Former Wye College, Wye (Wye 3)

HERITAGE AND TOWNSCAPE CONTEXT
HERITAGE AND TOWNSCAPE CONTEXT

Historical Growth Pattern

Like many historic settlements, Wye grew up around a crossroads. In Wye’s case a Roman-era fording point of the River Great Stour en route between Hastings and Canterbury over the North Downs, and a second, north-south, trackway following the river. The village developed as a medieval market town and a focus for education, following the establishment of a seminary in the mid 1400s. The seminary was taken over by Imperial College and remained in use as an agricultural college until 2005.

Available Ordnance Survey mapping shows the core of the village has two main historic focal points: the junction of Olantigh Road with Scotton Street / High Street, which is the location of Wye College, and Church Street, leading to the Church of Saint Gregory and Saint Martin. Church Street, rather than High Street, is the commercial centre of the village. Following the arrival of the Ashford – Margate railway in the 1840s the village became more accessible.

The rapid expansion of the village between the 1950s and present day is illustrated by the maps below. It is noteworthy that during this period peripheral residential growth has tended to follow a typical ‘suburban’ format based on cul-de-sacs. This has compromised the historic perimeter block structure.
HERITAGE AND TOWNSCAPE CONTEXT

Townscape Analysis

- Strong frontage / enclosure
- Weak frontage / enclosure
- Active frontage
- Absent frontage
- Importance interface
- Major landmark
- Minor landmark
- Focal spaces
- Trees playing a significant streetscape role
- Visual stops / deflections
Narrow plots establish rhythm
Continuous tree line and wall marks approach to village from north
Varied roof forms and chimneys add interest to roofscape
Narrowing of street width gives impression of greater length
Narrow plots establish rhythm
ADAS site concealed
Wide expanse of carriageway tarmac is not pedestrian friendly
Bend in road ‘leads’ eye
Vertical subdivision provides rhythm and breaks visual scale of building
Inconsistant boundaries and cars in front gardens
On-street parking slows traffic
Grass verge softens streetscape
View south down Church Street
View south down Olantigh Road
View further down Olantigh Road towards village

Townscape Analysis
Former Wye College, Wye (Wye 3)

DETAILED SITE APPRAISALS
DETAILED SITE APPRAISALS

Appraisal

This section sets out a short summary of the key characteristics of the main components of the former Wye College campus.

The original focus of the activities of Wye College was the grouping of important listed buildings (Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II), located in a series of interlinked quadrangles, at the corner of High Street and Olantigh Road. With the exception of the limited use of the Latin School on a permissive basis by Wye Heritage Centre, these buildings are vacant; their condition has been deteriorating since they became vacant and there is a pressing need for them to be brought back into active use, with appropriate repair, refurbishment, and adaptation. This complex of buildings has been the subject of a very detailed appraisal by Canterbury Archaeological Trust, which has informed the preparation of the Masterplan, and the concurrent application for conversion of the listed buildings, which is presently awaiting determination. This proposes:

- Conversion of the listed buildings to 39 new residential units
- Provision of enlarged and improved accommodation for the Wye Heritage Centre
- Great Hall, Lecture Theatre and Chapel to be retained as communal spaces for residents, with public access also
- Two new residential units, on land to the north in conjunction with car parking
- Car parking provided to full parking standard in a mixture of parking barns and open car parking spaces
- Full renovation of listed buildings to appropriate standard

To the north of the science laboratories is a track that serves farm buildings to the west and is also the route of the North Downs Way, which runs from east to west through the village. Immediately adjoining, to the north, is a former squash court, presently vacant; to the north of this building lies the Russell laboratory, a two storey building, formerly in use as classrooms and laboratories, but now vacant. This building shares with the former science laboratories the feature of terracotta panels.

To the north of the complex of listed buildings lie the former science laboratories, comprising mostly two storey, with some one storey and some two and a half storey buildings; the buildings are set back from Olantigh Road, with a landscaped area with an avenue of trees. While generally of little architectural interest, the buildings display an interesting grouping of bespoke terracotta panels, which reflect the academic interests of the former Wye College. A public footpath runs along the western boundary of the site, beyond which lie allotments.

