



# DESIGN, AMENITY AND SHOPFRONTS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Adopted July 2024

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# Section 1: Introduction

## Introduction:

Wyre Forest District is a considerably diverse area with particularly distinctive characteristics and heritage assets. It is important to aim for high quality design in any future development to both complement and enhance the local distinctiveness and create a high-quality environment.

Good design is essential for sustainable development, and it is recognised as a key contributor to community health, economic value, social well-being and inclusion, as well as environmental quality. Good design is needed to create places where people want to live, work and visit. Design is important everywhere, not only in maintaining places which are attractive, but also in revitalising and regenerating places. Good design is not just about individual buildings, but also about how places work as well as look.

The aim of this Supplementary Planning Document is to provide detailed advice on Wyre Forest District Council's expectations for the delivery of high-quality development. The SPD will clearly set out how the District Council's design policies should be interpreted. This will provide certainty and clarity for those bringing forward development within the District.

The SPD does not set new policy; it provides detailed guidance for implementing the design policies set out within the District's existing Local Plan. The SPD is a material consideration for anyone submitting a planning application. It is intended to be a practical and useful guide to design for all the key parties involved in the planning process. This supplementary planning document will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It should be read in conjunction with the adopted Local Plan to ensure adherence to Wyre Forest District and location specific policies.

### How should the Design and Place SPD be used?

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

### Pre-application advice

Pre-application engagement by prospective applicants offers significant potential to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system and improve the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success.

## Who will use the Design, Amenity and Shopfronts SPD?

### Applicants:

From householders looking for advice on how to extend their home, to professional developers and agents, this document is intended to provide clear guidance about what will be expected by Wyre Forest District Council.

### Planning Officers:

The SPD will be used by Wyre Forest District Council's Development Management Officers during the preapplication and planning application phase, ensuring consistency of guidance to potential applicants.

### Planning Committee:

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

**Planning and design process**  
Determine your path to planning approval

**Urban design principles**  
Understand our strategic objectives

**Understand local context**  
Understand the needs of your location

### Types of Development Covered within the SPD

- Residential amenity
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- Residential infill development
- Largescale residential development
- New Builds
- Employment Developments
- Existing Residential
- HMO standards
- Listed buildings and Conservation areas
- Shopfronts
- Advertisements
- Public Realm – Town Centres
- Development in the Green Belt

**Figure 1:** Process for using this SPD



**Figure 2:** Weaver's Wharf



**Figure 3:** Cookley



**Figure 4:** Wolverley Memorial Hall



# ≡ Policy Context

## Why is good design important?

Good design is so much more than aesthetics. Good design can radically enhance social, economic and environmental indices, creating sustainable developments which have significant positive impacts on both the lives of individuals and their wider communities (figure 5).

The importance of good design is addressed both within local Policy and within the NPPF.

Policy DM.24 in the Wyre Forest Local Plan sets out that ‘All development will be expected to be of a high design quality. It will need to integrate effectively with its surroundings, in terms of form and function, reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve, and where appropriate, enhance cultural and heritage assets, landmarks and their settings.’

Furthermore, the NPPF (2023) states that ‘the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.’

## Fitting in with other guidance

The SPD aims to provide guidance and clarity around the key Design policies in the WFDC Local Plan and provide detailed guidance to be used by applicants, Planning Officers and Committee Members throughout the planning process.

## How can applicants prove development is good design?

There are a range of tools available to guide the design of developments to ensure that the final product is of good quality. As set out in the NPPF, these tools and processes are of most benefit when applied early in the evolution of schemes to prompt discussions and refine options. They can be used to involve relevant stakeholders, including built environment and non-built environment professionals, decision makers and the local community.

Available tools include (but are not limited to):

- National Design Guide
- National Model Design Code
- Local design guides and codes
- Design review
- Assessment frameworks

These tools can be used by developers to help evolve and assess the design aspects of proposals, and for the purposes of community engagement.

## National Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework

## Guidance:

- Planning Practice Guidance
- National Design Guide (2021)
- National Model Design Code (2021)
- Building for Healthy Life – Homes England
- Building for Nature

## Wyre Forest District’s Policies:

Adopted Local Plan (2016- 2036)

## Relevant guidance:

- Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance (2011)
- Wyre Forest Cycle Strategy (2002)
- Public Realm Design Guide for Stourport on Severn (2006)
- Churchfields Masterplan SPD (2011)
- Health and Wellbeing SPD
- Housing SPD (2024)
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure SPD



Figure 5: The benefits of good design



# ≡ Design and Access Statements

## What is the role of Design and Access Statements in achieving well-designed places?

Design and Access Statements (DAS) set out the narrative for the design approach and design rational for the scheme. They demonstrate how the local character of an area has been considered and how design principles will be applied to achieve high quality design. They set out concisely how the proposal is a suitable response to the site and its setting, taking account of baseline information.

## What should be included in a Design and Access Statement accompanying an application for planning permission?

A Design and Access Statement must:

- (a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development; and
- (b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account.

A development’s context refers to the characteristics of the application site and its wider setting. These will be specific to the circumstances of an individual application and a Design and Access Statement should be tailored accordingly.

Design and Access Statements must also explain the applicant’s approach to access and how relevant Local Plan policies have been considered. They must detail any consultation undertaken in relation to access issues, and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the proposed development. Applicants must also explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the proposed development have been addressed.

## What should be included in a Design and Access Statement accompanying an application for listed building consent?

Design and Access Statements accompanying applications for listed building consent must include an explanation of the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed works, and how they have taken account of:

- (a) the special architectural or historic importance of the building;
- (b) the physical features of the building that justify its designation as a listed building; and
- (c) the building’s setting.

