

# Highsett, Cambridge

**Built**  
1959-1964

**Local authority**  
Cambridge City Council

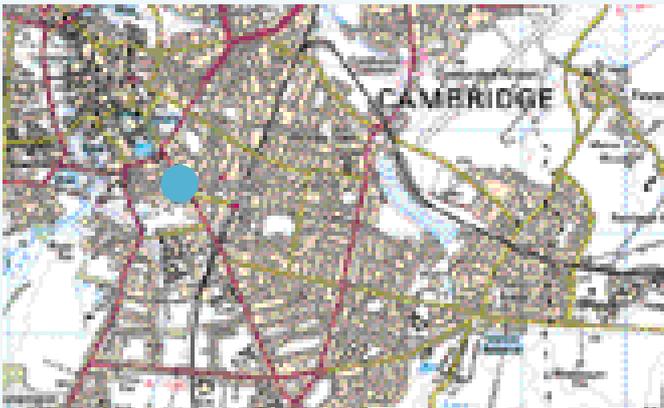
**Lead designer**  
Eric Lyons & Partners

**Developer**  
Wates, Rattee & Kett

## Overview

Highsett was developed between 1959-1964. Its 4 hectare site is divided into three distinct types of housing: Phase one: The Quad (flats and large communal garden); Phase two: The 'L' shaped (2-storey houses) and Phase three (our case study area): a cul-de-sac of townhouses. The development benefits greatly from its location just outside the centre of Cambridge and from the existing mature landscape.

Highsett is built in a gault brick, typical of East Anglia; roofs are pitched inwards to a central gutter and roof glazing is used to light bathrooms and staircases. By present-day standards, rather large areas of glazing are used. The houses are arranged in short terraces with small private walled gardens.



● The site



■ Area of detailed analysis



📍 Photo position

## Evaluation

Successful features of the area of detailed analysis are:

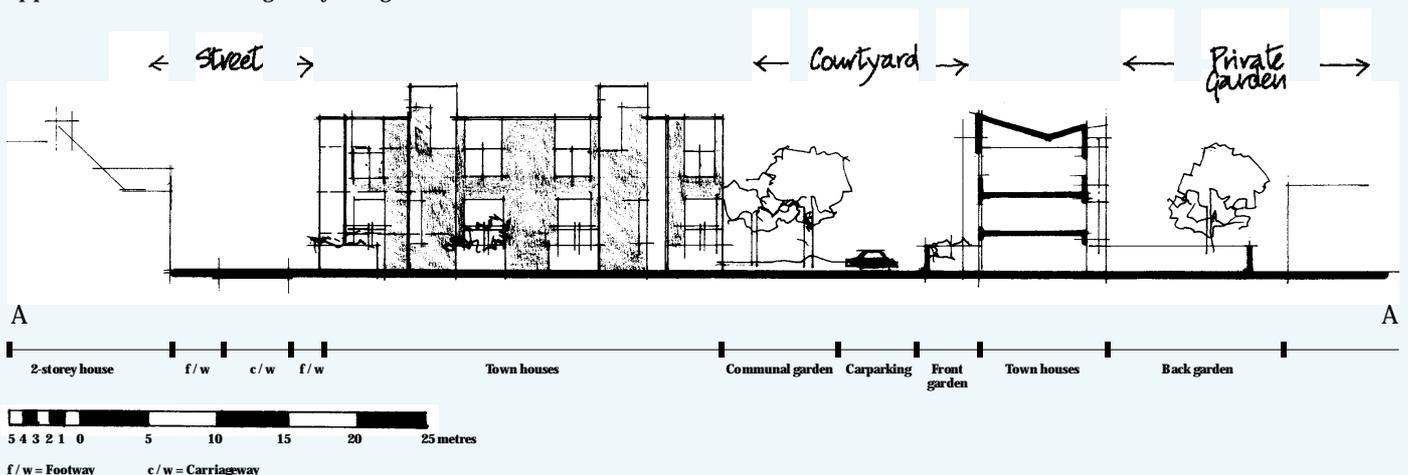
- Each house has a well-screened private garden or courtyard;
- There are safe, overlooked areas for children to play in;
- bin stores, bicycles and meter boxes can also be easily accommodated in these enclosed front gardens;
- A mix of short terraces fronting the street as well as those positioned in parallel, help to provide a high level of natural surveillance onto pathways and communal spaces, but not necessarily onto the street;
- Mature landscaped areas, albeit that some trees are very close to the buildings.

The area of detailed analysis demonstrates that a clear division of private and public space is important. However, one block appears to have been originally designed with a communal

back, but subsequently the space has been subdivided and used for private parking.

Other concerns are the poor design of the grouped garages as a long row with a large area of hardstanding in front. It is not clear whether these are viewed as satisfactory by residents, as some have converted their forecourts into parking spaces.

Although the site is structured as a cul-de-sac, it is quite permeable, due to its numerous pedestrian paths, but the configuration of the site and these multiple pathways, some enclosed by walls, and the proximity to an urban environment must create some security risks.





**1** The careful design of the front gardens provides space for bins, bicycles and meter boxes.



**2** There is a high level of surveillance onto pathways and communal spaces, but not necessarily onto the street. This must create some security risks.



**3** The external architectural design of the houses is straightforward and does not suffer from the more negative features of their period.



**4** One block appears to have been originally designed with a communal back, but the space has been subdivided and is used for private parking.



**5** It is not clear whether the garages are viewed as satisfactory by residents, as some have converted forecourts into parking spaces.

### Analysis of built form components in the area of detailed analysis

Area of detailed analysis:	0.4 ha.
Number of Dwellings:	18
Dwelling mix:	2-storey terrace
2 house types	3-storey townhouse
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare:	45
Habitable rooms per hectare:	203
Floorspace per hectare:	4953 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Space in and around the home</b>	
2-bed house: (2-storey)	88 m <sup>2</sup>
Typical garden area:	23 m <sup>2</sup>
4-bed house: (3-storey)	120 m <sup>2</sup>
Typical garden area:	63 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Car Parking</b>	
Parking spaces per dwelling:	1.2
Parking within building curtilage:	17%
On-street:	5%
Parking courts/ dedicated off-street bays:	22%
Garages:	56%
<b>Overall land budget</b>	
Dwellings footprint:	24%
Private gardens:	43%
Communal outdoor space and courtyards:	7%
Roads, footpaths and parking:	26%