Vale of White Horse District Council

Design Guide

March 2015

Foreword

One of the best things about living in the Vale is its special mix of rural villages and thriving market towns, alongside high-tech and cutting edge businesses; all set against a backdrop of beautiful countryside with a rich history and heritage.

As the Vale's planning authority, an important job of ours is to protect all of that. One of the ways we'll do so is by making sure housing developers build high-quality, well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. That's where this Design Guide comes in.

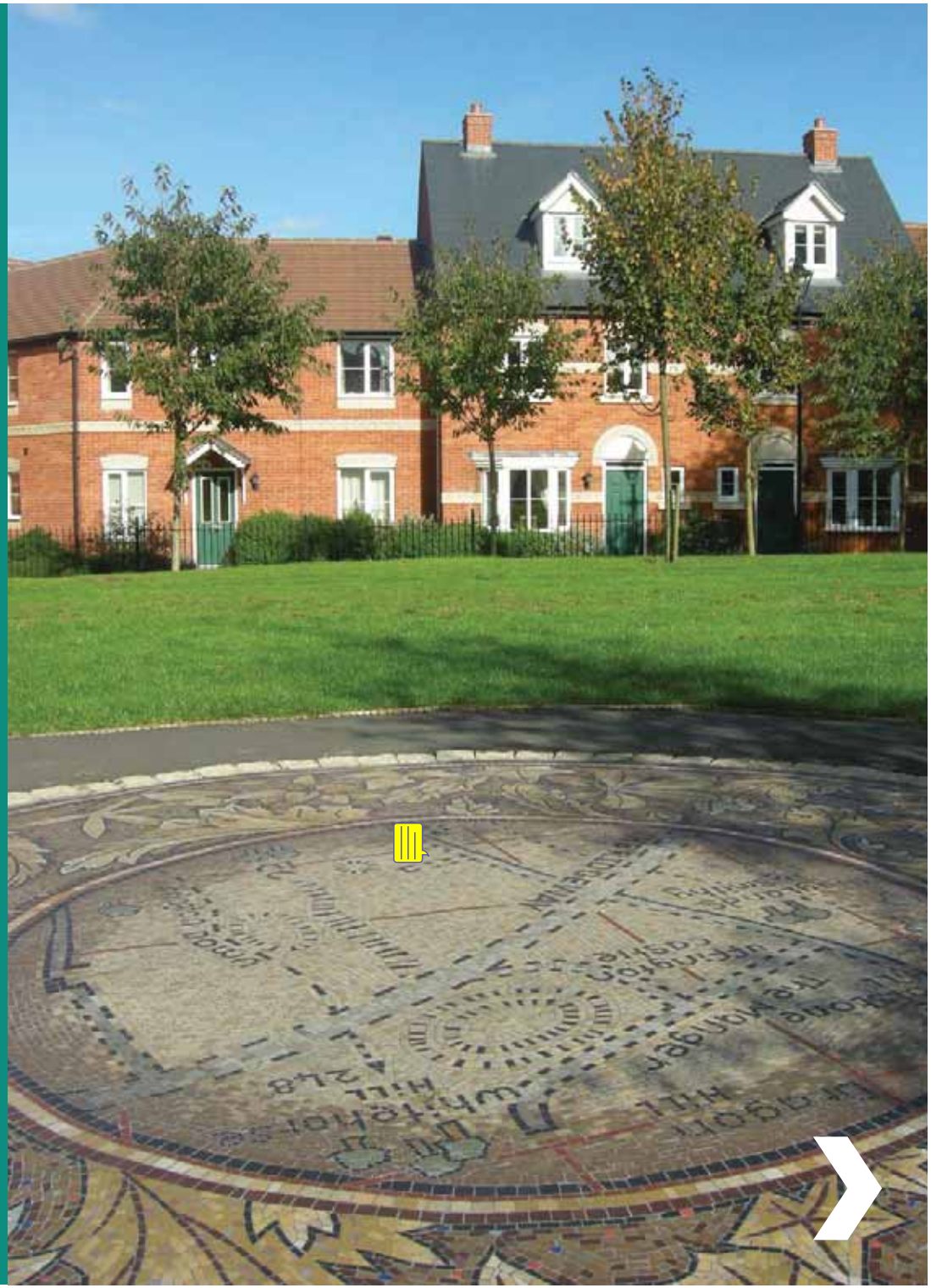
Our old Design Guide was only relevant for residential developments up to 15 houses. It now applies to all sizes and types of developments so we can make sure the larger new communities that are being planned will be designed to a high quality. It also means new employment areas or shops and community facilities meet the high standards we all expect.

We've redeveloped the approach of the guide too. Rather than just being a reference document, it is an interactive, step by step system that we'll be insisting developers use when planning homes and neighbourhoods in the Vale. Each section is followed by a checklist so developers can make sure they've done everything they need to.

Our planning officers will be using the same document and the same checklist when they're assessing planning applications.

The Vale is a reasonably diverse district, so we don't believe in a one-size-fits-all approach. Our Design Guide will make sure developments are in keeping with their immediate surroundings and communities. The approach is to make sure developments fit the character of their local area, to make sure they look like they belong there.

The importance of well-designed neighbourhoods and areas of employment are well documented. To put it simply, good quality developments create better and more prosperous places to live. That's what we want for the Vale, and this Design Guide will help us make that happen.



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PREFACE

The Vale of White Horse Design Guide sets out clear design principles to guide future development within the District and to encourage a design-led approach to development.

The aim of this guide is to inspire designers to rise to the challenge to deliver high quality, well designed buildings, streets and spaces that are in keeping with their environment and respond to the challenge to deliver sustainable development.

The Design Guide consists of principles (highlighted throughout the document) that development should adhere to. This is accompanied by descriptive text, general guidance and illustrations supporting these principles.

The guidance applies to all planning applications from a significant residential extension with several hundred new homes through to a modest extension to an existing home. In that context it is not anticipated or expected that all applicants will read the entire document.

The Design Guide is sub-divided into eleven sections that cover ~~from~~ strategic place making principles through to detailed guidance on building design.

These sections are:

- ~~0~~1 Introduction;
- ~~0~~2 Responding to the site and setting;
- ~~0~~3 Establishing the structure;
- ~~0~~4 Streets and spaces;
- ~~0~~5 Building design;
- ~~0~~6 Building in rural and lower density areas;
- ~~0~~7 Building performance;
- ~~0~~8 Mixed use centres;
- ~~0~~9 Commercial / employment areas;
- 10 Household extensions; and
- 11 Building conversions.

The adjacent table (Figure A) indicates the sections that are relevant to a range of application types.

Design Guide Section	Strategic housing developments and urban extensions	Major residential development (10 - 100 dwellings)	Infill developments (3-15 dwellings)	Schemes in rural or lower density areas	Commercial or employment	Mixed use scheme	Apartment blocks	Individual houses and ancillary buildings	Residential extensions	Building conversions
01 Introduction										
02 Responding to the site and setting										
03 Establishing the structure										
04 Streets and spaces										
05 Building design										
06 Buildings in rural and lower density areas										
07 Building performance										
08 Mixed use centres										
09 Commercial / employment areas										
10 Household extensions										
11 Building conversions										

Application type

Fig A: Design Guide matrix indicating relevance of document sections for application types

1 Introduction

The Vale of White Horse is a beautiful district rich in architecture and landscape quality. The villages and towns of the district are successful, lively settlements that generally convey a robust historic quality. This quality is recognised by the designation of over 2,000 listed buildings, 52 Conservation Areas, many landscape designations including an important section of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The district also has significant employment areas of national note including, Harwell and Milton Science Parks in Science Vale.

New development within the district should be of a quality that contributes to the success of settlements, contributes to a strong local economy and benefits existing residents, visitors and future generations. The design guide highlights the importance of a robust design process and careful consideration of context to create sustainable, successful, well-used places.

1 Introduction
Purpose of the Design Guide

Fig 1.1: Abingdon - Well designed historic dwellings overlooking the River Thames

> "The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people"
>
> NPPF Para 56

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This section outlines the purpose of the design guide and the value of good design. It explains how to use the document, its structure and the design process that should be undertaken by all applicants.

1.2 Purpose of the Design Guide

1.2.1 The Vale of White Horse District Council have prepared this guidance to set out clear design principles to guide future development within the District and to encourage a design-led approach to development.

1.2.2 This Design Guide aims to provide general guidance on the form that new development should take. This addresses a range of development types from new urban extensions and large residential developments to more modest residential extensions. It also covers the design of mixed-use areas, employment and commercial areas.

1.2.3 This document is intended to provide general guidance for the whole of the Vale however local areas can undertake their own study / Neighbourhood Plan to set out more detailed character analysis for a specific area.

1.3 The value of good design

1.3.1 The importance of design quality in creating successful places that people want to live and work in is well documented. Design matters because our lives are connected through the villages, towns and homes that we live, work and socialise in. Research by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and national guidance including the Urban Design Compendium have all demonstrated the link between good design and improved quality of life, equality of opportunity and economic growth:

- A well designed hospital will help patients get better more quickly;
- A well designed school will improve the educational achievement of its pupils;
- A well designed public realm increases retail rents;
- A well designed department store will have a direct impact on stock turnover; and
- A well designed neighbourhood will benefit from lower crime and higher house values.

1.3.2 The importance of design quality is also intrinsic to national planning policy with a clear mandate within the NPPF to deliver high quality built environments.

1.3.3 The test of whether this Design Guide is successful will be in the quality of development that comes forward in the Vale in the future.

1 Introduction
How to use the Design Guide

Fig 1.2: The Design Guide should be used as a working tool

1.4 Aims and objectives

1.4.1 The aim of this guide is to inspire designers to rise to the challenge to deliver high quality, well designed buildings, streets and spaces that are in keeping with their environment and respond to the challenge to deliver sustainable development.

1.5 How to use this Design Guide

1.5.1 This Design Guide is intended to be a design manual and a working tool. It is intended for frequent reference and will be essential for all charged with preparing or assessing the quality of planning applications.

1.5.2 The Design Guide should be read by:

- Developers and builders, in considering potential development proposals;
- Householders, considering residential extensions;
- Design professionals, in drawing up schemes for development;
- Development management officers, as a material consideration in assessing the suitability of applications;
- Town and parish councils, statutory and non-statutory consultees and the public in commenting on planning applications; and
- The Council, in determining planning applications and in upholding decisions at planning appeals.

1.5.3 Compliance with the design guide will help speed up the planning process by reducing the chance of objections due to poor design.

1.5.4 The Design Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and as such will be a material consideration in determining planning applications submitted to the Council. It carries considerable weight in decision-making, having been subject to scrutiny and amendment through the public consultation process.

1.5.5 The Design Guide consists of principles (highlighted throughout the document) that development should adhere to. This is accompanied by descriptive text, general guidance and illustrations supporting these principles.

1.5.6 The issues raised in each section are summarised in the Checklists. Applicants are required to address only those checklists appropriate to their application

1.5.7 Applicants will be required to provide a response to how the principles of this guide have been taken into account in the design of the development proposals. Where applicants feel it is essential to go against the advice in this guide they should demonstrate how their proposals are better meeting these urban design objectives.

1.5.8 The Design Guide is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. It is supplementary to the saved policies of the Local Plan 2011*. The Vale of White Horse District Council is currently preparing its Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic sites and policy. This Design Guide will support the implementation of the Local Plan once it is adopted and any other relevant Development Plan documents.

1.5.9 The relationship between the guidance, national planning policy and guidance and planning policy topic areas are referenced throughout the Design Guide.

***Saved Local Plan 2011 policies are identified here: http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/node/10175. Upon adoption of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 we will continue to reply upon the saved policies identified at Appendix G of the November 2014 Publication version of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1, until they are replaced by adoption in due course the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.**

1.6 Structure of the Design Guide

1.6.1 The Design Guide is an interactive PDF that will guide applicants through the document.

1.6.2 The document is split into eleven sections covering from strategic place making principles to more detailed guidance on building design. The interactive PDF will guide the applicant through the relevant sections depending on the scale and nature of the proposed development. This avoids applicants having to consider guidance which is not relevant to their application.

1.6.3 The flow chart demonstrates which sections are relevant to which type of application. Navigational tabs and process text will be used throughout the document for navigation.

1.6.4 Appended to this document are a number of additional sections providing further detail on key issues.

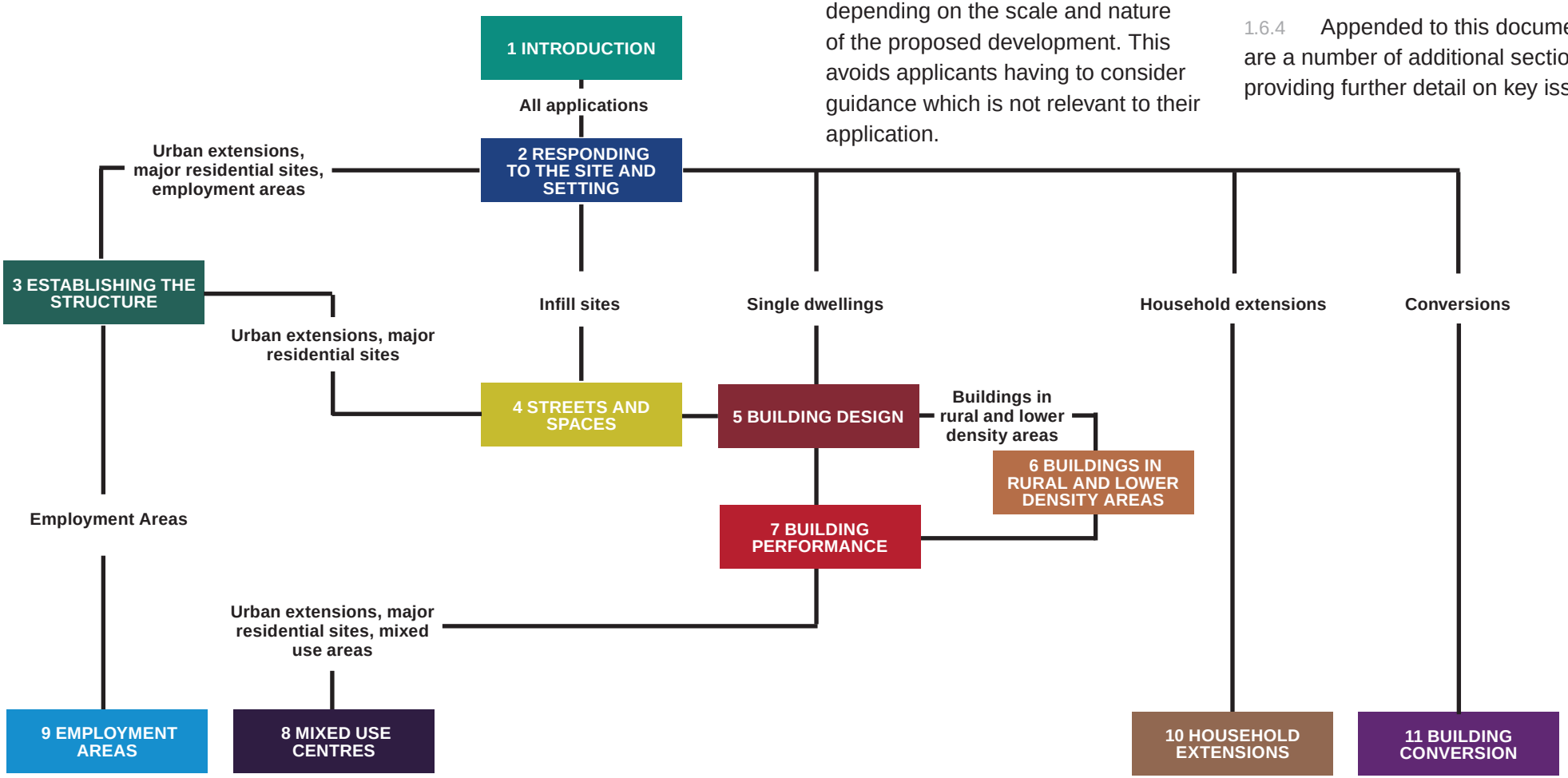


Fig 1.3: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

1 Introduction
Structure of the Design Guide

1.6.5 The guide is laid out in a consistent manner in each section for ease of use.

1.6.6 Principles are highlighted on each page to make it easier for applicants to understand what is required from them.

1.6.7 Navigational tabs and references are provided where appropriate to ease cross referencing within the document.

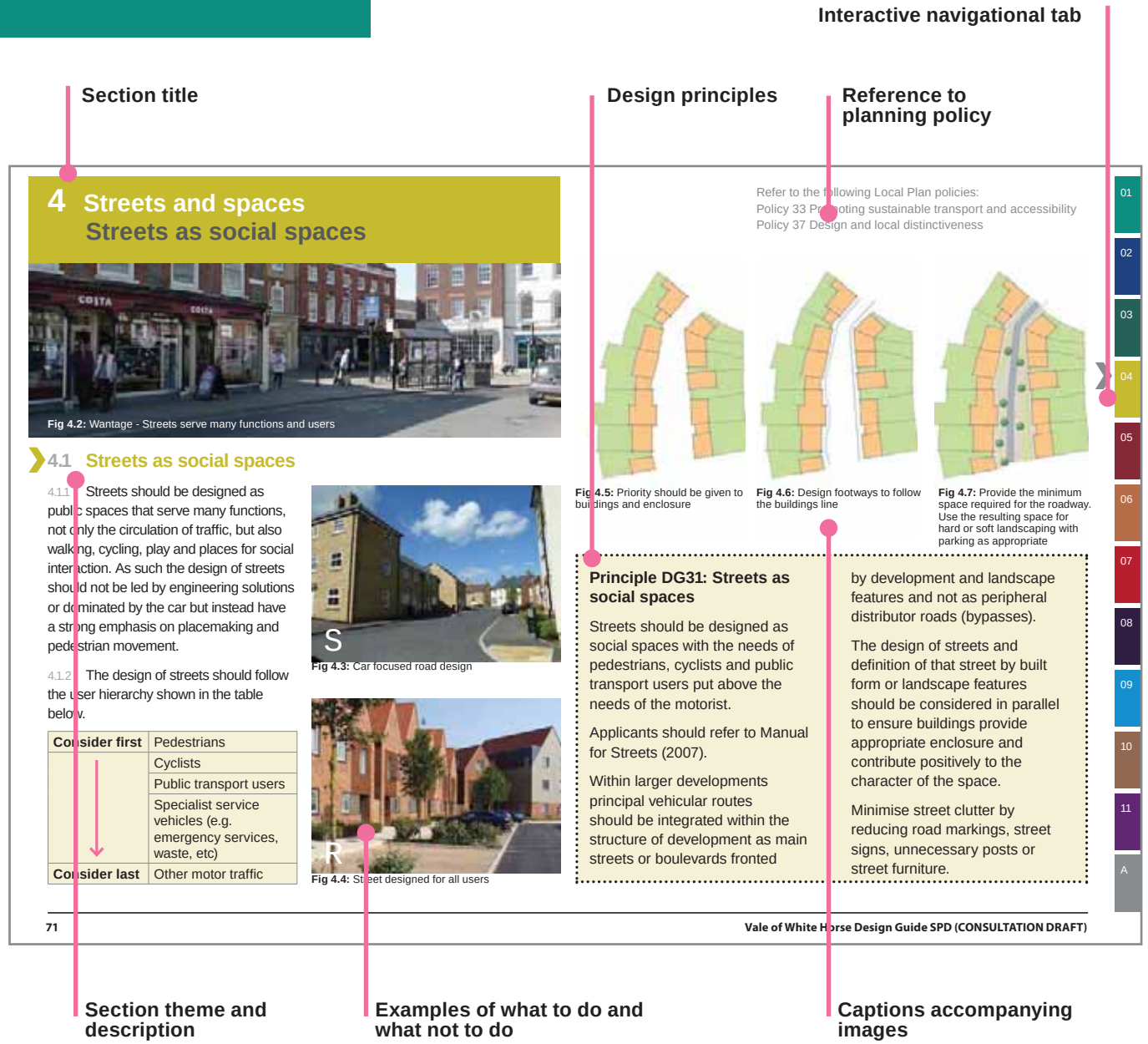


Fig 1.4: Typical page layout

1.7 The design process

1.7.1 The delivery of high quality development is dependent upon good design professionals undertaking a robust design process. A process which considers all relevant issues, constraints and opportunities, engages with key stakeholders and the public (where appropriate) and that through an iterative process applies creative thinking to translate these opportunities into development propositions. These propositions should respond to the site's surroundings and enhance the character of the area.

1.7.2 This section provides an overview of the key issues to be addressed at different stages in the design process and a checklist of submission requirements. These requirements will be dependent on the scale and complexity of the application.

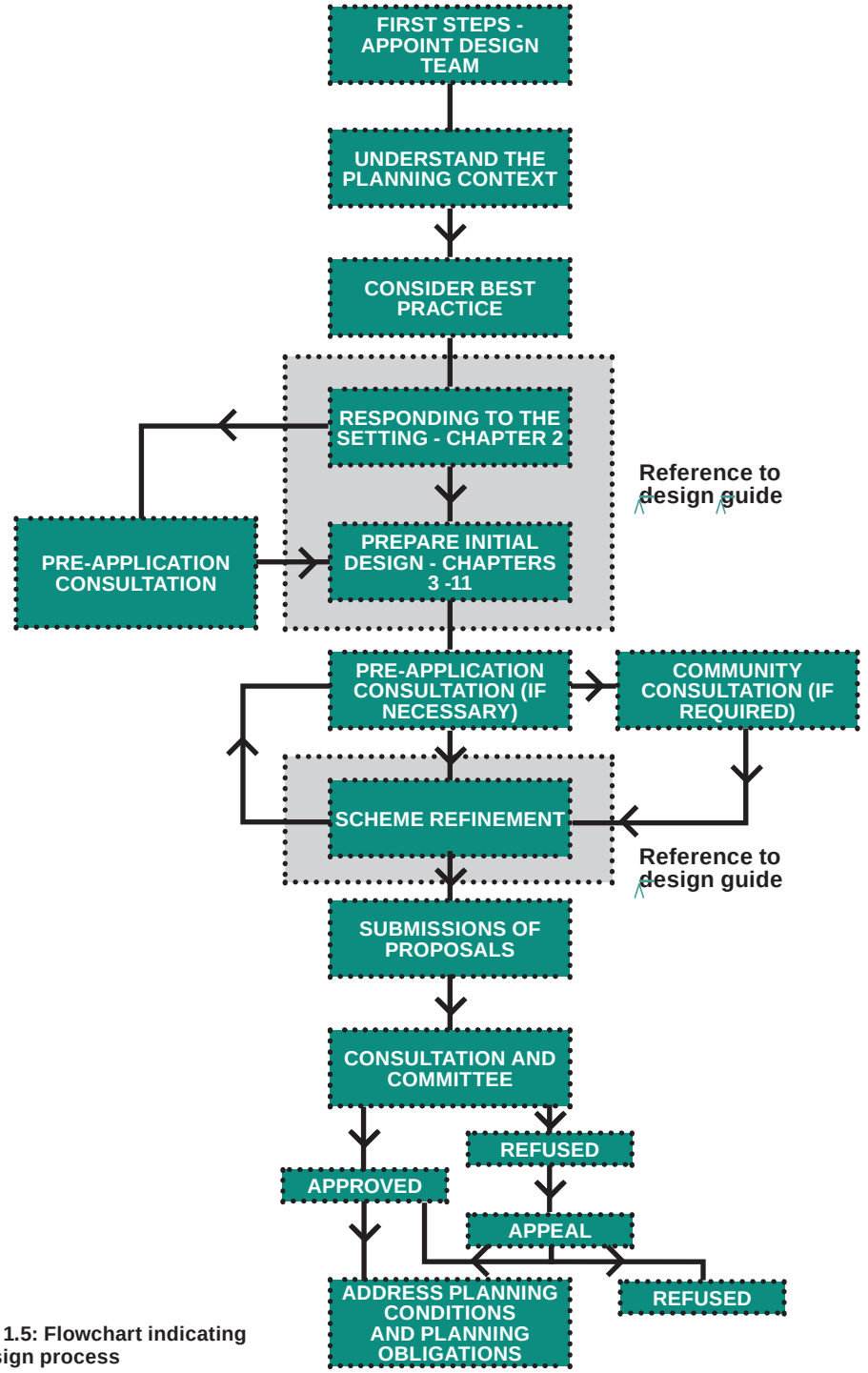


Fig 1.5: Flowchart indicating design process

First steps

1.7.3 It is important to understand the benefits of engaging skilled design professionals through the design process to ensure high-quality solutions. A design guide alone cannot produce good creative solutions: this is the job of a good creative professional.

1.7.4 The Vale of White Horse District Council strongly encourages householders, local builders, developers and any others commissioning design within the built environment to employ appropriate design professionals such as architects, landscape architects, arboricultural consultants, heritage consultants and urban designers.

1.7.5 Table 1.1 provides information on organisations that can assist with providing contact details for professionals.

Arboricultural Association Consultants List	The Malthouse, Stroud Green, Standish, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL103DL T: 44 (0)12 4252 2152 E: admin@trees.org.uk W: http://www.trees.org.uk/Directory-of-Arboricultural-Association-Registered-Consultants/
Architects Registration Board	8 Weymouth Street, London W1W 5BU T: +44 (0)20 7580 5861 F: +44 (0)20 7436 5269 E: info@arb.org.uk W: http://www.arb.org.uk/
Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management	43 Southgate Street, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 9EH T: +44(0)19 6286 8626 E: enquiries@cieem.net W: http://www.cieem.net/
Institute of Chartered Foresters Consultants List	59 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2JG T: +44 (0)13 1240 1425 F: +44 (0)13 1240 1424 E: icf@charteredforesters.org W: http://www.charteredforesters.org/directory-of-consultants/
Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers	De Morgan House, 58 Russell Square, London WC1B 4HS T: +44 (0)20 7436 7487 F: +44 (0)20 7436 7488 E: secretary@ihie.org.uk W: http://ihie.org.uk/
Institute of Historic Building Conservation	Jubilee House, High Street, Tisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6HA T: +44 (0)1747 873133 F: +44 (0)1747 871718 E: admin@ihbc.org.uk W: http://www.ihbc.org.uk/
Institution of Civil Engineers	One Great George Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3AA T: +44 (0)20 7222 7722 E: council@ice.org.uk W: http://www.ice.org.uk/
Institution of Highways and Transportation	6 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DZ T: +44 (0)20 7387 2525 F: +44 (0)20 7387 2808 E: info@iht.org W: http://www.ciht.org.uk/
Landscape Institute	33 Great Portland Street, London W1W 8QG T: +44 (0)20 7299 4500 F: +44 (0)20 7299 4501 E: mail@landscapeinstitute.org W: http://www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk/
North Wessex Downs AONB Office	Denford Manor, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 0UN T: +44 (0)1488 685440 E: info@northwessexdowns.org.uk W: http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/
Royal Institute of British Architects	66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD T: +44 (0)20 7580 5533 F: +44 (0)20 7251 1541 E: info@inst.riba.org W: http://www.architecture.com/RIBA/Home.aspx
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors	RICS Contact Centre, Surveyor Court, Westwood Way, Coventry CV4 8JE T: +44 (0)870 333 1600 F: +44 (0)20 7334 3811 E: contactrics@rics.org W: http://www.rics.org/uk/
Royal Town Planning Institute	41 Botolph Lane, London EC3R 8DL T: +44 (0)20 7929 9494 F: +44 (0)20 7929 9490 W: http://www.rtpi.org.uk/
Town and Country Planning Association	17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS T: +44 (0)20 7930 8903 F: +44 (0)20 7930 3280 W: http://www.tcpa.org.uk/
Trees and Design Action Group	E: sue.james1@virgin.net, tdagmidlands@gmail.com, southwest.fce.gsi.gov.uk W: http://www.tdag.org.uk/
Urban Design Group	70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ T: +44 (0)20 7250 0892 F: +44 (0)20 7250 0872 E: admin@udg.org.uk W: http://www.udg.org.uk/
Chartered Institute of Archaeologists	Miller Building, University of Reading, Reading, RG6 6AB T: +44 (0)118 378 6446 F: +44 (0)118 378 6448 E: admin@archaeologists.net W: http://www.archaeologists.net
National Register of Access Consultants	Fourth Floor, Holyer House, 20-21 Red Lion Court, London, EC4A 3EB T: +44 (0)20 7822 8282 E: info@nrac.org.uk W: http://www.nrac.org.uk

Table 1.1: Organisations that can advise on engaging design professionals

Understanding the planning context

1.7.6 National and local planning policies will influence whether a site is suitable for development and the form and nature of this development. The applicant should carry out a planning review of relevant planning policy documents depending on the nature and scale of the application.

1.7.7 Depending on the scale of development relevant statutory and non-statutory authorities and council officers should be consulted to understand their policies, requirements and initial advice. Relevant organisations are listed in Figure 1.6.

Permitted development

1.7.8 There are some forms of development that are classed as 'permitted development' and therefore do not need planning permission.

1.7.9 If you require any guidance in respect of what may or may not be permitted development you should contact the Council's planning department or the publication 'Permitted Development for Householders: Technical Guidance' (Department for Communities and Local Government, updated in April 2014, http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/100806_PDforhouseholders_TechnicalGuidance.pdf).

1.7.10 Even if you do not need to make a planning application, you should follow good design principles.

Consider best practice

1.7.11 In addition to planning policy, applicants should consider best practice in terms of sustainable design, creating better environments and the quality of the built form.

1.7.12 Further advice is available from the Homes and Communities Agency (www.homesandcommunities.co.uk) the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) (www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-services/built-environment) and English Heritage/Historic England publications; particularly Understanding Place series and Constructive Conservation series (http://www.helm.org.uk/guidance-library/). A list of best practice documents can be found in Appendix C.

Relevant Statutory Authorities and organisations:

- Natural England;
- North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Oxford County Council: access, drainage, highways, transport, rights of way, archaeology and cultural heritage, education, libraries etc;
- Historic England: Heritage Assets;
- Environment Agency: flooding, rivers and pollution;
- Utility companies;
- Police service: police liaison and crime prevention officer;
- Fire service; and
- Town and parish councils.

Fig 1.6: Organisations that might be relevant to consult to provide initial advice

1 Introduction
The design process

Responding to the setting Chapter 2

1.7.13 One of the fundamental objectives of this Design Guide is to ensure that new development respects, responds to and enhances the unique characteristics of the Vale. Section 2 of the Guide sets out the key principles and process to ensure development responds to its setting including:

- Identifying any planning designations;
- Considering the character of the site and the settlement within which it is located; and
- Establishing the constraints and opportunities.

1.7.14 Proposals for sites often have to work around difficult constraints or attractive features that should be retained. The challenge of good design is to resolve these in a way that still complies with the principles in this guide.

The Role of the Checklists

1.7.15 Checklists are provided at the end of each section in this document. The checklists are intended to act as prompts to applicants to ensure that the issues raised are considered at the right stage of the design process and to optimise the potential of the site to accommodate appropriate development. Not all checklists or all the issues raised in individual checklists will apply to every site and each case will be decided on its merits. Applicants are expected to demonstrate compliance where checklists do apply or robustly justify their proposals where a different approach has been taken.

Preparing initial design proposals Chapters 3 - 11

1.7.16 Applicants will be required to prepare initial design proposals in line with the relevant guidance throughout the Design Guide. These initial layouts/ designs should respond to the work carried out in Section 2 and have a clear relationship between the site's setting and the proposals put forward. The requirements for the initial design proposals will depend on the scale and nature of the application.

Pre-application consultation with the Vale of White Horse District Council

1.7.17 It is critical, particularly for larger and/or more complex applications that emerging proposals are discussed with planning officers at an early stage in the design process. This will avoid abortive work and is more likely to lead to a planning application which has general support.

1.7.18 The Government encourages positive engagement between developers/applicants and the council. The Council's Statement of Community Involvement stresses that the Council will welcome and provide opportunities for applicants or their agents to discuss development proposals with planning officers before they submit a planning application.

1.7.19 Pre-application discussions provide an excellent opportunity for issues to be highlighted and addressed at an early stage in the development process, thereby reducing the likelihood of delays later in the process. Pre-application discussions also provide an opportunity to discuss the information and level of detail required to accompany a particular planning application.

1.7.20 To find out more about this service refer to the council website and provide the information requested in the form. Click here http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/application-advice.

Community consultation

1.7.21 Depending on the scale and nature of the application it may be appropriate to carry out public consultation with the existing community.

1.7.22 Planning is a potentially contentious process as proposals can affect a wide range of people. The Government promotes a proactive approach to planning where community engagement and effective consultation are carried out prior to the submission of a planning application.

1.7.23 This can be used to gather views on key aspects of the site and its context which are considered important to the local community, views on initial options and ideas and to gain an understanding of any concerns that the community may have in relation to an application.

1.7.24 The council encourages all applicants and their agents to consult their neighbours before they submit a planning application. Where appropriate for larger applications, the council advises developers to consult more widely. There are a number of ways to consult or engage with town and parish councils, the community and other interested parties. Refer to the Vale's Statement of Community Engagement 2009 for further information.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Core Policy 37 - Design
Core Policy 38 - Major Development

Scheme refinement

1.7.25 The scheme should be refined in light of pre-application discussions and community consultation responses. It is the job of the applicant and the design team to review the design and to try to satisfy concerns.

1.7.26 Applicants will be expected to outline all consultation responses and how these have been considered.

Submission of proposals

1.7.27 The level of information that the council will require the applicant to submit as part of a planning application will depend on the scale and nature of the proposal. Reference should be made to the Validation Checklists on the council's website to understand the documents will need to be submitted. http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/8%20Validation%20Checklist%20for%20Planning%20and%20Listed%20Buildings.pdf

Assessment of Planning Applications

1.7.28 This Design Guide provides advice to support the policies in the Local Plan that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the district. The NPPF states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, whereas compliance with the guidance will help speed up the planning process.

Design Review

1.7.29 The council may consider offering design review when appropriate, preferably at the pre-application stage or as part of the assessing the planning application. The purpose of Design Review is to improve the design quality of new development. In assessing applications, the council will have regard to the recommendations from the Design Review panel.

1.8 Summary

1.8.1 Applicants should now understand the purpose and value of the Design Guide, its structure and the design process applicants should go through.

1.9 Next steps

1.9.1 Section 2, 'Responding to the Site and Setting' outlines the councils requirements on how applicants should assess the context and character of their site to ensure that new development will respect, respond to and enhance the unique characteristics of the Vale.

1.9.2 The applicant will be required to demonstrate a clear link between the assessment of their sites context, character, any applicable designations, and physical constraints and opportunities and the design concept/proposal set out in the Design and Access Statement.

2 Responding to the site and setting

The Vale of White Horse is an historic and beautiful district, with large tracts of its landscape and townscape protected for their special qualities.

One of the fundamental objectives of this Design Guide is to ensure that new development respects, responds to and enhances the unique characteristics of the Vale. To ensure that new development shares common characteristics with its locality, integrates and functions as a natural part, or extension, of existing settlements and contributes in a positive manner to the character of the Vale.

2 Responding to the site and setting
Introduction

Fig 2.1: Wytham - A rural village context

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The previous section outlined the purpose and value of the design guide, its structure and the design process applicants should follow in developing their proposals.

2.1.2 Section 2, 'Responding to the site and setting' outlines the councils requirements on how applicants should assess the context and character of their site to ensure that new development will respect, respond to and enhance the unique characteristics of the Vale.

2.1.3 The applicant must understand and respond to the specific context of their site and appreciate that the application of the principles within the guide will differ depending on the location within the District.

2.1.4 The applicant will be required to demonstrate a clear link between their appraisal of the context, any applicable planning designations, the character of their site, physical constraints and opportunities and their development proposals. This link or rationale will need to be articulated through the Design and Access Statement that will support their planning application.

2.1.5 This section sets out the process that an applicant will be expected to follow to understand the context and character of their site and establish the constraints and opportunities that will guide their proposals.

2.1.6 Fig. 2.2 identifies the steps required in this process. The resulting information will then form the basis on which development proposals should respond to.

IDENTIFY PLANNING DESIGNATIONS: (REFER TO SECTION 2.2)

↓

PREPARE A CHARACTER STUDY (REFER TO SECTION 2.3)

↓

IDENTIFY CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES (REFER TO SECTION 2.4)

Fig 2.2 Flowchart indicating the process that applicants should follow in order to 'Respond to the Site and Setting'

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 13 The Oxford Green Belt
Policy 39 The Historic environment

2.2 Identify planning designations

2.2.1 The environment of the Vale is protected by a number of designations, including Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Green Belt, Listed Buildings and conservation areas' which seek to preserve the area's natural and built environment for future generations.

2.2.2 Fig 2.3 illustrates the location of many of these designations across the District. The figure should not be seen as definitive and applicants should carry out their own desktop analysis referring to the Vale of White Horse Council website for further details

Principle DG1: Designations

Applicants should clearly identify whether the site lies within or in the setting of any statutory or non-statutory designation. Any development proposals within or in the setting of one or more of these designations will be required to demonstrate how the proposals respond to nation and local policies relevant to that particular designation.

Fig 2.3: Designations across the Vale - Map subject to change

2 Responding to the setting
Planning designations

Fig 2.4: Dragon Hill - Within the AONB with views across the district

Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

2.2.3 The North Wessex Downs, together with part of the Greensand Ridge, fall within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a nationally protected landscape under the CRoW Act 2000. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and the scenic beauty of the AONB, and the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations.

Principle DG2: AONB

Applicants with sites within and/or abutting the North Wessex Downs AONB must accord with relevant criteria set out in the AONB Management Plan and Paragraphs 115-116 of the NPPF. Proposals outside the AONB should not adversely affect its setting.

2.2.4 Secondary aims are to meet the need for quiet enjoyment of the countryside and to respect the interests of those who live and work there. Refer to http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk for further information.

Green Belt

2.2.5 Green Belt is a policy and land use designation set out in the NPPF used to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

2.2.6 The Oxford Green Belt was designated to prevent unrestricted sprawl, safeguard the countryside from encroachment, prevent merging of neighbouring towns, preserve the setting and special character or historic towns and villages and assist urban generation.

Principle DG3: Green Belt

Applicants with sites within the Green Belt must accord with relevant criteria set out in Paragraphs 79-92 of the NPPF.

Listed Buildings

2.2.7 There are over 2,000 statutorily listed buildings in the Vale, graded I, II* and II. These are designated by central government on the advice of English Heritage and are chosen for their special architectural or historic interest. Refer to http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/conservation-and-listed-buildings/listed-buildings

2.2.8 Listed building consent is required for any alterations (including demolition works and internal alterations and repairs) which affect the special interest of a listed building.

Principle DG4: Listed Buildings

This design guide will not override listed building considerations. Listed building consent will be required for most applications to alter or extend a listed building in any way.

Applicants should review guidance from English Heritage and/or seek advice from the Vale's conservation officer.

Development proposals that have an adverse effect on the setting of listed buildings will need to balance the harm against the public benefit.

Conservation Areas

2.2.9 There are 52 Conservation Areas in the Vale which have been designated because of their special architectural or historic interest.

2.2.10 Conservation Area designation is intended to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of that area. Attention to design is particularly important when working in Conservation Areas to avoid any detrimental impact from new development.

2.2.11 The District has a number of adopted Conservation Area Appraisals which are listed in Appendix D. For further details please refer to: http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/conservation-and-listed-buildings/conservation-areas

Principle DG5: Conservation Areas

Applicants with sites in or adjacent to Conservation Areas should refer to the respective Conservation Area appraisal and/or local plan policies on Historic Environments and clearly demonstrate that proposals are in line with this guidance.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

2.3 Character Study

2.3.1 Having identified planning designations, applicants requiring a Design and Access Statement must then prepare a Character Study that identifies the context within which the application site is set. This should consider the structure and history of the settlement within which it is located or relates, the character of the landscape, the streets and spaces and the built form.

Prepare a Character Study

2.3.2 Vale of White Horse District Council will require a Character Study to be carried out for any development proposal, irrespective of scale. The objective of the Character Study is to identify, analyse and describe in a systematic and objective way, those elements, or combination of elements, that help to form the character of a place. Elements may be drawn from the immediate surroundings or (where relevant) from adjacent settlements or landscapes within the Vale.

2.3.3 The level of detail in the study should be related to the scale of the development proposals. A proposal for a large scale urban extension should be supported by an extensive study to consider the extension in the context of the region, the existing settlement and its movement and green space network, carefully considering how the development would integrate with and enhance the settlement. Whereas an application for infill development or single dwelling may just consider the character of the street and the neighbouring properties to inform how the development can successfully complement the streetscene.

2.3.4 Sites where the character may not be desirable to replicate should consider adjacent areas or settlements and draw from those elements which help make the Vale a distinctive place.

2.3.5 Some of the elements to consider in a Character Study are indicated in the example that is set out on the pages that follow. This example is indicative only and should not be considered as the full scope of a Character Study.

2.3.6 The checklists at the end of Section 2 provide guidance on the appropriate scope and subject areas for the Character Study relating to the scale of development.

Principle DG6: Character Study

Applicants must prepare a Character Study that identifies the context within which the application site is set. This should consider the structure and history of the settlement within which it is located or relates, the character of the landscape, the streets and spaces and the built form.

The Character Study will help to guide and inform the proposals that are prepared later in the design process and applicants will be required to demonstrate how the study informs the design proposals.

The Character Study should identify the existing characteristics that can help to reinforce local identity and/or create a defined sense of place.

The Character Study will form part of the Design and Access Statement that supports a planning application.

2 Responding to the site and setting
Character Study

Consider the context

2.3.7 The starting point for the Character Study is a consideration of the wider context of the applicants site. The applicant must appreciate that the application of the principles within the guide will differ depending on the location of the site within the District. Character Study tool kits such as English Heritage's Place Check may assist applicants and communities in undertaking character assessments

2.3.8 Within the District there are broadly five main settlement contexts:

- **Rural context:** Isolated dwellings, country estates and small groups of dwellings such as hamlets and farm buildings. In these locations landscape is the dominant feature with the building situated within the countryside;
- **Rural village context:** Villages that display both rural and urban qualities. Buildings are loosely clustered to define space in key locations such as around nodes, main streets and defining important spaces (eg village greens). Elsewhere, landscape features and structures define the space with buildings being secondary.
- As the focal point of settlement in some cases in evidence over the last millennium, the villages also have potential to be important areas for archaeological interest;
- **The urban context:** ~~Towns and villages where the buildings are the dominant feature and define a series of streets, squares, alleys and courts which define the character of larger historic towns and villages. The landscape takes a complementary role within this context but adds significantly to the character.~~ Towns and villages where the buildings, the hierarchy and mix of uses and the public realm are the dominant features and delineate a series of streets, squares, alleys and courts~~, which defines the character of larger historic towns and villages~~. The landscape takes a complementary role within this context but adds significantly to the character. Archaeological interest is likely to be high in the urban context;.
- **Suburban context:** Much of the 20th century development in the Vale is suburban. In these areas neither the building form nor landscape are dominant and the public realm is often dominated by estate roads and car hard standings.

Fig 2.5: Rural context with landscape as the dominant feature

Fig 2.6: Rural village context where buildings are loosely clustered to define the village core

Fig 2.7: Urban context where the buildings are the dominant feature and define a series of streets

- Whilst buildings usually front the streets frontages are fragmented by gaps and buildings are often too loosely grouped or of insufficient height to enclose the street space; and

Principle DG7: Site context

As part of the Character Study applicants should carry out a context appraisal that identifies the broad context within which their site is located and this should inform their development proposals.

Fig 2.8: Suburban context which is neither defined by the landscape nor the buildings

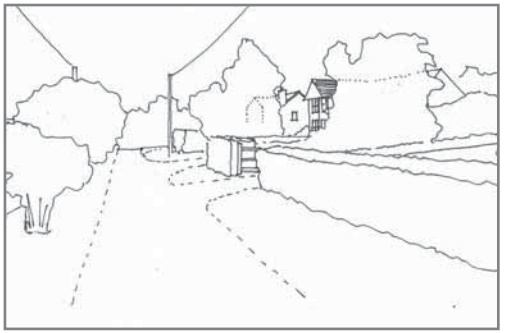


Fig 2.9: Lower density suburban where the landscape is an important setting for buildings

- **Lower density suburban:** Characterised by large residential properties set within relatively large well landscaped grounds. In these areas the landscape and mature vegetation is an important component of the areas character.

Consider the landscape and settlement character

2.3.9 The character of the District is diverse and complex due to its differing geology, landform, landscape characteristics and the way in which the existing settlements respond to these conditions.

2.3.10 The Vale of White Horse can be divided into broad character zones, taking into account the factors above. Further detail is provided in Appendix E: Vale of White Horse Settlement and Landscape Character.

2.3.11 Applicants should consider this as a starting point for carrying out the Character Study. However this should not be used as an alternative for a more thorough on-site analysis.

2.3.12 Further information can be obtained from national and regional Landscape Character Assessments including the National Landscape Character Area Profiles, AONB Landscape Character Assessment, the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study. County Historic Landscape Characterisation will also be available.

2.3.13 Further advice on assessing the landscape character and the visual impact of larger development can be obtained from "An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment" by Nature England and "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment" by the Landscape Institute.

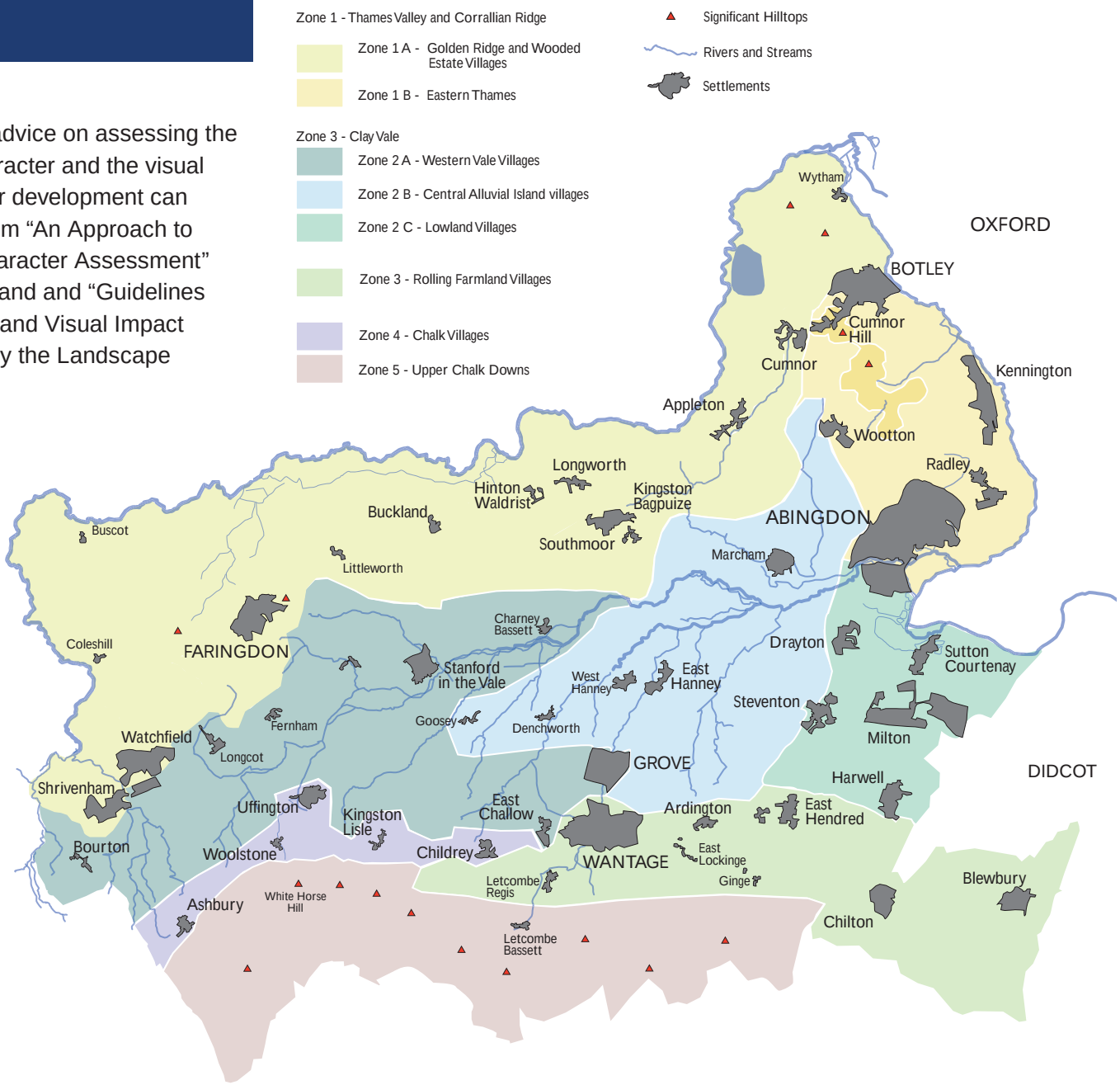


Fig 2.10: Settlement and Landscape Character Zones in the Vale

2.3.14 **Zone 1: Thames Valley and Corallian Ridge** covers approximately one third of the land area of the Vale. The area follows the path of the River Thames, which bounds the District to the north and east. Here, the landscape is a mixture of water meadows on the lower lying land and pasture on slightly higher ground. To the south is the Corallian or Golden Ridge, a higher area of land along the crest of which lie various settlements.

2.3.15 The zone contains many areas of deciduous woodland, including some ancient woodlands, particularly along the Corallian Ridge and in the north-eastern corner of the Vale. In the east, the proximity to Oxford allowed for a wide variety of building materials to be transported into the District. In the west, until the railway connected into Faringdon, materials were restricted to those that were available locally. This meant less influence by external factors and fashions in favour of traditional materials such as limestone, stone slates and thatch.

Fig 2.11: Zone 1

Fig 2.12: The area is, in part, shaped by its relationship with the River Thames

Fig 2.13: Within the east a variety of building materials are utilised

Fig 2.14: Within the west more traditional materials prevail

2.3.16 **Zone 2: The Clay Vale** is the largest of the character zones. It is a broad low-lying area of Kimmeridge and Gault Clays, with fields predominantly used as pastureland. Throughout the Clay Vale, Willow trees lie along the river valleys and streams.

2.3.17 Historically, it was a quiet rural area of self sufficient villages and hamlets. Between 1790 and 1840 significant changes took place due to the arrival of the canal and railway, which led to materials being imported into the area from further afield.

2.3.18 During this period a number of brickworks were set up in the area to take advantage of the rich clay soils. Brick replaced stone as the principal building material and was used in the construction of new dwellings, the repair of older buildings and to add detailing such as quoins and window surrounds to stone buildings.

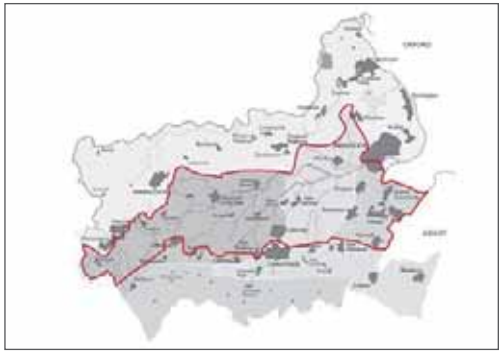


Fig 2.15: Zone 2

Fig 2.16: This area consists of expansive farmland and pastures

Fig 2.17: The area generally consists of smaller settlements and hamlets

2.3.19 **Zone 3: Rolling Farmland Villages** stretches from Letcombe Regis in the west to Blewbury in the east, and from East Hendred in the north to the southern boundary of the Vale. The Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand is a transitional landscape area, situated between the Chalk Downs and the flat Clay Vale. This area of Greensand becomes broader in the east of the District.

2.3.20 From Wantage to Blewbury, the Lower Chalk forms a broad plateau below the Downs which is particularly evident to the north of East Hendred. Here, the landscape is dominated by open arable fields with limited hedgerows. In other areas the Lower Chalk spreads out and creates small valleys, forming an undulating landscape below the Downs, such as around the hamlet of Ginge.

2.3.21 The villages in Zone 3 are situated at the edge of the northern scarp of the North Wessex Downs. They are located along a spring line running through an area of Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand. The built environment in Zone 3 includes a mix of small hamlets and the second largest settlement in the Vale, Wantage.

Fig 2.18: Zone 3

Fig 2.19: landscape is dominated by undulating pastures and open arable fields

Fig 2.20: Outside Wantage the settlements comprise of small villages and hamlets

Fig 2.21: Wantage has a distinct urban character within this area

2.3.22 **Zone 4: Chalk Villages** along the Spring Line stretches from the west of East Challow to Idstone. The villages open out to the south onto a steeply rising landscape with large open fields. In other areas the Lower Chalk spreads out and with its small valleys forms an undulating landscape. Near Uffington the Lower Chalk narrows to form a ledge.

2.3.23 The Icknield Way runs at the foot of the Lower Chalk where the Chalk meets the Greensand. Watercourses drain from springs towards the River Ock. The area around the Upper Greensand and the lower slopes of the Lower Chalk is characterised by considerable tree cover and a gentler landscape than the Upper Chalk Downland.

2.3.24 Zone 4 is characterised by small settlements, with Uffington being the largest. The character of the villages is distinctly rural, typically comprising informal cottages and farmsteads, although some villages include large Manor houses.

Fig 2.22: Zone 4

Fig 2.23: The character of settlements within this area is distinctly rural

Fig 2.24: The area comprises of informal clusters of buildings and farmsteads.

2.3.25 **Zone 5: the Upper Chalk Downs** is characterised by large open fields. There are numerous woodland areas, including mixed and deciduous plantations. Larger areas of deciduous woodland are found at the western end of the zone, in the vicinity of Ashdown Park, including some areas of ancient woodland.

2.3.26 The north-facing escarpment of the North Wessex Downs is prominent. The Ridgeway, Britain's oldest road, runs along the top of the downs and includes a number of nationally important archaeological sites such as White Horse Hill and Waylands Smithy.

2.3.27 Zone 5 is sparsely settled, with only one settlement of any size, Letcombe Bassett. The remaining built environment comprises a mix of farmsteads and the notable Ashdown House.

2.3.28 Further details on the character areas above Can be found in Appendix E: Vale of White Horse Character.

Fig 2.25: Zone 5

Fig 2.26: The area is largely designated as AONB with the White Horse Hill a key landmark

Fig 2.27: Ashdown House

Principle DG8: Landscape and settlement character

As part of the Character Study applicants must identify the landscape character within which their site is located and consider how this might influence and guide their development proposals.

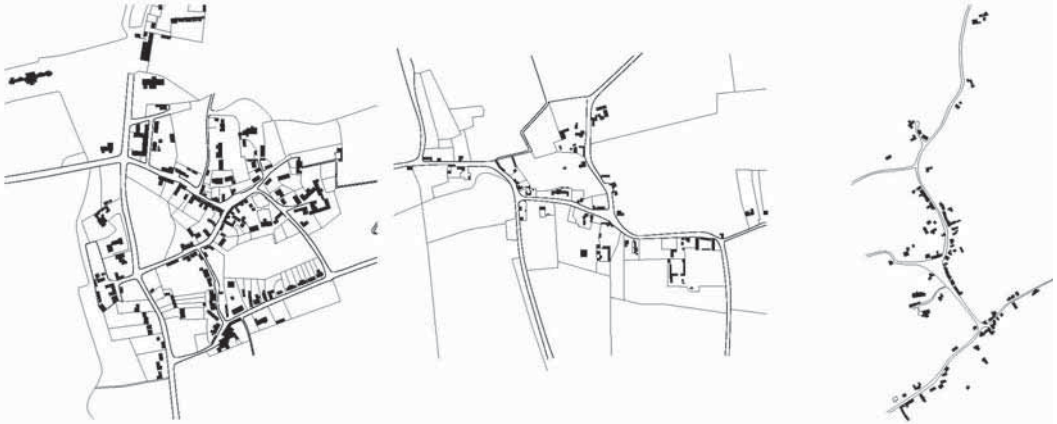


Fig 2.28: Figure ground plans of Buckland, Longworth and Stanford in the Vale show a different settlement form which helps to define the feel and character

Traditional Settlement Patterns

2.3.29 The settlement patterns in the Vale can be arranged into four different types, each of which has evolved over time.

2.3.30 **Nucleated settlements** are compact, with development concentrated in the core. Historically, the core would have been formed around a significant building such as a manor house or a church.

Fig 2.29: Nucleated settlement

2.3.31 **Poly-focal settlements** have development concentrated in more than one core. These cores would have developed around several important buildings, such as a church or manor house. This historic settlement pattern is frequently eroded because of later development filling the gaps between the original cores. In villages where the original gaps still exist, they can make an important contribution to the character of the settlement.

Fig 2.31: Poly-focal settlement

2.3.32 **Linear settlements** have a distinctive ribbon form. Development is concentrated along a primary road, with less development on smaller side roads. The depth of development in linear settlements is generally narrow, which allows views of the surrounding countryside from within the settlement.

Fig 2.30: Linear settlement

2.3.33 **Dispersed settlements** have evolved around separate original manors or separate farm groups forming foci for development. Open land is also a key component of dispersed settlements. As with poly-focal settlements, later infill can reduce the openness of these settlements.

Fig 2.32: Dispersed settlement

2 Responding to the site and setting
Character Study example

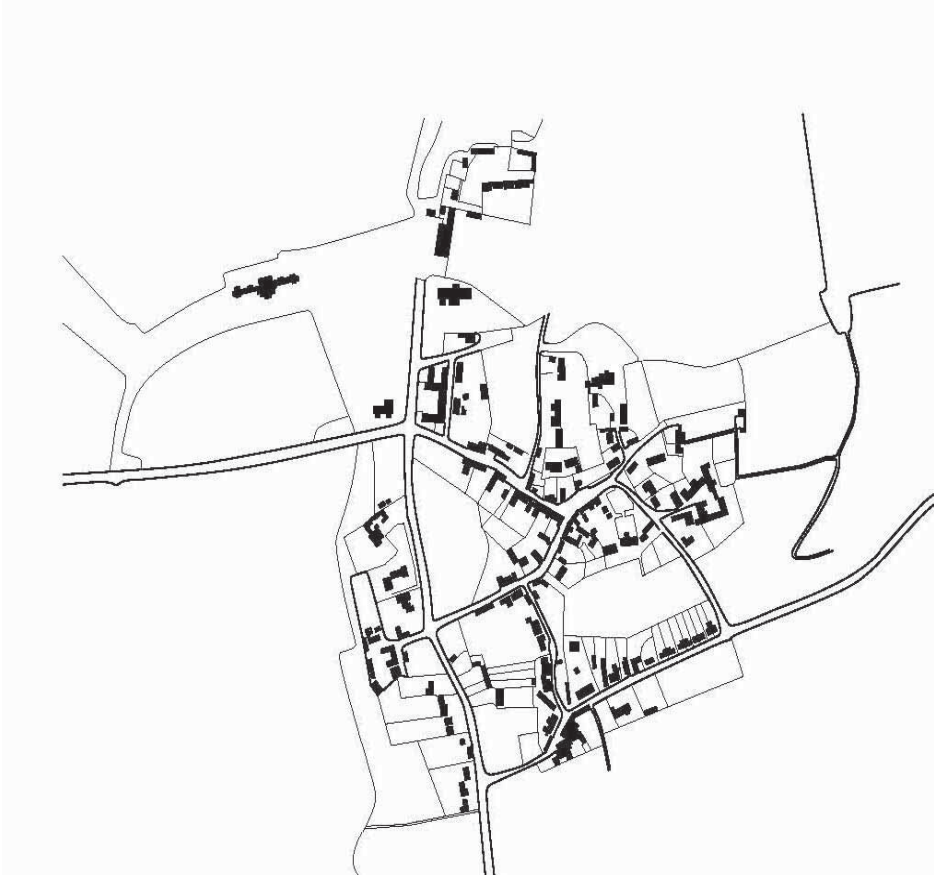
Overview

Buckland is a small settlement to the north of the Vale of White Horse District. This example Character Study indicates some of the elements to consider in a Character Study. This example is indicative only and should not be considered as the full scope of a Character Study.

History

- Buckland Village dates back to AD 1000
- Many of the houses were built to support Buckland Manor
- The settlement is formed around the convergence of a number of lanes which provide a connected network of routes

Fig 2.33: Historic figure ground plan indicating structure and grain of development (1890)



Settlement structure and pattern

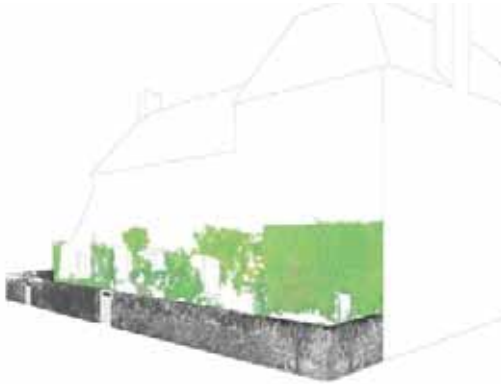
- Figure ground plan indicates that the historic pattern of streets and grain of development remains largely intact
- Intensification has focused around key routes

Fig 2.34: Figure ground plan indicating structure and grain of development (2014)

2 Responding to the site and setting
Character Study example

Landscape character

- Existing properties are set within a landscaped setting with significant areas of common land creating a green setting for the village

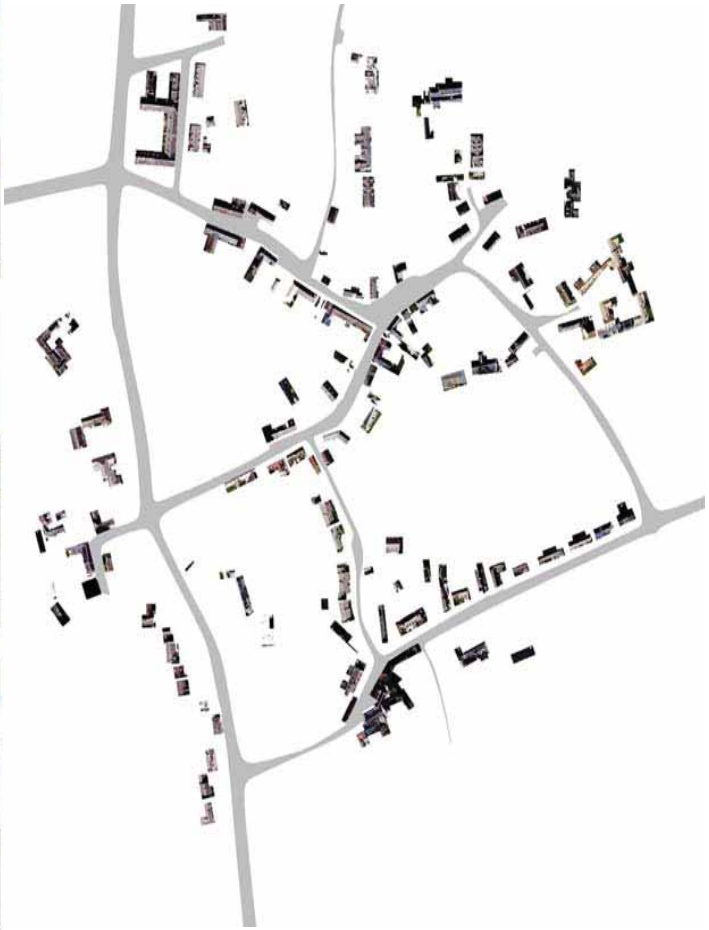


Private gardens

- Properties have substantial back gardens
- Front gardens are often defined by a low stone wall

Fig 2.35: The location and character of green spaces

2 Responding to the site and setting
Character Study example



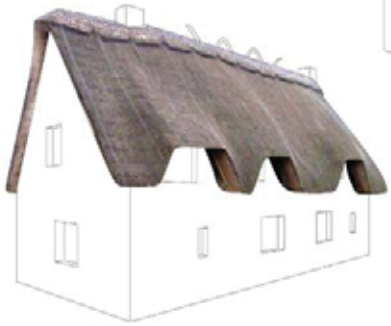
Building frontage and interface

- Orientation of buildings varies with some fronting the street and others and others addressing the street with the end gable

Fig 2.36: Building frontage diagram

Windows

- Consider the location, size and arrangement of windows



Roofscape

- Dormer windows and 'room in the loft' typologies are common
- Predominantly stone buildings with slate roofs or thatched

Building form

- Consider building massing and pitch of roofs

Fig 2.37: Architectural features

2 Responding to the site and setting
Site Appraisal

Fig 2.38: Constraints such as overhead pylons will have a significant impact on any development

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Principle DG9: Site Appraisal

Applicants must carry out a Site Appraisal that identifies the physical aspects of their site and identifies key constraints and opportunities that will help to inform their proposal.