Unless the proposed works only affect the interior of the building, Design and Access Statements accompanying applications for listed building consent must also explain how issues relating to access to the building have been dealt with. They must explain the applicant’s approach to access, including what alternative means of access have been considered, and how relevant Local Plan policies have been considered. Statements must also explain how the applicant’s approach to access takes account of matters (a)-(c) above.

Design and Access Statements accompanying applications for listed building consent must provide information on any consultation undertaken, and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the proposed works. Statements must also explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the building have been addressed.

### Introduction and Vision

- Vision and background of the proposed development
- Wider context of the site
- Relevant planning and policy context

### Site Assessment

- Historic context
- Settlement character
- Landscape and Ecology
- Movement
- Summary of Analysis

### Design Evolution

- Strategic allocation concept
- Design concept plan
- Draft framework plan for stakeholder engagement and feedback
- Framework masterplan

### Design Principles

- Landscape and Ecology
- Access and movement
- Uses
- Building heights and density
- Phasing
- Character areas
- Illustrative masterplan

### Appendix

- Building for a Healthy Life assessment
- Building with Nature assessment

**Figure 6:** What to include in a Design and Access Statement

# ≡ Masterplans and Design Codes

## What are masterplans?

Masterplans set the vision and implementation strategy for a development. They are distinct from local design guides by focusing on site specific proposals such as the scale and layout of development, mix of uses, transport and green infrastructure. Depending on the level of detail, the masterplan may provide an indicative layout of buildings, streets and public realm. More specific requirements for the site's development may be set out in a design code and a series of parameter plans, which can accompany the overall masterplan. A range of other plans and technical reports may be needed alongside a masterplan, to provide supporting evidence and set out related proposals, such as a local character study, landscape assessment, transport assessment and proposals for securing biodiversity net gain. An implementation strategy could also be included, especially where development is expected to be brought forward in several phases.

## How can masterplans be used most effectively?

Masterplans help the Council to assess at an early stage in the development process the relationship between key design issues and how the provision and integration of key design elements can contribute to successful places. Masterplans can benefit from a collaborative approach between the local planning authority, site promoters and local communities so that aspirations and constraints are understood early on. Care should be taken to ensure that masterplans are viable and well understood by all involved and that graphic representations of what the development will look like do not mislead the public by showing inaccurate details or significant elements not yet decided upon.

## What should be presented on a Masterplan?

Existing:-

- Site Context i.e., surrounding permeability, services, landmarks, existing access connections
- Existing surrounding development

Proposed:-

- Perimeter blocks including mass, height, orientation block structure etc
- Proposed open space and landscaping
- Proposed access
- Proposed services
- Proposed location of the site and the boundaries of the development in relation to the surrounding areas of land
- Proposed surrounding development

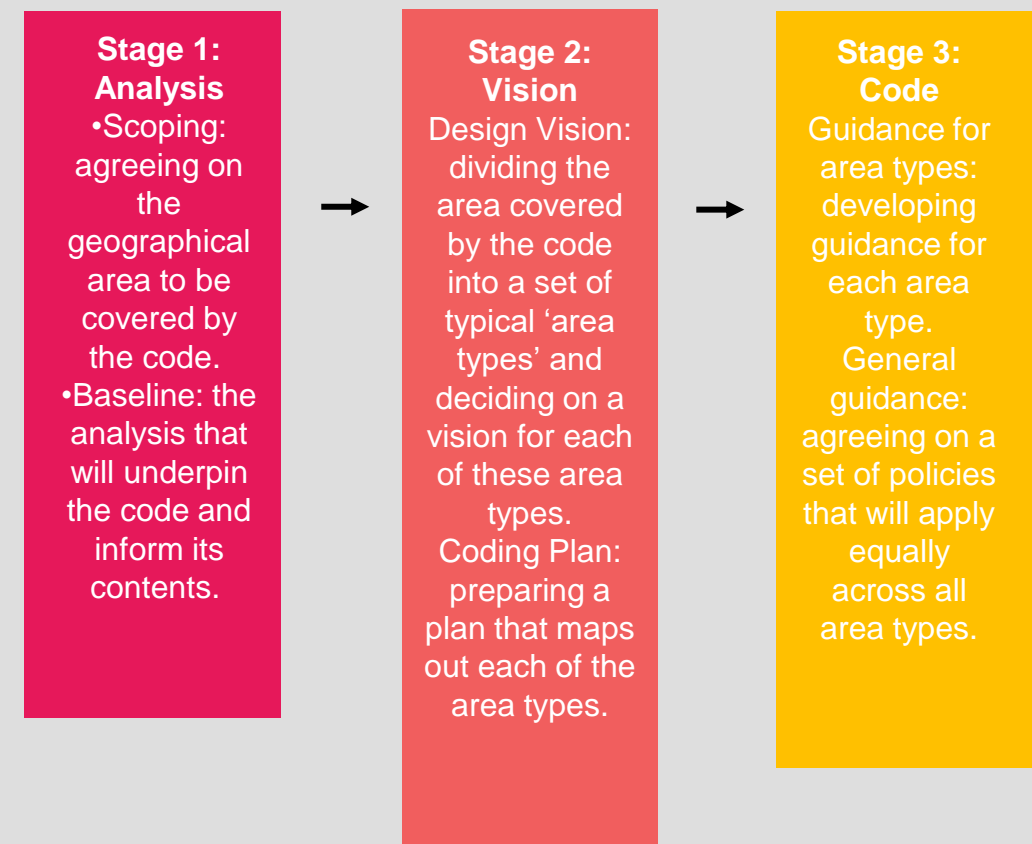
The masterplan should describe and map an overall development concept, including present and future land use, urban design and landscaping, built form, infrastructure, circulation and service provision. It is based upon an understanding of place, and it is intended to provide a structured approach to creating a clear and consistent framework for development. For more complex applications, the submission of material that shows design development and testing, including concepts or arrangements that have been pursued and subsequently discounted are particularly encouraged as this material will help to support decision making.