A public footpath runs alongside the northern boundary of the listed building complex, from Olantigh Road, to the Churchyard where the footpath continues across the Churchyard, to the High Street.

To the north of the Russell laboratories lie the former Students Union building, an area of car parking, and a former outdoor swimming pool, now filled in, for safety reasons.
On the east side of Olantigh Road, opposite the Russell building, is the Kempe Centre, formerly the Teaching and Learning Centre for Wye College, constructed in the 1990s. This building is now used by Wye School; two storey temporary classrooms used by the school are situated to the north. Planning permission has recently been granted for a multi use games area, which is presently under construction, and for the construction of new permanent teaching accommodation, a sports hall, and associated car parking and access.

To the east of Olantigh Road lies Occupation Road, running from east to west; Occupation Road forms part of the North Downs Way, which continues to the east to the Crown, which is on an elevated position above the village.

The north side of Occupation Road is bounded by a conifer tree screen behind which lie an extensive complex of glass houses, and a variety of other permanent buildings, formerly used as a research centre which are now largely unoccupied with the exception of a small local business, Wye Bugs. To the east of this complex lies the former meteorological station; beyond this lies an area of presently unused grazing land, known locally as the Strawberry Field. The eastern boundary of the land and buildings acquired by Telereal Trillium is formed by a substantial alder tree screen, understood to have been planted as a windbreak, and typical of the local landscape at and around Wye.

On the south side of Occupation Road, moving from west to east, are firstly a group of single storey buildings, (comprising a mixture of permanent and temporary structures, presently occupied by a number of local businesses) then to the north of these lie 4 existing dwellings, which have recently been refurbished, and are now occupied. To the north of these 4 dwellings lie the premises occupied until recently by BCP; these comprise a substantial area of glasshouses, with associated storage and office buildings, including a substantial grouping of temporary office/research buildings, which lie at the eastern end of the site. A line of alder trees screens this area from views from the east; a public footpath runs between Occupation Road, and Scotton Street, to the south.
To the south of the buildings on the south side of Occupation Road lie allotments; part of the land adjoining the allotments, to the east, and including part of the land used until recently by BCP, is subject to a covenant restricting its use to agriculture or horticulture only.

To the north of the Wye School lies an area of existing woodland, beyond which lie the former ADAS buildings. These were built and used as Government offices but are presently vacant and have been subject to severe vandalism and theft, leaving them in a poor overall condition. They comprise a mixture of one and two storey buildings, under flat roofs, configured in a horseshoe shape within the site. These buildings have been confirmed to be the subject of Permitted Development Rights, which provide for their conversion to 52 flats with associated car parking and cycle parking being provided within the site.

To the east of the former ADAS buildings lies an enclosed area, presently in use as pasture and sometimes described as the Donkey Field, but previously in use in conjunction with Wye College for research purposes; to the east of this area lies an area presently being established as a woodland, through local tree planting schemes; beyond which lies open agricultural land.
09 / Former Wye College, Wye (Wye 3)
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY
The emerging Masterplan proposals have been informed by a strategic level Landscape Study, prepared by Growth Industry Landscape Architects; the full landscape study report supplements this Masterplan Report.

The landscape study summarises the design and consultation process undertaken in 2017 in relation to landscape matters of connectivity and character affected by the proposed Masterplan development, with the findings presented as a series of strategic landscape approaches.

The Landscape Study explores the Wye Village context, and existing connectivity, highlighting the network of existing footpath and bridleway connections, and how they relate to the proposed Wye3 sites. The study presents potential development sites in terms of landscape character and opportunities to inform the architectural proposals contained within this overall Masterplan.

The Landscape Study presents a series of strategies outlining the wider Masterplan opportunities for enhancements and additions to landscape character, as well as improved connectivity brought about by the proposed Masterplan development.

The key findings and conclusions of the Landscape Study are summarised below. The Landscape Study identifies the areas of land and buildings comprised within the Wye3 Masterplan area; and the general topographic setting, which is noted as:

“To the east as the topography descends towards the village fringe and begins to flatten out, steep wooded elevated downland of Crown is replaced by productive agricultural fields on more gentle topography, defined with their locally characteristic formal linear enclosures of Poplar and Alder trees windbreaks. The geometric and orthogonal landscape character and scale of this farm land is in contract to the more fluid and non-linear nature to the west of the village which is greatly influenced by the River Stour and its floodplain.”

