

# The Good Design Guide

**Supplementary Planning Document**  
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council  
2020



Urban designers, landscape architects and heritage consultants, Node were commissioned by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council in March 2018 to produce The Good Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document to guide the design of new development within the Borough.

This document was produced with the full collaboration of the Council and its key stakeholders.

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# Introduction

## Background

The Good Design Guide supplementary planning document (SPD) aspires to:

*Substantially raise design quality in Hinckley and Bosworth Borough whilst ensuring that the local identity and heritage of the Borough is preserved and enhanced.*

Through providing accessible, clear guidance, this document will encourage high quality design and ensure that consistent rules are applied to the assessment of design by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. In doing so, this will simplify the application process for applicants and the local authority alike.

This supplementary planning document will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It should be read in conjunction with the adopted development plan to ensure adherence to Borough-wide and location specific policy.

## How should the document be used?

The process for using this SPD is set out in figure 1, overleaf. It is intended to be a practical and useful guide to design for all of the key parties involved in the planning process. The objective is to provide clarity to all involved, to save time, reduce confusion and ultimately raise the quality of design in the Borough.

## Who will use it?

### Applicants:

From householders looking for advice on how to extend their home, to professional developers and agents, this document is intended to provide clear guidance about what will be expected by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council throughout the design development and planning process.

Clarity regarding objectives and expectations is provided through the 'key themes' and 'action points' set out in each chapter and summarised overleaf, which can be easily recognised by their icons.

### Planning officers:

The SPD will be used as a manual for the design process by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's planning officers during the pre-application and planning application phase, ensuring consistency of guidance to potential applicants.

### Planning Committee/Executive Members:

Councillors will also use this guide to inform their decision making, ensuring consistency and reducing the need for planning appeals.

## What will it do?

This document is intended to inform every stage of design development, from initially appraising a site, through to submitting a planning application and reaching determination. With the easy to understand action points at every stage, it is intended to shape and inform all planning applications within Hinckley and Bosworth Borough.

The SPD does the following:

1. Provides details of the **design development and planning application process**, including clearly setting what will be required of applicants
2. Provides **Borough-wide, strategic urban design principles** that all development should seek to reflect, together with introducing the key components of development as a means of describing design and highlighting how good design can mitigate potential impacts on climate change
3. Provides **place-specific understanding and principles** that reflects the Borough's rich local identity
4. Provides **use-specific design principles** on key development types: new residential developments, existing residential, commercial / mixed-use developments and shopfronts

## Key Themes and Action Points



### Key Themes

Clearly stated objectives for each individual chapter, identifying key learning points



### Action Points

Points that applicants are required to respond to within pre-application or planning application submissions

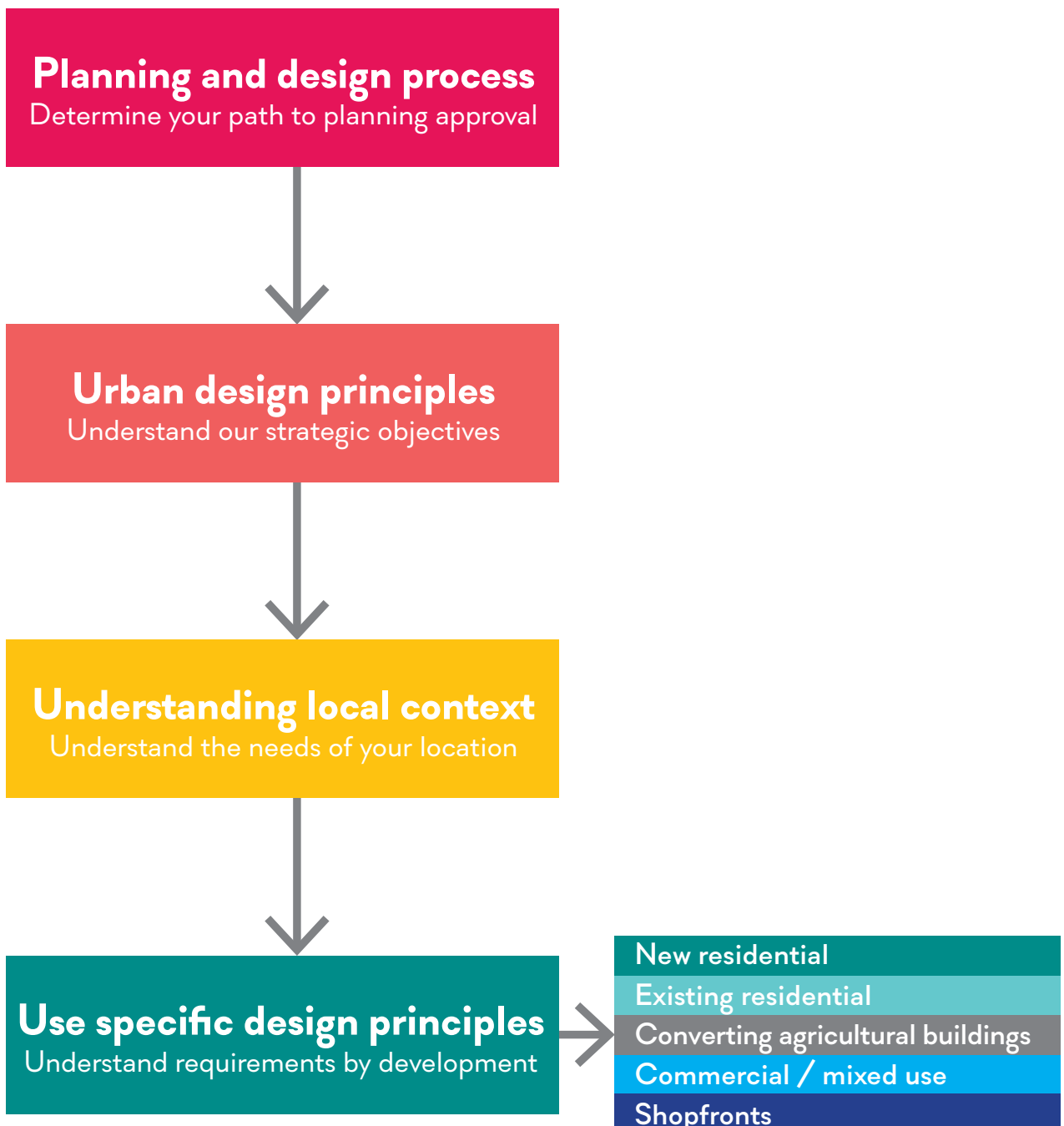


Figure 1 | Process diagram

# Policy context



To ensure ease of use, this chapter has sought to reflect all policy and guidance relevant to the design of development in Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

There is a wide range of national and local documentation that feeds into the development of good design. These are presented with a specific focus on understanding the factors that underlie the unique character and identity of Hinckley and identifying the elements that are required to protect it through design. This overview is deliberately reflective of the most important considerations in the Borough rather than tied to specific policies, to ensure it is a flexible long term tool.

## National policy

**The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** sets out the Government's planning policies for England. At its core is the message that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The NPPF establishes that good design is a critical element of sustainability with the ultimate goal of making places better for people.

It highlights that good design should be considered in all types of development to foster inclusivity, create a sense of place, develop safe and accessible environments, and respond to local character and history.

Behind this is the need to foster innovation by ensuring design codes and policies provide clear guidance without being overly prescriptive. The NPPF was revised in 2019, reinforcing the role of design, together with supporting the production of visual tools and pre-application discussions to support the delivery of design quality.

## National guidance

### The National Design Guide

illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance and is to be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.

The National Design Guide introduces ten characteristics which work together to create its physical character, nurture and sustain a sense of community and they work positively to address environmental issues affecting climate. These ten characteristics are: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources, and lifespan. These ten characteristics are reflected throughout The Good Design Guide as well as the Local Plan.

**Planning Practice Guidance** provides a regularly updated repository of supporting guidance on good design, including primary principles and objectives, what it can help achieve and how good design should shape planning proposals. This is set out in more detail in chapter 1.

**Building for Life 12** (2015) sets out measurable criteria for creating well-designed places that people value, becoming an industry benchmark for effective place making in residential settings. Its recommendations focus on achieving sustainability, inclusivity, functionality, and place-based character, utilising 12 questions around three themes:

- 'Integrating into the neighbourhood'
- 'Creating a place'
- 'Street and home'

A BfL12 assessment will be expected as part of any application for a new residential scheme (p132-3).

**Manual for Streets** (2007) provides a framework for the design of residential streets with a particular emphasis on the street as a 'place', as opposed to solely facilitating movement for cars. The street should be designed to be multi-purpose, accommodating functional elements including parking, access, and provision of drainage, utilities and street lighting but also offer a high-quality environment through well designed street geometry, street furniture, and logical layout and connectivity, with a particular emphasis on a movement hierarchy that prioritises pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport before private cars. The key message is that street design should be considered holistically to deliver a more integrated, practical, sustainable and high-quality environment.

## Action Point

Understanding of the relevant planning and guidance context for the form of application and location

of development should be sought in the initial outset when considering a planning application.



**Active Design (2015)** provides Sport England's guidance on the incorporation of activity into all forms of design, themed around accessibility, amenity and awareness. It provides a practical guide for the development of design ideas for everyday activity destinations; informal activity and recreation; and formal sports and leisure activities. This ensures that promotion of activity is captured by all forms of development, promoting healthier lifestyles as a whole. A summary active design matrix provides prompts to ensure that allow design teams and local authorities to interrogate how well schemes have incorporated the key principles.

**Creating Space for Beauty (2019)** provides the interim report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission, promoting high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods. It focuses on the creation of beauty at three scales: Beautiful buildings – considering windows, height, space and materials; Beautiful places – the 'spirit of place', the nature of streets, squares and parks; and Beautifully placed – sustainable settlement patterns in the right place and sitting in the landscape. Proposals should reflect this report and future guidance from the commission.

### Current Local Planning Policy Context

**Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Development Plan** currently consists of:

- Core Strategy 2009

- Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD
- Hinckley Town Area Action Plan
- Earl Shilton And Barwell Area Action Plan

A new Local Plan is being drafted and once adopted by the Council will replace the current suite of four documents set out above that make the Council's Development Plan. It is intended that this SPD will support relevant policies on design matters set out in the emerging Local Plan.

At present the Development Plan contains a number of policies that are relevant to all types of development. The aim of these policies is to respect the character of the area and the amenities of local residents and occupiers. In particular this SPD provides further guidance on the application of Policy DM10 (Development and Design) of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, Policy 22: (Development and Design) of the Earl Shilton and Barwell Area Action Plan and the following Local Plan policies:

#### Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD

- DM2 – Delivering Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development
- DM6 – Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest
- DM7 – Preventing Pollution and Flooding

- DM11 – Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment
- DM12 – Heritage Assets
- DM14 – Replacement Dwellings in the Rural Area
- DM18 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- DM23 – High quality Shop Front and Advertisements

#### Earl Shilton and Barwell Area Action Plan

- Policy 19: Regeneration of the District Centre

The advice within this guide is intended as best practice guidance to accompany the Development Plan and will assist in applying the Plan policies and subsequent design related policies in future Development Plans.

**The Leicestershire Highway Design Guide** is the key document to refer to on highway design matters.

### Policy summary

At a national level policy and guidance highlights the need to create sustainable places that enhance the quality of environment for people that use it, reflecting place-specific characteristics, with design a central factor for all types of development. Locally, policy and guidance highlights key themes that frame the character of the Borough, providing the underling context for developing good design.

# 1. Planning and design process



This chapter describes the planning application process including expectations for pre-application and planning application submissions together with the fundamental components of a best practice design development process.

## Background

**We want to see great new development taking place within the Borough.**

For this to happen, we want to establish a positive and respectful dialogue with applicants.

This chapter sets out the best practice process for developing the design of proposals and the process for engaging with the council from pre-application through to delivery. This is rooted in the context of national guidance including the 'National Design Guide', the regularly refreshed information from 'Planning Practice Guidance', 'By Design: urban design in the planning system', 'Building for Life', 'Manual for Streets' and 'Active Design'.

On the following pages you will find detailed expectations of what should be received as part of a planning application.

At the conclusion of this document, you will find a design assessment checklist, which should be completed as part of a formal pre-application request, as well as accompanying a planning application submission, to demonstrate how the design of the planning application has considered and reflected the issues raised.

## What to expect

The planning process has a reputation for being complex. We aim to simplify this as much as possible to help you to plan your planning application.

## Pre-application

The key opportunity for dialogue regarding developing proposals is through the formal pre-application process, where applicants have the opportunity to request feedback on their concept ideas for the site. Where the location, together with the type and scale of development render it appropriate, parish councils and neighbourhood plan groups should also be consulted as part of this process. We believe that thorough pre-application engagement is the best way to ensure clarity for all, avoid delays at application stage - and ultimately to deliver design quality.

To do this properly requires input from all parties to ensure that the information exchange is as efficient and well-informed as possible. Key items that we will usually expect to receive as part of a pre-application submission are set out below, however it is worth clarifying in advance with the appointed case officer whether additional details may be required depending on the scale and nature of your proposal:

- **Completed design worksheet (p130-1):** providing the supporting narrative for the proposals

- **Site location plan:** showing the boundary of the site, to a specified scale
- **Constraints plan:** showing the key urban design and technical issues affecting the site, to a specified scale
- **Design principles:** concept sketches and/or narrative showing design objectives
- **Concept design:** could include a masterplan drawing, elevations, sections and visuals

## The case for good design

Good design is so much more than looking good. Examples of poor design of the built environment are well known: low quality housing, derelict industrial areas, failing town centres.

The consequences of these mistakes are detrimental to daily quality of life and long term prospects of the individual and society.

The reverse of this is also true: good design can radically enhance social, economic and environmental indices, creating sustainable developments which have significant positive impacts on both the lives of individuals and their wider communities (figure 2).

It is therefore vital that we get it right.



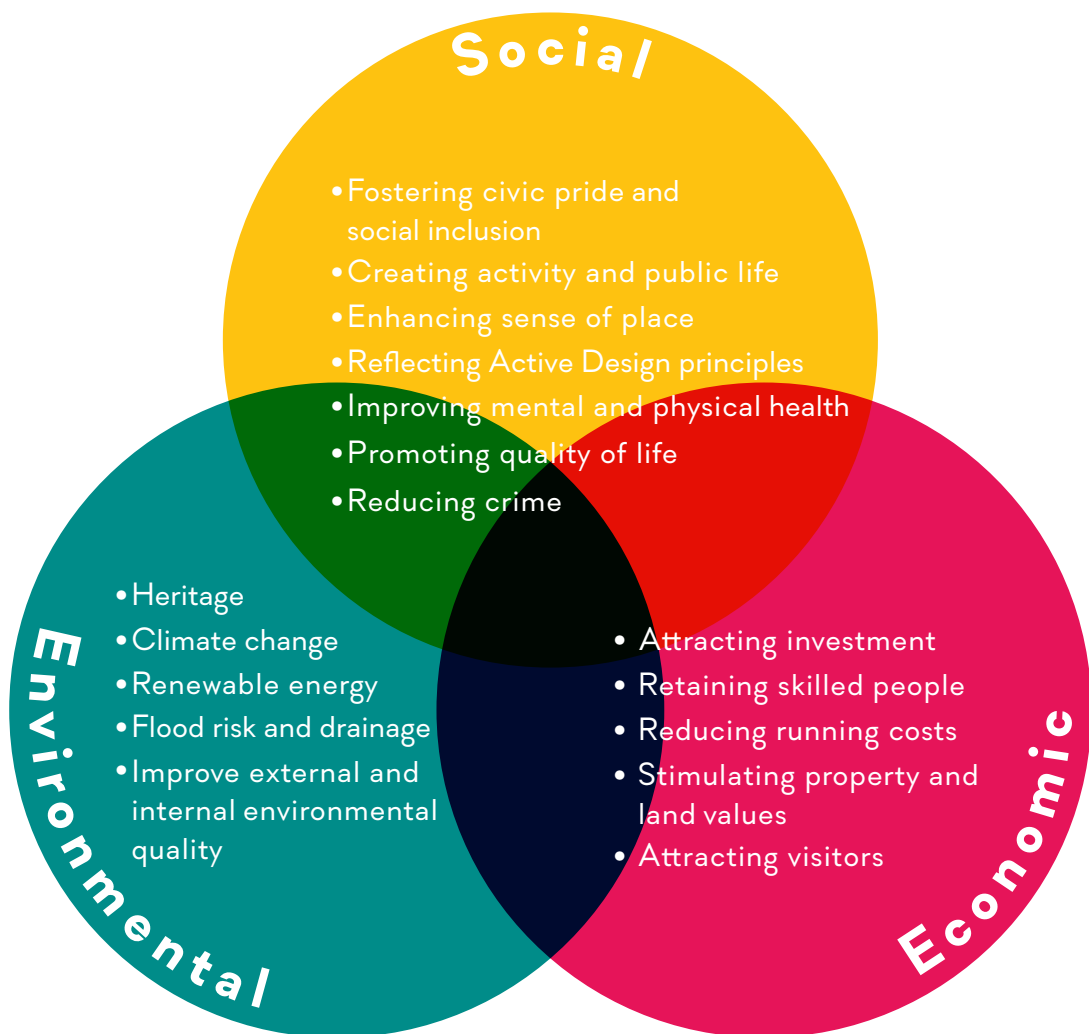


Figure 2 | The value of good design



Figure 3 | Design has a huge impact on quality of life: poorly designed housing, Coventry



Figure 4 | Design has a huge impact on quality of life: characterful and welcoming housing, Wolverhampton

## Design philosophy

At its core, good design is about putting people at the heart of decision making. Therefore, when approaching any form of design, the starting point should always be the people who will use or be impacted upon by the development. As such, early engagement is essential with a range of interested parties from local communities through to formal stakeholder organisations, including the local authority and highways authority.

The public spaces created by the scheme should next be considered, allowing wider agendas such as positive connections and creation of public space to be addressed.

Finally consideration should be given to how buildings can be used to define and enhance these spaces.



Figure 5 | Design philosophy

## Design process

Design should not just be considered as an end product; instead it is also a process. Although every site is different, there is a consistent approach to this process that every project should reflect from taking an initial idea or vision through to delivery.

A methodology for this process was first established by the Commission for the Built Environment, now Design Council, set out adjacent. It should also be recognised that design is rarely a linear process; instead a more circular, iterative approach is needed in order to ensure the best solution is reached.

Articulation of how this process has been followed would form a suitable narrative within a pre-application submission and a design and access statement supporting a scheme.

## Site survey

Understanding the site and its environs, or 'appreciating the context' is the foundation to ensuring that design work is sensitive to its local environment. This avoids the creation of 'identikit' development and bland, anywhere places.

An overview of assessment criteria is provided in a worksheet at the end of this document (p.128-129) which should form the basis of a thorough evaluation of a site and context. This could also help applicants to articulate their proposals within a pre-application submission and a design and access statement.

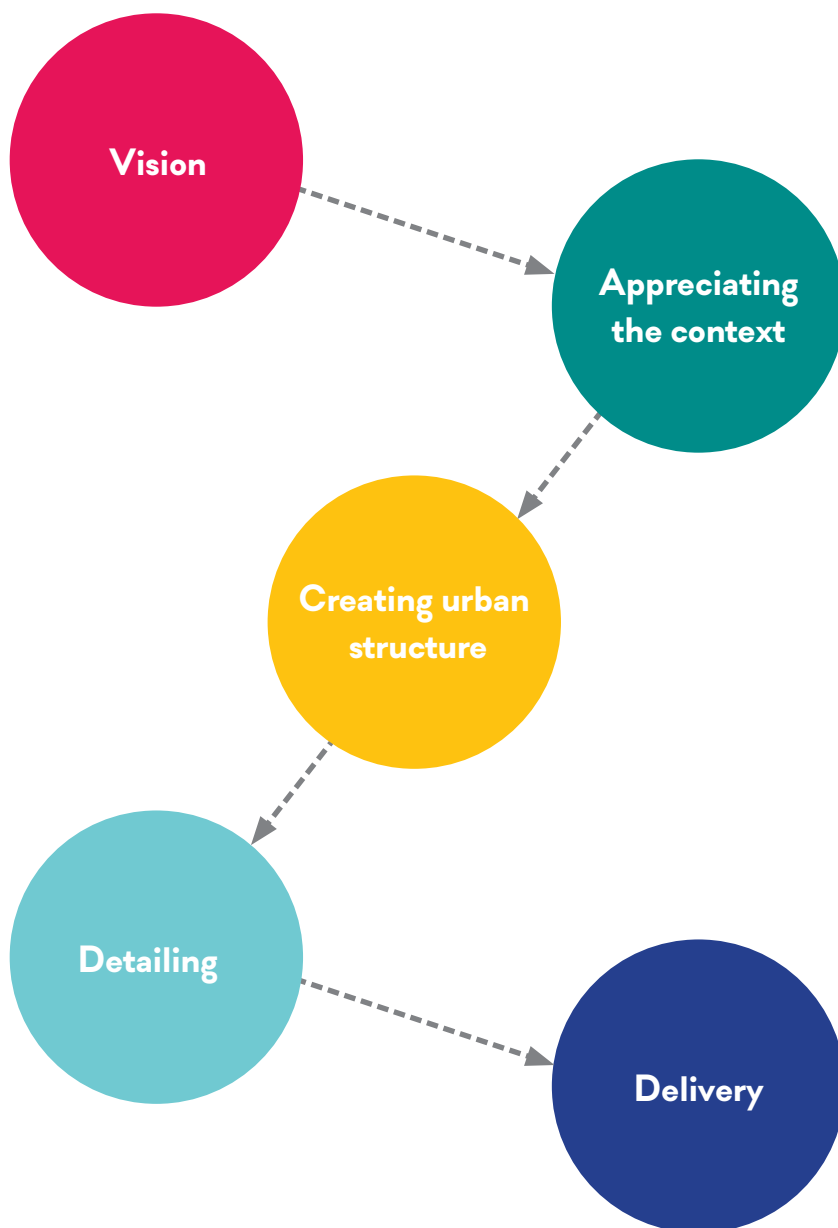


Figure 6 | Design process

## Action Point

Undertaking a well informed and structured approach to the design process is the best means of getting the best out of a site and for expediting the planning process. Applicants should follow the approach to design set out above and articulate this in their design and access statement.

A thorough site and context assessment should be undertaken by prospective applicants prior to the development of design proposals.

This could utilise the survey record provided at the end of this document (p128-9).



# 2. Design objectives



This chapter sets out design objectives which form the building blocks for design development. It then breaks down the individual component elements of design to promote clear communication of design features.

## Design objectives

This chapter provides the structuring principles that characterise good design. The guidance found within this chapter must be reflected in the design of all forms of development in the Borough.

Seven core urban design objectives are established in Planning Practice Guidance. These are that well designed new or changing places should:

### 1. Be functional

A building or place should be fit for purpose, designed in a way that delivers the intended function and achieves value for money in terms of lifetime costs. It should be intuitive, comfortable, safe and equally easy for all to use.

It should relate well to its environment so that occurrences such as flooding, temperature extremes and pollution do not prevent it from being used.

### 2. Support mixed uses and tenures

A good mix of uses and tenures is often important to making a place economically and socially successful, ensuring the community has easy access to facilities such as shops, schools, clinics, workplaces, parks,

play areas, pubs or cafés. This helps achieve multiple benefits and encourage a healthier environment, reducing the need for travel and helping greater social integration between existing and proposed communities. A mix of uses allows communities and places to respond to change more readily.