## What are Design codes

Design codes are a set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area. Their content should also be informed by the 10 characteristics of good places set out in the National Design Guide, and the National Model Design Code. WFDC require design codes to be used in considering custom and self-build and outline planning applications.



**Figure 7:** Indicative Masterplan: Silverwoods (Credit: Pegasus)

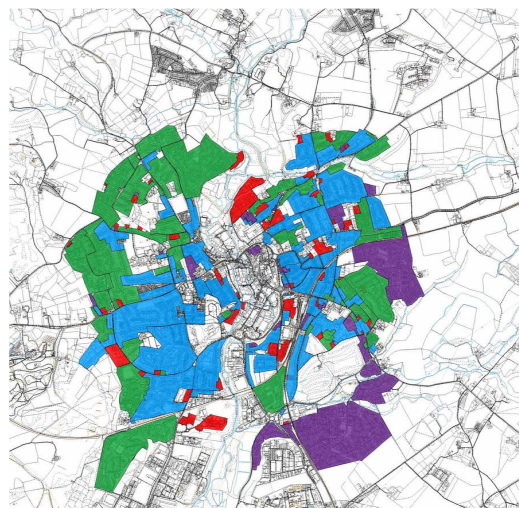
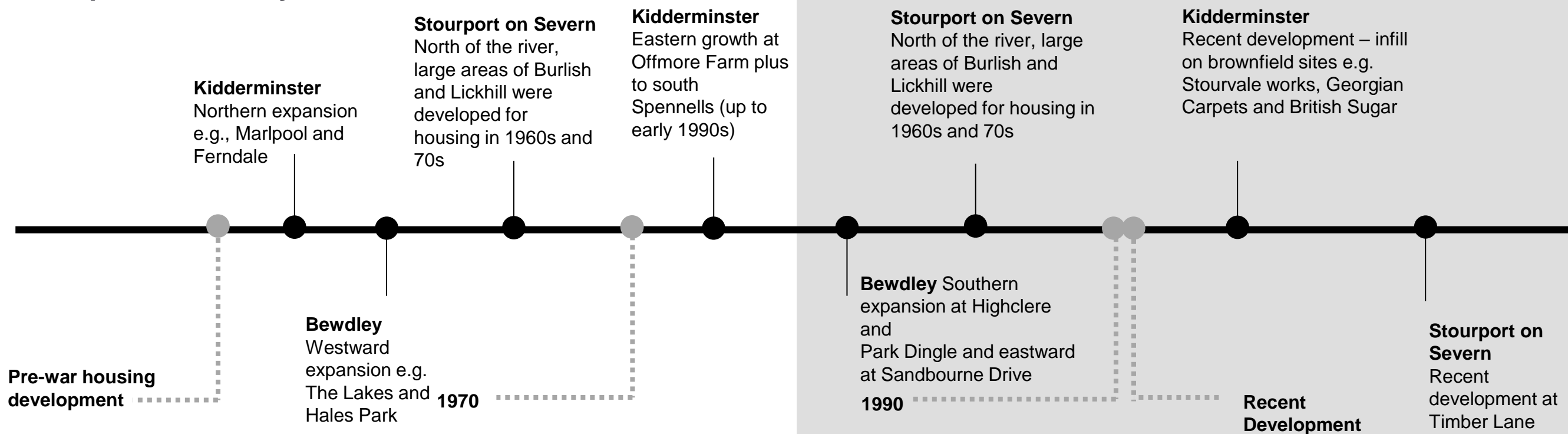


**Figure 8:** A breakdown of each stage when preparing a Design Code

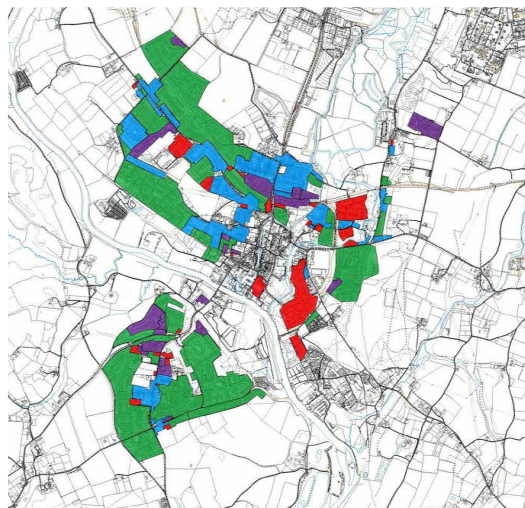


# Section 2: An Introduction to Wyre Forest:

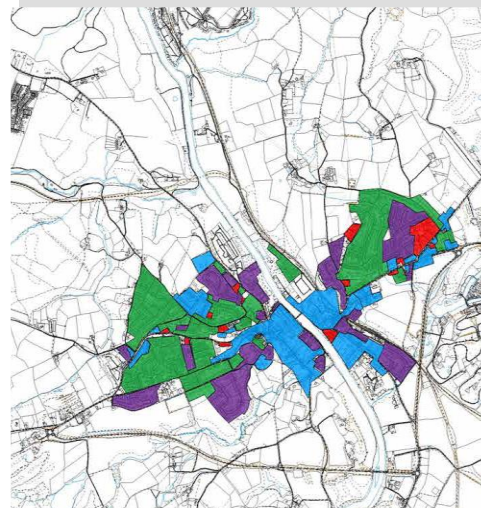
## Development within Wyre Forest District



Kidderminster



Stourport-on Severn



Bewdley

Wyre Forest's main towns have all seen significant expansion since the end of the war with large suburban estates being built on greenfield sites, especially in the 1950s and 1960s.