The Landscape Study examines wider connectivity, and existing connections, noting:

- The regional North Downs Way and Stour Valley Walk, passing through the village east to west, and converging along Occupation Road through to Church Street via the church yard.
- National Cycle Route 18 passes through Wye along Olantigh Road, along Upper Bridge Street, and onwards along Oxenturn Road.
- Other footpaths extend beyond the central road and footway network, generally following historic field boundaries.
- The Wibberley Way is a permissive path that runs north–south across the organic farmland, at the eastern boundary of the Masterplan area.

The Landscape Study notes that the view from the Crown landmark provides a good overview of the WYE3 sites, in the context of the village and wider landscape of the North Downs Ridge, and the Stour Valley below.

Key points noted include:

- Importance of strong and mature treescape within the village as a whole.
- Below the Crown, the landscape topography descends towards the village, gradually becoming flatter to agricultural fields with distinctive field boundaries and strong lines of tree belt shelters.
- The ADAS site presents a relatively sunken and discrete site, contained by mixed woodland on its eastern boundary to the fields, and mature 25m high Arboretum woodland and mature beech trees along Olantigh Road; the double roof height of the existing ADAS building and tall water tower are evident in the view.
- Occupation Road (North) is a well enclosed series of field enclosures lying in front of the existing Wye School building with its distinctive roof clearly visible.
- Occupation Road (South) is identified by the gable ends of the existing glass houses partially visible behind the Alder shelter belt.
The diagram below summarises the existing immediate landscape contacts of the Wye3 sites:
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Site Specific Analysis

The Landscape Study then includes site specific analyses, for the individual redevelopment areas, within the former Wye College Campus, the key conclusions are summarised below for each site.

**ADAS Site**

The diagram below summarises key landscape features of the former ADAS buildings site, which are noted to include:

- Fall in levels across the site from east to west of approximately 10m.
- The site has three main component areas comprising:
  a. Site entry at approx contour + 39m – 40m
  b. Mid plateau at + 33m
  c. Donkey Field, falling westwards from +50 to +46m
- The level changes between plateau are as follows:
  d. Grassland quad between existing buildings falling from +43 to 40m at a 1:10 gradient.
  e. Steep embankment between Donkey Field falling from +46/47m to 43m at a 1:2 gradient.
- The opportunity exists to select housing typologies that can exploit the average 3m level differences between the embankments and plateau and thus reduce their impact in this location by one storey (3m being the typical residential storey height).
- Sole point of vehicular access into the site is formed via a formal brick walled gateway to the west off Olantigh Road.
- The site is surrounded by a series of mature stands of woodland trees.
- No formal internal footpath connections, although there is a pavement running to the eastern side of Olantigh Road connecting to the site entrance.
09 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY
Site Specific Analysis

1 Mature Beech trees define site entrance framing view westwards to the North Downs

2 Existing sloping central courtyard space endorsed by buildings with TPO woodland to rear

3 Pronounced level change at foot of Donkey Field

4 Donkey Field looking towards ADAS

5 Young mixed woodland looking north to Long Plantation
Occupation Road Sites

The diagram opposite summarises the key landscape characteristics of the land at Occupation Road (both north and south).

- Constant fall in topography from +57m to +49m, from east to west.
- Sole point of vehicular access into the site is along Occupation Road.
- Pedestrian access focused on the route of the North Downs Way; north to south permissive route (Wibberly Way) extends north across the organic fields following the eastern site boundary.
- More open character, around the open grassland of the weather station field, and strawberry field to the east, bounded by traditional Alder and Poplar lines acting as windbreaks. An overgrown orchard lies in the north east corner of the strawberry field; these blocks of vegetation provide a valuable natural screen to the wider farmland and the land beyond.
- Wye Bug site forms a well defined site, enclosed by tall dense fir hedgerow and Beech hedging, more open along its northern and north western boundary with the Free School.
- South of Occupation Road existing glass houses, residential, commercial units and their associated yards and parking areas occupy much of the existing land holding, however the traditional Alder Field boundary and mature Willow and Poplar tree clusters partially screen much of this development when viewed from the east.
09 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Site Specific Analysis