The Site Appraisal will form part of the Design and Access Statement that supports a planning application.

2.4 Site Appraisal

2.4.1 Having identified any planning designations relevant to their site and prepared a Character Study applicants should then carry out a detailed Site Appraisal to consider the physical aspects of their site, including topography, drainage, existing natural features, and access points in order to identify the key constraints and opportunities that may impact on future development.

2.4.2 The objective of this Site Appraisal is to identify, in spatial terms, those constraints that will influence the design and the opportunities afforded by the site.

2.4.3 Some of the elements to consider in a Site Appraisal are indicated in the example that is set out on the pages that follow. This example is indicative only and should not be considered as the full scope of a Site Appraisal.

2.4.4 The scope and areas covered in the Site Appraisal should be related to the scale of the development proposals.

2.4.5 ~~A~~ checklist ~~is provided~~ at the end of Section 2 ~~that~~ provides guidance on the appropriate scope and subject areas for the Site Appraisal. This should not be considered as an exhaustive list of the ~~C~~onstraints and ~~O~~pportunities but rather a starting point for consideration.

Potential constraints and opportunities for consideration as part of the Site Appraisal

This is not an exhaustive list but a starting point for consideration

- Topography and views
- Geology and ground conditions
- Site orientation and microclimate
- Air quality and noise
- Drainage, hydrology and flood risk
- The location and capacity of existing services
- The history and heritage of the site and the potential for archaeological significant artifacts
- Existing landscape features that are of value
- Trees covered by Tree Protection Orders (TPO's)
- Ecological sensitive habitats and biodiversity
- Site access
- Rights of way or opportunities to connect and integrate with the existing development pattern

Refer also to the Checklist at the end of Section 2.

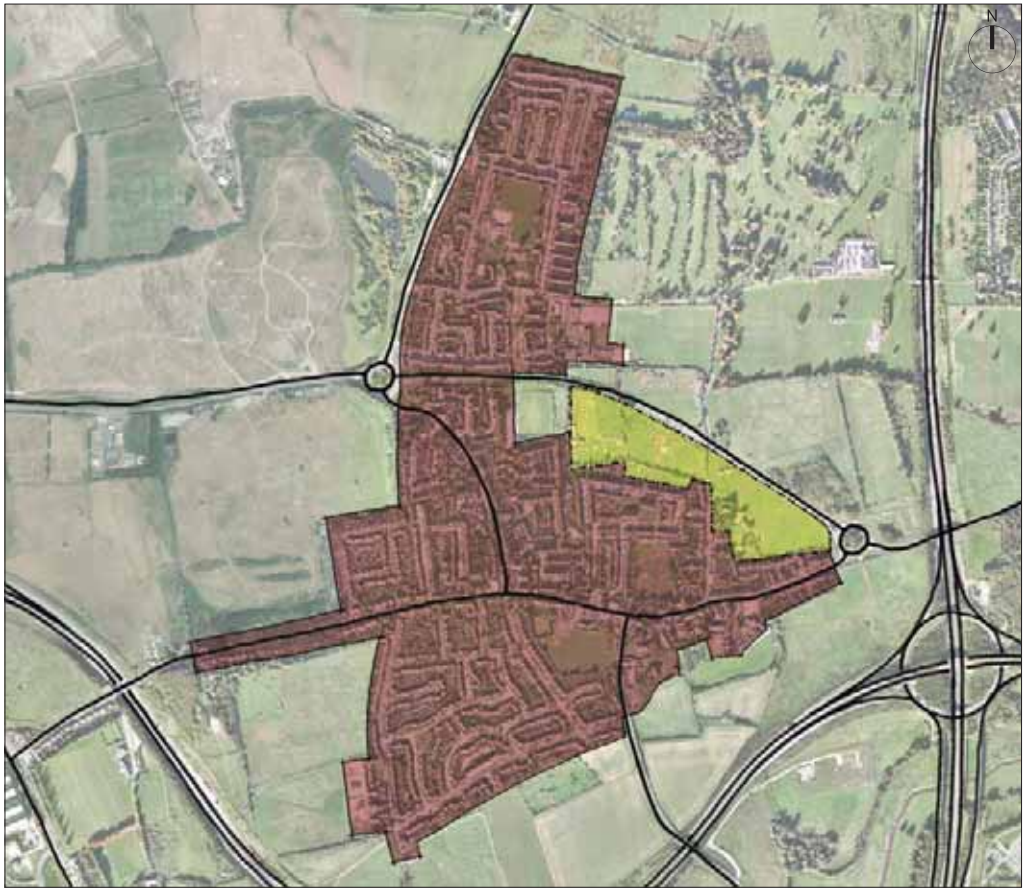


Fig 2.39: Plan showing a potential housing site area (yellow) within an existing settlement, Aveley in Essex (Pink)

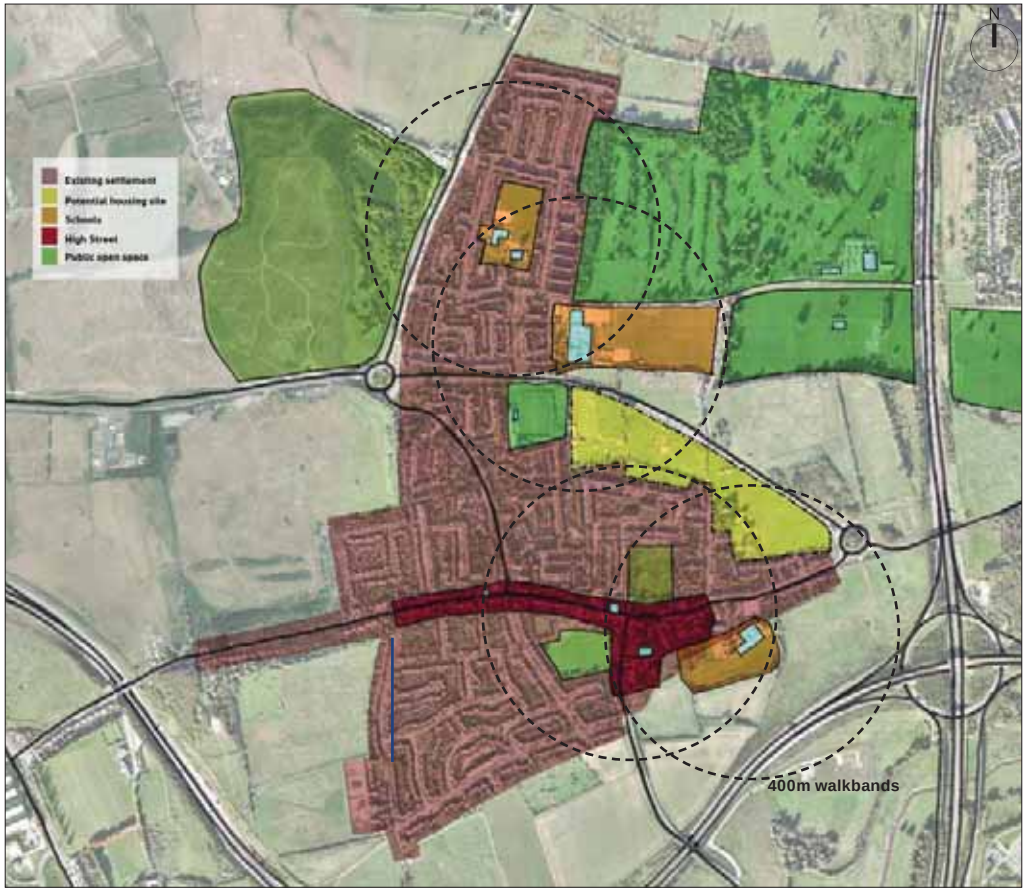


Fig 2.40: Plan indicating the sites context

Overview

- Aveley is a small settlement in Essex
- It is set within an open agricultural landscape
- This example indicates some of the elements to consider in a Site Appraisal
- This example is indicative only and should not be considered as the full scope of a Site Appraisal

Context

- The linear village centre is located to the south and includes local shops and services (red)
- A number of schools are located within the vicinity (orange)
- The village also includes a number of public open spaces (green)

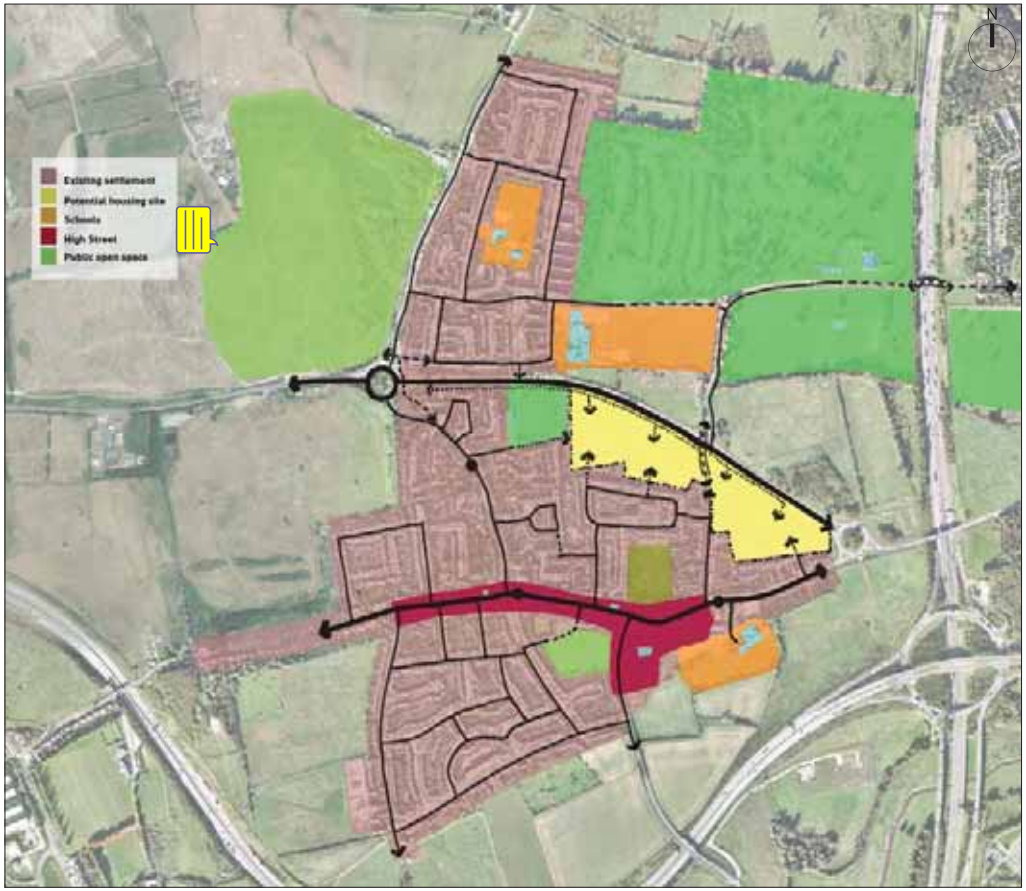


Fig 2.41: Plan showing connections in the wider area

Fig 2.42: Plan showing opportunities to connect into the site

Movement and connections

- The Aveley Bypass (B1335) runs along the northern edge of the site
- A number of routes provide connections to Aveley Village Centre
- A pedestrian bridge provides access over the bypass to provide access to land to the north
- There are several potential points of access into the site

Fig 2.43: Plan indicating existing constraints

Fig 2.44: Plan showing opportunities

Constraints

- The Aveley Bypass is a barrier to movement and creates noise and air quality issues
- There are a number of mature trees on the site together with water bodies and ditches
- The landscape to the north is open with a number of tree belts. Open views across this landscape can be made from the site
- A former farmhouse and associated buildings is located within the site and provides some local and historic identity

Opportunities

- There is potential to integrate the new development into the fabric of the existing settlement and to the open spaces and schools to the north of the bypass utilising existing connections
- There is potential to integrate the existing farm building into the development proposals
- There is opportunity to create a new development edge that provides a positive image of the place for people passing on the Aveley Bypass

Concept plan

2.4.6 The information gathered within this section should be pulled together to create a concept plan, informed by any designations identified, the Character Study and the Site Appraisal.

2.4.7 The concept plan should respond to any significant constraints on or adjacent to the site and exploit the sites opportunities.

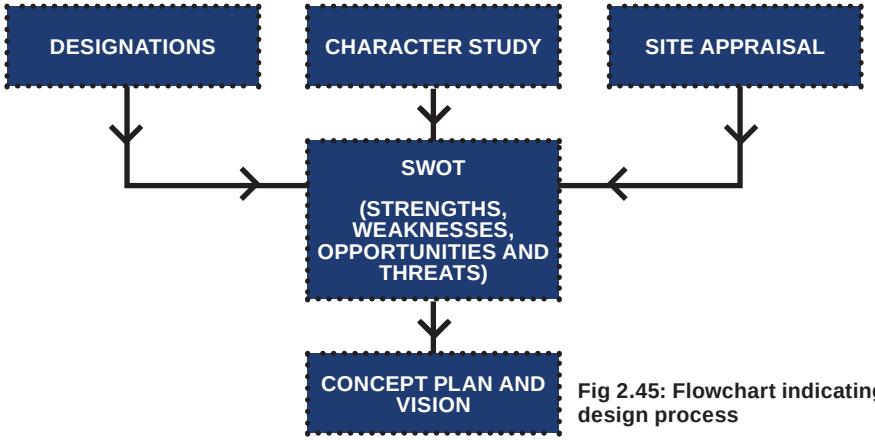


Fig 2.45: Flowchart indicating design process

Case study

The Aveley site is used as a case study through the Design Guide and the development of a design proposal is documented through the following sections:

- 3.2 - Water features and SUDs (figure 3.18);
- 3.3 - Landscape structure / open space network (figure 3.24);
- 3.5 - Movement framework (figures 3.39 and 3.40 and connected network of streets (figure 3.46);
- 3.7 - Density (figure 3.51);
- 3.10 - Development edge (figure 3.70); and
- 3.11 - Legibility landmarks and vistas (figure 3.75).

Fig 2.46: Concept plan

Concept

- The concept plan is a useful intermediate stage between the Site Appraisal and layout

Site Appraisal example

Infill developments, block of flats and single dwellings

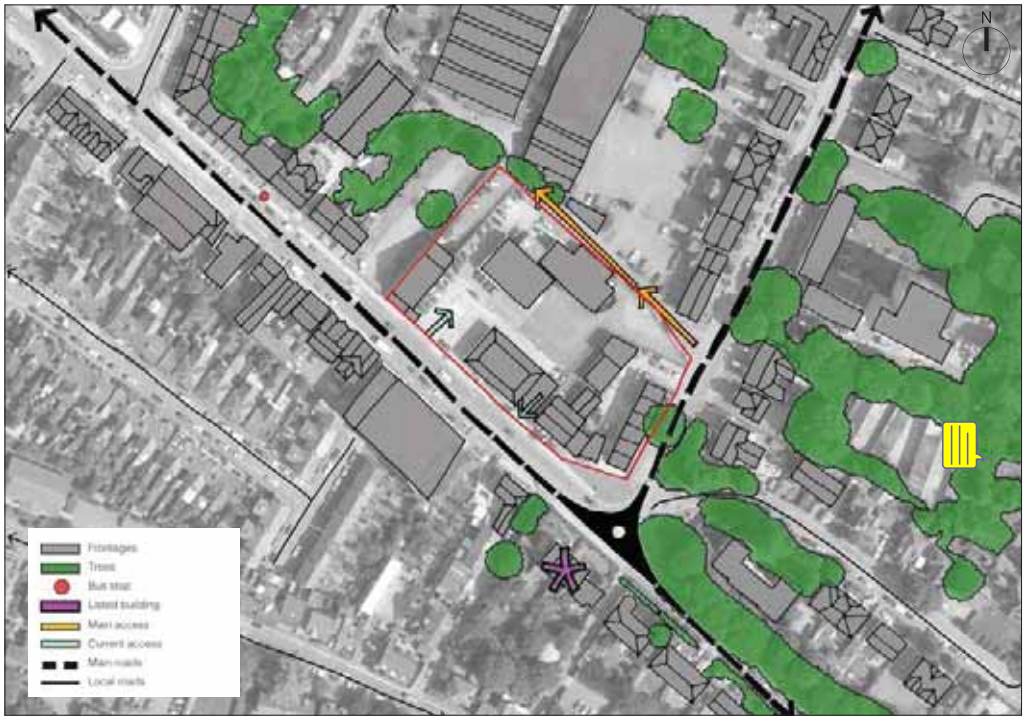


Fig 2.47: Plan indicating site boundary and connections within the wider area

Fig 2.48: Plan indicating adjacent land uses

Movement and access

- Located on the intersection of two important local streets
- Existing access to the site consists of a separate entrance and exit
- To the north of the site an existing access street runs adjacent to the boundary providing access to industrial uses
- An existing bus stop is located in close proximity to the site

Land uses

- The area primarily consists of residential development
- Along the southern local street properties have commercial ground floors
- The site consists of a number of commercial buildings and a petrol station
- To the north of the site there are a number of low grade employment uses which have been identified for future development

Fig 2.49: Plan indicating existing constraints

Fig 2.50: Plan indicating opportunities

Constraints

- Existing access route to the north of the site should be maintained
- Adjacent uses turn their back on the site creating a poor interface
- The frontage line along the southern local street is very strong and should be respected
- The setting of the listed building adjacent to the site should be respected

Opportunities

- To create new development that celebrates the sites position as a key node within the town
- To enhance the setting of the listed building
- To continue and provide improved frontage to both local streets
- To consider adjacent development opportunities and future proof the site

Concept plan

2.4.8 The information gathered within this section should be pulled together to create a concept plan, informed by any designations identified, the Character Study and the Site Appraisal.

2.4.9 The concept plan should respond to any significant constraints on or adjacent to the site and exploit the sites opportunities.

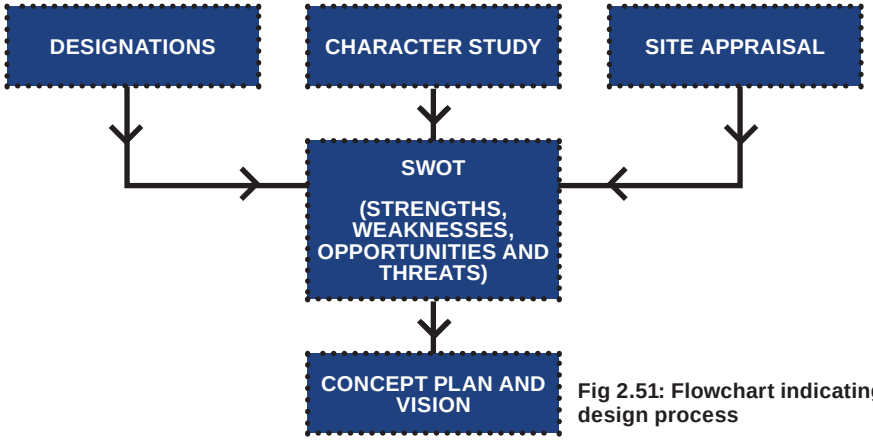


Fig 2.51: Flowchart indicating design process

Fig 2.52: Plan indicating initial concept

Concept

- The concept plan is a useful intermediate stage between the Site Appraisal and layout

2 Responding to the site and setting

Character Study CHECKLIST

Strategic housing developments, urban extensions

How to use

This table provides a checklist of things to consider when preparing a Character Study for a **Strategic Housing Development** or **Urban Extension**. The checklist should be used by applicants and planning officers as prompts when preparing the Character Study.

SUBJECT	DESCRIPTION	COMPONENT	CHECK
Wider setting	What is the wider setting of the site and the location of the settlement in relation to other settlements within the region.	Function of the settlement and relationship to adjacent areas	
	What is the wider context within which the site is located - rural, rural village, urban or suburban.	Settlement character (Principle DG6)	
Settlement structure	How is the settlement within which the site is located structured and where does it connect to? Does it a have a linear structure along a main route or is part of a grid of streets for example?	Historical development	
	What is the existing hierarchy and network of streets and spaces within the settlement and how does this contribute to its character?	Structure and hierarchy of streets and spaces	
	Are there any places or uses that provide a focus for the settlement?	Identity	
	What is the prevailing density of the settlement? Does it vary and what would be appropriate for the application site?	Density of development	
	How does the existing settlement mark arrival points or the meeting of routes? Can this be drawn upon to mark gateways and nodes within the proposal?	Gateways and nodes	
	How large are existing plots or blocks within the settlement? Is the pattern regular or irregular?	Plot and block size	
Landscape character/ natural features/ topography	What is the broad landscape and settlement character, the underlying geology and how might this influence the development? Are there particular landscape, arboricultural, ecological or geological characteristics, for instance, that give a place its essential character?	Landscape and settlement character (Principle DG7)	
	Are there landscape features (trees, hedgerows, ecological or geological), within the site that give the place its character and can these be incorporated into the proposals?	Existing landscape features, water features, trees, hedges	
	Are there any important views to and from the site and beyond that are valuable and should be retained? Understanding how the new development will be perceived from the surrounding area.	Views and skyline	
Streets and public spaces	What is the prevailing level of enclosure for existing street types within the settlement? Does this contribute to their character? How are spaces enclosed?	The containment of streets and public open spaces	
	Are there particular public realm characteristics, such as planting, form, materials to draw influence from?	Layout and form of spaces	
	How does the interface between private and public spaces contribute to the settlements character?	Public and private space interface	
	How does public art contribute to the settlements character?	Public art	
Built character	What is the local built character and how does this provide cues for appropriate design forms?	Scale, form and massing	
	Does the building frontage define the public realm or are there front gardens? What are the prevailing boundary treatments?	Treatment of building frontages and boundaries	
	Are there common building types prevalent within the settlement? Can these be re-interpreted?	Building types	
	Are there common building materials within the settlement which would be relevant to the proposal?	Use of materials	

2 Responding to the site and setting

Character Study CHECKLIST

Major residential scheme or employment site

How to use

This table provides a checklist of things to consider when preparing a Character Study for a **Major Residential Scheme** or **Employment Site**. The checklist should be used by applicants and planning officers as prompts when preparing the Character Study.

SUBJECT	DESCRIPTION	COMPONENT	CHECK
Wider context	What is the wider context within which the site is located - rural, rural village, urban or suburban?	Settlement character (Principle DG6)	
Settlement structure	How is the settlement within which the site is located structured and where does it connect to? Does it a have a linear structure along a main route or is part of a grid of streets for example?	Historical development	
	What is the existing hierarchy and network of streets and spaces within the settlement and how does this contribute to its character?	Structure and hierarchy of streets and spaces	
	Are there any places or uses that provide a focus for the settlement?	Identity	
	What is the prevailing density of the settlement? Does it vary and what would be appropriate for the application site?	Density of development	
	How does the existing settlement mark arrival points or the meeting of routes? Can this be drawn upon to mark gateways and nodes within the proposal?	Gateways and nodes	
	How large are existing plots or blocks within the settlement? Is the pattern regular or irregular?	Plot and block size	
Landscape character/ natural features/ topography	What is the broad landscape and settlement character, the underlying geology and how might this influence the development? Are there particular landscape, arboricultural, ecological or geological characteristics, for instance, that give a place its essential character?	Landscape and settlement character (Principle DG7)	
	Are there landscape features (trees, hedgerows, ecological or geological), within the site that give the place its character and can these be incorporated into the proposals?	Existing landscape features, water features, trees, hedges	
	Are there any important views to and from the site and beyond that are valuable and should be retained? Understanding how the new development will be perceived from the surrounding area.	Views and skyline	
Streets and public spaces	What is the prevailing level of enclosure for existing street types within the settlement? Does this contribute to their character? How are spaces enclosed?	The containment of streets and public open spaces	
	Are there particular public realm characteristics, such as planting, form, materials to draw influence from?	Layout and form of spaces	
	How does the interface between private and public spaces contribute to the settlements character?	Public and private space interface	
	How does public art contribute to the settlements character?	Public art	
Built character	What is the local built character and how does this provide cues for appropriate design forms?	Scale, form and massing	
	Does the building frontage define the public realm or are there front gardens? What are the prevailing boundary treatments?	Treatment of building frontages and boundaries	
	Are there common building types prevalent within the settlement? Can these be re-interpreted?	Building types	
	Are there common building materials within the settlement which would be relevant to the proposal?	Use of materials	

2 Responding to the site and setting

Character Study CHECKLIST

Infill developments, block of flats and single dwellings

How to use

This table provides a checklist of things to consider when preparing a Character Study for **Infill Developments, Block of Flats** and **Single Dwellings**. The checklist should be used by applicants and planning officers as prompts when preparing the Character Study.

SUBJECT	DESCRIPTION	COMPONENT	CHECK
Wider context	What is the wider context within which the site is located - rural, rural village, urban or suburban.	Settlement character (Principle DG6)	
Settlement structure	What is the function of the application site within the settlement? How does the settlement structure or connections influence this function or role?	Historical development	
	What is the existing hierarchy and network of streets and spaces within the settlement and how does this contribute to the character of the site?	Structure and hierarchy of streets and spaces	
	What are the adjacent land uses that could help inform the proposed uses on the site? Should the site contribute to a mixed use core for example? Is the site appropriate for residential uses?	Density of development	
	Does the site, or should the site mark an arrival point into the settlement or a meeting point of routes? How might this influence the proposals?	Gateways and nodes	
	How large are existing plots adjacent to the site. Are properties generally terraced or buildings on individual plots?	Plot size	
Landscape character/ natural features/	Are there landscape features (trees, hedgerows, ecological or geological), within the site that give the place its character and can these be incorporated into the proposals?	Existing landscape features, water features, trees, hedges	
	Are there any important views to and from the site and beyond that are valuable and should be retained? Understanding how the new development will be perceived from the surrounding area.	Views and skyline	
Streets and public spaces	What is the prevailing level of enclosure for existing street types within the settlement? Does this contribute to their character? How are spaces enclosed?	The containment of streets and public open spaces	
	Are there particular public realm characteristics, such as planting, form, materials to draw influence from?	Layout and form of spaces	
	How does the interface between private and public spaces contribute to the settlements character?	Public and private space interface	
Built character	What is the local built character and how does this provide cues for appropriate design forms?	Scale, form and massing	
	What are the prevailing boundary treatments to adjacent properties? Are these successful? Are these characteristic of the settlement? Does the building frontage define the public realm or are there front gardens?	Treatment of building frontages and boundaries	
	Are there common building types prevalent within the settlement? Can these be re-interpreted?	Building types	
	Are there common building materials within the settlement which would be relevant to the proposal?	Use of materials	

2 Responding to the site and setting

Character Study CHECKLIST

Extension or building conversion

How to use

This table provides a checklist of things to consider when preparing a Character Study for an **Extension** or **Building Conversion**. The checklist should be used by applicants and planning officers as prompts when preparing the Character Study.

SUBJECT	DESCRIPTION	COMPONENT	CHECK
Settlement structure	How does the building contribute to the existing settlement? How will any extension or conversion impact on this?	Historical development	
	How large are existing plots adjacent to the site. Are properties generally terraced or buildings on individual plots? How will the proposal impact on the existing pattern?	Plot / building pattern	
Landscape character/ natural features/ topography	What is the broad landscape and settlement character, the underlying geology and how might this influence the development? Are there particular landscape, arboricultural, ecological or geological characteristics, for instance, that give a place its essential character?	Landscape and settlement character (Principle DG7)	
	Are there landscape features (eg a mature tree or hedgerow) that contribute to the character of the site? Will these be affected by the proposals?	Existing landscape features, water features, trees, hedges	
	What is the buildings relationship with the countryside and will this be affected by the proposals?	Relationship to countryside	
Streets and public spaces	Is there a consistent or prevailing building line along the street? Will the proposal reinforce this?	Building line along the street	
	How does the interface between private and public spaces contribute to the character of the area?	Public and private space interface	
	How does public art contribute to the settlements character?	Public art	
Built character	Analyse the existing scale, form and massing of your building to determine what is important about these characteristics. Consider how any proposals will affect this?	Scale, form and massing	
	Are there common building materials within the area which would match or complement the materials of the building?	Use of materials	

2 Responding to the site and setting
Site Appraisal CHECKLIST

How to use

This table provides a checklist of things to consider when preparing a Site Appraisal. The checklist should be used by applicants and planning officers as prompts to identify **Constraints and Opportunities** for all sites.

SUBJECT	COMPONENT	SITE APPRAISAL	CHECK
Physical Environment	Topography and views	What is the topography of the site and how will this influence the proposals? How is the site viewed or overlooked from afar? Are there prominent overlooked areas that may be best left undeveloped? How can the development provide a well-defined external image to the countryside?	
	Geology and ground conditions	What is the existing geology of the site? Are there areas of the site which are difficult to build on, contaminated or less porous than others?	
	Orientation and microclimate	How is the site orientated? Can this be capitalised on?	
	Air quality, noise	Are there areas of the site which are affected by noise or poor air quality such as adjacent to major strategic roads or rail infrastructure?	
	Drainage and hydrology	How does the site currently drain? Are there locations where water collects? Are soils permeable? How will this affect the proposals and the potential for sustainable urban drainage systems?	
	Flooding	Are there areas of the site within the flood plain? Are there areas of the site prone to flooding?	
	Services	Are there existing services and/or capacity to serve the development? Are there any existing utilities or service infrastructure that may constrain your development. For instance overhead power lines or a significant sewer.	
Heritage	Archaeology	Are there likely to be any archeological remains within the area? Is an archeology study required?	
	Historic assets	Are there any historic assets on the site or does the site form the setting of a Heritage Asset?	
Landscape	Tree Protection Orders (TPOs)	Are there any TPOs on the site?	
	Existing features	Are there any existing features such as trees, hedgerows, watercourses, or areas of woodland that have value and should be retained?	
	Ecology and biodiversity	What is the existing ecological and biodiversity value of the site? Are there particular areas or features which have a high ecological/biodiversity value that should be protected? Is there opportunity for habitat creation and enhancement?	
Highways	Access	What are the existing access arrangements for the site? Does alternative means of access have to be introduced?	
	Connections and Links	Are there existing rights of way across the site? Can the site connect back to an existing neighbourhood and be integrated with an existing street network?	

2 Responding to the site and setting
SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application responds to its setting.

PROCESS: Have you:

- Identified all planning designations;
- Considered the character of the site within its settlement and prepared a Character Study; and
- Carried out a detailed Site Appraisal and established the constraints and opportunities that apply to the site.

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by both the applicant and officer as a checklist.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG1-5 Planning Designations	Has the Applicant clearly identified whether the site lies within or adjacent to any area with a statutory or non-statutory planning designation?	
	Has the applicant understood the implications of these designations on the development of his site?	
DG6 Character Study	Has the applicant carried out a Character Study and covered the topics set out in the relevant checklist?	
	Has the applicant identified the potential opportunities for new development to make a positive contribution to the character of a settlement?	
DG7 Site Appraisal	Has the applicant prepared a detailed Site Appraisal and identified the constraints and opportunities that apply to their site?	

SUMMARY: At this stage the applicant should have a full understanding of their site and its context. This work should be undertaken before developing design proposals.

3 Establishing the structure

Getting the structure of development right – the layout of streets, landscape, land uses and buildings and how they integrate with the existing streets, landscape and buildings is crucial to creating successful, attractive and sustainable places. The places we love to live, work and visit all have robust structures that define the character of the place. All to often new development lacks this coherent structure and therefore lacks a sense of place. It is critical when planning large scale development that the principles of place-making are carefully considered. This means considering the street layout and connectivity, the land uses and landscape and buildings in an holistic manner.

3 Establishing the structure
Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document. This section should be read by all applicants putting forward proposals for, or within **urban extensions, major residential sites, employment areas** and **mixed use areas.**

Before you proceed have you:

- Identified all planning designations;
- Considered the character of the site within its settlement and prepared a Character Study;
- Carried out a detailed Site Appraisal and established the constraints and opportunities that apply to the site.; and
- Completed the relevant checklists?

If not please go back to Section 2

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 3: This section outlines the principles of place-making and creating a robust layout for development that considers the street pattern and connectivity, land uses, landscape and building in an holistic manner.

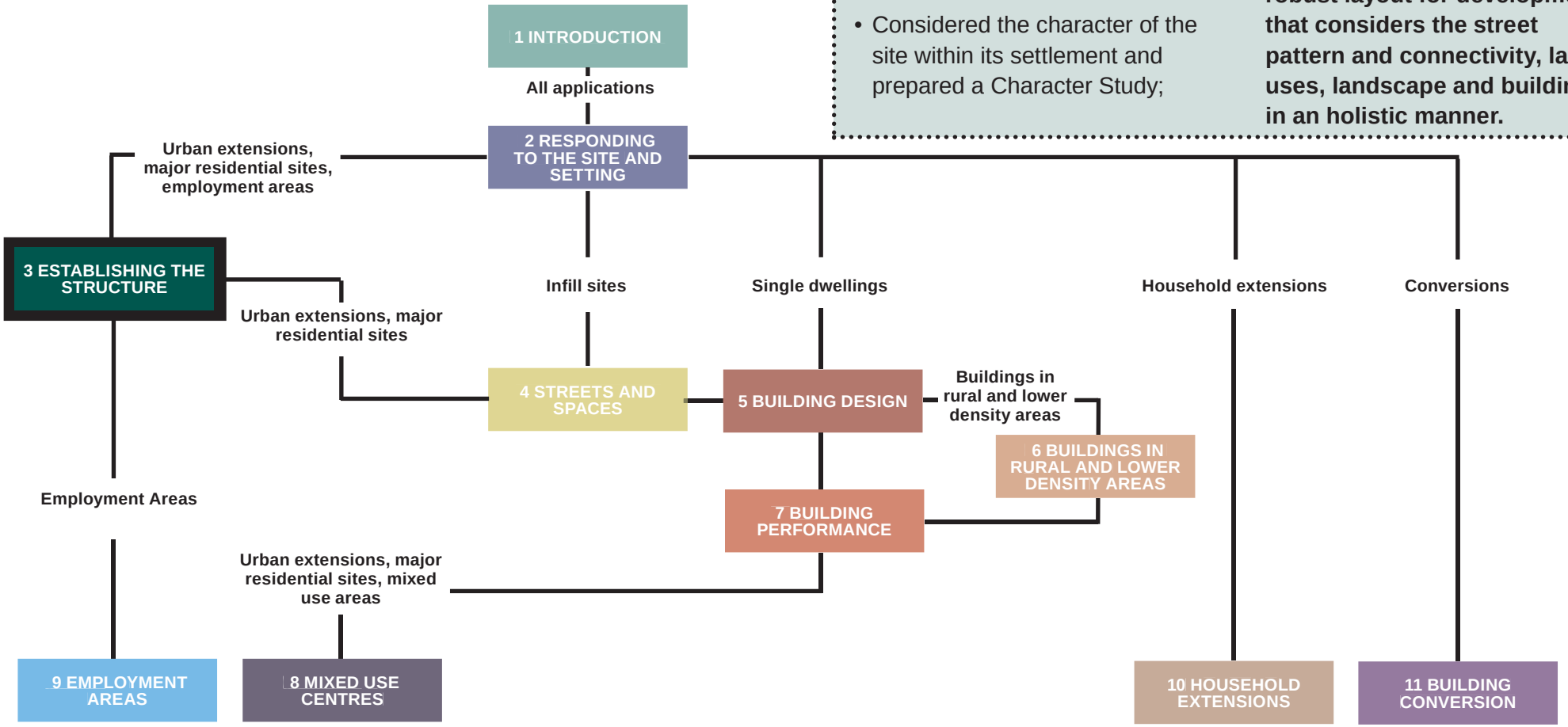


Fig 3.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide in the context of the 'Establishing the structure' section

3 Establishing the structure
Introduction

Fig 3.2: Successful historic precedents utilise a compact, adaptable and walkable settlement layout

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness
Policy 40 Sustainable design and construction

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The principles of good urban design go hand in hand with the creation of sustainable communities.

3.1.2 Historic towns and villages are by and large highly efficient in terms of their use of land, providing a mix of uses and reducing the need to travel for local facilities and services.

3.1.3 These settlements developed incrementally in a compact and walkable manner responding to the needs of their residents. They have also evolved in response to efficient use of local resources and microclimate.

3.1.4 New development should learn from the past and look to new advances/best practice to address the social, economic and environmental concerns of today.

3.1.5 Developing sustainable neighbourhoods should not be about "bolt on" solutions but about integrating sustainable principles into all stages of design, construction and operation of the new development.

3.1.6 Consideration should be given to minimising the environmental impacts of new and existing development and creating sustainable communities.

3.1.7 Adopting a number of simple principles that can achieve significant reductions in the environmental impact of new development. Many are simple and easily implemented at the outset of the design process and include:

- Enhancing the ecological value and biodiversity of the site;
- Maximising the benefits of daylighting and passive solar gain;
- Modifying the microclimate to reduce energy demands;
- Integrating sustainable drainage into the landscape design;
- Designing layouts and streets to encourage walking and cycling and create permeability;
- Creating places that have identify and that are easy to navigate through with recognisable local landmarks to aid legibility;
- Increasing density around settlement cores and public transport corridors; and
- Incorporating a mix of local facilities and workspace to reduce the need to travel.

3.1.8 This section is complemented by Section 7 - Building Performance which covers more detailed sustainability considerations at a building level such as the use of photovoltaic panels or grey water recycling.

3 Establishing the structure
Natural resources and sustainability

Fig 3.3: Smiths Wharf, Wantage - Letcombe Brook has been incorporated into the landscape structure

3.2 Conserving natural resources

3.2.1 Natural assets such as watercourses, orientation, wind direction and drainage have historically had a significant influence in shaping our settlements. Working with these assets can contribute to a more sustainable development in the long-term and enhance the distinctive local character

3.2.2 Applicants should consider how to maximise their site's resources while putting minimum demands on the environment.

3.2.3 The following section identifies key areas that should be considered at an early stage in the design process to maximise the benefits from natural resources before the need for expensive bolt-on sustainable solutions.

Principle DG10: Natural Resources

Use the physical characteristics of a site including topography, orientation, landform, geology, drainage patterns, field patterns, boundaries and vegetation cover to influence the form and layout of new development.

Maximise the site resources by utilising the solar potential of the site; making full use of rain water and drainage systems and harnessing wind energy.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 40 Sustainable design and construction
Policy 43 Natural resources

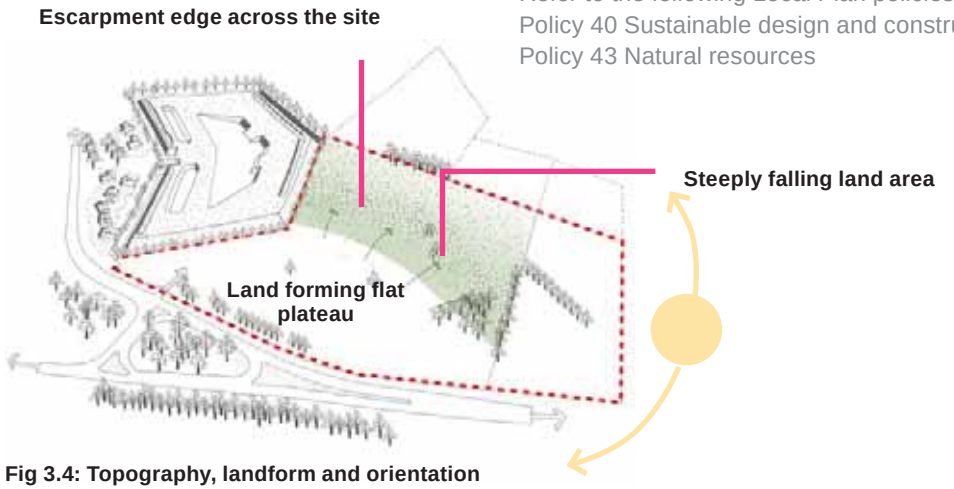


Fig 3.4: Topography, landform and orientation

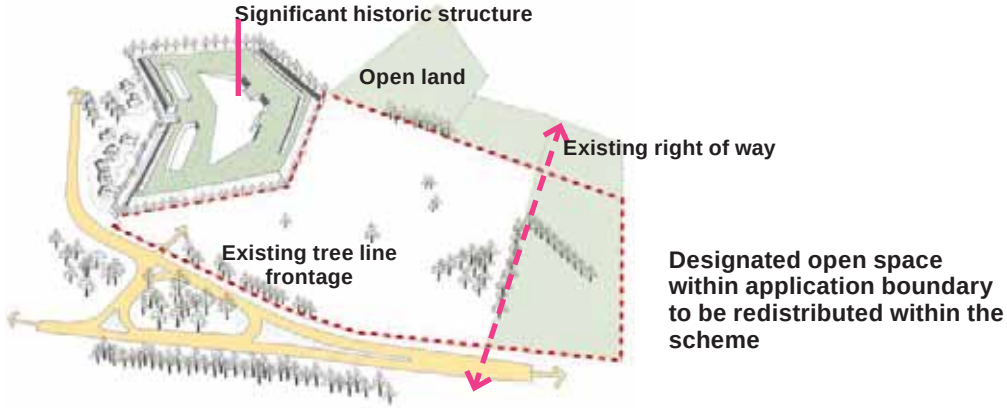


Fig 3.5: Existing landscape and field patterns

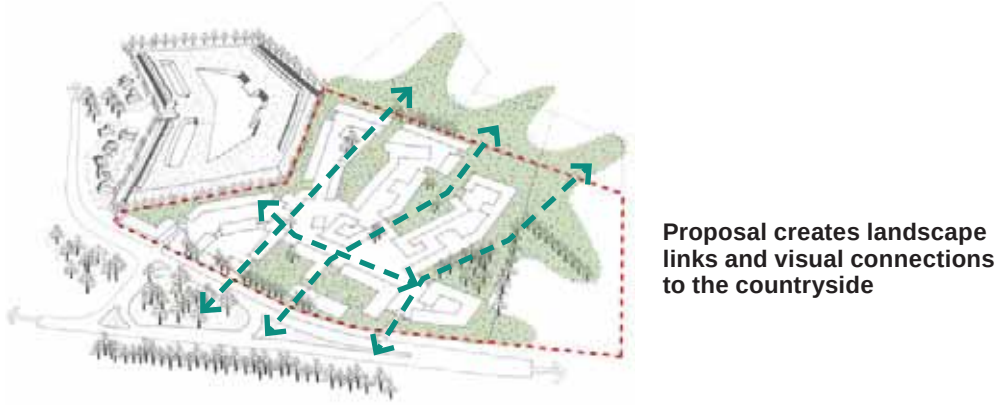


Fig 3.6: Landscape structure and block structure

3 Establishing the structure
Natural resources and sustainability

Fig 3.7: Building integrated photovoltaics and solar heater, RuralZED

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 40 Sustainable design and construction
Policy 41 Renewable energy
Policy 43 Natural resources

Reducing energy consumption

3.2.4 Urban design can significantly reduce the through-life energy consumption of buildings by creating shelter, providing opportunity for passive solar architecture and can also help create a comfortable public realm.

Energy supply

3.2.5 Once every effort has been made to reduce energy consumption/demand to its lowest practicable level applicants should consider options for the most sustainable form of energy supply.

Principle DG11: Reducing energy consumption

The layout of development should maximise the benefits of daylighting and passive solar gains.

Applicants should consider how the prevailing wind may effect the microclimate of any proposals.

The topography of the site can also be used to provide natural shelter from wind and therefore prevent heat loss in winter.

Applicants should demonstrate that alternative, site-wide, local energy generation has been considered within the design process.

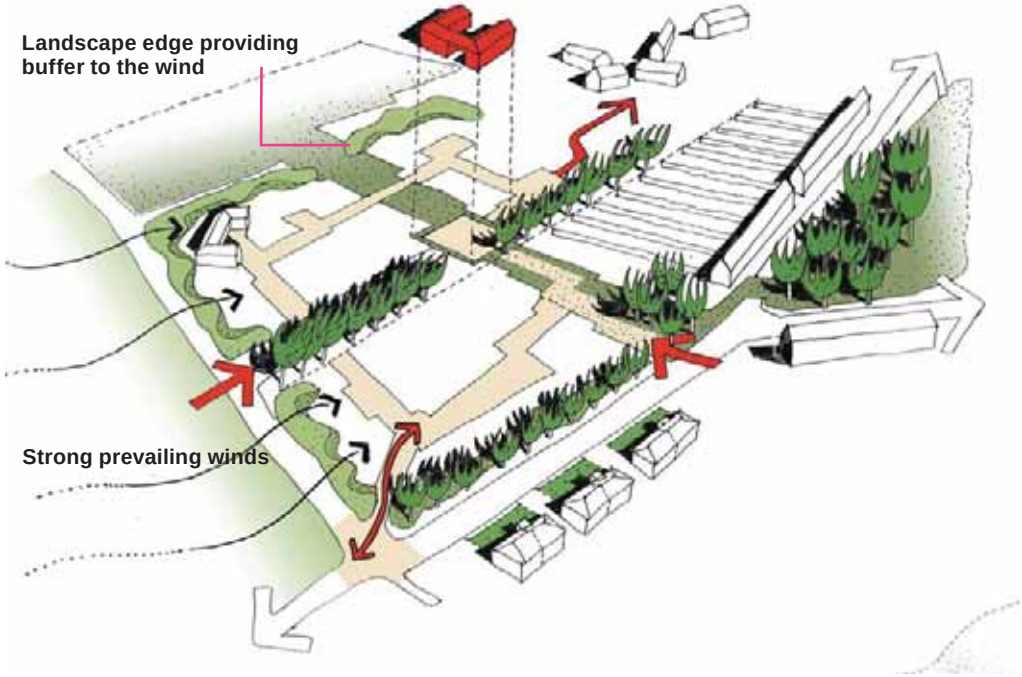


Fig 3.8: Sheltering development against the prevailing wind

3 Establishing the structure
Natural resources and sustainability

Fig 3.9: The microclimate of an area can be influenced by the siting of development in sheltered areas

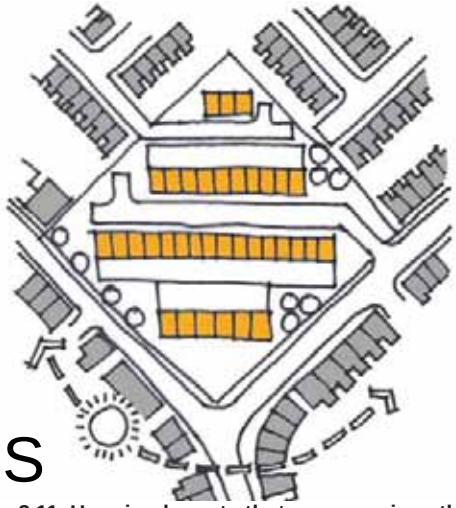


Fig 3.11: Housing layouts that compromises the principles of good urban design to maximise solar gains should be avoided

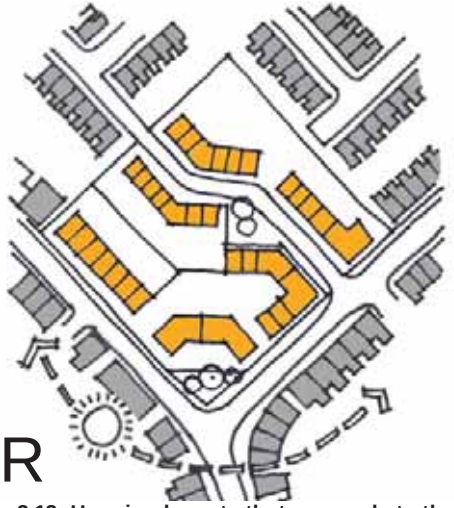


Fig 3.12: Housing layouts that responds to the context whilst still maximising solar gains

Orientation

3.2.6 Positioning the layout of development to maximise the benefits of daylighting and passive solar gains can reduce energy consumption. This generally suggests an east-west street pattern. However care should be taken to avoid compromising the principles of good urban design and/or the prevailing character of existing settlements.

3.2.7 The scale of development or location of building types can also improve these benefits.

Principle DG12: Orientation

The layout of development should optimise the benefits of daylighting and passive solar gains.

Fig 3.10: Housing layout orientated to capitalise on daylighting and solar gains can provide good urban form overlooking streets and spaces

Microclimate

3.2.8 Applicants should consider how the prevailing wind may affect the microclimate within an area. For example proposals can take advantage of mild summer breezes by aligning streets with their prevalent directions. Heat loss from storm or winter winds can be minimised by aligning streets across them.

3.2.9 The topography of the site can also be used to provide natural shelter from wind and therefore prevent heat loss in winter.

3.2.10 Tree planting and soft landscaping can also have a significant affect on the microclimate. Refer to section 4.3 for details.

Principle DG13: Microclimate

Applicants should consider how the prevailing wind may affect the microclimate of any proposals.

Affects can be mitigated through consideration of street alignment / orientation topography or the use of landscape to create shelter.

3 Establishing the structure
Natural resources and sustainability

Fig 3.13: SUDs incorporated within the public realm

Water

3.2.11 Reducing the demand for water and managing surface water are critical considerations in new development proposals.

Site wide strategies for reducing water demand

3.2.12 Demand management and water efficiency should be a priority for any applicant developing a sustainable neighbourhood.

3.2.13 Many of the principles for reducing water demand are discussed in Section 8 and relate to more specific building solutions. However it is critical that applicants consider site wide strategies and their implications.

3.2.14 Not all water uses require water to drinking standards and some demands can be met using re-used or recycled water, depending on its quality. Rainwater, in particular, is a local non-potable resource that can be used for flushing WCs and the first cycle on washing machines for individual buildings can also be used in external irrigation. Applicants should consider how these principles can be incorporated within their proposals and the implications of these on site layout, building and landscape design.

3.2.15 It is clear that education and promotion of water saving measures is also critical in order to influence reductions in water demand. Applicants should demonstrate how this is being addressed within the proposals.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy CP42: Flood Risk

Fig 3.14: Dowpipes diverted so that rainwater drainage can be used to irrigate planters

Fig 3.15: Storm water planters can be incorporated within the street design to attenuate rainwater

Fig 3.16: Attenuation ponds can be incorporated within parklands to provide positive landscape features

Fig 3.17: The restored Childrey village pond forms a focal point for the village

Water Features and Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs)

3.2.16 Surface water features, SUDs and watercourses can make a significant contribution to the landscape character, biodiversity and sustainable performance of development, and reinforces identity of place.

3.2.17 Consideration at an early stage in the design process of how to manage surface water can reduce the proposals demand on the network.

3.2.18 Attenuation ponds, swales, rain gardens, the choice of public realm materials and the balance between soft and hard landscape areas can contribute to this reduction and also help reduce the risk of flooding.

Fig 3.18: SUDs should not only be functional but also celebrated and integrated into development as positive features

Fig 3.19: SUDs feature integrated within the streetscene

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy CP42: Flood Risk

Fig 3.20: AVELEY - Sustainable urban drainage network responding to existing water features and topography

Principle DG14: Water features and SUDs

Where practically possible surface water features should be retained, enhanced and/or re-established as positive features contributing to the character, ecological value and biodiversity of new development.

Development proposals should incorporate the use of sustainable urban drainage as an integral part of the landscape structure.

SUDs should be designed into the development from the outset as features such as ponds, retention planters/basins, green back lanes and wetlands, and combined with good biodiversity and landscape features to make a positive contribution to the biodiveristy, character and appearance of a development.

Infiltration methods should be used wherever soil conditions permit.

Maximise the amount of porous hard surfacing to enable infiltration.

Consideration should also be given to the future management and maintenance of the SUDs.

3 Establishing the structure
Natural resources and sustainability

Fig 3.21: Successfully converted industrial building within Abingdon

Heritage Assets and the Historic Landscape

3.2.19 The Vale has a rich variety of heritage assets and historic landscapes that contribute significantly to the character and enjoyment of the District.

3.2.20 These assets should be celebrated, enhanced and preserved for the enjoyment of existing and future residents.

3.2.21 New development should look to capitalise on these assets wherever possible and integrate them into the masterplan in a positive manner.

3.2.22 Incorporating heritage assets and historic landscapes into a development will reinforce a sense of place and define a strong local identity and distinctiveness.

3.2.23 Design solutions incorporating heritage assets should be positive contributions to the built environment and should preserve and/or enhance the established character.

Fig 3.22: Modern extension to historic church

Fig 3.24: Successful conversion of historic asset.

Fig 3.23: Modern Extension to historic building

Fig 3.25: Retention of historic architectural features can add to character of a conversion

Principle DG15: Heritage Assets and the Historic Landscape

Heritage assets and Histrocic Landscapes should be celebrated, enhanced and preserved for the enjoyment of existing and future residents

Applications responding to the historic environment should refer to the saved local plan policies for more specific advice

Important archeology within the site should be thoroughly investigated and preserved in-situ.

3 Establishing the structure
Landscape structure

Fig 3.26 The landscape should be integrated with the development providing well overlooked public spaces

3.3 Landscape structure

3.3.1 The way in which landscape and open spaces are organised can make a significant contribution to the character and success of a development. It is critical that this is a consideration at an early stage in the design process and integrated with all other services and drainage requirements and informs the layout of new neighbourhoods.

3.3.2 Well designed, accessible landscapes and public open spaces can improve social cohesion, health and wellbeing within an area.

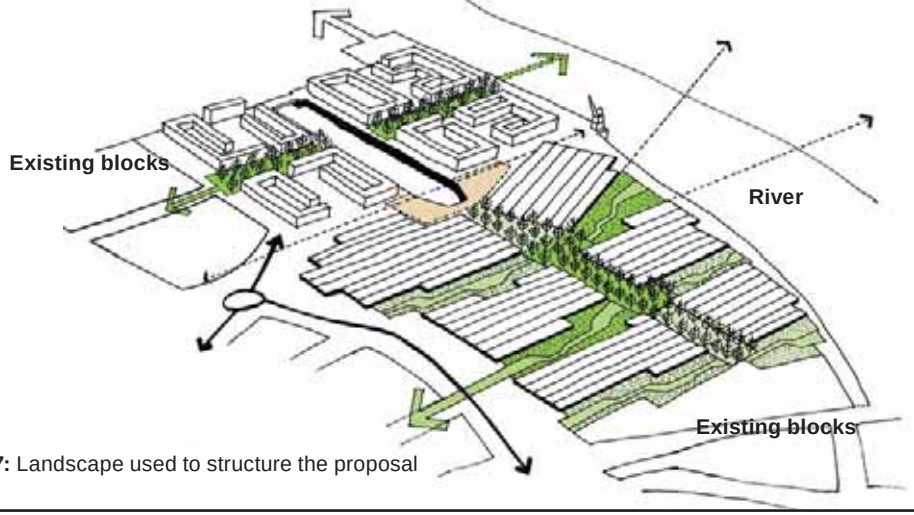


Fig 3.27: Landscape used to structure the proposal

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 44 Landscape
Policy 45 Green infrastructure

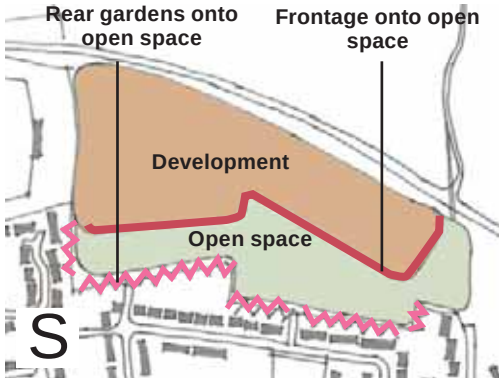


Fig 3.28: Landscape dividing new and existing development resulting in back gardens defining the open space should be avoided

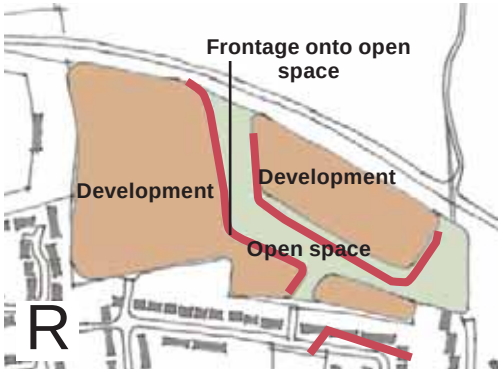


Fig 3.29: Landscape integrated within the proposal with development backing onto existing back gardens providing positive frontage to open space

Principle DG16: Landscape Structure

Applicants should demonstrate how the landscape structure has been considered from the outset of the design process and as an integral part of the proposal. This will be a key requirement within the Design and Access Statement.

Development proposals should retain important landscape features, mature trees and planting wherever possible and incorporate these features into the landscape structure. This will provide instant 'maturity' to new development and can provide windbreaks, visual screening and shelter.

Consider how the existing public right of ways can be incorporated within the movement network.

All open space should have a purpose and be of the size, location and form appropriate for that use. Avoid space left over after planning (SLOAP) or pushing open space to the periphery of development (unless there is strong justification to create a landscape buffer, for instance to reduce the impact of road/rail noise, to retain gaps between settlements or link open spaces). See also DG28.

Landscape should not be used as a divisive measure between new and exiting development. This tends to lead to isolated pockets of development and can also undermine the value, overlooking and usability of the proposed landscape.

3 Establishing the structure
Landscape structure

Fig 3.30: East Hendred - Bridleway creating a linked network of landscapes

Open Space Networks

3.3.3 Each existing settlement has a variety and hierarchy of spaces. It is important to identify clearly within an application how proposed open spaces contribute and respond to this hierarchy.

3.3.4 Where practical, new and existing landscapes and open spaces should be linked to form connected green networks. These networks are often more useful for visual amenity, recreational use and wildlife corridors than isolated parks.

3.3.5 Where direct links are not possible it may be appropriate to link these together through green routes, shared surface streets and boulevards.

Principle DG17: Open Space Network

Applicants should link existing and proposed landscapes and open spaces together to form open space networks.

Applicants should demonstrate within their application how proposed open spaces contribute and respond to the hierarchy of existing landscape and open space networks.

Fig 3.31: AVELEY - Network of open spaces and connections to existing rights of ways

Fig 3.32: A local open space in Wantage

Fig 3.33: open spaces should be linked to form greenways

3 Establishing the structure
Landscape structure

Fig 3.34: Local open space central to residential development accessible to all

Provision of open space

3.3.6 Larger developments will be required to provide a variety of open space types to meet the needs of different age groups. These spaces should be located so that they are within walking distance of residents and are easy to get to, usually within 400 or 800m.

Fig 3.35: Stanford in the Vale, village green

3.3.7 The Vale of White Horse has a huge number of successful open spaces which act as neighbourhood focal points, village greens or central squares with activities around them. Applicants should consider the role, layout and design of existing spaces within the local context to compliment, strengthen and add character to new spaces.

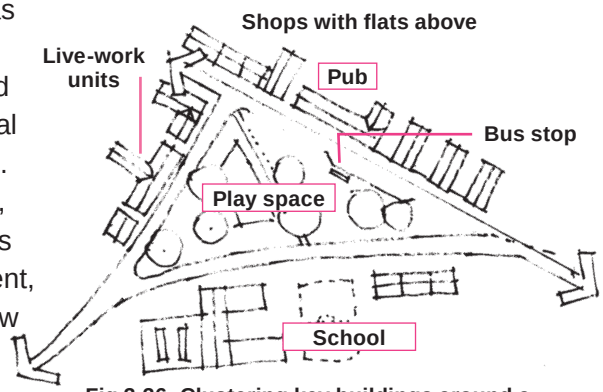


Fig 3.36: Clustering key buildings around a focal space can create a neighbourhood hub and a focal point for activity

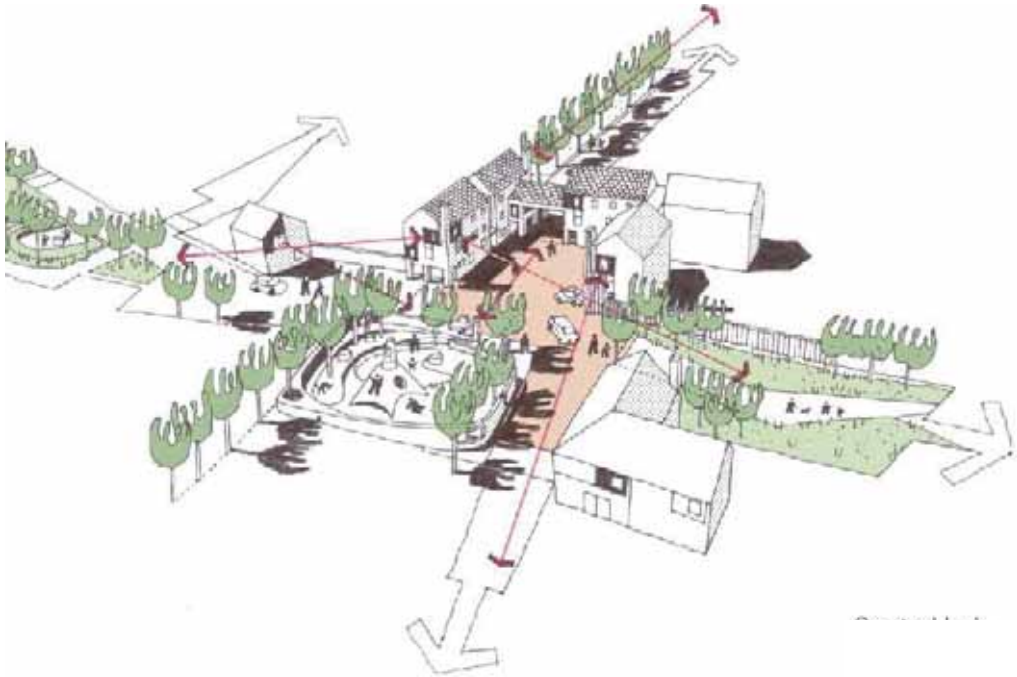


Fig 3.37: Neighbourhood focal space with key buildings clustered around

Principle DG18: Open space

Applicants should refer to the Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Future Provision Supplementary Planning Document (July 2008) setting out the open space requirements for new developments, in terms of its quantity, quality and accessibility. The SPD explains the open space provision standards, design objectives and principles, security and safety aspects, and the future management and maintenance requirements.

Open spaces should be located within areas that are central to new and existing development, within walking distance and easily accessible. Opportunities should be taken to accommodate biodiversity within all types of open space, for example, by provision of wildflowers, trees and shrubs.

Parks and play-spaces should be used as community focal points with development surrounding them.

Play-spaces should be designed to form part of the wider park area rather than an isolated/separate feature. See Section 4.6 for further details on playspaces.

Ecology and biodiversity

3.3.8 Many of the most valuable landscape assets are those that have been left alone. These need respecting, rather than exploiting. The value of a landscape asset can easily be degraded.

3.3.9 Protecting and enhancing existing landscape assets is an important consideration in order to minimise the damage to natural habitats, add to the character and distinctiveness of a place and contribute to climate change adaptation.

3.3.10 Please refer to Appendix A: Biodiversity and Planning for more details. Further information can be obtained from https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/planning-and-biodiversity.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 46 Conservation and improvements to biodiversity

Principle DG19: Ecology and biodiversity

Landscape features that have high biodiversity/ecological value should be retained and incorporated within the proposals.

All applications should seek no net loss of biodiversity as a minimum and if possible incorporate net gains.

SUDs can be designed and managed to achieve significant biodiversity outcomes.

New habitats to encourage additional species should be created within the landscape structure. Hedges, wildflower meadows, wild corners, old trees, ponds, hard landscaping features such as dry stone walls and rock piles and nest boxes installed in the eaves of buildings can all make a significant contribution to species diversity.

Details of how the landscape and biodiversity features on the site will be maintained should also be included in the planning application.

Fig 3.38:New habitats should be created to encourage additional species and improve biodiversity

3 Establishing the structure
Landscape structure

Fig 3.39: Faringdon Folly an important district landmark that should be protected

Topography and strategic views

3.3.11 The impact of large scale development within the countryside can be significant. Traditional settlements worked with the topography to provide natural shelter from the wind and thus softened their appearance.

3.3.12 Applicants should consider how their site is viewed or overlooked from afar. In some cases prominent overlooked areas may be best left undeveloped.

3.3.13 Development should provide a well-defined external image to the countryside.

3.3.14 Important strategic views to and from an existing settlement can also contribute to the external image of a place and help people orientate themselves and find their way around.