### 3. Include successful public spaces

Public spaces streets, squares and parks should be available for everyone to see, use and enjoy. They help bring neighbourhoods together, and provide space for social activities and civic life. They also provide access, light, air and the setting for buildings.

The position, design and detailing of public space is central to how it provides benefits for the wider community. The most successful spaces exhibit functional and attractive hard and soft landscape elements, with well orientated and detailed routes and include facilities such as seats and play equipment. Public art and sculpture can play an important role in making interesting and exciting places.

### 4. Be adaptable and resilient

Successful places can adapt to changing circumstances and demands, for example, in terms of working and shopping practices and the requirements of demographic and household change, together with the consequences of climate change. Buildings often change their use over time, for example from offices to housing.

Designing buildings that can be adapted to different needs offers real benefits in terms of the use of resources and the stability of an area.

Design features including the position and scale of entrances and circulation spaces, and the ability of the construction to be modified, can affect how easily buildings can adapt.

Places that are easy and practical to manage well tend to be more resilient. For example, where maintenance and policing are supported by good access, natural surveillance and hard wearing, easy to repair, materials.

### 5. Have a distinctive character

Distinctiveness is what often makes a place special and valued. It relies on physical aspects such as:

- the local pattern of street blocks and plots
- building forms
- details and materials
- style and vernacular
- landform and gardens, parks, trees and plants
- wildlife habitats and micro-climates.

Distinctiveness is not solely about the built environment: it also reflects an area's function, history, culture and need for change.

## Action Point

'Urban design objectives' should be utilised as the guiding principles for developing design ideas. Proposals should show how they reflect them.

Pre-application submissions and discussions with the council's officers will be structured around these points.



Figure 7 | Design objectives

### 6. Be attractive

The way a place looks, sounds, feels, and even smells, affects its attractiveness and long term success. Streetscapes, landscapes, buildings and elements within them all have an influence. So too can more transient elements – such as the way sunshine and shadows move across an area or the way it is maintained and cleaned.

Composition of elements and the relationship between colours, textures, shapes and patterns are all important, as is the depth of views.

### 7. Encourage ease of movement

The ability to move safely, freely and efficiently to and within a place for all users will have a great influence on how successful it is.

A place should have an appropriate number of routes to and through it: not too many to make it anonymous but enough to allow easy legitimate movement. How direct and understandable these are, how closely they fit with desired lines of travel, and how well they connect with each other and destinations will all influence the success of the place.

## Design components

In addition to the core principles of urban design, there are a series of individual components, or building blocks, that can collectively be utilised to describe the elements of design proposals:

### Layout

This is how buildings, street blocks, routes and open spaces are positioned in an area and how they relate to each other. This provides the basic plan for development. Developments that endure have flexible layouts and design.

New development should look to respond appropriately to the existing layout of buildings, streets and spaces to ensure that adjacent buildings relate to each other, streets are connected, and spaces complement one another.

### Scale

Building scale can be formed in many ways, from tall towers, individual stand alone units, long and low blocks, to terraces. They can all be successful, or unsuccessful, depending on where they are placed, how they relate to their surroundings, their use and their architectural and design quality.

Similarly streets can take different scales, from wide motorways with few entrances and exits to narrow lanes with direct access to buildings. Care should be taken to design the right scale and form for the right place.

### Appearance

The important smaller elements of building and spaces, including what a building is made from and the approach taken to its detailing. The quality of new development can be spoilt by poor attention to detail. Careful consideration should be given to items such as doors, windows, porches, lighting, flues and ventilation, gutters, pipes and other rain water details, ironmongery and decorative features. It is vital not only to view these elements in isolation, but also consider how they come together to form a whole. Materials should be practical, durable, affordable and attractive with a maintenance regime specified from the start. Choosing the right materials can greatly help new development to fit harmoniously with its surroundings. They may not have to match, but colour, texture, grain and reflectivity can all support harmony. There are a wide range of building and open space materials available and more products developed all the time. Innovative construction materials and techniques can help to achieve well designed homes and other buildings.

### Landscape

Landscape design includes considering all treatments of the external environment, from planting, trees and drainage design to lighting, road design and street furniture.

External spaces, whether public or private, provide the opportunity for relaxation, recreation, meeting with others and as such are paramount for mental and physical health, as well as a key contributor to quality of life.

It is essential to consider firstly how the open space and public realm of a scheme will be treated to ensure that the existing character of a place is protected; and secondly how it can be enhanced to provide for current and future residents or users of the scheme. Consideration should also be given to ongoing management and maintenance, to ensure that the completed proposals function well in the long term.

Boundary treatments are also a critical element of character and quality, with different approaches required for different spaces relative to their type, size and location.



Figure 8 | Good design is comprised of a series of component parts  
Photograph: Cornwall Street, Plymouth

## Action Point

The 'design components' of layout, scale, appearance, landscape and access should be utilised by applicants as the structuring

headlines to describe the specific components of their proposals within their supporting design and access statements.

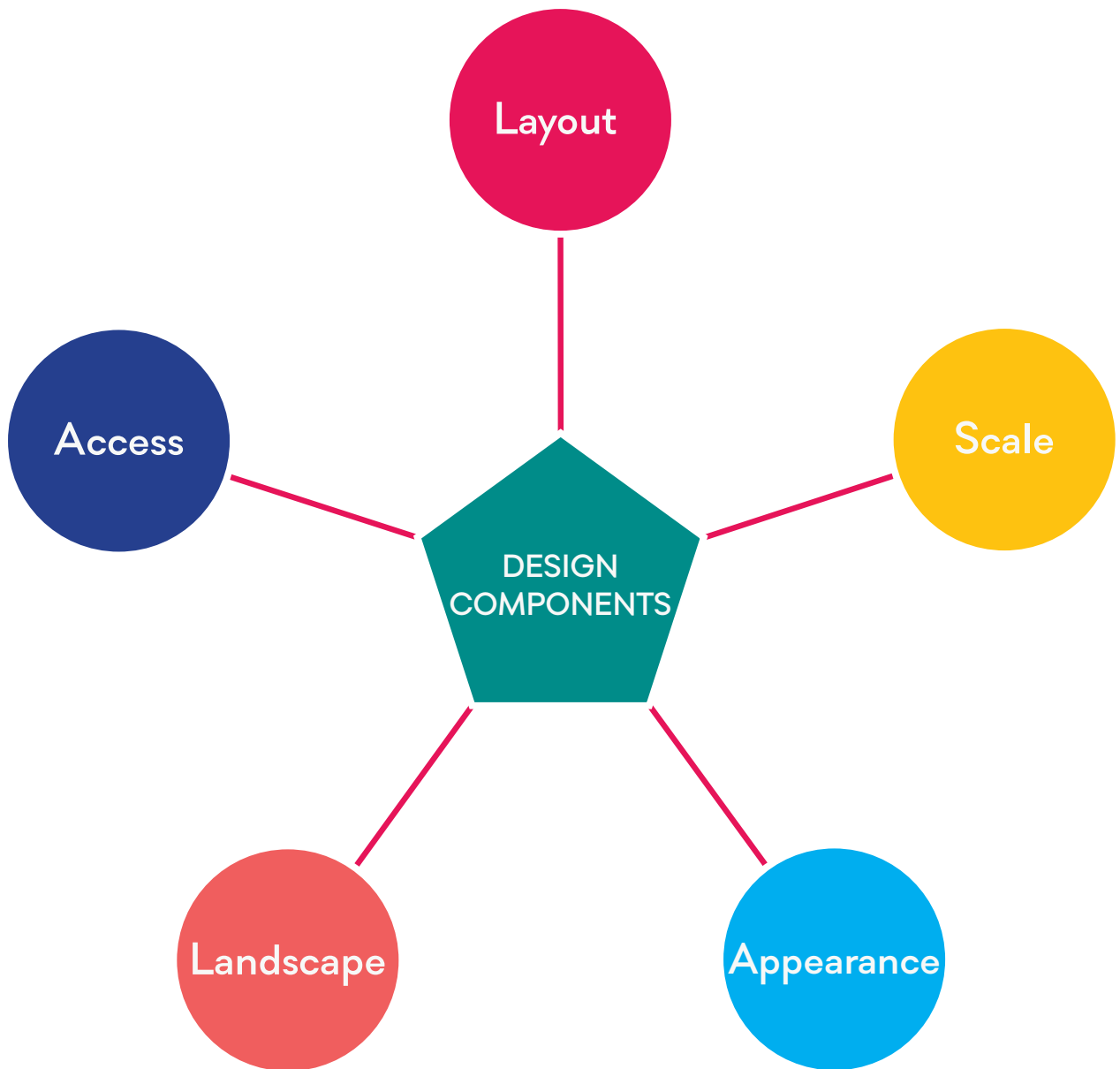


Figure 9 | Design components

### Access

The availability of safe, convenient, inclusive access is paramount to demonstrating quality design. This includes the ability to reach the development site on foot or bicycle, by private car and by public transport, together with the means of moving through the scheme, where appropriate.

How cars are accommodated within schemes is critical to the creation of a successful environment: if this is not planned from the outset, there is the strong chance that cars will dominate the public realm.

Inclusive access, meaning the ability for all members of society to access the scheme regardless of age or physical ability should be clearly demonstrated. Key issues include changes in levels and visibility. Consideration should be given to equality of access, rather than the provision of segregated routes wherever possible.

## Climate change

The Climate Change Act 2008 established a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels. In December 2015, the UK joined 195 countries in signing an historic global deal to tackle climate change. The Paris Agreement commits the international community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to avoid some of the most severe impacts of climate change.

The UK Government's Climate Change Risk Assessment sets out the six priority risk areas requiring further action in the UK over the next five years (see figure 10 and [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/584281/uk-climate-change-risk-assess-2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584281/uk-climate-change-risk-assess-2017.pdf).) The design of new development, together with the re-purposing of existing development

plays a significant role in the delivery against these targets.

Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin the design of new development. To be considered acceptable, proposed development will need to reflect this principle and enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.

New development should be built to be low-carbon, energy and resource efficient, and manage water and flood risk pro-actively and effectively in order to be climate resilient.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will look for development of all forms to seek to mitigate its impact and wherever possible, move towards regenerative design, that 'gives back' rather than results in negative impact on its environment

and by extension, the wider climate change agenda. Methodologies for achieving this include:

### Low carbon

- Reducing the need to travel and providing for sustainable transport / active travel, including pedestrian routes, cycleways (and supporting infrastructure) and public transport
- Providing opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies, including charging points, as suited to the specific conditions of the site
- Providing opportunities for decentralised energy and heating within masterplans
- Promoting low carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in buildings, such as passive solar design



Figure 10 | The top six areas of inter-related climate change risks for the UK (Source: UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 - see report for referenced chapters)



## Action Point

Addressing climate change should be a core principle of all development types at all scales. Applicants should identify how they have sought to

minimise the impact of development and wherever possible move towards regenerative design within their design and access statements.



- Use of low carbon materials and construction methods
- Ensuring new buildings are compatible with renewable technology opportunities such as solar panels

### Energy and resource efficiency

- Consideration of building layout and orientation to maximise solar gain and minimise need for heat
- Reduce the need for waste through efficient processes
- Utilise insulation and draught proofing in buildings, designing for air tightness
- Provide fresh air through mechanical ventilation and ability to open windows

- Utilise low carbon energy and heating
- Specify energy efficient appliances

### Water efficiency and management

- Provision of generous green infrastructure and private green spaces that improve adaptation, biodiversity and amenity, mitigates flood risk and helps lower temperatures
- Building in flexibility to allow future adaptation if it is needed, such as setting back new development from rivers so that it does not make it harder to improve flood defences in future
- Design of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) at a development and

neighbourhood level, to include ponds and swales as well as below the ground attenuation

- Use of permeable surface materials to reduce run off and resultant flood risk
- Provision of green roofs, green walls or roof gardens, particularly on large expanse buildings
- Design of buildings to be flood resilient in vulnerable contexts, including raised floors / electrics if appropriate
- New tree planting or altering the management of land, such as verges
- Providing water efficient devices
- Rainwater harvesting / grey water recycling

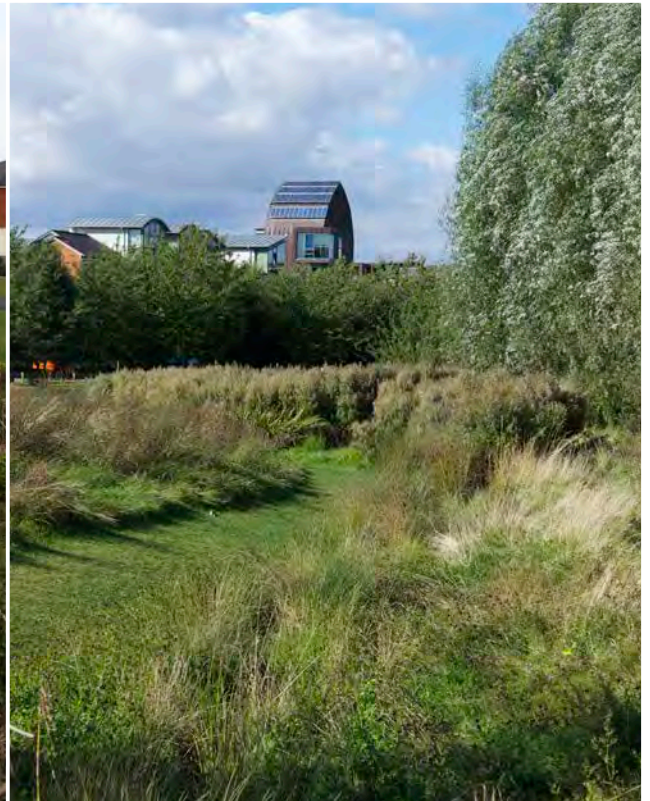


Figure 11 | Examples of high quality sustainable urban drainage design  
Left: Swale; Right: Natural drainage landscape

# 3. Understanding local context



This chapter provides contextual information and principles for Hinckley and Bosworth Borough. Specific guidance has been produced to enable a holistic understanding of the character and objectives for each individual settlement (p.72 onwards).

## Overview

It is only through holistically understanding the individual character of a place that sound, contextually sensitive design principles can be established.

This chapter classifies the Borough's settlements into character type groupings and provides specific contextual information and principles, to give clear guidance to applicants about what is considered acceptable in each location.

## Background to the Borough

The character of the Borough is one in which extensive varied landscape provides the backdrop to isolated rural centres, with a concentration of urban centres to the south.

These settled areas developed from early-late medieval agricultural settlements into important manufacturing centres with significant spatial and architectural growth during the industrial revolution and significant 20th century development.

## Settlement type

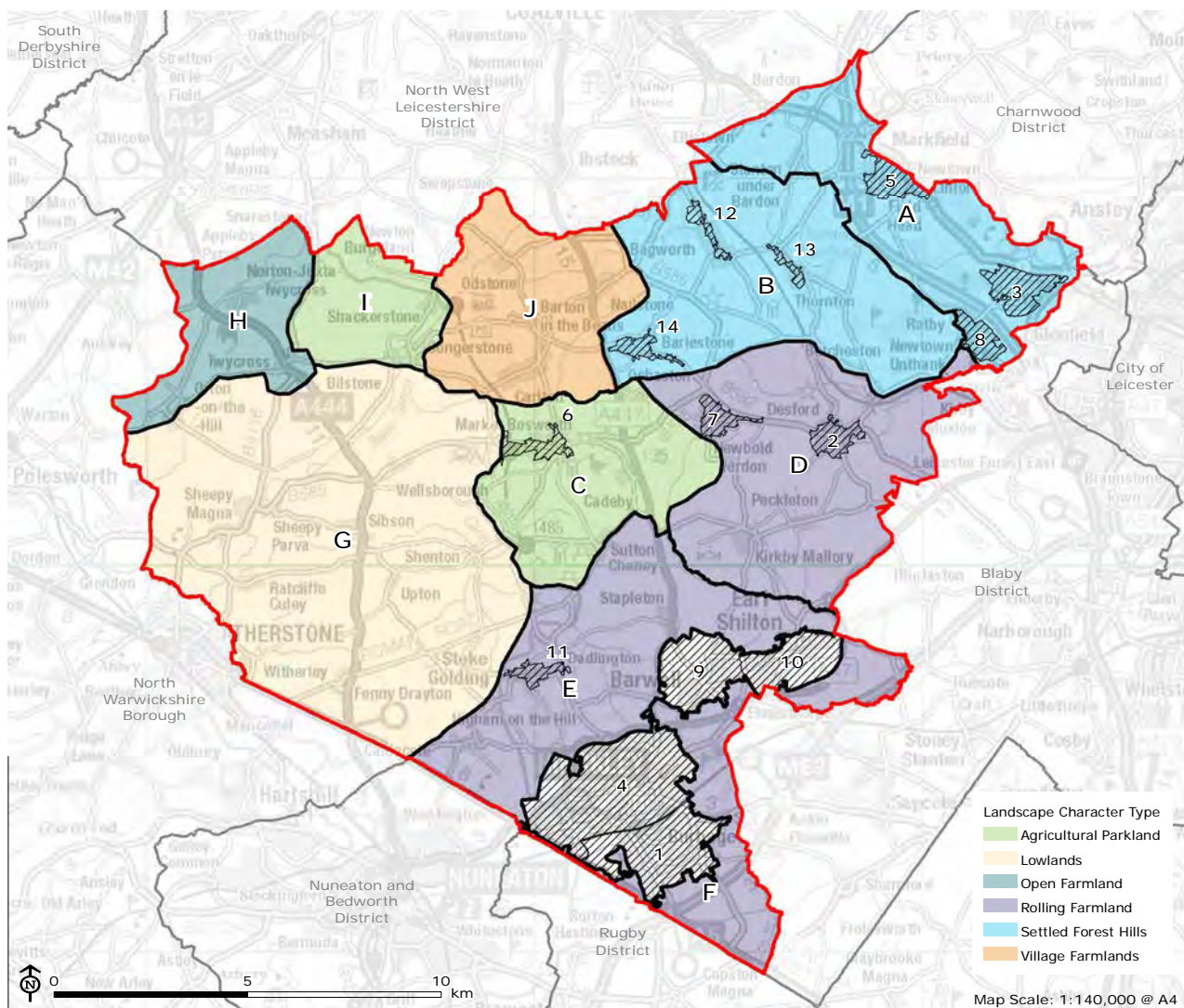
The Borough has a distinct hierarchy of linear and nucleated settlements, based upon size and level of amenity.

The Borough's towns are concentrated to the south, in close proximity to one another. The wider area is distinctly rural, with settlements broken down into 'rural centres', 'villages', 'hamlets', as well as a range of uncategorised but characterful dispersed farmsteads.

Settlement type is important for considering the tolerance of an area for developmental pressure and its potential architectural and spatial diversity. Hamlets for example, might only be able to tolerate contextual infill development before the spatial and built character of its form is impacted to an unacceptable level.



Figure 12 | Landscape setting around Stoke Golding



Hinckley and Bosworth Borough boundary

Urban Character Area

Landscape Character Area

1: Burbage

8: Ratby

A - Charnwood Forest Settled Forest Hills

F - Burbage Common Rolling Farmland

2: Desford

9: Barwell

B - Charnwood Fringe Settled Forest Hills

G - Sence Lowlands

3: Groby

10: Earl Shilton

C - Bosworth Parkland

H - Twycross Open Farmland

4: Hinckley

11: Stoke Golding

D - Newbold and Desford Rolling Farmland

I - Gopsall Parkland

5: Markfield

12: Bagworth

E - Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland

J - Barton Village Farmlands

6: Market Bosworth

13: Thornton

7: Newbold Verdon

14: Barlestone

Figure 13 | Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Areas (LUC, 2017)

### Natural environment and landscape character

One of the key factors for design in the Borough is acknowledging that it is predominantly rural. The area's urban and rural settlements interact with a significant landscape backdrop. This backdrop has a varied and diverse character including settled forests, rolling farmland, open farmland, village farmland, and agricultural parkland associated with historic aristocratic estates.

To protect this natural landscape environment, development should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

At a wider level protect the perception of separation between settlements, including those in the designated green wedges, ensuring that new development does not result in harm to existing environments.

There are also specific landscape character areas within the Borough that require additional consideration, such as Charnwood Forest which incorporates parts of the National Forest where design should reflect the National Forest's strategies (see area specific guidance, p.72).

This includes increasing woodland cover, enhancing biodiversity, developing the woodland economy and enhancing recreation, sport and tourism. Certain heritage assets, most notably the Bosworth Battlefield and Ashby Canal, draw primary value from their landscape

character (see most up to date Landscape Character Assessment), which should be enhanced through careful design.

### Heritage, built and spatial form

The Borough has a rich and diverse historic development that has created very specific built and spatial characteristics including a wide range of designated and non-designated heritage assets. This heritage has a significant time depth, ranging from the early remains of prehistoric and Roman settlements, through medieval agricultural development, to modern industrial and residential expansion. This variety has been influenced by several historical factors. Most of the Borough's towns and villages began as medieval agricultural settlements, reflecting the specific influence of farming associated with landed estates.



Figure 14 | The Borough's rich and diverse historic environment is a key asset  
Left: Desford; Right: Newbold Verdon



The relevant planning and guidance context for the form of application and location of development should be sought in the initial outset when considering a planning application.

These settlements were morphed through the growth of industries such as hosiery, framework knitting and shoe/boot manufacture, including early cottage-based workshops and later purpose-built factories.

This was complemented by the growth of mining and quarrying particularly in the northern regions, and supported by the development of the railway and canal networks.

These place-specific influences have resulted in specific architectural styles and predominant materials but have also had a profound impact on spatial form. The early origins of much of the Borough's settlements have led to surviving medieval street patterns, as well as high-quality open spaces including medieval market places, historic churchyards, and the remains of castles and manorial residences which often create important green spaces within a village boundary.

The influence of farming has also resulted in predominance of relic features such as ponds and lakes and their relationship to areas such as isolated brick farm buildings. Furthermore the influence of industry has led to the survival of a significant network of jitties (small connecting streets) and yards: a pattern seen in internationally significant historic cities such as York.

### Urban areas

The main urban area is located to the south of the district, formed from the close proximity of Hinckley, Earl Shilton, Burbage and Barwell.

These urban areas are predominantly medieval in origin.

Despite isolated examples of significant medieval structures, the built and spatial character of these urban settlements is predominantly derived from expansion during the industrial revolution as well as later 20th century growth.

The towns developed as significant manufacturing centres in the 17th-19th centuries, with an emphasis on hosiery. This has resulted in the survival of manufacturing buildings, ranging from early vernacular cottage-industry workshops to later purpose-built factories, many of which are set onto surviving jitties and retain an element of their historic spatial arrangement. These structures are complemented by associated built form including Victorian residential streets, and important examples of earlier non-conformist chapels and meeting halls. These earlier buildings interact with important examples of later Edwardian and interwar architecture.

The urban centres have been subject to extensive late twentieth century growth, incorporating infilling and suburban development, notably including 1970s housing estates such as Hollycroft and Stoney Gate in Hinckley; and Swallows Green in Burbage. These estates make a significant contribution to the borough, characterised by generous plot sizes and amenity spaces, promoting community interaction and pride of place, illustrated in the way that residents have sought to improve the appearance of the area over time.