### Residential development since 1945

- Pre – War housing development
- 1946 – 1970 housing development
- 1971 – 1990 housing development
- Post 1990 housing development





# ≡ Areas of settlement

## Wyre Forest in Context:

Wyre Forest District is situated within the North of Worcestershire. Covering 75 sq. miles, it has a population of approximately 101,600 (2021) based on the 2021 census Office for National Statistics (ONS). The District comprises of three towns- Kidderminster, Stourport on Severn and Bewdley, together with a rural hinterland which includes several small villages. The three towns form a triangle of settlements at the centre of the District separated by narrow areas of open countryside. Despite their proximity, each has its own character and community identity.

## The three main towns; Kidderminster, Stourport on Severn and Bewdley:

Kidderminster (census 2021 pop. 57,400) is the main centre for commerce. It developed rapidly in the 19th Century with the expansion of the carpet industry to become a world leading centre for carpet production. Since the 1970s the town’s carpet industry has been in decline and a gradual process of economic diversification has taken place.

Stourport on Severn (census 2021 pop. 20,653) developed as an important industrial Georgian Canal Town at the confluence of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and the River Severn. For over 100 years this attractive town with its riverside meadows has been a popular day trip destination for residents from Birmingham and the Black Country.

Bewdley ( census 2021 pop. 9,300) is a Georgian riverside town, which saw significant development during the 1960s. Today Bewdley is an attractive historic market town and a popular visitor destination.

## Rural Settlements:

The District’s rural settlements surround the 3 main towns. To the east, the larger, generally, more accessible settlements include Chaddesley Corbett, Blakedown, Cookley, Fairfield and Wolverley. Whilst to the West of the River Severn the smaller settlements of Clows Top, Far Forest, Callow Hill, Bliss Gate and Rock provide limited services to rural residents. The rural areas are influenced by the adjacent conurbation in terms of attractiveness for commuting and house prices here are generally high.

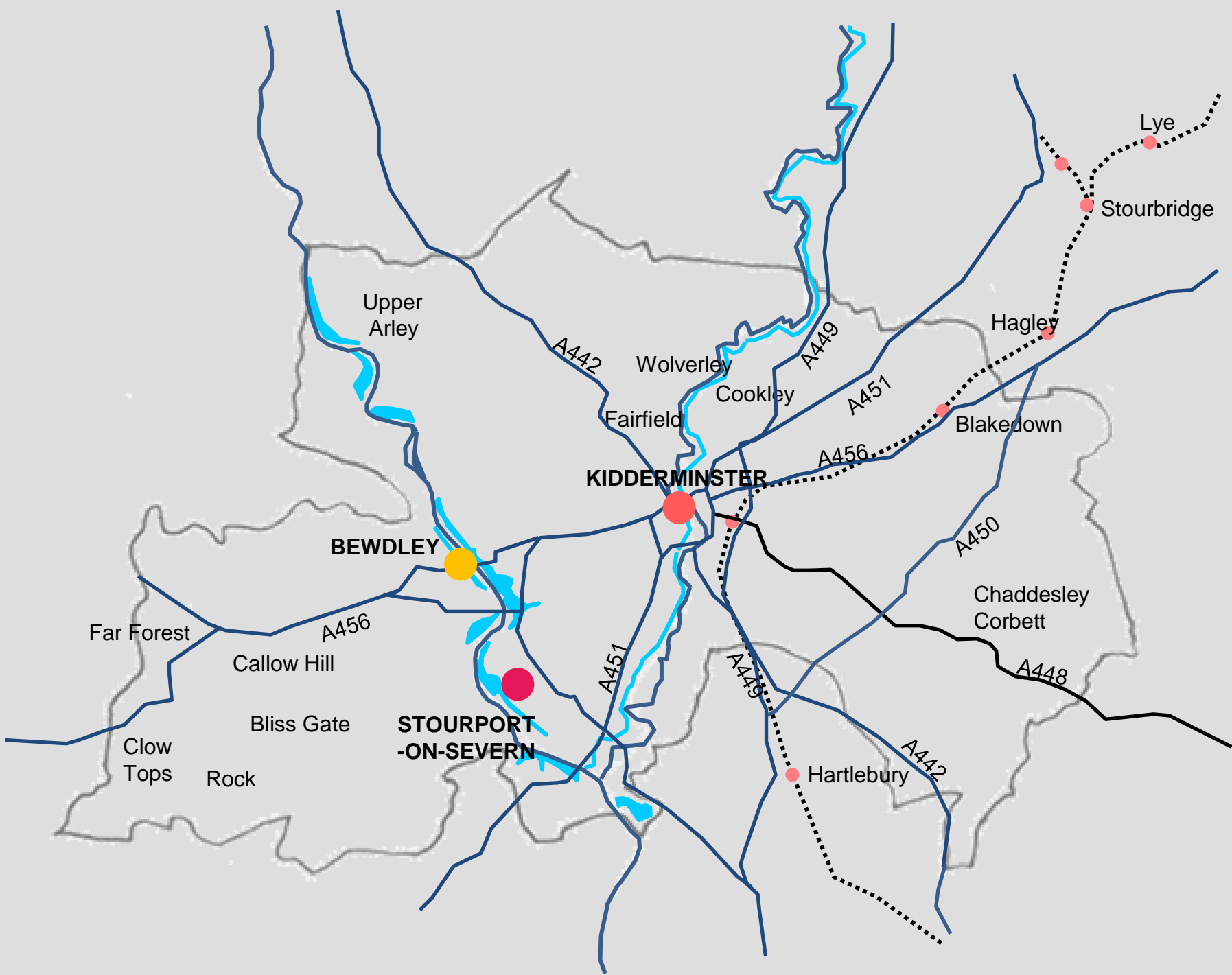


Figure 9: Wyre Forest District Map

# ≡ Heritage and Local Distinctiveness

The heritage of an area brings with it challenges. Proposals need to respond to the setting of heritage assets, whether specific or area based. This can include statutory assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings and archaeological designations, but also locally important assets.