1 Strong Alder shelter belt as field enclosure alongside Wibberley Way
2 North Downs Way on approach from the east with Alder line to site boundary
3 Occupation Road
4 Existing pond and Glasshouses within Covenanted land
5 Open grazing fields (Strawberry Field) towards the former Orchard
Olantigh Road Landscape Considerations

The Landscape Study notes that Olantigh Road forms a direct and historic point of history into Wye village from the north, due the straight nature of this rural road there are observed issues with vehicle speed and narrow or inconsistent pavements which need addressing to ensure better pedestrian comfort and safety going forward as building plots become developed including the Wye School expansion.

Key landscape characteristics are noted as:

- The straight road is generally flat around +47m closer to the village, starting to descend gradually to +39m outside the ADAS entrance.
- A strong linear approach to village, offers access to a range of sites including ADAS, Wye School, Occupation Road, and private houses, former students union, Russell Laboratories, science block, Squires Cottages and Listed Building Campus to the west.
- Road is contained along its southern length by built development; in front of the western buildings, the 4m wide grassed verge is located planted with occasional small medium fruiting trees.
- A particular landscape feature along the eastern edge is the mature woodland and historic lines of deciduous trees nearer the ADAS site and further north, beneath these trees near continuous brick wall continues along the eastern side of the road heading north forming a strong linear landscape element.
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Site Specific Analysis

1. Olantigh Road western pavement width is too narrow at approximately 900mm

2. Olantigh Road looking north showing lack of pavement in front of the school to the east

3. Western pavement width reduces to approximately 600mm outside the former Science Buildings

4. The junction of Olantigh and Occupation Road occurs outside former Squash Building and Free School entrance, combined with farm access road and North Downs Way crossover

5. North Downs Way between Churchfield Allotments and former Science Buildings on approach to the Church
The Landscape Study identifies the key strategic moves as:

Nestled at the foot of the Downs, Wye is a village surrounded by open countryside; a rich agricultural tapestry of rectilinear fields bounded by strong hedgerows, tree belts and woodland plantations. The natural beauty of the countryside and this strong sense of rurality, acknowledged by the AONB classification, is part of what makes the village an attractive place to live and work. Any new development that seeks to occupy the edge or periphery of the village must respect the neighbouring landscape character rather than seek to impose a suburban character upon it. The transitions between open countryside, new residential neighbourhood and village core should be gentle, not jarring so that each appears merely an extension of, or progression to, the other.

This can be best achieved by reflecting key characteristics of the village’s built form; architecture, streetscape and materiality within the new development. In terms of landscape the aim would be to pull the essence of the countryside through the development, drawing in the surrounding landscape characteristics that are key to making Wye such a special place to live. This includes not only the tree and plant species characteristic of the locality but the fundamental form and structure of the wider landscape.

The three core tenets of the landscape strategy are put forward in direct support of the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Development Plan in particular WNPS (respecting the qualities of the Ken Downs AONB) and WNP10 (enhancing connectivity and creating new green spaces). They are as follows:

Draw the countryside in to bring the countryside right into the heart of the new development through the creation of strong linear green spaces that capitalise on key downland views, afford opportunities for informal recreation, space for sustainable drainage and that foster biodiversity.

Foster positive links to link these linear green spaces with green thoroughfares that provide safe and attractive corridors for both wildlife and residents and that provide generous space for a legacy treescape which when combined with the existing boundary trees will have a positive aggregate effect in mitigating the visual impact of the development on the wider AONB landscape, especially when viewed from the downland above.

Create circulatory routes to utilise these green links in the creation of a network of safe, traffic-free circulation routes for walkers and cyclists, linking to the wider footpath network, not only to positively support and encourage the notion of a ‘Walkable Village’ but to ensure that no part of the development feels independent or isolated from the village core and existing community and to celebrate and reinforce the route of the North Downs Way as it enters the village from the east.
Landcape Study identifies the following core objectives:

1. Improve the junction, crossing, pavement provision and general streetscape on Olantigh Road.
2. Separate traffic and pedestrians along Occupation Road making the route of the North Downs Way the principal traffic-free thoroughfare, providing a safe and comfortable pedestrian and cycle link with the village.
3. Create a generous linear green space between the vehicular access to the development and Occupation Road/North Downs Way drawing the countryside into the heart of the development providing scope for SUDS integration (linked to the existing pond) and opportunities for informal recreation.
4. Create green corridors between development parcels echoing the strong field boundaries of the surrounding landscape and providing opportunities for large scale, legacy tree planting to mitigate the visual impact of the development from the downland, to foster biodiversity and to provide traffic-free circulatory routes through the development.
5. Strengthen the landscape boundaries to surrounding farmland to create comfortable micro-climates and to mitigate the visual impact of the development.
6. Create a buffer to the school grounds for the privacy of both pupils and new residents and to aid wind mitigation.
7. Retain the ADAS arboretum and enhance community access. Create a green link to allow pedestrian and cycle access through the woodland between the school and the former ADAS site.
8. Support use and enjoyment of North Downs Way through the provision of a dedicated parking area for walkers, picnic area and information board to create a ‘gateway’ to the North Downs Way.
9. Utilise the recently planted woodland to the east of ADAS as informal Open Space.
10. Improve and enhance existing footpaths and create new routes for better connectivity.
A series of new or improved connections are proposed within the Wye 3 Masterplan, reinforcing the walkability and connectivity between sites and within the overall village path network. These connections are primarily pedestrian improvements, although in the case of the North Downs Way extend to cyclists and are outlined on the adjacent connectivity plan.

The Masterplan proposes two principal areas of improved connections which are outlined below and explained on the following pages:

**Streetscape Footpath Improvements:**
1. Pedestrian priority crossings and junction improvement outside the Wye School. (in association with traffic calming measures further along Olantigh Road).
2. Improvements to the streetscape experience along Olantigh Road, seeking increased footway widths on both sides of Olantigh Road connecting to the ADAS site.
3. Enhancements to footpath connection between Olantigh Road and Churchyard passing by the Listed Building campus.

**Rural Footpath Network Enhancements:**
4. Enhancements to the North Downs Way as it passes along Occupation Road, to extend the rural character of this regional route as close to the village as possible.
5. Enhancements to the North Downs Way as it passes alongside Churchfield Allotments en route to the Churchyard.
6. New footpath connections throughout the Masterplan sites.
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Proposed Landscape Connectivity

The Landscape Study identifies scope for path and pavement improvements at:

• Olantigh Road Junction
• Olantigh Road streetscape improvements
• Improvements to the footpath between Olantigh Road and the Church

Further scope for improvement is noted at Occupation Road / North Downs Way; where it is noted that at present Occupation Road presents a fairly unattractive prospect in contrast to the picturesque open countryside lining the North Downs Way as it descends into the village from the east, Occupation Road being characterised by shabby commercial and former horticultural buildings, derelict garages and oppressive evergreen hedging.

EXISTING views along Occupation Road. The route has a narrow, corridor–like feel with views to the wider landscape restricted to glimpses either end.

PROPOSED enhancement of the North Downs Way along a traffic-free Occupation Road with adjacent linear residential green space.
The Landscape Study also addresses scope for widening of the Churchfield allotment path, while maintaining the mature Beech hedging; and the addition of a new connection to the new informal public open space and the ADAS site.

EXISTING narrow path between boundary hedge and Churchfield Allotments

EXISTING The Strawberry Field pasture looking towards the woodland with the strong Alder boundary with the Wibberley Way permissive path behind

PROPOSED widened path between boundary hedge and Churchfield Allotments

EXISTING narrow path between boundary hedge and Churchfield Allotments

EXISTING The Strawberry Field pasture looking towards the woodland with the strong Alder boundary with the Wibberley Way permissive path behind
Former Wye College, Wye (Wye 3)

10

URBAN DESIGN VISION
URBAN DESIGN VISION

Design Quality

The urban design vision for the area covered by the Masterplan has developed from the planning and design principles outlined above, it has also taken account of the design concepts outlined by Sue McGlynn in the first workshop, the wider context of the Wye Neighbourhood Plan, and other national and local planning policies and guidance, including the Wye Village Design Statement.