Through 20th century suburban growth, the separation between Hinckley and Burbage shrank significantly, joining the two urban areas. The decline of manufacturing in the town has also placed many of the significant purpose-built factories at risk.

### Rural centres

The rest of the district is characterised primarily by relatively isolated rural centres, villages, and hamlets set into expansive open landscape. These areas have significant historic provenance. The region was initially settled in the Bronze Age, and there is evidence for an Iron Age hill fort near Ratby and Roman occupation including a significant villa/industrial complex (Manduessedum) adjoining Watling Street at Witherley on the western edge of the district.

Many of the villages have their origins in the early-medieval/Anglo-Saxon period, including Danish hilltop settlements at Ratby, Groby, and Cadeby, and the pre and post-conquest periods including many mentioned in the Domesday Book.

These rural areas initially developed as agricultural settlements associated with important manorial centres and estates and there is an extensive surviving range of scheduled medieval aristocratic moated sites that dot the landscape.

These areas developed significantly following the enclosure acts of the 18th century, and the declining fortunes of agriculture, into manufacturing centres associated

with hosiery and framework knitting, with later 19th century emphasis on quarrying and mining with coal pits at Bagworth, Desford, and Nailstone.

Whilst some of these settlements retain much of their historic form, such as Market Bosworth, many were subject to significant late twentieth century development incorporating infilling and expansion.

This provenance and specific model of development within these villages has resulted in the survival of a high concentration of medieval churches including significant Norman churches at Fenny Drayton and Higham on the Hill, around which are the clustered remnants of surviving historic centres incorporating remains of medieval halls, farm buildings, cottages associated with manorial estate farming, and later

smaller-scale manufacturing, which are surrounded and often subsumed by 20th century infill and expansion.

Whilst this is a common model of development and character, across the district, there are distinct variations in form. One particular example is material: whilst red/orange brick is common across the district there is a concentration of stone and granite buildings in villages associated with historic quarrying.

Furthermore, much of the historic cores of settlements such as Hinckley, with its original medieval streets, are inherently the central focus of retail. Whilst this enhances economic prosperity and vitality, the encroachment of inappropriate signage and shop fronts can have a profound impact on the visual quality of the environment.

## Understanding vernacular architecture

### What is vernacular?

In this guide you will find many references to 'vernacular' styles. Vernacular buildings form a significant part of the Borough's built form, so understanding what this actually means is crucial.

At its simplest, the 'vernacular' of an area means the way in which ordinary buildings were constructed to respond to the specific local context.

Understanding the vernacular style of a particular area should be the starting contextual point for planning any development.



Figure 15 | Vernacular buildings are highly significant within the Borough



Applicants should utilise the area specific guidance (p.72 onwards) for their location to inform their design and note their response in the design assessment

### How can we identify the vernacular style in an area?

Whilst the exact nature and makeup of a vernacular style, naturally, varies by place, there are common elements in which it can manifest. Vernacular buildings can be identified through common unified styles, forms, and appearance.

### Examples of vernacular styles

Hinckley and Bosworth contains a high number of traditional buildings. Many of these are constructed in a vernacular style influenced by the local social, environmental and functional context. The examples below are not an exhaustive list of all vernacular styles in the Borough, but instead an illustration of some of the ways the vernacular can be understood:

- **Building types:** historic influences on the area have led to a high concentration of surviving domestic and working buildings associated with manorial and estate agriculture, quarrying/mining, boot and shoe and hosiery production. These include estate labourer and quarrymen's cottages, as well as a high number of farmhouses and outbuildings both isolated in the landscape and occupying prominent positions within village boundaries. Specific guidance is provided on these building types within section 6: 'converting agricultural buildings'.
- **Materials:** many of the historic buildings of the Borough are

constructed using timber-framing and, later, red brick given the availability of building clay, quality of woodland, and general inaccessibility of stone sources in much of Leicestershire. However, in certain areas there is a higher level of stone given the proximity of historic quarries. In the northeast of the Borough, for example, there is a high concentration of Groby granite for walling and Swithland slate for roofing.

- **Decoration and detail:** in the Borough there are examples of detailing that have grown out of necessity, and those borne from individual taste. Due to the influence of cottage-based framework knitting from the 17th century, many historic cottages incorporated large windows to the upper floors to allow light in for working. Furthermore, the influence of estate farming and the development of estate owned farming villages has led to the influence of one family or landowner's tastes in key areas. Many Gopsall estate villages, for example, have eyebrow dormers on their cottages.
- **Siting and orientation:** in the Borough's individual settlements there are some specific traditional buildings lines and plan forms that play a key role in settlement character. In different locations, this can include development directly addressing the street to back of pavement, building orientation

perpendicular to the street and clusters of buildings within farmsteads. Full details of the appropriate response to each settlement is found in the area specific guidance.

### Encouraging contextual, but innovative design

It is essential to avoid the encroachment of generic modern forms and instead focus on the development of contextual design.

This should not be taken to discourage architectural innovation and contemporary design. This often has a significantly more positive impact on an area than pastiche replication. The key issue, however, is that innovation should be appropriate to a place and context.

### What characteristics define my area?

This is the key question that should be asked when planning new development. This will inevitably vary from place to place, and should form the basis for contextual, innovative design. Reference should be made to the area specific guidance contained within this document (p.72 onwards).

### Area specific guidance

The area specific guidance section of this document (p.72 onwards) provide guidance on the character of specific locations within the Borough, arranged alphabetically. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how proposals respect the prevailing character and reflect the established key principles.

# 4. New residential development



This chapter provides specific guidance for what is expected from the design of applications for new residential development on greenfield and brownfield sites, including infill development

## Introduction

The following pages set out the process to be followed to ensure good quality design in new residential development and provides cues to applicants for materials to inform pre-application discussions.

## 1. Vision

**Aim:** The starting point for any design should be a clear vision of the type of place you wish to create.

This can be expressed in a number of ways, including:

- Vision statement
- Use of appropriate design precedents
- Aspirations for the overall quality of place
- Explaining how the site will be unique and developed with reference to its existing context
- Setting out how the site will interface with its existing context, including interacting with commercial development
- Demonstrating that consideration of who will use the scheme has been integrated into design thinking from the outset
- How sustainability will be integral to the design



Figure 16 | Example of a vision image



## Action Point

Prospective applicants should follow the process established over the following pages and complete the Design Assessment (p130-1) to indicate how they have responded to the key principles





Applicants should undertake a thorough survey, utilising the checklist provided (p128-9) as a basis for ensuring that all site and contextual issues are fully understood

## 2. Appreciating the context

**Aim:** Undertaking sufficient survey and analysis to fully identify the site's features and context.

This process is informed by a combination of desktop research and primary experience of the site and its context. A useful list of key issues to assess on a site survey is provided in the appendix, but in summary, an understanding of the following issues should be gained:

- Buildings and structures, including colours, materials, details, age, pattern, quality
- Movement patterns, including public transport, cycle routes, footpaths, roads, site access and parking
- Legibility, including the site's image, local views, strategic views, landmarks, nodes, gateways, barriers
- Adaptability and resilience, considering the site's ability to change
- Integration and efficiency, considering how the site can maximise use of sustainable energy and minimise resource consumption and waste
- Infrastructure and services, availability of roads and utilities and their capacity to accommodate further development.

Assessment should be underpinned by an appropriate level of technical site survey data relative to the specific characteristics of the site. Typically this can include surveys of topography, ecology, flood risk and drainage, heritage, landscape and visual and highways.

Information is often best represented in plan form, accompanied by written descriptions. Technical survey information should be drawn to an appropriate scale to ensure an accurate understanding of the site can be derived from it.

- Natural features including landscape, topography, ecology, trees and hedgerows, hydrology
- Human impact including boundaries, noise, settlement pattern, archaeology, place names



Figure 17 | Example of a constraints plan

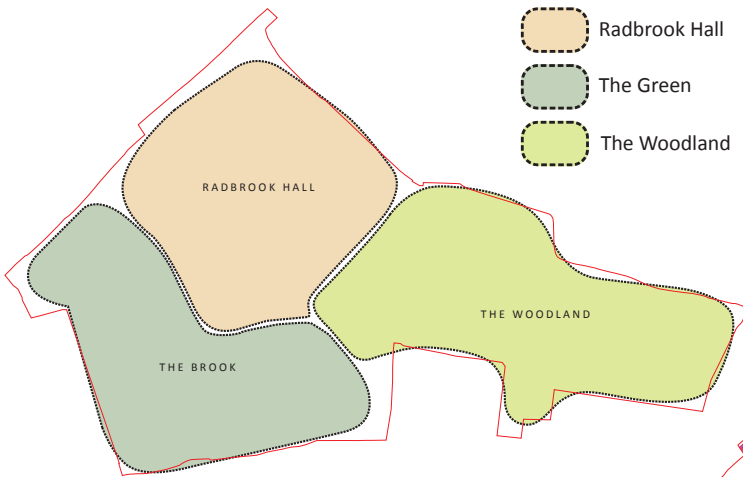
### 3. Creating urban structure: design principles

**Aim:** Develop a coherent rationale by identifying key design principles that

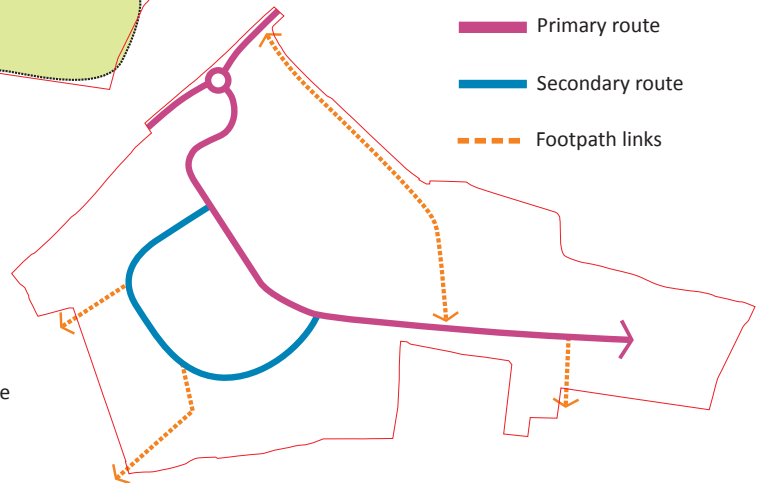
will help to explain how proposals will take into account the existing context and create a structure that will meet key urban design principles.

Design principles can be expressed in written or diagrammatic form (as shown below) to clearly communicate the narrative for the scheme.

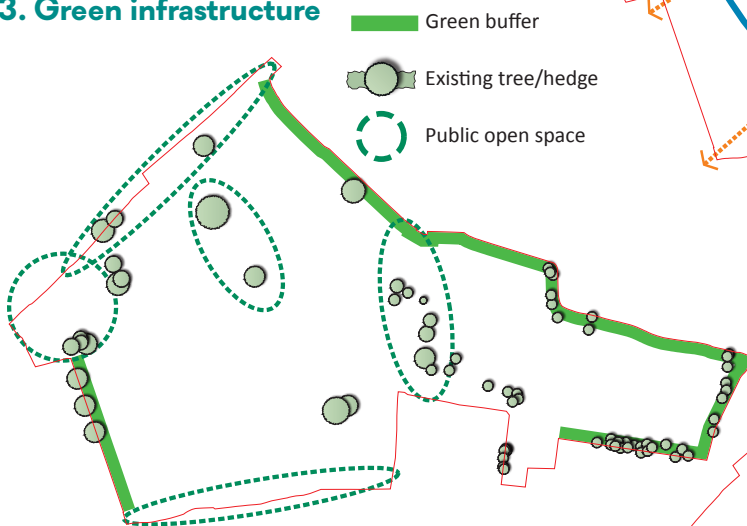
#### 1. Create character areas



#### 2. Connectivity and permeability



#### 3. Green infrastructure



#### 4. Continuity and enclosure

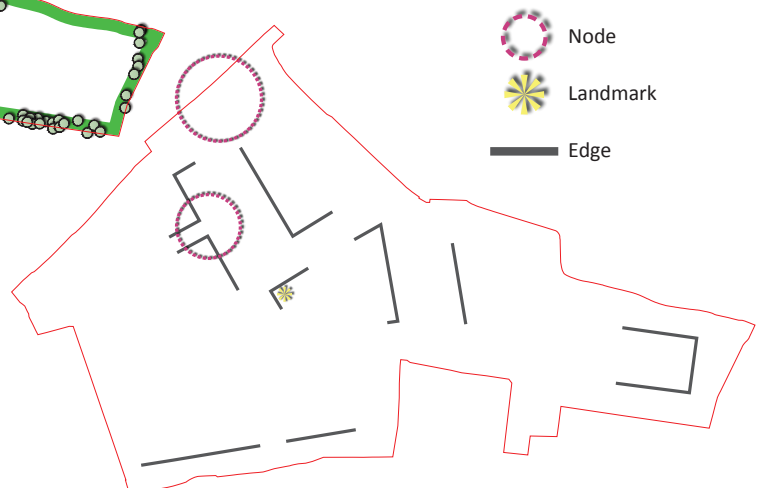


Figure 18 | Example of design principles diagrams

### 3. Creating urban structure: concept plan

**Aim:** Create a concept plan that in principle can be agreed with the planning department, allowing further design development to take place without the need for costly and time consuming abortive work.

The plan should communicate the key features of the design which could include:

- Retention of existing natural or man-made features
- The proposed built and non-built areas and their land uses
- Access points, movement network (pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles and public transport)
- Landscape structure and type
- Sustainable urban drainage systems
- Density
- Landmarks and nodal points
- Opportunities for alternative energy solutions, which generally need to be explored at the outset of a scheme

The key facets that support the production of this plan are set out on the following pages.



Figure 19 | Example masterplan

### 3. Creating urban structure: block structure and grids

**Aim:** To consider grid structure and type, size of blocks, permeability and legibility of the design.

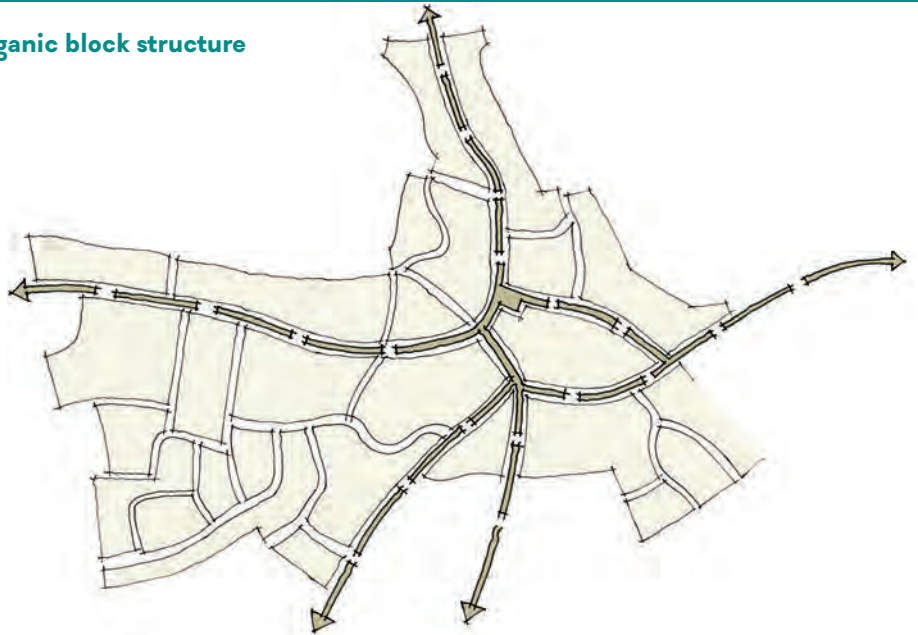
The type of grid proposed by the scheme will have a significant bearing on the creation of character within the site.

Examples of grid types are provided adjacent, which provide a structuring framework for the creation of vastly different development types.

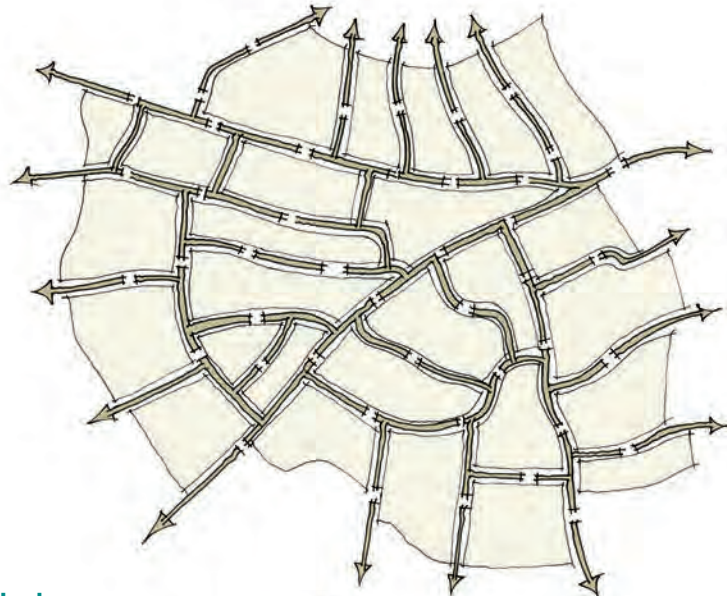
Each grid type has been inspired by settlements within the Borough. As such, each has its own merits, which should be considered relative to its existing context and the type of development character desired for the scheme.

The level of formality of grid will be appropriate in different circumstances.

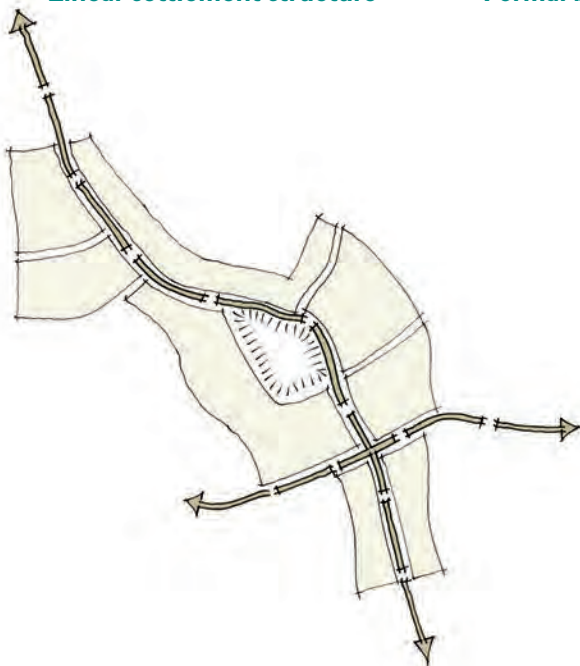
**Organic block structure**



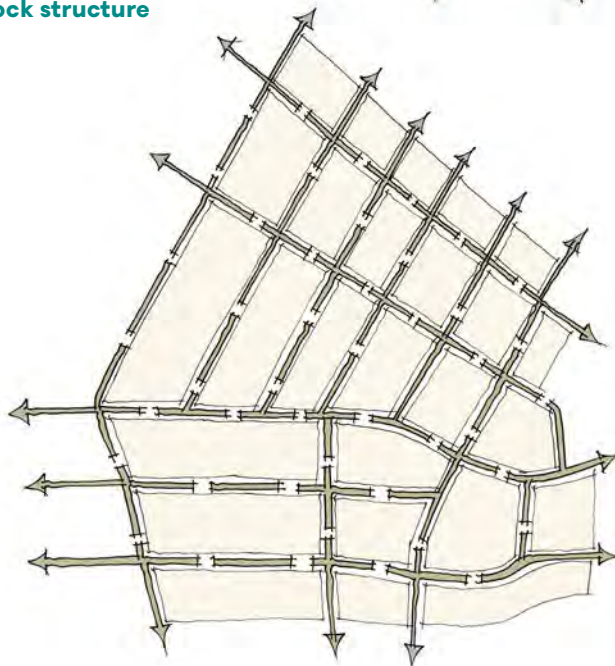
**Semi formal block structure**



**Linear settlement structure**



**Formal block structure**



**Figure 20 | Example grid structures**

### 3. Creating urban structure: streets

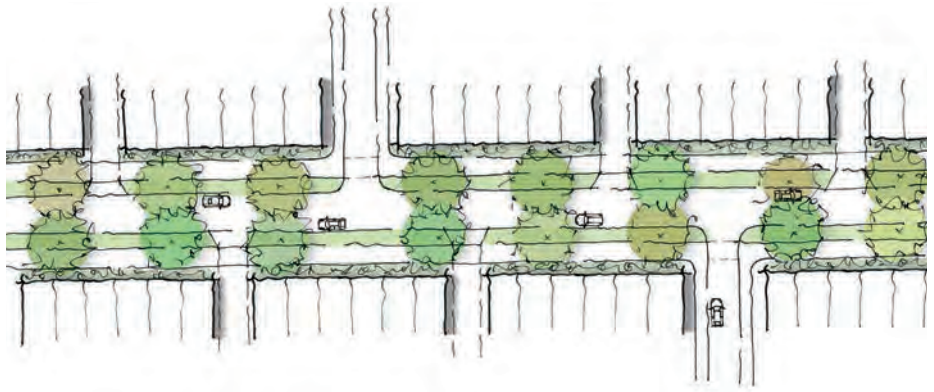
**Aim:** To create high quality streets that go beyond simply providing connections and instead create places.

Streets are a key part of the public realm. At their heart they should be clearly and logically connected and provide opportunities for people to make sustainable movement choices, promoting pedestrian and cycle movements to reduce the need for cars.

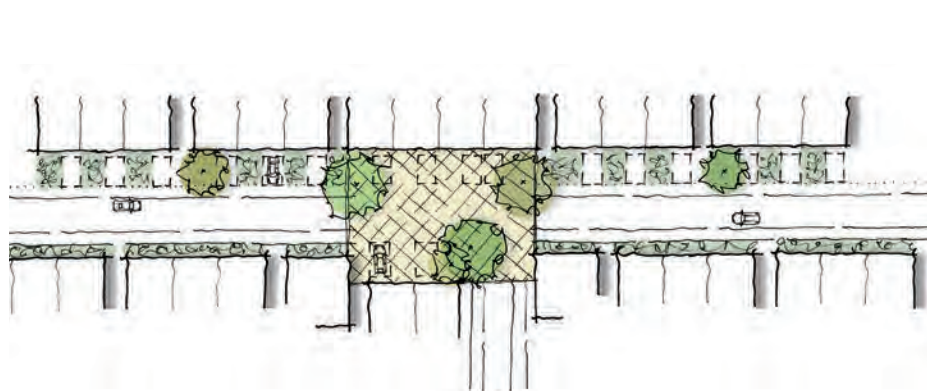
Streets have a fundamental role to play in contributing to the creation of variety within a development, allowing a wealth of difference between a formal, primary route secondary, tertiary and informal street typologies, examples of which are set out adjacent.

New development needs to demonstrate a variety of street types to create character. One method of creating character is through utilising varied, bespoke materials, with supporting information regarding how these will be maintained to ensure ongoing quality of appearance.