3.3.15 Strategic views should be retained and enhanced wherever possible.

3.3.16 Proposals should clearly outline how these considerations have been integrated within the design.

Fig 3.40: Distant landmark above the treetops

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

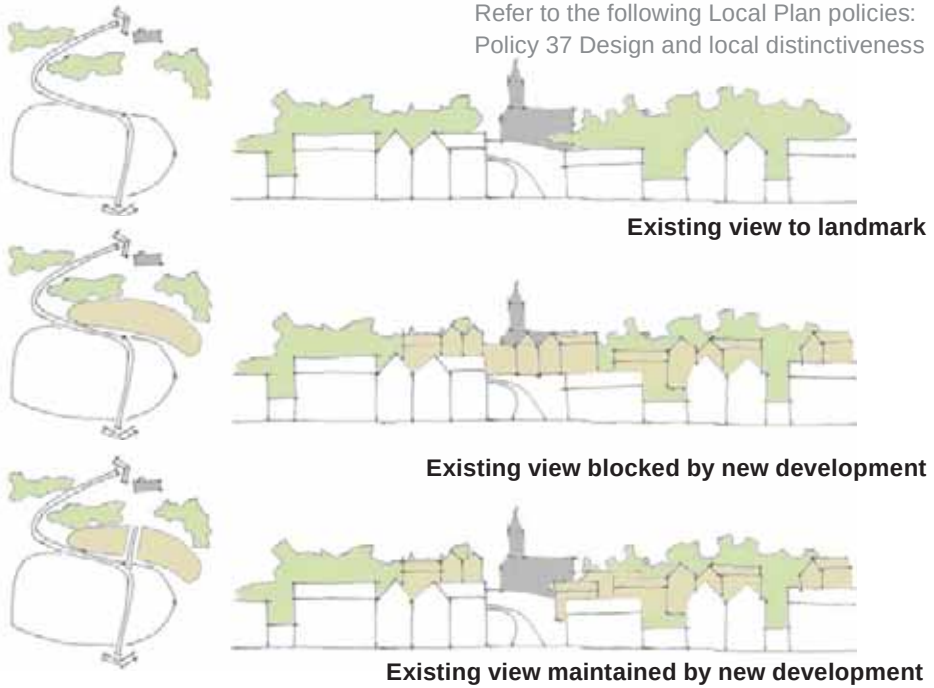


Fig 3.41: Landmarks and views

Principle DG20: Topography and strategic views

Development proposals should work with the topography with buildings integrated within the existing topography in order to soften the appearance of a new development within the landscape.

Important views into a site should be identified and development should be arranged to have a positive impact on the landscape or townscape.

Views out of a site to prominent landscape features and landmarks should also be retained and where possible enhanced

New buildings should not obscure or cause adverse impact to existing views to important landmarks or to ridgelines of hills

Where there are no direct sight lines through to an important landmark, consideration should be given to how the new development could be structured to open up views. This can help to enhance identity and legibility.

3 Establishing the structure
Health, well being and recreation

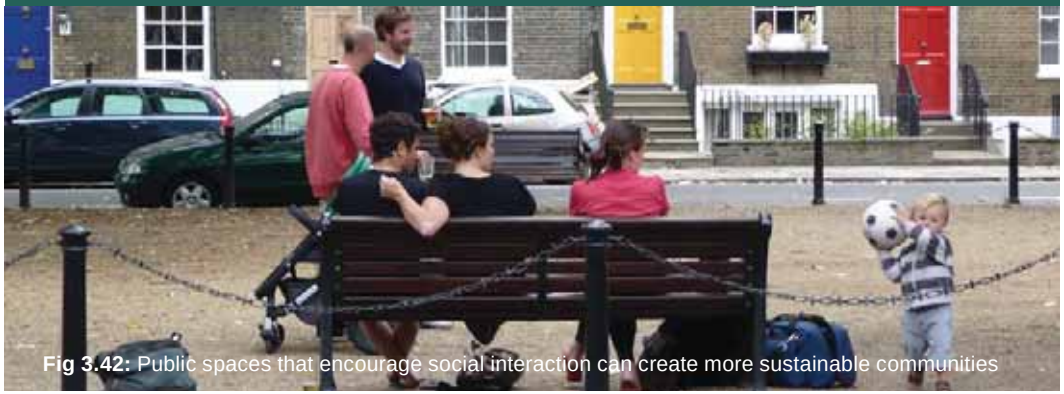


Fig 3.42: Public spaces that encourage social interaction can create more sustainable communities

3.4 Health, wellbeing and recreation

3.4.1 Delivering sustainable communities is also about creating successful public life where people have a strong social connection to their neighbourhood. Where people feel safe, engaged, connected with other residents and have some control over how their area is managed.

3.4.2 This can in part be achieved by creating a network of multi-functional streets and public spaces for relaxation, play, learning, discovery, health, leisure, sport and social interaction.

3.4.3 It also requires public spaces and community facilities that encourage a legacy of civic and cultural activities that become embedded within the neighbourhood.

3.4.4 Easy access to these facilities is critical in achieving strong social cohesion within a neighbourhood.

3.4.5 A widely used benchmark for a neighbourhood unit is 400m radius, equating to a five minute walk. This is widely recognised as a comfortable distance most people are willing to walk to daily facilities, the corner shop, the local park or bus stops.

3.4.6 The neighbourhood unit can be a useful starting point to ensure development is planned with easy access to facilities and open spaces.

3.4.7 Neighbourhoods should not be viewed as disconnected enclaves however. Instead they should be conceived holistically as pieces of village or town that overlap, connect and share facilities.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 40 Sustainable design and construction

3.4.8 Local food growing can provide a healthy outdoor pursuit, a strong magnet for community integration and contribute to sustainability.

3.4.9 Applicants should consider opportunities for local food growing such as community orchards, provision of allotments or other community garden projects.

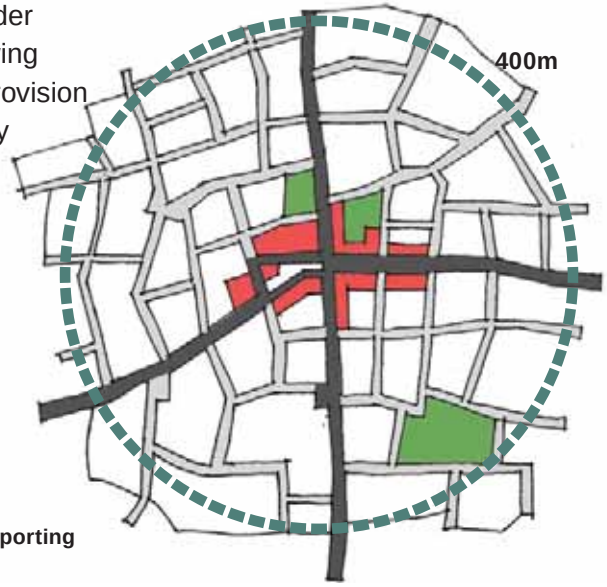


Fig 3.43: Neighbourhood unit with supporting facilities

Principle DG21: Health, wellbeing and recreation

Create a network of safe and well designed streets and public spaces that can have a social function as well as accommodating vehicular movement.

Provide opportunities for play, social interaction and recreation as well as any formal sports requirements in line with Section 5.

Provide the community infrastructure to encourage a legacy of community and cultural activities.

Leave a legacy that allows the resident community to have some control over managing their surroundings.

Consider opportunities to encourage local food growing such as community orchards, provision of allotments or other community garden projects.

3 Establishing the structure
Movement framework

Fig 3.44: Providing pedestrian links across barriers such as rivers increases permeability

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 33 Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

3.5 Movement framework

3.5.1 The movement framework is the network of connected streets within a development.

3.5.2 A successful movement framework provides:

- A number of routes offering choice for how people will make their journeys;
- A range of street types that facilitate all users and encourages walking and cycling; and
- Makes clear connections to existing routes and facilities.

3.5.3 The movement framework should make it as easy and attractive to walk, cycle or take the bus, as it is to travel by car.

Fig 3.45: Poorly designed, car dominated environments encourage the continued use of cars.

Fig 3.46: Streets designed for all users will encourage walking and cycling

Fig 3.47: AVELEY - Movement network integrating new development with an existing settlement provides connections to facilities in this case the local high street a country park, leisure centre and school.

Reduce the reliance on the car.

3.5.4 A fundamental principle for any new sustainable development is to promote sustainable forms of transport, and by doing so, reducing energy consumption and the need to travel by car.

3.5.5 A twin track approach should be taken that provides local facilities, employment and live-work opportunities closer to home to reduce the need to travel whilst promoting alternative forms of travel.

Principle DG22: Reduce the reliance on the car

Within larger proposals a mix of uses should be provided, including local facilities close to public transport to promote walking, cycling and bus use.

Applicants should liaise with the council and bus operators to encourage bus routing through the new development and provide bus stops within a 5 minute walk (400m) of homes.

Streets should be designed so that pedestrians and cyclists can safely and easily use the network.

Sufficient cycle parking should be provided at dwellings and at workplaces, shops, community facilities and transport interchanges. Lack of cycle parking may deter cycle use. Please refer to 4.13 for details of parking requirements.

Encourage/promote home working and live / work units to reduce car bourne trips. Refer to Section 5.12 for further guidance.

Link new pedestrian and cycle routes with 'strategic' networks such as 'safe routes to school' and the national cycle network.

All major applications should be accompanied by a travel plan for the development.

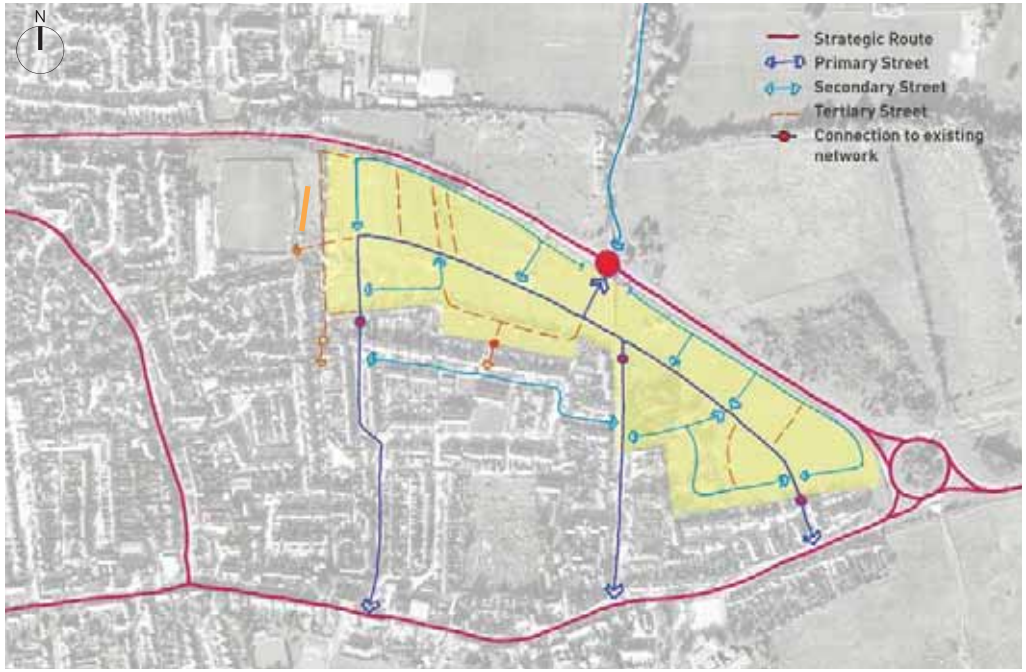


Fig 3.48: AVELEY - The movement framework establishes a hierarchy of streets that connects to the existing street network

3.5.6 For larger developments new bus routes should be incorporated to provide new residents with access to employment, education, retail and medical services.

3.5.7 Main routes must be designed for bus operation.

3.5.8 Location of bus stops should be agreed early in process and linked to walking routes and serve facilities.

Connect with the existing

3.5.9 Providing new development that integrates and connects with the existing settlement benefits both new residents by providing convenient access to existing facilities and existing residents by providing access to new facilities delivered as part of the development. The more direct links are (vehicular or otherwise) between residents and local facilities and public transport the more viable those services become.

Principle DG23: Connect with the existing

New development should link with existing routes and access points, creating direct and attractive connections between public transport, footpaths, cycle routes and local facilities.

Future proof by providing streets that later phases of development can connect into at the edges of development sites.

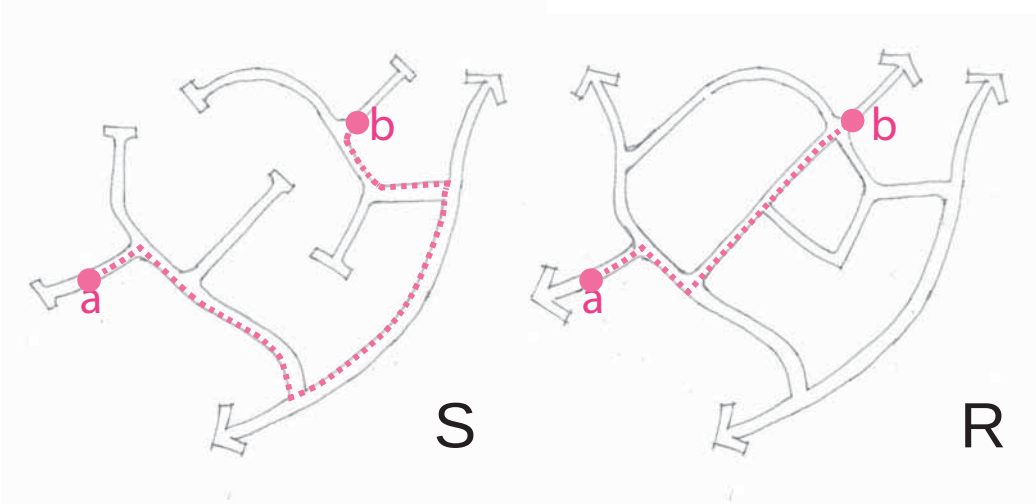


Fig 3.49: Cul-de-sacs provide little choice and often result in longer routes between desired locations. A network of connected streets provides a legible structure and offers more direct, convenient routes.

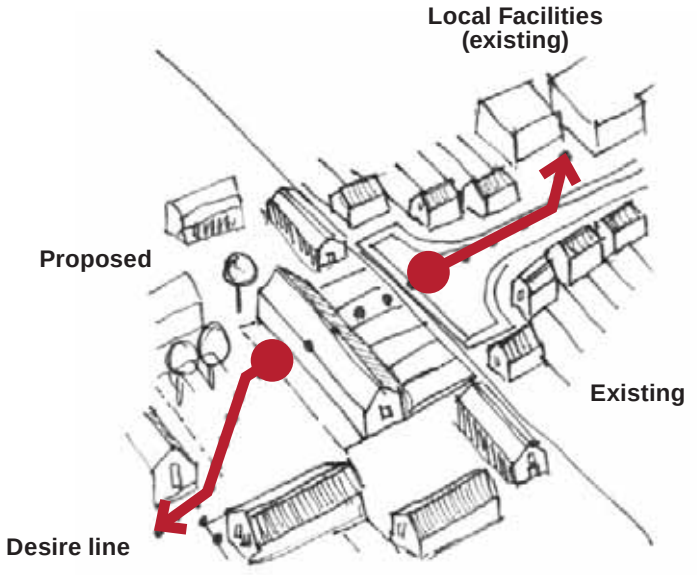


Fig 3.50: A disconnected proposal does not offer the connection to existing local facilities.

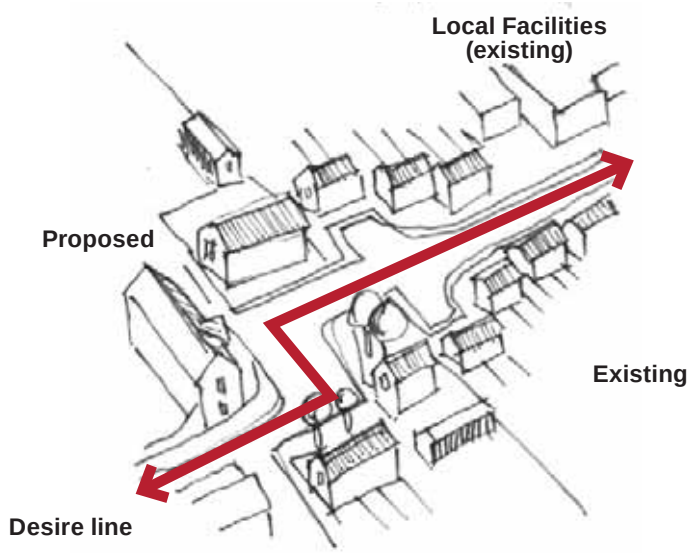


Fig 3.51: A connected scheme offers connections between facilities

3 Establishing the structure
Movement framework

A connected network of streets

3.5.10 Successful places are easy to get to, easy to move through and easy to find your way around. A connected network of streets offers choice, aids legibility, avoids hammerheads and other engineered solutions and provides a hierarchy of street types which respond to the function and role of the street.

Fig 3.52: Winding, cul-de-sac layout provides poor connectivity and also creates awkward block and plot layouts resulting in left over spaces

Fig 3.53: A coherent, legible street network provides a more connected environment and creates a more logical block and plot layout

Principle DG24: A connected network of streets

The movement network should be designed to follow natural desire lines, to link to existing streets, open spaces, local facilities or destinations. It should also respond to topography and landscape features.

Avoid single points of access, long culs-de-sac and tortuous routes that do not provide a choice of direct and convenient routes.

~~Provide~~ a network of connected streets and public spaces that provides choice and follows a spatial and visual hierarchy. The character of a street should reflect its position in this hierarchy and respond to local characteristics derived from Section 2 of this Guide.

While direct routes are most convenient, the design should also balance visual attraction, traffic calming and safety to optimise the pedestrian's experience.

Fig 3.54: AVELEY - the block structure establishes a connected network of streets

A hierarchy of streets

3.5.11 Development should provide a network of connected streets that provides choice and follows a spatial and visual hierarchy. An appropriate hierarchy of connected streets will be informed by the context of the site and the Character Study carried out Section 2.

3.5.12 The network is likely to consist of the following street types:

- Primary Routes – Avenues, Boulevards and Main Streets
- Secondary Routes – Local Streets and access streets
- Tertiary Routes - Mews, homezones short Cul-de-Sacs and yards

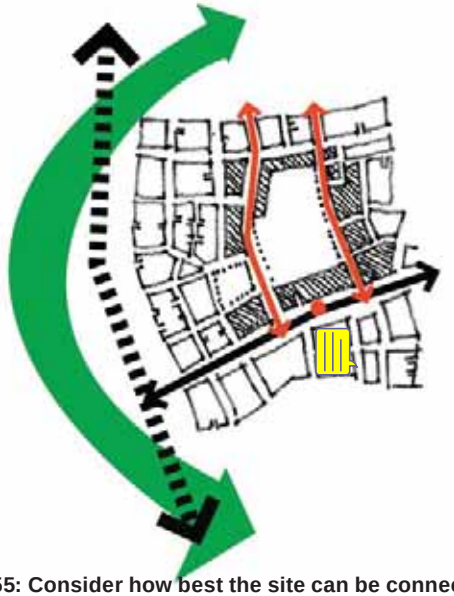


Fig 3.55: Consider how best the site can be connected with nearby main routes and public transport facilities

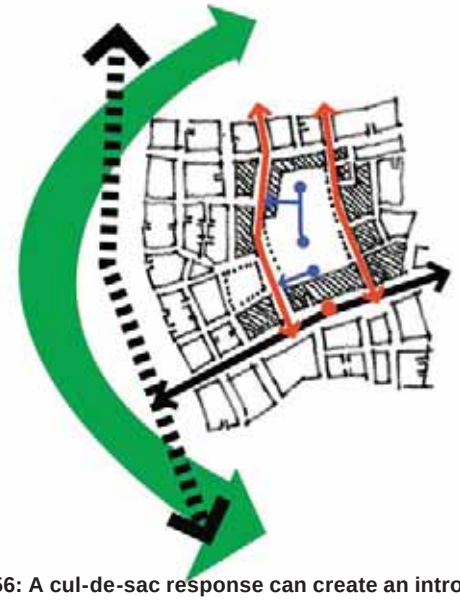


Fig 3.56: A cul-de-sac response can create an introverted layout, which fails to integrate with the surroundings

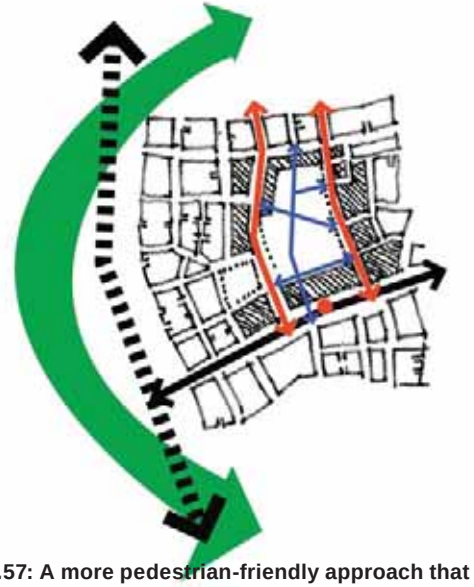


Fig 3.57: A more pedestrian-friendly approach that integrates with the surrounding community, links existing and proposed streets, and provides direct links to local facilities and bus stops

Fig 3.58: This street pattern, which forms the basis for perimeter blocks, ensures that buildings contribute positively to the public realm

Street types - Primary routes: Avenues, Boulevards and Main Streets

3.5.13 **Role:** Main Streets adopt the role of accommodating strategic trips in addition to more local movement, focusing activity on those streets that contain town, village and neighbourhood centres.

3.5.14 This helps support the viability and vitality of existing and proposed centres by creating passing trade and reduces the need to locate strategic routes through the Green Wedges.

Fig 3.59: Primary routes: Main street

3.5.15 **Type of Journey:** Main Streets should be thought of as true mixed priority routes, performing a number of roles that include accommodating through traffic and local trips as well as pedestrians and cyclists.

3.5.16 **Character:** Main Streets should be the focus of public life in each neighbourhood. They should be rich, engaging and vibrant places where no one mode is allowed to dominate and all users are made aware, through the local context, of how to behave and what to expect.

3.5.17 **Frontage:** Main Streets should be lined with building frontage of a sufficient scale and continuity to reflect appropriately to the existing context, reflect its civic importance and provide an appropriate level of enclosure.

3.5.18 **Public Transport:** Bus stops and the alignment of the routes that serve them should be focused on the network of Main Streets, providing neighbourhoods with access to the public transport network by serving key nodes and junctions, local centres and other community infrastructure.

3.5.19 **Parking:** On-street parking should be allowed in designated bays.

3.5.20 **Tree Planting:** The opportunity to integrate trees within Main Streets should be taken wherever reasonable and appropriate. Trees and shrubs should not be planted over the route of sewers and furthermore tree planting should not impede access required for the maintenance of sewers.

3.5.21 **Other Design Requirements:** Cycling routes and parking should be incorporated into the street design, with the form of cycle facilities responding to local context. Generally on-carriageway formal cycle lanes are encouraged.

3.5.22 Facilities to aid pedestrian crossing should be designed-in. This may include formal signalised crossings or central medians that aid informal crossing movements.

Fig 3.60: An example of a main street

Fig 3.61: An example of a boulevard

Fig 3.62: An example of a main street

Street types - Secondary routes: Local Streets

3.5.23 **Role:** Local Streets help encourage movement within neighbourhoods by providing a strong connected route that connects to local centres, schools and facilities. Local streets should provide direct, legible routes for all modes and connect where possible back into main streets.

Fig 3.63: Secondary routes: Local streets

3.5.24 **Type of Journeys:** Local Streets should primarily be used for movement at a neighbourhood level and for neighbourhood traffic to access higher-order streets.

3.5.25 **Character:** The Local Streets should create spaces in which car drivers can no longer rely on the regulated environment of higher-order streets where traffic and pedestrians are segregated, and instead must rely on local context to inform road user behaviour. Although pedestrians and cyclists should not necessarily feel that they can dominate the street, their movement should be prioritised. The design of the street should limit vehicular speeds to 20 mph without the need for dedicated traffic calming features.

3.5.26 **Frontage:** Local Streets should be lined with building frontage of a sufficient scale to provide an appropriate level of enclosure responding to the context.

3.5.27 **Public Transport:** Although the bus network should primarily be focused on the Main Streets, Local Streets are likely to provide key opportunities to access potential users, particularly by locating bus stops at local centres and schools .

3.5.28 **Parking:** On-street parking should be permitted unless there is a reason why this would not be appropriate.

3.5.29 **Other Design Requirements:** Cyclists will generally be accommodated on-carriageway, either with formal cycle lanes or as part of the general traffic lane.

3.5.30 Pedestrian crossing facilities are most likely to take the form of Zebra crossings and informal islands.

Fig 3.64: Example of a local street

Fig 3.65: Example of a local street

Fig 3.66: Example of a local street

Street types - Secondary routes: Access Streets

3.5.31 **Role:** Access Streets should connect to the wider network at either end, but do not necessarily have to form a gridded vehicular network. These street types are likely to have lower levels of connectivity for vehicles. The layout of development should accommodate further connections for pedestrians and cyclists to encourage a permeable, and walkable network.

Fig 3.67: Secondary routes: Access streets

3.5.32 **Type of Journey:** Access Streets should only be used by traffic with a local origin and/or destination.

3.5.33 **Character:** As these streets will be lightly used by vehicular traffic pedestrians should feel comfortable moving freely across the street. In some instances the use of shared surface treatments may be appropriate. The design of the street should limit vehicular speeds to 20 mph, without the need for active traffic calming measures.

3.5.34 **Frontage:** Access Streets should be lined with building frontage of a sufficient scale to provide an appropriate level of enclosure responding to the context.

3.5.35 **Public Transport:** Bus services should not use Access Streets other than in exceptional circumstances.

3.5.36 **Parking:** On-street parking should be allowed unless there is a local reason why this may not be appropriate.

3.5.37 **Other Design Requirements:** Cyclists should be accommodated on-carriageway.

Fig 3.68: An example of an access street

Fig 3.69:An example of an access street

Fig 3.70: An example of an access street

Street types - Tertiary routes:
Mews, homezones, short Cul-de-Sacs and yards

3.5.38 **Role:** To provide access to homes, not for use by through traffic.

3.5.39 **Type of Journey:** The lowest-order of street should only be used by traffic with a local origin and/or destination.

Fig 3.71: Tertiary routes: Mews, homezones, short cul-de-sacs and yards

3.5.40 **Character:** This lowest-order street should be designed so that drivers feel like guests in an environment that clearly articulates that pedestrians are prioritised. This street type is least likely to rely on standard highway engineering solutions, such as signage, to inform drivers about context. Techniques such are shared surfaces can be used to convey this message. The design of the street should limit vehicular speeds to 10 mph without the need for active traffic calming measures.

3.5.41 **Frontage:** The informal nature of these streets can be reflected in the adjacent development with varying building line, massing and orientation. The scale of development should provide an appropriate level of enclosure and reflect the intimate nature of these street types.

3.5.42 **Public Transport:** Bus services should not use the lowest order of streets.

3.5.43 **Parking:** On-street parking should be allowed unless there is a reason why this is not appropriate. Opportunities for casual parking that may block the carriageway should be designed out to avoid a streetscene that is dominated by parked cars.

3.5.44 **Other Design Requirements:** Tree planting can be used to help define spaces within the street.

Fig 3.72: An example of an informal, shared surface mews

Fig 3.73: An example of an informal, shared surface mews

Fig 3.74: An example of an informal yard

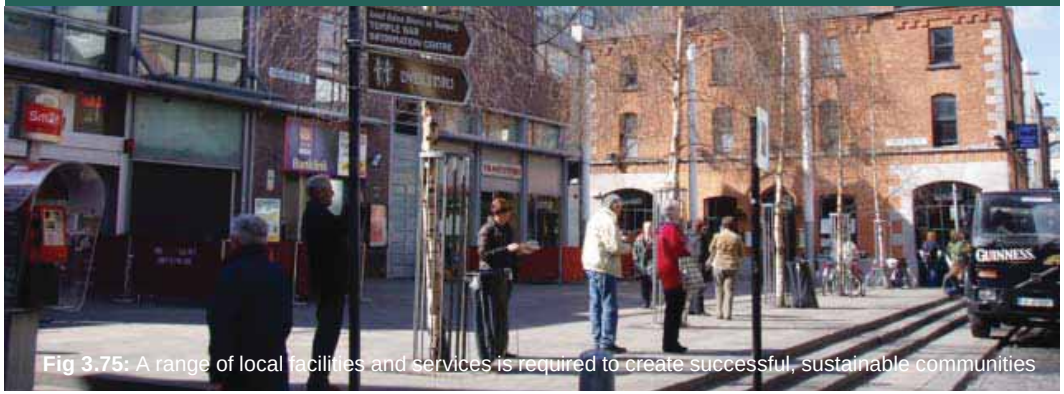


Fig 3.75: A range of local facilities and services is required to create successful, sustainable communities

3.6 A mix of uses

3.6.1 Successful communities require a full range of local facilities and services conveniently located and integrated within a settlement and that are connected by safe and pleasant streets.

3.6.2 A mixed-use development helps to support activity and surveillance throughout the day and night contributing to a greater feeling of safety.

3.6.3 The Vale is endowed with very successful town and village centres at the heart of its settlements.

3.6.4 It may be appropriate for new large-scale development to provide local facilities and neighbourhood hubs which serve a more local catchment and that complement these town and village centres.

Fig 3.76: Historic towns provided successful mixed use cores with residential uses above and adjacent to commercial properties

Fig 3.77: Combining shops at ground floor with homes above can create active, vibrant streets

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 32 Retailing and other main town centre uses
Policy 33 Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility

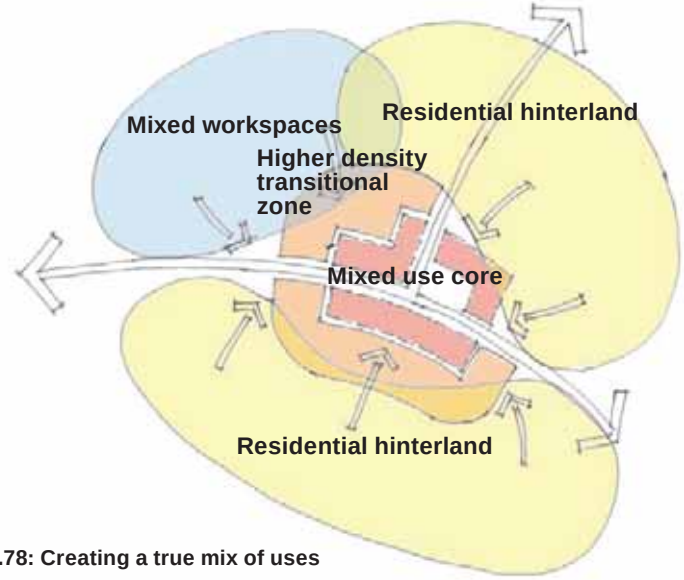


Fig 3.78: Creating a true mix of uses

Principle DG25: A mix of uses

Larger proposals will require a range of local services and facilities to be incorporated.

The viability and vitality of these uses will depend on the existing and proposed catchment.

Local services and facilities should be conveniently located along main routes and/or at the junctions of main routes to maximise accessibility.

The clustering of facilities should be encouraged to reinforce their role as a focus for the community.

The provision of community facilities such as health centres, primary schools or playspaces should also be considered in an integrated way within these locations. This will help to reinforce these hubs and contribute to the viability of local retail use.

For further design advice on mixed-use/local centres refer to Section 9.

The location of non-residential uses should be integrated with the public transport provision.

3.7 Density

3.7.1 Historically, some of the most successful settlements such as medieval village and town centres, and Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian terraces include high density development.

3.7.2 ~~In making the best use of the land, the local plan seeks to achieve a target net density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare provided that it would not have an adverse effect on the character of there, highway safety or the amenity of neighbours~~.

3.7.3 In some locations, such as in rural locations, a lower density of development may be more appropriate. In some urban areas, however, a higher density will be more appropriate in the interests of creating a sustainable pattern of development.

3.7.4 Higher density developments can support higher levels of public transport provision and local facilities and create more walkable neighbourhoods.

3.7.5 An appropriate density or range of densities for development should be informed by the Character Study carried out as part of 'Responding to the ~~Context~~' Section 2 and respond to ~~the Council's Adopted~~ Policies.

Principle DG26: Density

Density should be appropriate to the location, respond to and/or enhance the character of the existing settlement.

For larger development proposals a range of densities, building types and forms will be required. Increased densities should be focused around key movement intersections, along strategic routes, overlooking public spaces and within neighbourhood, local and village centres. This varied density profile adds character and interest, supports local facilities and public transport and can provide the building mass to create strong framing of public spaces.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 23 Housing density

Fig 3.79: AVELEY - The density of development varies across the site and is intensified along key routes and at nodal locations (red - high density; orange - medium density and yellow - low density)

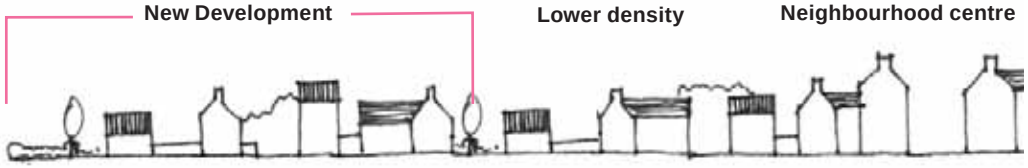


Fig 3.80: Typical cross section showing higher density development closer to the town centre

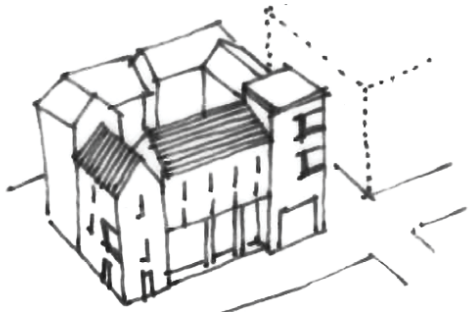


Fig 3.81: Higher density, smaller urban blocks are suitable in more urban locations

Fig 3.82: Lower density, larger blocks are more suitable in rural locations

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

3.8 Urban structure - the pattern of blocks and plots

3.8.1 The layout of all existing towns and cities can be simplified into a grid of blocks and plots. The blocks within the grid may be regular shaped squares or rectangles (providing a regular grid), as found in many new towns, or it may be more irregular (providing a more irregular grid), as found in historic towns and villages.

3.8.2 New development should respond to the existing pattern of development within a settlement (it's grain) taking cues from existing block sizes, patterns of plot subdivision and relationship between the built and non-built private space. This will ensure that new development ~~t~~will integrate more effectively within existing settlements as a natural extension of the original structure.

3.8.3 The appropriate 'grain' of a settlement should be drawn from ~~your~~ Character Study identified in Section 2 of this Guide.

3.8.4 Applicants should avoid layouts determined by an internal logic or by standard design products that bare no relation to the context.

3.8.5 The structure/layout of a proposal must create or contribute to a grid form (be it regular or irregular) of perimeter blocks. The perimeter block is most appropriate for achieving successful development as it:

- Ensures the efficient use of land;
- Optimises connections to surrounding areas;
- Provides a clear distinction between public and private spaces;
- Enhances permeability and legibility;
- Increases natural surveillance of the street;
- Can work at any scale or location; and
- Ensures attractive street frontages.

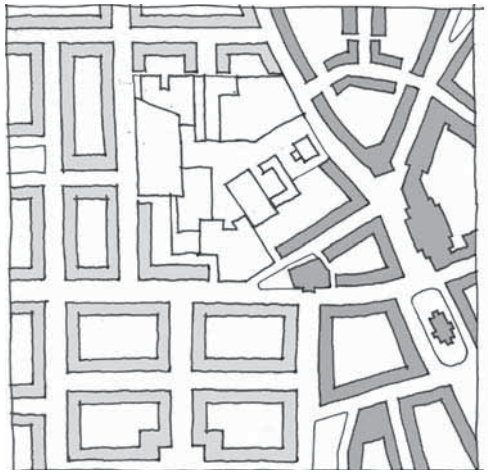


Fig 3.83: Regular gridded street pattern (west) and historic pattern (east)

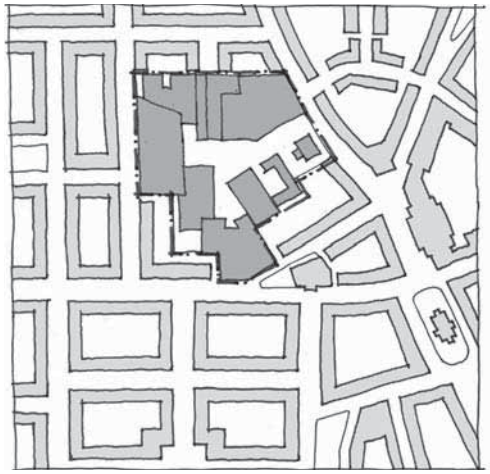


Fig 3.84: Development site of former industrial buildings identified for change

Fig 3.85: Development proposes a connected network of streets with blocks contributing to the existing pattern

Fig 3.86: Development proposal is internalised with new buildings accessed via cul-de sac streets

3.8.6 When designing the layout of development using perimeter blocks, it is important to ensure the blocks vary in size and shape according to the density, location within the masterplan and mix of uses. The blocks should take into account natural features, orientation and topography.

3.8.7 In general, blocks between 70 - 125 metres in length provide a better network for both pedestrians and vehicles. Given the size and character of the settlements in the Vale, larger blocks are unlikely to be appropriate.

3.8.8 The continuity of development, fine grain and subtle variety in form and massing can add a richness to proposed development that responds to the unique characteristics of the Vale.

3.8.9 The introduction of character areas through the use of materials or a coherence of architecture to define legible areas within a larger development may be appropriate.

Building line and frontages

3.8.10 The siting of buildings in relation to the street can have a significant effect on the success of a development. The most successful layouts have 'public fronts and private backs'. These streets have clearly defined 'edges' and allow for natural surveillance minimising opportunities for crime and escape.

3.8.11 The existing building line should inform the design and layout of a new development.

3.8.12 The distance that the building line is set back from the street also defines the level of privacy enjoyed by a dwelling. It may, therefore, be appropriate to introduce a setback which offers a buffer between public and private realms. Even the smallest setback can help privacy and security as well as provide practical storage areas for cycles or refuse. See Section 5 Building Design for further details.

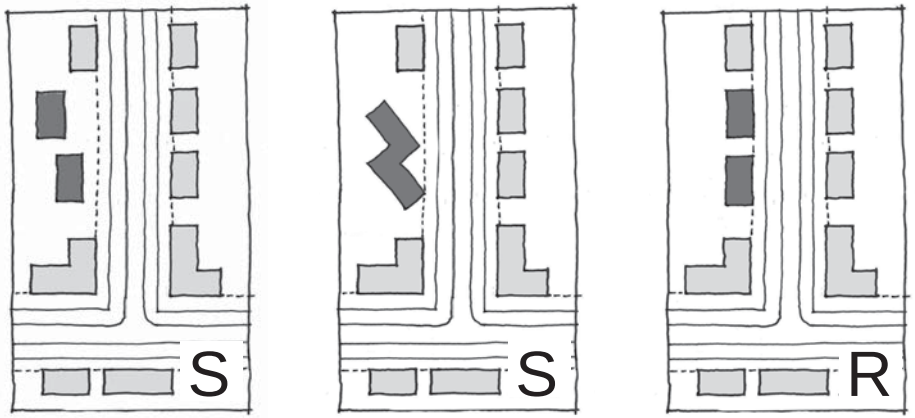


Fig 3.87: New buildings in a street should follow the established building line

Principle DG27: Urban Structure

New development should create a grid network to provide optimum accessibility and best use of land

New development should respond to the grain of the existing settlement taking cues from existing block sizes, patterns of plot subdivision and relationship between built and non-built private space.

New development should provide continuity in the streetscene. The provision of a continuous built frontage maintains the public front of a street and creates a positive rhythm in the street scene.

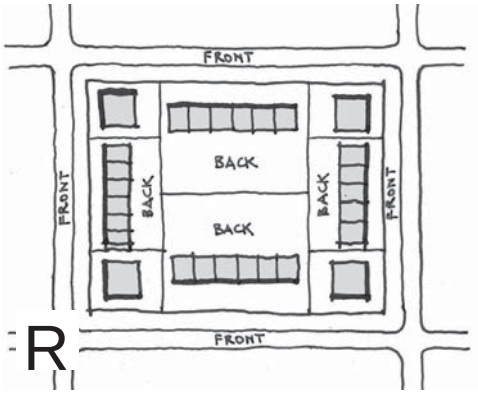


Fig 3.88: Perimeter block ensuring a clear definition of front and backs and a strong building line to the street

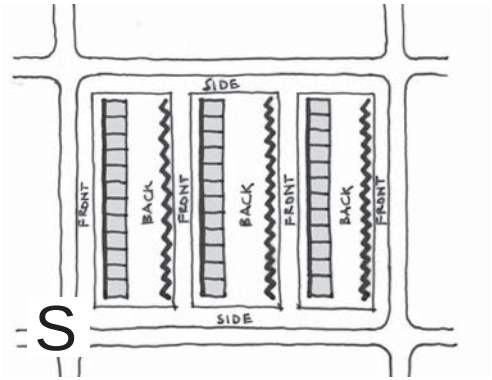


Fig 3.89: Streets should not mix fronts and backs

3.9 Hierarchy of spaces and enclosure

3.9.1 Most good places have an appropriate sense of enclosure; they feel contained, like an outdoor room. Lack of enclosure gives a place a sense of being too exposed or lacking any structure.

3.9.2 Enclosure is determined by the height of the building frontage relative to the width of the street or square. Trees, hedges and walls can also contribute towards creating a sense of enclosure.

3.9.3 Enclosure may be building dominated or landscape dominated. Enclosure also creates different conditions. In the case of a square or courtyard enclosure helps to create a 'static' environment; in a street, where movement is the main characteristic, enclosure helps to create a 'dynamic' environment.

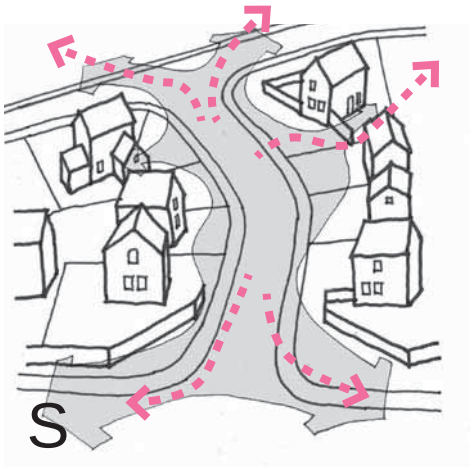


Fig 3.90: Road dominated: lack of enclosure

Fig 3.91: Creation of a sense of enclosure ensures that buildings rather then roads have priority

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Fig 3.92: Victorian/Georgian town centre enclosure, Abingdon

Fig 3.93: Village enclosure formed by walled front garden, Wytham

Fig 3.94: Estate village enclosure - deep front gardens and trees, Lockinge

3.9.4 A simple way of evaluating enclosure is to calculate the ratio of the height of the buildings to the width of the street or space.

3.9.5 Applicants should refer to their Character Study (Section 2) to inform the level of enclosure appropriate for the location. As a rough guideline, a ratio of between 1:1.5 to 1:3 (height:width) is likely to be appropriate depending on the hierarchy of street or public space (Refer to Urban Design Compendium). The overriding factor is that the space between buildings is a safe and pleasant place and does not feel oppressive.

3.9.6 Landscaping can help to create a sense of enclosure – e.g. specimen trees framing the street.

3.9.7 A significant challenge for larger residential developments is to provide a scale that is appropriate to people rather than cars. When buildings are set close to the street it is important to ensure they relate to the human scale. When buildings are set back from the street, it is important to ensure that roads and parking areas do not dominate the street scene.

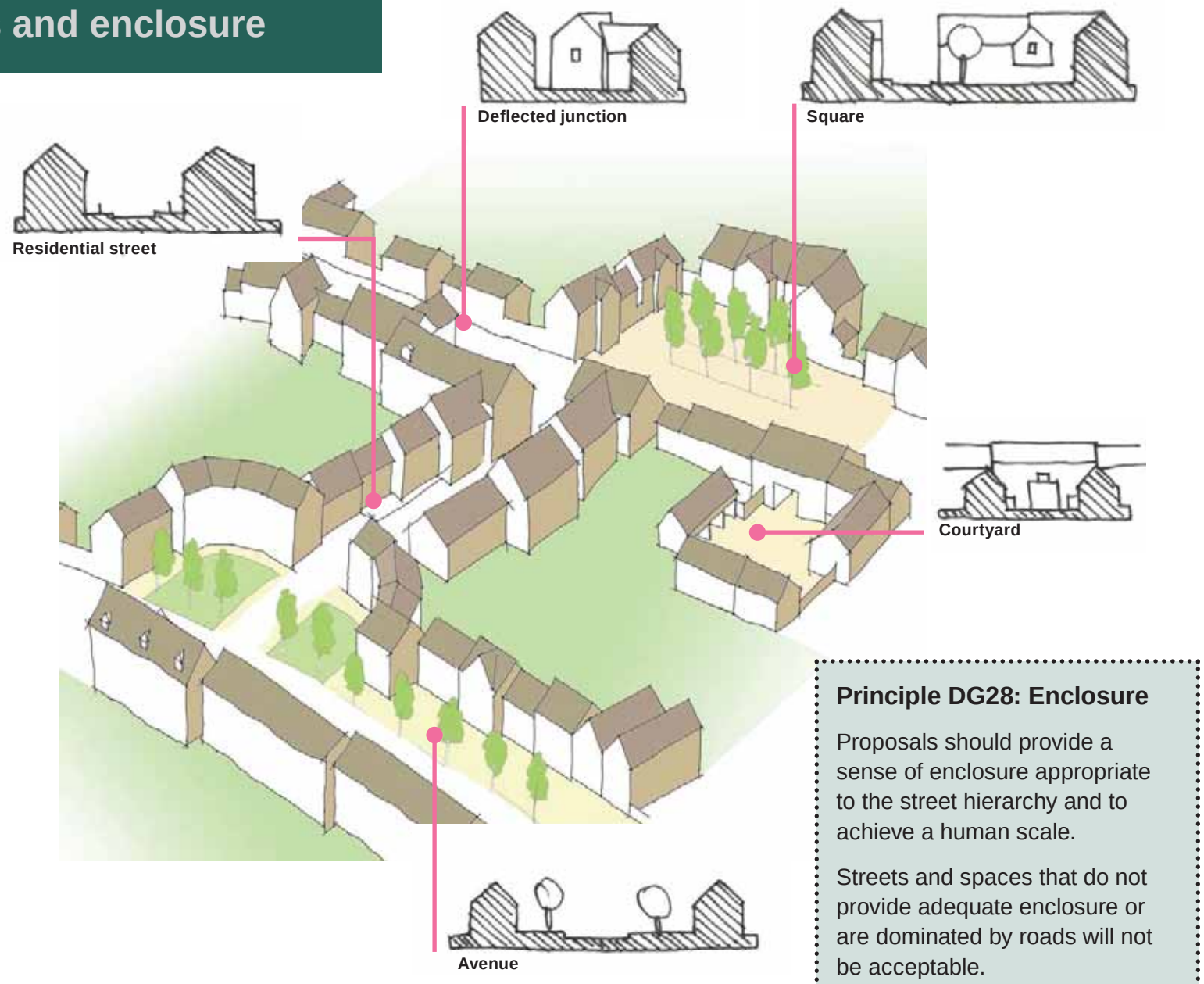


Fig 3.95: A hierarchy of streets and spaces with varying levels of enclosure

Principle DG28: Enclosure

Proposals should provide a sense of enclosure appropriate to the street hierarchy and to achieve a human scale.

Streets and spaces that do not provide adequate enclosure or are dominated by roads will not be acceptable.

3 Establishing the structure
The development edge

Fig 3.96: A positive development edge can be created by providing strong building frontage overlooking the countryside accessed by a shared surface street.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

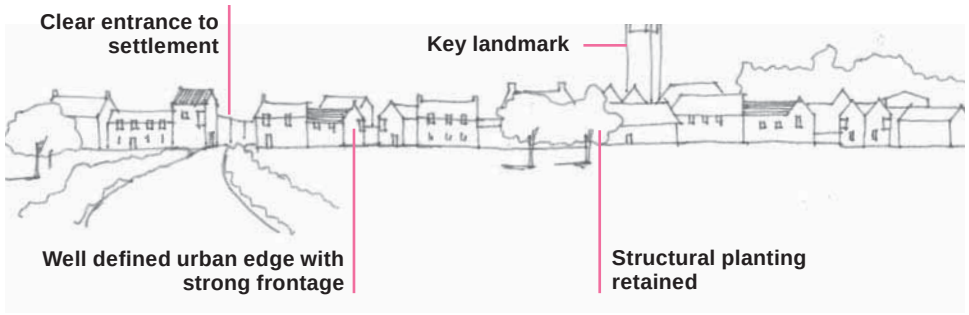


Fig 3.97: The edges of development should be carefully considered to contribute to a positive external image of the settlement

3.10 The development edge

3.10.1 The edge of a development and its external appearance are critical aspects for urban extensions and new development on the edge of existing settlements.

3.10.2 All too often the edge is poorly defined by wooden fences abutting the countryside.

3.10.3 Development should instead provide a positive edge which has a clear and well-defined external image. The nature of this edge will depend on the location but could be achieved through:

- Providing strong building frontage;
- Combining structural planting, boundary treatments (such as stone walls) and building frontage; and
- The use of planting to soften the mass of built form.

3.10.4 In addition the edge of development should:

- Clearly define entrances to the development through the use of pinch points, corners or feature buildings;
- Use structural planting to frame views or as screening to hide existing unsightly views;
- Maintain views to important landmarks and/or key buildings; and
- Provide a varied skyline and roofscape.

Principle DG29: The Development Edge

Proposals should avoid back fences abutting the countryside.

Applicants (where applicable) will be required to demonstrate how their proposals provide a positive edge which has a clear and well-defined external image.

Fig 3.98: AVELEY - a clear development edge defines the boundary of the settlement and creates a positive interface with the landscape

Fig 3.99: The edges of development should respond positively to existing landscape and avoid fences abutting the countryside

Fig 3.100: A balance between creating a positive edge to the countryside whilst maintaining a rural feel

3 Establishing the structure
Legibility, landmarks and vistas

Fig 3.101 The old town hall in Faringdon acts as landmark to aid legibility within the town

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

3.11 Legibility, landmarks and vistas

3.11.1 The structure or layout of new development should be easy to navigate and easy to understand. This is achieved through:

- The use of a rational street hierarchy which relates to the street's role and connectiveness;
- Creating or responding to an existing local centre or focal point;
- Focusing and connecting the movement network to these local centres or focal points;
- Structuring development around the location where important routes converge, the 'nodes' within the settlement; and
- Emphasising important entrance point into the settlement or into a distinctive part of the settlement, the 'gateways', using built form.

Fig 3.102 Focal buildings at nodal points within a settlement also help to terminate vistas

Fig 3.103: AVELEY - Plan indicating legibility, landmarks and vistas

3 Establishing the structure
Legibility, landmarks and vistas

Landmarks

3.11.2 Landmarks are distinctive buildings, structures, landscape elements or sculptures that provide visual cues within a development and aid legibility.

3.11.3 Landmark buildings may have additional height than the surrounding context, be architectural distinctive either in terms of their form or design.

3.11.4 Landmarks should be located in or adjacent to important spaces, centres, nodal points or landscapes to aid the understanding of a place and enhance identity.

3.11.5 The location and justification for potential landmarks should be developed in discussions with the Council to ensure they are proposed in areas where they will contribute to the wider legibility of the settlement.

Vistas

3.11.6 Overly-long streets can be daunting or monotonous to the pedestrian whereas long culs-de-sac and tortuous winding routes can be confusing and lack legibility. Streets that ~~are aligned to~~ create a varied sequence of spaces and vistas aligned with focal buildings can be more rewarding and contribute to the understanding of a place. This can be achieved through:

- A curve or kink in the street;
- Offsetting the street network and terminating the view on a building;
- Creating a pinch point; and / or
- Locating a taller building to enclose the street which shortens the visual length of the street.

Fig 3.104: The location of a taller terminal building can limit the visual length of streets

Principle DG30: Legibility, landmarks and vistas

The structure or layout of new development should be easy to navigate and easy to understand.

Applicants should demonstrate how the use of landmarks, markers and vistas has informed their proposal.

The location of landmarks should be clearly justified.

Overly-long streets and torturous winding culs-de-sac should be avoided.

Fig 3.105: The landscape structure

Fig 3.106: A network of streets

Fig 3.107: Density and land use

Fig 3.108: An urban structure

3.12 Bringing it all together

3.12.1 The principles within this section should be brought together to form a concept masterplan for the development.

Fig 3.109: A concept masterplan

3 Establishing the structure
SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST (PART 1)

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has established the structure of the proposal.

PROCESS: Have you read, understood and applied the principles set out through Section 3?

PROCESS: Have these principles been considered in conjunction with the Planning Designations, Character Study and Site Appraisal prepared in Response to the ~~Context~~?

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

SUMMARY: Applicants should now have an urban structure bourne from place that complies with good urban design principles. At this stage it may be appropriate to hold a Pre Application Meeting with the Planning Authority.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG10: Natural resources	Has the design proposal used the physical characteristics of the site identified in Stage ~~0~~2 to influence the form and layout of new development?	
	Has the proposal maximised the site resources in response to Principles DG10 - DG13?	
DG14: Water features and SUDs	Where applicable has the design sought to retain, enhance and/or re-establish surface water features identified in Stage ~~0~~2 as positive features?	
	Has the design incorporated the use of sustainable urban drainage as an integral part of the layout and landscape structure?	
DG15: Landscape structure	Does the design demonstrate that the landscape structure has been considered from the outset of the design process and as an integral part of the proposal?	
	Does the design retain any important landscape features identified in Stage 02 (mature trees and planting) wherever possible and incorporate these features into the landscape structure?	
	Does the design avoid space left over after planning (SLOAP) and integrate open space into the heart of the development as positive element of the scheme.	
DG16: Open space networks	Does the design link existing and proposed landscapes and open spaces to form open space networks and contribute and respond to the hierarchy of existing open spaces?	
DG17: Open spaces	Where applicable has the design provided the appropriate level of open space in accordance with the Sport and Recreation Future Provision SPD?	
	Are these open spaces within walking distance and easily accessible?	
DG18: Ecology and biodiversity	Have landscape features with high biodiversity/ecological value identified in Stage 02 been retained and incorporated within the proposals?	
	All applications should seek no net loss of biodiversity as a minimum and if possible incorporate net gains. Has this been achieved?	
	Have new habitats been created within the landscape structure to encourage additional species?	
DG19: Topography and strategic views	Has the design worked with the topography and integrated the buildings within the landscape?	
	Have important views into and out of the site identified in Stage 02 been retained or enhanced?	
	Where applicable has the design avoided obscuring existing views to important landmarks?	
DG21: Reduce the reliance on the car	Has the applicant provided a travel plan (where applicable) or transport statement demonstrating measures taken to reduce the reliance on the car?	
DG22: Connect with the existing	Does the proposal integrate with existing routes and access points, and create direct and attractive connections between public transport, footpaths, cycle routes and local facilities?	

3 Establishing the structure
SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST (PART 2)

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG23: A connected network of streets	Does the proposed movement network follow natural desire lines, link to existing streets, open spaces, local facilities or destinations?	
	Is the proposal future proofed and allow potential future development to integrate into the street network at a later date?	
	Does the layout avoid single points of access, long culs-de-sac and tortuous routes that do not provide a choice of direct and convenient routes?	
	Does the design provide a network of connected streets and public spaces that enable choice and follow a spatial and visual hierarchy?	
DG24: Mix of uses	Has a range of local services and facilities been incorporated within the design?	
	Are these facilities conveniently located along main routes and/or at the junctions of main routes to maximise accessibility?	
	Are these facilities served or expected to be served by public transport?	
DG25: Density	Is the density of the scheme appropriate to the location and the character of the existing settlement (established in Section 2)?	
	For larger proposals has a range of densities, building types and forms been proposed?	
	Are increased densities focused around key movement intersections, along strategic routes, overlooking public spaces and within neighbourhood, local and village centres?	
DG26: Urban structure	Does the design create a grid network to provide optimum accessibility and best use of land?	
	Does the new development respond to the grain of the existing settlement taking cues from existing block sizes, patterns of plot subdivision and relationship between built and non-built private space? Does the new development provide continuity in the streetscene?	
DG27: Enclosure	Does the proposal provide an appropriate sense of enclosure appropriate to the street hierarchy and achieve a human scale?	
DG28: The development edge	Has the applicant (where applicable) demonstrated how their proposals provides a positive edge which has a clear and well-defined external image. Proposals should avoid back fences abutting the countryside.	
DG29: Legibility, landmarks and vistas	Does the structure or layout of the proposed development appear easy to navigate and easy to understand?	
	Has the applicant demonstrated how the use of landmarks, marker buildings and vistas has informed the proposal?	
	Does the layout avoid overly-long streets and torturous winding culs-de-sacs?	
DG30: Energy supply	Has site wide local energy generation been considered? Has an energy strategy been prepared?	

4
Streets and Spaces

Well designed streets and public spaces contribute significantly to the success of places. Those streets and spaces that are comfortable, stimulating and attractive can encourage social interaction, act as meeting points for communities, add value to surrounding properties and generally add to the character of a neighbourhood.

The design of the public realm (the streets and spaces around buildings) is as important as the design of buildings. All too often in new development these elements are given less design consideration or dictated by standardised, engineered solutions.

The following guidance emphasises the importance of the public realm as well as the design of social spaces that contribute to the success of an area.

4 Streets and spaces
Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document. This section should be read by all applicants putting forward proposals for urban extensions, major residential sites, infill sites and development in urban locations.

Before you proceed If your application is for an urban extension or major residential site have you read through the relevant parts of Sections 2 and 3 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to Section 2.

If your application is for an infill site or small development within an urban location have you read through Section 2 and completed the checklist? If not please go back to Section 2.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 4: This section outlines the key principles to consider in delivering well designed streets and spaces.

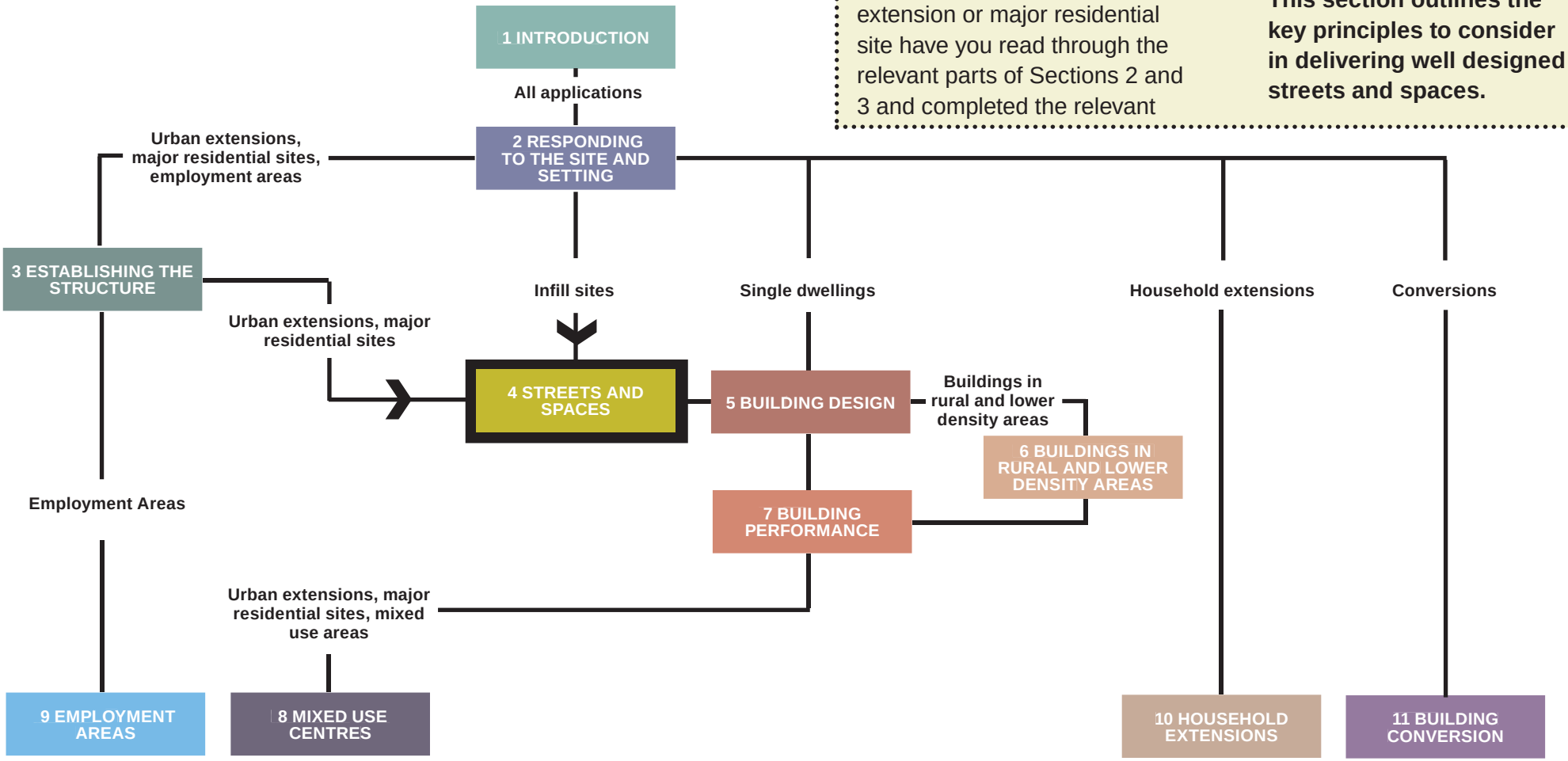


Fig 4.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

4 Streets and spaces
Streets as social spaces

Fig 4.2: Wantage - Streets serve many functions and users

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 33 Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

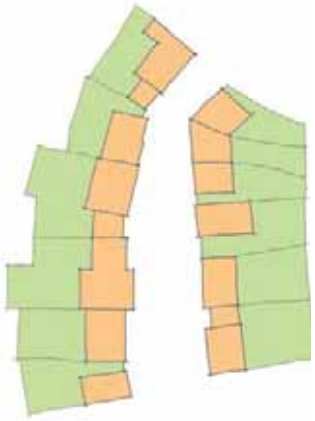


Fig 4.5: Priority should be given to buildings and enclosure

Fig 4.6: Design footways to follow the buildings line

Fig 4.7: Provide the minimum space required for the roadway. Use the resulting space for hard or soft landscaping with parking as appropriate

4.1 Streets as social spaces

4.1.1 Streets should be designed as public spaces that serve many functions, not only the circulation of traffic, but also walking, cycling, play and places for social interaction. As such the design of streets should not be led by engineering solutions or dominated by the car but instead have a strong emphasis on place-making and pedestrian movement.

4.1.2 The design of streets should follow the user hierarchy shown in the table below.

Consider first	Pedestrians
↓	Cyclists
	Public transport users
	Emergency services
	Service vehicles
Consider last	Other motor traffic

Fig 4.3: Car focused road design

Fig 4.4: Street designed for all users

Principle DG31: Streets as social spaces

Streets should be designed as social spaces with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users put above the needs of the motorist.

Applicants should refer to Manual for Streets (2007).

Within larger developments principal vehicular routes should be integrated within the structure of development as main streets or boulevards fronted by development and landscape features and not as peripheral distributor roads (bypasses).

The design of streets and definition of that street by built form or landscape features should be considered in parallel to ensure buildings provide appropriate enclosure and contribute positively to the character of the space.

Minimise street clutter by reducing road markings, street signs, unnecessary posts or street furniture.

4 Streets and spaces
Streets to encourage walking and cycling

Fig 4.8: Newhall, Essex - A well design street with generous footways

4.2 Streets to encourage walking and cycling

4.2.1 The design of a street should clearly communicate to users (whether pedestrians, cyclists or motorists) how to behave appropriately and safely by influencing where in the street they travel, how fast to travel, and where enhanced attention is necessary.