The heritage of the area can help inform new development, but this does not mean a literal interpretation through pastiche development.

### Conservation areas:

There are 17 Conservation Areas within the district, one covers much of Bewdley town centre, 4 in Stourport-on-Severn, 4 in Kidderminster, 7 in rural settlements and a linear one covering the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. Character Appraisals for these Conservation Areas are available on the website.

### Listed and locally listed buildings:

There are over 650 listed buildings within the Wyre Forest, as defined by Historic England. Please refer to the Historic England website ([Search the List - Find listed buildings, monuments, battlefields and more | Historic England](#)) for more information.

### Carpet and Music Heritage:

Kidderminster is best known for its carpet manufacturing industry which started around 1735 and became world famous for its quality. The carpet industry was the town’s main employer with over 20,000 workers, until its gradual decline in the 1970s.

Kidderminster however has another strong cultural past as a major musical hub of the 60s and 70s with the Town Hall and Frank Freeman’s Dance Hall playing host to major up and coming bands, boasting an impressive line-up including Captain Beefheart, Manfred Mann and Led Zeppelin's front man Robert Plant.

Whilst Kidderminster benefits from major new developments, its industrial heritage should not be forgotten. Some of the Carpet factory buildings are listed and have been brought back into alternative uses and the Museum of Carpet provides an educational day out for anyone interested in how it all began. It’s also important to ensure the rich musical heritage is not lost and future generations can appreciate how Kidderminster has contributed to musical history. Along with Kidderminster’s evolving identity an arts and music heritage will entwine the past, present and future, promoting the reuse of key buildings and enriching the fabric of the public realm in a dynamic multi-media explosion.

## Conservation Areas within Stourport- on -Severn

- Areley Kings
- Gilgal
- Stourport-on-Severn 1
- Stourport-on-Severn 2

## Conservation Areas within Kidderminster

- Blakebrook
- Church Street
- Green Street
- Vicar Street

## Other Conservation Areas

- Bewdley
- Broome
- Chaddesley Corbett
- Churchill
- Harvington
- Ribbesford
- Wolverly
- The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

Figure 10: Conservation Areas within Wyre Forest



Figure 11: Kidderminster Music Heritage Trail



Figure 12: Kidderminster Museum of Carpet

# ≡ Key Issues

## Health and Environmental:

The design of the built environment can have a significant impact on both physical and mental wellbeing. Well-designed built environment can help to reduce health inequalities in Wyre Forest; while poor environmental quality, housing conditions or pollution can exacerbate them

Planning will investigate 'designing in health' into our environments to promote and encourage physical exercise and psychological wellbeing and improve cognitive functioning.

This can include the overall quality of public spaces, from street layouts and connectivity, green infrastructure/ landscaping, and traffic calming measures, to a person's interaction with the surrounding cultural and historic environment. The quality of the public realm is vitally important for both mental and physical health.

## Social:

Design has a direct effect on the society in which we live in. From how it makes people feel, to making our lives better and easier. Well-designed spaces mean that spaces are safe and inclusive, are built to a good quality and are sustainable, which increases the urban vitality.

## Economic:

When good design is prominent, it can have a direct impact on the overall commercial property value. Well designed places generally will have a greater economic value. From a public realm perspective, consumers are more likely to be enticed into spending when an area is fit for purpose and designed well.

The district's assets are fundamental to the character of the district, but within the asset themes are embedded difficulties which speak to the diversity and differences that are found across the District

There are tensions and inequalities that exist within the district that new development should help to address, including the quality of and access to green space, areas of multiple deprivation, access to public transport, barriers, walking and cycling, as well as an incremental erosion of character through alterations to buildings or the street scene. This Design SPD draws upon on these elements as a basis for directing future growth in a way that is context-led and sustainable.

## Natural assets

Improving access to green spaces will contribute to improved health levels, with increased physical activity and active travel. This would further help improve disparities in outcomes in health in Wyre Forest.

## History and heritage

Whilst there are 17 Conservation Areas, some of those see limited investment or management. The limited designations combined with financial and viability disparities mean there are inequalities of quality of design within the conservation areas.