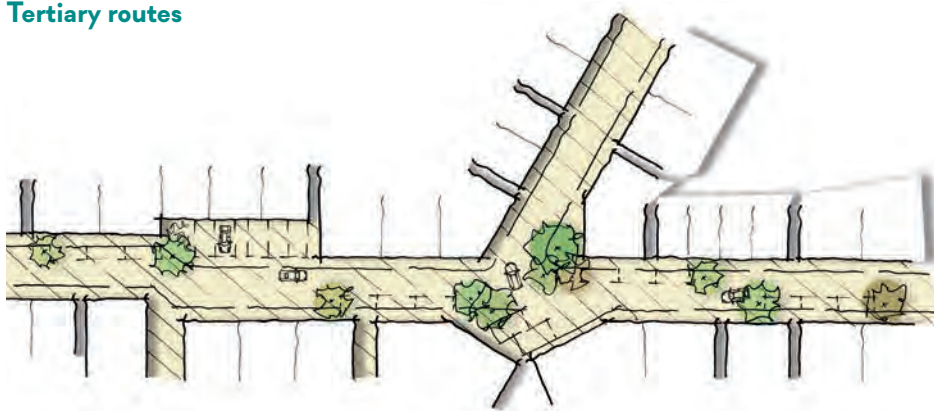
#### Primary route



#### Secondary routes



#### Tertiary routes



#### Informal streets



Figure 21 | Example street types

### 3. Creating urban structure: enclosure

**Aim:** Enclosure of streets and spaces plays a critical role in creating well defined and distinctive places. When chosen appropriately for its context, enclosure provides comfort and shelter. Streets and spaces lacking this quality can create inhospitable environments that deter usage. Enclosure is a product of:

#### 1. Enclosure ratios

Enclosure ratios provide a useful tool to consider how different streets can deliver entirely different characters, through varying their width and the height of enclosing buildings. Example ratios are shown adjacent and provided below on the basis of height:width:

- Mews street or intimate space - 1:1
- Strong street enclosure- 1:1.5-1:3
- Courtyards / squares- 1:4-1:5

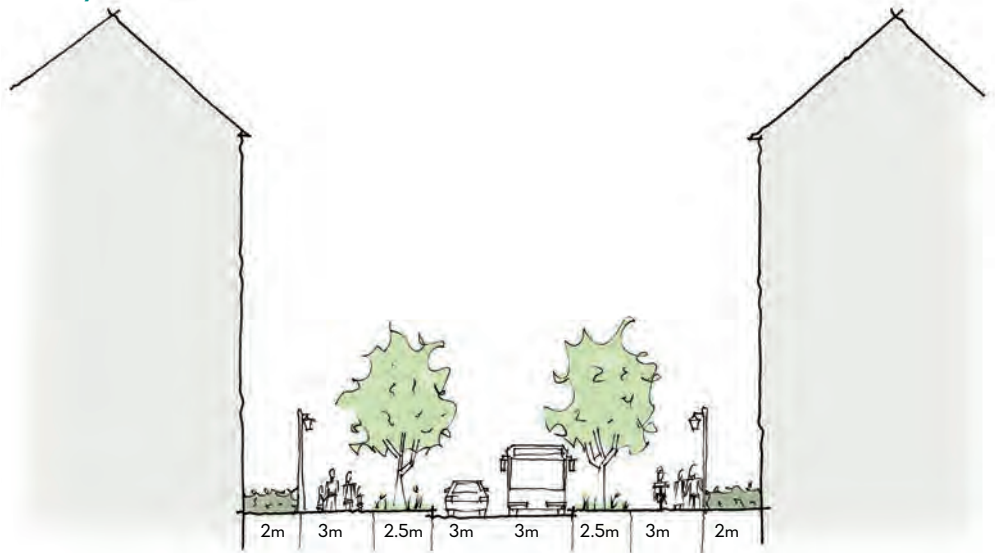
#### 2. Length of street or space

Overly long streets and spaces can also result in poor enclosure. This can be remedied through breaking down length through varied alignment and creation of visual breaks, landmarks and pinch points to provide interest.

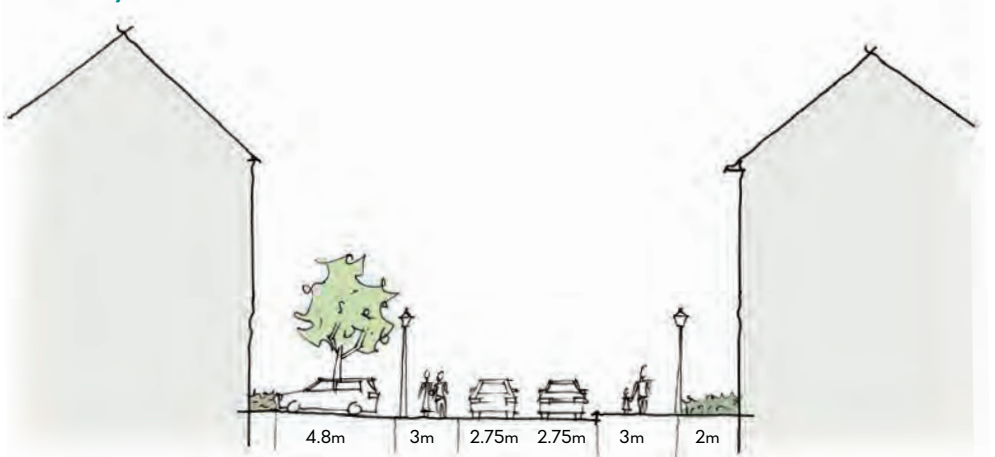
#### 3. Form of buildings

The form of buildings is critical, in particular continuity of frontage. Where terraces or connected buildings cannot be used to provide continuity of frontage, the careful placement of buildings (for example at the terminus of views) together with the provision of walls, trees and other landscape features can all contribute to the overall sense of continuity and enclosure.

#### Primary route



#### Secondary routes



#### Tertiary routes



#### Informal streets



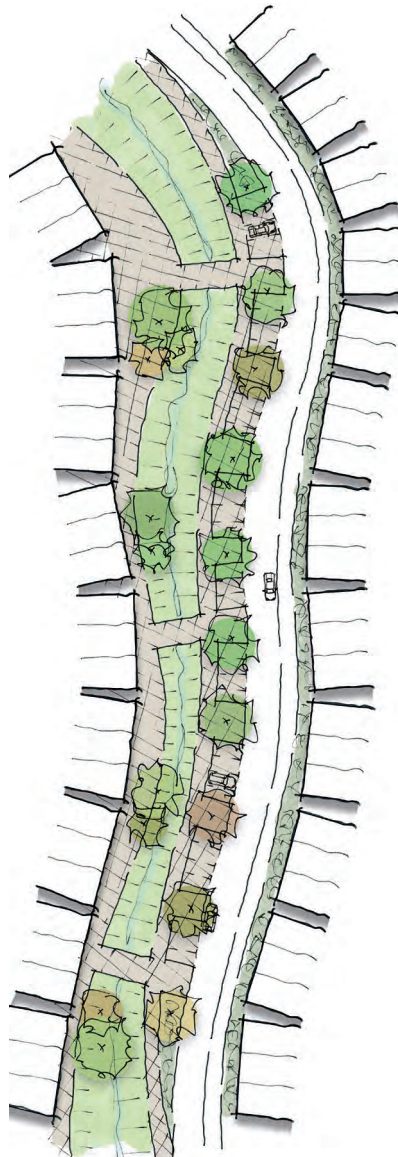
Figure 22 | Example street sections

### 3. Creating urban structure: open space, landscaping and green infrastructure

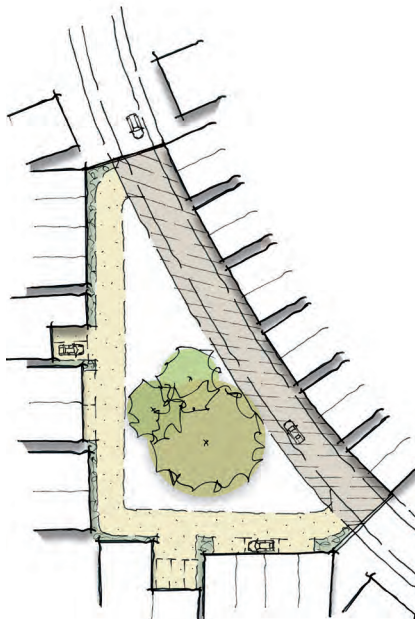
**Aim:** To create high quality public open space within the site that promotes health and wellbeing, providing opportunities for recreation, children's play, chances to meet other people, form community bonds and grow food.

Open space is a key facet of creating a successful place. As a starting point, existing features should be retained wherever possible and utilised to define design character and allow new development to assimilate naturally into its context. Landscape design requires careful thought, including an overall landscape strategy to define the amount, type and distribution of space (which should be made with regard to the Council's up to date Green Infrastructure policy and strategy, Play and Open Space study and its Local Plan Policies). This should be supported by details regarding the design of spaces, materials, lighting, street furniture and art, together with specifications on soft landscape, including plant and tree species, with reference to the NHBC guidelines. Ensuring variety from formal squares and village greens through to green/blue corridors and overlooked public realm and landscape within the streetscene are all critical components of the overall success of a scheme.

The ongoing care and maintenance of open space is also a key issue in ensuring that its quality is enduring. The Council will expect full details to be provided regarding the proposed management of open space within all new residential and mixed use developments.



Village green



Squares

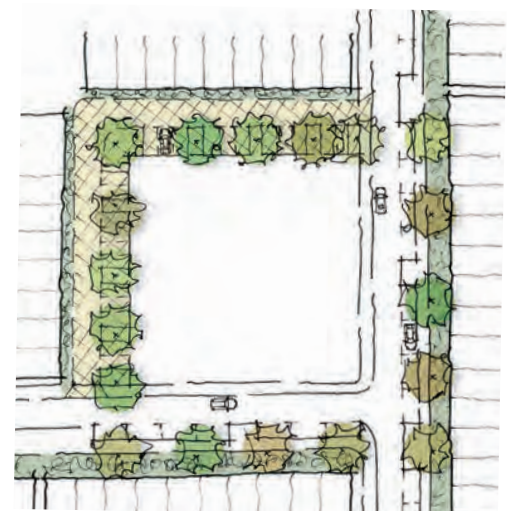
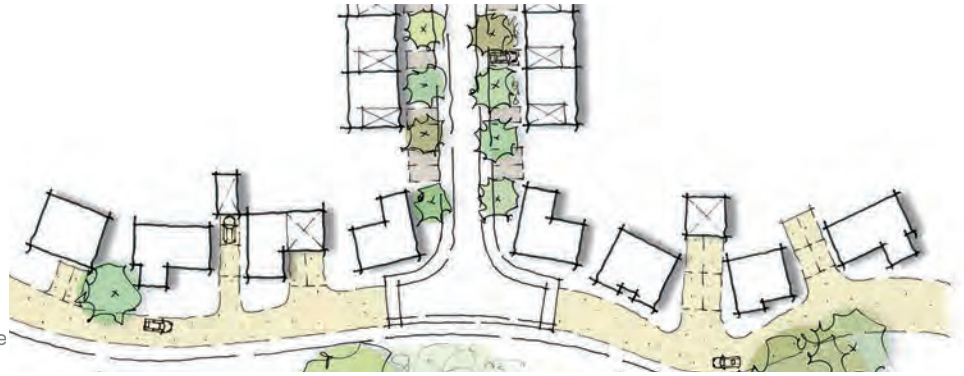


Figure 23 | Example landscape typologies

### On plot: driveways, detached garages, integral garages



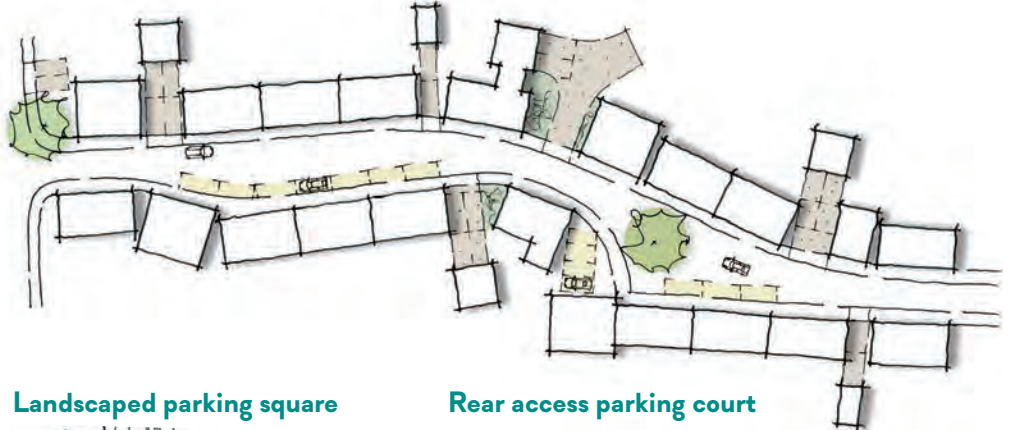
### 3. Creating urban structure: parking

**Aim:** To ensure that a sufficient level of parking is provided in a manner which does not dominate the streetscene nor impact upon built or landscape character. Opportunities exist to provide parking in a range of ways selected to suit their context, character and density. This could include:

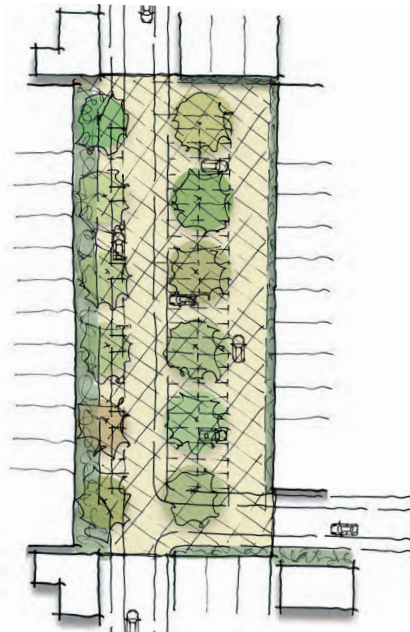
- On plot in front / to side of house in driveways
- Garages: integral or separate
- Car ports
- On street: in linear / chevron bays
- On street: within designed landscaped squares
- Parking courtyards contained within secure rear spaces of perimeter blocks. Courtyards will require active frontages with natural surveillance to ensure security

Development with large runs of parking in front of housing does not contribute positively to the streetscene and will not generally be considered acceptable.

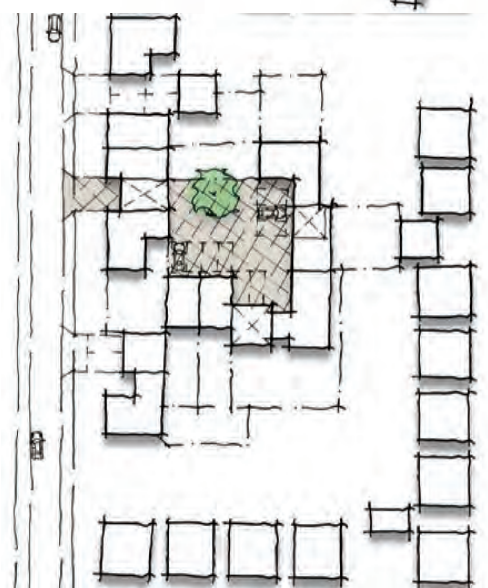
### On plot / on street: recessed detached garages, parallel parking bays



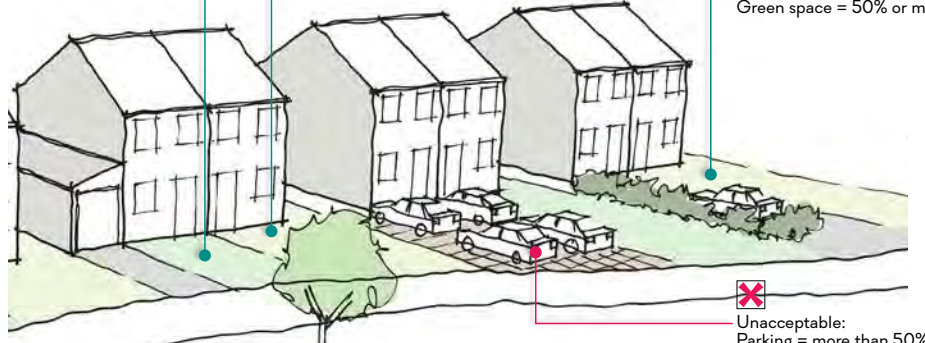
### Landscaped parking square



### Rear access parking court



### Frontages



✓  
Acceptable:  
Green space = 50% or more

✗  
Unacceptable:  
Parking = more than 50%

Figure 24 | Example parking typologies



#### 4. Detailing: building relationships

**Aim:** use buildings to define streets and spaces.

There is no one size fits all policy to appropriate building/space relationships, which should be planned relative to its context.

For example, in more urban environments, it may be considered more important for built development to create a dual frontage and turn a corner, creating a terminus for views and promoting higher densities, but creating a greater challenge to the design of private rear spaces.

Where this is the case, flexibility is required on the size and orientation of rear spaces.

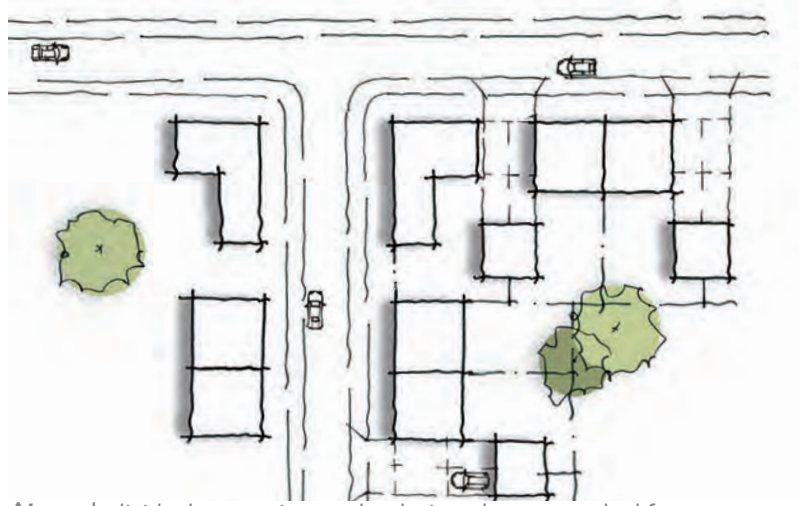
#### 4. Detailing: protecting residential amenity space

**Aim:** provide high quality internal and external amenity space.

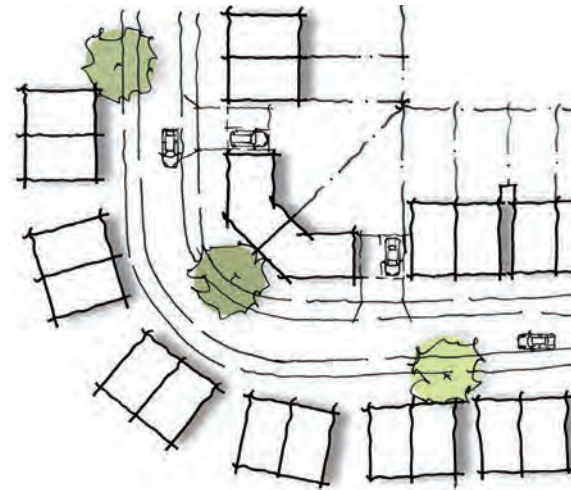
Delivering well designed internal and external amenity space is critical to quality of life of residents, as it provides the setting for day to day home life.

Ensuring adequate space between and around buildings is recognised as a core component of residential amenity.

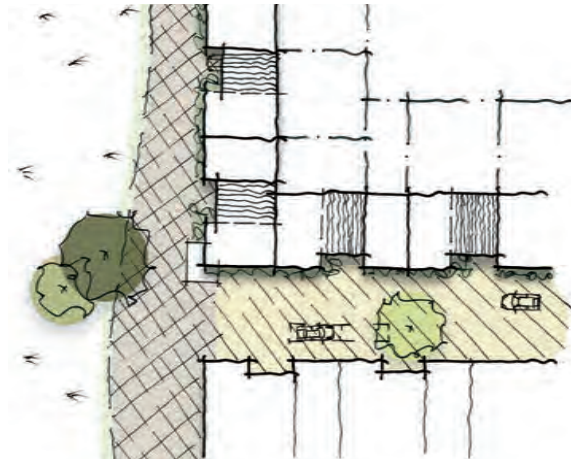
#### How to turn the corner



**Above:** Individual properties can be designed to create dual frontages to different streets



**Above:** neighbouring houses can be design specifically as corner turning units to create dual aspect frontage



**Above:** neighbouring houses can be orientated perpendicular to one another to turn a corner

Figure 25 | Turning corners

## Private amenity space and separation distances

Figure 26 (overleaf) shows how back to back development allows the creation of secure private gardens, enclosed behind buildings.

The way buildings relate to each other – their orientation and separation distance – must provide and protect acceptable levels of amenity. Separation distances as shown on the diagram are the minimum standards that are required however it should be noted that every application will be assessed on its own merits depending on the individual characteristics of the site such as orientation, ground levels, window positions, garden size and shape.

### Back to side distances

A principal window to a habitable room should ideally not be less than 8m from the blank side of a single storey neighbouring property, rising to 14m for a two storey property and above. An exception to this rule is in an urban location where it may be acceptable to have a reduced distance where issues of amenity and overlooking are dealt with by good design.

### Back to back distances

Principal windows to habitable rooms of neighbouring properties should not be less than 21m apart, unless they are across a road.

### Corner plots

Corner plots play an important role in within the streetscene and it is important to recognise that overdevelopment of these plots can create an oppressive quality which can lead to a significant change in the prevailing character of a place.

### Side to side distance

Where single storey development is planned, the extension may extend to the boundary of the property. In the spirit of good neighbourliness, an adequate distance of 1m between the property and its boundary (giving a total distance of at least 2m between properties) should be encouraged. In assessing the merit of the planning application, consideration will be given to the impact on local character created by reducing the space between buildings.

### Garden proportions

Gardens are an important part of the quality of life afforded by a house. Over-development leaving a significantly reduced garden area can affect its appeal in the longer term. Homeowners should ensure that a single extension or cumulative smaller extensions do not result in a significant loss of total garden space as this can render the plot out of keeping with its context. A general guideline for garden sizes is:

- A minimum garden length of 7m
- 80sqm: three bedroom house.
- 60sqm: two bedroom house.

This could vary dependent on design so as not to preclude innovation.

### Other

There are many ways that amenity space can be provided in new development, that go beyond simply the traditional ideas of a front and rear garden, although these are still important and highly sought after features of new homes. Building design can also increasingly be utilised to provide additional amenity space through balconies, roof terraces and courtyards.

Again, appropriate amenity space relationships will be defined by their specific context, with reasoning required if the private amenity space guide cannot be achieved.