4.2.2 This will vary according to the type of street and may include tightening kerb radii, narrowing vehicular carriageways, provision of on-street parking, and the use of planting and/or shared surfaces. Traffic calming measures are covered in Section 4.4 of the Design Guide. Applicants should also refer to Manual for streets for further details on street design best practice. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets

Fig 4.9: Streets with little or no overlooking will discourage pedestrians from using them

Fig 4.10: Streets with generous footways, tree planting and good overlooking from adjacent buildings feel safer to use

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 33 Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Fig 4.11: Residential streets that incorporate tree planting and soft landscaping, seats for resting and generous footways encourage walking.

Principle DG32: Streets to encourage walking and cycling

In urban and rural village areas streets, pedestrian routes and spaces should have adequate building frontage to provide natural surveillance and contribute to public safety.

Ensure that residential streets are designed to a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour.

Streets should also encourage pedestrian movement through generous pavement widths, incorporating shared surfaces, avoiding unnecessary barriers or clutter and providing places for pedestrians to rest, gather and socialise.

4 Streets and spaces
Trees planting and soft landscaping

Fig 4.12: Lockinge - Tree planting and soft landscaping used to create a sense of enclosure

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 33 Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Fig 4.13: Tree can be used as traffic calming features and to increase the sense of enclosure along a street

4.3 Tree planting and soft landscaping

4.3.1 Trees and soft landscape can make an important contribution to the character of an area by adding visual interest, giving structure and form to public and private spaces, and improving the legibility of a place. Existing mature planting (identified in the Site Appraisal) should be retained where possible and appropriate, and can make a contribution to local distinctiveness.

4.3.2 New trees and shrubs, should be included in all new development as part of the scheme's overall design.

4.3.3 The selection of tree species should reflect the character of the locality, including the local soil conditions, native habitats and plant communities.

4.3.4 Native trees and shrubs should be planted where possible. A balanced approach is needed between the use of native species and their suitability for specific functions. For example there are a limited number of native species suitable for street frontage planting.

4.3.5 Longer lived species should be used where possible and appropriate.

4.3.6 Applicants should seek advice from appropriate professionals (landscape architects, arboriculturalists, ecologists or nurserymen), for guidance on plant selection and planting procedures.

4.3.7 Trees and soft landscaping should be selected and located according to:

- Final height, spread and form;
- Soil type and volume of soil;
- Existing species in the locality;
- The intended character of the area, street or public space e.g. formal sculptural planting or softer informal planting;
- Existing services underground or overhead;
- Whether they are deciduous or evergreen to ensure they do not block daylight from elevations during the winter period and provide shade and shelter in the summer;
- Proximity to roads, ensuring sight lines and forward visibility is maintained;
- Proximity to buildings;
- Space available for segregated root areas and service runs; and
- Highway lighting.

Fig 4.14: Environments devoid of tree or soft landscaping can often appear bleak and uninviting

Fig 4.15: Introducing soft landscaping significantly improves the quality of the public realm

4.3.8 Minimise the potential for root related damage to surfacing or boundary structures by considering issues of compatibility below ground. Protective measures such as root barriers or appropriate tree pit designs should be used.

4.3.9 Landscape design also has a role in deterring crime – e.g. tough and spiky planting can help prevent unauthorised access to a property.

4.3.10 Contact the council's Countryside Officer and Forestry Officer for further advice or refer to Trees in Design Action Group publications:

- Trees in townscape: A guide for decision makers; and
- Trees in hard landscape: A guide for delivery.

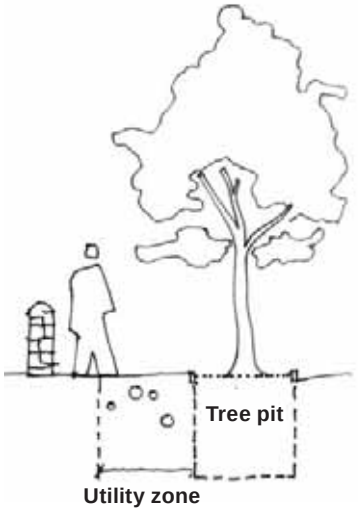


Fig 4.16: Professionally designed tree pits should be used to provide the necessary soil volume required to successfully establish the tree. Tree pit design needs to consider any adjacent service runs and particular care is needed for trees in hard surfaces

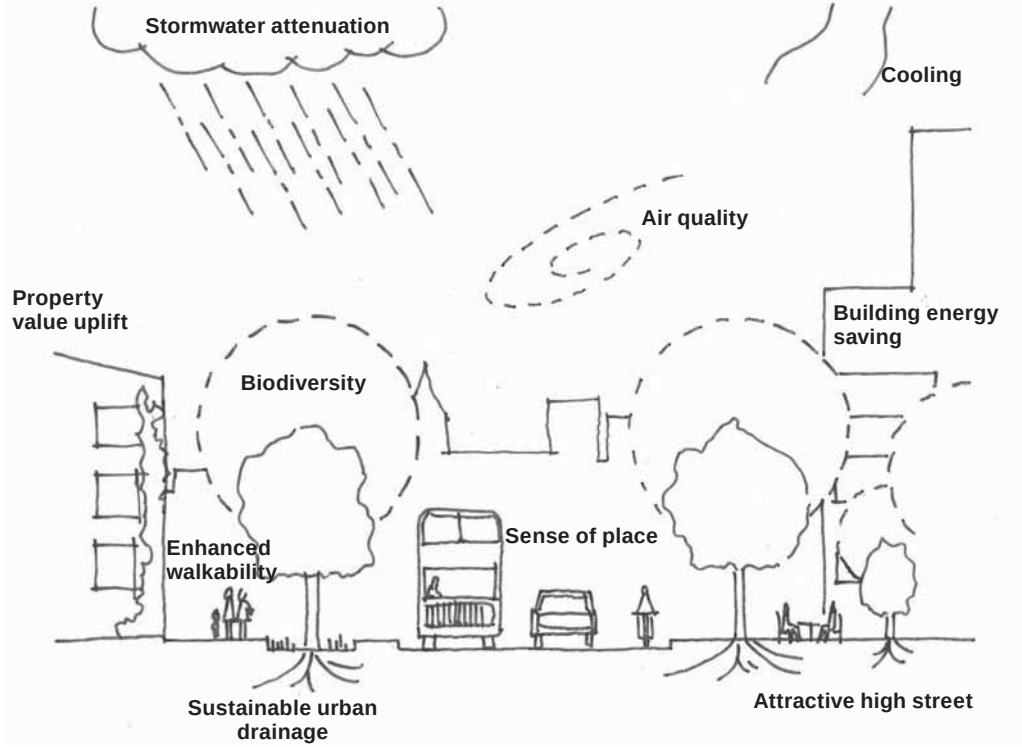


Fig 4.17: The benefits of tree planting and soft landscaping

Principle DG33: Tree planting and soft landscaping

Tree planting and soft landscaping should be provided on all street types as a matter of principle. Tree size at maturity should be appropriate to the location. For example in residential access streets small scale trees at closely spaced should be specified where as on a main street larger trees at larger intervals should be specified.

Tree species should be appropriate to the environment and applicants must consider the mature size of trees and not just the size at the time of planting.

Applicants should seek advice from appropriate professionals e.g. landscape architects, arboriculturalists, ecologists or nurserymen for further guidance on plant selection and planting procedures.

Care should be taken to ensure that planting does not reduce natural surveillance.

Applicants should demonstrate that the long-term maintenance and management of landscape elements has been considered through a management and maintenance plan.

4 Streets and spaces
Traffic calming

Fig 4.18: Abingdon - Traffic calming integrated into the design of the street

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 33 Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

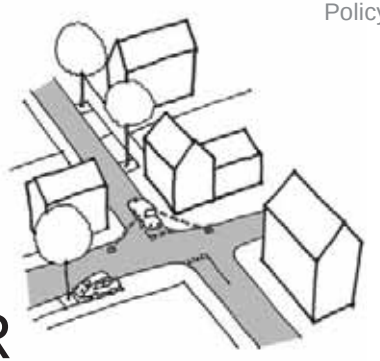


Fig 4.19: Frequent changes in directions and tight corners with narrow sight lines to control speed

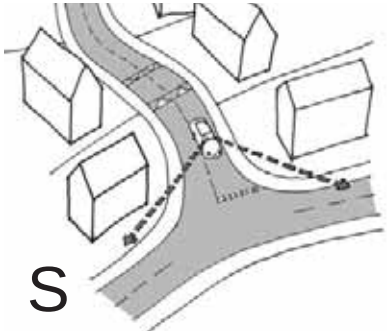


Fig 4.20: 'Fast' road with gentle bends and wide sight lines controlled by speed bumps gives mixed messages and can encourage speed

4.4 Traffic calming

4.4.1 Traffic calming measures should be integrated within the design of the streets and not as bolt on measures such as speed bumps. The best way to do this is to design streets that encourage drivers to drive with care and caution, and minimise all vehicle priority measures within residential areas except on bus routes. Measures can include:

- The use of shared surfaces;
- Varying the alignment of the vehicular route;
- Use of tight junction radii;
- Narrowing down the carriageway and the use of planting and build outs;
- The use of on-street parking;
- Raised areas at junctions and nodal points; and
- Changing colour/materials.

4.4.2 The design of the street should be carried out by an architect, urban designer and/or the landscape architect, not just the traffic engineer. Streets submitted for adoption will require a safety audit. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets

Principle DG34: Traffic Calming

Traffic calming measures should be integrated within the design of the streets.

Refer to Manual for Streets for further guidance.

Fig 4.21: Street design incorporating traffic calming measures

Fig 4.22: Speed bumps as a traffic calming measure for new roads should be avoided.

Fig 4.23: Traffic calming measures should be integrated within the design of streets

4 Streets and spaces
Shared surfaces

Fig 4.24: Successful shared surface street incorporating tree planting, soft landscaping and parking

4.5 Shared surfaces

4.5.1 In a shared surface street the footway and carriageway are combined and surfaced in the same material and/or at the same level. The absence of demarcation and/or level change between the pedestrian and car is an effective traffic calming tool as drivers have to slow down to negotiate the space with other users.

4.5.2 A significant concern with shared surfaces, however, is that the absence of a kerb can undermine the mobility of some disabled or visually-impaired people. This can be addressed through the use of a contrasting line or tactile materials to demarcate carriageways.

4.5.3 The use of street furniture, trees and lighting can also be used to demarcate vehicle routes through

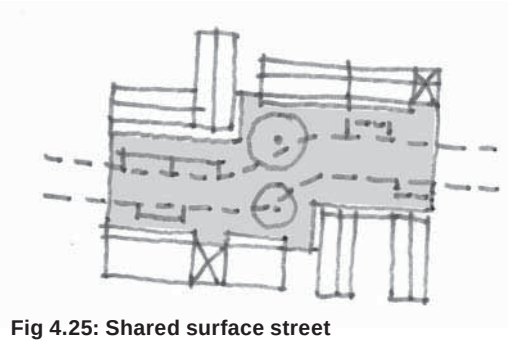


Fig 4.25: Shared surface street

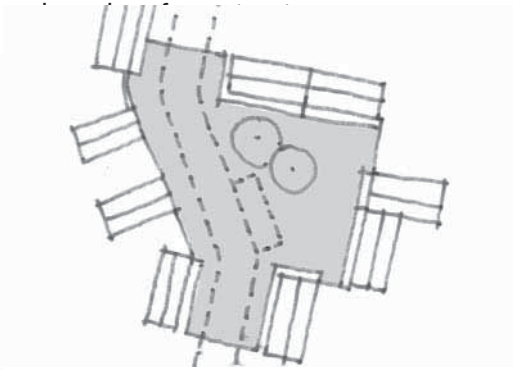


Fig 4.26: Shared surface square

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 33 Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

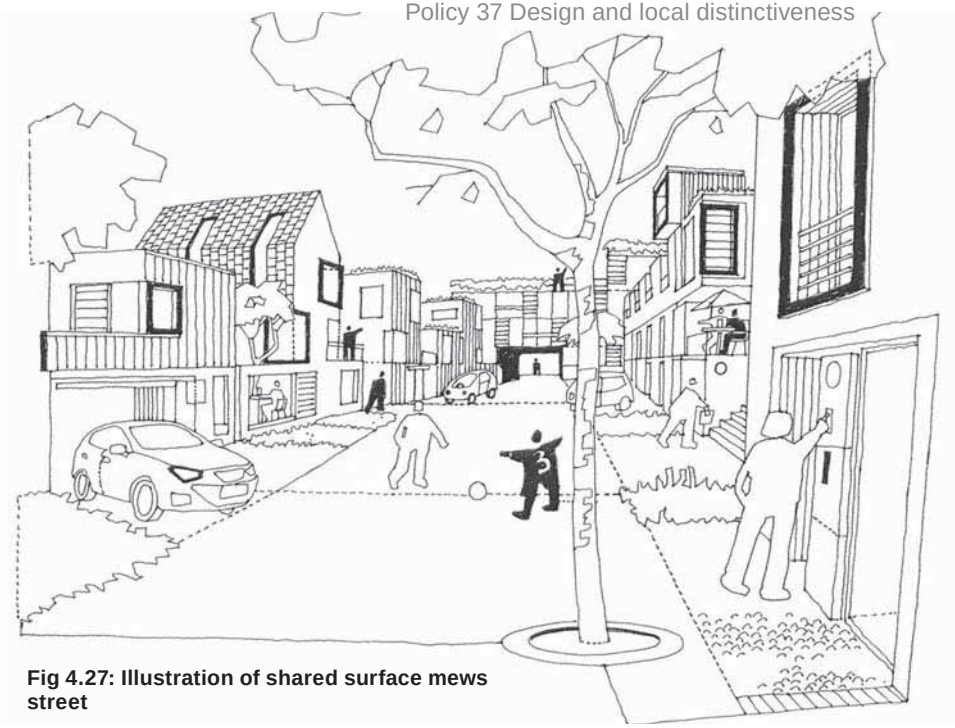


Fig 4.27: Illustration of shared surface mews street

Principle DG35: Shared surface streets

Shared surface streets should be incorporated within new residential proposals where appropriate.

Shared surface streets are best used in lower order streets such as mews, courtyards, minor residential streets or in rural locations.

This approach can also be used however within local centres or adjacent to public spaces as a form of traffic calming.

Applicants should consider the use of a contrasting line or different materials to demarcate the carriageway. These could be setts or block pavers in contrasting textures or colours, which are visibile to pedestrians and can be felt by partially-sighted people. They can also help delineate parking bays in shared surfaced areas.

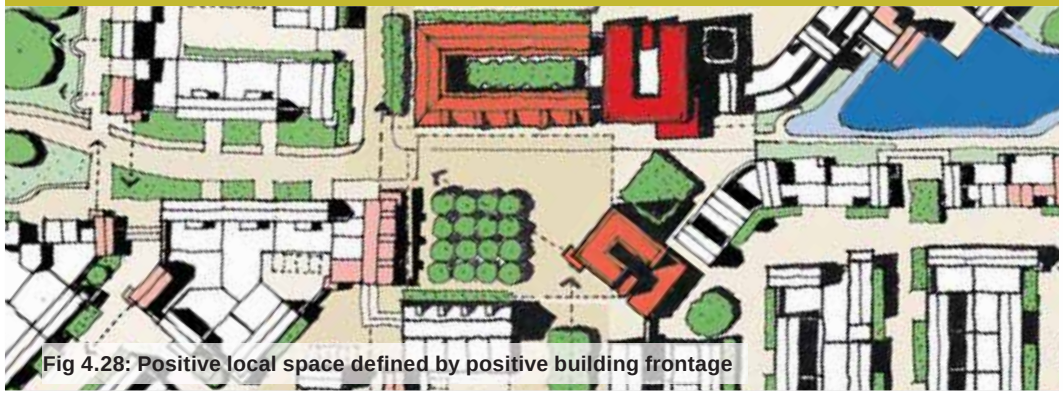


Fig 4.28: Positive local space defined by positive building frontage

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Fig 4.29: Informal space and buildings

Fig 4.30: Formal space with semi-formal building

4.6 Positive local spaces

4.6.1 Open spaces should form part of the overall open space network as set out in Section 3.

4.6.2 These spaces must make a positive contribution towards the townscape.

4.6.3 It is important that open spaces are high quality and have a specific role or function in order to avoid residual, unused or neglected open spaces.

4.6.4 The local context should be reflected in the design of local open spaces. This could be achieved through the use of landscape, materials, trees and other planting and street furniture.

4.6.5 Opportunities to improve the wildlife and biodiversity value of open spaces should be maximised, for example by linking spaces.

4.6.6 Public spaces within urban areas should have an appropriate level of enclosure related to the human scale. Applicants should consider the height of surrounding buildings and/or landscape features in relation to the width of public spaces to avoid spaces which are overly wide. A brief analysis of existing open spaces within the settlement could provide the cues for suitable enclosure ratios within new development.

4.6.7 A balanced approach between the diversity and/or unity of buildings surrounding a space should be considered and should respond to the existing character of the settlement.

Principle DG36: Local spaces

Spaces should be designed with a specific role or function to avoid residual, unused or neglected spaces.

Local spaces should be designed positively and provide a high level of amenity with building frontages providing clear definition, appropriate enclosure and overlooking.

Consideration should be given to the maintenance of the local open spaces, and provision should be made for the ongoing cost of this maintenance.

Local public spaces should have an appropriate level of enclosure related to the human scale.

Where furniture and equipment are provided, their design should be should be robust and durable.

4 Streets and spaces
Positive local spaces

Fig 4.31: Local playspace well overlooked by adjacent development

Playspace

4.6.8 Playing is important to children's well being. It helps to develop their physical abilities and their emotional responses. Where play is collaborative, it can help to improve children's interpersonal skills. Where play involves exploration and creativity, it can help children think in a flexible manner and develop learning and problem solving skills.

4.6.9 Play spaces should be learning environments and incorporate natural landscape to enable contact with nature.

Fig 4.32: Play spaces should not be sited to the rear or side of buildings where overlooking is limited. This can often lead to anti-social behaviour

Fig 4.33: Play spaces should be integrated within the overall landscape design and include elements of natural play and learning environments

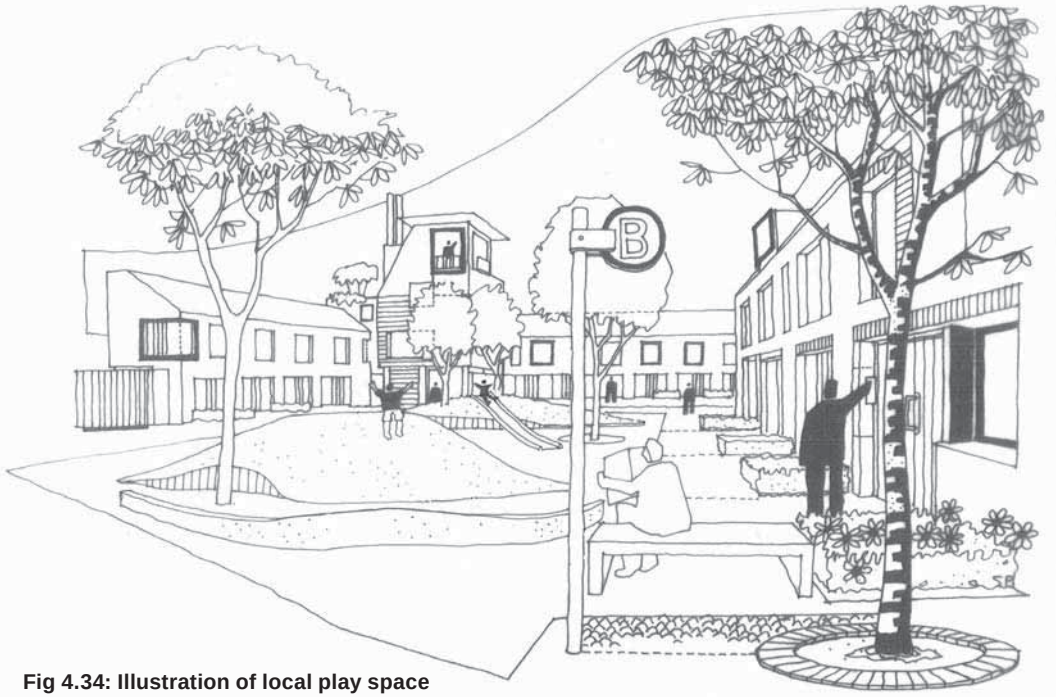


Fig 4.34: Illustration of local play space

Principle DG37: Playspace

The siting of playspaces needs to take into account the surrounding context to ensure that disturbance to surrounding residential properties is minimised. Factors to consider will be the intended age of the children using the playspace, the size of the playspace facility and the proximity to existing residential properties.

The requirements and broad distribution of playspaces can be found in the council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Future Provision Supplementary Planning Document (July 2008).

Playspaces should be accessible to all children. Reference should be made to existing national guidance on inclusive play, including Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces (Play England, August 2008) and Public Space Lessons: Designing and planning for play (CABE, October 2008).

4 Streets and spaces
Inclusive design

Fig 4.35: Public spaces should be designed to enable everyone to participate irrespective of a person's mobility, age, gender or ethnicity

4.7 Inclusive design

4.7.1 Buildings and public spaces should be designed so that they are accessible and inclusive to all users.

4.7.2 An inclusive approach to design enables everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities.

4.7.3 The five key principles of inclusive design as set out by CABE include:

- Placing people at the heart of the design process;
- Acknowledging diversity and difference;
- Offering choice where a single design solution cannot accommodate all users;
- Providing for flexibility in use; and
- Providing buildings and environments that are convenient and enjoyable to use for everyone.

4.7.4 Further guidance on inclusive design is provided in The principles of Inclusive Design (CABE, 2006), Inclusive Mobility (Department for Transport, 2005) and Designing for Accessibility (RIBA Publishing, 2004).

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Principle DG38: Inclusive Design

Streets and public spaces should be designed so that they:

- Reflect the diversity of people using spaces;
- Are convenient, safe and easy to use for all people without having to experience undue effort, barriers to access or separation;
- Enable everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities irrespective of a person's mobility, age, gender or ethnicity;
- ~~Are welcoming and remove real and imagined barriers~~;
- Meet the needs of wheelchair users, mobility impaired people and people with pushchairs;
- Encourage social interaction and do not purposely design-out the activities of young people or other groups; and
- Provide sensory richness.

In addition applicants should:

- Design tree pits and select tree species that prevent disruption of surfaces when trees mature.
- Ensure that street furniture, signage, lighting and visual and textural contrast in the paving materials are carefully designed and reflect the needs of all potential users; and
- Provide sufficient levels of accessibility for all potential users in terms of accessible parking, pavement space and access to public transport.

The principles of inclusive design should be incorporated from the outset, rather than at the end of the design process as an afterthought. Inclusive design principles will need to be clearly set out in applicants' Design and Access Statements.

4 Streets and spaces
Furniture and lighting

Fig 4.36: Street furniture integrated with the landscape design to avoid clutter

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Fig 4.37: If stand alone street furniture is selected it should be complementary to the overall design

Fig 4.38: Lighting mounted on buildings can reduce street clutter within the public realm

4.8 Furniture

4.8.1 The design and location of street furniture should take into account the character of the area and the need to avoid harming the amenity of residents or impeding movement.

4.8.2 The design and location of street furniture, therefore, needs to be considered as part of the early stages of the design process.

4.8.3 The regular spacing of street seating on pedestrian routes to facilities should be provided to allow the elderly and disabled opportunity to rest.

Principle DG39: Furniture

Street furniture should be restricted to essential items and functions should be combined where possible. For example attaching signs to lamp posts, mounting streets signs and/or lighting on buildings.

Street furniture should be simple, high quality, well designed, robust and responsive to its setting. Seating and other street furniture should be considered in an integrated way into the design of the landscape.

Applicants should consider the use of changes in levels, planting and street trees integrated into the public realm design to minimise the need for bollards.

4.9 Lighting

4.9.1 Lighting schemes that are well considered and reflective of the area are essential to the creation of safe, high quality streets and spaces.

4.9.2 Lighting should be considered at an early stage in the design of streets and spaces as an integral part of the design process.

4.9.3 The use of renewable energy solar lighting to footpaths and the public realm may be cost effective..

Principle DG40: Lighting

Lighting columns should be kept to a minimum and, wherever possible, light fittings should be located on existing or new buildings.

All lighting features should accord with the design approach for other street furniture.

Light fittings should be designed to avoid causing light pollution particularly in sensitive and dark rural areas.

4 Streets and spaces
Utilities and public art

Fig 4.39: Landform art can double up as play spaces

Fig 4.40: Public art can be used to mark a public space

Fig 4.41: Public art can be used as an integrated feature within the streetscene

4.10 Utilities

4.10.1 Whilst most utilities run under ground they have an impact on where trees may be planted within the public realm and above ground supply boxes can be unsightly. The provision and location of utility requirements should be considered at an early stage to minimise potential conflict and reduce the impact.

Principle DG41: Utilities

Applicants should consider utility requirements such as supply boxes, cable runs and maintenance access at an early stage of the design process to avoid conflicts between these and landscape features, tree planting and public realm designs.

4.11 Public art

4.11.1 Public art can play a significant part in the character of the public realm, creating distinctive places as well as forming legible features.

4.11.2 Public art can be delivered in a variety of media, and it should be designed for a specific location in the landscape or public realm.

4.11.3 Larger phased sites often use public art provision as community projects.

4.11.4 Saved local plan policy DC4 states that in developments on all sites of 0.5 of a hectare or more the provision of public art which makes a significant contribution to the appearance of the scheme or the character of the area, or which benefits the local community will be sought.

Principle DG42: Public art

The provision of public art should not only consider the art as an item within the public realm, but as a place or focus that the community can actively enjoy.

Public art should be integrated into the public realm of new development. It should be considered at an early stage of the design process to ensure it is well related to the development proposals.

Proposals should identify suitable locations for public art.

It is important that provision is made for the maintenance of public art.

4 Streets and spaces
Public realm materials

Fig 4.42: Bound gravel can be appropriate in rural areas to maintain the character

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

4.12 Public realm materials

4.12.1 The choice of surface material within the public realm will have a significant bearing on its character and appearance.

4.12.2 The decision on materials should be driven by the local context and its appropriateness within this setting. It should also be driven by the real life cost of the material. Natural stone, gravel and brick often last longer, weather better and suit more historic and rural locations than artificial materials.

4.12.3 Different textures or laying patters should be used to demarcate areas rather than colour. Refer to English Heritage's 'Streets for All: South East' for guidance on materials and street furniture in historic areas.

Fig 4.43: The use of tarmac for both carriageway and footway should be avoided as it extends the appearance of the road and often results in an over engineered appearance

Fig 4.44: Using high quality surface materials improves the visual appearance of streets

Principle DG43: Public realm materials

The choice of paving and surfacing materials should be informed by both the existing character of an area ~~and also~~ the intended purpose, appearance, and technical requirements (e.g. sustainable drainage).

Robust and durable materials should be selected. Natural stone either as flags, setts or cobbles may be the most appropriate, especially in historic and rural locations.

Concrete or tarmac should be used with caution as their uniform appearance and sharp finish can undermine the character of a new development.

All surfacing and crossing facilities should take into account partially-sighted people or those with impaired mobility.

A palette of materials should be discussed with the council prior to submission of an application.

Fig 4.45: Parking successfully integrated into the street broken up by tree planting and soft landscape

4.13 Parking

4.13.1 The provision of parking represents a significant design challenge in the built environment.

4.13.2 Parking is rarely aesthetically pleasing and if poorly designed can have a significant impact on the appearance of our streets and spaces, and can also raise concerns about safety.

4.13.3 A balanced approach should be taken to achieve convenient parking in close proximity to households whilst reducing the dominance of car parking on the street scene. In larger schemes this is likely to result in a range of parking solutions being incorporated.

4.13.4 Non-allocated, shared parking~~,~~ is more efficient than designating parking to individual dwellings and applicants should consider whether this approach can be utilised to reduce parking numbers within development schemes.

4.13.5 The suitability of parking solutions will vary depending on the location and nature of the proposal. For example, in larger applications or in more urban locations parking on driveways to the front of properties should be avoided. In rural areas this could be an acceptable solution provided accesses are kept clear.

4.13.6 Applicants for larger sites should also consider provision of electric charging points.

4.13.7 The following guidance sets out a range of parking solutions that may be appropriate.

Principle DG44: Parking

A comprehensive car parking strategy should be produced for new developments which should contain a combination of appropriate parking solutions.

Parking should be provided for both residents and visitors at an adequate level ~~(set out in the current parking standards)~~ in response to the location of the site. For example lower parking levels may be acceptable in more urban locations or where there is convenient access to public transport.

Applicants should consider non-allocated, shared parking to improve efficiencies and reduce parking numbers.

Parking should be considered at the outset of the design process and solutions should ensure that the impact from parking on the environment has been suitably mitigated. Refer to Car Parking: What works where, HCA (2006).

Refer to the Oxfordshire County Council's current parking standards.

Fig 4.46: Providing sufficient car parking to meet the needs of residents whilst creating attractive and successful development schemes is a significant challenge. Often parking is poorly designed and the choice of parking solution does not fit with the way in which residents wish to park.

Fig 4.47: Parking successfully integrated into the street broken up by tree planting and soft landscape

On street parking

4.13.8 Parking on-street remains one of the most successful ways to accommodate parking as part of a balanced solution. Parking on the street is an efficient use of space and people understand how it works. Unlike rear parking courts, on-street parking increases activity on the street and between the street and the house.

4.13.9 On-street parking should be designed into the streetscene from the outset. It may be parallel to the kerb, angled to the kerb, perpendicular to the kerb or within a central reservation; however, it should not be allowed to dominate the environment or to negatively impact on the character of a street. All solutions for parking within the street benefit from landscaping and the materials used should be of the highest quality.

Fig 4.48: Parking should be broken up by tree planting and soft landscaping to avoid dominating the street scene

Fig 4.49: Parking bays demarcated by a change in pattern of paving sets and broken up by carefully selected tree species planted along the street

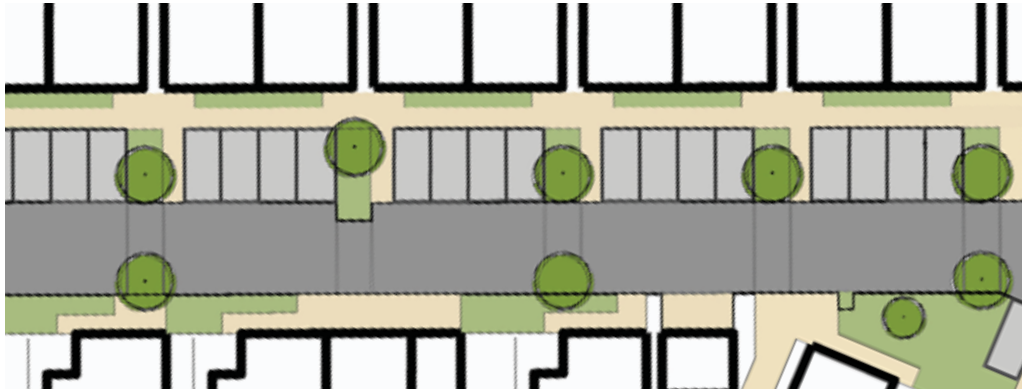


Fig 4.50: Plan of residential development shown with perpendicular parking broken up by soft landscaping and tree planting

Principle DG45: On street parking

Visitor parking should be sought on street in all but rural/isolated locations.

On street parking for residents provides convenient spaces adjacent to properties and also adds to the activity of the street and natural surveillance. On street car parking also avoids vehicle crossovers on the pedestrian footway.

The quality of the street should be paramount in designing parking spaces into the street. The inclusion of landscaping should be integral to the design of the street.

Lines of on-street parking spaces should be broken up into blocks of a maximum of 5 bays separated by kerb build-outs. This allows pedestrians to cross the road without visibility being blocked and for trees to be planted or other street furniture placed to minimise the visual impact of parking.

In wider streets and avenues, small groups of parking spaces can be provided at right-angles to the carriageway and set within a framework of planting.

Fig 4.51: Parking square with central green space

On-street parking squares

4.13.10 In larger developments, squares or yards can be designed to include parking. Parking squares can be efficient solutions, where they double up as shared surface, pedestrian friendly spaces. Parking squares require careful design, including the integration of landscape features to avoid vehicles dominating the public realm.

Fig 4.52: Large parking squares devoid of landscaping should be avoided

Fig 4.53: Parking square broken up by mature planting which 'softens' the appearance of parked cars

Fig 4.54: Informal parking square adjacent to landscape area. A balance of parking, hard landscaped areas, planting and soft landscaping is required to make parking squares successful

Principle DG46: On street parking squares

Where parking squares are proposed, they should be designed as attractively landscaped, safe public spaces which are appropriately overlooked by development.

Where larger parking areas are required they should be punctuated by careful landscape design. This could include trees, low growing planting and varied porous surface materials.

Large unsightly expanses of tarmac should be avoided.

Parking should normally be set out in marked bays to ensure efficient use of space. However, in villages and rural areas this may not be necessary.

Fig 4.55: Car ports can be used to provide driveways whilst maintaining a strong building line

On plot parking - garages and carports

4.13.11 Garages and carports can add to the parking solution as part of a balanced approach.

4.13.12 It is essential that garages and carports are conveniently located, easy to use and close to properties.

4.13.13 Above all it is important to ensure that where garages and carports are promoted as the parking solution the opportunity for indiscriminate parking within the public realm is designed out. Provision of electric charging points in garages is encouraged.

Fig 4.56: Garages will not be used if they are not easy to access, well sized and convenient. They are unlikely to be used when an alternative such as a front drive in this case is provided.

Fig 4.57: The use of gates rather than garage doors can be beneficial in ensuring the space is used for parking cars and not storage space

Fig 4.58: On-plot parking arrangements

Principle DG47: On plot parking - garages and carports

Where garages and carports are integrated within the frontage of the building, they should be carefully designed to avoid blank frontages. Garages and carports are best incorporated within wide frontage dwellings, which enable 'active rooms', such as living rooms and kitchens, to be provided fronting the street at ground floor level.

When designing carports, the use of visually transparent gates, rather than garage doors, can be beneficial in ensuring the car and the rear of the properties are secure, whilst reducing the chance of the spaces being used for general storage.

The design of carports should be co-ordinated with the design of refuse and recycling storage (refer to Section 5.13).

Garages and carports designed as individual buildings or subordinate to the principal dwelling should be well overlooked by 'active rooms' and by neighbouring dwellings to provide natural surveillance.

Large groups of garages or car ports should be avoided.

A single garage should be able to accommodate a car, storage and sufficient space for bicycles, and have a minmum internal floor area of 3 metres x 6 metres.

When proposing flats above garages applicants should consider the quality and amenity of the residential property.

Fig 4.59: Front driveways can often lead to overly wide, car dominated streets which lack a sense of enclosure

On plot parking - driveways

4.13.14 Much of 20th century suburban development has based its parking solution on front driveways within the plot boundary of properties. This has often resulted in unsatisfactory car-dominated streets that lack the necessary enclosure to create a sense of place.

Fig 4.60: Front driveways can block surveillance onto the street and be overbearing for adjacent dwellings

Principle DG48: On plot parking - driveways

Front driveways in larger or urban and semi-urban schemes should generally be avoided as this necessitates wider streets, tends to have a considerable visual impact and can restrict informal surveillance. In these locations driveways should be located to the side of properties.

In more rural locations provision of parking on front driveways is an acceptable solution.

Parking spaces should be a minimum 2.5m wide x 5.25m long with a minimum of 6m behind to reverse and turn into.

Off-street parking

4.13.15 Residents tend to favour parking solutions which maintain a line of sight between their dwellings and their vehicle. As such parking courts to the rear of properties tend to be less successful solutions.

Fig 4.61: Rear parking courts that are not overlooked and uninviting are not preferred by residents

Fig 4.62: Entrance to small rear parking courts should appear to be private to discourage anti-social behaviour

Principle DG49: Off-street parking

Parking options to the rear of blocks in rear parking courts should only be considered once on-street and on-plot options have been exhausted.

Where rear parking courts are proposed, they should be small scale, immediately adjacent to properties and naturally surveyed. They should be treated as the public realm and also include elements of landscaping and tree planting, and avoid single large expanses of asphalt.

Applicants should consider whether dwellings could be located adjacent to or above parking areas and provide frontage to these parking courts in order to provide overlooking and reduce crime.

Entrances to parking courts should be carefully designed to create a semi-private appearance. A single access or secure entrances should be well overlooked by neighbouring dwellings to provide surveillance and security.

Entrances should be of sufficient height to allow access for all vehicles including vans.

Fig 4.63: Conveniently located cycle parking near entrances will encourage cycling

4.14 Cycle parking

4.14.1 For cycling to become an attractive alternative to the car, bicycles must be readily accessible and securely stored.

4.14.2 The type of storage will depend largely on the type of dwelling and the scale of the development. However it is generally recognised that if secure cycle storage is conveniently located within individual dwellings or close to entrances cycles are more likely to be used.

Fig 4.64: Cycle parking in areas that are not well overlooked or in areas that are not points of activity are less likely to be used

Fig 4.65: Cycle parking within an integral garage

Principle DG50: Cycle parking

Space should be made available within new development for parking of bicycles in accordance with the Council's cycle parking standards.

Wherever possible, cycle storage should be accommodated within each plot, within the dwelling, a garage or outbuilding.

Secure and convenient cycle storage for flats should be provided within the main buildings, preferably close to main entrances. External communal stores are usually inappropriate as they are unlikely to offer convenient access for all residents and they are less secure.

Large separate bicycle storage buildings that do not benefit from good natural surveillance should be avoided.

Dedicated visitor cycle parking should also be provided for flats close to main entrances and well overlooked by habitable rooms.

4 Streets and spaces
SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST (PART 1)

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has considered the design of streets and spaces of the proposal.

PROCESS: Have you read, understood and applied the principles set our above?

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

SUMMARY: At this stage an applicant will have established the urban structure of their scheme and prepared a strategy for the streets and spaces that form part of this structure.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG31: Streets and social spaces	Does the design of streets respond to the character established in the Character Study in Section 02?	
	Have the streets been designed as social spaces with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users put above the needs of the motorist?	
	Where applicable have major streets been design as main streets or boulevards enclosed by development and landscape features and not as peripheral distributor roads (bypasses)?	
	Do the proposed buildings provide appropriate enclosure to the streets and contribute positively to the character of the space?	
	Has street clutter been minimised by reducing road markings, street signs, unnecessary posts or street furniture?	
DG32: Streets to encourage walking and cycling	Do all streets, pedestrian routes and spaces have adequate building frontage to provide natural surveillance and contribute to public safety?	
	Are residential streets designed to a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour?	
DG33: Tree planting and soft landscaping	Has tree planting and soft landscaping been provided within street designs? Trees should be a range of sizes and regularly spaced corresponding to the nature and hierarchy of the street.	
	Has the applicant demonstrated that the species selected are appropriate for the location?	
	Has the applicant demonstrated that the long-term maintenance and management of landscape elements have been considered through a management and maintenance plan to ensure their successful establishment?	
DG34: Traffic Calming	Where appropriate have traffic calming measure been integrated within the design of the streets?	
DG35: Shared Surface	Has the use of shared surfaces been considered on lower order streets? If proposed do they conform to guidance within Manual for Streets?	
DG36: Local spaces	Are all spaces designed with a specific role or function to avoid residual, unused or neglected spaces?	
	Are all spaces designed to provide a high level of amenity with building frontage providing clear definition, appropriate enclosure and overlooking?	
	Has the applicant demonstrated that the long-term maintenance and management of these areas has been considered through a management and maintenance plan?	

4 Streets and spaces
SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST (PART 2)

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG37: Playspace	Where applicable has the design provided the appropriate level of playspace in accordance with the Sport and Recreation Future Provision SPD?	
	Is the design for playspaces in line with guidance on inclusive play, including Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces (Play England, August 2008)?	
DG38: Inclusive Design	Has the applicant demonstrated that the principles of inclusive design has been considered and incorporated within the design from the outset?	
DG39: Furniture	Has the selection of street furniture been restricted to essential items and have functions been combined where possible?	
	Is the street furniture simple, high quality, well designed, robust and responsive to its setting?	
DG40: Lighting	Has a lighting strategy been proposed that: minimises the impact of lighting columns on the streets; accords with the design approach to other street furniture and avoids causing light pollution particularly in sensitive and dark rural areas?	
DG41: Utilities	Has the location, design and integration of utilities within the landscape been considered to mitigate their impact on the public realm?	
DG42: Public art	Has the provision of public art been considered?	
DG43: Public realm materials	Has a suitable palette of high quality materials been proposed that responds to the character of the place as identified in the Character Study?	
DG44: Parking	Has the applicant proposed a comprehensive parking strategy that provides a range of parking solutions suitable to the location?	
	Is the parking provision in line with Oxfordshire County Council Parking standards?	
	Does the proposed parking solutions comply with design guidance DG45 - DG49	
DG50: Cycle parking	Does the design provide adequate cycle parking in suitable locations for both public and private users?	

5 Building design

It is important that the design of buildings and in particular their form, proportions, roofscape and overall appearance is borne from the place and therefore contributes positively to the character of the existing settlement. All too often new development is built which fails to contribute to the distinctiveness of a place resulting in standard development that could be found anywhere. Being responsive to the character of the existing built form should not result in pastiche replicas, instead the emphasis should be placed on contemporary interpretation of traditional building forms to suit today's needs.

Applicants should establish an architectural approach, form and identity borne from the place and demonstrate this link between the existing and the new within the Design and Access Statement. This may have to be drawn from further afield within the district if the adjacent development does not convey any positive characteristics specific to Vale. The design must be drawn from the Character Study undertaken in Section 2.

5 Building design
Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document. This section should be read by all applicants putting forward proposals for urban extensions, major residential sites, infill sites and development in urban locations.

Before you proceed have you read through the relevant sections from 2 - 4 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to Section 2.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 5: This section outlines the key principles to consider in delivering well designed buildings. This section should be read in parallel with Section 7, Building performance, and if your site is in a rural or lower density area Section 06 which provides specific additional design guidance for proposals in these areas.

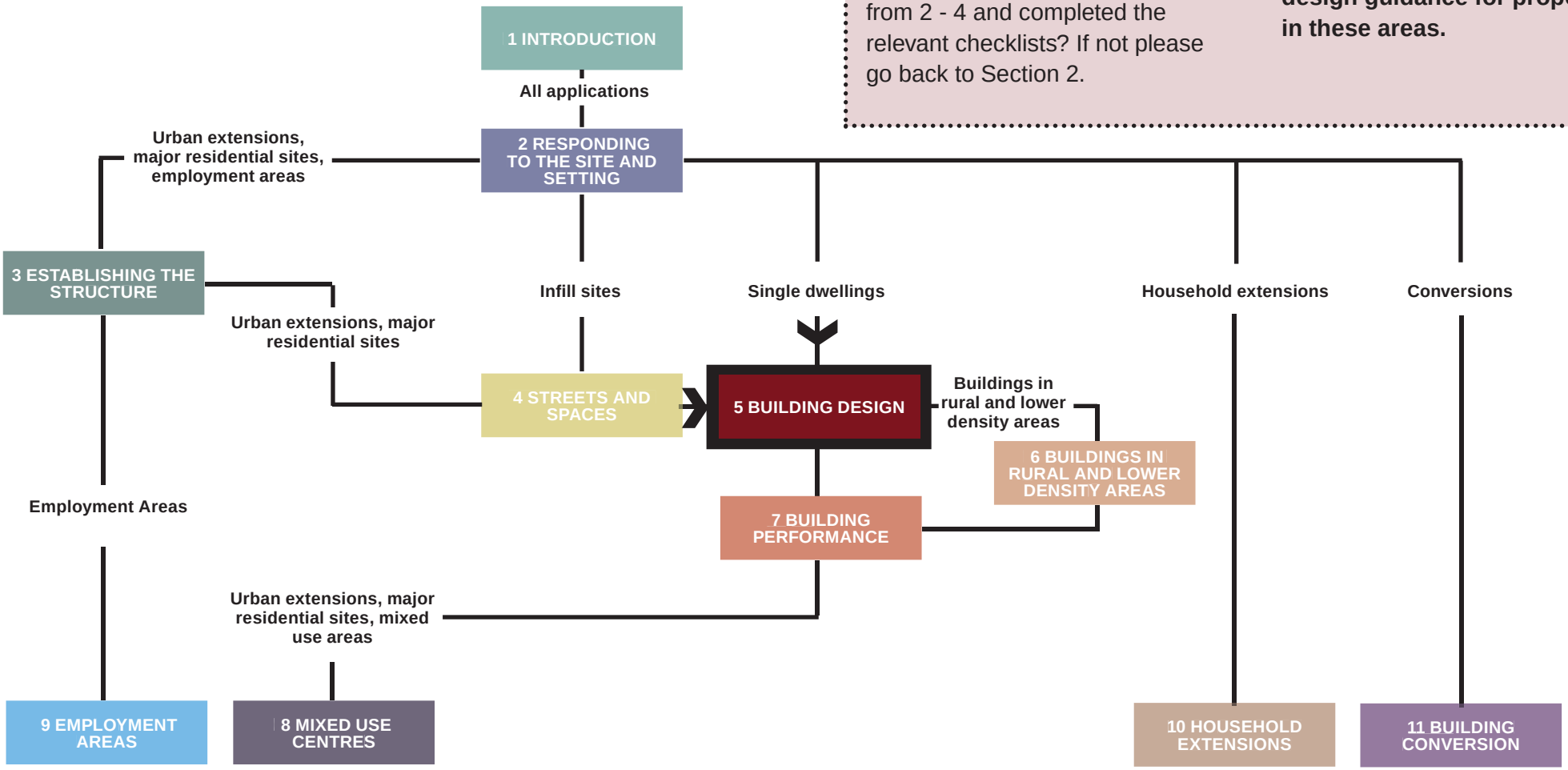


Fig 5.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

5 Building design
Building scale, form and massing

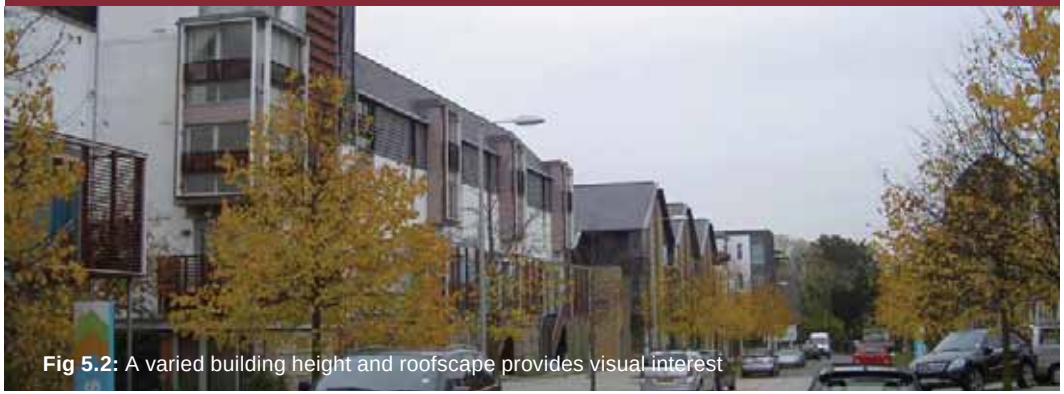


Fig 5.2: A varied building height and roofscape provides visual interest

5.1 Building scale, form and massing

Scale

5.1.1 The scale of new buildings should relate to their context (rural or urban), their location within the hierarchy of routes and whether they act as a focal point, landmark or corner building.

5.1.2 The scale of existing buildings within the urban areas of the District tend to range from 2 to 4 storeys whereas within more rural villages this is predominantly 1 to 2 storeys.

5.1.3 Applicants should refer to their Character Study (refer to Section 2) together with relevant conservation area appraisals and community appraisals to consider the prevailing scale, form and massing of development within the locality.

Fig 5.3: Historic development built incrementally had subtle variations in scale

Fig 5.4: Variation in height can create visual interest

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

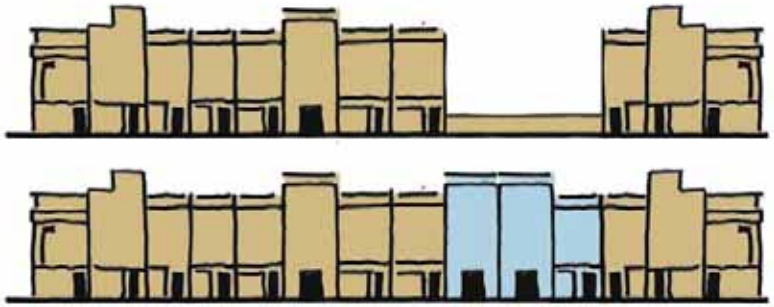


Fig 5.5: Development should reflect the scale, grain and diversity of the existing settlement

Principle DG51: Scale

New development should generally reflect the scale of the existing settlement unless a strong justification is provided. For example the location of a landmark building to terminate a key view.

Subtle variations in height can also be used to add visual interest. This can be achieved with differing ridge and eaves heights, as commonly found in traditional streets. Similarly, variations in frontage widths and plan forms can add further interest to the street scene. This can be appropriate in both urban and rural locations.

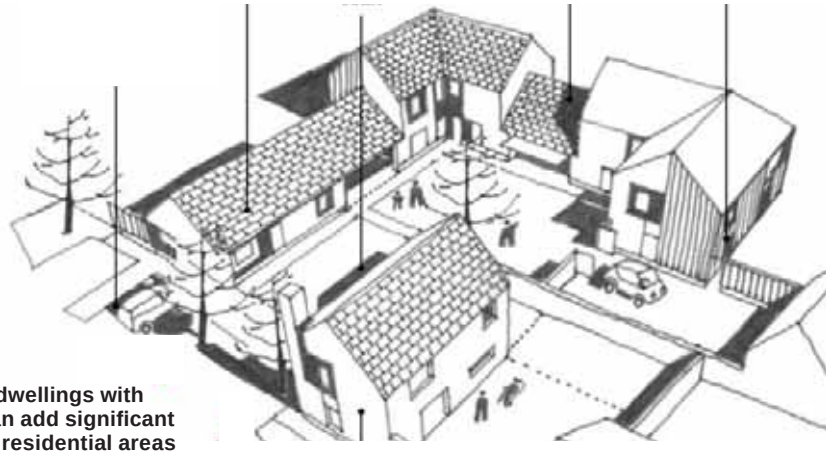


Fig 5.6: Grouping dwellings with different scales can add significant interest in rural or residential areas

5 Building design
Building scale, form and massing

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Form and massing

5.1.4 The form and massing of development can have a significant contribution to the character of a neighbourhood.

5.1.5 The majority of traditional buildings in the Vale, in both urban and rural areas, adopt a very consistent, simple form, with rectangular floorplans and pitched roofs.

5.1.6 New development should adopt this simple form but good contemporary design that respects context will also be welcomed.

Principle DG52: Form and massing

Keep it simple! In most instances new development should adopt a simple form, with a rectangular floorplan and pitched roof unless a strong justification can be provided.

In some locations more complex forms, such as L-shaped corner buildings may be appropriate. They should be composed of a hierarchy of simple rectangular elements each with its own pitched roof.

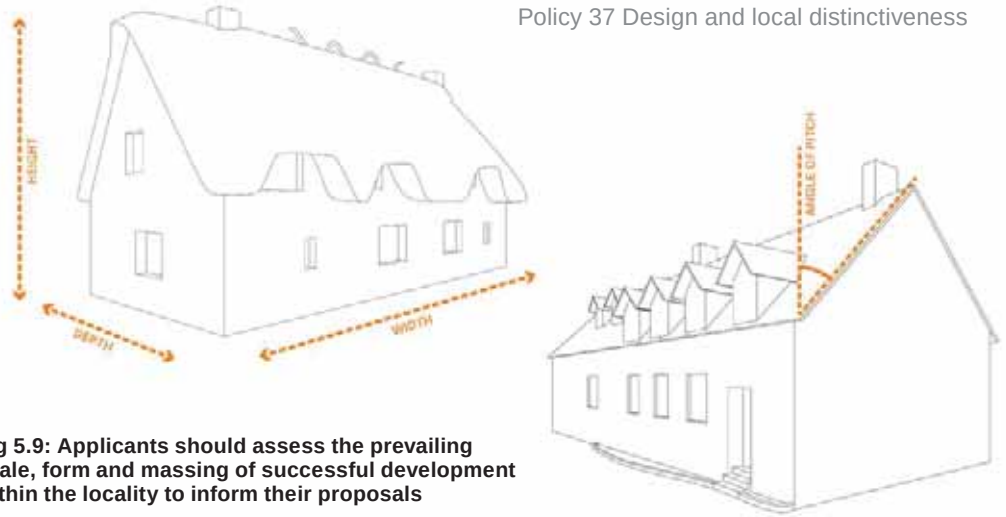


Fig 5.9: Applicants should assess the prevailing scale, form and massing of successful development within the locality to inform their proposals

Fig 5.7: Simple geometric building forms

Fig 5.8: Simple geometric forms are organised with gable ends fronting the street whilst other are parallel to street

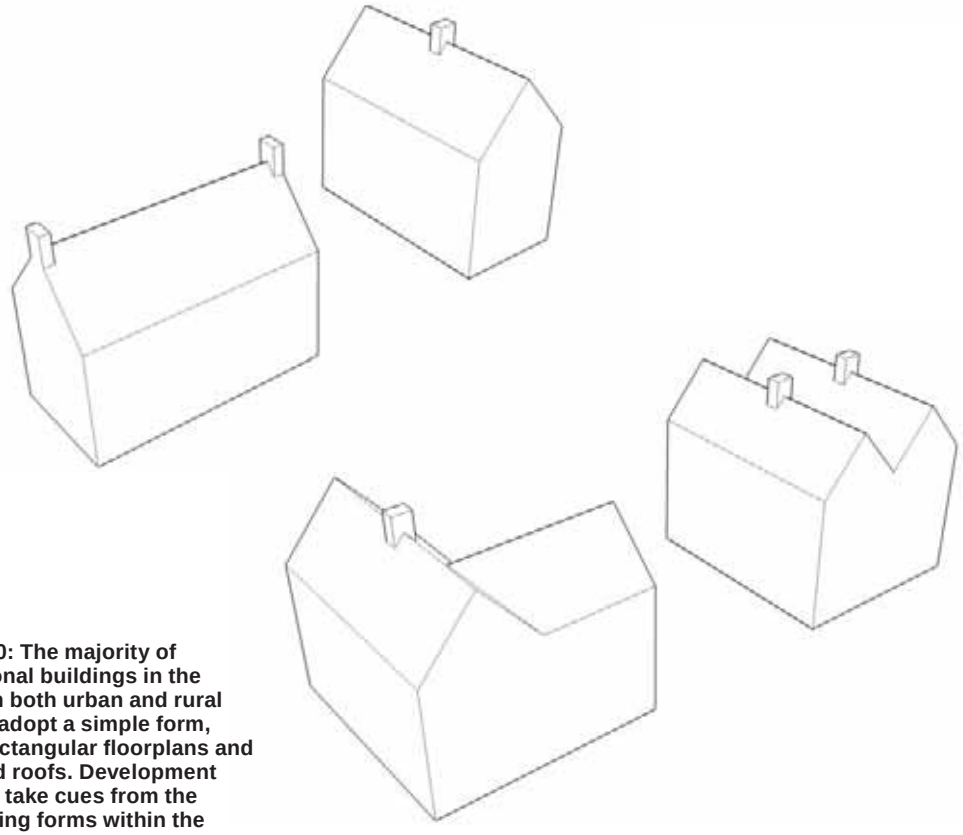


Fig 5.10: The majority of traditional buildings in the Vale, in both urban and rural areas, adopt a simple form, with rectangular floorplans and pitched roofs. Development should take cues from the prevailing forms within the context to strengthen local character

Fig 5.11: Historic buildings successfully turned corners providing activity and overlooking to both streets

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Fig 5.14: Gable ends which incorporate windows provide overlooking

5.2 Corner buildings

5.2.1 Corner sites are often visually prominent and buildings should therefore be specifically designed for these sites. Corner sites may provide an opportunity to accommodate non-residential uses, to aid legibility of a place or to contribute to its character through distinctive designs or increased building height.

5.2.2 Standard house types are unlikely to work successfully on corner locations.

Fig 5.12: The dwelling provides no overlooking to the street.

Fig 5.13: Entrance areas and windows "turn" the corenr to provide overlooking to both streets.

Principle DG53: Corner Buildings

Corner buildings should be designed so that they 'turn the corner' providing frontage to both streets

Corner locations are particularly suitable for flatted blocks and 'L' shaped buildings maintaining continuity of built frontage and incorporating corner windows and entrances.

Applicants should demonstrate how the design of corner buildings will aid legibility.

Exposed, blank gable ends with no windows fronting the public realm should be avoided.

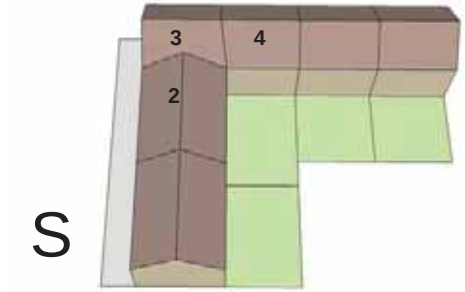


Fig 5.15: Linking houses together at a corner causes problems with garden space and privacy. Here the example shows there is no garden for houses 2, 3 and 4.

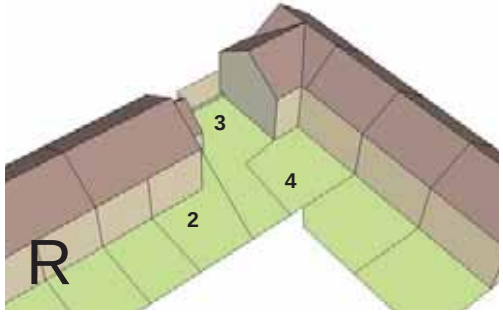


Fig 5.16: By extending plot 3 to turn the corner and setting back plot 2 it provides sufficient space for a garden. By providing plot 2 with a single storey element and an adjoining brick wall, it further assists with maintaining a built frontage.

5 Building design
Building frontage

Fig 5.17: Strong building frontage providing good overlooking and enclosure to the street

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

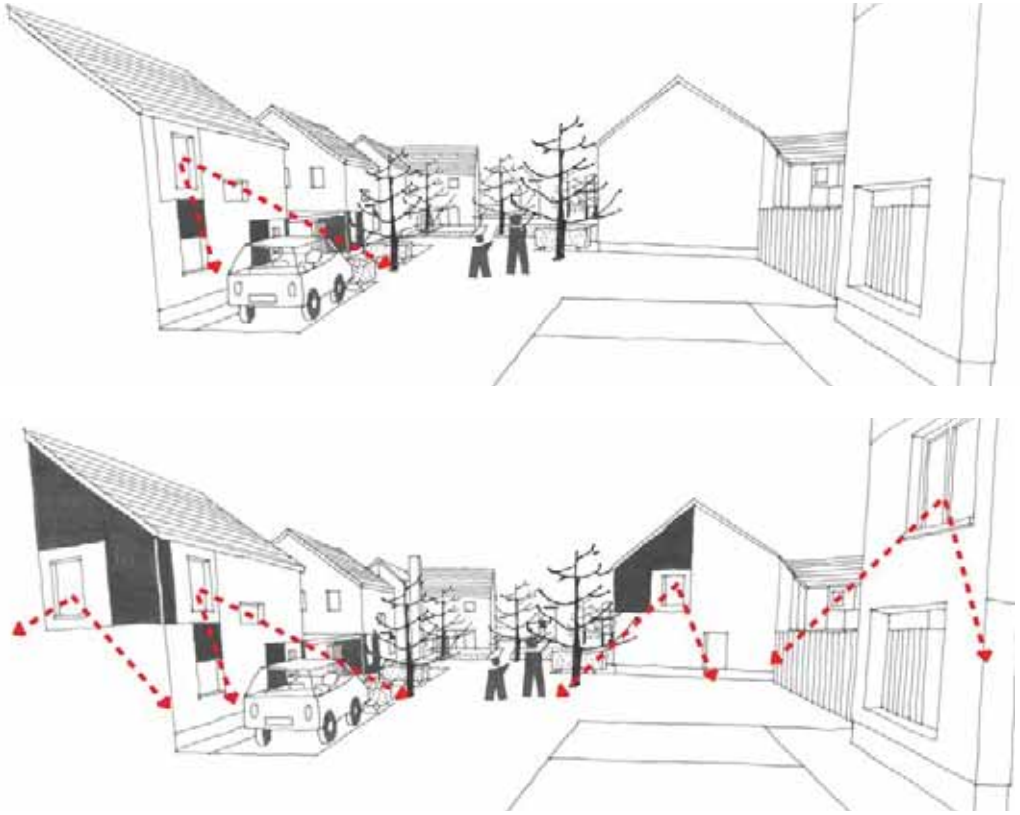


Fig 5.18: Ensuring that all public areas are overlooked by adjacent buildings, to increase 'eyes on the street' will reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour

5.3 Building frontage

Overlooking the street

5.3.1 'Secured by Design' is an initiative run by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) supporting the principles of 'designing out crime'. There are many similarities between the core principles of 'Secured by Design' and contemporary urban design principles.

5.3.2 The foundations of both approaches are based upon:

- Clearly defining public and private spaces;
- Ensuring that all public areas are overlooked by adjacent buildings, to increase 'eyes on the street'; and
- Ensuring private spaces are secure and also well overlooked.

Principle DG54: Overlooking the street

Development should be designed to ensure that urban streets and public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings. This can be achieved by ensuring that in urban areas, streets and spaces are overlooked by ground floor habitable rooms and upper floor windows.

Fig 5.19: Areas which are not overlooked are often subject to anti-social behaviour

Fig 5.20: Development should provide a good level of overlooking and also clearly define public and private space.

Boundary treatment

5.3.3 The definition of a private boundary plays an important role in defining public and private space, contributing to the character of the public realm and maintaining a sense of privacy.

5.3.4 Within the Vale a range of boundary treatments can be found and this varies depending on the context. In many locations, both urban and rural, boundary walls provide enclosure to the street and give a degree of structure.

5.3.5 In many of the Vale's historic centres, buildings front directly onto the street with no boundary condition.

5.3.6 A lack of coordination of boundary treatments or a proposal that is out of character with the wider area can fragment the unity of the public realm.

Principle DG55: Boundary treatments

In most cases properties should have a boundary that defines public and private space Exceptions may be in areas where they are out of keeping with local tradition (for instance in historic centres).

Boundary treatments should be reflective of the area and local traditions in terms of height, structure and materials. This should be drawn from the applicants Character Study (refer to Section 2).

Boundary treatments should not impair natural surveillance.

For larger developments boundary treatments should be co-ordinated to contribute to the character of the street but allow for some variety and individuality.

Fig 5.21: Privacy strips and front gardens can provide privacy to dwellings whilst maintaining overlooking

Fig 5.22: Planting can be used to provide privacy between residents and passers by

Fig 5.23: Traditional walled boundary treatments area part of the character of the Vale

5.3.7 **Walls:** The use of walls within the district is widespread in defining the boundaries of properties. They contribute hugely to the character of rural and urban streets.

5.3.8 Within more rural villages walls are often used in combination with buildings to provide enclosure and structure to streets and spaces.

5.3.9 The appropriate use, style and materials of walls should be drawn from the local context.

Fig 5.24: Walls are often used within rural areas to provide structure to streets and spaces

Fig 5.25: The use of long boundary walls in inappropriate locations will not be acceptable

Fig 5.26: Combining the use of boundary walls and building frontage to maintain overlooking can create development with rural characteristics

Fig 5.27: Low boundary walls contribute to the character of the district.

Fig 5.28: Overbearing walls defining very narrow privacy strips should be avoided

Fig 5.29: Low boundary walls used as planters to define privacy strip

5.3.10 **Railings:** Railings can successfully provide enclosure, whilst allowing views into and out of a site and preventing any loss of light. Designs should be in keeping with the character of the local area and should not be unduly ornate or elaborate.

Fig 5.30: The use of railings in combination with a low wall is a successful treatment within the Vale

Fig 5.31: The excessive use of railings to define privacy strips and front gardens can result in a cluttered streetscene.

Fig 5.32: The use of simple railings on a low boundary wall in this design creates a subtle, transparent boundary improving overlooking

5.3.11 **Fencing:** Close-boarded or panel fencing is not an appropriate boundary treatment for prominent locations, such as street frontages.