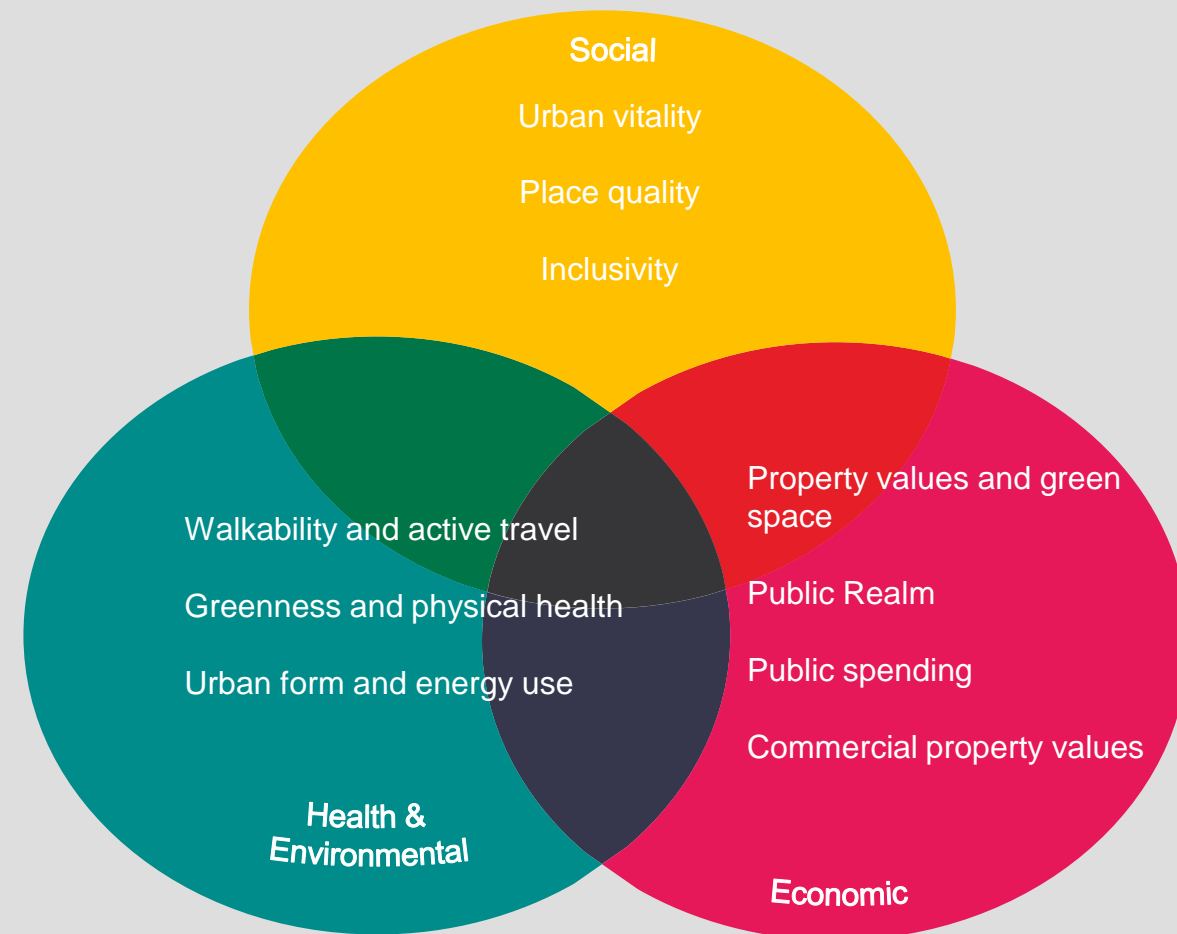
## Diverse communities

Wyre Forest District has a diverse community. Health statistics reveal real disparities across the district – with the highest deprivation rates falling within Birchen Coppice, Stourport, Areley Kings and Kidderminster Town (Census, 2021). These nuances and diversity in character must underpin future change and investment to ensure it brings greatest benefit.

## Permeability

Car travel had been replacing short journeys for decades as it can be seen as more convenient, and people now tend to travel longer distances. This has been a trend for 40 years and is connected to a decline in physical activity .

This decline in physical activity is a factor in health outcomes for Wyre Forest residents. Life expectancy is 8.4 years lower for men and 11.7 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Wyre Forest than in the least deprived areas (Wyre Forest Health Profile Nov 2019). Therefore, it will be imperative for all new developments to achieve maximum permeability and connectivity through sites that promotes sustainable and active modes of travel.



**Figure 13:** Summary of Social, Economic and Environmental Aspects of Sustainable Development within Wyre Forest



# ≡ Wyre Forest's Best Assets

The previous pages explored the character of Wyre Forest and showcased some of the assets that Wyre Forest has to offer. Some of the key ones that help to encapsulate Wyre Forest's distinctiveness include:

## **Natural assets**

Wyre Forest's waterways and green spaces provide spots for rest and recreation, as well as supporting a diverse ecological network and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs). There is an opportunity to restore and improve access to green spaces and along waters, to re-wild and help nature recovery to take its course through connecting green spaces, and for any new riverside development to contribute positively to its setting

## **History and heritage assets**

There is an opportunity to properly appreciate what already exists in Wyre Forest. Re-purposing underused buildings or taking cues from the area's past to inform the design of new high-quality development. More broadly, there is an opportunity to conserve and enhance historic areas through targeted intervention.

## **Local distinctiveness**

There are three thriving towns with their own distinctive identity. Kidderminster benefits from extensive brownfield sites presenting opportunities including for canal and riverside regeneration. Stourport-on-Severn riverside and the historic canal basins have been fully restored and attract high visitor numbers; Bewdley's flourishing riverside environment offers many opportunities for visitors. The local distinctiveness should be used as a starting point for any future growth.