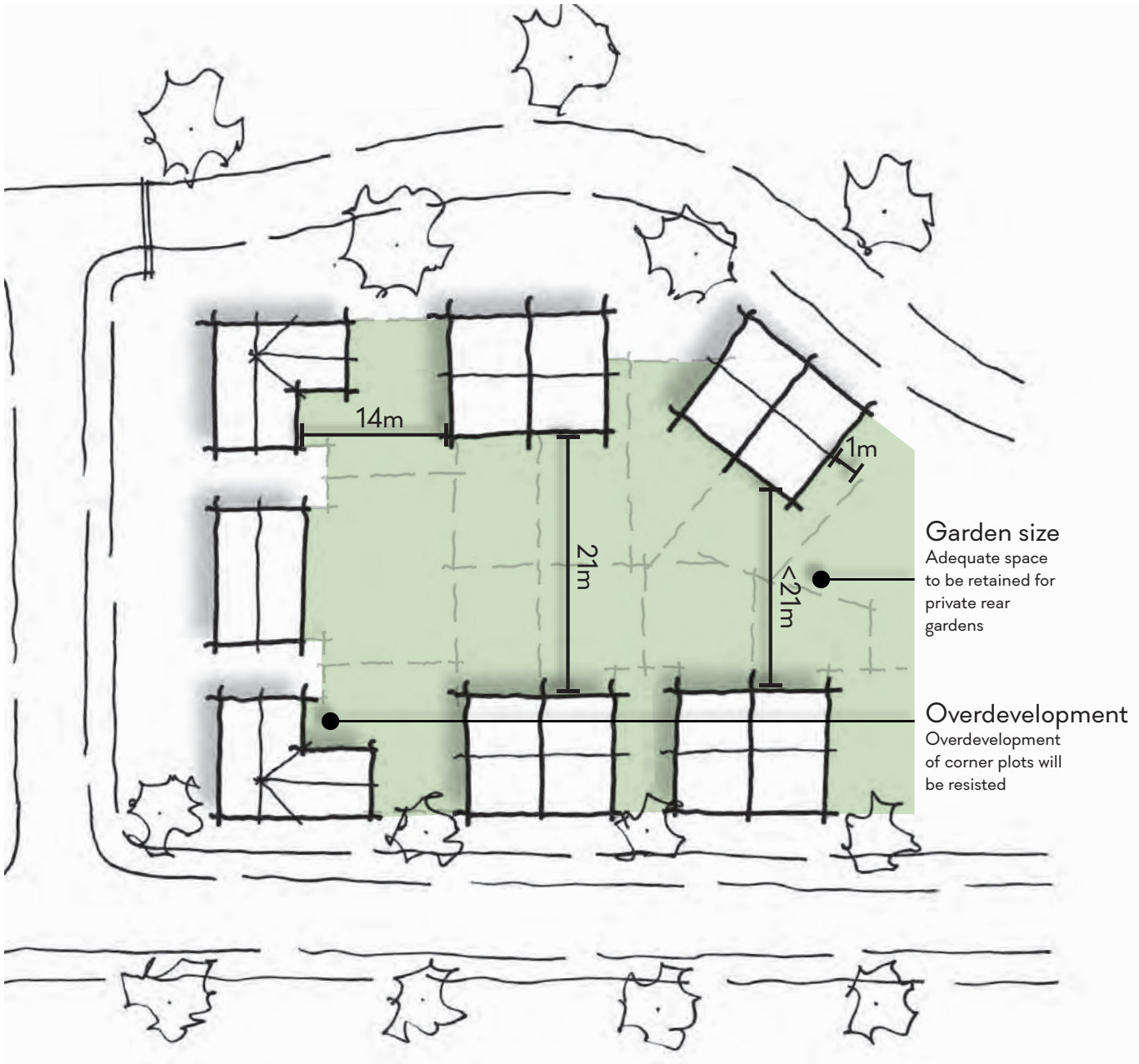


Figure 26 | Protecting residential amenity space

## 4. Detailing: space standards, storage and electric charging points

**Aim:** provide adequate space in new development, including identifying space and design of enclosures for bins and bikes. Wherever possible internal space standards for new residential development should aim to exceed those set by the Department for Communities and Local Government's 'Technical Housing Standards' (2015), including providing for residential amenity and internal storage.

The integration of modern standard bin and cycle storage plays a significant role in the streetscene and as such is a critical aspect of the delivery of well designed places. The storage of the council's three wheelie bins should therefore be a key design consideration from the outset, designed to be functional, convenient and visually pleasing.

They can provide an opportunity for definition of external boundaries including planting where appropriate, or designed to be integral to the building itself. Their location should be convenient for both occupants and refuse collection purposes; and considered with a view to minimising the potential for impact on views / light levels / smell on windows and internal space.

Designed cycle storage is an important part of promoting sustainable movement choices. As shown adjacent, this can be in external purpose built structures or integral to higher density housing.

Garages should be large enough to accommodate modern cars and allow for cycle storage.

The integration of electric charging points should be considered from the outset.

### How to integrate bin and cycle stores

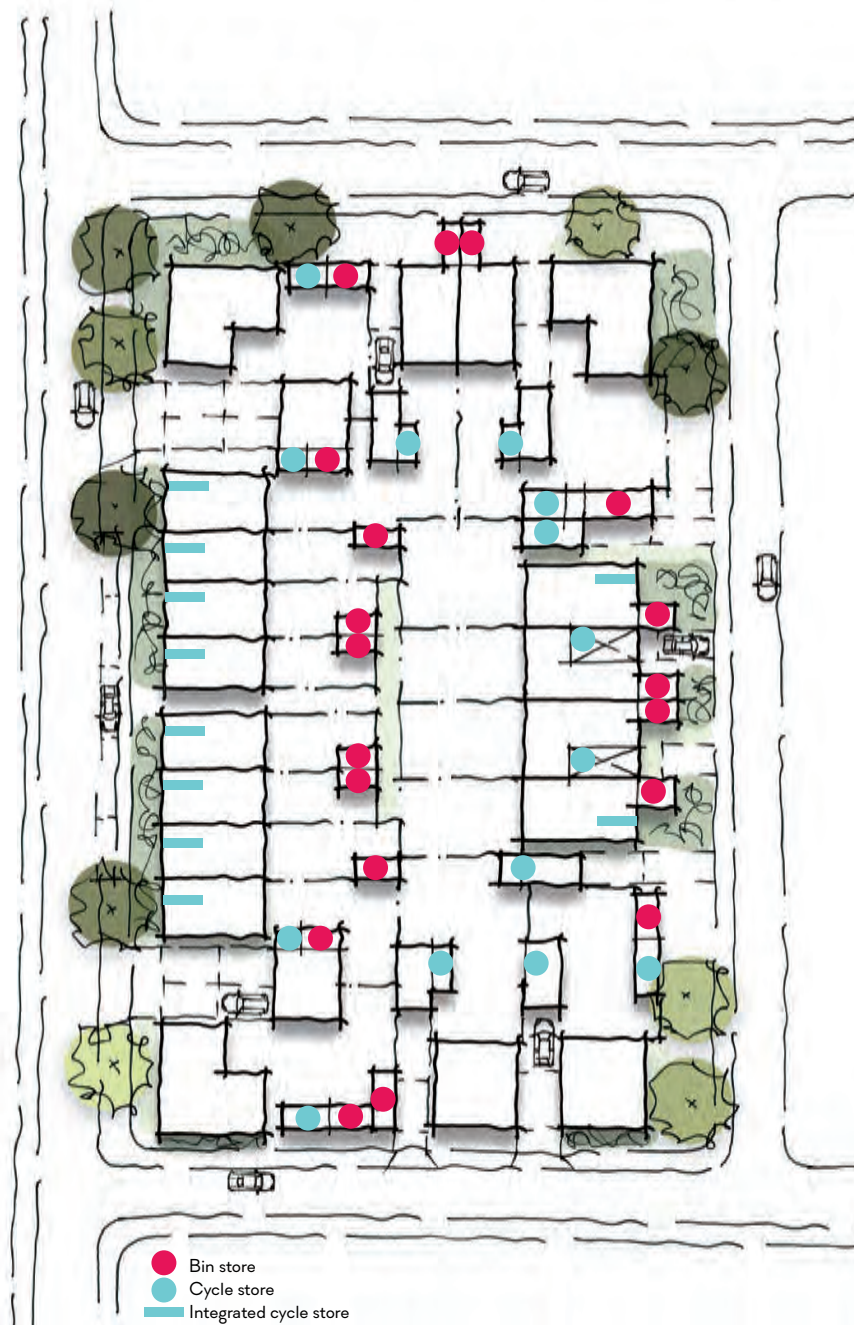


Figure 27 | How to integrate bin and cycle stores

#### 4. Detailing: design quality and appearance

**Aim:** the architectural approach to a design can result in markedly different results using the same masterplan, from a very traditional through to a contemporary aesthetic. Each approach has merits in the appropriate context and should be informed by its environment and the unique vision for the proposed scheme.

Attention to detail in the design of individual building components (see fenestration in figure 41, p.51) through to the collection of features within a streetscene is critical, together with the selection of high quality materials that will weather well and have long life spans.

Consideration should be given to the ongoing maintenance of the streetscene from the outset.



High quality design can be achieved in many ways. Above: The use of historic materials and architectural forms create the character of a traditional village at Poundbury, Dorset. Below: Contemporary design of buildings and landscape at Derwenthorpe, York, executed in high quality materials



Figure 28 | Both traditional and contemporary responses can create high quality schemes

1. Cast iron railings, Market Bosworth
2. Buildings to back of pavement, Market Bosworth
3. High brick walls, Cadeby
4. Hedgerow and estate fencing, Sheeepy Parva
5. Hedgerow, Cadeby
6. Slim fence posts with relief and soft landscape

## 4. Detailing: boundary treatments

Boundary treatments are a significant feature of local character, the loss of which can have a highly detrimental impact on local distinctiveness.

Reflecting local boundary treatments, such as brick or stone walls, hedgerows, railings or soft landscape features can provide a beneficial means of integrating new development into the existing environment and can be critical in the overall creation of character within a scheme.

Fencing is often selected as a cost effective means of creating a boundary treatment. Consideration should be given to its potential negative impact on the wider streetscene, particularly where this would entirely block through views and create dead frontages.

Use of slimmer vertical fence posts, with relief can reduce the sense of oppression often created by long runs of fences. Low fences, used in partnership with soft landscape can provide a more sensitive form of delineation of boundaries.



Figure 29 | Boundary treatments typical of the Borough

1. Limestone, Market Bosworth
2. Red brick, granite and sandstone, Groby
3. Granite walls, Markfield
4. Glazing and metallic fascia panels, Hinckley
5. Modern brick and render, Hinckley
6. Brick and clay tiles, Market Bosworth

#### 4. Detailing: materials

Where a property is proposed to be extended, it is advisable to utilise materials that either match those of the existing dwelling, or provide a clear complement.

A wide range of building materials are available, both new and reclaimed, to enable a suitable match to be found, for example to replicate brick, tile or slate from an existing building.

Reference should be made to the local context in material selection. Further detail relating to individual settlements is provided in the area specific guidance (p.72).

The use of sensitive materials is particularly significant in the case of listed buildings or for proposals within conservation areas. Care should be given to the selection of the type, colour and size of bricks, roof tiles, mortar colour, lintels, sills and heads. Planning conditions to specify a palette of materials will be utilised where considered appropriate.

Use of high quality materials will result in a positive impact on the appearance of the property and will reduce maintenance costs over time.



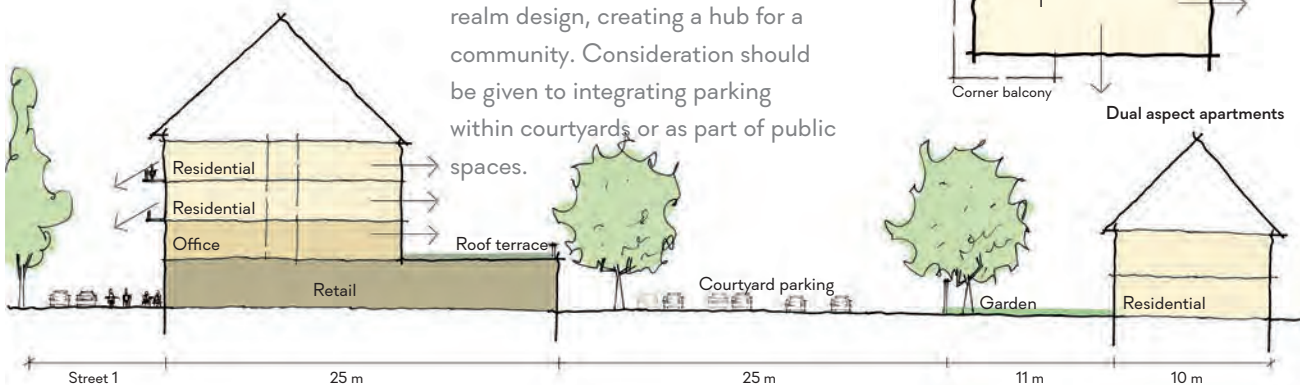
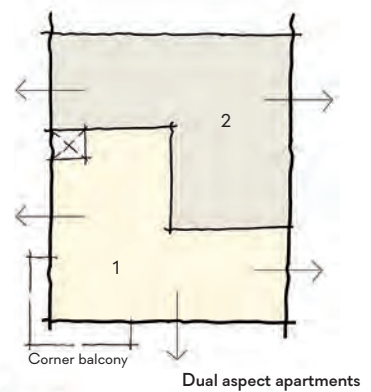
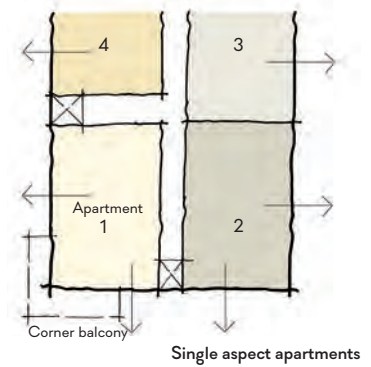
Figure 30 | Materials typical of the Borough

## 4. Detailing: mix of uses

**Aim:** the mix of uses proposed by a development will significantly impact on its potential to create a vibrant and self-sustaining community.

Developments should seek to create walkable neighbourhoods that allow residents the opportunity to service their day to day needs without use of a car. Shops, doctors' and dentists' surgeries, schools, libraries and public transport hubs form the beating heart of communities and a distinct opportunity for the creation of a vibrant, distinctive place.

Careful consideration should be given to the interface between residential and commercial uses. Mixed uses can be provided in a range of ways according to their nature and context. Whilst certain functions may require accommodating in a specific building (perhaps for amenity reasons), the incorporation of varied uses within the ground floor spaces of residential buildings allows passive surveillance of both functions, and as a result, can create well used, safe and secure environments. Mixed uses provide a place to congregate which can be enhanced through thoughtful public realm design, creating a hub for a community. Consideration should be given to integrating parking within courtyards or as part of public spaces.



**Above:** Individual buildings can provide complementary uses to create variety and activity in appropriate locations.

**Right:** Blocks can be subdivided to provide different uses, including commercial space, residential and retail. The public realm can be critical in ensuring quality is delivered in these environments.

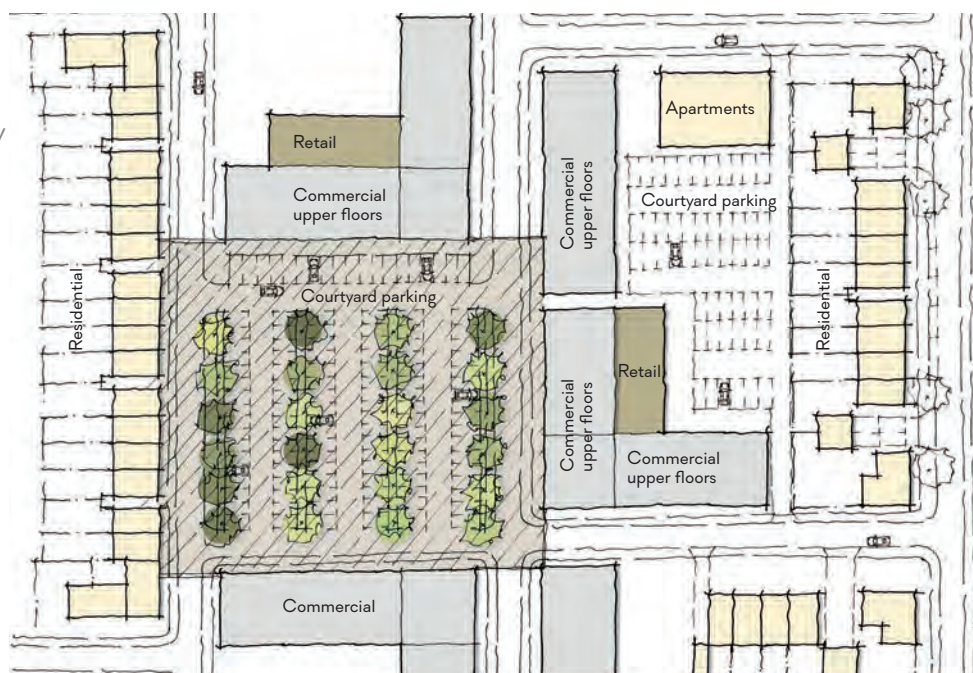


Figure 31 | Incorporating mixed uses within buildings and a block



## Infill sites

**Aim:** providing guidance on the design of infill sites within the existing built environment to create new development.

Infill sites provide a specific set of challenges and opportunities for new development. They provide one jigsaw piece of a wider picture and as such must be carefully considered in relation to their potential impact on their setting.

This highly specialised nature means that all development will be assessed on its own unique merit, however there are some general principles which will be applied in their assessment:

Building plots should be of similar size and shape to the wider context, allowing sufficient space between buildings. Built development should be of similar footprint, plot position and layout to the wider context, allowing sufficient space between buildings and not adversely impacting upon the prevailing grain of development.

A figure ground plan showing the proposal in its context will assist an applicant in demonstrating this point.

Built development should also be of similar scale, mass and roof form to the wider context, allowing it to sit comfortably within the streetscene. Wherever possible, development should respect building lines.

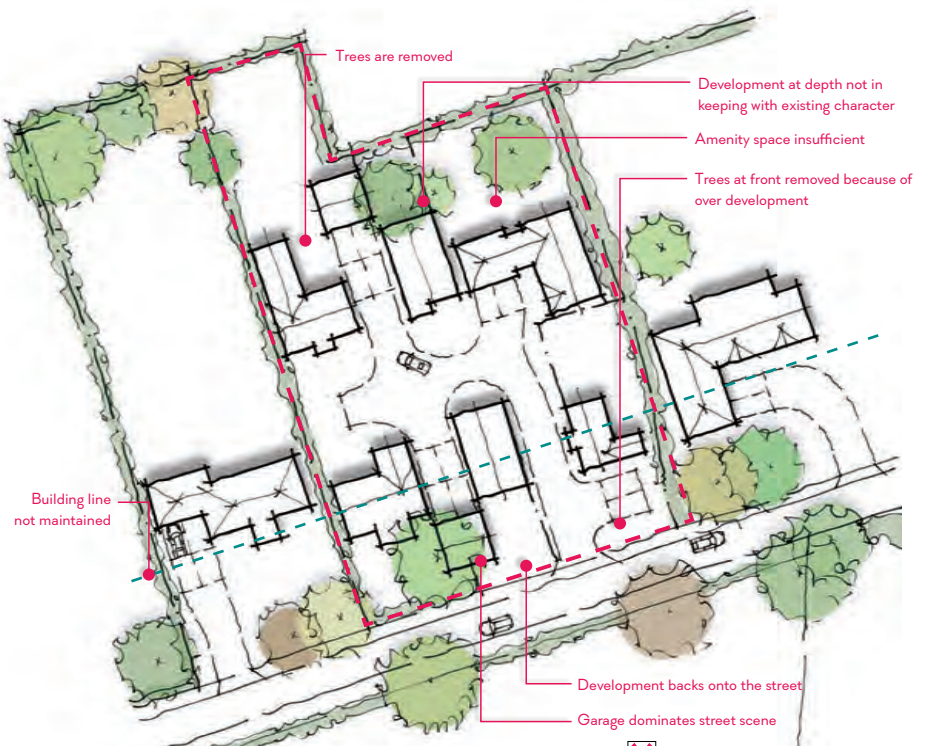
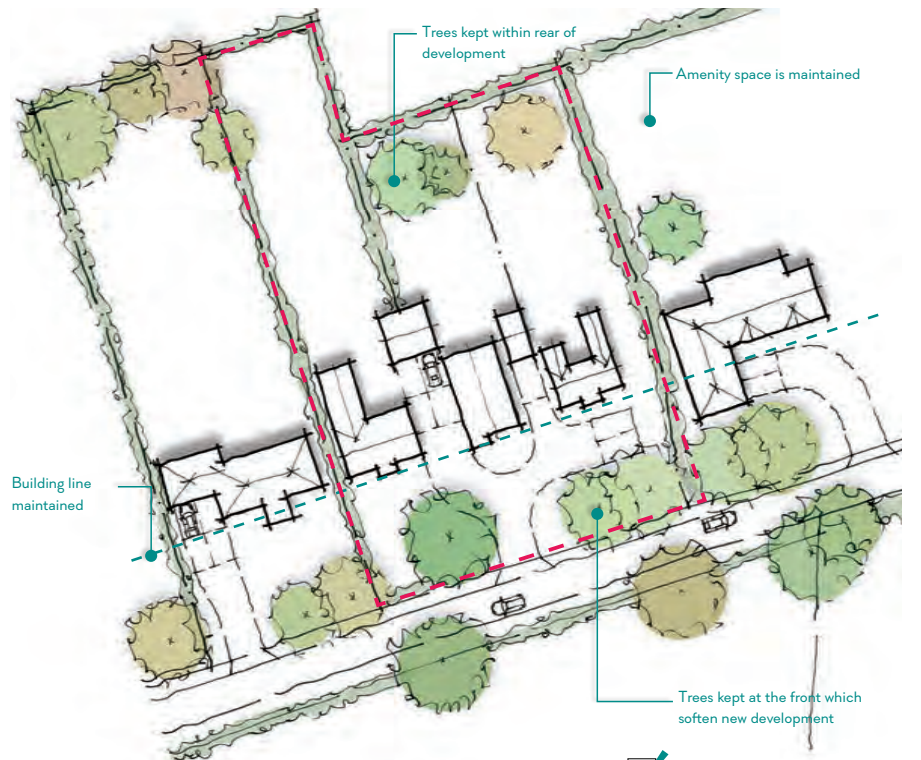


Figure 32 | Infill sites

## Backland sites

**Aim:** providing guidance on the subdivision of existing sites to create new development.

Where an existing plot is proposed to be subdivided to create additional development in 'backland' locations, this will require clear and convincing justification in relation to its context. Some sites may be able to accommodate this type of development, whereas others will not. At a minimum, it will need to demonstrate that it will not result in loss of amenity to neighbouring properties by way of overlooking, overshadowing or noise.

Habitable rooms within a rear elevation should ideally not be less than 8m from the blank side of a single storey neighbouring property, rising to 14m for a two storey property and above. Principal windows to habitable rooms within the rear elevations of neighbouring properties should never be less than 21m apart from a proposed principal window to a habitable room.

It will also be required to demonstrate that the density is also in keeping with the prevailing character of the surrounding area. A figure ground plan can provide a useful tool to demonstrate how new development can sit comfortably within its environment.

Where these conditions can be demonstrated, existing access arrangements should be used to serve new development wherever possible, to avoid unnecessarily 'puncturing' the character of the streetscene and allowing highways to dominate.

Development should respect wider building lines and not back onto the street. Boundary treatments should also be carefully utilised to assimilate new development into its context, reflecting those seen in the wider frontage and seeking to avoid gaps that break down sense of place.