5.3.12 Simple post and rail and picket fencing is usually more appropriate in village and other rural locations.

Fig 5.33: Picket fencing is a common boundary treatment in rural and rural village locations

Fig 5.34: Close-boarded fencing is not an acceptable solution along street frontages

Fig 5.35: The use of picket fencing in combination with planting can create soft, green boundaries

5.3.13 **Open fronts:** Traditional buildings in urban locations often fronted directly onto the street with either a small privacy strip or front garden or no privacy strip at all. This helped create the tight urban grain that often characterises the Vale's historic towns.

5.3.14 For new development a privacy strip or front garden prioviding a degree of privacy between residents and passers by is recommended. This can however be successfully achieved without a physical boundary through careful landscape design. Open fronted privacy strips tend to be smaller than traditional front gardens and defined by planting.

Fig 5.36: Many traditional buildings within the Vale fronted directly onto the street. WThis creates tight, urban streets. The privacy of residents from passers-by can be safeguarded if windows are vertically aligned and/or cill heights are raised.

Fig 5.37: Open fronts which do not clearly define and enclose the privacy strip through landscape measures will not be accepted.

Fig 5.38: This privacy strip is well defined with planting and a change in surface material which results in a coherent, uncluttered street scene.

Entrances

5.3.15 Building entrances add animation and activity to streets and spaces. In turn they contribute to the overlooking of the street and can add to the feeling of safety within a place.

Fig 5.39: Traditional recessed entrances providing shelter for residents

Fig 5.40: Modern recessed entrances providing shelter for residents

Principle DG56: Entrances

Main entrances to houses, ground floor flats, communal entrances for flats and non residential uses should directly face onto the street and be clearly visible from the public realm.

All building entrances should be welcoming and easily identifiable to help improve legibility.

The scale and style of an entrance should relate to its function. The more important the function of the building, the more impressive the entrance should be. For example a public building should have a larger and more prominent entrance than a house.

Recessed entrances or canopies integrated into the design of the building facade should be provided. Canopies should not appear to be 'bolt-on' solutions and instead make a positive contribution to the building facade.

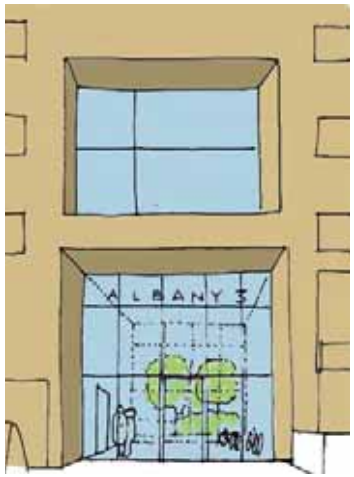


Fig 5.41: Entrances to important buildings, apartments and non-residential uses should be more civic in their appearance

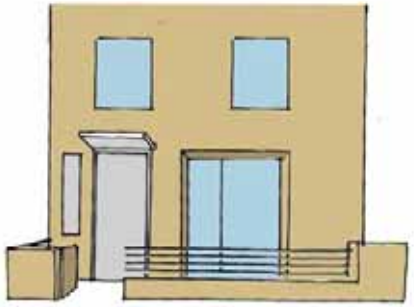


Fig 5.42: Entrances to dwellings should have a more domestic scale to them

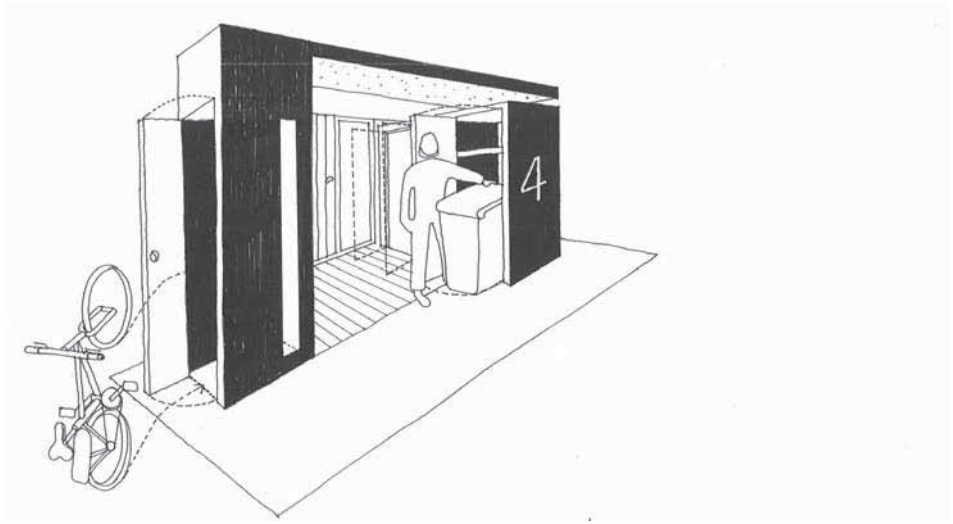


Fig 5.43: The design of entrances should consider the integration of cycle storage and bin storage if appropriate.

5.4 Roofscape

5.4.1 The pitch and form of roofs and the roofscape within a settlement are important to the character of the place.

5.4.2 Applicants should refer to their Character Study (refer to Section 2) to consider the prevailing roofscape within the locality.

5.4.3 The predominant roof forms in the District are simple double pitched gable ends or hipped roofs (more commonly used for detached dwellings). New development should respect these simple characteristics.

5.4.4 Integrating hipped roof profiles into the streetscene, particularly in more urban locations can be challenging. In these circumstances it may be more appropriate to use simple pitched roofs.

5.4.5 If there is a prevalent angle of pitch within a settlement this can be a powerful contributor to the character of the area. Applicants should consider if this is the case and whether this should be reflected within their proposals.

Principle DG57: Roofscape

Keep it simple! New development should respect the simple double pitched gable ends or hipped roofs prevalent within the District.

Contemporary roof profiles may be considered but must be strongly justified.

Overly complicated roof profiles should be avoided.

The roof of larger floorplan buildings should be broken up into a series of smaller spans or modules of a simple form to ensure that the roof does not dominate the building or surrounding area and does not appear clumsy in its proportions.

In order to minimise the visual impact of down pipes and guttering these should be integrated with the design of the roof and facade.

Deep floor plans that necessitate flat roof sections should be avoided.

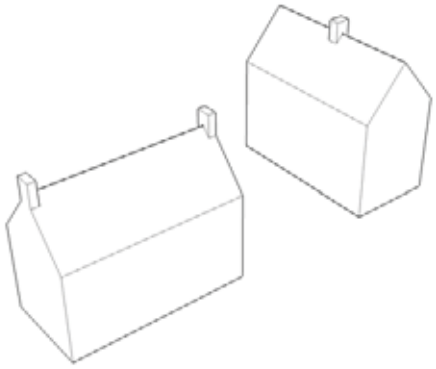


Fig 5.44: Simple pitched roof (model)

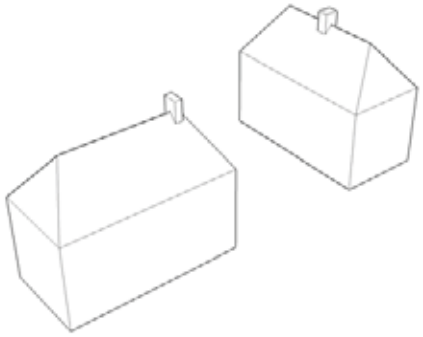


Fig 5.46: Hipped roofs (model)

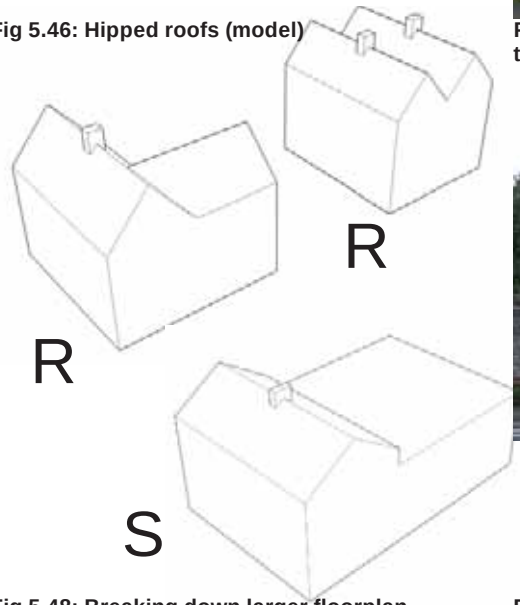


Fig 5.48: Breaking down larger floorplan buildings into a number of simple roof profiles (model)

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Fig 5.45: Simple pitched roof on terraced properties in the District

Fig 5.47: Hipped roof on an older property in the District

Fig 5.49: The roof of this historic property is composed of a number of simple profiles

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

5.5 Chimneys

5.5.1 Chimneys are a traditional feature within the Vale which contribute to the character of the area. ~~may~~Developments are encouraged to include chimneys as they can contribute to the overall appearance of a development.

5.5.2 Chimneys or stack features can be used in modern ways such as for thermal stacks to aid ventilation in summer, to incorporate flues from wood burning stoves or as a service core for gas flues or vent outlets.

5.5.3 Chimneys can be located in a number of positions including:

- On the gable end or projecting from the gable end, usually at first or sometimes second floor level;
- Along a side or rear wall or occasionally on the front;
- Within the gable end;
- Along the ridge;
- Projecting from the roof plane away from the ridge; or
- A central position within the building optimises energy efficiency as there is less heat loss than if located on an external wall.

5.5.4 The location of a chimney will affect the layout of the dwelling and as such it is an important consideration in the initial design.

Fig 5.50: Chimneys can be used in new development to reflect local vernacular in a modern way. Care should be taken to avoid tokenistic use or pastiche replicas of traditional buildings.

Principle DG58: Chimneys

Chimneys within new development can be positive design features and should be considered by applicants.

Modern interpretations of traditional chimneys could be explored.

5.6 Dormers

5.6.1 Dormer windows can be prominent traditional features in the streetscene. However, care needs to be taken with their design, proportions and position on the roof.

Fig 5.51: Dormers can be used in new development to reflect local vernacular in a modern way. Care should be taken to avoid dormers that are our of proportion with the facade.

Fig 5.52: Dormer windows are a traditional feature within the Vale and come in many configurations.

Principle DG59: Dormers

Dormer windows should be a feature that provide light and ventilation to roofspaces and should not just be used as a means of generating additional headroom.

Flat roof, mono-pitch and gabled dormers are all commonly found in the Vale. The choice of design should be informed by the character and appearance of the local vernacular.

Dormers should be positioned so that they line up with openings on the main façade.

5.7 Windows

5.7.1 The choice of window design should be determined by the overall design approach. For example, a contemporary design may incorporate large glazed elevations, which would be inappropriate in a more traditional design. The number of window openings and their size can have a profound effect on the appearance of a building.

5.7.2 With careful design, windows can create a light and airy impression and make a building appear less bulky. However, if poorly designed, too many windows can make a building appear overly fussy and fail to respect the character of the area. It should also be noted that a greater window area will increase the energy demands of a building.

5.7.3 Buildings of traditional design should have rectangular windows, usually constructed of timber, with the emphasis on either the horizontal or vertical axis. Modern buildings can have a variety of window designs provided they are part of an overall design concept.

Include window recesses (reveals)

5.7.4 The positioning of windows, including sill and arch/lintel heights, needs careful consideration to ensure the design reflects the character of the area. In more traditional designs, the positioning of windows within their reveals is also important – windows that finish flush with the front face of a building can appear flat and uninteresting, whereas windows that are set back within reveals cast shadows which add visual interest. The degree of any window recess should also take into account the choice of facing material. For example, stone buildings can accommodate a deeper window recess than brick buildings.

Use bay windows as a feature

5.7.5 Bay windows can be used to add interest to elevations and create attractive features on buildings. Bay windows in the Vale have traditionally included splayed, curved and square forms often topped with lead flat roofs.

Use locally appropriate materials

5.7.6 UPVC windows are less successful in design terms, particularly in traditional buildings due to their bulky frames and glazing bars. Wherever possible, timber should be used unless an alterative material is shown to be more appropriate.

Principle DG60: Windows

The choice of window design should be determined by the overall design approach

Alterations to windows should be in keeping with the character of the existing dwelling

Sash windows should not be replaced by casement windows

Glazing bars should not be removed to allow a large expanse of glass

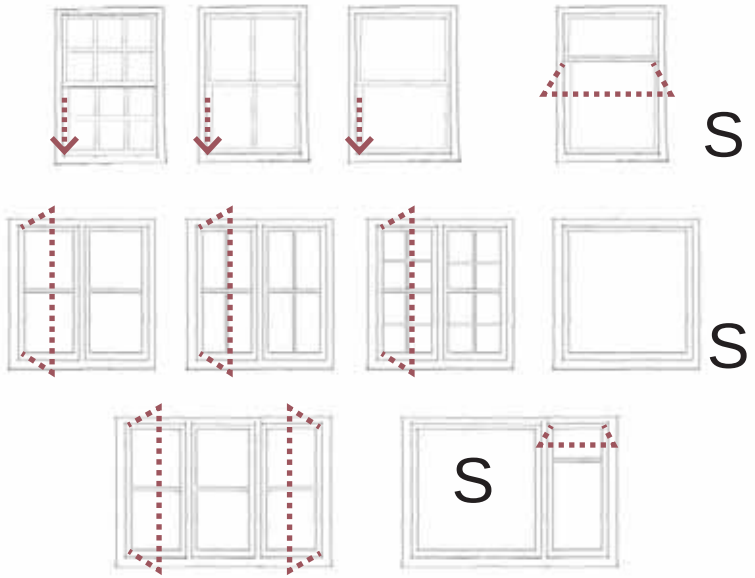


Fig 5.53: Illustration of inappropriate window alteration

The window proportions, size and number of panes in addition to style of opening should all be respected in traditional buildings.

Sash windows should not be replaced by top or side hung casements.

Glazing bars should not be removed to allow a large expanse of glass.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

5.8 Facades and elevations

5.8.1 Applicants should refer to their Character Study (refer to Section 2) to consider the facade and elevational treatment of existing buildings within the locality and this should be a starting point for the consideration of elevational treatment and facade design for new buildings.

5.8.2 This should not result in pastiche replicas of traditional buildings but instead re-interpret key aspects of their elevations for instance their symmetrical layout, window to wall ratio, and proportions and placement of windows and doors.

5.8.3 The Vale has a wide range of architectural styles and the arrangement of facades varies however building facades are usually simply organised with windows and doors aligned horizontally and vertically.

Principle DG61: Facade and elevations

Applicants should establish an architectural approach and identity borne from the place in the design of building facades and elevations. A link between the existing and the new should be demonstrated within the Design and Access Statement.

Keep it simple! Avoid crowded façades and arrangements that are almost, but not quite, aligned.

Fig 5.54: Traditional and modern town house elevation

Fig 5.55: Traditional and modern gabled end elevation

5.9 Materials

5.9.1 Whilst architectural style varies within the District a prevailing characteristic of most successful buildings is a simple, restrained palette of materials, detailing and architectural features integral to the design.

5.9.2 The choice of materials and architectural features in new development is often overly complicated, pastiche or includes 'bolt-on' elements that area out of place.

5.9.3 The choice of materials and detailing should be drawn from the local context and re-interpreted in a contemporary manner.

5.9.4 Materials should reflect the character of the area and also the style of architecture adopted. For instance for a traditional architectural approach use the materials that are used within the area (eg for roofs normally plain clay tiles or slates) where as if a contemporary approach is taken there is potential to explore a wider range of materials (eg zinc / copper roofing).

Principle DG62: Materials

Keep it simple! A context-appropriate palette of good quality materials should be used for new residential development with a preference for local materials and/or materials with low embodied energy. The durability and resistance to weathering of materials is an important concern.

Avoid reconstituted materials, particularly in conservation areas or other sensitive locations

For larger scale development proposals a palette of materials should be developed through the Character Study and agreed with the Council.

Case Study - Horstead, Rochester

Rochester brick

Local brick colours and bonding patterns in Rochester High Street

The context above informed the architectural expression and use of materials

Fig 5.56: Example of how to reinterpret in a contemporary way brick detailing and materials found in the locality

5.10 Amenity, noise and Overshadowing

5.10.1 Providing private amenity space in the form of garden space, balconies or communal gardens is important in achieving a successful and attractive development.

5.10.2 All dwellings should seek to provide private outdoor space provision. This open space should be appropriate to both the location of the proposal and the type and size of accommodation. For example, large detached houses within rural areas should have larger gardens whereas the space requirement/expectation for compact housing or apartments in an urban area will be significantly less. This can be provided in the form of a private garden, patio or balcony, depending on the type of dwellings being provided.

5.10.3 Where no private gardens are proposed private communal gardens should be provided, normally to the rear of blocks.

5.10.4 The following amenity space is recommended for houses:

- 3 or more bedrooms - 100 sq m;
- 2 bedrooms - 50 sq m; and
- 1 bedroom - 35 sq m.

5.10.5 Further recommendations on amenity space for apartments can be found in Section 5.15.

Noise

5.10.6 Noise can be a source of significant aggravation for residents, particularly at night. Issues associated with noise are particularly prevalent in locations close to external sources of noise such as railway lines and busy roads.

5.10.7 Noise disturbance can be reduced through careful design. The following techniques can be used:

- Orientate buildings so that habitable rooms and sitting out areas do not face noise sources;
- Introduce design features such as recessed balconies and acoustic lobbies;
- Construct barriers such as garages or walls between noise sources and dwellings.
- Locate noisy external activities such as play areas close enough to the properties they serve to be safe and usable but far enough way to avoid noise disturbance.

Overshadowing

5.10.8 Buildings close to the boundary of neighbouring properties can increase overshadowing or loss of daylight to neighbouring properties. Habitable room windows should normally be at least 12 metres away from the flank wall of the neighbouring property.

5.10.9 Within higher density developments care should be taken to avoid areas which are permanently in shade, overshadowed by adjacent buildings.

Fig 5.57: Recessed balcony provides protection from noise

Fig 5.58:Sunken amenity space provides buffer from road noise

Principle DG63: Amenity

All development should have private open space. This can be provided in the form of private gardens, patios, balconies or private communal gardens, dependent on the type of dwellings being provided.

The provision of private open spaces should be appropriate to the location of the development and the size of dwelling.

Where no private space is provided within a new development, applicants will be expected to justify why private open space cannot be provided.

External access to rear gardens should be provided. Long, narrow alleyways should be avoided.

Private gardens should be treated as an extension of the living space of the house.

Design to prevent noise disturbance

Ensure the relationship of buildings does not cause overshadowing

5.11 Privacy & Overlooking

5.11.1 The specification of minimum distances between buildings can often lead to standardised layouts and indeed much of our historic fabric within towns and villages is comprised of tightly spaced compact development.

5.11.2 The relationship of buildings to each other, their height and the positioning of windows can all have an impact on the privacy enjoyed by neighbouring properties.

5.11.3 In addition to the distance between properties, there are a number of solutions that can be employed to maintain privacy from the placement of buildings and typologies used to more detailed design measures such as appropriate positioning of windows (staggered or otherwise), arrangement of habitable rooms to reduce direct views; and creating varied floor levels.

Provide appropriate height to width ratio

5.11.4 The height of properties and the distance between facing habitable rooms can have a direct impact on the privacy levels enjoyed by both neighbouring residents and residents of the new development.

5.11.5 Development proposals should demonstrate how the privacy of neighbouring properties has been respected and how a reasonable level of privacy will be achieved for new residents.

5.11.6 In higher density developments, it may be possible to include higher buildings without adversely affecting privacy by using the following techniques:

- Set back upper floors
- Recessed balconies
- Internal courtyards

Design amenity space for privacy

5.11.7 Private amenity space should be conveniently located for residents and designed to ensure privacy is maintained.

Direct overlooking of private amenity space by habitable rooms in neighbouring properties should be avoided. Garden space at the front of properties can be used to increase privacy in front facing rooms. Balconies can contribute to outside amenity space. However, they must be positioned to ensure they do not cause overlooking of neighbouring properties.

Principle DG64: Privacy

New development should demonstrate how privacy will be maintained between new and existing development whilst designing to the principles of compact neighbourhoods in more urban locations.

An adequate distance between facing habitable rooms helps enable people to feel comfortable in their own home.

Design to prevent noise disturbance

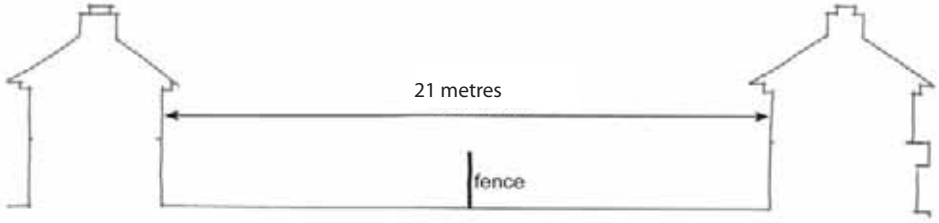


Fig 5.59: An adequate distance between facing habitable rooms helps enable people to feel comfortable in their own homes.

5 Building design
Inclusive communities

Fig 5.60: Proposals should consider the requirements of all members of society

5.12 Inclusive communities

5.12.1 People have differing requirements from their home, depending on cultural needs, economics, health requirements and age. The housing available should reflect this diversity.

5.12.2 Buildings should be designed so that they can be altered internally or externally over time without the need for demolition or rebuilding as needs change. Very narrow fronted buildings are unlikely to be easily altered or extended. By building flexible internal space, rooms can be adapted to different uses depending on family requirements.

5.12.3 Consider designing development that is capable of responding to changing social, technological and economic conditions is more likely to be successful and ultimately more sustainable.

5.12.4 The principles of designing Lifetime Homes include:

- parking space to be capable of widening to 3300mm;
- the distance from the car parking space to the dwelling entrance should be kept to a minimum and be level or gently sloping;
- the dwelling should have an accessible well lit threshold;
- the width of doors and hall allow wheelchair access;
- adequate space to turn a wheelchair within the living room;
- entrance level living space and WC;
- provision for a future stair lift; and
- sockets and controls at a convenient height.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 22 Housing mix
Policy 24 Affordable housing
Policy 26 Accommodating current and future needs of the ageing population

Principle DG65: Inclusive communities

New residential developments should address the needs of people with disabilities by complying with Building Regulations. This requires reasonable provision to be made for people with disabilities to gain access to and to use buildings.

Design buildings to maximise the potential for lifetime use. For instance through the provision of bed spaces at ground floor level and knock out panels between floors for lift installation and between rooms for expansion.

See Lifetime homes guidance for further details. http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/

Wheelchair accessible homes should be designed in accordance with recognised guidance such as Wheelchair Housing Design Guide (Habinteg, 2006). These homes should be positioned in highly accessible locations.

Affordable housing should comply with planning policy set out in the local plan.

Affordable housing should be 'pepper potted' throughout the site, and be identical in external appearance to private housing.

5 Building design
Working from home and live-work units

Fig 5.61: Live work unit - Sutton Courtney

5.13 Working from home and live-work units

5.13.1 People are increasingly choosing to work from home, a trend hastened by advancements in technology and the sustainability agenda. Modern homes, therefore, need to be capable of adaptation to enable people to work from home.

5.13.2 Alternatively, new homes can be designed as live/ work units to enable people to carry out their whole business from home.

5.13.3 The types of Live-work units are wide ranging, from sole trading professionals to staffed practices. For some people, a study space with internet connection is sufficient, whilst others may require studio space or an outbuilding.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

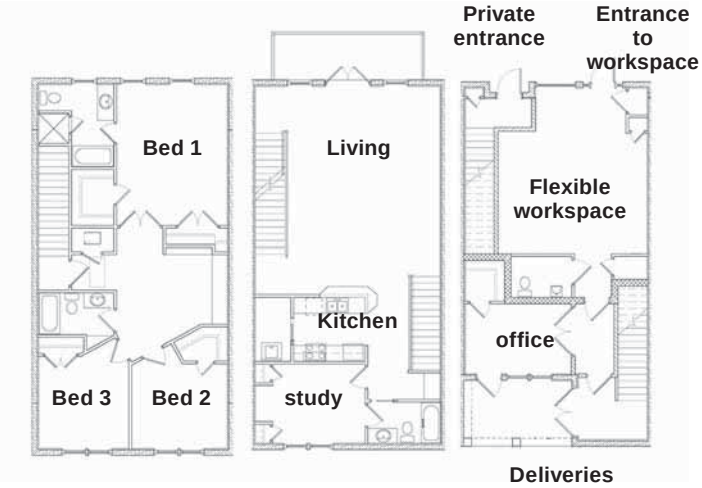


Fig 5.62: Example of how live work space could be accommodated within a family dwelling

Principle DG66: Live-work units

The ability to work from home and/or incorporating Live-work units should be considered as part of any application.

When designing Live-work units from the outset, the primary use must remain residential. Any business use must be capable of being carried out in a residential area without harm to the amenity of other residents.

Appropriate sound proofing or ventilation measures may need to be installed to provide a buffer between areas used for residential and business purposes. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to group workshops together within a block to minimise any potential conflict between residential and business uses and to enable the efficient provision of services.

5 Building design
Refuse and recycling

Fig 5.63: Carports can be used to accommodate refuse bins

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

5.14 Refuse and recycling

5.14.1 The provision of waste management facilities within developments is fundamental if waste reduction and recycling targets are to be met.

5.14.2 There is an inherent conflict between the integration of external features such as bin and recycling stores, cycle storage and utility services to a property and the necessity for active frontages and passive street surveillance.

5.14.3 Refuse and recycling storage and collection facilities should be designed to be convenient and easily accessible, integrate with the surrounding environment and be as unobtrusive as possible.

5.14.4 If sited at the front of the property, they should be appropriately screened visually from the public footway or enclosed in a well-ventilated cupboard. They should be designed into developments so as to avoid large areas of blank frontages

5.14.5 If convenient external access to rear gardens are provided bin storage could be accommodated to the rear of the property allowing residents to wheel bins onto the street for collection. This avoids the need for front bin store and the potential conflicts discussed above.

5.14.6 Applicants should refer to Vale's website for requirements and further guidance. ~~https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk~~

Principle DG67: Refuse and utilities

Storage facilities should integrate well with their surrounding environment and be as unobtrusive as possible. They should be located in a position where they are accessible for residents and accessed directly from the property.

They should be of a suitable size to accommodate all the refuse containers to meet the needs of residents and be of a size acceptable to the refuse collection service.

Refuse storage facilities should ensure that passive surveillance of the street is maintained and entrances and utility services are not blocked. They should not result in dark recesses and should not result in a cluttered or shabby appearance.

Fig 5.64: If refuse facilities are not considered at an early design stage then bins often dominate the streets

Fig 5.65: Refuse areas should be considered as part of the design of the buildings. If refuse areas are located to the front of the building they should be designed as an integral part of the elevation

Fig 5.66: Meter cupboards, vents, downpipes and bolt on canopies can all contribute to a cluttered building appearance

5.15 Meters and services

5.15.1 The apparatus of modern services (e.g. external pipework, flues, vents, meter cupboards, satellite dishes and aerials) can create a cluttered appearance and detract from the design of an otherwise successful development. Careful consideration, therefore, needs to be given to their positioning on buildings.

Fig 5.67: External services can be unsightly

Principle DG68: Meters and services

Enclosures for utility services and meters must not dominate the building frontage and solutions must be harmonious with the overall architectural design of the property.

Wherever possible, external service pipes and other apparatus should be grouped together and discretely located on elevations which are not prominent. This requires careful consideration of the provision of all services at the initial design stage.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

5 Building design
Apartments

Fig 5.68: The scale and massing of apartment buildings can be reduced by breaking the building into smaller components and with subtle variations in height

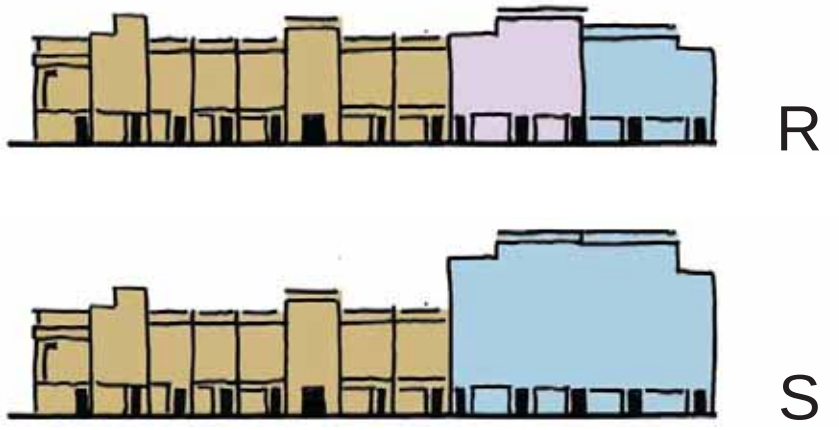


Fig 5.69: Apartment buildings should respond to the scale, massing and grain of the context in a complementary way and avoid becoming overbearing

5.16 Apartments

5.16.1 The design of apartment buildings in the context of the Districts urban locations needs careful design consideration.

5.16.2 All too often apartments within these locations fail to respond in a contextual and sensitive way to their setting.

5.16.3 Apartments should be proposed at appropriate locations within urban areas. These are likely to include town centres, neighbourhood hubs, adjacent to important spaces or landscapes, nodal points, corners or the junction of major routes.

Building heights

5.16.4 The height of apartment buildings will ~~v~~ depending on the local context but is likely to range from 3 to 5 storeys in urban areas. Apartment buildings can be effective tools in aiding legibility to centres, hubs and key routes through their increased scale and more urban appearance.

Form and massing

5.16.5 By their very nature apartment buildings tend to be larger in scale and massing.

5.16.6 They also tend to be deeper in floorplan than houses. However care is needed to ensure natural light and ventilation is achieved in deep plan forms

5.16.7 Care should be taken to avoid the building appearing overly bulky.

5.16.8 Applicants should consider the scale and massing of prevalent larger historic buildings within the urban context such as mill buildings, factories and civic buildings as cues to draw inspiration from.

5.16.9 Single aspect, north facing apartments should be avoided.

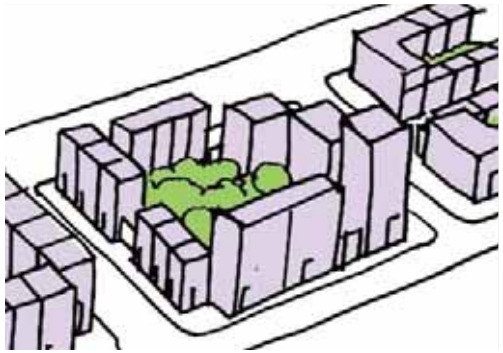


Fig 5.70: Apartments should be proposed at appropriate locations within urban areas and add to the legibility of an area.

Principle DG69: Apartments - scale and massing

Inappropriately located apartment buildings that cannot be justified will be rejected.

The height and location of apartment buildings should respond to its context and aid legibility within the settlement.

Apartment buildings may be deeper in floorplan than houses and as such care should be taken to avoid the building appearing bulky. These larger buildings should be broken down into a hierarchy of simple rectangular elements each with its own pitched roof.

Single aspect, north facing apartments should be avoided.

Overlooking the street

5.16.10 All Development should be designed to ensure that urban streets and public spaces have good levels of overlooking from buildings as described in Section 6.3

5.16.11 Apartment buildings can make a significant contribution to this surveillance by incorporating 'active frontage' (non-residential uses) on the ground floor and/or incorporating separate entrances for ground floor dwellings.

Boundary treatment for apartments

5.16.12 The interface and treatment of the boundary between an apartment and the public realm will depend on its location and setting. As a general rule apartments are more successful when they form part of the street frontage instead of being set behind large grassed areas that are too public to be used.

5.16.13 Open planting, in the form of a privacy strip as part of the street scene, can be used successfully to provide a degree of privacy and demark an interface zone between public and private.

Fig 5.71: Apartment buildings should contribute positively to overlooking the street from ground floor dwellings.

Fig 5.72: Apartment buildings that provide non-residential 'active' ground floor use together with generous entrances contribute positively to the street.

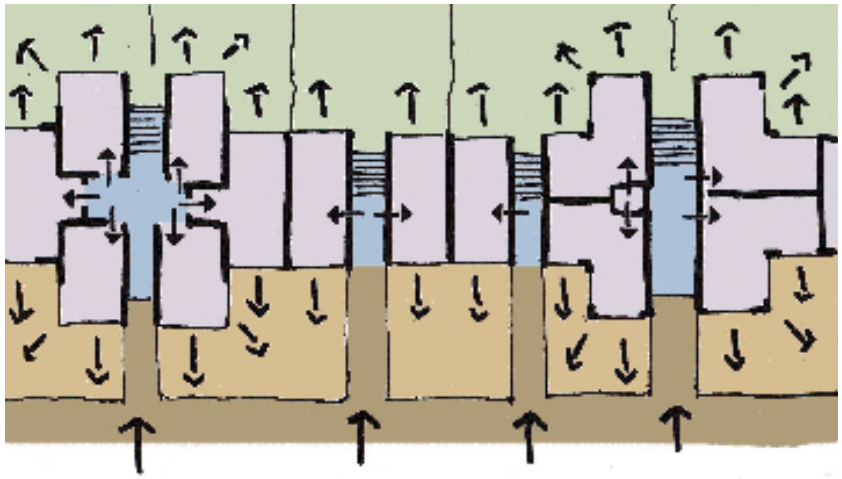


Fig 5.73: Apartment build providing overlooking of the street and central amenity space

Principle DG70: Apartments - building frontage

Apartment buildings that do not incorporate ground floor non-residential uses should carefully consider ground floor dwelling types to avoid bedrooms at ground floor overlooking the public realm. This can often be disruptive to residents and also reduce passive surveillance onto the public realm. It is often more appropriate to incorporate maisonettes on the ground and first floor of apartments to avoid such scenarios.

Apartment buildings should consider incorporating non-residential ground floor uses where appropriate.

~~Care should be taken to avoid bedrooms on the ground floor overlooking the public realm as outlined above.~~

Fig 5.74: Ground floor entrances to maisonettes and communal entrance to apartments above

Apartment entrances

5.16.14 Due to the increased number of residents apartments can contribute significantly to the activity and animation of the streetscene. Careful design consideration however needs to be applied to provide spacious, appropriately located entrances to meet these demands.

5.16.15 The communal areas of apartments buildings are critical to their success. Experience has shown that poorly designed communal areas accessed by large numbers of flats are problematic. Entrance areas should serve a limited number of dwellings, be spatious, well lit by natural light and naturally ventillated.

Fig 5.75: It is critical that communal areas should be of high quality

Fig 5.76: Entrance to apartment which is clearly articulated, naturally lit and welcoming.

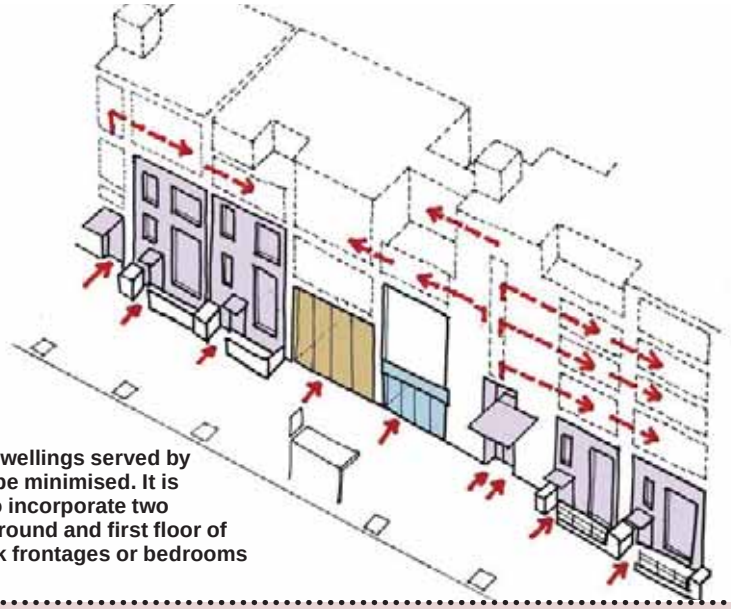


Fig 5.77: The number of dwellings served by communal cores should be minimised. It is often more appropriate to incorporate two storey dwellings on the ground and first floor of apartments to avoid blank frontages or bedrooms overlooking the street

Principle DG71: Apartments - entrances

Entrances to shared stair cores should be directly from the street.

Ground floor dwellings within apartments should incorporate individual entrances direct from the street. This increases the animation of the public realm and reduces the numbers of dwellings served by communal cores.

All building entrances should be welcoming and easily identifiable to help improve legibility.

Communal entrance cores should be generous, well lit by natural light and naturally ventilated.

Entrance areas should incorporate individual letterboxes, cycle storage and access to refuse areas.

The number of dwellings accessed from a single core should be minimised (around 2 - 8 per floor) to increase social interaction with neighbours and increase residents sense of ownership.

Double banked apartments accessed by long central corridors should be avoided.

Long deck access solutions should be avoided

Cores should connect in a direct and legible way to proposed amenity spaces and parking areas.

Amenity space for apartments

5.16.16 The demand on amenity space, parking and refuse and recycling storage within apartments can be significant and this should be considered at an early stage in the design process.

5.16.17 When designing apartments, communal gardens should be incorporated to the rear of blocks to provide visual amenity and outdoor space for residents. Soft landscaping should be prioritised over areas of hard standing and consideration should be given to designing in outdoor seating, eating, drying and growing space.

5.16.18 Any residents on the ground floor should have access to a well defined, rear, private area. This will act as "defensible space" and create good quality amenity.

5.16.19 Residents living in upper floor apartments should have access to a balcony which is large enough to be enjoyed. Balconies should be positioned to ensure they do not cause overlooking of neighbouring properties.

5.16.20 Experience has shown that communal roof gardens are often unsuccessful in providing usable amenity space. The use of roof gardens to satisfy amenity space requirements will have to be strongly justified and applicants will be required to demonstrate how every effort has been made to accommodate amenity space elsewhere.

Principle DG72: Apartments Amenity

Proposals should comply with council standards in relation to the provision of adequate amenity space. This space should take the form of communal gardens, ground floor gardens or patio space and balconies.

Roof terraces should be avoided unless the applicant can demonstrate every effort has been made to accommodate the space elsewhere.

Any ground floor dwellings should have access to rear private space to provide defensible space between the dwelling and the communal garden.

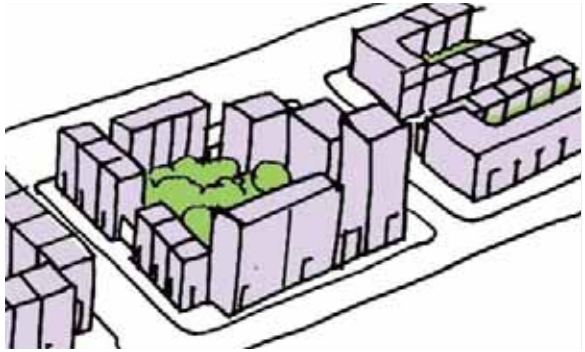


Fig 5.78: Where possible apartment blocks should include communal gardens including soft landscaping, seating and informal recreational space.

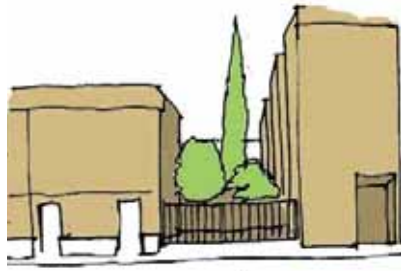


Fig 5.79: Allowing glimpses through to courtyards can soften the urban environment

Fig 5.80: Soft landscaping should be prioritised over areas of hard standing and consideration should be given to designing in outdoor seating, eating, drying and growing space.

Fig 5.81: Where balconies are deemed appropriate they should be generous to encourage use

Fig 5.82: Ground floor dwellings should have access to a well defined, rear, private area to act as "defensible space"

Apartment Refuse

5.16.21 Apartments normally have communal refuse areas. It is important to provide sufficient, secure well-ventilated space that is readily accessible from the road for ease of collection.

Fig 5.83: Integrated communal refuse areas have to be designed with care to mitigate their impact

Aerials and satellite dishes

5.16.22 Satellite dishes and aerials for individual dwellings on apartment buildings can have a significant detrimental impact on the buildings appearance and on the streetscene.

Principle DG73: Apartments refuse and recycling

Communal refuse areas should be provided in convenient, secure, well-ventilated spaces close to communal entrances.

Integrated refuse areas should be of high quality to mitigate there impact on the street scene

Free standing bin stores will not normally be acceptable because of their detrimental impact upon the public realm and private amenity.

Principle DG74: Aerials and satellite dishes

Apartment buildings should always have a communal aerial and satellite dish if cable TV is not available, and a condition should be attached to the planning permission to this effect.

Apartment Parking

5.16.23 Applicants should refer to Section 5.13 for guidance on parking.

5.16.24 The demand on space for parking within apartments can be significant. Applicants should consider whether parking for apartment buildings within urban areas of good public transport accessibility can be reduced in consultation with the local highway authority.

Fig 5.84: Cycle storage within the rear courts of apartment buildings should be of high quality and integrate with the landscape design.

Principle DG75: Parking

Applicants should comply with guidance within Section 4.13 Parking.

Applicants should consider whether parking for apartment buildings within urban areas of good public transport accessibility can be reduced in consultation with the local authority.

Where parking courts are deemed as acceptable solution for apartment buildings these should not compromise the central amenity space for residents and should be integrated within the landscape to soften the impact.

Cycle parking for apartments should ideally be within the building, in a ground floor communal area close to the main entrance. External facilities within secure rear courts may be acceptable if these are easily accessible from communal entrances and designed to mitigate their impact on communal amenity space.

5 Building design

SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST (PART 1)

Developments of more than one building / apartments

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has considered the design of buildings **for applications where more than one building is proposed** or for **apartments.**

PROCESS: Have you read, understood and applied the principles set our above?

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

SUMMARY: You will now have designed the buildings on your site. This should have been carried out in parallel with ~~a consideration of~~ Building performance (refer to the guidance in Section ~~0~~7) and if your site is in a rural or low density area with reference to Section ~~0~~6.

If a pre-application meeting has not yet been held then this would be an appropriate time. This can be used to check that the Planning Authority are happy with the principles of the scheme and to agree any refinements that may be required.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
Response to character	Do the proposals demonstrate a response to the character of the area as identified within the Character Study in Section 2?	
Response to constraints and opportunities	Do the proposals demonstrate a response to the site constraints and opportunities as identified within the Site Appraisal in Section 2?	
DG 51 / DG68: Scale	Does the design generally reflect or respond to the scale of the existing settlement and positively contribute to the character as identified in the Character Study in Section 2? If not has a strong justification been provided?	
	Does the scheme incorporate variations in height responding to the location within the proposal, for instance reflecting the street hierarchy, enhancing legibility of an important corner or node or emphasising a particular use?	
	Is the location of any apartment buildings justified and justifiable?	
DG 52 / DG68: Form and massing	Does the new development adopt a simple form in-keeping with the character of the area? If not is the reason justified?	
DG 53: Corner buildings	Do corner buildings 'turn the corner' providing frontage to both streets?	
	Has the applicant demonstrated how the use of corner buildings has been considered in order to aid legibility?	
	Does the scheme avoid exposed, blank gable ends with no windows fronting the public realm?	
DG54: Overlooking the street	Does the development ensure that all streets and public spaces have good natural surveillance from buildings?	
DG69: Apartments - Building frontage	If there are apartments within the scheme do they incorporate ground floor non-residential uses? If not, do they provide a positive residential frontage overlooking the street and avoid bedrooms at ground floor level overlooking the public realm?	
DG55: Boundary treatments	Does the development clearly define public and private space through the use of appropriate boundary treatments? If not is this justified?	
	Are these boundary treatments reflective of the area as established in the Character Study?	
DG56 / DG70: Entrances	Are all property entrances directly onto and easily visible from the public realm? Are they legible and welcoming?	
	If there are apartments within the scheme are the number accessed from a single core limited (approximately 2 - 8 per floor) and double banked apartments accessed by long central corridors or long deck access solutions avoided?	
	If there are apartments within the scheme are their communal entrance cores generous, well lit by natural light and naturally ventilated?	

5 Building design

SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST (PART 2)

Developments of more than one building / apartments

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG57: Roofscape	Does the roofscape proposed reflect the simple roof structures characteristic within the District?	
	Are larger buildings broken up into a series of smaller spans or modules of a simple form to ensure the roof does not dominate the building or surrounding area?	
DG58: Chimneys	If chimneys are incorporated into the design are they reflective of the character of the area?	
DG59: Dormers	If dormers are incorporated into the design are they reflective of the character of the area?	
	Are they positioned to line up with with openings on the main façade?	
DG60: Facade and elevations	Has the applicant demonstrated an architectural approach and identity borne from the place and reflected through the Character Study?	
DG61: Materials	Is the palette of materials proposed of high quality and reflective of the character of the area as established through the Character Study?	
DG62: / DG71 Amenity	Has the applicant demonstrated that the provision of amenity space is appropriate to the location of the development and the size of dwellings?	
DG63: Privacy	Has the applicant demonstrated how privacy will be maintained between new and existing development whilst in more urban locations designing to the principles of compact neighbourhoods?	
DG64: Inclusive communities	Has the development addressed the needs of people with disabilities?	
	Does the level of affordable housing comply with planning policy?	
	Has any affordable housing been 'pepper potted' throughout the site, and is it identical in external appearance to private housing?	
DG65: Live-work units	Has the ability to work from home been considered within the application? If Live-work units are proposed have they been designed to avoid harm to the amenity of other residents?	
DG66 / DG72: Refuse and utilities	Has the applicant demonstrated how the refuse requirements for new development has been met whilst complying with the principles set out in DG66 and DG72?	
DG67: Meters and services	Have utility services and meters been considered within the overall architectural design of the property to avoid dominating the building frontage?	
DG73: Apartments - Aerials/satellite dishes	Apartment buildings should always have a communal aerial and satellite dish if cable TV is not available, and a condition should be attached to the planning permission to this effect.	
DG74: Apartments - Parking	Does the parking comply with the recommendations of Section 4.13 of this Design Guide?	

5 Building design

SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST (PART 1)

Single buildings and dwellings

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has considered the design of buildings **for** applications for **single buildings** or **dwellings.**

PROCESS: Have you read, understood and applied the principles set our above?

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

SUMMARY: You will now have designed the buildings on your site. This should have been carried out in parallel with ~~a consideration of~~ Building performance (refer to the guidance in Section ~~0~~7) and if your site is in a rural or low density area with reference to Section ~~0~~6.

If a pre-application meeting has not yet been held then this would be an appropriate time. This can be used to check that the Planning Authority are happy with the principles of the scheme and to agree any refinements that may be required.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
Response to Character	Do the proposals demonstrate a response to the character of the area as identified within the Character Study in Section 2?	
Response to Constraints and opportunities	Do the proposals demonstrate a response to the site constraints and opportunities as identified within the Site Appraisal in Section 2?	
DG 51: Scale	Does the design generally reflect or respond to the scale of the existing settlement and positively contribute to the character as identified in the Character Study in Section 2? If not has a strong justification been provided?	
DG 52: Form and massing	Does the new development adopt a simple form in-keeping with the character of the area? If not is the reason justified?	
DG 53: Corner buildings	If the proposed building is on a corner plot does the building 'turn the corner' providing frontage to both streets?	
	Does the scheme avoid exposed, blank gable ends with no windows fronting the public realm?	
DG54: Overlooking the street	Does the building provide good natural surveillance of the street or space that is overlooks?	
DG55: Boundary treatments	Does the development clearly define public and private space through the use of appropriate boundary treatments? If not is this justified?	
	Are these boundary treatments reflective of the area as established in the Character Study?	
DG56: Entrances	Are all property entrances directly onto and easily visible from the public realm? Are they legible and welcoming?	
DG57: Roofscape	Does the roofscape proposed reflect the simple roof structures characteristic within the district?	
	If the building is large is it broken up into a series of smaller spans or modules of a simple form to ensure the roof does not dominate the building or surrounding area?	
DG58: Chimneys	If chimneys are incorporated into the design are they reflective of the character of the area?	
DG59: Dormers	If dormers are incorporated into the design are they reflective of the character of the area?	
	Are they positioned to line up with with openings on the main façade?	
DG60: Facade and elevations	Has the applicant demonstrated an architectural approach and identity borne from the place and reflected through the Character Study?	
DG61: Materials	Is the palette of materials proposed of high quality and reflective of the character of the area as established through the Character Study?	

5 Building design

SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST (PART 2)

Single buildings and dwellings

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG62: Amenity	Has the applicant demonstrated that the provision of amenity space is appropriate to the location of the development and the size of the dwelling?	
DG63: Privacy	Has the applicant demonstrated how privacy will be maintained between new and existing development?	
DG64: Inclusive communities	Has the development addressed the needs of people with disabilities?	
DG65: Live-work units	Has the ability to work from home been considered within the application? If a Live-work unit is proposed has this been designed to avoid harm to the amenity of other residents?	
DG66: Refuse and utilities	Has the applicant demonstrated how the refuse requirements for new development has been met whilst complying with the principles set out in DG66?	
DG67: Meters and services	Have utility services and meters been considered within the overall architectural design of the property to avoid dominating the building frontage?	

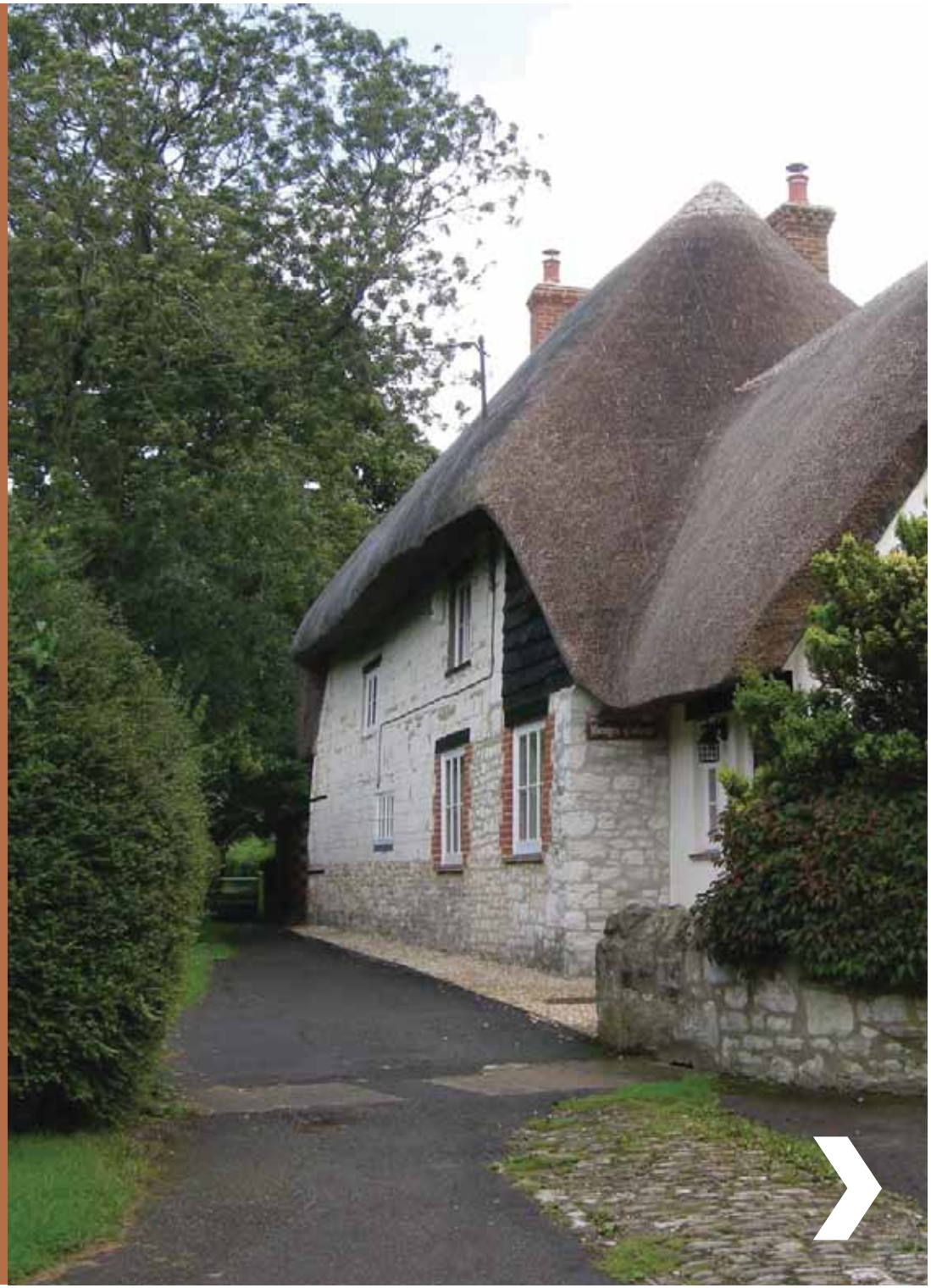
6 Buildings in rural and lower density areas

This section is relevant for dwellings in relatively large grounds, country estates and small groups of dwellings such as hamlets and farm buildings. In these locations landscape is the dominant feature with the buildings situated within the landscape and/or countryside.

Within rural areas of the Vale traditional buildings successfully integrated into their landscape settings through the use of simple building forms, local materials, structural planting and an understanding of how to site development within the landscape to protect against the climate.

The type of landscape varies across the Vale from Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south, more flat expansive pastures in central areas to the Corraline Ridge to the north of the District. Lower density areas such as Cumnor Hill and Oxford Road in Abingdon are characterised by residential properties set in relatively large, often well landscaped grounds Throughout the Vale the countryside plays a unique role in defining the character of the District.

The Council, through its role as Local Planning Authority is a custodian of the countryside and wants to see any development within these areas integrated into the landscape in a sensitive and appropriate manner.



6 Buildings in rural and lower density areas
Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document and those sections relevant to your application

Before you proceed have you read through the relevant Sections 2 and 5 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 6: This section outlines the key principles to consider in delivering well design buildings in rural locations including:

6.1 Landscape character and setting;

6.2 Informal clusters or grouping;

6.3 Scale, form and massing;

6.4 Facades and elevations;

6.5 Boundaries; and

6.6 Parking.

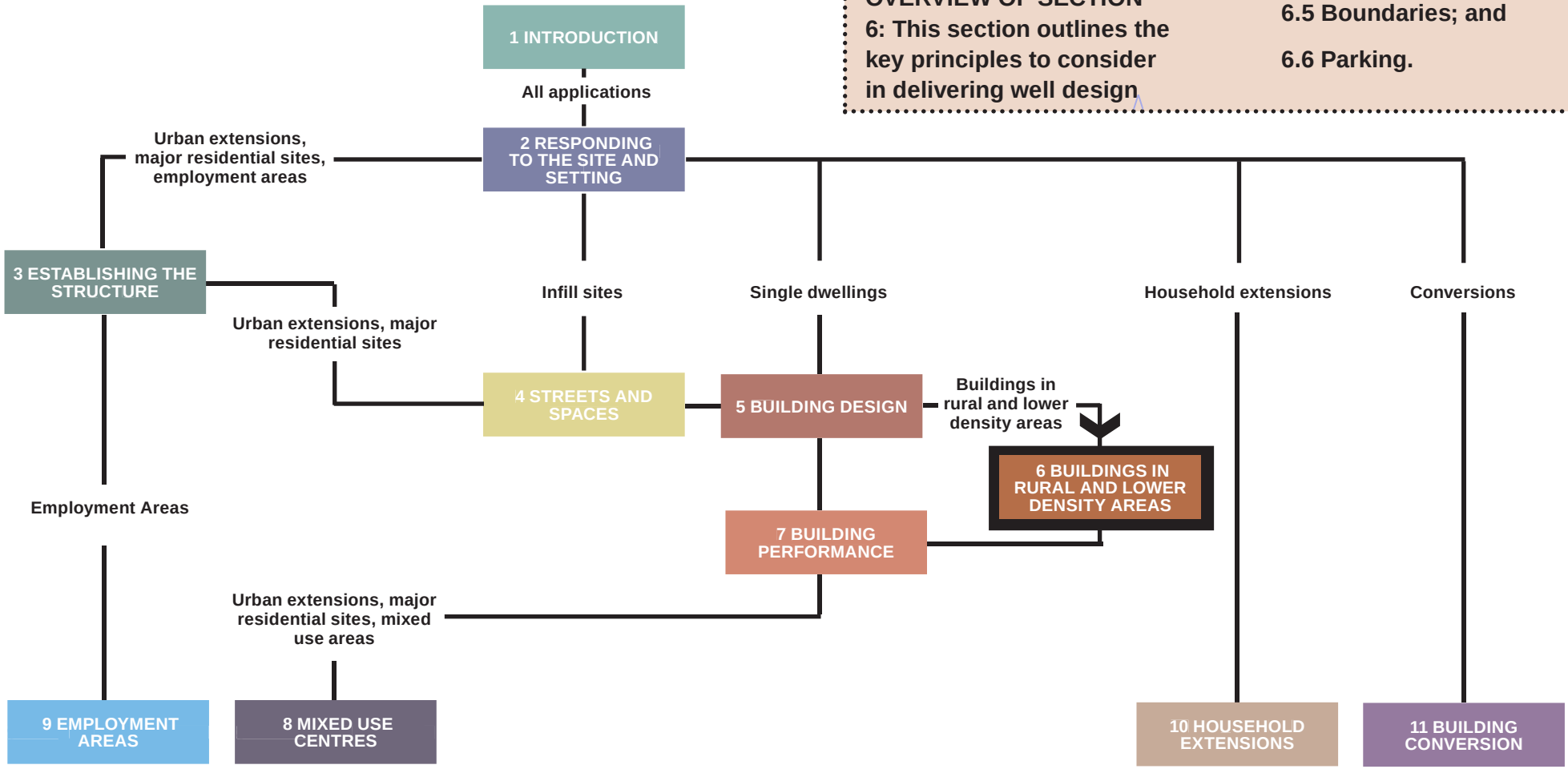


Fig 6.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

6 Buildings in rural and lower density areas
Landscape character and setting

Fig 6.2: Rural dwelling set within the landscape

6.1 Landscape character and setting

Setting

6.1.1 Buildings in rural and lower density areas within the Vale should be simply integrated into their setting to be at one with the landscape in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

6.1.2 Lower density areas such as Cumnor Hill and Oxford Road in Abingdon are characterised by residential properties set in relatively large, often well landscaped grounds

6.1.3 Whilst one can point to examples of prominent eighteenth and nineteenth century country houses within the Vale that stand proudly in the landscape as dominant features these tend to be the exceptions.

6.1.4 Country houses have a unique relationship with their landscape setting; their exceptional architectural and generally planned formal landscape settings are unique elements within the landscape and not the typical relationship between built form and the landscape.

Fig 6.3: Buildings should not be located on ridgelines or exposed sites and instead should integrate into their setting

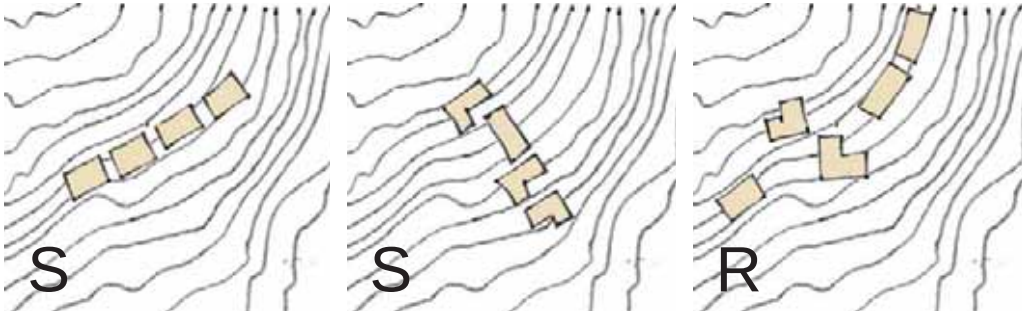


Fig 6.4 Proposals on hillsides should avoid development set at one level to avoid merging development together which is generally out of character in rural locations

Principle DG76: Landscape character and setting

Applicants should demonstrate how the landscape character has been considered from the outset of the design process as an integral part of the proposal. This will be a key requirement within the Design and Access Statement.

Buildings within rural and lower density areas within the Vale should be simply integrated into their setting to be at one with the landscape.

As a general rule, buildings should not be located on ridgelines or exposed sites where the buildings will become a dominant visual feature to the detriment of the existing landscape character.

Development proposals should work with the topography. Integrating buildings around the existing topography can help to soften the appearance of a new development within the landscape. The topography of the site can also be used to provide natural shelter from wind and therefore prevent heat loss in winter.

Buildings on sloping sites should avoid exposed plinths within the hillside and use the topography to the developments advantage. Building along the contours of the landscape rather than cutting across them can reduce this issue provided buildings are

6 Buildings in rural and lower density areas
Landscape character and setting

Relationship with the landscape

6.1.5 Understanding the relationship of rural buildings and the landscape is critical in successfully integrating new development into the countryside.

6.1.6 Applicant should refer to their Character Study in Section 2 and demonstrate how these findings have informed the design proposals.

6.1.7 Landscape elements such as hedgerows, trees and soft landscaping are often used to visually anchor buildings into their settings.

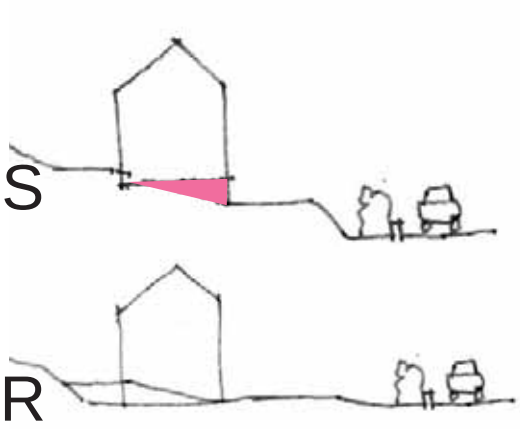


Fig 6.5: Buildings on sloping sites should avoid exposed plinths within the hillside and use the topography to the developments' advantage. Building along the contours of the landscape rather than cutting across them can reduce this issue.

Principle DG77: Landscape

Work with what you have got! Retain important landscape features, mature trees and planting wherever possible and incorporate these features into the landscape structure.

Sufficient space should be allowed around new buildings and consideration must be given to the relationship of buildings with their boundaries on all sides.

Landscape elements, tree planting, and boundary treatments should be used to establish the building within the landscape, visually anchoring the building to their existing landscape setting.

Trees and planting should be selected and located according to:

- Final height and appearance of the tree or plants;
- Whether they are deciduous or evergreen to ensure they do not block daylight from elevations during the winter period;
- Soil type;
- Existing tree species in the locality;
- Existing services underground or overhead; and
- Proximity to existing buildings.

Fig 6.6: Hedgerows and tree planting visually anchor the building to its landscape setting

Fig 6.7: Traditionally development has been sited ~~with~~in sheltered positions within the topography with planting used to provide additional shelter.

Fig 6.8: Homes at Cumnor Hill, set within a well landscaped environment

Fig 6.9: Mature trees and vegetation softens the impact of large homes at Cumnor Hill.

6 Buildings in rural and lower density areas
Informal clusters or groupings

Fig 6.10: Traditional informal farmyard cluster

6.2 Informal clusters or grouping

6.2.1 Repetitive building forms in rows or grids can often appear out of place within a more rural context in its natural surroundings. Traditional farms often contain a variety of buildings often clustered around a farmyard or court. These groupings of buildings grew in an organic way to create a varied and generally successful composition within the landscape.

6.2.2 Over-intensive development should be avoided within these areas.

Principle DG78: Clusters or grouping

New development should respond to traditional forms and cluster around a central space in and varied manner.

Over-intensive housing development should be avoided and in lower density areas plot size should reflect the prevailing context.