Key elements have been identified as:

1. Landscape led approach: Protecting important views out of, and into Wye but also securing opportunities for enhancement – notably the route of the North Downs Way through Occupation Road, and onwards to the west
2. Enhancing and improving the network of footpaths/cycle paths, through the village, both to achieve improved connectivity and also to assist in promoting the concept of the walkable village
3. Enhancement of green spaces around the improved network of footpaths/cycle routes within the village
4. Special focus on the junction of Occupation Road and Olantigh Road – where necessary enhancements for highway safety associated with the school must be balanced with securing an enhancement to appearance with a rural character
5. New built development to reflect and incorporate the overall landscape and movement strategy to be developed.
6. Overall mix of new development to incorporate residential, business, education and community uses
7. Design and appearance of new development to reflect the principles of the Wye Village Design Statement, within the wider context of principles of design guidance in national and other local policy documents, notably:
   - Scale of development
   - Locally appropriate materials
   - Form and layout of development to have regard to local precedents within Wye

The photographs in section 2 Background illustrate the diversity of built form and materials of existing buildings/street scenes within Wye, which have helped guide the preparation of the detailed Masterplan proposals.

The urban design vision draws on the design principles set out in Building for Life 12. By way of a general design overview and utilising the BFL headings:

1. Connections:
The aim has been to integrate the masterplan and the individual sites into the fabric of Wye by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, see strategy plan.

2. Facilities and Services:
Commercial workspace is proposed west of Olantigh Road. This involves converting an existing laboratory building, see layout, which proposes workspace wrapping around an internal courtyard. Good location and easily accessible from village centre.

3. Public Transport:
Each site has relatively good access to public transport, which will help to reduce car dependency. As all sites are within the 800m walkable village strategy this will also help to reduce car dependency. A detailed Transport Assessment has been prepared by TPP.

4. Meeting Local Housing Requirements:
Following market assessment the overall development will have a mix of housing types and tenures to suit local requirements. The aim is for a housing mix that will create a broad based community, avoiding creating too many larger or too many smaller homes from being grouped together. See masterplan and individual site layouts.

5. Character:
Following detailed townscape analysis the proposals draw inspiration from context, topography and orientation. Distinctiveness can be achieved by designs that respond to local characteristics in a contemporary way. See ADAS elevational proposals.

6. Working with the Site and its Context:
Each of the proposals take advantage of existing topography, landscape features, existing buildings etc. See relevant constraints and opportunities proposals and subsequent individual proposals for each site.

7. Creating well Defined Streets and Spaces:
Generally buildings are designed and positioned within a landscape ‘framework’, as this helps to define the streets and spaces they address.

8. Easy to find your way around:
As well as the masterplan, each site layout identifies a clear network of well defined streets and spaces with well defined routes. In particular, this assists orientation and site legibility for the user. In particular, see ‘Land north of Occupation Road’ scheme proposal.

9. Streets for all:
Site layouts and their respective street layouts have been designed to encourage cars to drive slowly. The detailed design stage will review material specification and finishes to reinforce this safety principle.

10. Car Parking:
Resident and visitor parking is sufficient and at detailed design stage will be finally co-ordinated and integrated so as cars do not dominate the street scene. Landscape design, in particular, to be carefully considered to help reduce visual impact in the relevant street scenes.

11. Public and Private Spaces:
Clear definition of spaces to be finally co-ordinated at detailed design stage

12. External Storage and Amenity Space:
Adequate external storage space for bins, recycling and bicycles to be finally co-ordinated at detailed design stage.
URBAN DESIGN VISION

Rural Kentish Character

The following images are used to illustrate key pointers to the development of appropriate forms of development, through this Masterplan:

Caring Wood, Kent

Avante Coxeath

Orchard Gate, Ditton

Staplehurst
URBAN DESIGN VISION

Built Form

Interesting frontage to green spaces

Innovatively interpret clusters of rural farmsteads, oasts and barns

Compact enclosed streetscenes with good natural surveillance and refined architectural detailing
Landscape designs integrated into layouts to create identity and a strong sense of place.

Attractive green spaces to create local distinctiveness.
Innovative rural street designs as traffic calming features. Improved pedestrian and cycle experience.

Slower streets and lanes – carriageway narrowing, contrasting materials, cross overs, pedestrian priority.

Non standard robust quality materials, integrated landscaping, shared surfaces, non priority junctions