✓ Generally acceptable

✗ Generally unacceptable

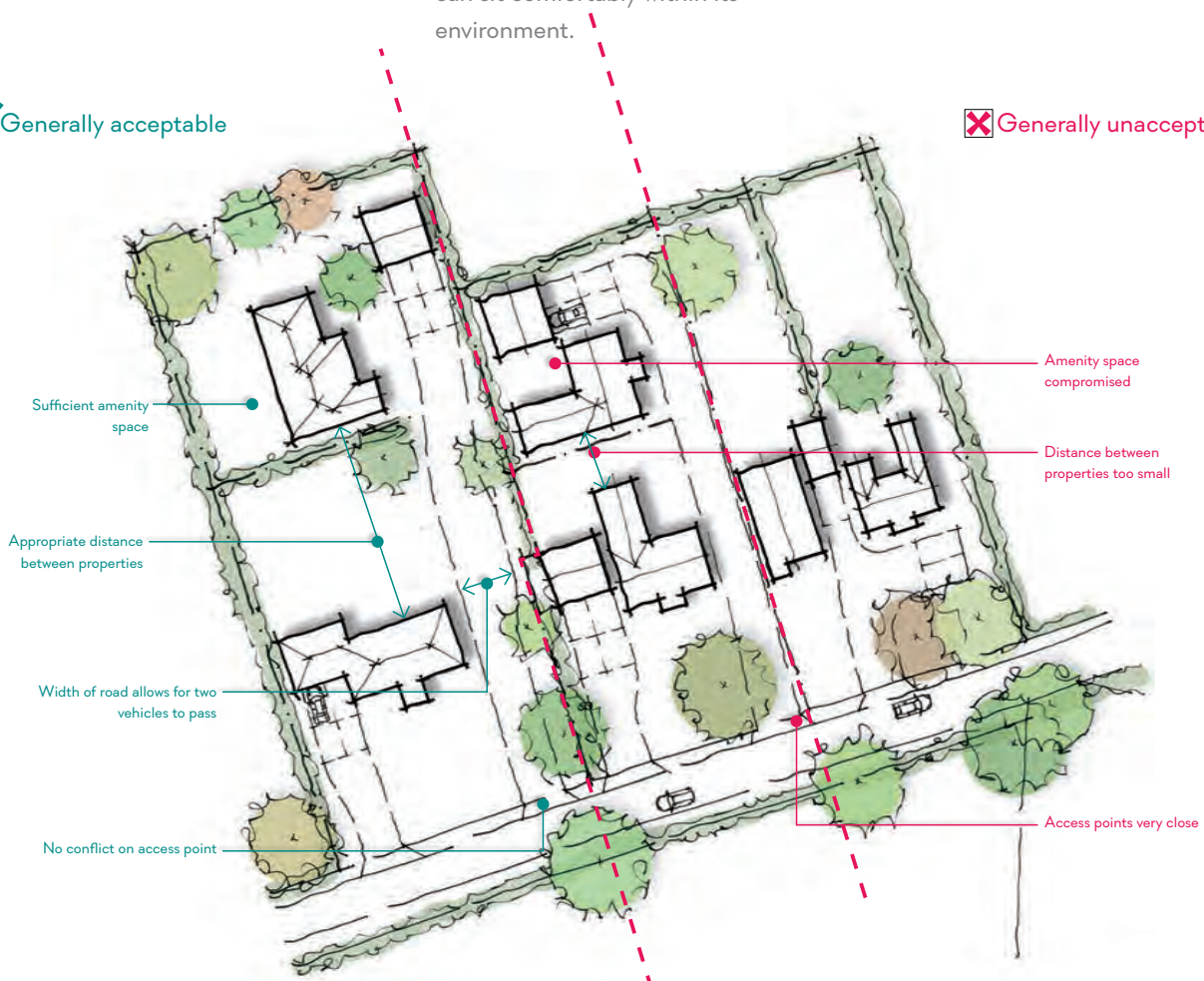


Figure 33 | Backland site: design considerations

## Building for Life 12

Building for Life 12 (BfL12) is the government supported tool for assessing the quality of new housing design.

As a local authority, we will seek to utilise the criteria set out in BfL12 as a tool for engaging with applicants as part of a pre-application enquiry or a planning application for new residential development.

The BfL12 assessment can be undertaken at outline application or reserved matters stage to demonstrate how the proposals achieve the standard, which is arranged under three categories:

- Adding to the neighbourhood
- Creating a place
- Getting the details right.

Schemes are assessed on a traffic light basis against each of the 12 questions. We are keen to promote schemes to be recognised as 'Built for Life™'.

Based on BfL12's traffic light system, developments that achieve nine greens are eligible for 'Built for Life™' accreditation.

Schemes achieving 12 greens will receive the Built for Life 'Outstanding' award. Accreditation is available immediately after planning approval, offering developers the opportunity to promote the quality of their developments.

The BfL12 questions are set out in full on p132-3. These principles can also be used as part of the design development process to stimulate ideas and ensure that holistic consideration is given to all key issues affecting housing quality.

## Chalet and tourism accommodation

The attractive rural nature of much of the Borough has led to a number of applications for chalet and tourism accommodation.

Although often temporary in nature, these proposals still have significant potential to impact on their environment, therefore it is essential that they follow the wider principles of good design established within this document.

Where tourism accommodation is proposed, this should be delivered in high quality materials that respect their context. Timber is often a suitable choice, providing a natural aesthetic that has the potential to assimilate comfortably into its environment.



Figure 34 | The BfL award winning Lime Tree Square, Street, Somerset

# 5. Existing residential development



This chapter provides clear and specific guidance for what will be expected from the design for modifications, extensions, or conversions of existing residential development

## Introduction and key issues

Residential development, including residential infill, householder extensions and conversions, collectively comprise the most common form of planning application received by the council.

As the majority of applications are typically made by existing householders who may not have wider knowledge of the planning process, we recognise the importance of providing clear guidance about how your application will be assessed.

On the following pages you will find the key fundamentals to getting residential proposals right, however it should be noted that every application will be assessed on its own merits depending on the individual characteristics of the site such as orientation, ground levels, window positions, garden size and shape.

## Key aim

Ensuring adequate space between and around buildings is recognised as a core component of residential amenity.

## Some basic principles

### Back to side distances

A principal window to a habitable room should ideally not be less than 8m from the blank side of a single storey neighbouring property, rising to 14m for a two storey property and above. An exception to this rule is in an urban location where it may be acceptable to have a reduced distance where issues of amenity and overlooking are dealt with by good design.

### Back to back distances

Principal windows to habitable rooms of neighbouring properties should not be less than 21m apart, unless they are across a road.

### Corner plots

Corner plots play an important role in within the streetscene and it is important to recognise that overdevelopment of these plots can create an oppressive quality which can lead to a significant change in the prevailing character of a place.

### Side to side distance

Where single storey development is planned, the extension may extend to the boundary of the property. In the spirit of good neighbourliness, an adequate distance of 1m between the property and its boundary (giving a total distance of at least 2m between properties) should be encouraged. In assessing the merit of the planning application, consideration will be given to the impact on local character created by reducing the space between buildings.

## Garden proportions

Gardens are an important part of the quality of life afforded by a house. Over-development leaving a significantly reduced garden area can affect its appeal in the longer term. Homeowners should ensure that a single extension or cumulative smaller extensions do not result in a significant loss of total garden space as this can render the plot out of keeping with its context. A general guideline for garden sizes is:

- A minimum garden length of 7m
- 80sqm: three bedroom house.
- 60sqm: two bedroom house.

This could vary dependent on design so as not to preclude innovation.

Please also see guidance on amenity space in figure 26 on p.35.

## Terminologies for common features of a house

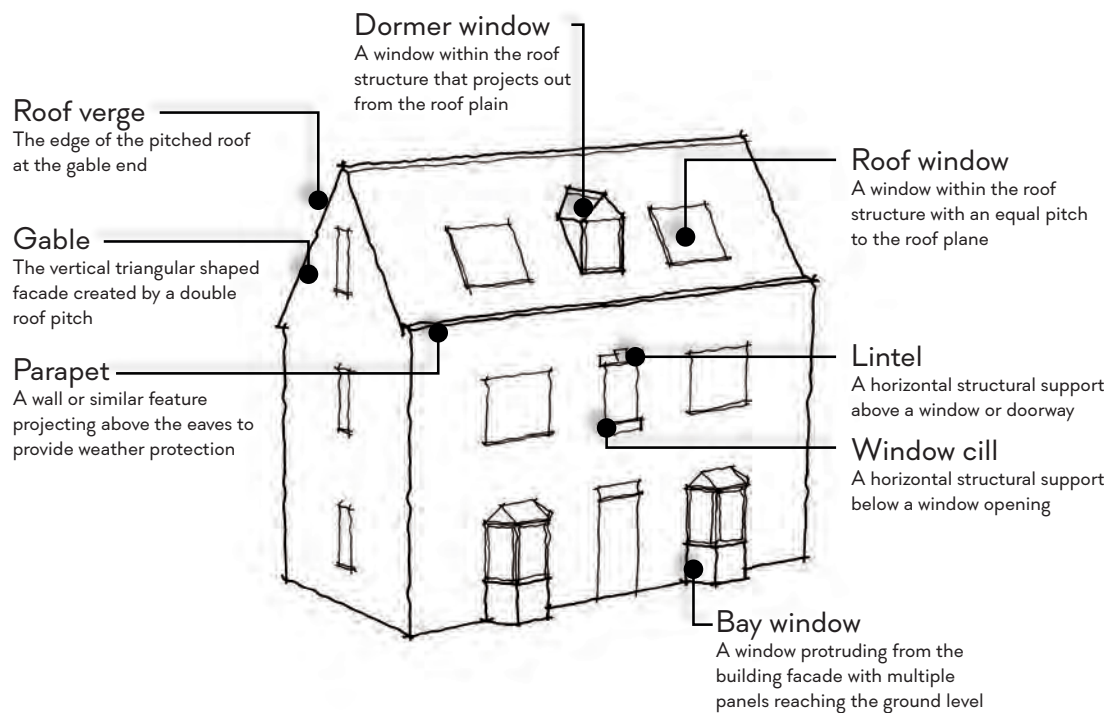
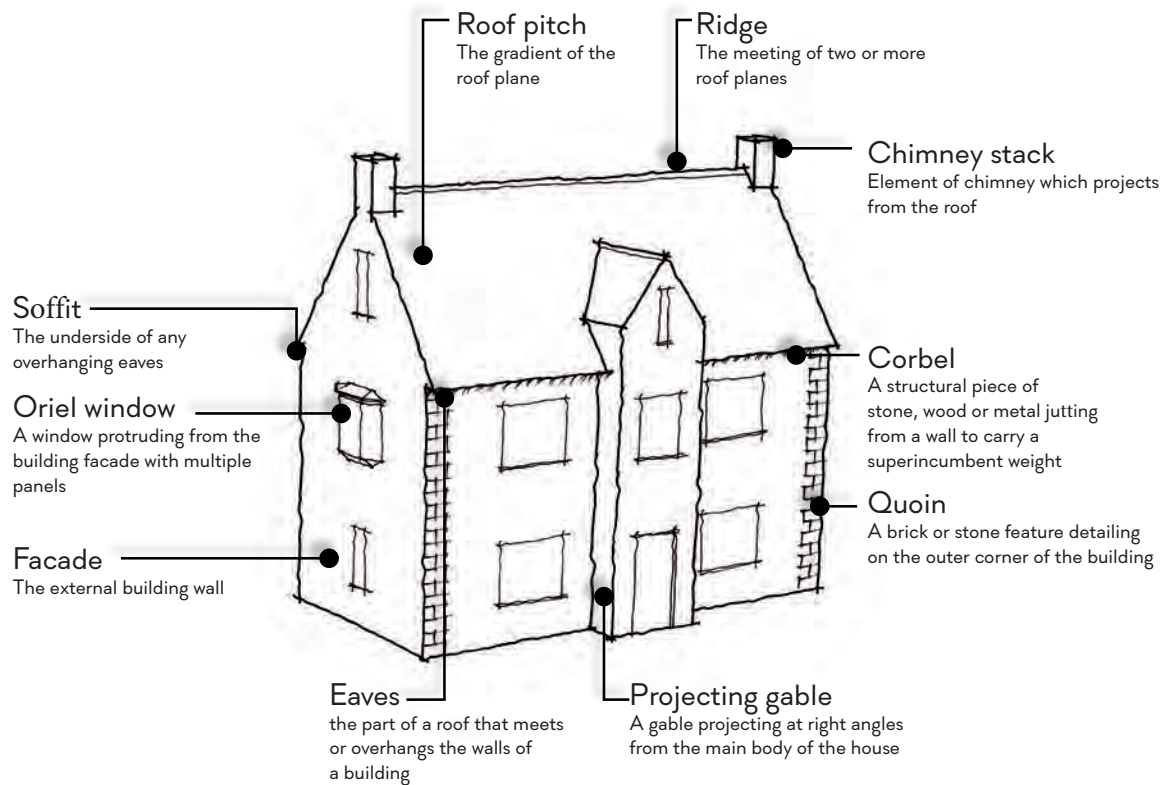


Figure 35 | Terminologies for common features of a house

## Extensions

Extensions, whether to the side, front or rear of an existing property or to the roof collectively comprise the most common form of application submitted to the Council.

Although it may appear that extensions are relatively modest in their scale, both individually and collectively, they can result in changes to the built environment that if designed insensitively, can have a significant negative impact. It is therefore important to establish principles which can be applied to all residents to ensure fairness and continued residential amenity.

## Extensions: roof extensions

Roof extensions are a well used methodology for extending internal space, but can be prominent over a wider area due to their higher scale compared with their neighbours. Some key guidelines are:

- Wherever possible, locate roof extensions to the rear of properties to minimise potential impact on the streetscene.
- Rooflights that lie flush with the roof itself will typically be the easiest way of introducing natural light into a roofspace without resulting in negative visual impact
- Dormer windows, which allow for additional headroom within roofspaces can be appropriate in certain situations, however these will be considered in the context of impact upon the character of the building and on neighbours' amenity and should reflect the window pattern of the dwelling.
- Material selection, and scale of window opening and position within the roofscape is critical in the success of dormers. Dormers to fronts of properties will only be acceptable where this is a prevailing feature of the surrounding context.

### ✓ Generally acceptable



Figure 36 | Appropriate approach to roof extensions

## Extensions: to rear

Rear extensions should be designed to be clearly subordinate to the main dwelling. They should be an appropriate height, width, depth and reflect or complement the detailing and materials of the original building. Examples highlighting different ways that this can be delivered are illustrated in the diagram below.

Where there are no public views into a site, a fully integrated two storey rear extension may be acceptable unless there is a detrimental impact on the adjacent properties as assessed by the 45 degree rule, set out overleaf.

### ✓ Generally acceptable



### ✗ Generally unacceptable

Figure 37 | Appropriate approach to rear extensions

## Extensions: the 45 degree rule

The 45 degree rule is applied for planning applications for new extensions to existing properties which could result in the outlook from or daylight to a principal window to a habitable room being impacted upon. The rule ensures consistency and fairness between applicants and their neighbours.

### Application of the rule

On a plan of the proposal, a projecting line is to be drawn from the nearest principal window to a habitable room that may be affected by the planning application towards the proposed building at an angle of 45 degrees.

The selected window must be the main source of light to a habitable room in the neighbouring property.

Habitable rooms include living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens but do not include rooms such as bathrooms, utility rooms, halls, landings or garages.

The extension should not cross the 45 degree line. If it does, the new extension could impact upon the outlook from or daylight to the neighbour. Application of the rule alters depending on the individual characteristics of the site and existing boundary treatment.

When the proposed extension is **single-storey** then: the 45 degree line is to be drawn from midway along the nearest ground floor principal window to a habitable room.

When the proposed extension is **two-storey** then: the 45 degree line is taken from the quarter point of the nearest ground floor principal window to a habitable room.

If there is **no ground floor window**, or if a first floor window is nearer, the 45 degree line should instead be drawn from the mid point of the nearest first floor principal window to a habitable room.

For **all** extensions:

- If the **neighbouring property has already been extended**, the 45 degree line is drawn from the nearest principal window to a habitable room of that extension, provided it is the window most likely to be affected.
- When **both properties have been extended**, any further extensions will be looked at on their merits taking in to account the amount of private amenity space to be retained.

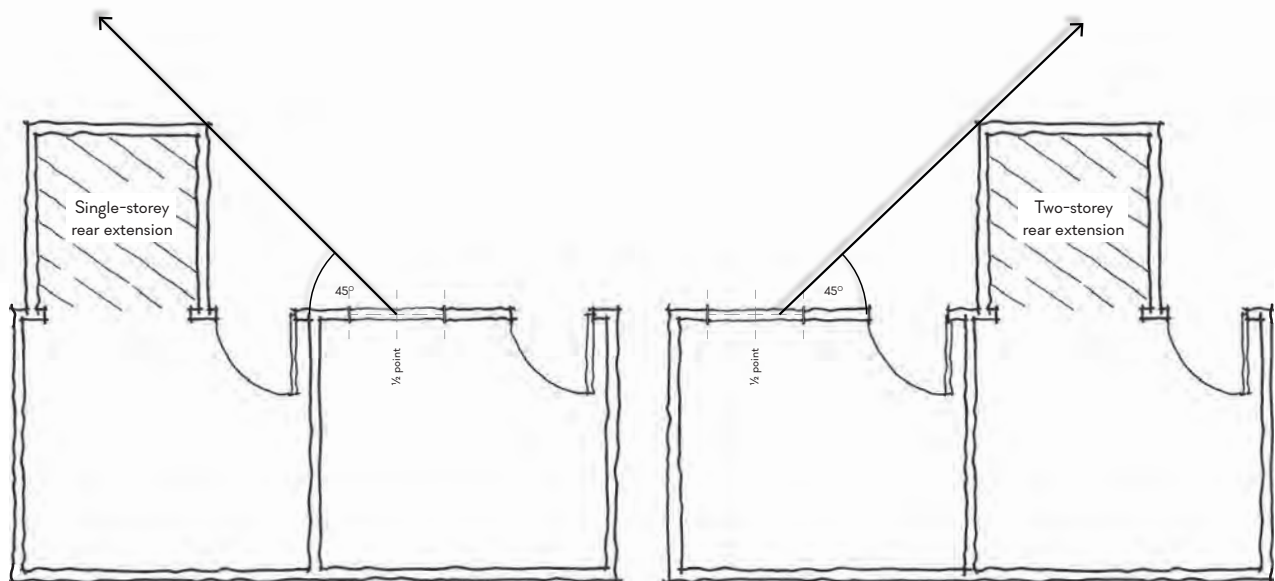


Figure 38 | Application of the 45 degree rule



### Extensions: to side

Two storey side extensions should appear smaller in scale and massing in order to be subordinate to the main dwelling. Any proposal for a two storey side extension should be set down from the ridge of the existing house and set back from the front elevation (the minimum distance for this should be 0.5 metres in both directions) unless in design terms this in itself would create an imbalance in the overall design of the property.

Two storey side extensions on corner plots should not be over bearing and should have an active frontage. They should be set at least 2m away from the highway.

### Extensions: to front

Two-storey extensions to the front of properties are unlikely to be acceptable especially in relation to semi-detached and terraced properties as they will be visually prominent within the street scene. If this type of development is proposed, it should take the form of the existing building, mirroring the roof pitch, replicate or have lower eaves height and the ridge should be below the existing ridge height.

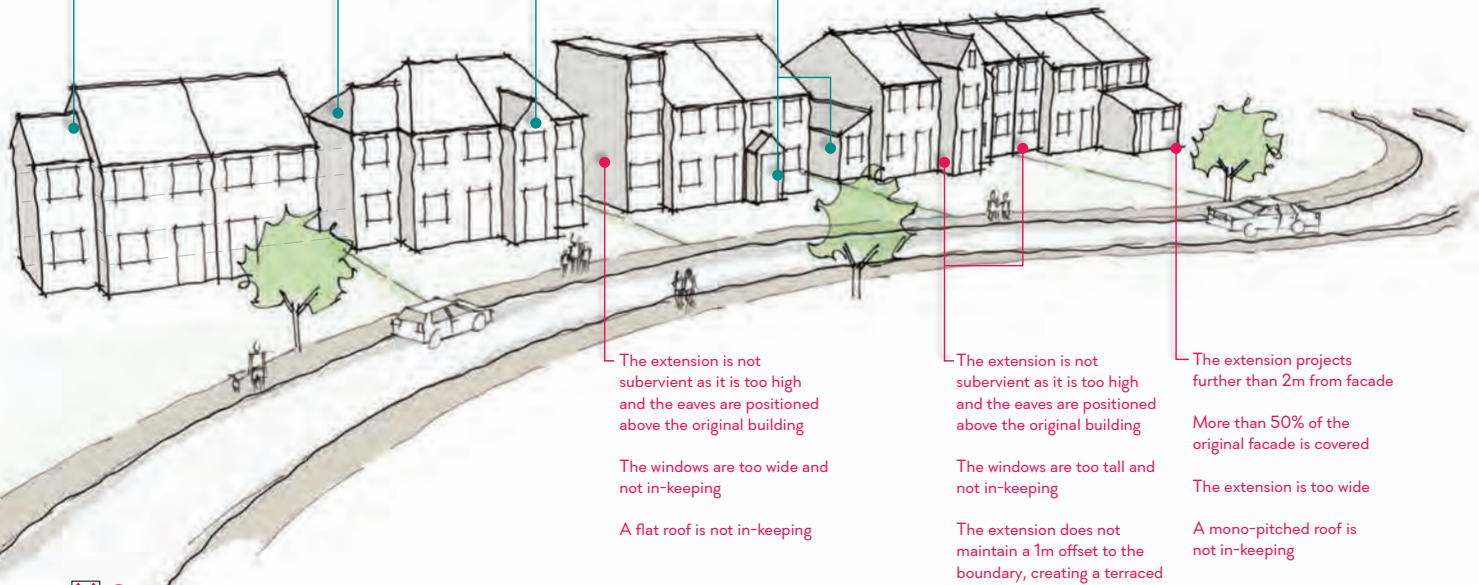
In addition, the proposal should not normally extend beyond the front elevation by more than 2 metres and not cover more than 50% of the front elevation. Front extensions should not result in the loss of existing parking spaces where it would impact on the streetscene and car parking provision.