Visual gaps that reflect the general character of the immediate area should be retained between buildings on adjacent plots.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

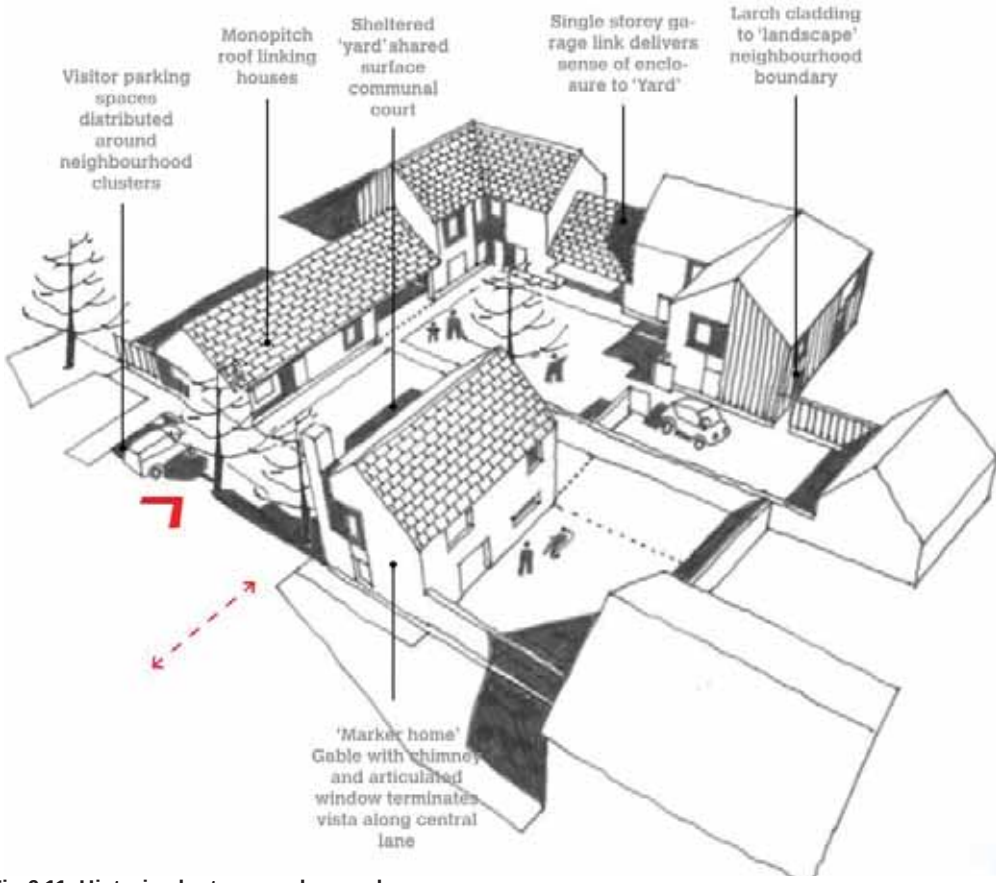


Fig 6.11: Historic clusters can be used as precedent for new development proposals.

6 Buildings in rural and lower density areas
Scale, form and massing

Fig 6.12: Rural buildings generally conform to simple forms

6.3 Scale, form and massing

6.3.1 The majority of traditional buildings in the Vale in rural areas, adopt a very consistent, simple form, with rectangular floorplans and pitched roofs. Refer to Section 5.4 Roofscape.

6.3.2 Applicants should refer to their Character Study (Section 2) to consider the prevailing scale, form and massing of development within the locality and respect this in developing their development proposals.

6.3.3 Larger agricultural buildings have been a traditional part of the rural scene in the form of simple rectangular barns and sheds nestled within the landscape. Traditionally larger buildings were broken down into a number of simple components reducing the overall bulk and mass. This technique should be employed for larger commercial and agriculatural buildings within the countryside.

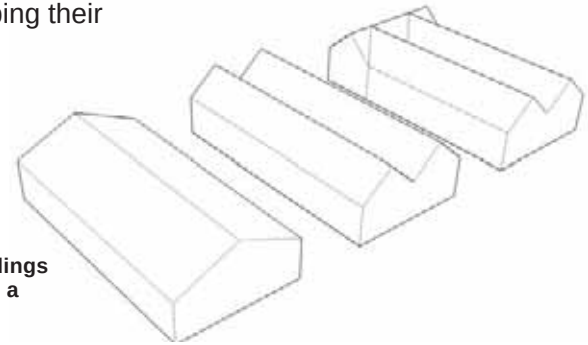


Fig 6.13: Large agricultural buildings should be broken down to avoid a bulky appearance

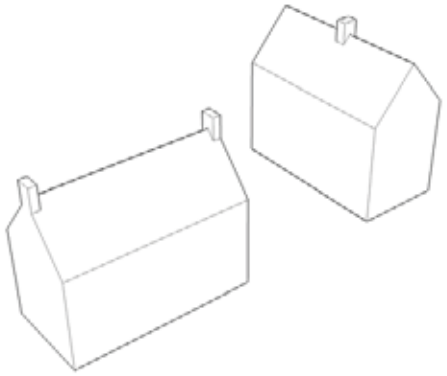


Fig 6.14: Simple rectangular floorplan with pitched roof

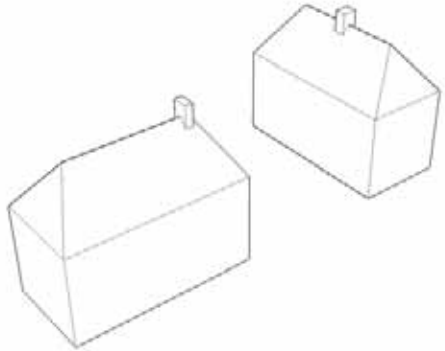


Fig 6.15: Simple rectangular floorplan with hipped roof

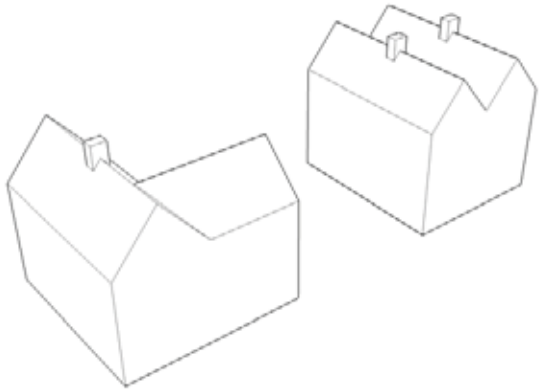


Fig 6.16: Breaking down larger dwellings into a number of simple geometric forms

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Principle DG79: Scale form and massing

Keep it simple! The majority of traditional buildings in the Vale, in both urban and rural areas, adopts a very consistent, simple form, with rectangular floorplans and pitched roofs. In most instances new development should adopt a similar approach unless justification or a strong architectural approach can be demonstrated.

Larger footprint buildings can often appear bulky and should be broken down to create a number of simple geometric forms.

The majority of development within rural and lower density areas of the Vale is 1 or 2-storey in height. Development heights should be responsive to their context and predominant heights within the area. Development that exceeds these will require strong justifications.

New development should generally reflect the scale of the existing dwellings within its locality unless a strong justification is provided.

6 Buildings in rural and lower density areas
Facades, elevations and boundaries

Fig 6.17: Access streets and parking should be informal and reflect the prevailing character

6.4 Facades and elevations

6.4.1 The elevational style and layout of new buildings should be drawn from the characteristics and vernacular of the context.

6.4.2 This should not result in pastiche replicas of traditional buildings but instead reinterpret key aspects of their elevations be it their symmetrical layout, window to wall ratio, proportions or placement of windows and doors.

Principle DG80: Facades and elevations

The elevational style and layout of new buildings should be drawn from the characteristics and vernacular of the context.

The visual impact of buildings within these locations can be more significant than those within urban areas. These buildings can often be seen from many locations within the wider area. As such it is important to understand the appearance of the building as a whole as compared to having specific public and private facades.

Applicants should establish an architectural approach and identity borne from the place and demonstrate this link between the existing and the new within their Design and Access Statement.

Keep it simple! Avoid crowded façades and arrangements that are almost, but not quite, aligned.

6.5 Boundaries and landscape setting

6.5.1 The interface and boundary treatment of plots and the street and surrounding areas should be reflective of the character of the area as identified in the Character Study.

6.5.2 Rural and lower density areas are generally characterised by the landscape and mature trees, hedgerows and planting are important to their character and setting. These landscape elements in combination with walls, timber fencing and railings form the boundary and definition of individual plots.

Fig 6.18: Rustic gates, fences and hedgerows provide characteristic boundary treatments.

Principle DG81: Boundary treatments

The front boundary of a site should be defined by either walls, timber fencing, railings and/or hedges to reflect the general character of the immediate area.

Front gardens should be provided with lawns, tree planting, hedges and only small areas of hard surfacing either gravel or paving.

Retention of all trees and hedgerows, especially along property boundaries is vital. If trees and hedges do need to be removed, they should be replaced within the site.

Side boundary separations of at least 2 to 5 metres (depending on the location) should be retained at all levels.

6 Buildings in rural and lower density areas
Parking and access

Fig 6.19: Access should be designed and landscaped to be informal and have a minimal impact

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

6.6 Parking and access

6.6.1 Sufficient parking should be provided on site in accordance with current standards. A limited quantity of parking could be provided to the front of buildings if landscaped and designed in such a manner that it does not dominate the front garden or impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties. Permeable surfacing should be used to limit any off-site surface water impact.

6.6.2 Where hard-surfacing for car parking in front gardens is necessary, it should be screened from view of the street by trees and hedge planting.

6.6.3 Any garaging required by developments should either be incorporated into the buildings at the ground floor level or provided in detached buildings. Where there is a noticeable slope in the ground, it may be possible to cut a garage building into the slope with landscaping sweeping over the roof.

6.6.4 New entranceways and driveways shall be designed and constructed in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's standards.

6.6.5 Access ways and driveways to developments shall be designed and landscaped to be informal and have a minimal impact. Driveways should be soft (not overly engineered with kerbs and hardsurfacing), well landscaped and boundary hedgerows and plantings should be retained and/or provided.

Principle DG82: Parking

In more rural and lower density locations front driveways are an acceptable solution and should be landscaped and designed in such a manner that they do not dominate the front garden or streetscape.

Refer also to Section 4.13.

6 Buildings in rural and lower density areas

SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has considered the design of buildings in **rural and lower density areas**.

PROCESS: Have you read, understood and applied the principles set our above?

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

SUMMARY: You will now have designed the building on your site. This should have been carried out in parallel ~~with a consideration of~~ Building design (refer to the guidance in Section ~~0~~5) and Building performance (Section ~~0~~7).

If a pre-application meeting has not yet been held then this may be an appropriate time. This can be used to check that the Planning Authority are happy with the principles of the scheme and to agree any refinements that may be required.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG75: Landscape character and setting	Has the applicant demonstrated how the landscape character has been considered from the outset of the design process as an integral part of the proposal?	
	Does the design integrate with it's setting?	
	Does the design avoid becoming a dominant visual feature to the detriment of the existing landscape character?	
	Does the proposal work with the existing topography? Avoiding exposed plinths within the hillside for example?	
DG76: Landscape	Does the development retain important landscape features, mature trees and planting wherever possible and incorporate these features into the landscape structure?	
	Is sufficient space allowed around new development to avoid clustering of masses and to allow tree planting between? Consideration must be given to the relationship of buildings with their boundaries on all sides.	
	Has the applicant demonstrated that landscape elements, tree planting and appropriate boundary treatments have been used to establish the building within the landscape, visually anchoring the building to their existing landscape setting?	
	Has the applicant demonstrated that the plant species selected are appropriate for the location?	
DG77: Clusters or grouping	If a cluster of buildings is proposed do they respond to traditional forms and cluster around a central space in and varied manner?	
	Has the design retained visual gaps between buildings or groups of buildings to reflect the general character of the area?	
	Does the design generally reflect or respond to the scale of the existing settlement and positively contribute to its character? If not has a strong justification been provided?	
DG79: Facades and elevations	Has the applicant demonstrated an architectural approach and identity borne from the place?	
	Has the applicant considered the appearance of the building from all visible locations and designed the facades accordingly?	
DG80: Parking	Does parking comply with Section 4.13 of this Design Guide?	

7 Building performance

Housing makes a significant contribution to CO2 emissions in the UK. The construction industry also utilises substantial volumes of non-renewable resources and generates pollution and waste. The need for sustainable approaches to building design is therefore fundamental if the challenges associated with climate change, resource depletion and pollution are to be addressed.

Traditionally, sustainable technologies such as wind turbines and solar panels have been retro-fitted to existing buildings, often to the detriment of the building design.

Section 3 explored at site wide considerations for sustainable development in larger scale developments. This section looks at how sustainable design and construction can improve the environmental integrity of housing, without compromising design quality.

7 Building performance
Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document and those sections relevant to your application

Before you proceed have you read through the relevant Sections 2 - 6 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to Section 2.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 7:
This section should be read in parallel with 'Building Design (Section 5) to ensure that sustainable design measures are integrated at the outset of the design process and that "bolt on" solutions are avoided.

The choice of sustainable measures should be considered within the context of the site, and measures which are deemed acceptable for one location may not necessarily be acceptable for another.

Applicants should refer to the Character Study carried out in Section 2 to inform this process.

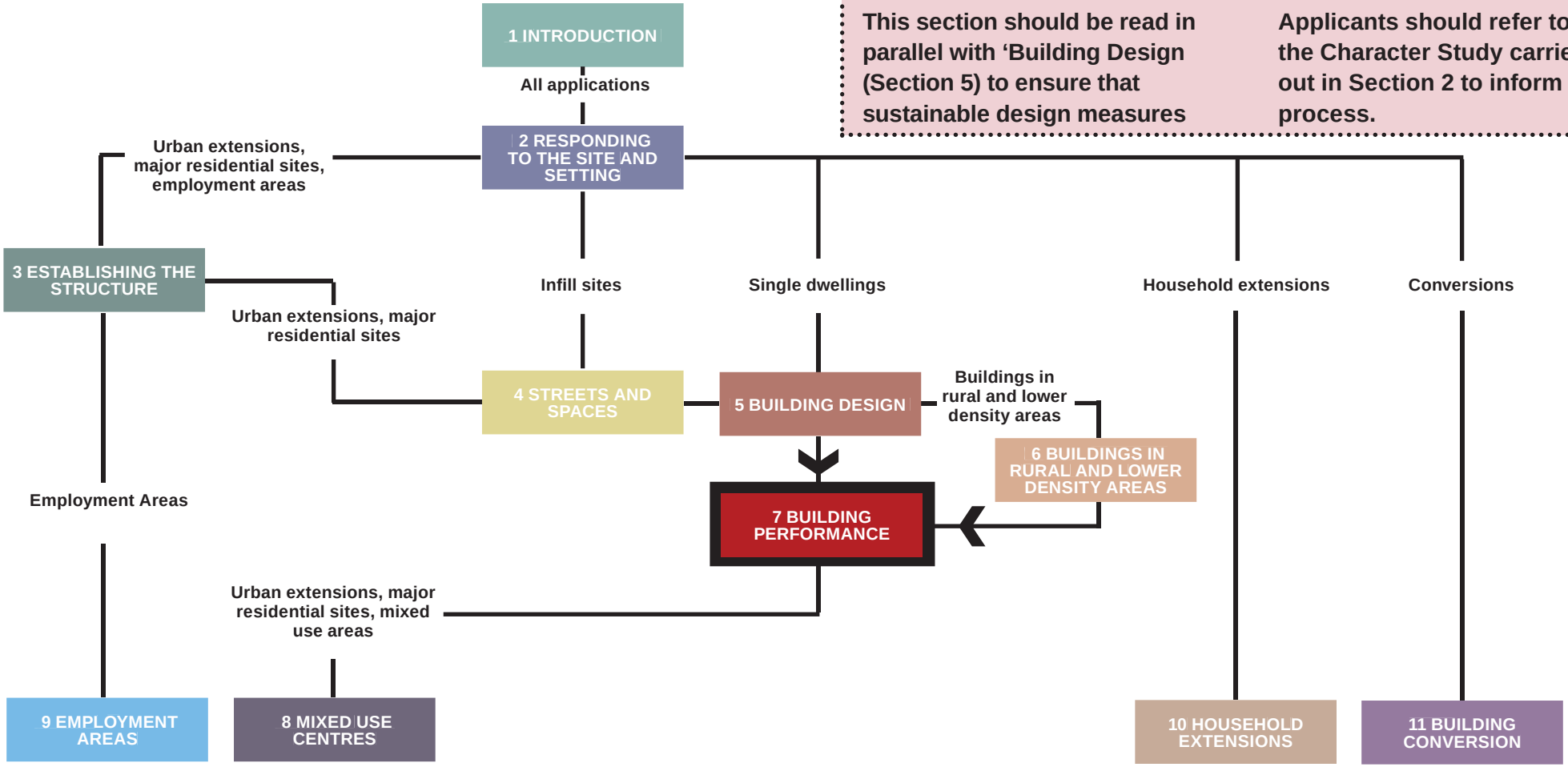


Fig 7.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

7 Building performance
Introduction

Fig 7.2: Sustainability considerations should cover all aspects from energy to health and wellbeing

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 40 Sustainable design and construction

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The council has an adopted Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (Dec 2009). The aim of this Supplementary Planning Document is to provide guidance to planners, developers, architects and facilities managers on how to achieve the council's requirements in respect of sustainable design and construction when preparing planning applications for commercial developments over 1,000 square meters and residential developments of ten or more dwellings. Applicants with relevant applications should review this document.

7.1.2 The targets set out within this document have been superseded but the spirit and aspirations from the council to deliver sustainable development remains a strong priority.

Targets for sustainable development

7.1.3 The current Government is committed to ensuring that all new homes are zero carbon from 2016 onwards. Changes will be introduced through the Building Regulations to meet this target.

7.1.4 For office and industrial development a different system of assessment is used under a Building Research Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating. This has five rating levels from pass to excellent.

7.1.5 The council aspires to new non-residential development achieving a level of performance equivalent to BREEAM excellent.

7 Building performance
Energy efficient and design principles

Fig 7.3: Building integrated photovoltaics and solar heater, RuralZED

7.2 Energy efficient design principles.

Orientation and lighting

7.2.1 For site wide guidance on orientation please refer to Section 4.

7.2.2 Buildings orientated simply to maximize sunlight and daylight penetration can often conflict with the principles of good urban design. As a general rule buildings should be orientated to first and foremost contribute to the structure and character of established environment or in the case of larger development the established structure of streets and spaces.

7.2.3 For example when developing an infill site in an urban area the building frontage should overlook the street and contribute to the established building lines. It should not restrict orientation to 30 degrees of south to maximize solar gains.

7.2.4 The depth of buildings can have a significant effect on natural lighting levels internally. Traditional residential buildings within the Vale have depths of 6 - 8m which are particularly effective in capitalising on natural lighting levels and natural ventillation.

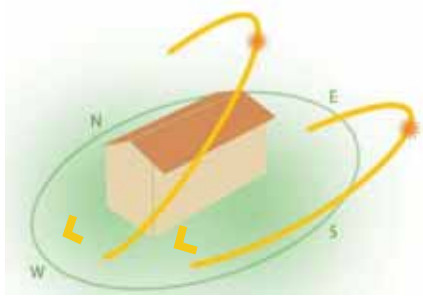


Fig 7.4: Optimum orientation relative to the sun

Principle DG83: Orientation

The orientation of a building should not be dictated solely by the sun however there are means by which building design can take advantage of orientation.

Building depths should be limited wherever possible to maximise natural lighting levels and natural ventilation.

Homes should seek to avoid single-aspect which may cause homes to overheat (if south-facing) or create additional heating demands (if north facing)

South facing windows that maximise natural daylighting and warmth should be favoured for habitable rooms where this does not compromise provision of adequate overlooking onto the street.

North facing facades should seek to minimise large areas of glazing to prevent unnecessary heat loss in winter. Again this should only be applied where this does not compromise provision of adequate overlooking onto the street.

Design for natural light and consider the installation of roof lights or 'sunpipes' to provide daylight to areas without windows and solar-powered external lighting.

Applicants should consider inclusion of materials with high thermal mass within the building structure to absorb the sun's heat energy.

Provide shading to south facing windows to prevent overheating in summer months. This could be in the form of deciduous tree

Green roofs and walls

7.2.5 Green roofs and walls offer a wide range of sustainability benefits, including reducing storm water runoff, increased sound proofing, filtering water and increasing biodiversity. They also provide a radiant barrier to prevent rooms becoming hotter than the outdoor air temperature in summer. A green roof can be integrated into the design of a new extension, retrofitted to an existing flat roof or planned into individual units on a larger scheme.

Principle DG84: Green roofs

Consider whether the use of green roofs are appropriate within the context of the site

Ensure the building position and climate is suitable for the chosen green roof system.

7 Building performance
Materials and construction

Fig 7.5: Locally sourced materials can increase the sustainability credentials of a building

7.3 Materials and construction

7.3.1 The choice and source of materials can have a significant bearing on the amount of energy used to construct and operate buildings.

Efficient re-use of materials

7.3.2 Where appropriate and practical existing on site materials can be considered for re-use. For example, re-use existing concrete as road fill or foundations.

Consider the environmental impact of materials

7.3.3 The use of sustainable building materials will be encouraged.

Evaluate the thermal mass of materials

7.3.4 Using high thermal mass materials can significantly reduce heat loss in winter. Traditional Vale buildings were frequently constructed using materials such as brick and stone, which store heat and release it slowly. Other materials that also have a high thermal mass must be justified as part of a comprehensive design concept, particularly in sensitive historic areas.

Principle DG85: Materials

Seek to recycle building materials where appropriate.

The use of materials with low-embedded energy or materials that can be recycled is encouraged.

The use of materials that have low toxicity is encouraged

Where appropriate consider the use of materials with high thermal mass that suit the character of the area.

Fig 7.6: Building integrated photovoltaics and solar heater, RuralZED

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 40 Sustainable design and construction

7.4 Energy technology

7.4.1 Heat and energy for buildings can be generated from a number of different sources including sunlight, wind and geothermal heat. Where appropriate, energy technologies should be integrated into the design of the building from the outset as part of an overall design approach.

Photovoltaics

7.4.2 For example, solar cells (photovoltaics) are used for electricity generation. Cells can be 'building integrated', into the building envelope as solar roof tiles or transparent solar membranes on conservatories, rather than retro-fitted to roofs as glass fronted panels which can result in negative visual impact.

7.4.3 Installing solar panels on houses does not generally require planning permission, however, permission may be required in certain circumstances, for example when installing a solar panel on the roof of flats or in a Conservation Area.

Solar thermal water heating

7.4.4 Solar water systems require a collector that can either be roof or wall mounted. Solar thermal water heating systems require a roof collector, but demand a larger surface area for the collector than ~~water~~ systems. These systems tend to be visually obtrusive and should be carefully sited and designed from the outset. With care they can be positive design elements of a roofscape or an elevation.

7.4.5 Building integrated energy efficient solutions provide an opportunity to maximise energy generation on a building without significantly compromising the building design. They can make a positive contribution to the design of buildings, particularly where a contemporary statement is required.

Fig 7.7: Retrofitting solar water heating systems require careful planning to mitigate their visual impact.

Principle DG86: Photovoltaics

For new development integrated energy efficient solutions are preferable.

Any panels should be positioned on building surfaces that face within 90 degrees of south. They work best if they are not overshadowed and ideally on a pitch of less than 40 degrees. Do consider the character of the building and the area.

Designs should allow for system maintenance.

PVs can also be situated within gardens or on ancillary buildings.

Principle DG87: Solar thermal water heating

Any panels should be positioned on roofs that have a 30 – 40 degree pitch within 30 degrees of an east-west axis.

Consider the character of the building and the area.

Leave space for extra water cylinders if required for the chosen system.

Make sure that roofs are strong enough to hold the solar panels.

Designs should allow for system maintenance.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 40 Sustainable design and construction

Hydro-power

7.4.6 Small scale hydro-power can be used to convert energy from flowing water into electricity.

7.4.7 When ~~they are~~ considered a number of design issues should be taken into account including the appearance of turbines and associated infrastructure. The affect the system may have on neighbouring properties from noise and vibration or change in water flow and finally, the impact of the system on the habitats and species in the watercourse. The Environment Agency should be contacted for further information. Planning permission is required for all water turbines.

Principle DG88: Hydro-power

Check the site to see if it is suitable.

Consult the Environment Agency.

Locate the power usage site or connection point to the national grid close to the water source.

Minimise the visual and noise impacts of turbines and other infrastructure by considering the design and position carefully.

Take measures to ensure that the ecology of a water source is not affected by diverting a proportion of its flow.

Fig 7.8: Archimedes screw, hydro generation, East Hanney

Ground / air source power

7.4.8 Ground source heat pumps (GSHP) transfer heat from the ground into a building to provide space heating and, in some cases, to preheat domestic hot water. Planning permission is not usually required to install these systems and they usually do not have any significant design implications. Applicants should however consider the internal requirements of the plant and area of the ground needed for the system.

7.4.9 Air and water source heat pumps are also available. Air source heat pumps can be fitted outside a house or in the roof space but can be noisy and visually obtrusive and should therefore be carefully sited to minimise impact on the character of the area.

7 Building performance
Water

Fig 7.9: Swales cane be incorporated within the landscape

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 40 Sustainable design and construction

7.5 Water

7.5.1 Reducing the demand for water and in turn reducing the embodied energy within clean water is a critical consideration in sustainable building design. Measures such as installing water meters, water-saving devices such as dual flush lavatories and other water efficient fixtures and appliances can significantly reduce water consumption.

Harvest the rain

7.5.2 Rainwater storage systems harvest rainwater for irrigation, garden watering, toilet flushing or car washing. The simplest form of rainwater storage is a garden water butt and can usually be located on rear elevations. Underground storage should be considered in some sensitive locations or where the storage vessels are larger.

Re-use grey water

7.5.3 Grey water recycling systems re-use waste water from hand wash basins, baths and showers. Grey water systems can be installed in new or existing properties and have the potential to meet a significant proportion of domestic demand for water.

7.5.4 Grey water storage tanks are best located in roof spaces or underground so that they do not affect the exterior of a building or the street scene.

Principle DG89: Water

All water fittings in all homes and non-residential buildings (taps and showers) should be specified and installed as recognised low flow technology.

Use ultra-low or dual flush WCs.

Encourage rainwater harvesting or grey water recycling unless site conditions are such that it is not possible to install these systems.

Fig 7.10: Water butts are simple solutions to recycle rainwater

7 Building performance
SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to **building performance** as part of an application.

PROCESS: Have you read, understood and applied the principles set our above?

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

SUMMARY: You will now have designed the building on your site.

If a pre-application meeting has not yet been held then this may be an appropriate time. This can be used to check that the Planning Authority are happy with the principles of the scheme and to agree any refinements that may be required.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG82: Orientation	Whilst the orientation and/or design of a building should not be dictated solely by the sun has the building design taken advantage of orientation or considered maximising solar gains?	
	Are building depths limited to maximise natural lighting levels and natural ventilation?	
DG83: Green Roofs	Has the applicant agreed with the council whether green roofs are appropriate within the context of the site?	
	Is the building position and climate suitable for the chosen green roof system?	
	Has additional structural support to the roof been allowed for, as green roofs are heavier than traditional ones?	
DG84: Materials	Has the applicant considered materials with low-embedded energy, materials that can be recycled and/or materials that have low toxicity?	
	Has the applicant considered materials from local sources wherever possible?	
DG85: Photovoltaics	Has the applicant considered solar roof tiles?	
	Are the position/location of any panels suitable?	
DG86: Solar thermal water heating	If proposed has the design considered the impact on the building and/or the character of the area?	
	Are the position/location of any panels suitable?	
DG87: Maximise the potential of water	Is the site suitable?	
	Has the applicant consulted the Environment Agency?	
	Has the design minimised the visual and noise impacts of turbines and other infrastructure?	
DG88: Water	Has the applicant considered rainwater harvesting or grey water recycling systems?	

8
Mixed use centres

The Vale is endowed with very successful town and village centres that have developed over time around crossroads, centres of activity or stopping places, with the incremental growth of housing, retail, community and employment uses around the original core. Successful communities require a full range of local facilities and services conveniently located and integrated within a settlement and connected by safe and pleasant streets. All too often truly mixed use areas in new development is poorly designed, poorly located or lacks the vibrancy and activity of the neighbourhood centres we love.

Section 3.6 outlines the importance of incorporating a range of facilities within a neighbourhood that are conveniently sited and connected to residential areas by safe and direct routes. Planning new or designing within mixed use centres or neighbourhood hubs requires careful consideration. This section outlines the key principles to consider to achieve a successfully planned neighbourhood centre.

8 Mixed use centres
Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document.

Before you proceed have you read through Sections 2 - 7 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to any sections that are relevant to your application.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 8: This section outlines the key principles to consider to achieve a successfully planned mixed use centre including:

- **8.1 Access**
- **8.2 Layout and public realm**
- **8.3 Built form**
- **8.4 Shopfronts**

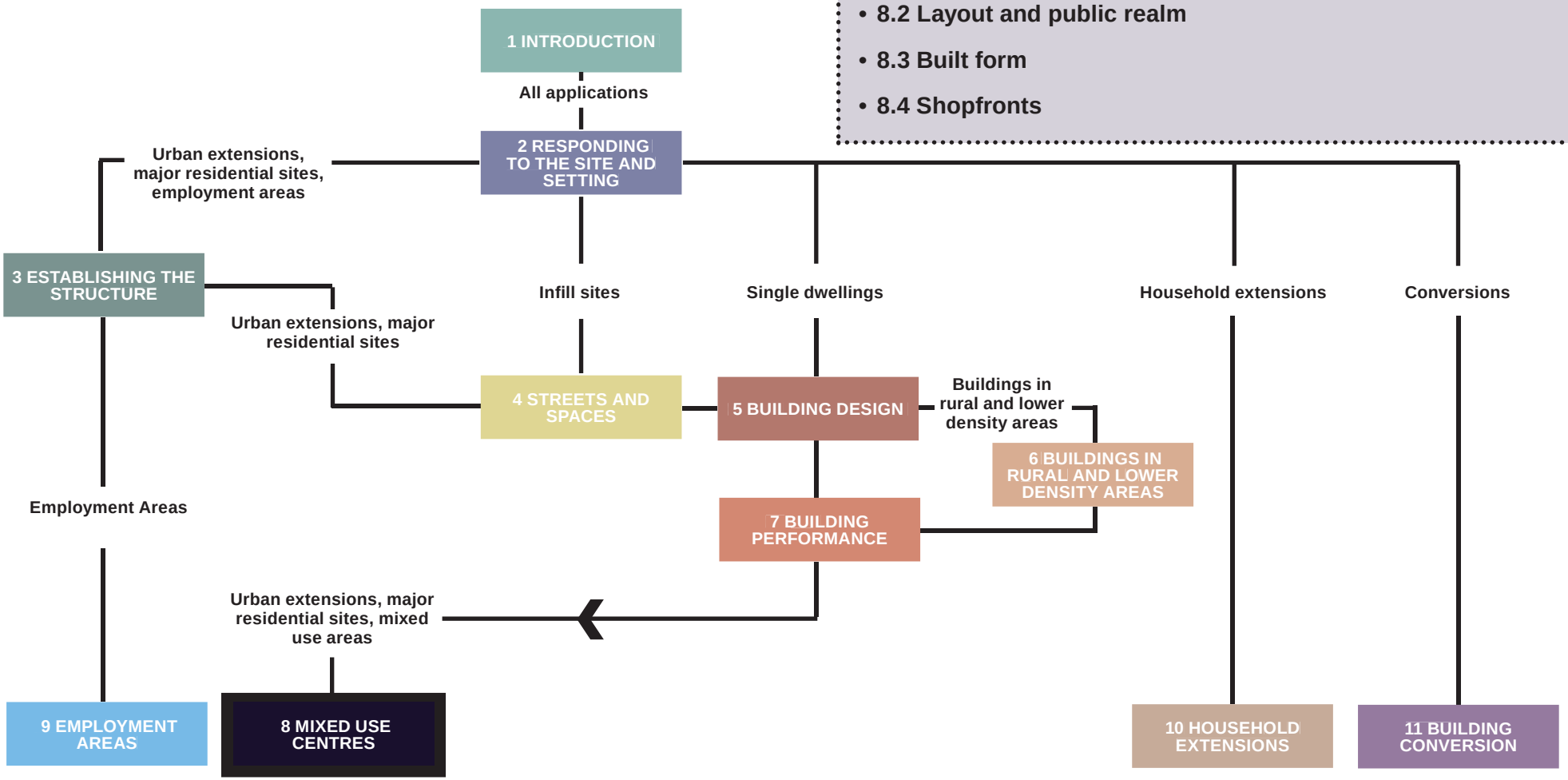


Fig 8.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

8 Mixed use centres
Access

Fig 8.2: Non-residential uses cluster around key streets and nodes

8.1 Access

8.1.1 The link between successful commercial uses and accessibility has long been recognised. Shops, services and community facilities are more likely to thrive when located on well connected streets benefiting from passing trade, public transport accessibility and a walkable catchment of around 5 to 10 minutes (400 - 800m).

8.1.2 The benefits of mixed use development are numerous:

- Reduction in the need to use a car;
- More convenient access to facilities and local jobs;
- Greater opportunities for social interaction;
- Urban vitality and street life; and
- A greater feeling of safety, with 'eyes on streets'.

8.1.3 The range of services and facilities is linked to the density and quantum of supporting development. For example a village may support a local shop and pub whereas a major urban extension could have sufficient quantum to support a range of facilities, shops, schools and other community facilities.

Fig 8.3: In urban and rural areas local retail and facilities locate along key routes

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 32: Retailing and other main town centre uses
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

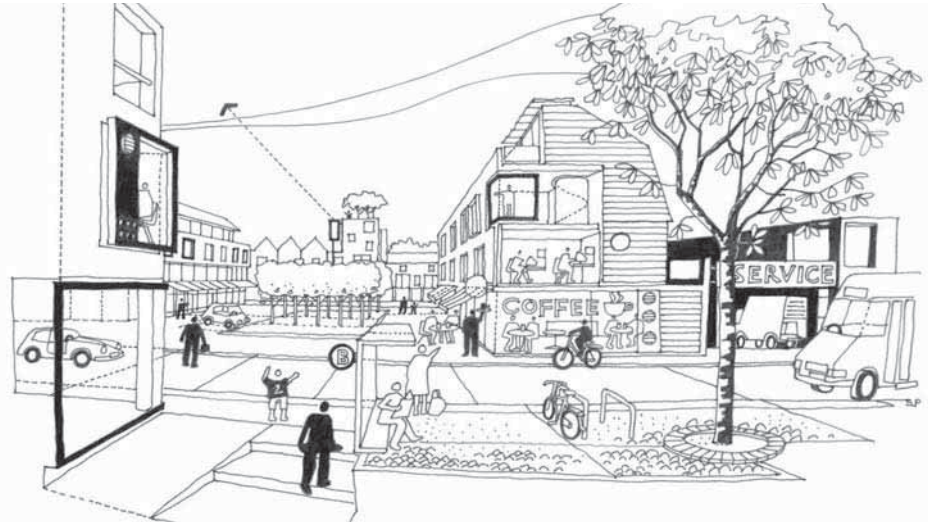


Fig 8.4: Illustration of mixed use centre

Principle DG90: Mixed use centres - Access

The location of mixed use centres and neighbourhood hubs is key to their viability and long term success. They should be conveniently located at the intersections of well connected streets and should be highly visible.

Accessibility for all users should be integrated into the design of the centre, with particular consideration given to how the elderly and disabled will access and use the centre.

Short stay / visitor and disabled car parking spaces and secure cycle parking should be integrated into the streetscape or landscape design with convenient access to capitalise on passing trade. The appropriate number, location and layout will depend on the local context.

A frequent bus route should serve the Neighbourhood Centre with bus stops conveniently located and well-overlooked to encourage patronage.

8 Mixed use centres
Layout and public realm

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 32 Retailing and other main town centre uses
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Fig 8.5: Illustration of village green

8.2 Layout and public realm

8.2.1 Mixed use centres or neighbourhood hubs should be designed as a central focus for the community. They should provide an attractive and identifiable environment, supported by high quality public realm treatment including street furniture, materials, lighting and planting. All development within the centre should front onto the public realm and make a positive contribution to natural surveillance, identity and legibility.

8.2.2 Providing a public space will create a more welcoming pedestrian environment suitable for pavement cafés and a place for people to linger or meet friends. Setting the public space back from the road will reduce the intrusion of vehicles.

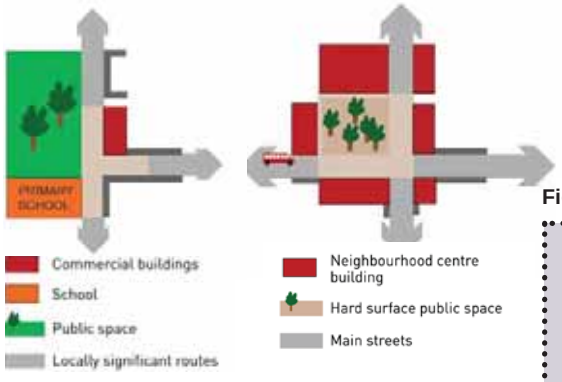


Fig 8.6: Abstract plan configuration of neighbourhood hub and mixed use centres

Fig 8.7: Ground floor retail with residential above focused around a village green - Broundbury

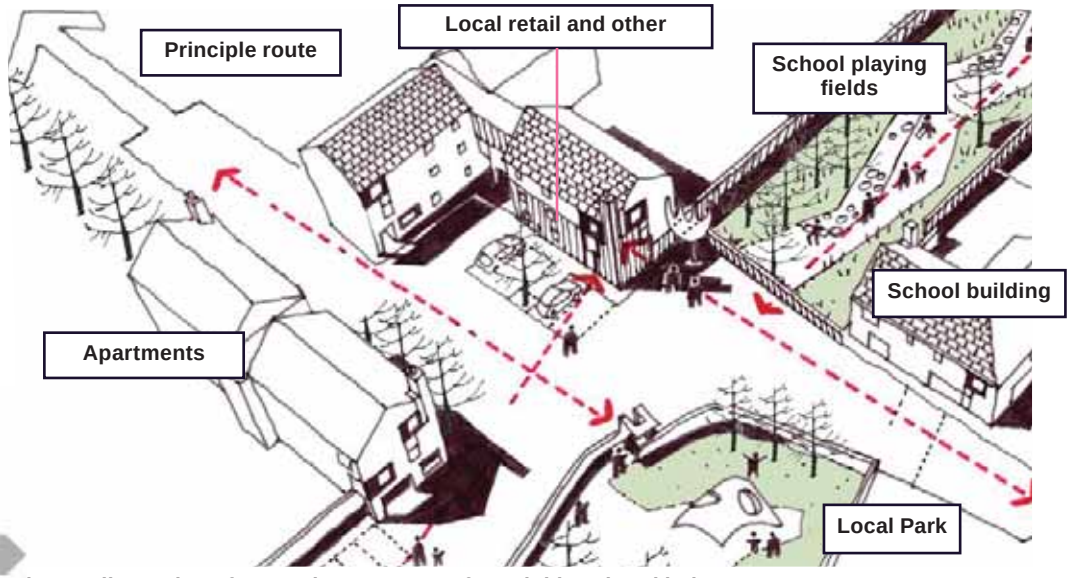


Fig 8.8: Illustration of general arrangement for neighbourhood hubs

Principle DG91: Mixed use centres - Layout and public realm

Mixed use centres and neighbourhood hubs should be designed around streets or nodes. Avoid internal shopping centres or malls.

Cluster facilities around an appropriate scaled high quality public realm or public space as a central focus. This could range from a village green, a small public square to a simple widening of the street.

The size of public spaces created in neighbourhood centres should be related to the height of enclosing development to provide enclosure and a sense of place;

Servicing areas must not visually dominate the streetscene and dead frontage overlooking the public realm should be avoided.

8 Mixed use centres
Built form

Fig 8.9: The height of buildings within a centre should be appropriate to its context and aid legibility

8.3 Built form

8.3.1 The clustering of buildings and the scale and massing of the centre or hub should contribute to its legibility. The heights and form of buildings will depend on their location within the District and the size of the proposed development. For example within a more rural village location a neighbourhood hub could consist of two or three 2-storey buildings clustered around a key node whereas in more urban locations or within larger urban extensions it may be appropriate to structure a number of 3 – 4 storey buildings, a school building and crèche around a public space.

8.3.2 Development within mixed use areas and neighbourhood hubs should generally be fine grain.

8.3.3 Sub-dividing development parcels into smaller plots has a number of benefits including:

- Generating more active frontages and entrances onto the street;
- Encouraging a 'human scale' and fine pedestrian grain;
- Providing a flexible basis for amalgamation if necessary which enables future incremental growth to take place; and
- Minimising costly and wasteful leftover space.

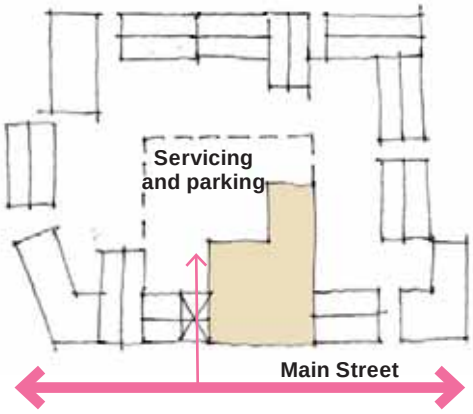


Fig 8.10: 'Wrap' or locate larger non-residential footprints such as supermarkets or leisure buildings within the block with a perimeter of active development.

Fig 8.11: Building heights with 4 storey development within the mixed use centre, 3 storeys defining principal streets and 2 storeys elsewhere

Principle DG92: Mixed Use centres - Built form

The height of buildings within a centre should be appropriate to its context and aid legibility.

Include residential development within the mix above non-residential uses to ensure activity and surveillance throughout the day and night. Residential proposals within these locations should consider service yard locations, noise, odour, lighting and air quality issues.

Ground floor ceiling heights should be increased to provide more generous non-residential spaces.

Development within mixed use areas and neighbourhood hubs should generally be fine grain.

'Wrap' or locate larger non-residential footprints such as supermarkets or leisure buildings within blocks with a perimeter of active development.

All development within the centre should front onto the public realm and make a positive contribution to natural surveillance, identity and legibility.

Applicants should refer to Section 5.15 for apartment design.

8.4 Shopfronts

8.4.1 The guidance below should be applied to both new development and alterations to existing shopfronts.

8.4.2 There is a wide variety in the design, detail, style and appearance of shopfronts. However there are certain features that are common to most. Even in the most modern shopfront it is usually possible to identify a 'stallriser', 'fascia', and 'pilaster', and although not in a traditional form, elements that echo 'consoles', 'cornices' and 'fanlights'. In any design such elements should be compatible in terms of scale, proportion and materials in order to produce a well-balanced shopfront.

8.4.3 Shop frontages should be designed to reinforce the shop's identity and its location in the centre or hub whilst forming an integral part of the whole building, streetscene or cluster of buildings. The design needs to consider the overall style of the hub or centre and also respond or reflect the character of existing shop fronts within the settlement.

8.4.4 Ground floor units should be flexible and easily adaptable to respond to the changing needs of the neighbourhood and reduce the likelihood of vacant units.

8.4.5 The principal purpose of a shopfront is the advertisement and display of goods and services provided inside the building.

8.4.6 Retail frontage should reinforce the shop's identity and its location in the centre or neighbourhood hub whilst forming an integral part of the whole building and street frontage.

8.4.7 This can be achieved by considering the style of the whole building and that of its neighbours.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 32 Retailing and other main town centre uses
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

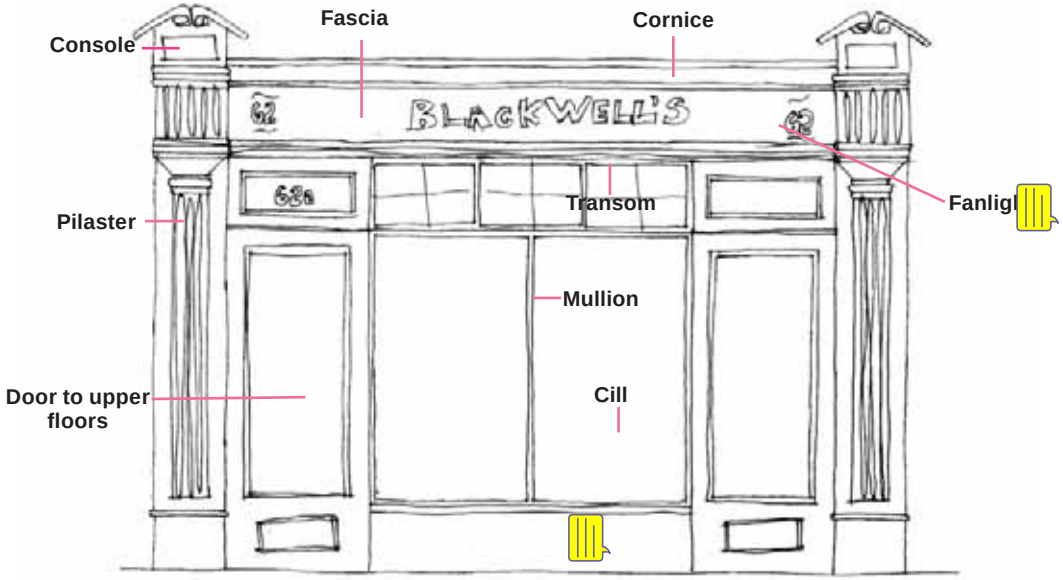


Fig 8.12: Basic elements of a traditional shopfront

S **Fig 8.13: The building frontage is dominated by oversized signage and signage on upper levels. It appears cluttered and detracts from the overall street scene**

R **Fig 8.14: A co-ordinated, uncluttered approach that is visually cohesive creates a more pleasant street environment**

8 Mixed use centres
Shopfronts

Fig 8.15: Abingdon shop fronts which are appropriate to their context

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 32: Retailing and other main town centre uses
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

8.4.8 **Canopies:** The integration of canopies within shopfronts will be accepted in areas where this is prevalent to provide shelter, colour and interest and reflect the character of the District. It is important that these canopies are consistently applied and are made of a non-reflective material so that they do not adversely affect the appearance of the street scene.

8.4.9 **Security:** Security measures for retail and commercial units should be considered at the design stage and not 'added on' as an afterthought. A balance must be struck between ensuring that units are safe and secure while considering their impact on the appearance of the street. Solid external shutters can create an unwelcoming and hostile environment and should therefore be avoided.

8.4.10 The preferred solution of light mesh grilles or lattice roller shutters allow shopfronts to maintain an 'open' feel and appearance but maintain a high degree of security.

8.4.11 **Signage:** The impact of external signage on the street scene can be significant. When carefully considered signage can aid legibility and contribute positively to the streetscene. Poorly sited, overlarge or badly designed signage however can clutter the appearance of centres and neighbourhood hubs. There is therefore a need to create a careful balance between satisfying commercial needs of advertising and protecting the amenity and character of shopping areas.

8.4.12 All signs should relate well in terms of size, scale and appearance to the building on which they are set and the streetscene of which they are a part.

8.4.13 The signage should generally not extend beyond the defined shopfront fascia and should avoid lurid colours and excessive backlit illumination.

8.4.14 Where adjacent shopfronts are of similar scale and appearance, designers should define a signage zone so a consistent height and scale of signage can be established across adjacent shopfronts.

Fig 8.16: Solid external metal roller shutters can create an unwelcoming and hostile environment and should therefore be avoided

Fig 8.17: Canopies should contribute to the streetscene.

Fig 8.18: Overly lurid shopfronts and signage should be avoided

8 Mixed use centres
Shopfronts

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 32: Retailing and other main town centre uses
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

8.4.15 **Lighting:** Modest and subtle lighting of centres, neighbourhood hubs and individual shop-fronts can contribute to a lively and safer-feeling environment at night and should be encouraged. In the interest of minimising obtrusive light, projecting illuminated signs and flashing or neon signs should be avoided.

8.4.16 **Materials:** The character of the building, street and any adjoining buildings should be used to influence the choice of materials and colours. The number of different materials and colours should be kept to a minimum in order to avoid a clash with the adjoining buildings and the character of the street.

8.4.17 New shopfronts must be constructed from high quality materials and avoid lurid colours.

8.4.18 **Glazing:** Where appropriate glazing should be as extensive as possible to allow views in and out of shops. Sales counters and checkout counters should be located near to glazed areas so that they provide passive surveillance of external public spaces.

8.4.19 Full height advertisements or blanked-out panels should not be included where they are detrimental to the streetscene.

8.4.20 Glazed areas should generally be subdivided to achieve a well-proportioned shopfront and contribute to the scale and rhythm of an overall elevation.

Principle DG93: Shopfronts

Shopfronts should respond to the grain of individual buildings. The proportions of the shopfront should harmonise with the main building and its neighbours.

Within new build development the shopfront should not be treated separately from the upper levels but considered as a coherent design.

Materials should reflect the existing range within centres or a palette agreed with the Council.

Shopfronts should not incorporate external security measures that negatively impact on the streetscene.

Shopfronts should not display over dominant or incongruous advertising.

All signs should relate well in terms of size, scale and appearance to the building on which they are set and the streetscene of which they are a part.

Fig 8.19: Shopfront integrates with overall appearance of the building

Fig 8.20: Corporate branding on historic buildings should be subtle and in-keeping with the buildings overall appearance

Fig 8.21: Co-ordination between shopfronts can create a more coherent street scene

8 Mixed use centres
SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has considered the design of mixed use centres as part of an application..

PROCESS: Have you read, understood and applied the principles set our above?

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

SUMMARY: Applicants should now have a proposal which has responded positively to its setting and demonstrates how the proposal has been informed by its context. It should have established an appropriate structure and referred to relevant sections in accordance with Figure 8.1.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG89: Mixed use centres - Access	Is the location of any mixed use areas and/or neighbourhood hubs conveniently located at the intersections of well connected streets and highly visible?	
	Is the centre supported by an appropriate quantum of development within walking distance?	
	Is the design accessible for all users?	
	Does the design incorporate an appropriate number of parking spaces in an appropriate location?	
	Is the location accessible by public transport?	
DG90: Mixed use centres - Layout and public realm	Is the design based around the principles of streets, blocks and nodes?	
	Does the design incorporate an appropriate high quality public realm / public space?	
	Are service areas and large areas of parking screened from view?	
	Is blank frontage onto the public realm avoided?	
DG91: Mixed use centres - Built form	Are the building heights appropriate to the context and appropriate to the enclosure of streets and public spaces?	
	Is a mix of use proposed to ensure activity and surveillance throughout the day?	
	Are larger footprints such as supermarkets incorporated within a block and wrapped with development?	
	Does the design make a positive contribution to street frontage, natural surveillance, identity and legibility?	
	If apartments are included, do they conform to guidance in Section 5.15?	
DG92: Shopfronts	Does the design of shopfronts respond to the grain of the building and harmonise with the building as a whole and its neighbours?	
	Does the choice of materials reflect the palette within an existing centre or has a palette of materials been agreed with the Council?	
	Does the signage relate well in terms of size and appearance to the building on which they are set and the streetscene of which they are a part?	

9 Commercial / employment areas

The District has a number of regionally and nationally significant commercial / employment areas including Milton Park and Harwell Science Park. Over the local plan period these areas will grow significantly to provide employment for a growing population within the Vale. Whilst it is accepted that these areas are influenced and shaped by a different set of priorities to residential and mixed use schemes they can also conform to the basic principles of place-making to create quality workplace environments.

Commercial / employment areas that take a landscape led approach and invest in the areas between the buildings create better workplace environments and in turn improve productivity, reduce sickness days and provide a more prestigious setting.

9 Commercial / employment areas
Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document.

Before you proceed have you read through Sections 2 - 3 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to any sections that are relevant to your application.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 9: This section outlines the key principles to consider to achieve a successfully planned commercial / employment area including:

- **9.1 Layout and access**
- **9.2 Parking and servicing**
- **9.3 Supporting facilities**
- **9.4 Built form**
- **9.5 Building frontage**
- **9.6 Signage**
- **9.7 Waste and recycling**
- **9.8 Building performance**
- **9.9 Materials**

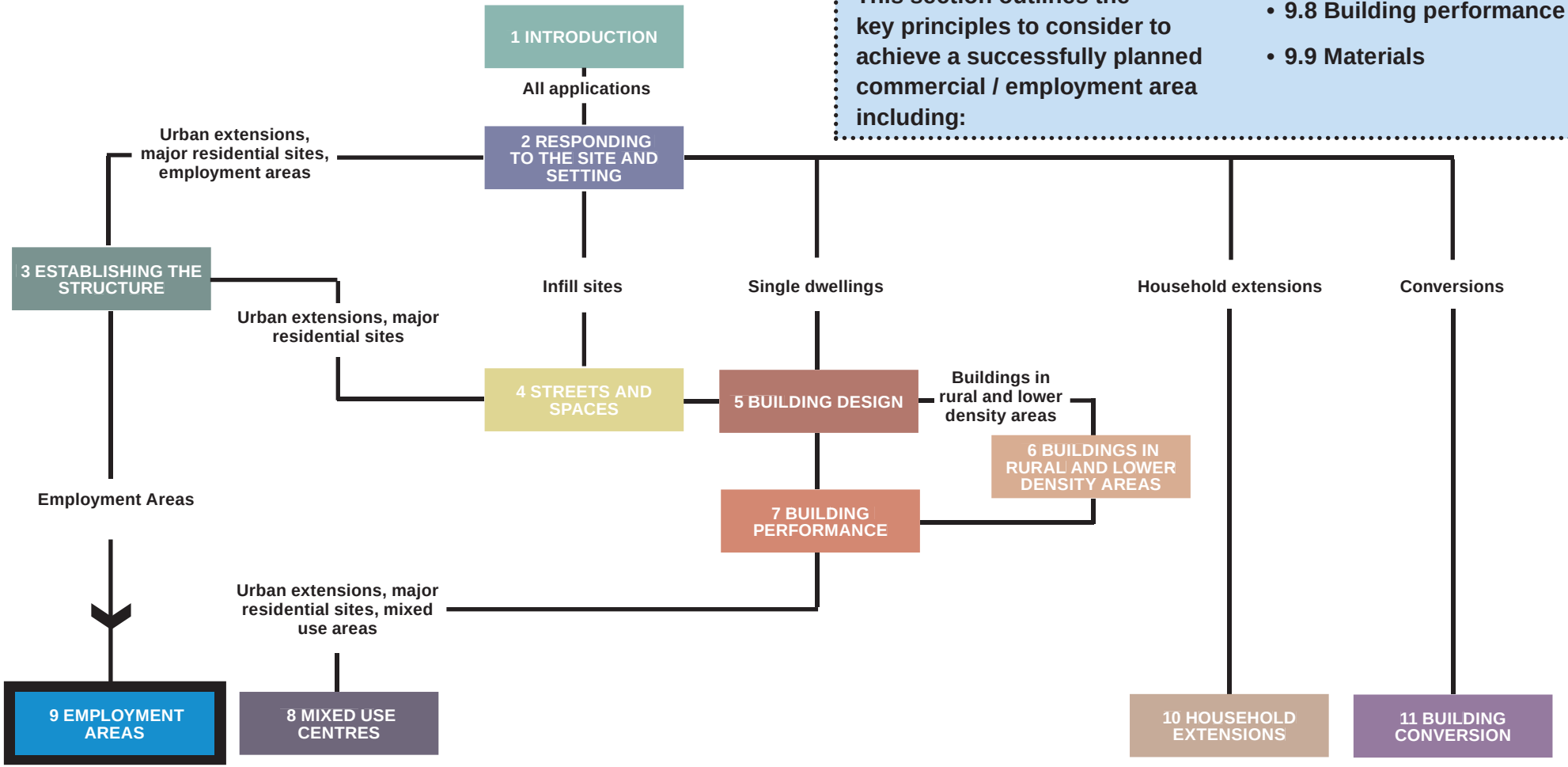


Fig 9.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

9 Commercial / employment areas
Layout and access

Fig 9.2: Office buildings set within a green environment at Milton Park near Didcot

9.1 Layout and access

Layout

9.1.1 The principles of establishing a successful layout in Section 3 should also be applied to commercial and employment areas.

9.1.2 The existing employment areas have a number of physical assets, including areas of open space, natural woodlands and water which employees should be able to see from their workplaces and enjoy in their breaks. New development and improvements to existing employment areas should improve connections to the surrounding landscape and create open, green vistas through the development to the surrounding landscape.

9.1.3 New development and improvements to existing areas should take a landscape led approach focusing investment in areas that will significantly contribute to the quality of the workplace environment. Focus should be directed to the space around and between the buildings before the building design itself including:

- Spine roads or principal streets which could take the form of well planted boulevards to encourage walking and cycling;
- Central landscape areas or public space which form focal points;
- Connections to the countryside;
- Gateways into the areas;
- Entrance forecourts and parking areas for individual businesses; and
- Drainage and SUDs solutions.

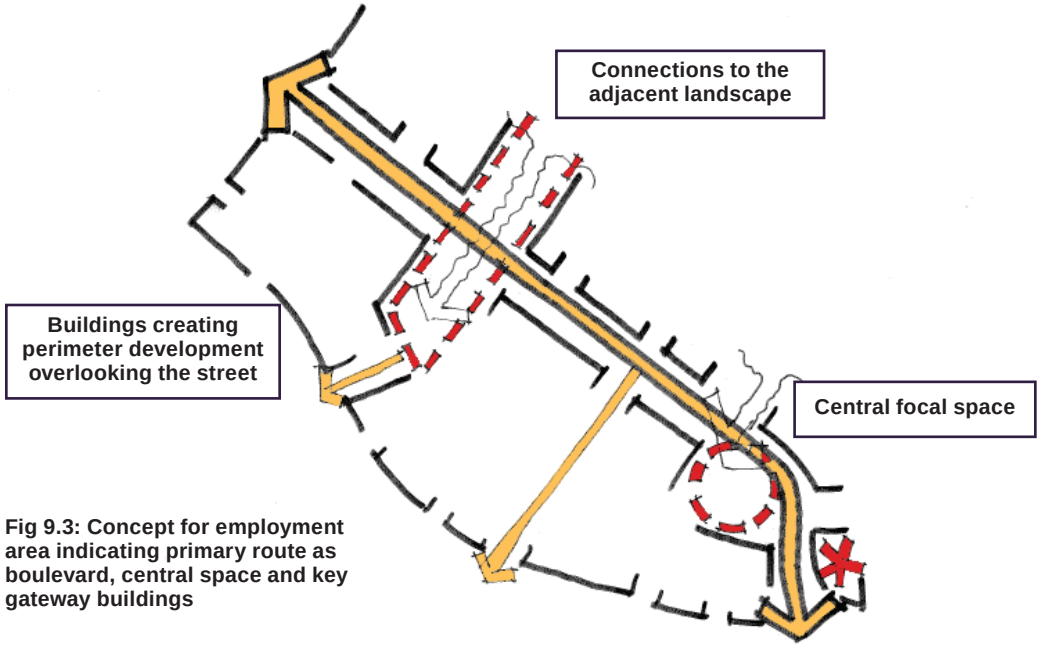


Fig 9.3: Concept for employment area indicating primary route as boulevard, central space and key gateway buildings

Fig 9.4: Layout plan showing indicative block layouts with frontage and entrances overlooking the boulevard

9 Commercial / employment areas
Layout and access

Fig 9.5: Employment structured around high quality landscape design

9.1.4 Employment uses should be clustered around entrance forecourts. The forecourts will function as the main arrival space for groups of buildings and will incorporate visitor and staff parking. The entrances to individual buildings should face these areas with reception areas providing surveillance onto forecourt spaces. Forecourts should have a simple and robust aesthetic, softened with tree and hedge planting

Access

9.1.5 Commercial and employment areas should be well served by public transport with good pedestrian connections to bus stops, rail stations and adjacent residential areas to minimise car use.

9.1.6 New employment development should be structured as a network of connected streets with development wherever possible fronting the street.

Fig 9.6: Entrance forecourt

Fig 9.7: Entrance forecourt

Fig 9.8: Even larger employment uses can be grouped to create entrance forecourts as the main arrival space and to incorporate visitor and staff parking

Principle DG94: Employment areas - layout and access

For the layout of new employment areas applicants should refer to Section 3 of this document and demonstrate how these principles have been met through the proposals.

New development and improvements to existing areas should take a landscape led approach focusing investment in areas that will significantly contribute to the quality of the workplace environment.

Commercial and employment areas should be well served by public transport

Proposals should be structured as a network of connected streets with development fronting the street wherever possible.

Office areas and storage space within B2 and B8 uses must be integrated within the curtilage of a single structure and avoid low quality ancillary buildings cluttering the development's high quality appearance.

9 Commercial / employment areas
Parking and servicing

Fig 9.9: Large areas of parking and asphalt to the front of buildings should be minimised

9.2 Parking and servicing

9.2.1 Parking and servicing demands for commercial and employment areas can put significant pressure on land take and can often conflict with creating good, sustainable urban solutions.

9.2.2 Large forecourt parking located at the front of buildings can often result in a 'sea of parking' which can be confusing to find your way around and reduces overlooking of principal streets and spaces.

9.2.3 Forecourts should be limited in size functioning as the main arrival space for groups of buildings and will incorporate visitor and staff parking.

9.2.4 Cycle parking should be provided close to the entrance of commercial or employment buildings in locations with good surveillance.

Fig 9.10: Parking should be incorporated into the landscape design with tree planting breaking up the visual impact of parked cars.

Fig 9.11 Applicants should consider light weight parking structures to minimise landtake

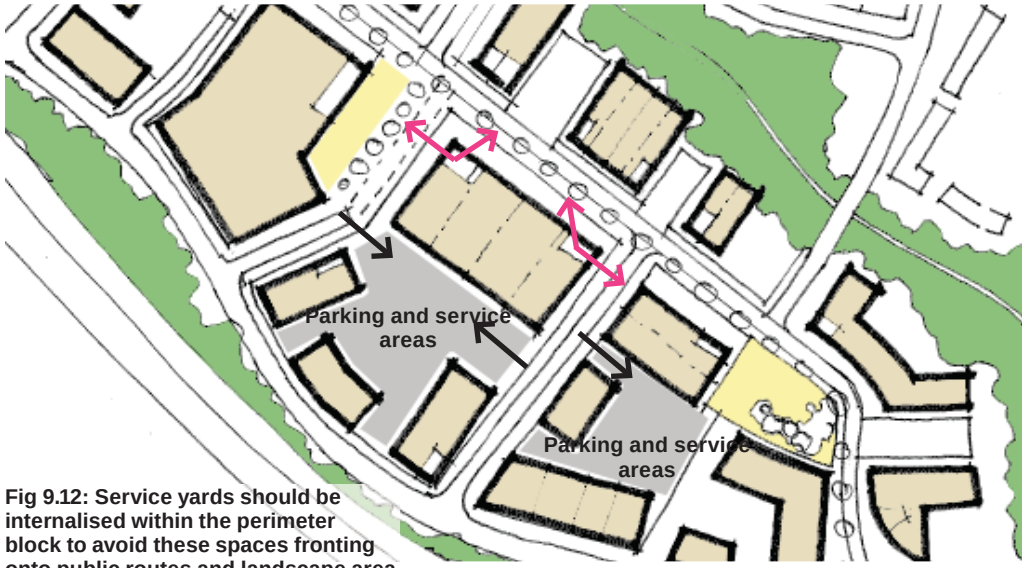


Fig 9.12: Service yards should be internalised within the perimeter block to avoid these spaces fronting onto public routes and landscape area

Principle DG95: Employment areas - parking and servicing

Parking levels should conform to current standards, as set out in the Adopted Vehicle Parking Standards.

Service yards should be internalised within the perimeter block to avoid these spaces fronting onto public routes and landscape area

Large forecourts with buildings substantially set back from the public realm should be avoided where possible.

Wherever possible large areas of surface parking should be positioned to minimise its impact on the public realm. This could include internalising the parking within the perimeter block or locating it to the side or rear of the building.

Limited parking can be provided in small forecourts accommodating visitor and disabled parking. Applicants should demonstrate that the building line will ensure that a good streetscene is maintained.

Parking should be incorporated into the landscape design with tree planting breaking up the visual impact of parked cars.

9 Commercial / employment areas
Supporting facilities and built form

Fig 9.13: Employment areas should be supported by local facilities to serve the working population

9.3 Supporting facilities

9.3.1 Having a range of local facilities serving employees within a commercial area can significantly cut down on car bourne trips and improve the workplace environment. Facilities such as creches, convenience retail, cafes, and gyms can also create focal points for employees.

Principle DG96: Employment areas - supporting facilities

Where appropriate incorporate a range of appropriate, supporting facilities within employment areas to serve the needs of employees.

Fig 9.14 Facilities such as creches can be hugely successful within employment areas

9.4 Built form

9.4.1 Employment buildings should respond positively to the character and architectural traditions of the district in terms of scale, mass, form, materials and detailing. On business parks, as a general principle the landscape and public realm should form the dominant feature within employment areas with the buildings forming a more neutral background. As such the design of simple, rectilinear buildings within the landscape is promoted similar to traditional agricultural buildings.