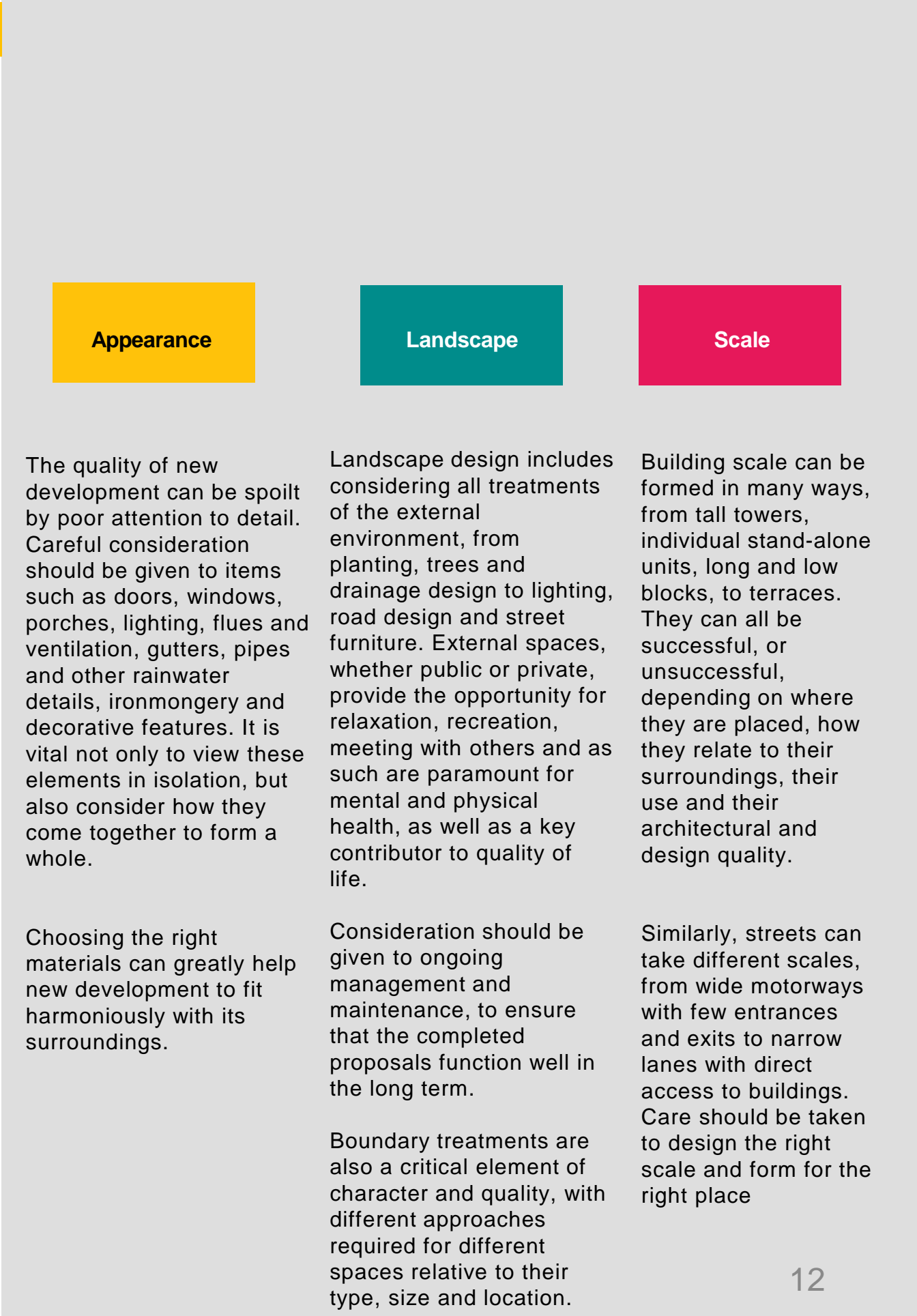
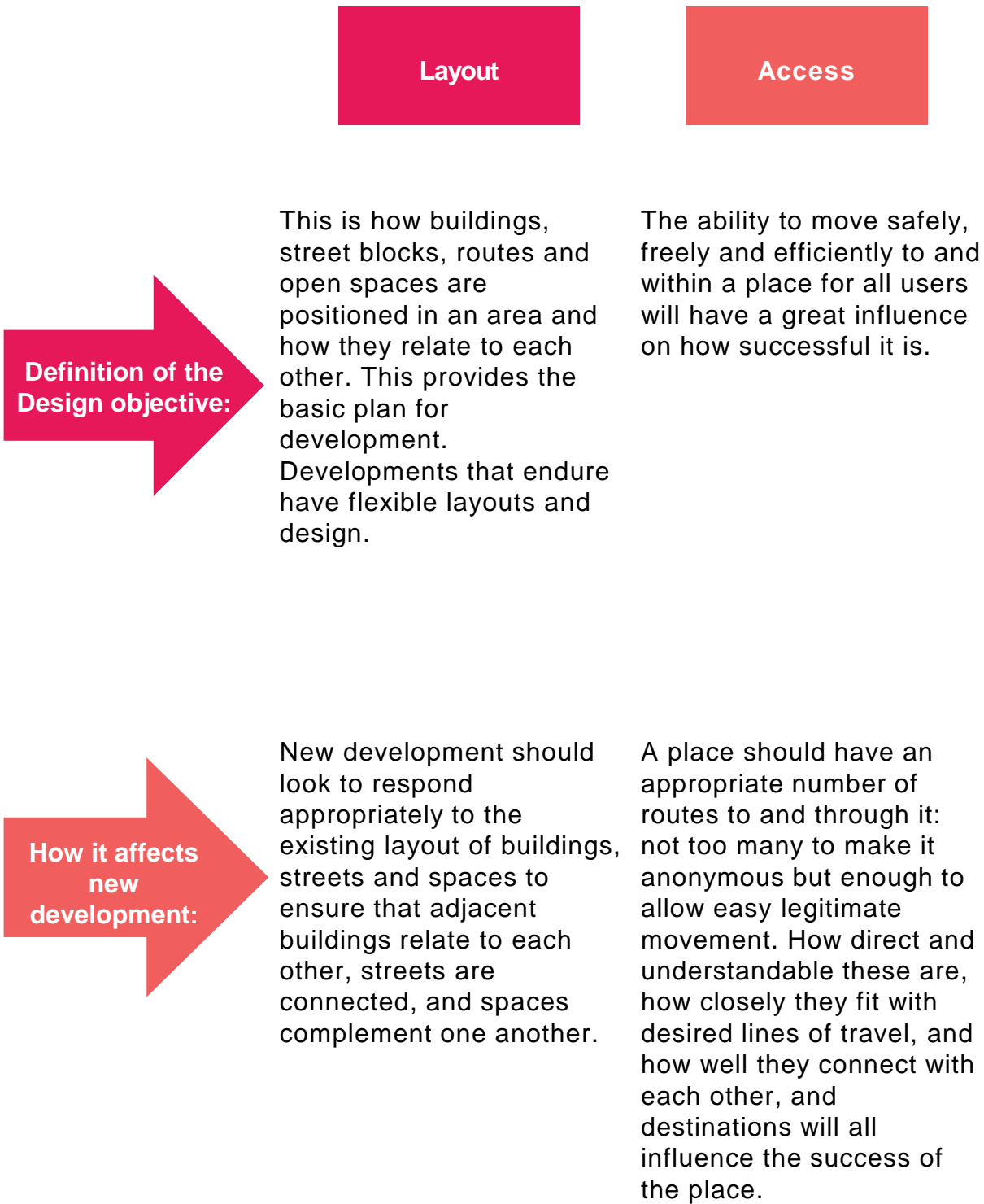
All new developments should take opportunities to integrate existing and new green infrastructure from the outset.