#### ✓ Generally acceptable

Appropriate height, width, depth and detailing, including minimum 1m offset to boundary

Only within the right context will two-storey front extensions be permitted with appropriate roof pitch, ridge height, eaves height, depth and detail

Appropriate height, width, depth and detailing



The extension is not subervient as it is too high and the eaves are positioned above the original building

The windows are too wide and not in-keeping

A flat roof is not in-keeping

The extension is not subervient as it is too high and the eaves are positioned above the original building

The windows are too tall and not in-keeping

The extension does not maintain a 1m offset to the boundary, creating a terraced style development that is not in-keeping

The extension projects further than 2m from facade

More than 50% of the original facade is covered

The extension is too wide

A mono-pitched roof is not in-keeping

#### ✗ Generally unacceptable

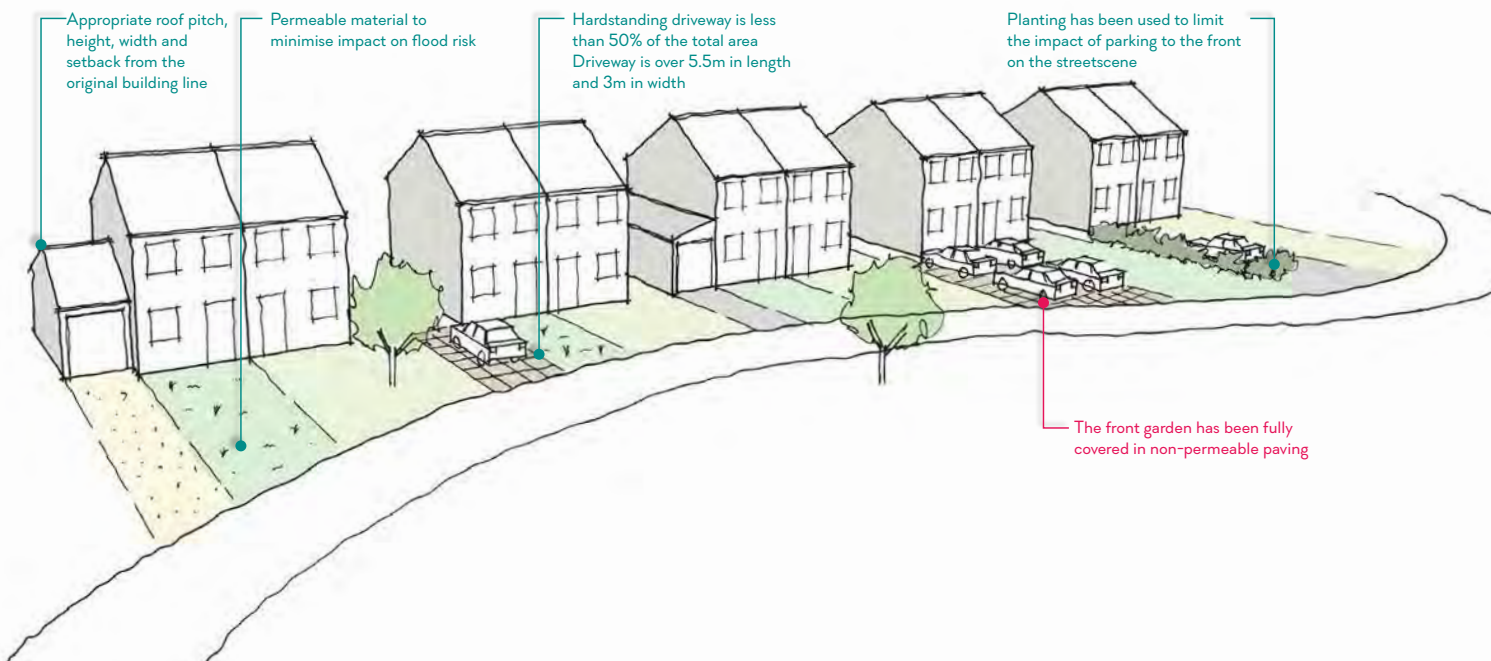
Figure 39 | Appropriate approach to front and side extensions

## Parking provision

Provision of off road space for storage of cars is another frequently requested addition to existing properties. Some key guidelines are:

- Garages attached to the sides of dwellings should follow the same guidelines as extensions
- Garages and car ports should generally be set back from the existing dwelling so as not to dominate the streetscene
- When a driveway is used in front of a garage it should be at least 5.5m long so that vehicles do not overhang the highway and 3m wide, if providing access to a property
- Where hardstanding is proposed at the front of a property, this should not constitute more than 50% of the total area
- Permeable paving materials are supported as a means of minimising the cumulative impact on flood risk. It is also recommended to consider incorporation of soft landscape features and boundary treatments to minimise negative impacts upon character and pedestrian specific movement routes to ensure safety

### ✓ Generally acceptable



### ✗ Generally unacceptable

Figure 40 | Appropriate approach to parking

## Detailing

In terms of elements of detailing, it is generally appropriate to ensure that the new development integrates coherently with the existing, whether this is an extension to an existing building or a new home in a conservation area. This can be achieved through replicating the heads and sills, brick coursing and quoin work, ridge and eaves finishes as appropriate. Adopting this sensitive approach will ensure that new development will sit comfortably with the existing context.

## Roofscape

Roofscape is a key character forming feature of detail in residential design. This includes the shape and pitch of roofs, as well as the materiality. Flat roofs on extensions will not normally

be considered appropriate where they do not form part of the original design of the house, however in some circumstances where they are not visible from the public realm and the use of a flat roof may result in a reduced visual impact, they may be considered acceptable, particularly if designed with a contemporary aesthetic style.

## Fenestration

Fenestration, including the scale, rhythm, proportions and elements of detail used for window and door openings plays a critical role in the success of housing design. In the case of residential extensions, care should be taken to ensure that the existing horizontal and vertical rhythm together with the proportion of openings is either reflected or complemented.

## Boundary treatments

Boundary treatments are also key generators of character within the public realm that can help to integrate new development into a context or simply define the quality of a new development.

This can range from the retention of existing trees and hedgerows, the provision of new soft landscape features, the use of fences, railings and walls and the clever incorporation of storage features such as bin/cycle storage to define boundaries, clearly delineating public and private space and bringing character to development.

Further detail on boundary treatments and contextual materials can be found on p38-9.

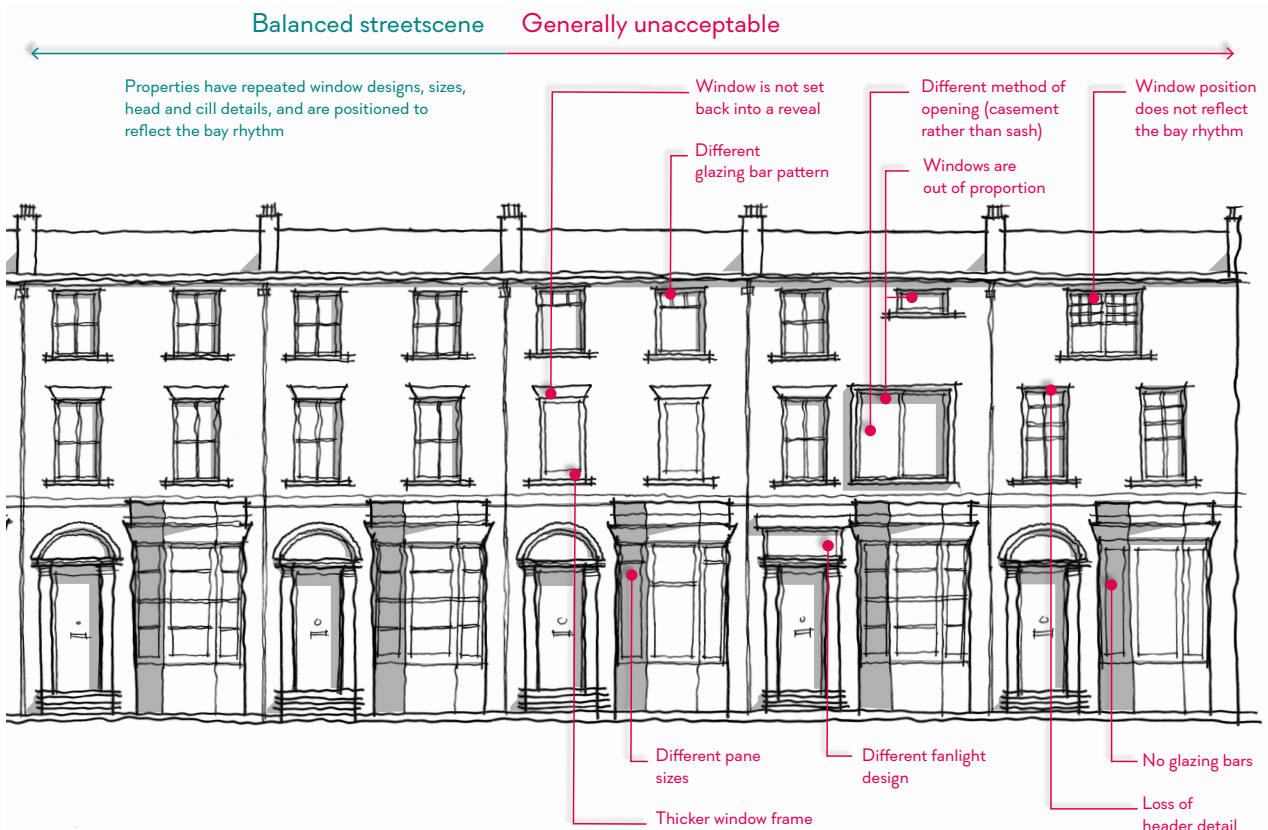


Figure 41 | Appropriate approach to fenestration

# 6. Converting agricultural buildings



This chapter provides clear and specific guidance for what will be expected from the design of conversions of existing agricultural buildings to provide residential development

## Introduction and key issues

As a predominantly rural Borough, agricultural buildings and groups are a significant part of Hinckley and Bosworth's built form. They are vital to the character of its diverse open countryside and its historic villages.

The term 'agricultural building' covers a wide range of working structures from those housing animals to those designed for specific functions such as storing and processing grain.

The best way to protect the character of these buildings is to retain them in agricultural or associated use. Utilising these buildings for the purpose for which they were built limits the need for significant alteration. Non-agricultural uses result in lighting, space, and environmental standards that are difficult to address without a level of damage.

Common examples of applications involving a change of use received by the council include conversion for residential development and visitor accommodation. Both use types have significance overlaps in the challenges that they pose to the conversion of an agricultural building, namely the threat of over-domestication.

This threat has the potential to be heightened when considering visitor accommodation, where a desire for more intensive use, for example, the subdivision of large spaces for a series of smaller holiday lets, is unlikely to be considered appropriate.

Conversion to other uses, however, when justified and planned well can provide these buildings with a sustainable future, forming attractive parts of historic and modern landscapes and contributing to competitive local economies. Furthermore, their character and the unique challenges they pose often encourage imaginative and innovative design that can create interesting and engaging places. This should, however, be guided by a clear understanding of the building, its existing external appearance, its internal configuration, and the nature of its setting. The following stages should be considered when planning a conversion:

## 1. Understand the building

Agricultural buildings were originally designed for a specific purpose, illustrating historical agricultural processes. This usually results in a specific appearance and layout. The basis for any conversion should be an understanding of its original use and the evolution of the building or group. Understanding what the building was designed to do gives context to its existing form including any floors or partitions, and will frame how to plan alterations to the exterior and interior space as well as consider its spatial setting.

Many rural buildings are listed, either in their own right or as curtilage listed structures to a principal listed building such as a farmhouse. These are, therefore, subject to a specific planning process - listed building consent. The basis for any proposals impacting listed buildings should be an understanding of the building and its significance as well as its setting.

## 2. Control the exterior

Agricultural buildings were designed to be functional. This generally resulted in architectural and decorative restraint, avoiding complex elevations. When converting an agricultural building it is of paramount importance that the building does not become domestic in appearance and retains its agricultural character regardless of its new use. Essentially, it should not look like a house. This means:

- Avoiding domestic add-ons such as chimneys, dormer windows, conservatories, porches, visual clutter such as satellite dishes, domestic external lighting, hanging baskets, using domestic window or door styles and adding buildings such as sheds within the curtilage.
- Retaining features characteristic of historic working buildings such as the apertures (openings) which should not be partially or completely filled in, ventilation slots (often patterned) and any use-specific historic additions (wagon stores, for example, have exterior steps to coachmen's lodgings above).

Some of the more specific areas to address include:

### Windows and doors

Most agricultural buildings were designed without windows (in the strict domestic sense). The emphasis was on facilitating access and allowing ventilation. In this way agricultural buildings are characterised by long façades uncluttered by openings, which are restricted to the minimum necessary and often positioned asymmetrically in relation to an internal configuration.

In the first instance, existing openings should be retained. Doors and shutters can often be tied back as a wall feature, or retained in working order to provide privacy. Consideration could be given to revealing blocked up historic apertures if they exist. Planning internal spaces should take advantage of existing historic openings such as hayloft hatches, cart and wagon doors etc.

New openings should generally be avoided, and kept to an absolute minimum when necessary.

When justified they should be sited to take account of the position of internal timbers, and are generally more appropriate on inward facing elevations. They should never be planned in a regular or symmetrical pattern, as this is overly domestic. They should replicate existing proportions, construction, and should be placed into an appropriate reveal. Consideration should also be given to using non-reflective glass. Additional light to the building can also be achieved through the use of conservation roof lights.



Above: The layout of buildings within the group is illustrative of their planned purpose and is critical to their ongoing understanding. Below: The scale hierarchy of buildings is a key component of their interrelationship



Figure 42 | The layout and scale hierarchy of agricultural buildings

It is important to fill historic apertures correctly. As non-domestic openings they were never designed to take domestic window styles, such as sashes and they were not meant to be an obvious decorative feature.

Consideration should be given to what the aperture was designed to do, and what it has been historically used for. A good principle in openings not designed to take a window, is to reduce the visual impact of new frames as much as possible, avoiding excessive transom

and mullions and general window divisions, opting for simple and slender frames and glazing. They should also be set back into a reveal.

Historic agricultural joinery, particularly doors, is often large and heavy. Off-the-peg joinery, as well as domestic styles such as Neo-Georgian doors and windows, should not be used for agricultural buildings.

Any new material should complement the quality and character of the historic working

building. uPVC should always be avoided. Timber is a historically-appropriate material, though coloured stained hardwood should be avoided. Metals such as steel and aluminium might be appropriate for new windows as their inherent strength allows for very slender, sleep, and visually-discrete frames. However this needs to be considered carefully given that they are naturally more modern in their appearance.



Above: External elevations avoid complexity, opting instead for decorative restraint. Below: retention of original doors and external features includes ventilation slots and metal ties. No new openings have been created and new windows and doors are of untreated oak. Re-roofing has worked with variations in the ridge to maintain character.



Figure 43 | The external treatment of agricultural buildings

## Major openings

A key feature of agricultural buildings are the big openings. This includes threshing, cart, and wagon doors. These large openings should not be partially or completely blocked or filled in, and should be retained. Glazing to large areas should be set back in a reveal to retain the character of the opening. Glazing large areas such as this can cause issues of privacy, and overemphasise areas of the building traditionally closed. This can be mitigated through the retention, restoration, or reintegration of joinery such as cart and wagon doors that can close over the glazed panels where necessary.

## Roofs

The roofline is often one of the most visually prominent parts of an agricultural building in the landscape. A key characteristic feature of agricultural buildings is a long, unbroken, roof profile. It should retain this character. In general:

- Avoid features such as dormer windows. Not only are these domestic in appearance but significantly alter the shape and profile of the roofline.
- Rooflights, whilst less intrusive, can still visually undermine unbroken roof-slopes. Where they are to be used, this should be done sparingly and they should be sited discreetly so as to not become a feature in the landscape. Rooflights should be 'conservation style', flush with the roof-slope and fitted with non-reflective glass.

- Avoid accretion of visual clutter including ridge and roof vents.
- Roofing materials vary by place but common local examples include thatch, clay tiles and slate. These should be retained and re-used wherever possible. If replacement is necessary, and can be justified, they should be replaced like-for-like. This includes considering the material source, colour, texture, finish (generally tiles should be hand, rather than machine, made) size, and method of laying (interlocking tiles, for example, are not appropriate).

## Flues and chimneys

Chimneys and chimney stacks should be avoided as they are largely domestic. Possible exceptions are smaller servicing buildings attached to a main barn which have included, in some circumstances, tall chimneys. Metal flues with a matte finish may be appropriate additions. However, they should be discrete in size and siting. They should generally be sited away from principal elevations and low on the eaves.

## Wall materials

Given the high level of decorative restraint, a key characteristic of agricultural buildings is the visual influence of the main historic construction material such as timber-framing, brick or stone.

The majority of farm buildings in the Borough are built of local red brick. Existing brickwork should be reused. Where a shortfall is experienced,

new brick should generally be reclaimed - though demolition of other outbuildings or parts of the building to provide that material will not be acceptable. Consideration should be given to source (including region and underlying geology), and matching the colour, texture, size and bond (how the bricks are laid) of the existing brickwork and a lime-based mortar mix.

Historic fabric should be repaired where necessary. For example:

- Timber-framing should be repaired by splicing in new elements in green oak, replicating historic joint methods. Reclaimed oak should be avoided, as it confuses the archaeology of the building given the likely presence of peg holes, mortices, etc.
- Pitched weatherboarding is a key feature of the Borough. All replacement boarding should be substantial, matching the scale of the existing.
- Exposed historic timbers should not be painted or stained. This risks undermining their visual quality and covering historically-significant elements such as carpenter's marks.

The Council's conservation officer will be able to provide advice and guidance on appropriate methods of repair and early engagement is strongly encouraged.

## Extensions

It is usually not appropriate to extend an agricultural building or add new buildings in its curtilage. This risks losing the simple historic form of the building, and its own status as an ancillary outbuilding. External elements such as septic tanks, storage, or garages, should in the first instance be planned within existing smaller outbuildings.

In certain circumstances, however, a very high-quality addition or extension might be appropriate. This can reduce in some cases the need to subdivide the main historic space. These extensions or additions should generally be simple, unobtrusive, and respect the plan-form of the building and group layout.

Where appropriate, key considerations include:

- **Scale:** it should be subordinate.
- **Siting:** it should in no way impact the spatial and historic relationship of the farmstead, and is usually most appropriate for structures not already part of a clustered formal group.
- **Orientation:** many barns are orientated away from the road.
- **Form:** standard domestic add-ons, for example, such as conservatories or porches are not appropriate.
- **Method of connection:** particular consideration should be given to how the extension joins the existing building. In

certain contexts it might be appropriate to construct a high-quality separate building and link it to the main agricultural property via a lightweight link (for example using steel and glass). This protects the simple historic building envelope.

## Gutters and downpipes

Gutters and downpipes are generally domestic, and many historic agricultural buildings do not have any.

Implementation of these features should be kept to a minimum, and should be discrete. They should be simple in design and located away from the principal elevations if possible. The preferred material is cast iron.

## External details

The simple elevations of agricultural buildings are often characterised by features such as ventilation details including slits, cruciforms, or circular apertures. Pitching eyes denote former crop, hay, or straw storage bay uses. These should be retained.

As well as protecting character, retention of these features can also increase light to the interior reducing the need for new apertures, and can be glazed on the inside to prevent drafts. Other details which may exist include hoists and pulleys fixed to the wall. These should be retained.

## 3. Plan the interior

Planning control does not generally extend to the internal features of a building, unless the building is listed (and then may require listed building consent). Internal features require sensitive consideration, particularly if they have historical or architectural value and the retention and appropriate repair of such features is encouraged.

Consideration of the interior is paramount even in non-listed properties where inappropriate planning within the interior space can have a knock-on effect on the exterior, including for example the need for new windows.

The Council's conservation officer will provide design guidance on how to retain and work with such features. Reference should also be made to guidance from Historic England, including 'Adapting traditional farm buildings.'

## 4. Protect the setting

Agricultural buildings are often part of an important group of structures that form a broader farmstead: usually a farmhouse, barns, and outbuildings. This group can often be laid out in a significant spatial arrangement such as around a central working courtyard.

They also form an important part of the wider landscape, influenced (and influencing) natural features such as topography and watercourses, with close associations to field systems, tracks, and surrounding settlements.





Above: In the interest of preserving character, conversions should avoid domestication of barn buildings. Below: Reuse of historic apertures can ensure continuity of character, with window frames set back within aperture where they are introduced



Figure 44 | The internal treatment of agricultural buildings

Conversion should protect the relationship between individual farm buildings as well as with their landscape setting.

One of the key ways to do this is avoid anything that would create visual or physical barriers between each building and between the building and landscape. This includes avoiding domestic boundary treatments such as close boarded fencing, and carefully siting new areas such as car parking, access pathways and gardens.

The proliferation of commercial and domestic trappings may serve to introduce a non-agricultural character to any building proposed for conversion. The key objective will be to ensure that the surroundings are designed to be as agricultural in character as possible.

Key areas to consider include:

### **Courtyards**

Courtyards should be surfaced in a material that reflects its rural setting, but which are not so formal as to detract from the building's character - including bonded aggregate dressed surfaces and dragged concrete which is found within the Borough's farmyards. Existing cobbles, setts, bricks, or blocks should be retained and supplemented. Courtyards and farmyards should remain open and not be divided by fences or walls. Parking spaces should not be formally marked out.

### **Gardens**

In general, the creation of individually defined garden plots will not be appropriate. Where the use of landscaping and boundary treatments can be justified design cues should be taken from existing traditional features and will typically consist of metal agricultural or timber post and rail fencing, low brick or stone walls and native hedgerows.

### **Miscellaneous structures**

In general new buildings within the farmyard or curtilage should be avoided in order to protect the visual and spatial integrity of the group.

Attention should instead be on utilising existing structures. Consideration should be given to how adaptable certain types of existing buildings and spaces are. This should form the basis for planning the development of a farmyard or curtilage and will provide a more unified approach.

For example hay barns, shelters, sheds, hen houses, lean-to structures for storing farm machinery, and pig sties do not lend themselves to residential conversion and are more appropriate for use for storage or for hiding domestic features such as utility rooms, refuse stores, and garages.

Of particular significance in the Borough are perimeter walls, which were distinctive to the 'planned farmsteads' of the 18th and 19th century. These should be left intact, and not chopped through or reduced for access or to create visual splays.

## **5. Consider habitat preservation and creation**

It is essential to consider the impact conversion work will have on wildlife, particularly in relation to protected species such as barn owls, bats, and birds the protection of which are material considerations in the planning process. Unauthorised works impacting these species is an offence and punishable by a substantial fine. Other protected species, including badgers and great crested newts, are often to be found around historic agricultural buildings.

Farmers traditionally relied on natural predators to address vermin and so agricultural buildings often incorporate features that facilitate habitats for this type of wildlife including owls and bat holes which were devised to allow access along uninterrupted flight paths. A suitably qualified expert should be engaged to assess whether protected species are present. Natural England will be able to provide help and advice on this process.

Whilst mitigation methods will depend on the specific circumstances of the site, common methods the council will encourage owners to use include incorporating nesting lofts, as well as preservation of nesting sites and flight routes. Conversion may also necessitate retention of features on the building that facilitate access, such as ventilation holes, and careful consideration should be given to introduction of new lighting and retention of neighbouring trees.



Consideration of the landscape setting of barns is critical to a successful conversion project. Above: Open plan curtilage surrounding the barn and original boundary wall retained as part of landscaping proposals, together with use of full glazing for former threshing barn opening. Below: use of sensitive landscape materials including boundary wall.



Figure 45 | The setting of agricultural buildings

# 7. Commercial development



This chapter provides clear and specific guidance for what will be expected from the design of commercial buildings and areas, including retail, food and drink, office, industrial development

## Introduction

Good commercial developments play a vital role in enhancing the economic prosperity, vitality and quality of life in urban and rural centres. When designed well they create attractive and comfortable places to live and work, attracting investors. If not designed well, however, they can introduce large, bland, and non-contextual units and spaces that reduce, dramatically, the desirability and prosperity of a place. Many award-winning commercial developments, specifically office and industrial schemes, take a 'campus' approach developing a holistic and integrated environment of integrated streets, spaces, and buildings. Equally, the conversion of existing buildings can play a significant role in the creation of commercial space.