9.4.2 Although the scale and massing of commercial buildings may vary from building to building, articulation of the ground floor can create a more human scale and establish a coherent and common design language throughout the development. This could be achieved through the use of glazing, articulation of cladding, establishing a datum line or facade detail. The horizontal emphasis can be visually reduced by in including vertical divisions or elements.

9.4.3 Whilst it is accepted that some employment buildings will be of a significant scale, applicants should consider the impact of these buildings on views from the countryside and the wider context. Measures to mitigate their impact should be considered. For example low profile pitches / barrel vault roofs may be preferable to angular flat roofs. Green roofs should be considered where appropriate.

Principle DG97: Employment areas - built form

Keep designs simple. Larger footprint buildings can often appear bulky and should be broken down to comprise ~~of~~ a number of simple geometric forms.

Articulation of the ground floor of buildings can create a more human scale and establish a coherent and common design language throughout the development.

Fig 9.15 Simple geometric forms with entrance areas and ground floor clearly articulated.

9 Commercial / employment areas
Building frontage and signage

9.5 Building frontage

9.5.1 Whilst it is recognised that the opportunity for active frontages can be limited within some commercial and employment uses, ~~particularly within larger employment areas,~~ building entrances, reception areas and offices should be positioned to make a positive contribution to the surveillance of the public realm and forecourts.

9.5.2 Individual employment / commercial buildings within more urban areas should conform to the principles of creating successful perimeter blocks, providing continuity of building line, active frontage and enclosure. In urban locations buildings should not be significantly set back and parking / service yards should be located to the rear.

Principle DG98: Employment areas - Building frontage

Wherever feasible buildings should be designed with a single entrance point serving reception areas, the main space and office.

Building entrances will front onto streets, spaces and forecourts and make a positive contribution to surveillance and legibility.

Entrances should be generous, covered areas which are welcoming and easily identifiable to help improve legibility and provide protection from the weather.

The position of reception areas and office space should be located to positively contribute to the surveillance of entrance areas and forecourts. Reception areas on corners overlooking entrance areas and forecourts contribute to the surveillance of those areas.

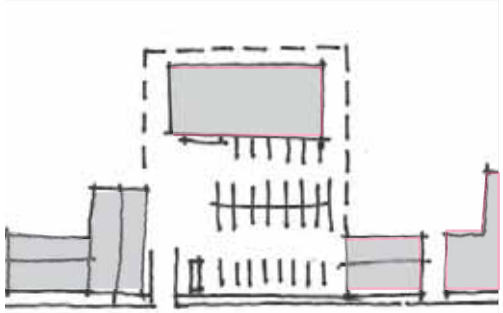


Fig 9.16 Commercial buildings within more urban areas should not be set back from the building line.

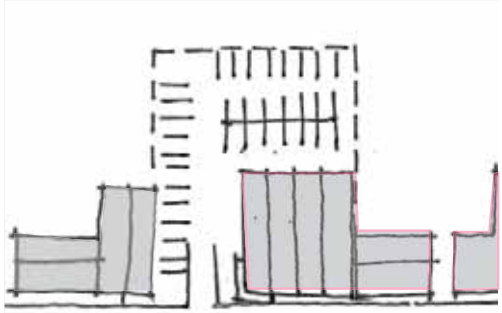


Fig 9.17 Commercial buildings should be integrated within the development block and maintain a consistent building line. Large areas of parking/ service yards should be located to the rear.

9.6 Signage

9.6.1 Signage for commercial / employment areas can become over dominant within the public realm and detract from the quality of the surrounding streets and public spaces.

Fig 9.18 Signage should be focused around entrance areas or flank walls

Principle DG99: Employment areas - Signage

Stand alone signage for individual businesses should be avoided as this generally has a negative impact on the street scene. In larger employment areas estate signage with unified boards, listing individual companies may be provided at entrance points from the public highway.

Signage for individual businesses should be focused around entrance areas and / or on bare flank / walls.

Signage should not be overbearing or out of proportion with the overall building.

9 Commercial / employment areas
Waste, performance and materials

9.7 Waste and recycling

9.7.1 Business and employment uses inevitably create waste. The quantity and how it is dealt with is primarily down to the occupants, however, the design of the buildings can help ~~these~~ users to minimise the impact of this waste.

Principle DG100: Employment areas - waste and recycling

A Waste Strategy specific to the end users should be produced and provided to the Local Planning Authority for written approval prior to the occupation of each building.

Each tenant should have access to adequate, hygienic, space in which to segregate the waste into various recycling streams and thus minimise landfill.

These recycling points should be conveniently located for the users and also for the efficient removal of the materials by collection vehicles.

These facilities must not be in plain sight ~~from~~ landscape areas or principal streets.

9.8 Building performance

9.8.1 Sustainability principles should be integrated into all stages of design, construction and operation of the buildings. The emphasis, in terms of resources, is on reducing demand through solar orientation, natural ventilation, waste minimisation practices and reducing resources used, re-used and recycled. The intention is that the quality of the workplace will be raised through the application of these sustainability principles.

Principle DG101: Employment areas - building performance

Applicants are encouraged to attain the BRE's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of 'Excellent'.

Fig 9.19 Simple geometric forms with entrance areas and ground floor clearly articulated.

Fig 9.20 Open plan designs capatilising on natural light can provide lights and airy spaces that allow future adaptability

9.9 Materials

9.9.1 The selection of materials and colours for commercial and employment areas can have a significant visual impact on the context. The selection of materials should also consider all sustainability issues and take a 'whole life cycle' approach. The use of traditional construction materials such as timber weather boarding or locally distinctive brick and roofing tiles, would help integrate employment / commercial buildings into the rural context.

Principle DG102: Employment areas - materials

A palette of materials should be agreed with the council

The selection of materials and colours should integrate in the landscape and could be used to reduce the appearance of bulk and massing of the building

Care should be taken when specifying reflective materials and/or large areas of glazing within inappropriate settings to avoid glare and light pollution.

Materials and architectural expression can be used to break up facades into its component parts (base, middle, roof) to reduce the bulk and massing of buildings, including vertical components or elements can reduce the horizontal emphasis.

9 Commercial / employment areas
SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has considered the design of commercial and employment areas as part of an application..

PROCESS: Have you read, understood and applied the principles set our above?

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

SUMMARY: Applicants should now have a proposal which has responded positively to its setting and demonstrates how the proposal has been informed by its context. It should have established an appropriate structure and referred to relevant sections in accordance to Figure 9.1.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG93: Commercial areas - layout and access	Does the design conform to guidance in Section 3?	
	Does the design take a landscape led approach to the layout of the area linking to natural assets and creating landscaped spaces for workers?	
	Is the design structured around a network of connected streets?	
	Is the location accessible by public transport?	
DG94: Commercial areas - Parking and servicing	Does the design incorporate an appropriate number of parking spaces in an appropriate location?	
	Are service areas and large areas of parking screened from view?	
DG95: Commercial areas - Supporting facilities	If applicable does the design incorporate a range of appropriate, supporting facilities within employment areas to serve the needs of employees?	
DG96: Commercial areas - Built form	Are larger footprint buildings broken down to comprise of a number of simple geometric forms to reduce their apparent bulk?	
	Are ground floors of buildings articulated to create a development with a more human scale?	
DG97: Commercial areas - Building frontage	Does the design maximise the potential of active frontage with entrances fronting onto streets, spaces and forecourts and making a positive contribution to surveillance and legibility?	
DG98: Commercial areas - Signage	Does the design mitigate the impact of signage onto the public realm?	
DG99: Commercial areas - Waste and recycling	Has a strategy for waste and recycling been considered?	
DG100: Commercial areas - Building performance	Is the applicant committed and do the designs support achieving a rating of BREEAM excellent?	
DG101: Commercial areas - Materials	Has a palette of materials been agreed with the council?	
	Are the materials sustainable and do they mitigate against the impact on their setting?	

10 Household extensions

Extensions to dwellings can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of a dwelling itself and the street or area in which it is set. A well-designed extension can enhance the appearance and value of a property, whereas an unsympathetic extension can have a harmful impact, create problems for neighbouring residents, and affect the overall character of the area.

This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when extending a dwelling. It sets out the differing approaches that should be adopted when designing front and rear extensions, single storey and two storey additions, porches, garages and outbuildings.

Householders are encouraged to make their extensions as energy efficient and sustainable as possible, in line with the design principles set out in Section 7.

10 Household extensions
Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document.

Before you proceed have you read through Section 02 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to Section 02.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 10: This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when extending a dwelling including:

- **10.1 Planning**
- **10.2 Listed Buildings**
- **10.3 Responding to local character**
- **10.4 Consider your neighbours**
- **10.5 Scale, form and massing**
- **10.6 Design considerations**
- **10.7 Detailed principles**

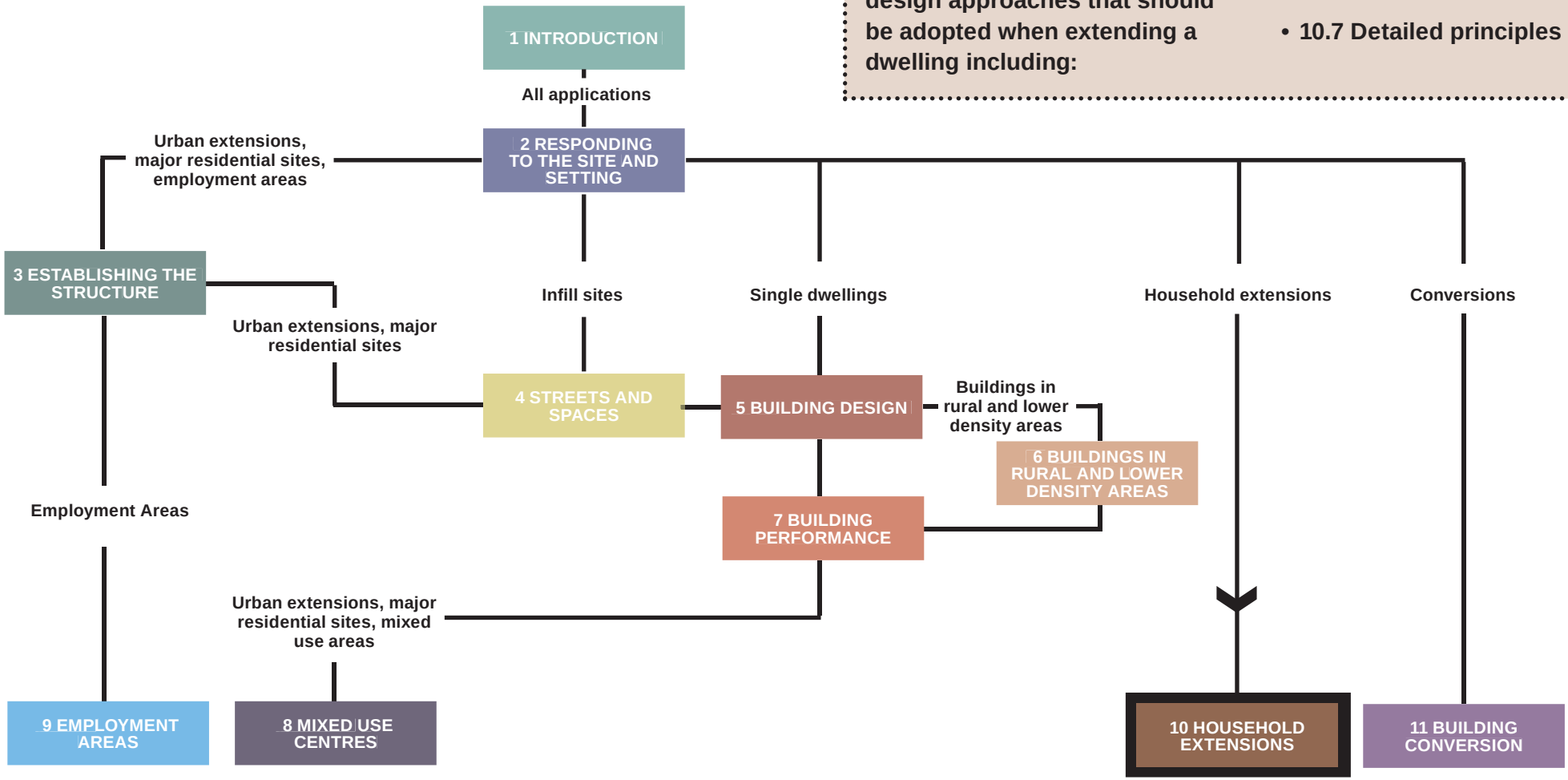


Fig 10.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

10 Household extensions
Planning and designations

Fig 10.2: Modern extension used to link two buildings

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

10.1 Planning

10.1.1 Some smaller-scale extensions may constitute 'permitted development' which means they do not need planning permission. The council's Planning Service can advise on whether planning permission is required through the permitted development enquiry form (click here) or alternatively, the Planning Portal website provides an interactive section. (www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/100806_PDforhouseholders_TechnicalGuidance.pdf)

10.1.2 If planning permission is required the council has a validation checklist for householders (click here) to help people in preparing applications and ensure all necessary information is included.

10.1.3 Building Regulations approval may also be required for any extensions or alterations to a dwelling. Advice on Building Regulations can be provided by the council's Building Control Service.

10.2 Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other designations

10.2.1 If through assessment in Section 2 a building has been identified as being Statutorily Listed or is located within a Conservation Area or AONB, some forms of development or alteration that would otherwise be classed as permitted development will require planning permission, Listed Building consent or combinations of these. You may need to submit a Design and Access Statement for applications for Listed Building consent and for planning applications in Conservation Areas.

10.2.2 More information can be found on the Council's website (www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building).

10.2.3 Extensions to historic buildings can be harmful if their significance is not fully understood. Further advice on alterations to your property can be requested through pre-application advice. Click here for further details.

10.2.4 As outlined in Section 2, the guidance in this Design Guide does not override consideration of proposals through an application for Listed Building consent.

10 Household extensions
Local character and neighbours

10.3 Responding to the local character

10.3.1 The importance of responding to the setting is identified in Section 2 and applicants should now have an understanding of how the existing building contributes to its surroundings and the local character.

10.4 Consider your neighbours

10.4.1 When considering extending or altering a dwelling applicants should consider its impact on neighbouring properties. Consider size, how close it will be to them, overlooking and privacy. Think about how you would feel if they built the same thing.

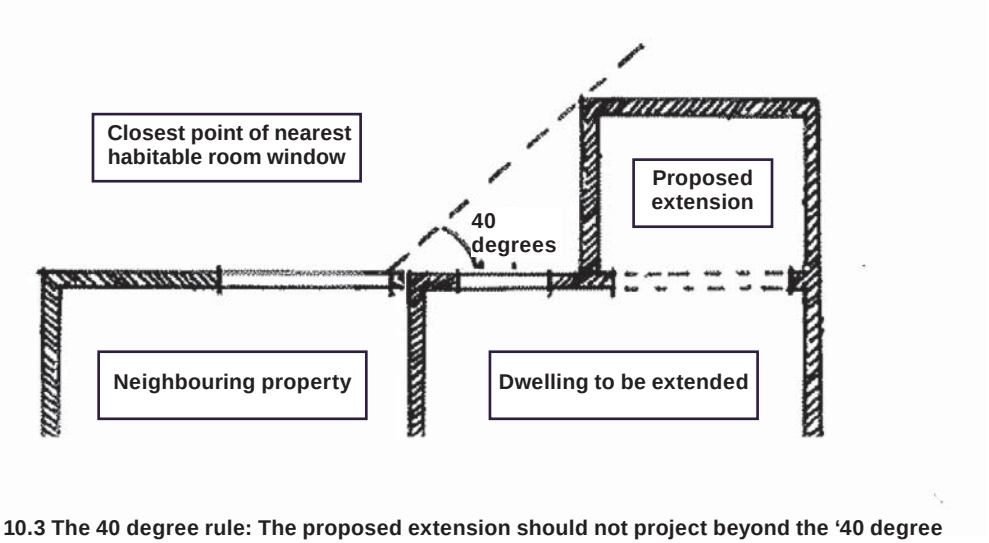


Fig 10.3 The 40 degree rule: The proposed extension should not project beyond the '40 degree line' (indicated by the dashed line) into the neighbours protected area

Principle DG103: Responding to local character

Respond to the character of the area and immediate neighbourhood within which your property is located.

Use this character as a starting point for design in terms of building form, size, position within the plot and relationship to plot boundaries.

Maintain established building lines.

Use simple uncomplicated building forms.

Use building materials and details typical of your area or demonstrate how the materials chosen are appropriate.

Principle DG104: Consider your neighbours

Make sure proposed extensions do not intrude upon a neighbour's privacy.

All extensions should take into account the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing. Consider the position, size and form of the extension in relation to adjacent properties and the path of the sun.

Any extension to a house should not lead to an oppressive or overbearing impact, which would be harmful to the amenity of occupiers of nearby neighbouring dwellings.

In particular, two storey extensions should not encroach beyond a 40 degree line taken from the edge of the nearest ground or first floor window of a habitable room of a neighbouring property

Any side facing upper floor windows to habitable rooms (e.g. bedrooms) need to be carefully located and/or designed to ensure they do not cause overlooking problems for neighbouring properties.

A minimum distance of 12m is recommended between habitable windows and flank walls.

Carefully consider the position of new garages to avoid an increase in noise and disturbance from vehicle movements.

Fig 10.4 The 40 degree rule: The proposed extension should not project beyond the '40 degree line' (indicated by the dashed line) into the neighbours protected area

10 Household extensions
Scale form and massing

Fig 10.5: Extension at East Hanney

10.5 Scale, form and massing

10.5.1 The scale form and massing of an extension and how the extension relates to the original dwelling and its amenity space is a critical consideration. Applicants should keep the form and scale of the extension proportionate to the house and plot. Extensions on dwellings that have been extended previously over time and/or proposed extensions which are considered 'over development' will not be accepted.

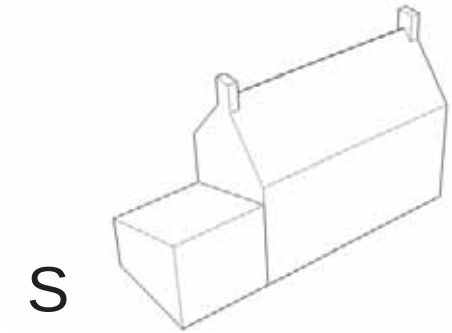


Fig 10.6 The scale and massing of the extension bares no relationship to the existing dwelling

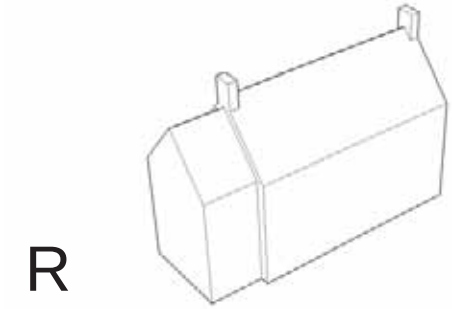


Fig 10.7 The extension has an appropriate scale and massing in relation to the original dwelling

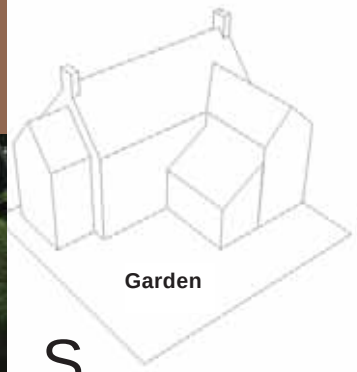


Fig 10.8 Multiple extensions over time can have a compound impact and overwhelm the original dwelling

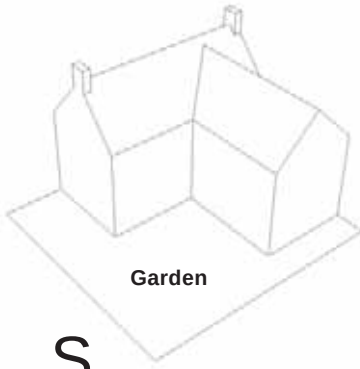


Fig 10.9 The size of the extension overwhelms the original dwelling and also results in a significant loss of private amenity

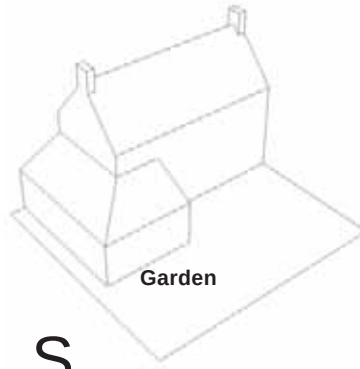


Fig 10.10 Extensions that wrap around the existing dwelling should be avoided

Principle DG105: Scale, form and massing

Extensions should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling.

The original building should remain the dominant element of the property whether you have one extension or several. The effect of any extension should not overwhelm the house from any given view point.

Any existing external access from the front of the dwelling to the rear garden is a significant asset to service the garden consideration should be given to the value of retaining this access.

Extensions should use simple, uncomplicated building forms to compliment and co-ordinate with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling

Applicants should avoid proposals that wrap around the existing dwelling and involve complicated roof forms. This is likely to result in a bulky appearance.

The pitch and form of roof used on a dwelling adds to its character and extensions should respond to this where appropriate.

10 Household extensions
Design considerations

Fig 10.11: A successful, simple rear extension

Fig 10.14 Successful extensions can be designed to reflect the architectural style of the existing building

Fig 10.15 Successful extensions can be designed as modern interventions with contrasting style from the existing dwelling

10.6 Design considerations

10.6.1 There are generally two design approaches that can be adopted when considering extending a property.

10.6.2 The first is to consider the materials, architectural features, window sizes and proportions of the existing building and to recreate this style to design an extension that matches or complements the existing building.

10.6.3 The second is to consider the proportion, materials, architectural features and window sizes of the existing building and to develop a contemporary response to those by taking cues from the key aspects. This approach requires a high quality design.

10.6.4 Both options can create successful, well designed extensions that can be mutually beneficial to both the house and the wider area.

Fig 10.12 Side extension subservient to original dwelling with sympathetic window detail

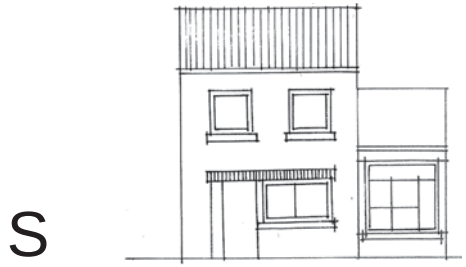


Fig 10.13 Side extension with unsympathetic window detail

Principle DG106: Design considerations

Extensions should respond to the design of the original dwelling and applicants should demonstrate how the Character Study from Section 2 has informed the design proposal.

Applicants that do not use materials to match those of the existing dwelling should demonstrate the appropriateness of the alternatives proposed.

Owners of listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas should also make use of the statutory list, conservation area character appraisals or any other assessment of the building's significance when considering an extension so that their design sustains or enhances the features that contribute to its significance or better reveals them.

The position, size, proportion, height and style of new windows and doors and the ratio of solid wall to openings all help to define the character of a dwelling. It is important, therefore, that the extension responds to the existing pattern of window and door openings.

10 Household extensions
Detailed principles

Fig 10.16: Front extensions can often detract from the appearance of the dwelling

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Fig 10.17 Canopies were integrated very successfully in historic dwellings

Fig 10.18 Front extensions can often detract from the continuity of the building frontage

10.7 Detailed principles

Front extensions

10.7.1 Front extensions can often detract from the continuity of the street scene and damage the appearance of a dwelling.

Principle DG107: Front extensions

Front extensions will be resisted where they have a significant impact on the street scene or are damaging to the appearance of a dwelling.

Modest front extensions that reflect the character of the existing property are more likely to be acceptable.

When located close to a neighbouring property, front extensions should not normally project more than 1.4 metres in front of the dwelling.

Front extensions are more likely to be acceptable where the building line is staggered or where the dwelling is set well back from the road.

They should normally be designed with a pitched roof.

Porches and canopies

10.7.2 Porches and canopies implemented as extensions can often appear as 'bolt-on' and incongruous to the original dwelling. These structures are not appropriate for all dwellings. For example, simple terraced properties can appear over-dominated by the addition of a porch. In such cases, an internal porch may be a more appropriate solution.

10.7.3 Where porches and canopies are deemed acceptable they should reflect the character of the original dwelling in terms of their scale, details and materials.

Principle DG108: Porches and canopies

Canopies and porches will be resisted where they have a significant impact on the street scene or are damaging to the appearance of a dwelling.

Where they are located close to a neighbouring property, they should not normally project more than 1.4 metres in front of the dwelling.

10 Household extensions
Detailed principles

Fig 10.19 Successful two storey extension complements the original dwelling

Side extensions

10.7.4 Side extensions should normally be set back from the front of the house to retain the proportions of the original building and reduce the visual impact of the join between existing and new. This can be particularly important on symmetrical properties or identical semi-detached properties.

10.7.5 In built-up areas, the gaps between dwellings can often be small. Cumulatively, these gaps can make an important contribution to the character of an area. Extending at two storeys to the side of a detached or semi-detached dwelling can result in development right up to the site boundary, resulting in an inappropriate 'terracing effect'.

10.7.6 The problem can be exacerbated where an extension has the same roofline as the original building and where a neighbouring property already lies on, or close to, the boundary.

10.7.7 To reduce such a 'terracing effect', it is desirable to maintain a gap between the extension and the site boundary and for the extension to have a lower ridge height than the main building. The extent of the gap should be determined by the pattern of development in the area but, in general, it should not be less than 1 metre wide.

10.7.8 An alternative way of avoiding a terracing effect is to set the first floor element of the extension back from the front elevation – it should be set back at least one third of the depth of the dwelling.

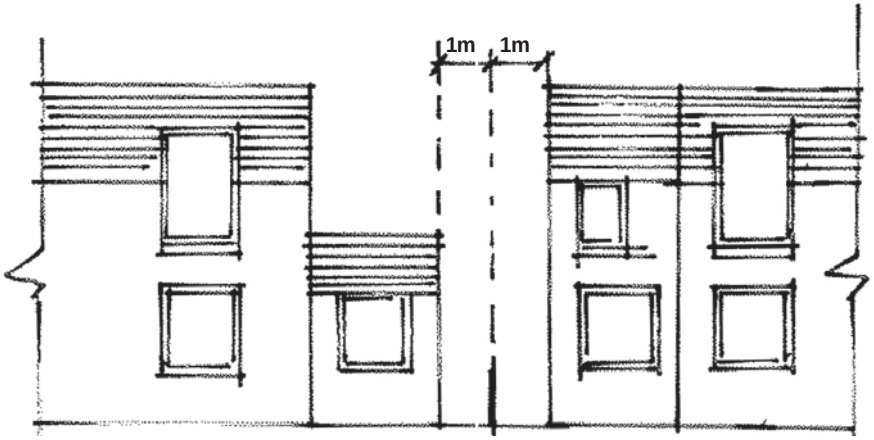


Fig 10.20 A minimum of 1 metre must normally be retained between the new side wall of the extension and the boundary of the site to prevent a terracing effect

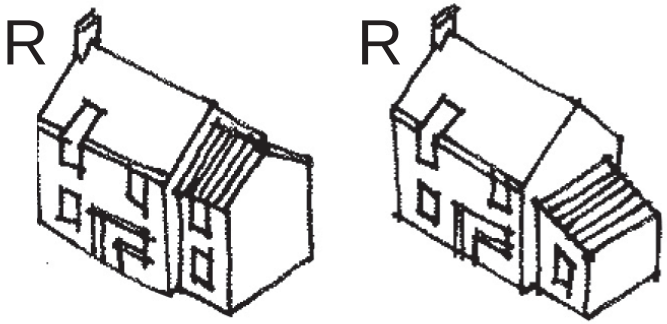


Fig 10.21 Extensions subservient to original dwelling with sympathetic roof and window details

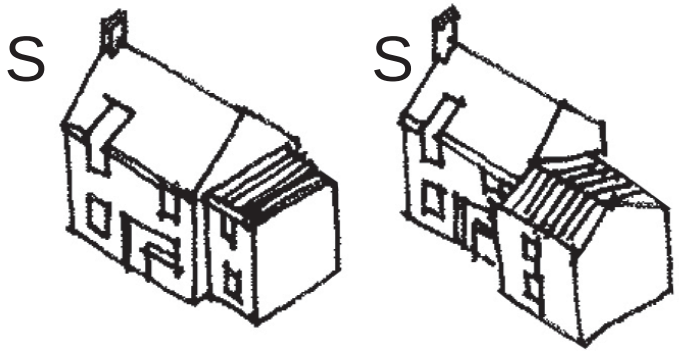


Fig 10.22 Flat roof on extension (left) does not sit well with the original ridged roof. Extension (right) is not subservient to, nor seamless with, the original dwelling. The extension also projects forward of the established building line

10 Household extensions
Detailed principles

10.7.9 Where the original building has a pitched roof, two storey extensions should generally be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof. Single storey side extensions will have a lesser impact on the appearance of a dwelling than two-storey extensions.

10.7.10 A flat roof may be acceptable for a single storey extension, provided it is carefully designed – e.g. including a parapet wall with a coping stone on top.

Fig 10.23 Successful single storey extension

Principle DG109: Side extensions

Side extensions should generally be set back from the front of the house.

Extensions that close an important gap within the street scene or lead to a terracing effect will not be accepted.

Two storey extensions should generally be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof.

The design of all side extensions should take into account the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, overshadowing and over dominance.

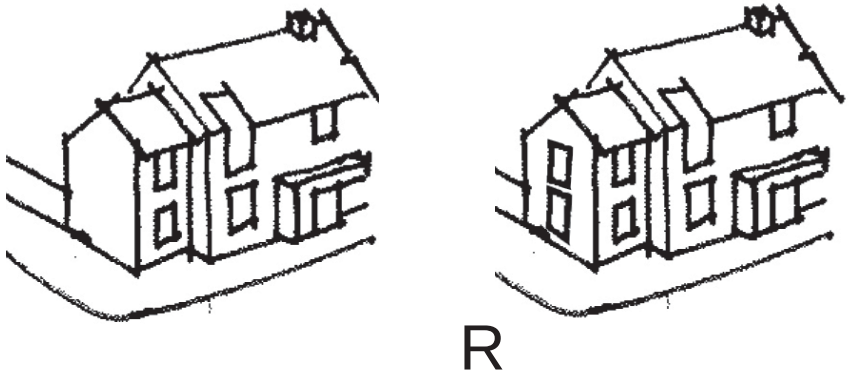


Fig 10.24 Extensions where side elevations face the street should incorporate windows to provide passive surveillance

Fig 10.25 Successful two-storey extension subordinate to the principle dwelling

10 Household extensions
Detailed principles

Fig 10.26 Rear extensions which are not visible from the street and do not negatively impact on neighbouring properties can be expressed in many forms, including the use of contemporary architecture and materials

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

Rear extensions

10.7.11 The design of all rear extensions should take into account the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, overshadowing and overdominance.

10.7.12 A general rule is that any two-storey element should not encroach beyond a 40 degree line taken from the edge of the nearest ground and first floor window of a habitable room of a neighbouring property.

10.7.13 The length of single storey rear extension should not normally exceed 6 metres on a detached dwelling, 4 metres on a semi-detached dwelling, and 3 metres on a terraced dwelling.

10.7.14 Extending terraced and semi-detached dwellings represents the most significant challenge in terms of potential loss of residential amenity due to the close proximity of neighbouring properties. Problems can be mitigated by limiting the scale of the proposed extension and applying the 40 degree rule (refer to Figures 10.3 and 10.4). Single storey extensions are easier to accommodate successfully. An alternative solution is for neighbours of adjoining properties to work together to extend both dwellings concurrently.

10.7.15 Where the original building has a pitched roof, two storey extensions should generally be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof.

10.7.16 Single storey rear extensions and conservatories often do not need planning permission as they can be built under 'permitted development' rights. The council's Planning Service can advise on whether planning permission is required through the permitted development enquiry form (click here) or alternatively, the Planning Portal website provides an interactive section. http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/application-advice/do-i-need-planning-permission-0

Principle DG110: Rear extensions

Rear extensions should not have a harmful effect on neghbouring properties in terms of privacy, overshadowing or overbearing.

An adequate distance between facing habitable rooms helps enable people to feel comfortable in their own homes (refer to Sec 5.10)

They should not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwellings usable amenity space.

Applicants should apply the 40 degree rule as set out in section 10.4.

Rear extensions which are not visible from the street and do not negatively impact on neighbouring properties can be expressed in many forms, including through the use of contemporary architecture.

10 Household extensions
Detailed principles

Fig 10.27 Dormers successfully integrated into the roof to provide additional space

Loft conversion and roof extension

10.7.17 A loft conversion is a space efficient means of extending the amount of living accommodation in a dwelling. The most significant challenge associated with loft extensions is how to introduce roof lights and/or dormers that are appropriate to the character of the original building.

10.7.18 Dormer windows should be designed as features principally to provide light and ventilation. They should be small and should sit appropriately in the roof-slope, well above the eaves line, well below the ridge line and set in from the gable ends.

10.7.19 Two or three smaller dormers are often more successful than a single large dormer. Flat roof or pitched roof dormers can be successfully integrated into the majority of building designs. However, the choice of design should be informed by the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

10.7.20 An alternative means of providing light and ventilation to a loft conversion is by introducing roof lights or windows into gable walls. Where possible, roof lights should be included on rear elevations where they are less likely to be visible in the street scene. In sensitive locations such as on Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas, 'conservation type' roof lights should be used.

Fig 10.28 If dormer roof extensions are acceptable in their context, the position and proportion of dormer windows should respond to existing windows

Principle DG111: Loft conversions and roof extensions

As a general rule extensions that alter the existing ridge of the roof or significantly alter the roof profile will not be accepted

Dormer roof extensions should be set within the roof slope.

Where a clear rhythm of fenestration is established the position and proportion of dormer windows should respond to existing windows and/or doors.

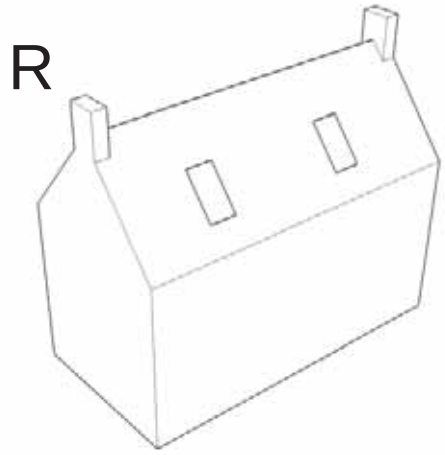


Fig 10.29 Loft conversion incorporating rooflights

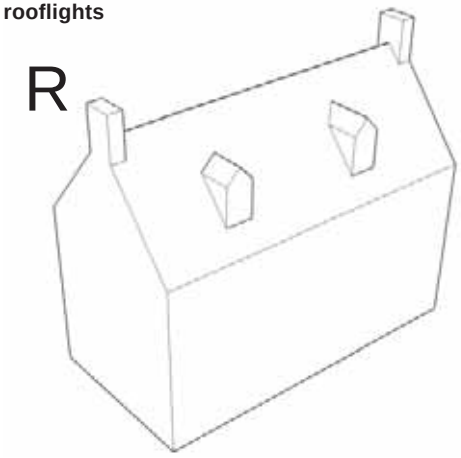


Fig 10.30 Loft conversion incorporating dormers

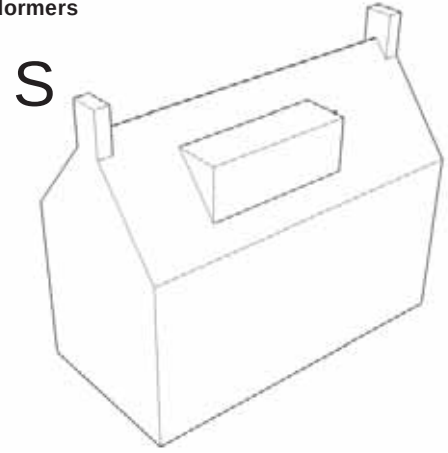


Fig 10.31 large flat roofed single dormer out of scale with the original dwelling

10 Household extensions
Detailed principles

Fig 10.32 Outbuildings are challenging to design particularly those within view of the public realm

Self contained annexes

10.7.21 Residential annexes generally provide self-contained accommodation and offer a degree of separation from the main dwelling. However, they usually need to be linked to the main dwelling, both physically and in terms of the inter-dependence of the use of the annex and the main dwelling.

10.7.22 Residential annexes should be designed in accordance with the advice for other residential extensions. In addition, they should share the front door and entrance hall of the main dwelling, and they should be designed to be capable of being incorporated into the main dwelling at a later date.

Outbuildings and garages

10.7.23 The design principles set out above should be applied when considering new outbuildings or garages.

10.7.24 The size and scale of any outbuilding should not compete with the main dwelling.

10.7.25 The original building should remain the dominant element of the property whether you have one extension or several. The effect of any outbuilding should not overwhelm the house from any given view point.

10.7.26 They should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling.

10.7.27 A single garage should be able to accommodate a car, storage and sufficient space for bicycles, with an internal floor area of 3 metres x 6 metres.

Fig 10.33 Outbuilding is a dominant feature with the use of contrasting material making the structure stand out

Fig 10.34 Garage structure too large for the dwelling

Fig 10.35 Garage obscures dwelling from the street

Fig 10.36 Garage structure too large for the dwelling

Fig 10.37 Outbuilding dominates and compromises the external space

Fig 10.38 Garage structure obscures dwelling

10 Household extensions
SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to the design of a **household extension** as part of an application.

PROCESS: Have you read, understood and applied the principles set our above?

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

SUMMARY: Applicants should now have a proposal which has responded positively to its setting and demonstrates how the proposal has been informed by its context. It should now conform to the principles set out above in Section 10.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG102: Responding to local character	Has the applicant demonstrated how the proposal responds to and respects the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood?	
DG103: Consider your neighbours	Has the applicant considered and demonstrated that the proposal does not have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to overshadowing, privacy or an oppressive or overbearing impact?	
	Does the proposal comply with the 40 degree rule?	
DG104 / DG105 and DG 106: Scale, form and massing	Is the extension a simple, uncomplicated building form that compliments and coordinates with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling? The original building should remain the dominant element of the property.	
	Is the roof form appropriate to the original dwelling? Generally this should be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof.	
DG105: Design considerations	Do the materials proposed match those of the existing dwelling or has the applicant demonstrated the appropriateness of the alternatives proposed?	
	Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?	
DG108: Side extensions	Is the side extension set back from the front of the house? If not has the reason been justified?	
	Does the side extension retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid creating a 'terracing effect'?	
DG109: Rear extensions	Does the rear extension ~~have no~~ detrimental impact on the existing dwellings usable amenity space?	
DG110: Loft conversions and roof extensions	Are any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?	
	Does the position and proportion of dormer windows respond to the location of existing windows and/or doors?	

11 Building conversions

There are many buildings throughout the Vale within settlements and in the countryside that are no longer used or are vacant. These buildings include farm buildings, factories, chapels, schools and mills. The re-use of existing buildings within the Vale is a key objective in terms of preserving their contribution to settlements and the countryside but also in sustainability terms. The embodied energy in a buildings fabric is considerable i.e it takes a lot of energy to demolish and rebuild existing buildings.

With this in mind the council seeks to encourage the re-use of buildings wherever possible particularly when the building makes a positive contribution to the character of an area. Their conversion and re-use however must be done with great care in order to ensure that the essential character of the original building is not lost or that the contribution the building makes to the wider area is not compromised.

This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when converting a range of existing building types. It should be noted that conversion to residential use is not always the most appropriate solution, particularly where the building is listed or is situated in an isolated location in the open countryside.

Compliance with building regulations is also a key consideration for any building conversion and may require significant alterations to the original building. In these cases the council may consider the conversion of the building as not appropriate or acceptable.

11 Building conversions
Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document.

Before you proceed have you read through Section 2 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to Section 2.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 11: This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when extending a dwelling including:

- **11.1 Agricultural buildings**
- **11.2 The conversions of chapels, schools and churches**
- **11.3 Conversion of commercial buildings**
- **11.4 Refurbishments**

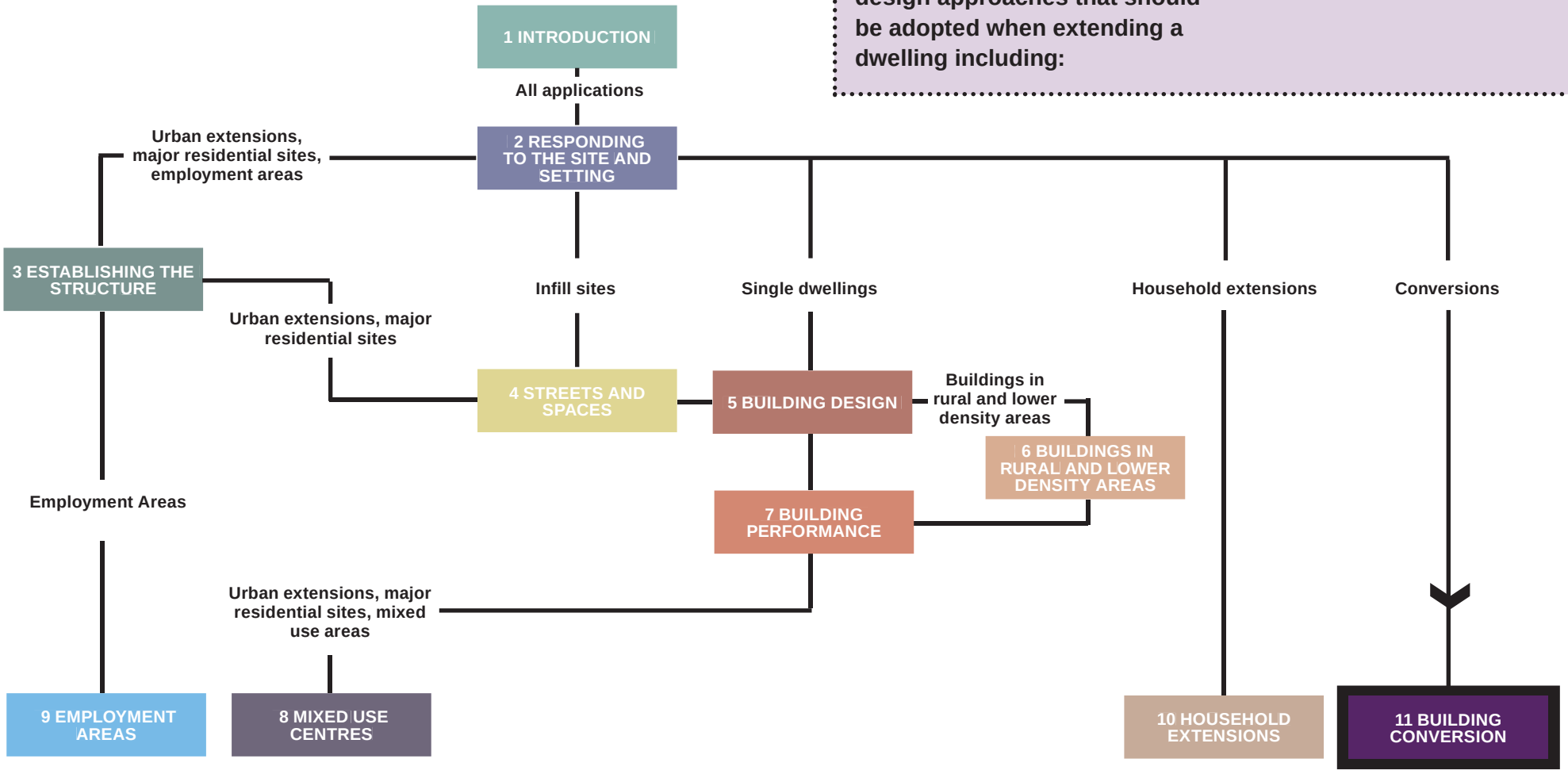


Fig 11.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

11 Building conversions
Agricultural buildings

Fig 11.2: Example of unconverted agricultural building

11.1 Agricultural buildings

11.1.1 The conversion of traditional agricultural buildings such as barns, stables and cartsheds is the most common form of conversion in the Vale.

11.1.2 Continuation of the original agricultural use is usually most appropriate to preserve the character and appearance of such buildings. However, if a building is no longer needed or suitable for modern agricultural purposes, its disuse can result in the building falling into disrepair. Conversion to an alternative use is a successful way of securing the future of such traditional agricultural buildings.

11.1.3 This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when converting agricultural buildings to other uses. It should be noted that residential conversions are not always the most appropriate solution, particularly where the building is listed or is situated in an isolated location in the open countryside. Non-residential uses may be easier to accommodate.

Structural integrity

11.1.4 Many agricultural buildings will have been unused for extended periods of time or they may not have been well maintained – consequently, their structure may have suffered. The structural integrity of a building will be a critical factor in determining whether it is capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension.

Fig 11.3 Successful barn conversion

11.1.5 If substantial rebuilding or extension is required, it is unlikely that planning permission will be granted as the proposed works would no longer constitute a conversion.

Architectural and historic characteristics

11.1.6 The importance of an agricultural building to the history, character and appearance of an area can be assessed with reference to its age, design, form, materials used, roof structure and the presence of any architectural detailing.

11.1.7 The form of traditional agricultural buildings typically comprises substantial stone, brick or timberframe walls, uninterrupted roof slopes, long ridge lines, few openings apart from the large wagon doors, substantial timber roof structures, and large internal spaces.

Fig 11.4 Traditional courtyard arrangement

11.1.8 Architectural detailing may include patterned brickwork, dentil courses, buttresses, arrow slits and gable parapets.

11.1.9 These features are essential to the building's character and, therefore, need to be retained as part of the proposed conversion.

11.1.10 Agricultural buildings typically have an informal farmyard or open field setting. The proposed conversion should respect the building's setting, either as part of a group of traditional buildings or as part of the surrounding landscape.

Fig 11.5 Glass roof tiles and small high level windows allow light to penetrate the building

11 Building conversions
Agricultural buildings

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness
Policy 39 The historic environment

Design approach

11.1.11 The primary objective of all conversions must be to retain the character and appearance of the original building. This may require compromises in terms of the residential layout and the provision of natural light into all habitable rooms.

11.1.12 The introduction of conspicuous domestic features such as chimneys, satellite dishes, aerials, porches and additional window or door openings tend to be out of character with the original building and, wherever possible, such features should be avoided. Natural light can be provided by introducing glass roof tiles, glass insertions into honeycomb brickwork and slit windows. Existing openings in elevations can be used for windows or doors, and to 'borrow' light into the more central parts of the building. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.

11.1.13 Internal walls should be retained where ever practically possible and the introduction of additional walls kept to a minimum. Timber roof trusses should be retained and not cut or removed to provide head height at first floor level.

11.1.14 Proportionately large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character. Residential type features such as conservatories should be avoided. Wherever possible, existing ancillary buildings such as car-sheds should be used as garaging to avoid the need for new buildings. Conversions should not subdivide historic farmyards.

11.1.15 Landscaping and boundary treatments need careful attention and should be designed to be as simple as possible. Hard and soft landscaping should be kept informal, and walls, fences, kerbing and any other urban features should be avoided where they would harm the building's agricultural character or farmyard setting.

Fig 11.6 Existing hay doors retained and contributes significantly to the character of the barn

Fig 11.7 Successful retention of existing openings

Fig 11.8 Domestic style porch and projecting roof lights detract from the barns character

Principle DG112: Agricultural buildings

A structural report will need to be submitted with any planning application to demonstrate that the building is capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension.

If substantial rebuilding or extension is required, it is unlikely that planning permission will be granted as the proposed works would no longer constitute a conversion.

The conversion must retain the character and appearance of the original building. This should be established through the applicants Character Study (Section 02).

The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.

Existing opening in elevations should be used for windows and doors. New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings.

A simple window design is usually most appropriate.

Extensions or ancillary buildings that dominate the original building will not be accepted

Landscaping, boundary treatments and access roads should be simple, informal and reflect the agricultural character of a farmyard setting.

11 Building conversions
Chapels, schools and churches

Fig 11.9: Example of successful conversion retaining original porch

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness
Policy 39 The historic environment

Fig 11.10: Internal floor division is visible through window

Fig 11.11 Unsuccessful removal of original entrance

Fig 11.12 Successful retention of feature windows

11.2 The conversion of chapels, schools and churches

11.2.1 This is less common in the Vale than barn conversions. Similar to barn conversions, the design challenges associated with the conversion of these buildings often relate to the creation of room and floor divisions in buildings which originally comprised large internal spaces.

Architectural and historic characteristics

11.2.2 The defining characteristics of chapels, schools and churches are often similar, comprising formal proportions and a simple rectangular footprint, tall sash windows, brick or stone arches, uninterrupted roof slopes, long ridge lines, and large internal spaces, sometimes with mezzanine floors. Architectural detailing may include stained glass windows, ornate timberwork and plasterwork on walls and ceilings, and ecclesiastical memorials. These features are essential to the building's character and, therefore, need to be retained as part of the proposed conversion.

11.2.3 Chapels, schools and churches are typically located in central village locations. The buildings rarely include much external space, which can present a challenge for residential conversion in terms of providing amenity space and minimising any overlooking of neighbouring dwellings.

11 Building conversions
Chapels, schools and churches

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness
Policy 39 The historic environment

Design approach

11.2.4 The primary objective of all conversions is to retain the character and appearance of the original building. This may require compromises in terms of the residential layout and the provision of natural light into all habitable rooms.

11.2.5 The introduction of conspicuous domestic features such as satellite dishes, aerials, and dormer windows tend to be out of character with the original building and, wherever possible, such features should be avoided. If additional light is required, it may be appropriate to introduce glass roof tiles or appropriately designed rooflights (i.e. conservation rooflights which are designed to be flush with the roof plane).

11.2.6 The internal wall divisions should be retained wherever possible and the introduction of additional walls or floors should be kept to a minimum. Existing window openings and window detailing, such as stained glass, should be retained and refurbished.

11.2.7 Where additional floors are introduced, they should not cut across tall windows in such a way as to be visible from outside the building.

11.2.8 Large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character.

11.2.9 Any existing ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible, and the inclusion of additional detailing which would detract from the character of the building should be avoided.

11.2.10 Landscaping and boundary treatments should be designed to be as simple as possible.

11.2.11 Paint colours and finishes should be chosen to reflect the character and appearance of the building.

Fig 11.13 Successful retention of original porch

Fig 11.14 Small rooflight allows light to upper floor

Principle DG113: The conversion of chapels, schools and churches

The conversion must retain the character and appearance of the original building. This should be established through the applicants Character Study (Section 02).

The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.

Existing opening in elevations should be used for windows and doors.

A simple window design is usually most appropriate.

New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings.

Where additional floors are introduced, they should not cut across tall windows.

Large extensions or ancillary buildings that dominate the original building will not be accepted.

Existing ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible.

Landscaping and boundary treatments should be designed to be as simple as possible.

11 Building conversions
Commercial buildings

Fig 11.15:Industrial character retained in conversion

11.3 Conversion of commercial buildings

11.3.1 A variety of commercial buildings have played a significant role in the history of the Vale, including mills, shops, pubs and breweries. The design challenges associated with the conversion of these buildings can vary significantly and can be particularly difficult for buildings such as mills and breweries which have large internal spaces and tall ceiling heights.

11.3.2 These larger buildings are often converted into self-contained flats which have additional amenity, parking and storage requirements that should be considered at the outset of the design process. Applicants should refer to Section 5.15 for guidance on these requirements

11.3.3 Where a property is being converted to flats, the development should, where possible, be contained within the existing building envelope. If extensions are necessary, for example to accommodate a lift or to meet building regulations, proposals need to be carefully designed

Architectural and historic characteristics

11.3.4 Whilst pubs and shops usually have a domestic scale and design, industrial buildings such as mills and breweries are usually much larger, with a more formal architectural composition.

11.3.5 The defining characteristics of these industrial buildings include formal proportions usually in a rectangular plan, and large windows (i.e. plate glass in iron frames with top-hinged openings, small pane timber sash windows or Crittall Windows).

11.3.6 Roof forms tend to be relatively simple, but where buildings have large floor plans, the space may have been spanned by a multi-ridged roof with a central light atrium. Architectural detailing may include arched brick window and door openings, ornate brickwork and iron fittings on external elevations, and internal iron rafters and structural braces. These features are part of the history and character of the building and, therefore, should be retained as part of the conversion.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness
Policy 39 The historic environment

Fig 11.16: Successful conversion with retention of many of the industrial features.

Fig 11.17 Ornate brickwork adds character to historic building

Fig 11.18 Original features and openings retained

11 Building conversions
Commercial buildings

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness
Policy 39 The historic environment

Design approach

11.3.7 The primary objective of all conversions is to retain the character and appearance of the original building. Consequently, conversion schemes need to be carefully designed.

11.3.8 The introduction of uncharacteristic features such as satellite dishes, aerials, and dormer windows should be avoided. If additional light is required it may be appropriate to introduce glass roof tiles or appropriately designed rooflights.

11.3.9 The internal walls should be retained and the introduction of additional walls or floors should be kept to a minimum. Existing window openings and detailing should be retained. Where additional floors or mezzanines are introduced, they should not be visible through windows.

11.3.10 Large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character. Wherever possible, existing ancillary buildings such as storage sheds should be used as garaging to avoid the need for new buildings.

11.3.11 Existing commercial or industrial fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible. Original features such as internal metalwork can make a positive contribution to the final scheme. The introduction of additional detailing, which would detract from the character of the building should be avoided.

11.3.12 Landscaping and boundary treatments need careful attention and should be designed to be as simple as possible. Walls and fences should be avoided where they would harm the building's character or setting.

11.3.13 Paint colours and finishes should be chosen to reflect the character and appearance of the building.

Fig 11.19 Atrium used to allow light to upper floors

Fig 11.20 Simple landscaping softens industrial buildings

Principle DG114: The conversion of commercial buildings

The conversion must retain the character and appearance of the original building. This should be established through the applicants Character Study (Section 02).

The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.

Existing opening in elevations should be used for windows and doors.

A simple window design is usually most appropriate.

New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings.

Where additional floors are introduced, they should not cut across tall windows.

Large extensions or ancillary buildings that dominate the original building will not be accepted.

Existing commercial or industrial fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible.

Landscaping and boundary treatments should be designed to be as simple as possible and in keeping with the industrial aesthetic.

Commercial buildings converted to flats should comply with the principles set out in Section 5.15.

11 Building conversions
Refurbishment

Fig 11.21: Refurbishment of thatched dwelling

11.4 Refurbishment

11.4.1 The Vale is fortunate to have a rich architectural heritage, with over 2,000 listed buildings (ranging from large country houses to modest cottages), 8 Historic Parks and Gardens and 52 Conservation Areas. Collectively, these contribute to the distinctiveness of the District and represent a valuable architectural, historical and economic resource.

11.4.2 The architectural heritage of the Vale should be safeguarded for future generations to enjoy. This does not mean, however, that all buildings need to be preserved unchanged. Instead, their sympathetic refurbishment, alteration and adaptation will be encouraged to prevent possible disuse and decay.

11.4.3 Where a building is listed, consent will be required for any external or internal alterations which affect its special interest. Whilst all proposals are considered on their merits, certain works to Listed Buildings are unlikely to be acceptable in principle. Examples include installing UPVC windows, re-pointing walls in cement-rich mortars, removing original features such as fireplaces and staircases, painting exteriors in inappropriate colours, installing satellite dishes or other domestic paraphernalia on prominent elevations, and adding poorly designed extensions.

11.4.4 This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when refurbishing buildings.

Structural integrity

11.4.5 As with conversions, building restorations and renovations can encounter structural problems. Where there is any uncertainty about the impact proposed works would have on the structural integrity of a building, a structural report will need to be prepared.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness
Policy 39 The historic environment

Fig 11.22: UPV windows should be avoided when refurbishing historic properties

Fig 11.23 Windows and doors should be refurbished to complement the character of the building

Fig 11.24 Successful refurbishment retaining historic features

11 Building conversions
Refurbishment

Design Approach

11.4.6 The primary objective of all refurbishments is to retain the character and appearance of the original building. Consequently, conversion schemes need to be carefully designed.
The approach, however, may differ depending on the design and location of the building. For example, the post-war building boom resulted in many houses being built which are of neither good traditional or modern design. If refurbishment is being considered, then the opportunity should be taken to improve the appearance of such dwellings.

11.4.7 In more historic buildings, it is important to retain any features which contribute to the architectural character of the building. In the past, architectural features have often been removed and replaced in the mistaken belief that they cannot be repaired. Stripping the historic fabric should always be avoided and, wherever possible, architectural features should be retained and repaired

11.4.8 A key consideration in all refurbishments, but particularly for refurbishments of historic buildings, is the compatibility of modern building methods and materials. For example, historic buildings with solid wall construction are not compatible with modern cavity wall construction, as solid walls are designed to absorb moisture whereas cavity walls are designed to keep moisture out. Similarly, it is rarely successful to retrofit buildings with damp proof courses and concrete floors as these can restrict moisture movement and prematurely decay the building's fabric.

11.4.9 The choice of materials should be compatible with the building – for example, on historic buildings, lime mortar should be used on solid wall construction instead of modern cement as it allows the wall to breath. External paints should also be breathable, which will be compatible with the building and will help prevent peeling and cracking.

11.4.10 Where a refurbishment proposal includes an extension, reference should be made to the advice set out in Section 10.

11.4.11 The design of any extension should be appropriate to the scale, layout and design of the original building. In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate to design a light-weight modern extension rather than copy the style of the original building. Wherever possible, inappropriate modern additions should be removed as part of any refurbishment.

Principle DG115: Refurbishment

As with conversions, building restorations and renovations can encounter structural problems. Where there is any uncertainty about the impact proposed works would have on the structural integrity of a building, a structural report will need to be prepared.

The refurbishment must retain the character and appearance of the original building. This should be established through the applicants Character Study (Section 02).

In more historic buildings features which contribute to its character should be retained.

Consider the compatibility of modern building methods and materials.

Where a refurbishment proposal includes an extension, reference should be made to the advice set out in Section 10.

11 Building conversions
SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to the design of a **building conversion** as part of an application.

PROCESS: Have you read, understood and applied the principles set our above?

PROCESS: The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

SUMMARY: Applicants should now have a proposal which has responded positively to its setting and demonstrates how the proposal has been informed by its context. It should now conform to the principles set out above in Section 11.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG111: Agricultural buildings	Has a structural report been submitted with any planning application to demonstrate that the building is capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension? If substantial rebuilding or extension is required, it is unlikely that planning permission will be granted as the proposed works would no longer constitute a conversion.	
	Does the conversion retain the character and appearance of the original building as established in the Character Study? The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.	
	Has the conversion used the existing openings in elevations for windows and doors. New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.	
	Does the landscaping, boundary treatments and access roads reflect the agricultural character of a farmyard setting?	
DG112: The conversion of chapels, schools and churches	Does the conversion retain the character and appearance of the original building as established in the Character Study? The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.	
	Has the conversion used the existing openings in elevations for windows and doors? New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.	
	If additional floors are introduced, do they avoid cutting across tall windows?	
	Are existing ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings retained wherever possible?	
	Is landscaping and boundary treatments designed in a simple manner that does not detract from the building?	
DG113: The conversion of commercial buildings	Does the conversion retain the character and appearance of the original building as established in the Character Study? The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.	
	Has the conversion used the existing openings in elevations for windows and doors. New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.	
	Are existing commercial or industrial fixtures and fittings retained wherever possible?	
	Is the landscaping and boundary treatment designed in a simple manner and in keeping with the industrial aesthetic?	
	Do commercial buildings converted to flats comply with the principles set out in Section 5.15?	
DG114: Refurbishment	If required has a structural report been submitted with any planning application to demonstrate that the building is capable of refurbishment without substantial rebuilding or extension?	
	Does the refurbishment retain the character and appearance of the original building as established in the Character Study?	

A

Biodiversity and planning

A Biodiversity and planning

A.1 Introduction

A.1.1 Biodiversity simply describes all living things – the variety of life on earth – all plants, animals and the places that they live. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity is a key indicator and component of sustainable development. In the design guide biodiversity is used to describe important habitats and species which may be affected by, or could be enhanced by development activity.

A.1.2 The aim of this appendix is to provide basic guidance on what the Council expects in relation to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity related to development proposals. It should give applicants and developers greater certainty and avoid delays in processing planning applications. Information on providing biodiversity enhancements and designing wildlife habitats into new developments can be found throughout the main body of the design guide. There is a wealth of published information available elsewhere which will be referred to and should be used to aid developers in making biodiversity related decisions.

A.1.3 The Vale of White Horse contains a rich variety of natural habitats of local, national and international importance. There are a total of 123 designated nature conservation sites in the Vale including 2 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), 23 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 84 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), 5 Local Nature Reserves and 9 Geologically Important Sites .

A.1.4 In addition to protected habitats there are a large number of protected species found in the Vale. The majority of protected species receive protection as a result of them being rare or of limited distribution, but also as a result of persecution, as is the case with badgers. As a result it is perhaps unsurprising that the majority of biodiversity issues associated with planning applications arise as a result of the presence of a protected species.

A.1.5 In line with the National Planning Policy Framework all developments in the Vale will be expected to contribute to the Governments commitment to halt the loss of biodiversity and deliver net gains where possible.

A.1.6 This appendix will provide basic information on the habitats and species most commonly encountered in planning process as well as laying out the steps that a developer / applicant will need to take when considering these issues.

A Biodiversity and planning

A.2 Legislation

A.2.1 All protected species and habitats mentioned within this document are covered within one of the following pieces of legislation:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981as amended;
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act 2000);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010;
- The Badgers Act 1992;
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997; and
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

A.2.2 Differing procedures and processes will need to be followed depending on the piece of legislation concerned and the penalties for not complying with the legislation will vary accordingly. In addition to the legislation the Council takes a strong stance in the protection of non-statutory sites (LWS) and priority habitats and species.

A.2.3 For further information and guidance applicants should refer to the following key guidance documents:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly chapter 11;
- ODPM Circular 6/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their impact within the planning system; and
- Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development BS 42020:2013.

A Biodiversity and planning

A.3 Protected Species

A.3.1 Protected species are present throughout The Vale and they are the biodiversity issue most often encountered in the planning system. The Council takes a pragmatic approach to protected species issues and will only ask for surveys where it believes that there is a reasonable likelihood of a particular species being present. Protected species occur in many types of habitat although there are clearly some types of application, which have a much higher probability of affecting protected species, and these are outlined in Table 1 of this appendix.

A.3.2 Protected species are a material consideration when the Council is considering a development proposal. Full information about the presence of a protected species will be required before the planning application can be determined. In line with the NPPF the council will expect developers to provide net gains for species and habitats when considering development proposals.

A.3.3 In order for the Council to be in a position to determine the application the applicant / developer will be expected to provide the following information:

- Up to date surveys to an appropriate degree of detail carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist;
- Where appropriate, information on how the development will avoid harming the species in its existing location;
- Details of measures to enhance the provision of species within the development or create new additional opportunities for that species;
- Details of mitigation measures employed to mitigate the harm caused by the development to that species where avoidance is not possible; and
- Details of the compensation measures to be provided where mitigation is not possible.

A.3.4 Applicants are strongly advised to enter into pre-application discussions to ensure all the relevant information is provided before submitting an application. It is important to note that with many species, surveys can only be satisfactorily conducted at certain times of the year when the species is active. Early consultation is therefore important to avoid undue delays to applications arising as a result of the need to carry out surveys within the relevant seasons.

A.3.5 Surveys will not be conditioned as part of a planning permission. Surveys should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist and provide sufficient detail to allow the Council to make informed decisions. As a guide the Council would as a minimum require the following information to be provided in the survey:

- What species are involved?;
- What is the population level likely to be affected by the proposal?;
- What is the impact of the proposal on protected species?;
- Is the impact necessary or acceptable?;
- What can be done to mitigate the impact?, and
- Will a licence be required from Natural England?