## General principles

### Activity / mix of uses

Commercial developments should create vibrancy. Development should create active frontages to all public areas, avoiding dead façades, blank walls and fencing. Careful consideration should also be given to the interface between residential and commercial uses. Successful schemes incorporate a mix of uses, such as offices in upper floors complemented by retail at ground.

- In specific retail/food/beverage schemes, development should create a continuous frontage of bars, shops, and restaurants enhanced by attractive forecourts and shopfronts.
- In commercial/industrial developments, where retail units may not be appropriate or necessary, an active frontage should be achieved through orientation of public-private space, consideration of internal space on the ground floor, and addressing façade treatments. This might include, for example, orientating well-trafficked entrances with high-quality forecourts around public spaces, locating less active areas, such as service yards, to the rear.

### Scale and massing

Commercial scale and massing requires very careful consideration. In some cases this may be because over prominence could result in an oppressive environment, however it should also be recognised that new commercial development can be too small: it should generally seek to offer more than just single storey development in order to assimilate with existing and proposed urban environments, such as within a local centre, where in order to create a node - and a sense of place, greater scale will be required.

### Layout

The layout of a commercial scheme should create a logical and coherent network of interrelated buildings, spaces and functions, addressing

the relationship between public and private space as well as considering the integration of functional spaces such as servicing and car parking.

- Development should reflect and integrate the surrounding pattern of blocks and streets, providing effective and logical links to the movement network in the wider area.
- Careful consideration should be given to car parking. In commercial developments car parking can dominate, if positioned encircling or in front of the main buildings acting as the main defining spatial feature and gateway. Car parking should be well integrated into a scheme and not the main visual element. This could include segmenting into distinct areas, enclosing by built form, integrated into soft landscaping, exploring higher-quality materials that better integrate with other movement routes, and positioning away from the main frontage.
- Servicing is also a major consideration for commercial developments including loading bays, delivery spaces, bins, and storage spaces. If not planned correctly it can have a visual impact on the streetscape, impact the efficiency of a business' operation, and create a dangerous and noisy environment for pedestrians. Servicing should be positioned away from the main public areas, and storage areas screened from view ideally located within the footprint of a building.

## Movement

High-quality commercial schemes consider inclusive accessibility and facilitate access to a range of transport options. Specifically:

- Schemes should enhance the potential for sustainable and active transport modes providing safe and secure cycle storage, and should be located within easy reach of public transport.
- The movement network through a site should be logical and coherent with continuous pedestrian routes orientated on desire lines. The design and orientation of buildings should contribute to overall legibility.
- The relationship between pedestrians and cars should be addressed where appropriate, incorporating traffic calming measures and exploring shared surface materials to provide a more integrated environment.
- The integration of electric charging points should be considered from the outset.



Above: Consideration of pedestrian and cycle movement routes was central to the design of mixed use development in Malmo, Sweden; Below: Creating an attractive landscape setting enhanced by pedestrian and cycle routes has been a core feature of the success of Blythe Valley Park in Solihull (photo: IM Properties)



Figure 46 | Consideration of pedestrian and cycle movement is vital to commercial schemes

### Character in context

Commercial developments are necessarily driven by economic pressures. They can lead to the implementation of large-volume buildings, of generic design, on a streetscape or a rural landscape. Development should create or enhance a local distinctiveness, incorporating a high standard of design. This includes:

- Designing in relation to an established built hierarchy, reflecting the scale, density, and block pattern of contextual areas whilst exploring more contemporary styles that reflect a modern commercial use.
- Considering the interface between the development and the surrounding context. In dense urban environments this will often require responding to an established public frontage. In rural areas it may necessitate implementing adequate landscaped buffers, including mature planting and treelines to screen or soften the development.



Above: The National Waterfront Museum in Swansea relates to its waterside location through its deliberately reflective choice of materials and wave-like forms. Below: Modern commercial development designed to reflect neighbouring historic factories through form and materials, Denmark



Figure 47 | Commercial buildings should respond to context

### Public spaces and landscape

Commercial developments often focus predominantly on the proliferation of usable space and built form, neglecting the surrounding elements that knit the whole site together. It is important to integrate effective public spaces into a scheme including streets, squares, and where appropriate park/play areas. Particular principles include:

- Creating social and civic hubs (such as squares), for workers or customers, enclosed by high quality built form and which use

high-quality materials.

- Create an appropriate mix of hard and soft landscaping, incorporating and enhancing any existing green infrastructure and considering boundary treatments, including the creation of bunds where appropriate.
- Carefully considering the relationship between public and private space – ensuring public spaces are subject to natural surveillance and are enclosed with high-quality architecture.

### Adaptability, flexibility, sustainability

Commercial development usually relies on the success of market pressures. Changing market circumstances can often lead large volume spaces and sites vacant or partially vacant. Schemes should incorporate flexible buildings and spaces that can be easily adapted to future uses and which incorporate sustainable, energy-efficient, technology. This might include providing a range of unit types, such as incubator units, to cater for a range of businesses.



Above: Subdivision of car parking through planting diminishes its potential impact and creates an enhanced and more biodiverse environment at Blythe Valley Park in Solihull (photo: IM Properties). Below: Use of soft landscape softens development and creates a more human environment within large scale commercial schemes



Figure 48 | Commercial buildings should consider their public realm and landscape environment

## Specific guidance: retail, food and drink

Whilst all types of commercial development should address the above issues, distinct types of commercial premises have different priorities.

At the heart of retail, food and drink developments should be the creation of an inclusive and high-quality user 'experience' with continuous active frontages creating vitality and well-defined routes enabling an organic and fluid retail experience. Of

particular consideration for this type of development are:

**External space:** Creation of high quality external spaces for eating and drinking can contribute much to the wider public realm. Locations should be chosen that enhance their setting and high quality materials used.

**Advertising:** Good design should reduce the need for advertising that creates spatial clutter and large intrusive signs. Buildings and spaces should be orientated along human-scale pedestrian routes that

enable effective advertising to be achieved through human-scale well-proportioned signage such as fascia boards and hanging signs.

**Neighbour amenity:** Bars and restaurants should not negatively impact upon neighbouring residential properties through noise, smell or nuisance.

**Plant:** Location of plant machinery, flues, air conditioning and other fundamental requirements should be planned to minimise their potential visibility from the public realm.



Above: Human scale of development and high quality public realm creates a pleasant retail experience in Stratford on Avon. Below: Retail and mixed use development has been successfully incorporated within a pedestrianised public realm in Hinckley town centre



Figure 49 | Retail, food and drink



### Specific guidance: office and industrial

At the heart of industrial and commercial development should be the dual focus on:

**Viability:** Providing economically-viable and functional space.

**Impact:** controlling the physical and visual impact on the wider area, enhancing or creating a sense of unique identity.

Of particular interest in these schemes are:

- Access to sustainable and active transport for commuters.
- Providing a comfortable interface to its context responding to an urban street scene through creation of a quality frontage or open rural context through mature landscaping. This interface should take into account visual impact in terms of scale and physical prominence, and the impact of its particular function that may create noise, harmful substances or dangerous activity.
- Achieving quality, pushing beyond generic architectural forms and low-quality materials. The best industrial schemes seek new ways of presenting the classic industrial shed: addressing the external form of the building through high-quality materials and colour schemes, and the design of internal space to create inviting entry spaces and social areas.
- Effective interface between public and working areas through positioning and orientation.



Use of quality materials and attention to detail in landscape design creates an inviting and attractive external environment at Blythe Valley Park in Solihull (photo: IM Properties). Below: Jaguar Land Rover, Wolverhampton. High-quality materials create a crisp and clean appearance



Figure 50 | Office and industrial

# 8. Shopfronts



This chapter provides clear and specific guidance for what will be expected from the design of shopfronts, including highlighting some of the common issues and themes, together with component parts to enable informed design

## Introduction

Shopfronts can make or break a high street. Get them right and they create an attractive, vibrant, and characterful commercial heart to a historic or modern urban centre, allowing a business to advertise itself and thrive. A well designed shopfront, or range of shopfronts, can attract people to a business and a place. However, get them wrong, through inappropriate detailing or design, and they can very quickly create a severely disjointed streetscene, leading to negative impressions of a place.

High quality, carefully considered signage and frontage for shops and other commercial premises, enhances identity and legibility, creating coherent and attractive centres of activity and commerce. By contrast, where shopfronts and signage are not considered as part of a wider building or streetscape, the detrimental impact can be ruinous. This is particularly significant in historic centres, where even modest changes can result in significant impacts upon prevailing character.

## Key issues

The most common issues with shopfronts are:

- Inappropriate materials
- Disproportionate signage
- Inappropriate illumination

- Visual clutter including stickers and notices
- Poorly designed security

## Planning

As a council, we understand the desire to visually promote businesses and attract custom through shopfronts and signage and want to work pro-actively to ensure that this is achievable in a way that enhances rather than detracts from its setting.

A specific consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, however planning consent is also required for installation, alteration, replacement or removal of shopfronts to ensure that there is control over this significant aspect of streetscenes.

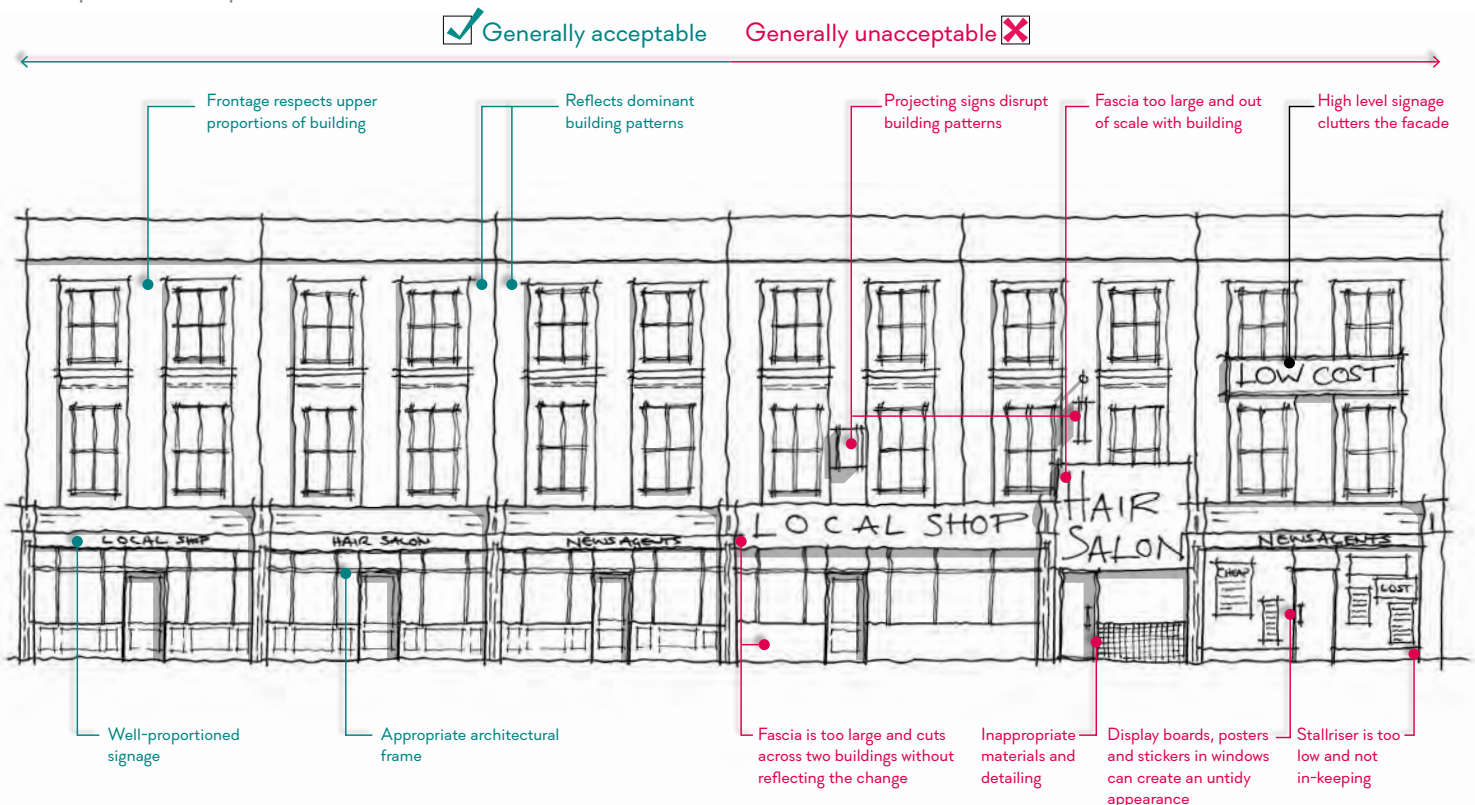


Figure 51 | Inappropriate / appropriate shopfronts

## Guiding themes

Good design should address the composition, material, and structure of the shop-front. It should also consider the signage, illumination, security and any additional elements as a planned whole, reflecting the established character of the building and street-scene whilst allowing a degree of flexibility. A well-designed shopfront should address the following key themes:

### 1. Reflect the building

New shop-fronts, and alterations to shop-fronts, should consider the overall proportion, form, and scale of the building's upper floors. Unnecessarily large shop-fronts or, in particular, signage can detract from or even cover historically-valuable architecture above and, more generally, create a disjointed appearance.

### 2. Reflect the street

A well-design shop-front integrates well with the established street-scene, introducing a sense of variety but responding to an overall character. This includes using the right materials, responding to a dominant scale and proportion, and following an established pattern.

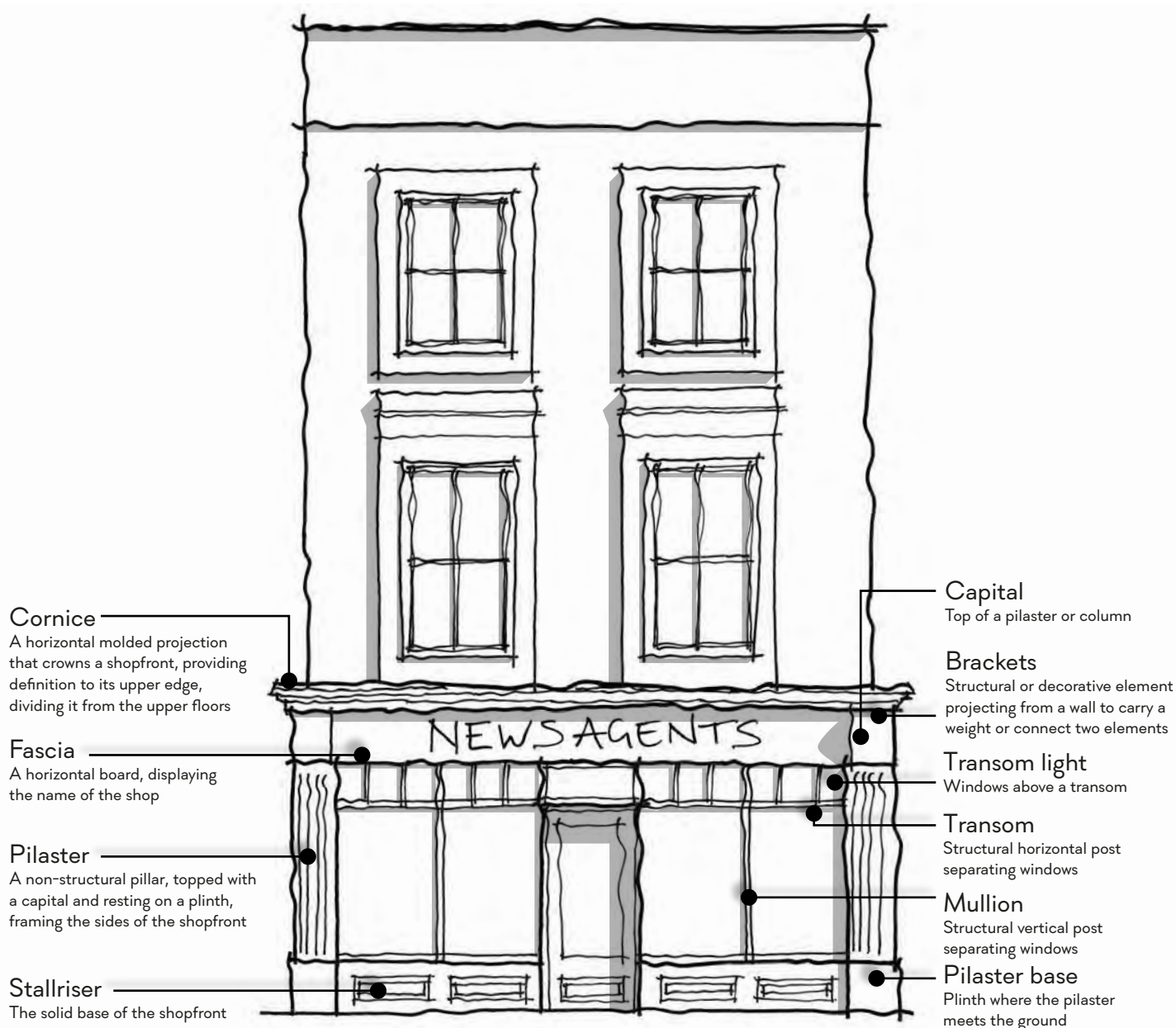


Figure 52 | Traditional shopfront components

### 3. Reflect historic styles

In many areas historically-valuable shopfronts remain or have been reflected in new designs. This is often the case for 18th/19th century terraces or rows in which shopfronts were designed as a planned whole with well-proportioned elements reflecting the building and street.

### 4. De-clutter

A good shopfront uses the minimum amount of visual elements necessary to advertise a business and create a fresh, restrained, and attractive streetscene. Often, less is more. Unnecessary visual clutter should be avoided. This includes reducing unnecessary advertisements, plastic foliage or other elements stuck onto the shopfront, and removing general detritus such as visible air-conditioning units, wires and intrusive roller shutter boxes.

## Key components

More specifically, shopfront design should address the following detailed components:

#### 1. Structure and form

When designing a new shopfront, or retrofitting a building, the structure of the shopfront itself has a profound impact on its visual quality.

##### *Architectural frame*

In historic areas, or where a more traditional appearance is desirable, shopfronts incorporate traditional elements such as fascia boards, cornices, pilasters, appropriately sized uninterrupted stallrisers, and

avoid large expanses of unbroken glazing. These elements create an appropriate architectural frame that results in a well proportioned design.

Whilst the exact proportion and detailing varies due to context, all shopfronts should incorporate an adequate architectural frame.

##### *Profile*

Many historic shopfronts were constructed using mullions with a specific profile, such as a slender curve. Often the propensity in modern shopfronts is to use bulky or squared frames.

Whilst this can be appropriate in more modern contexts or if there is no overbearing historic character, if there is a specific unified appearance in the streetscene and where historic shopfronts survive, the use of modern frame shapes and profiles can be detrimental to the overall character.

#### 2. Materials

Materials have a profound impact on the visual quality of the shopfront and streetscene. Materials should reflect the character of the street and its historic precedent.

##### *Traditional*

Historically shopfronts and signs were constructed using timber. This remains the most appropriate material, particularly in historic areas.

##### *Modern*

Modern high-quality alternatives, such as aluminium or steel can work well and create a sharp, fresh, contemporary look. However, they

can often jar with more traditional timber shopfronts due to their finish, and are most appropriate in more modern areas.

##### *What not to use*

Materials such as plastic, uPVC, should always be avoided. Other inappropriate materials include applied cladding (stone, brick, wood). Whilst tiles can sometimes be found in surviving Victorian and Edwardian frontages they can be inappropriate for modern shopfronts.

### 3. Signage and advertisements

##### *Fascia and lettering*

The fascia is the most important area of a shopfront for advertising the business. In general, good signage works within the established proportions and confines of the fascia board and avoids applying larger more modern signs onto it. Large box signs or additional flat boards should be avoided as they create disproportionate depth and height. The most appropriate signage at fascia level is individual letters applied or painted directly onto the fascia board. Too much information at fascia level can create visual clutter. In general, the businesses' name should be sufficient, avoiding over the top logos or slogans.

##### *Hanging signs*

Hanging signs are a staple of the high street. They can add a distinct texture to a streetscene, but if designed inappropriately can lead to a cumulative disunity.

In general, hanging signs should:

- Be appropriately sized in relation to the building and street.
  - Use an appropriate material, shape, and form avoiding large box signs.
  - Display only necessary information.
  - Have an appropriate and attractive method of fixture.
- The most appropriate signage is

held by slender, well-designed, brackets using a quality material.

#### *Windows and upper floors*

A shopfront can become cluttered by a lot of stickers or signs on windows and doors. Whilst it is often necessary to place signs in the window, for menus or opening hours, this should be restricted to the minimum necessary and be of an appropriate size. No signage should be shown on the upper floors of the building.

#### **4. Illumination**

Illumination can highlight attractive features of a shopfront and facilitate an attractive night-time buzz, but needs to be well integrated.

#### *Sources of illumination*

Illumination should not create a cluttered visual appearance. Shopfronts should avoid using visually distinct sources of illumination such as swan neck lamps, or trough lights, or sources that result in



Above: Signage created through letters individually painted onto the fascia board.  
Below: Halo-illumination integrated to the underside of the cornice



Figure 53 | Examples of signage and illumination

disproportionate signage, such as internally-illuminated box signs.

The most appropriate sources of light are integrated into the shopfront and signage. This includes pelmet lighting in which individual lights are placed into the underside of areas such as fascia boards, or halo illumination whereby a thin strip of light is placed behind each individual letter to create a soft glow akin to a halo.

### Colours

Good shopfront design considers the impact and quality of light on the streetscene. Softer white light is preferable to a deep orange glow.

## 5. Canopies

Traditional canopies can be an attractive addition to a shopfront, providing areas to sit in the shade, or allowing more pleasant browsing. However they can also have an impact on the unity of a streetscene. In some instances they are simply not appropriate, particularly where they would create visual disunity on a row of unified shops or have a detrimental physical and visual impact on the architectural quality of a historic building. However, where there is more variety in a streetscene a well-designed canopy can be appropriate. In general:

- They should be no larger than is necessary and be visually restrained reflecting the colour scheme and design of the main shopfront.
- They should use a high quality material.
- Careful attention should be paid to the canopy box. If placed incorrectly it can physically damage a building and create visual clutter. It should be integrated into the overall shopfront design.



Figure 54 | Done correctly, shopfronts can enliven and add character to the streetscene

## 6. Security

Security features, whilst vital for a business, can have a detrimental impact on the quality of a shopfront and streetscene. The use of external roller shutters and grilles can lead to visual clutter (through presence of shutter boxes) and, when closed lead to a dead and inactive street-scene. Furthermore, the use of alarm systems can introduce visual clutter onto a shopfront. Whilst a specialist should be consulted there are key

areas to consider when addressing security in shopfronts.

- Security should ideally be integrated into the design itself including, for example, appropriately sized and reinforced stall-risers and limiting the amount of glazing with mullions reducing the need for external shutters.
- If this is not possible external roller shutters or grilles should be the last resort, and usually resisted. A more appropriate solution would be internal open grilles which cover only the glazed part of the shopfront (i.e. above stallriser), though the shutter box should still be hidden.
- Alarms should not be visible on the shopfront but discretely integrated within or to the side of a building.



Above: Poor quality roller shutters: external shutters create inactive frontages outside of business hours.  
Below: Internal perforated shutters allow visibility, light and interest



Figure 55 | Security features: roller shutters