A.3.6 Fig A.1 provides a visual interpretation of the steps a developer / applicant should take in considering a development with the potential for impacts on protected species or habitats:

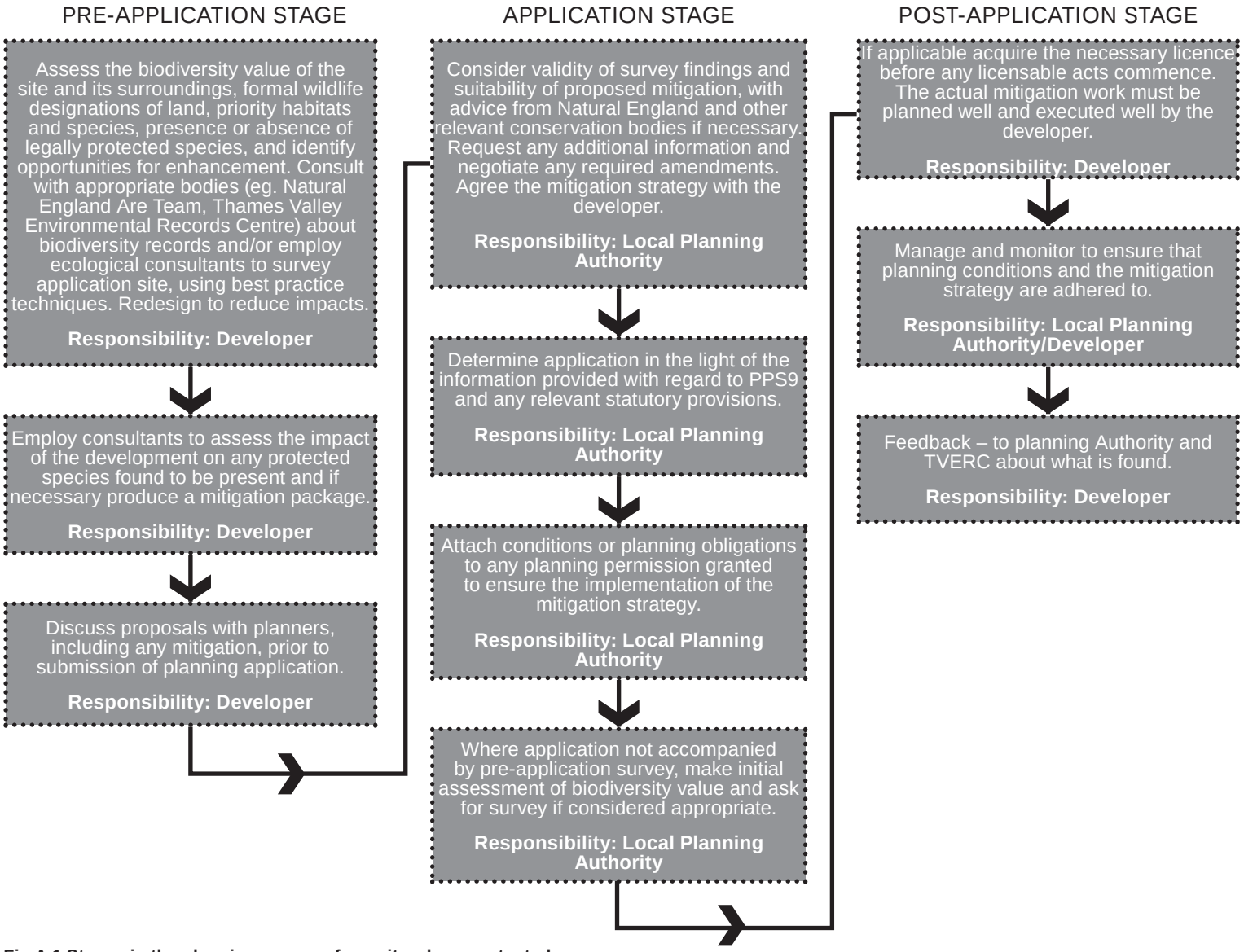


Fig A.1 Stages in the planning process for a site where protected species may be present (Adapted from the Bat Conservation Trust)

A Biodiversity and planning

A.3.7 The species most commonly encountered in development proposals in the Vale are set out in Table 1. This also sets out the issues associated with them, guidance on what can be done and who can help.

SPECIES	WHAT IS THE ISSUE?	WHAT CAN I DO?	CHECK
Bats	The majority of planning cases in the Vale where a protected species survey is likely to be needed relate to bats. This is because bats are often associated with man made structures and can occur in just about any type of building.	Bat provision can usually be designed into new developments or conversions but it is important that this is identified at an early stage of planning to avoid undue delays.	Figure 1 gives some guidance on where it is reasonable to expect bats may be found. Bat mitigation guidelines – A.J. Mitchell-Jones www.naturalengland.org.uk Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 2nd Edition – Bat Conservation Trust (2012) http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/batsurveyguide.html
Great crested newts	Great Crested Newts (GCN) breed in ponds, but spend 75% of their lifecycle on land in long grass or rough vegetation up to 500 metres away. They hibernate in the gaps between stones in walls or rockeries, and in piles of logs. Just about any pond can have GCN resident, from small garden ponds up to farm field ponds. Development sites that don't contain ponds can still be affected if they provide terrestrial habitats for GCN resident in nearby ponds.	Mitigation to avoid damage or disturbance to GCN populations is usually possible. The type and cost of the mitigation is dependant on the population size and the potential impacts of the proposal. Early consultation with the council is advised if there are likely to be any impacts on GCN.	Great crested newt mitigation guidelines – English Nature publication http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/810429
Nesting birds	All nesting birds receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as you may expect nesting birds are found in many places but particular care should be taken where a scheme involves the removal of trees, hedgerows or other dense vegetation. Care should also be taken for work involving roof structures and the eaves of buildings where swifts, swallows and house martins may be present.	In general work which may involve disturbance to nesting birds should only be undertaken outside of the nesting season which runs from the end of February to early August. Where there is a loss of nesting habitat as a result of a development the Council would normally expect appropriate replacement nesting opportunities to be provided as part of the development.	Contact the RSPB: www.rspb.org.uk 01767 693 690 Swift Conservation: www.swift-conservation.org/

SPECIES	WHAT IS THE ISSUE?	WHAT CAN I DO?	CHECK
Barn owls	As the name suggests Barn owls ore often associated with barns and all types of agricultural buildings but they are also associated with a wide variety of derelict and unused buildings.	Barn owls should not be disturbed whilst they are nesting. The nesting season runs from the beginning of April to the end of September. Nesting and roosting sites should be protected, where it is not possible to avoid impacts developers will be required to provide alternative roosting or nesting locations as near to the original nesting sites as possible	The Barn Owl Trust: www.barnowltrust.org.uk
Badgers	Badgers can be found in woodlands, in areas of scrub, large gardens, (particularly if there are relatively undisturbed) and on undeveloped or brownfield sites within towns. Their setts have large holes which are broadly oval in shape. Badger setts are sometimes confused with enlarged rabbit holes or foxes holes (earth's). If you are unsure contact the Council for advice or employ an appropriately qualified consultant to determine what species are involved.	Badgers have very large territories and will use various setts within this area. Mitigation for badgers is often a complex and costly business and it is best to avoid impacting on badger setts and the surrounding areas if at all possible.	Badgers and development – English Nature 2002 www.naturalengland.org.uk
Reptiles	All native reptiles are protected, in the Vale grass snakes and slow-worms are the most often encountered whilst adders and the common lizard are less common. Reptiles can be found on a variety of habitats including urban areas and are often associated with brownfield sites, old railway lines and other open sunny habitats.	As with all protected species it is best to avoid impacts but where this is not feasible it is often possible to provide appropriate mitigation and or compensation to offset any negative impacts.	Reptiles: guidelines for developers – English Nature 2004 www.naturalengland.org.uk

SPECIES	WHAT IS THE ISSUE?	WHAT CAN I DO?	CHECK
Water voles	Water voles are associated with watercourses including canals, rivers, streams, ditches and even sometimes ponds. They are found in both rural and urban areas and although in decline are found throughout the Vale. Water voles are fully protected. Any development that is likely to either directly or indirectly affect a habitat that has potential to be used by water voles will be expected to provide survey information to determine the presence or absence of the species.	Providing mitigation and compensation measures for water voles is often expensive and time consuming and development impacts on water voles are best avoided.	Advice available from Natural England: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31013?category=9012
Otters	The population of otters in the Vale is expanding following the national trend for the recovery of the species. Otters are primarily associated with river systems but occasionally may be found in smaller streams and ditches particularly near where these connect to the main rivers. Any development that affects the banks of rivers should consider the potential for the development to impact on local otter populations.	Developments that are likely to affect otter holts are unlikely to be permitted. Mitigation is often very expensive and complex.	Contact the Environment Agency 01491 828355
Dormice	Dormice are generally associated with woodlands and species rich hedgerows in the countryside. Any development which threatens woodland or involves the loss of hedgerows or damages the connectivity of hedgerow networks should consider the possibility of impacts on dormice.	Mitigation for dormice is usually possible but needs to be planned well in advance of any development proposals.	Contact Natural England: http://www.naturalengland.org.uk

A.3.8 Important Note: Proposals which disturb or in any way affect many of the species above are likely to require a Licence from Natural England and no development will be possible without first obtaining a licence.

A.3.9 **Habitats.** Protected habitats are less often encountered in development proposals as their locations are relatively well known and documented. Proposals for development on any undeveloped site (brownfield or greenfield) should consider the potential for direct or indirect impacts on designated sites (this includes statutory and non statutory sites) and priority habitats (as defined in S.41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act). Information on the location of these sites can be obtained from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC).

A.3.10 Priority habitats have not all been mapped and it is not uncommon for these to be identified as a result of development proposals. If this is the case the presumption would be against allowing development unless it can be demonstrated that the proposals can avoid impacts on the priority habitats and provide enhancements for the long term. If it is not possible to avoid impacts on priority habitats or provide sufficient on site mitigation then the developer would be expected to provide off site compensation. Biodiversity offsetting is favoured as a means of compensating for the loss of Priority habitats.

A.3.11 Early consultation with the Council is recommended for any development that has direct or indirect impacts on a designated site or priority habitat. Indirect impacts would include things such as disturbance resulting from noise, light, dust or increased pressure from people or their domestic pets.

Figure 1

Trigger list of where bats are *likely* to be present and where developers can reasonably be expected to submit a bat survey.

(i) Proposed development which includes the modification, conversion, demolition or removal of buildings and structures (especially roof voids) involving the following:

- all agricultural buildings (e.g. farmhouses and barns) particularly of traditional brick or stone construction and/or with exposed wooden beams greater than 20 cm thick;
- all buildings with weather boarding and/or hanging tiles that are within 200 m of woodland and/or water;
- pre-1960 detached buildings and structures within 200 m of woodland and/or water;
- pre-1914 buildings within 400 m of woodland and/or water;
- pre-1914 buildings with gable ends or slate roofs, regardless of location;
- all tunnels, mines, kilns, ice-houses, adits, military fortifications, air raid shelters, cellars and similar underground ducts and structures;
- all bridge structures, aqueducts and viaducts (especially over water and wet ground); and
- all developments affecting buildings, structures, trees or other features where bats are known to be present.

(ii) Proposals involving lighting of churches and listed buildings or floodlighting of green space within 50 m of woodland, water, field hedgerows or lines of trees with obvious connectivity to woodland or water.

(iii) Proposals affecting quarries with cliff faces with crevices, caves or swallets.

(iv) Proposals affecting or within 400 m of rivers, streams, canals, lakes, or within 200 metres of ponds and other aquatic habitats.

(v) Proposals affecting woodland or field hedgerows and/or lines of trees with obvious connectivity to woodland or water bodies.

(vi) Proposed tree work (felling or lopping) and/or development affecting:

- old and veteran trees that are older than 100 years;
- trees with obvious holes, cracks or cavities; and
- trees with a girth greater than 1 m at chest height.

(vii) Proposed development affecting any feature or locations where bats are confirmed as being present, revealed by either a data trawl (from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre) or as notified to the developer by any competent authority (e.g. planning authority, Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation or other environmental or conservation organisation).

A.3.12 The types of habitat most commonly encountered in the planning system are listed below:

HABITATS	VALUE	PROTECTED SPECIES ASSOCIATED WITH HABITAT	ADVICE AND REFERENCES
Ponds	Ponds are a priority habitat. Ponds of all shapes and sizes can have significant ecological value, including small garden ponds and seemingly dry and derelict ponds	Great crested newts Water voles. Bats Reptiles	Restoration" of ponds is often not the best option – it is better to create new ponds adjacent to the existing ones to provide a variety of habitats. Where ponds are lost to development new ponds should be created in compensation. http://www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk
Hedgerows	Native hedgerows provide many important habitat functions such as winter food sources for birds, nesting sites and safe commuting routes connecting otherwise isolated habitats. Hedgerows are a priority habitat.	Nesting birds Reptiles Badgers Bats Great Crested newts Dormice	Efforts should be made to retain hedgerows within developments. Retained hedgerows should be buffered from surrounding development and not incorporated into domestic boundaries. Where retention is not possible native species rich hedgerows should be provided in compensation
Rivers, streams, canals and ditches	Watercourses are important wildlife corridors allowing the movement of species throughout the landscape. They are also important habitats in themselves.	Water voles Great crested newts Native crayfish Bats Reptiles	Any development which impacts on a watercourse either directly or indirectly may need the consent of the Environment Agency and it is best to contact them early in the planning process: http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/

HABITATS	VALUE	PROTECTED SPECIES ASSOCIATED WITH HABITAT	ADVICE AND REFERENCES
Wildflower grasslands	Some of the most diverse habitats in the Vale occur on the chalk grassland of the Chilterns and N. Wessex Downs as well as the rich riverside meadows along the Thames.	Nesting birds Reptiles	Most of the important grasslands are within designated sites and development of these areas should be avoided. If priority habitat grasslands are identified on development sites then the developer should consider how to avoid direct or indirect impacts. Mitigation should be provided where impacts cannot be avoided and as a last resort compensation will be required if it is not possible to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity.
Ancient or veteran trees	Old trees provide habitats for many species as well as being important landscape features in themselves	Bats Nesting birds	Impacts on ancient or veteran trees should be avoided wherever possible. Applications involving the loss or deterioration of ancient trees will be strongly resisted
Woodlands	Ancient woodlands are irreplaceable habitats which are widespread across the Vale.	Bats Nesting birds Badgers Dormice Reptiles	Impacts on ancient woodland should be avoided. Mitigation for impacts is generally difficult. The diverse nature and structure of ancient woodlands means that replacement planting is generally not considered to be adequate mitigation / compensation. Applications involving the loss or deterioration of ancient woodlands will be strongly resisted.
Traditional Orchard	Traditional Orchards are a priority habitat	Bats Nesting birds Badgers Dormice Reptiles	Traditional fruit tree orchards and cobnut plats, whilst of artificial origin, have often escaped agricultural intensification and are important refuges for a wide range of wildlife. The total area of traditional orchards has declined drastically in recent years and the conservation of the remaining orchards is a high priority.

A Biodiversity and planning

Sources of further information:

- Bat mitigation guidelines – A.J. Mitchell-Jones January 2004
- http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/69046
- Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition – Bat Conservation Trust (2012) ISBN 13: 9781872745985
- http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/batsurveyguide.html
- Great crested newt mitigation guidelines – English Nature publication August 2001
- http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/810429
- Reptiles: guidelines for developers – English Nature 2004
- http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/76006
- Badgers and development – Natural England http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/73034?category=19010
- Barn owls and Rural Planning Applications – A guide for developers and planners – Barn Owl Trust,
- http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/76007?category=40030
- BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development.
- British Standards Institute
- http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030258704
- Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom - IEEM 2006
- http://www.cieem.net/ecia-guidelines-terrestrial-freshwater-and-coastal

Key contacts:

- Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC), c/o Oxfordshire County Council, Signal Court, Old Station Way, Eynsham, OX29 4TL. Tel: 01865 815451.
- tverc@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Natural England - Web site: http://www.naturalengland.org.uk

B

Glossary of terms

B Glossary of terms

Access: The point(s) of vehicular or pedestrian entry/exit to a site.

Active Frontage: The interface between buildings and streets is characterised by muiltiple entrances and windows, which allows interaction between public realm and the premises facing the street.

Adaptability: The ability of a building to respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions.

Amenity Space: External space for recreational purposes.

Block: A form of development where the perimeter is defined by streets

Building Line: The line defined by the frontages of buildings along a street or road.

Building Interface: The area between the back of foot way on the street and the building line.

Built Form: Buildings and structures

Bulk: The combined effect of volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Also called massing.

Character: The combination of features of a building or a place that give it a distinctive identity.

Character Area: An area with distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently to give the area a distinctive identity.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP): The combined production of heat, usually in the form of steam, and power, usually in the form of electricity from a single source, close to where they are to be used.

Conservation Area: An area that has been designated as having special architectural or historical interest.

Context: The physical setting for a development.

Context Appraisal: A detailed analysis of the features that define and influence the area that surrounds a development site.

Defensible Space: A space that encourages safety and does not create opportunities for crime.

Density: A measure of the number of dwellings or people per hectare.

Design: The creative process of making spaces and places.

Design Code: A document that sets out the design and planning principles that will apply to development in a particular place.

Design Guidance: Documents that provide guidance on the appearance of development in a given area.

Design Principle: A statement that summarises design guidance.

Design and Access Statement: A document that sets out the design approach proposed for a development. The document will also address any site constraints and opportunities.

Development Control: The process through which a local authority determines whether planning permission should be granted for a development.

Elevation: An external face of a building, or the height of a site above sea level.

Enclosure: The arrangement of buildings, walls, trees etc to provide different levels of containment of a space.

Facade: The external face of a building or group of buildings that face the public realm.

Fenestration: The placement of windows on the exterior of a building.

B Glossary of terms

Figure ground: A two-dimensional map of an urban space that shows the relationship between built and unbuilt space. It is used in analysis of urban design and planning.

Form: The physical appearance of a development – its 3 dimensional shape.

Footprint: The 2 dimensional shape created by a building or group of buildings on the ground.

Grain: The general shape and direction of building footprints.

Greywater: Wastewater generated from plates and wash-hand basins, showers and baths, which, because it is nearly as clean as potable water, can be recycled onsite for uses such as toilet flushing, landscape irrigation and constructed wetlands.

Heritage assets: A range of geographical components of the historic environment which have been positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. These include listed buildings; old buildings that are not listed but still have local historical importance; scheduled monuments; war memorials; historic wreck sites; parks; historic gardens; conservation areas, archaeological sites and so on.

Hierarchy: A logical sequence of spaces, streets or building forms, increasing or decreasing in size or density throughout a development.

Landmark: A building or structure that stands out from surrounding buildings.

Layout: The arrangement of buildings, streets and spaces in a development.

Legibility: The degree to which a place can be easily comprehended by its users so that navigation through that space is easily achieved.

Local: distinctiveness Similar to character – the features that define an area or development.

Massing: The volume of a building or group of buildings.

Masterplan: An evolving plan that establishes the framework and key elements of a site including routes, spaces, uses and so on.

Mixed-use: The combination of complementary uses within a building, site or area.

Movement: The passage of people and vehicles through buildings, places and spaces.

Movement network: The term “movement networks” refers to the physical infrastructures that allow people to navigate between land uses or destinations.

Node: A place where activity and routes are concentrated.

Passive surveillance: The monitoring of public space through the placement of buildings and activities in such a way as to maximise visibility and foster positive social interaction.

Permeability: The degree to which a residential development can be penetrated by foot, cycle and vehicle and the connectivity of the development to adjacent developments.

Permitted Development: Development that is deemed to be permitted without the requirement to submit a formal planning application. Development is usually small scale.

Place: A space in the built environment that has some meaning for people due to the activities and uses which characterise the space, or the quality of the space itself.

Place-making: Creating the physical conditions that residents find attractive, safe, neighbourly and legible.

B Glossary of terms

Public realm: The spaces between buildings accessible to the public; including the highway, green areas, squares etc.

Scale: The size of a building relative to neighbouring buildings.

Sense of place: A property of space with strong identity and character that is deeply felt by local inhabitants and visitors.

Street Furniture: Includes litter bins, seating, lighting, bus shelters and signs.

Street hierarchy: An urban planning technique for laying out street networks. It is conceived as a hierarchy of routes that embeds the link importance of each road type in the network topology (the connectivity of the nodes to each other).

Streetscape: The character and appearance of the street environment.

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs): Natural drainage solutions that provide an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of today's generation, without compromising the needs of tomorrow's generation.

Termination, terminated view: A building or other feature which is placed at the end of a view down a street or square, to aid enclosure or provide a landmark.

Topography: A description of the shape of the land.

Townscape: The urban equivalent of landscape: the overall effect of the combination of buildings, spaces, views and features.

Urban Design: The process of making places, incorporating the design of buildings, spaces and details.

Urban Grain: The pattern development in a settlement.

C

Reference documents

C Reference documents

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework

Association of Chief Police Officers et al (2002), Secured by Design, Website www.securedbydesign.com

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Home Office and ODPM (2004) Safer places - the planning system and crime prevention; Thomas Telford Publishing

HMSO (2004) Planning and Compulsory Purchase (Local Development) England Regulations 2004

ODPM (2003) Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide

Oxfordshire County Council (2004) Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

Oxfordshire County Council (2009) Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire.

C Reference documents

Urban Design Compendium (2000) Homes and Communities Agency

D

Conservation Areas

D Conservation Areas

There are 52 Conservation Areas in the Vale which have been designated because of their special architectural or historic interest:

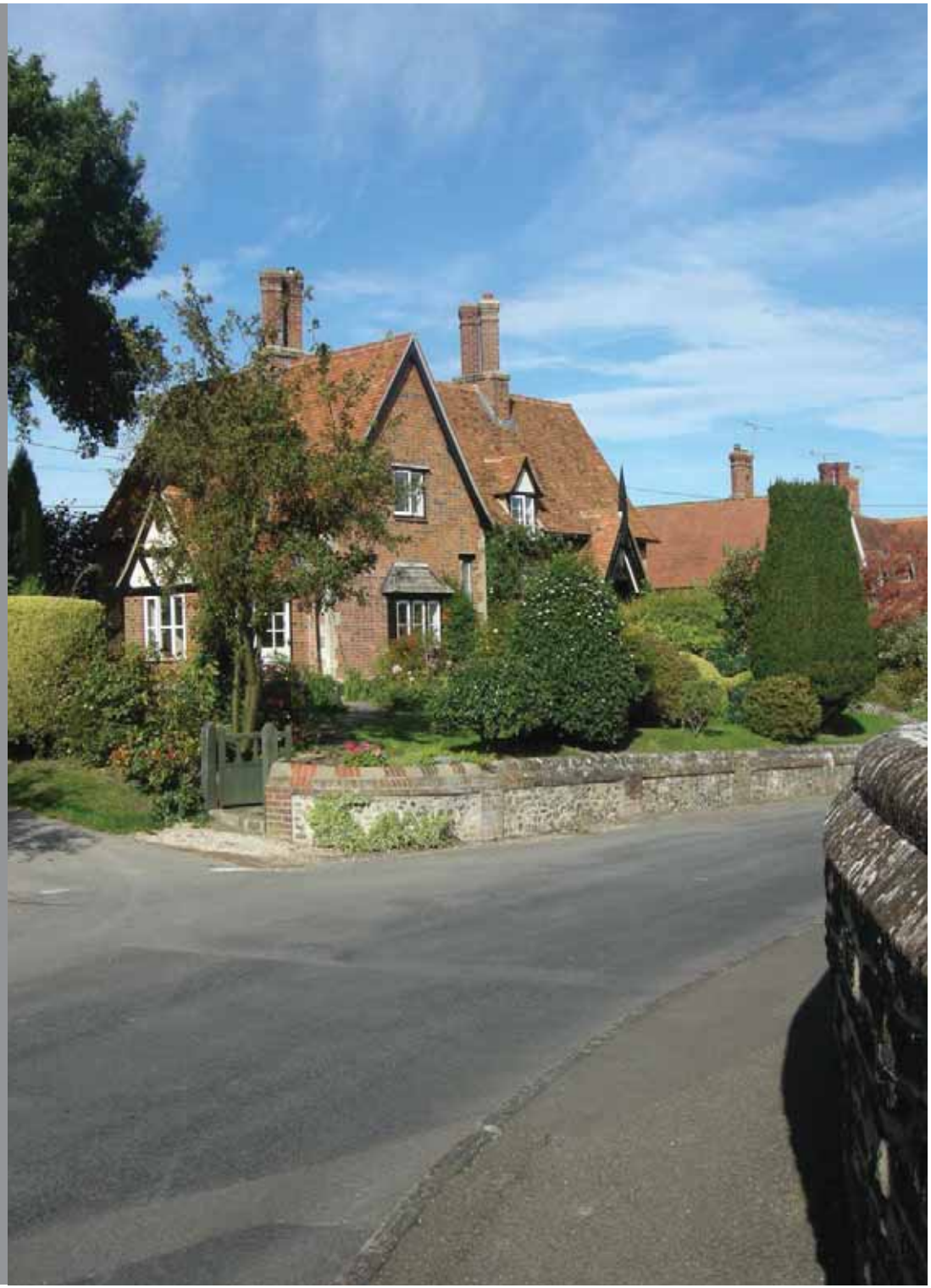
- Abingdon Town Centre
- Abingdon, Albert Park
- Abingdon, Northcourt
- Appleton
- Ardington & East Lockinge
- Ashbury
- Baulking
- Blewbury
- Bourton
- Buckland
- Buscot
- Charney Bassett
- Childrey
- Coleshill
- Cumnor
- Denchworth
- Drayton
- East Hanney
- East Hendred
- East Lockinge (See Ardington)
- Faringdon
- Fyfield & Netherton
- Goosey
- Great Coxwell
- Grove
- Harwell
- Hatford
- Hinton Waldrist
- Idstone
- Kingston Bagpuize
- Kingston Lisle
- Letcombe Bassett
- Letcombe Regis
- Little Coxwell
- Littleworth
- Longworth
- Marcham
- Milton
- North Hinksey
- Pusey
- Shellingford
- Shrivenham
- Sparsholt
- Stanford in the Vale
- Steventon
- Sutton Courtenay
- Uffington
- Wantage - Town Centre
- Wantage - Charlton
- West Hanney
- West Hendred
- Woolstone
- Wytham

The District has a number of adopted Conservation Area Appraisals which are listed below:

- Northcourt Conservation Area, Abingdon
- Wytham Conservation Area
- East Hendred Conservation Area
- Bourton Conservation Area
- Cumnor Conservation Area.

E

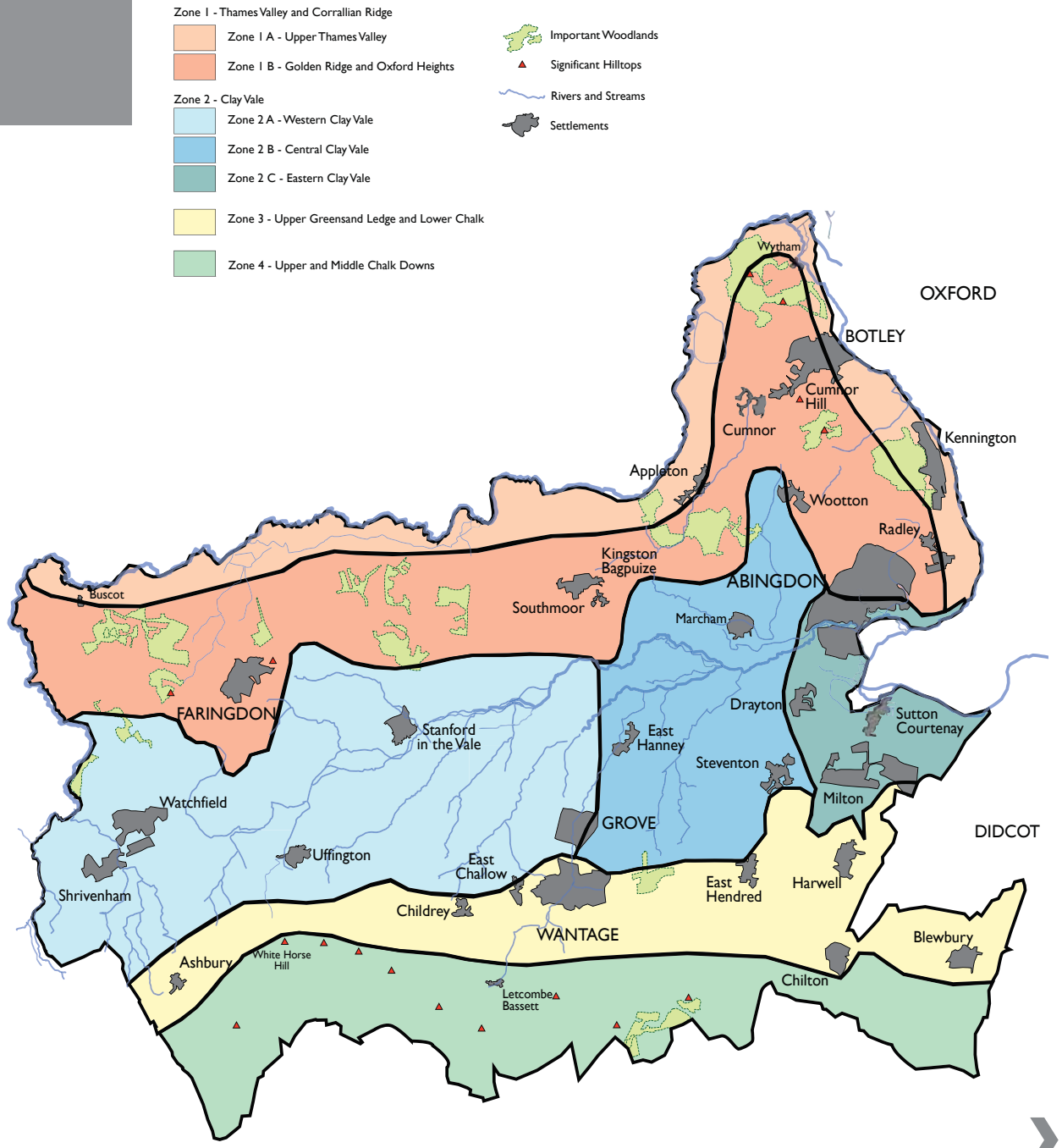
Vale of White Horse character



E Vale of White Horse character

E.1 Geology

E.1.1 A study of the geology of the District can help to understand why towns and villages appear the way they are today. Geology can dictate where a settlement is located, its size and the main building materials.



E Vale of White Horse character

Zone 1: Thames Valley and Corallian Ridge

- Zone 1A: Upper Thames Valley.
- Zone 1B: Golden Ridge & Oxford Heights.

E.1.2 Zone 1A is the northernmost zone; it comprises the Oxford Clay beds of the Thames Valley, which run from Buscot in the west to Wytham in the east.Zone 1B is the Corallian Ridge which is a remnant of a coral reef formed during the Jurassic period. The ridge is made up of limestone and sandstone. It stretches from Faringdon to Kennington and Radley. An area of Greensand is apparent around Frilford where heathland plants are evident.

Zone 2: Clay Vale

- Zone 2A: Western Clay Vale.
- Zone 2B: Central Clay Vale.
- Zone 2C: Eastern Clay Vale.

E.1.3 Zone 2 is comprised of Kimmeridge and Gault Clays which originally would have been waterlogged marshy lands and thickly wooded areas. Settlements took shape on slightly higher ground as 'islands' which is denoted by the suffix 'ey', examples include Hanney and Goosey.

15 View of Oxford from Boars Hill

16 North of Coleshill

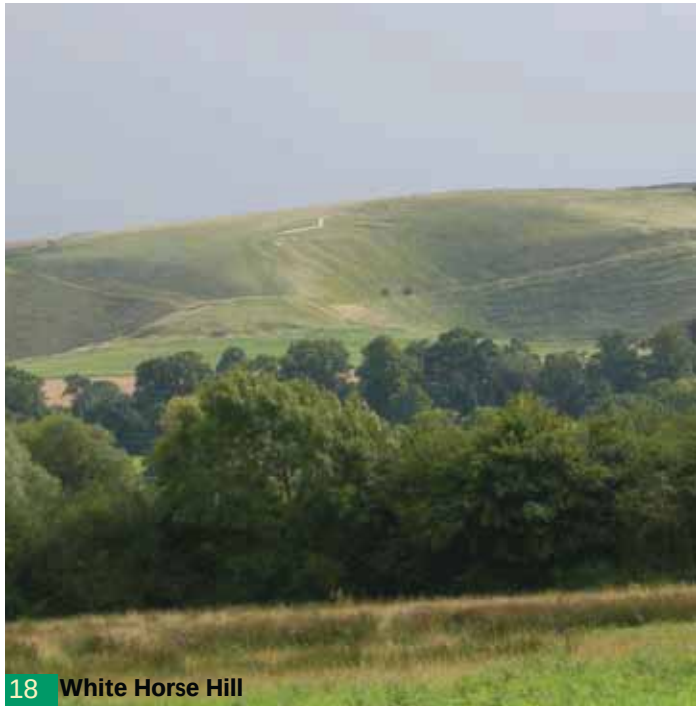
17 River Thames, Buscot

Zone 3: Upper Greensand Ledge and Lower Chalk

E.1.4 Zone 3 is comprised of a larger area of Greensand with lower chalk towards the North Wessex Downs. This zone stretches from the western villages of Ashbury and Childrey through to Wantage, the Hendreds and as far as Blewbury in the east.

Zone 4: Upper and Middle Chalk Downs

E.1.5 Zone 4 is the southern most zone, it comprisesnthe Middle and Upper Chalk of the Downs. The Zone has relatively few settlements, except for farmsteads around the Ridgeway. The land is mainly used for grazing due to the poor soil conditions.



18 White Horse Hill

20 View north of Watchfield

19 View south from Kingston Lisle

E.2 LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

E.2.1 Although geology has a very strong influence on the character of a settlement, other factors such as local traditions, history and technology can also influence the evolution and appearance of a settlement. Image 21 below divides the Vale into separate character zones, taking into account geology, landscape and a physical assessment of individual settlements in each zone.

E.2.2 The following sections provide an overview of the character of each of the zones.

E.2.3 It should be noted that the individual character of the five largest settlements in the District, Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Wantage and Grove, is more varied because of their size and history. These settlements do not therefore fit comfortably into the individual character zones and, therefore, they are described separately.

E Vale of White Horse character

Zone 1: Thames Valley and Corallian Ridge

E.2.4 Zone 1 covers approximately one third of the land area of the Vale. The area follows the path of the River Thames, which bounds the District to the north and east. Here, the landscape is a mixture of water meadows and pasture on slightly higher ground.

E.2.5 To the south is the Corallian or Golden Ridge, a higher area of land along the crest of which lie various settlements.

E.2.6 The zone contains many areas of deciduous woodland, including some ancient woodlands, particularly along the Corallian Ridge and in the north-eastern corner of the Vale.

E.2.7 In the east, the proximity to Oxford allowed for a wide variety of building materials to be transported into the District. In the west, until the railway connected into Faringdon, materials were restricted to those that were available locally. This meant less influence by external factors and fashions in favour of traditional materials such as limestone, stone slates and thatch.

E.2.8 Zone 1 is subdivided into two separate sub-zones to the east and the west of the Vale. These subzones are appraised below:

- Zone 1A - Corallian Ridge and Wooded Estate Villages
- Zone 1B - Eastern Thames

22 North Hinksey

24 Buckland

23 River Thames, Abingdon

25 Estate Cottages, Coleshill

26 Cumnor Hill

Zone 1A: Corallian Ridge & Wooded Estate Villages

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.2.9 The northernmost part of the Vale abuts the River Thames and contains soft Oxford Clays covered by gravels and alluvium. The landscape combines a diverse mix of water meadows, small woodlands, pasture, with willows along the river banks and hedgerows.The Corallian Ridge runs the length of the District and beyond in either direction. In the west the ridge, also known as the Golden Ridge, is bisected by streams, which have formed steep slopes. In the Faringdon area, this is evident in the form of Badbury Hill and Faringdon Folly Hill. Much of the ridge is characterised by woodland, including a significant area of ancient woodland.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.2.10 The majority of the settlements are set back from the river on higher ground along the ridge line. Settlements here are often based around country estates and large manor houses with gardens designed to look out over the north-facing scarp.

E.2.11 Settlements are typically limestone villages built of locally sourced, hard Corallian Ragstone, and their elevated position often provides spectacular expansive views.

27 View north from Faringdon

28 Buckland House

30 Wytham

29 Pusey

31 Cumnor

E Vale of White Horse character

Zone 1A: Palette of Materials

E.2.12 The defining building features include limestone, which helps create the distinctive character of the area. Steep pitched roofs, narrow gables and dormer windows are typical of the area.

E.2.13 **Walls:**

- Random, uncoursed rubble, local corallian limestone with a variety of bed widths and colours;
- Ashlar limestone dressings;
- Coursed stone appears on later dwellings;
- Colour washed lime render often covers stone beneath;
- Berkshire orange brick - usually on smaller Victorian dwellings or on Georgian properties;
- Decorative brickwork - often blue or buff for chimneys, quoins, doors and window detailing;
- Timber frame with render or brick infill panels; and
- Weatherboard is restricted to conversions from agricultural or cottage industry uses.

E.2.14 **Roofs:**

- There are three roofing materials that are equally dominant:
- Stone slates;
- Thatch was traditionally locally sourced long or wheat straw with flush ridges;
- Orange plain clay tiles, and
- Blue slates

E.2.15 **Windows & Doors:**

- Timber sash and casement windows and iron leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

E.2.16 **Timber Finishes:**

- The paint colour palette is narrow, with white or similar pale colours. Estate colours in villages such as Buscot and Coleshill;
- Tar and pitch on barns and exposed timber frames; and
- Untreated oak.

Roofs

36 Stone slates

37 Blue slate

38 Typical thatched roof with dormer

39 Local orange plain clay tiles

Timber Finishes

40 White painted timber windows

41 Buscot estate paint colours

Walls

32 A variety of shades of coursed and uncoursed limestone

33 Colour washed Render

34 Berkshire orange brick with blue headers

35 Natural and stained weatherboard - traditional and modern

Zone 1A: Settlements with distinct character

E.2.17 The larger settlements in the Vale have individual characteristics which do not always accord with the character zone in which they are located. Whilst Faringdon is influenced by the character of Zone 1, it has developed its individual character because of its history, location and size.

E.2.18 Faringdon is the largest settlement in Zone 1A, and has panoramic views across the Thames Valley from its perch on the Golden Ridge.There is a relatively broad spectrum of building materials influenced by the arrival of the canal and railway, including brick, stone and limewashed and painted renders. The predominant roofing materials are blue and stone slates.

42 London Street, Faringdon

43 Lechlade Road, Faringdon

50 Gravel Walk, Faringdon

51 Dove Court, Faringdon

44 Berkshire orange brick

45 Painted render

46 Coursed limestone

47 Slate

48 Traditional Georgian colours

49 Traditional heritage colours

Zone 1B: The Eastern Thames

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.2.19 The eastern Thames and Oxford Heights area differs from the area to the west primarily due to its proximity to Oxford. It is a much more developed area, where better transport links have led to the availability of a wider range of building materials.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.2.20 Many of the settlements in Zone 1B are situated in low lying areas in close proximity to the River Thames. One of the largest settlements in the zone is Botley, which sits on the edge of Oxford. The topography rises up from the Thames at Cumnor Hill, from where there are expansive views to the north. Abingdon is the largest town in the District, but still retains its character as a historic market town.

Zone 1A

- Abingdon (north of River Ock)
- Boars Hill
- Botley
- Cumnor Hill
- Foxcombe Hill
- North Hinksey
- Kennington
- Radley
- Wootton

52 View west to Boars Hill

55 Boars Hill

53 River Thames

56 North Hinksey

54 North Hinksey

E Vale of White Horse character

Zone 1B: Palette of Materials

E.2.21 The Corallian limestone again has a strong presence, particularly on cottages in villages.

E.2.22 **Walls:**

- A mix of uncoursed and coursed corallian limestone. Usually smaller regular shaped stones with Ashlar limestone dressings;
- Colour washed lime render often covers earlier stone beneath;
- Berkshire orange brick - predominates in urban areas;
- Decorative brickwork - often blue or buff for chimneys, quoins, doors and window detailing;
- Timber frame with render or brick infill panels; and
- Weatherboard is usually found on conversions.

E.2.23 **Roofs**

- Plain clay tiles predominate in the zone and often replace earlier stone or thatch;
- Blue slate is also common; and
- Thatch is generally found in rural settlements on smaller dwellings and barns. Usually locally sourced long or wheat straw.

E.2.24 **Fenestration and Doors:**

- Timber sash and casement, iron leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

E.2.25 **Timber Finishes**

- The paint colour palette is narrow, with white or similar pale colours. The exception is in urban locations, where a broader, palette is observed;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame; and
- Untreated oak.

Roofs

60 Orange /red plain clay tiles

61 Blue Slate

62 Typical thatched roof

Timber Finishes

63 White painted timber windows

64 White painted timber door

Walls

57 Light to mid range shades of Corallian limestone - either coursed or uncoursed

58 Colour washed Render

59 Berkshire orange brick with blue headers

Zone 1B: Settlements with distinct character

E.2.26 The larger settlements in the Vale have individual characteristics which can differ from those of the zone in which they are located. Abingdon and Botley have developed individual characteristics largely influenced by their history, location and size.

ABINGDON

E.2.27 Abingdon is the largest town in the District. The built history of the town includes buildings which date from the 15th century, including the chapel of St John's Hospital, a refuge for travellers, and almshouses around St Helen's Church.Brick is the predominant building material in Abingdon, although render and stone are also well used. The predominant roofing material is clay tiles.

65 Almshouses

66 Ornate Victorian detailing

67 Morland Brewery conversion

68 Contemporary use of brick and clay tiles. Flood risk addressed by raising ground floor level

E Vale of White Horse character

BOTLEY

E.2.28 Botley is one of the largest settlements in the Zone. Although it was first settled in Saxon times, its major development has taken place since the 1930's and generally to the west of the ring road. The character of Botley includes a mix of styles, ranging from stone cottages and Victorian terraces to 20th century residential suburbs.

E.2.29 Cumnor Hill extends to the west of Botley and links to the village of Cumnor. It has a distinctive low density, well landscaped character, and includes a variety of substantial detached properties and a number of contemporary apartment buildings.

E.2.30 A broad spectrum of building materials has been used in the Botley and Cumnor Hill area, including brick, render, stone, and more modern materials such as metal and glass. The predominant roofing material is plain clay tiles.

79 Red/orange brick with buff banding

80 Modern infill based on 1930s design

83 Original windows maintained

84 Contemporary metal windows

81 Uncoursed limestone with ashlar dressings

82 Clay tiled extension to stone cottage

75 Seacourt Tower, Botley

77 Uncoursed limestone cottage

76 Typical Victorian terraces

78 Modern Flats

Zone 2: The Clay Vale

E.2.31 The Clay Vale is the largest of the character zones. It is a broad low-lying area of Kimmeridge and Gault Clays, with fields predominantly used as pastureland. Throughout the Clay Vale, Willow trees lie along the river valleys and streams.

E.2.32 Historically, it was a quiet rural area of self sufficient villages and hamlets. Between 1790 and 1840 significant changes took place due to the arrival of the canal and railway, which led to materials being imported into the area from further afield.

E.2.33 During this period a number of brickworks were set up in the area to take advantage of the rich clay soils. These were located in Stanford in the Vale, East Challow, Childrey and Uffington. Brick replaced stone as the principal building material and was used in the construction of new dwellings, the repair of older buildings and to add detailing such as quoins and window surrounds to stone buildings.

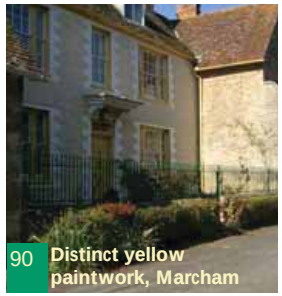
E.2.34 The Uffington Brick and Tile Company, which was sited to the north of Uffington within the Clay Vale, provided a large quantity of bricks to Wantage and the surrounding villages.

E.2.35 The arrival of the canal and railway led to the development of Victorian brick and blue slate terraces within villages and as extensions to some villages.

E.2.36 Zone 2 is subdivided into three separate subzones to the east, west and centrally across the Vale, these sub-zones are appraised below:

- Zone 2A - The Western Clay Vale Villages
- Zone 2B - Central Alluvial Island Villages
- Zone 2C - Lowland Villages

88 Pusey House


90 Distinct yellow paintwork, Marcham

85 Stanford in the Vale

89 Thatched cottage, Grove

87 River Thames, Sutton Courtenay

86 East Hanney

Zone 2A: The Western Clay Vale

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.2.37 The Western Clay Vale stretches from the north of Uffington as far as the Corallian Ridge near Faringdon, eastwards to Charney Bassett and westwards to Bourton. The pastures and hedgerows of the clay soils are concentrated in the west, between Woolstone and Lyford.

E.2.38 The landscape was once heavily wooded, but is now relatively open largely due to the loss of Elm trees in the 1970's. Some hedgerows have also been removed to create larger fields.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.2.39 As the original landscape of the Clay Vale was low lying and either heavily wooded or very wet marshland, it had relatively few settlements.

E.2.40 These are generally smaller villages and hamlets, usually located on outcrops of gravel raised above the wet land.

E.2.41 One of the largest settlements in the zone is Grove, which differs significantly in character from the other settlements as it has been substantially expanded since the Second World War.

Zone 2A

- Baulking
- Bourton
- Charney Bassett
- East Challow
- Fernham
- Grove
- Hatford
- Longcot
- Lyford
- Shippon
- Shellingford
- Stanford in the Vale
- West Challow

91 View across Zone 2A from below White Horse Hill

92 View northwards towards Shrivenham

94 Charney Bassett

95 Victorian Gothic, Charney Bassett

93 Shellingford's stone cottages

E Vale of White Horse character

Zone 2A: Palette of Materials

E.47 Although a clay zone, the proximity to stone has led to stone being the predominant building material. It is a rural zone with many wide frontage cottages and low thatched roofs.

E.48 **Walls:**

- The local coursed corallian limestone with a variety of tones;
- Uncoursed stone appears on the earliest of dwellings or former agricultural buildings;
- Colour washed render is rarely found but usually covers stone beneath;
- Brick is less frequently used;
- Brick has a common decorative use on stone buildings for quoins and window detailing; and
- Weatherboard is usually found on outbuildings and agricultural buildings and conversions.

E.49 **Roofs:**

- Roofing materials predominantly stone slates;
- Clay tiles are often a later replacement for stone slates;
- Thatch is also common on smaller cottages; and
- Blue slate is less common - usually found on later dwellings.

E.50 **Fenestration and Doors:**

- Timber sash and casement, iron leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

E.51 **Timber Finishes:**

- The paint colour palette is narrow, with white or pale colours such as greens and greys. The exception is in urban locations, where a broader, palette is observed;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame; and
- Untreated oak.

Walls

96 Light Corallian limestone with brick, ashlar and wooden dressings

97 Colour washed render

98 Blue headers

99 Stained weatherboard

100 Natural oak weatherboard

Roofs

101 Traditional and modern replacement stone slates

102 Red plain clay tiles

103 Traditional thatch

Timber Finishes

104 White painted timber doors and windows

105 Green painted timber windows

Zone 2A: Settlements with distinct character

E.52 The larger settlements in the Vale have individual characteristics which can differ from those of the zone in which they are located. Grove has developed its own character which is largely dominated by its post war expansion.

GROVE

E.53 Grove is the largest settlement in Zone 2A. The buildings include a number of older buildings, which are concentrated around the conservation area. The majority of development in Grove, however, is of post war construction. In the old village, the traditional materials include stone, brick, render and timber framing. The roofing materials include blue slate and plain clay tiles, but also thatch and stone tiles.

110 Blue slate

111 Orange/red plain clay tile

107 Render and timber frame

112 Thatched dormers

113 Half hipped thatch roof

114 Black and white painted timber doors and windows

115 Edwardian green painted door

106 Brick and timber frame

108 Brick and tile cottage

109 Modern dwellings based on traditional designs

Zone 2B: Central Alluvial Island Villages

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.54 To the east, the Gault Clay meets the Kimmeridge Clay and together the two form a wide unbroken vale as far as the Thames at Abingdon. There are extensive alluvial flats and gravel terraces where the Ock meets the Thames.

E.55 A number of watercourses such as the Letcombe Brook, Land Brook and Childrey Brook flow through the area. These led to the building of a number of water mills which provided the power for the production of flour, silk and wool at different periods in the Vale's history.

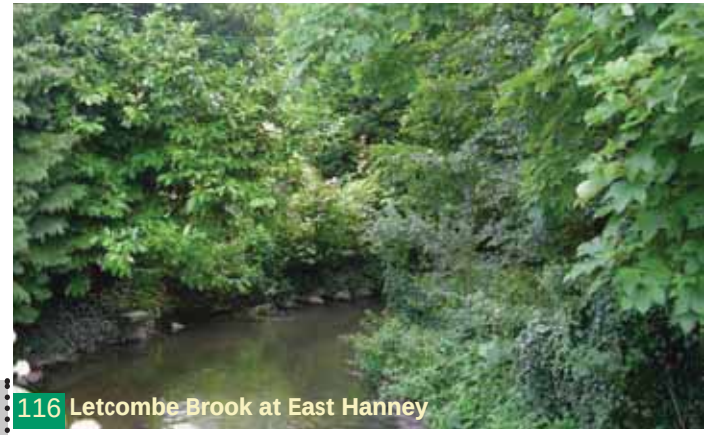
BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.56 The 'island' villages were established in pre-Norman times on a gravel bed set in the marshy low lying Vale. This gave rise to the building of raised causeways to connect settlements as the surrounding lower fields had the potential to flood.

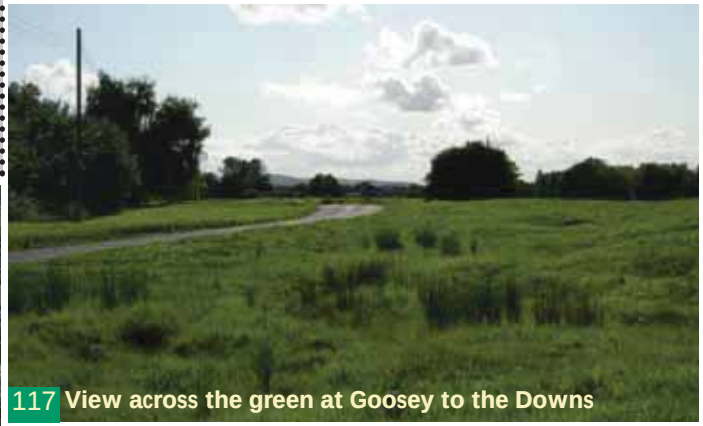
E.57 Goosey is a prime example of an island village. It comprises a group of houses, cottages and farm buildings scattered around a large green,,originally intended for keeping geese. It has retained its essential character over the centuries.

Zone 2B

- Cotford
- Denchworth
- Dry Sandford
- East Hanney
- Frilford
- Frilford Heath
- Goosey
- Garford
- Marcham
- West Hanney

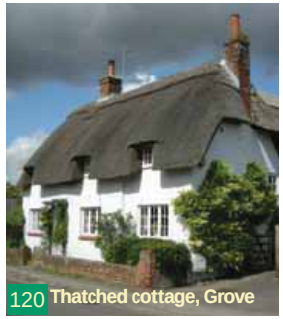


116 Letcombe Brook at East Hanney



117 View across the green at Goosey to the Downs

119 Marcham



120 Thatched cottage, Grove

121 Farmhouse, Goosey

118 Gatehouse, Denchworth

E Vale of White Horse character

Zone 2B: Palette of Materials

E.58 The location of this zone traditionally provided access to a variety of materials. The clay provided local bricks, with stone and timber also being readily available nearby. This zone has the greatest mix of materials for walls and roofs with no one material predominating. Small wide frontage, 1.5-2 storey cottages are most prevalent.

E.59 **Walls:**

- Local coursed corallian limestone with light to mid tones and smaller bed widths;
- Uncoursed stone appears on the earliest of dwellings r former agricultural buildingsTimber framing with either brick, stone or lime render infill;
- Berkshire orange brick - often with blue headers;
- Brick has a common decorative use on stone buildings for quoins and window detailing; and
- Weatherboard is usually found on outbuildings and agricultural buildings.

E.60 **Roofs:**

- Stone slates;
- Orange or orange/red clay tiles; and
- Thatch with a plain, flush ridge.

11.4.7 **Fenestration and Doors:**

- Timber sash and casement, iron leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

E.61 **Timber Finishes:**

- The paint colour palette is narrow, with white or pale colours such as greens and greys. The exception is In Marcham, where a yellow paint has been applied;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame;
- Untreated oak; and
- For more detail on paint and stain colours see appendix D.

Walls

122 Berkshire orange brick - often with blue headers

123 Local limestone in narrow beds - often with brick detailing

124 Timber frame with lime render infill

125 Timber frame with brick infill

Roofs

126 Stone slates

127 Orange/red clay tile

128 Orange plain clay tiles

129 Thatch

Timber Finishes

130 Black and white painted windows and doors

131 Yellow paintwork - a local colour to properties in Marcham

Zone 2C: Lowland Villages

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.62 Zone 2C stretches from Steventon in the west to Appleford in the east, and from Harwell in the south northwards to the south of Abingdon.

E.63 The wider landscape contains expansive open arable fields on thin gravel terraces, which overlay the clay sub soil.

E.64 The Thames passes along the northern boundary of this zone. The area is bisected by the A34, and views to the east are dominated by Didcot Power Station.

E.65 The area west of the A34 is characterised by a feeling of openness. There are wide views over the area from Steventon Hill to the south of Steventon village. The flat open landscape provides views of the North Wessex Downs to the south and the Corallian Ridge to the north.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.66 There are a number of fine examples of traditional timber frame buildings with brick and render infill panels in the area.

E.67 Particularly good examples can be found in Steventon, Sutton Courtenay and Harwell.

Zone 2C	
Abingdon (south of River Ock)	Harwell
Drayton	Milton
	Steventon
	Sutton Courtenay

132 Steventon Causeway

133 River Thames

135 Sutton Courtenay

136 Stone cottage, Drayton

137 Victorian farmhouse, Steventon

134 Causeway cottages

E Vale of White Horse character

Zone 2C: Palette of Materials

E.68 This area of the clay vale is dominated by the use of timber framing and brick from local brickworks. Theorange/ red Berkshire brick is often combined with blue or buff in detailing, string courses or diaper work.

E.69 A variety of building forms are found here with a mix of:

- Small wide fronted cottages often in rows;
- Substantial detached 2-2.5 storey houses;
- Corner and 'L' shaped forms;
- Prominent gables; and
- Jettied first floors.

E.70 **Walls:**

- Timber framing with either brick, limestone or lime render infill;
- Berkshire orange brick;
- Frequent use of contrasting detailing - blue headers, buff brick courses, diaper work and dentilation; and
- Weatherboard is usually found on outbuildings and agricultural buildings and conversions.

E.71 **Roofs:**

- Orange or orange/red clay tiles;
- Thatch with a plain, flush ridge; and
- Blue slate.

E.72 **Fenestration and Doors:**

- Timber sash and casement, iron and timber leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

E.73 **Timber Finishes:**

- The paint colour palette in rural areas is narrow, with white or pale colours such as greens and greys;
- In urban areas and on larger dwellings, greater use of Georgian and Victorian colours particularly on doors;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame; and
- Untreated oak.

Roofs

140 Orange clay tile

141 Red/orange clay tile

142 Flush ridge Thatch

143 Blue slate

Timber Finishes

144 Painted and stained timber windows

145 Ornate leaded casements

146 Georgian green door

147 Georgian porch

Walls

138 Berkshire orange brick with a variety of features including: blue headers and string course, buff detailing, diaper work and dentil and bottle work

139 Timber framing with brick, stone or render infill

E Vale of White Horse character

Zone 3: Rolling Farmland Villages:

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.74 Zone 3 stretches from Letcombe Regis in the west to Blewbury in the east, and from East Hendred in the north to the southern boundary of the Vale.

E.75 The Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand is a transitional landscape area, situated between the Chalk Downs and the flat Clay Vale. This area of Greensand becomes broader in the east of the District.

E.76 From Wantage to Blewbury, the Lower Chalk forms a broad plateau below the Downs which is particularly evident to the north of East Hendred Here, the landscape is dominated by open arable fields with limited hedgerows.

E.77 In other areas the Lower Chalk spreads out andcreates small valleys, forming an undulating landscape below the Downs, such as around the hamlet of Ginge.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.78 The villages in Zone 3 are situated at the edge of the northern scarp of the North Wessex Downs. They are located along a spring line running through an area of Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand.

E.79 The built environment in Zone 3 includes a mix of small hamlets and the second largest settlement in the Vale, Wantage

Zone 3

- Ardington
- Blewbury
- Childrey
- Chilton
- East Hendred
- Ginge
- Letcombe Regis
- Lockinge
- Sparsholt
- Upton
- West Hendred
- Wantage

150 View through East Hendred

151 Narrow timber framing

148 View from East Lockinge

149 The restored Childrey village pond

152 Ornate estate cottages

153 Timber frame and thatch

Zone 3: Settlements with distinct character

WANTAGE

E.80 The larger settlements in the Vale have individual characteristics which can differ from those of the zone in which they are located. Wantage has developed individual characteristics largely influenced by its history, location and size.

E.81 Wantage is the second largest settlement in the Vale. Originally a small Roman settlement, the town has changed dramatically over the centuries particularly with the arrival of the canal and railway and, in recent years, with the redevelopment of parts of the town centre.

E.82 The Uffington Brick and Tile Company provided a large quantity of bricks for Wantage in the 19th Century, which enabled the development of Victorian red-brick properties.

E.83 Traditional building materials in Wantage include orange brick (sometimes with blue headers) and render, with blue slate and plain clay tile roofs.

Roofs

158 **Orange clay tile**

159 **Clay tile - gabled**

160 **Thatch**

161 **Blue slate - steep pitch**

Timber Finishes

162 **Heritage green timber door and windows**

163 **Black stained timber**

Walls

154 **Commonly square or narrow Timber framing with patterned brick or rendered infill.**

155 **Berkshire orange facing brick with burnt or blue headers**

156 **Lime render**

157 **Weatherboard**

Zone 3: Palette of Materials

E.84 This zone has the most predominant use of timber framing and brick. Originally infilled with limewashed wattle and daub or early brick, however this was often replaced with modern brick or plaster.

E.85 The Victorian estate villages of Ardington and Lockinge often recreate the medieval timber framing, but within a highly decorative Gothic style.

E.86 A variety of building forms are found here with a mix of:

- Taller often deep plan cottages;
- Substantial detached 2-2.5 storey houses;
- Corner and 'L' shaped forms;
- Prominent steep pitch gables; and
- Jettied first floors.

E.87 **Walls:**

- Timber framing with either brick or lime render infill;
- Berkshire orange brick; and
- Frequent use of detailing - herringbone pattern.

168 Blue slate with small dormer

171 Orange/red plain clay tile - decorative ridge

169 Timber frame and render

172 Metal detailing reflecting historic former use

170 Original timber doors and windows are maintained

173 Contemporary window designs

165 Grove Street, Wantage

164 Imposing Georgian features

166 Harmonious Victorian street design

167 Industrial conversion

Zone 4: Chalk Villages along the Spring Line

E.88 Zone 4 stretches from the west of East Challow to Idstone. The villages open out to the south onto a steeply rising landscape with large open fields.

E.89 In other areas the Lower Chalk spreads out and with its small valleys forms an undulating landscape. Near Uffington the Lower Chalk narrows to form a ledge.

E.90 The Icknield Way runs at the foot of the Lower Chalk where the Chalk meets the Greensand. Watercourses drain from springs towards the River Ock.

E.91 The area around the Upper Greensand and the lower slopes of the Lower Chalk is characterised by considerable tree cover and a gentler landscape than the Upper Chalk Downland.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.92 Zone 4 is characterised by small settlements, with Uffington being the largest. The character of the villages is distinctly rural, typically comprising informal cottages and farmsteads, although some villages include large Manor houses.

174 View to White Horse Hill from north of Woolstone

175 Kingston Lisle

177 Woolstone

178 Uffington

179 Sarsen stone

176 Ashbury

E Vale of White Horse character

Zone 4: Palette of Materials

E.93 The most prominent material is local chalk blocks set on a foundation of sarsen stones. Sometimes sarsen stones alone make up the walls. As these are extremely difficult to cut, they are always laid as whole stones in a random uncoursed fashion.

E.94 Small 1.5-2 storey wide frontage cottages often with thatched roofs predominate.

E.95 **Walls:**

- Chalk block either regular sized and laid in courses or random sized and uncoursed;
- Sarsen stone mixed with other materials such as chalk or brick;
- Timber framing;
- Berkshire orange brick usually used for brick quoins and detailing around windows and doors and repairs to chalk;
- Colour washed lime render; and
- Weatherboard on outbuildings.

E.96 **Roofs:**

- Thatch with a plain, flush ridge;
- Red/orange clay tiles;
- Stone slates; and
- Blue slate.

E.97 **Fenestration and Doors:**

- Timber sash and casement, iron leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

E.98 **Timber Finishes:**

- The paint colour palette in rural areas is narrow, with white or pale colours such as greens and greys often with black contrasts;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame; and
- Untreated oak.

Walls

180 Examples of coursed chalk block and uncoursed chalk and sarsen stone construction

181 Timber frame and render often over chalk or stone

182 Brick repairs

183 Brick detailing

Roofs

184 Hipped thatch

185 Half hipped thatch

186 Stone slates

187 Red/orange clay tile

Timber Finishes

188 Cream painted door and railings

189 Pale green painted timber door

Zone 5: The Upper Chalk Downs

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.99 This zone is characterised by large open fields. There are numerous woodland areas, including mixed and deciduous plantations. Larger areas of deciduous woodland are found at the western end of the zone, in the vicinity of Ashdown Park, including some areas of ancient woodland.

E.100 The north-facing escarpment of the North Wessex Downs is prominent. The Ridgeway, Britain's oldest road, runs along the top of the Downs and includes a number of nationally important archaeological sites such as White Horse Hill and Waylands Smithy.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.101 Zone 5 is sparsely settled, with only one settlement of any size, Letcombe Bassett. The remaining built environment comprises a mix of farmsteads and the notable Ashdown House.

E.102 Ashdown House is constructed of chalk blocks with stone quoins. The building has Dutch and

E.103 French influences and its hipped roof is topped by two large chimneys and an octagonal cupola.

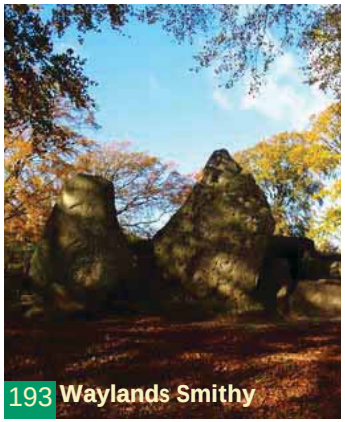
E.104 The house is unusually tall and narrow, which is emphasised by the openness of the landscape within which it is set, and includes a detached pavilion on each side.

Zone 3

Letcombe Bassett

190 White Horse Hill

192 Dragon Hill



193 Waylands Smithy

194 Ashdown House

191 Watchfield Windfarm from the Downs

E Vale of White Horse character

Zone 5: Palette of Materials

E.105 The most prominent material is timber framing infilled with either chalk, stone or render.

E.106 A rural, open zone which is contains predominantly farms and farm cottages.

E.107 Large detached farmhouses often set in a courtyard of associated outbuildings.

E.108 Small 1.5-2 storey wide frontage cottages often with thatched roofs.

E.109 **Walls:**

- Timber framing with chalk, stone or render infill;
- Chalk block random sized and uncoursed;
- Sarsen stone mixed with other materials such as chalk or brick;
- Weatherboard on outbuildings and extensions to cottages;
- North Wessex orange brick as a sole facing material usually on outbuildings or used in repairs; and
- Colour washed lime render.

E.110 **Roofs:**

- Thatch with a plain, flush ridge; and
- Red/orange clay tiles.

E.111 **Fenestration and Doors:**

- Timber sash and casement, iron leaded casement windows;
- Timber doors;
- Timber Finishes;
- The paint colour palette in rural areas is narrow, with white or pale colours such as greens and greys often with black contrasts;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame; and
- Untreated oak.

Walls

195 Timber frame with render or brick infill

196 Render often covers chalk or brick beneath

197 Uncoursed chalk with brick repairs

198 Replacement weather board

199 Weatherboard extension

200 Painted chalk & brick

201 Sarsen stone and flint

Roofs

202 Hipped thatch

203 Thatch and tile

204 Orange clay tile

205 Red/orange clay tile

Timber Finishes

206 Painted windows & stained door

207 Black and white painted windows