# Design Objectives

The following objectives should be strongly considered and implicated throughout the new development, to enable good design to be present.



# ≡ Sustainable Design Objectives

Future growth should be sustainable. The following design objectives will allow for sustainable measures to be carefully planned and considered early on during the development stage.

## Low carbon

## Energy and resource efficiency

## Water efficiency and management

## Wyre Forest’s existing assets, should be retained, re-used and enhanced.

Definition of the Design objective:

How can it affect new development:

Reducing the need to travel and providing for sustainable transport / active travel, including pedestrian routes, cycleways (and supporting infrastructure) and public transport.

- Incorporate opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies, including electric charging points, air and ground source heat pumps, PV Panels
- Provide opportunities for decentralised energy and heating within masterplans
- Promote low carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in buildings, such as passive solar design

Consideration of building layout and orientation to maximise solar gain and minimise need for heat, also to aid overheating where necessary. Reduce the need for waste through efficient processes

- Utilise insulation and draught proofing in buildings, designing for air tightness
- Provide fresh air through mechanical ventilation and ability to open windows
- Utilise low carbon energy and heating
- Specify energy efficient appliances
- Incorporate eaves that overhang south facing glazed elevations.
- Orientate gardens/communal gardens to obtain maximum sunlight.

Building in flexibility to allow future adaptation if it is needed due to factors such as climate change. Rainfall is increasing in short term intensity and surface water management should take this into account This can include implementing measures such as:

- Larger pipework on buildings
- setting back new development from rivers so that it does not make it harder to improve food defences in future
- Use of permeable surface materials to reduce run off and increase in flood risk
- Provide water efficient appliances
- Use of appropriate SUDs that relate and function well for the site.

Existing buildings, including both designated and non-designated heritage assets, should be retained, re-used and enhanced, informed by whole life carbon assessment. Existing greenery should be retained and enhanced.

Modern high-quality proposals that provide a thoughtful and sensitive response to retaining and enhancing the existing historic fabric and public realm will be supported.



# ≡ Understanding the Local Context

## Introduction:

There are many different types of site in Wyre Forest, each with their specific characteristics and considerations.

All proposals will need to be developed in accordance with the Wyre Forest District Council’s Local Plan. Where proposals do not comply, applicants will need to provide robust justification. Applicants will need to demonstrate how the scheme meets good design standards and does not adversely impact the local character nor compromise the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties.

## Common consideration for all:

The National Design Guide (2021) features Ten Characteristics of well- designed places which cover all aspects concerning good planning and design. These characteristics present a holistic set of principles and criteria that Council officers will use as a benchmark to assess planning applications. Therefore, it is important for applicants to consider and address each of these categories directly through their design proposals.

The ten characteristics cover a range of development opportunities ( such as infill, new- build or retrofit) at a number of spatial scales, from small and infill sites to major regeneration sites and Opportunity Areas.

## Positive response to context

To draw value from this analysis, proposals should demonstrate how they respond to the local features and distinctiveness of the neighbourhood and aim to enhance these. Proposals should demonstrate how they have been influenced by constraints and opportunities.

Further information on how the ten characteristics can be incorporated into new developments is set out in the National Model Design Code (2021).

CONTEXT

☐ Enhances the surroundings.

IDENTITY

☐ Attractive and distinctive.

BUILT FORM

☐ A coherent pattern of development.

MOVEMENT

☐ Enhanced and optimised.

NATURE

☐ Accessible and easy to move around.

PUBLIC SPACES

☐ Safe, social and inclusive.

USES

☐ Mixed and integrated.

HOMES AND BUILDINGS

☐ Functional, healthy and sustainable.

RESOURCES

☐ Efficient and resilient.

LIFESPAN

☐ Made to last.

Figure 14: Checklist for well-designed places

# ≡ Residential Amenity

## Introduction

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

## Definition of ‘Residential Amenity’:

In the context of the SPD, the definition of residential amenity is considered as;

*‘the benefit enjoyed from physical external space which is part of the private home.’*

The benefit enjoyed depends on the quality of space. The level of enjoyment is also dependent on a number of factors, including location, size, orientation, accessibility, site levels and enclosure. The following provides guidance on how to ensure neighbouring amenity is protected, however every case will be considered on its individual merits.

## Back to side distances:

A primary window serving a habitable room should not be less than 12.5m minimum distance between windowed elevations and opposing 1 and 2 storey flank walls (15.5m for 3 storey flank walls).  
An exception to this rule is in an urban location where it may be acceptable to have a reduced distance where issues of amenity and overlooking are dealt with by good design. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## Back-to-back distances:

Back-to-back distances should be 21m between building faces for 2 storey dwellings and 27.5m for 3 storeys and above and /or where main living room/kitchen windows above ground level overlook existing conventional dwellings.

The separation distance should be increased by 2 metres for every 1 metre rise in ground level between new and existing dwellings. This standard will be more strictly applied at the rear of the building. Single storey development is not so critical in terms of overlooking from upper storeys and will be judged on its merits.

There should be a 5m per storey set back where new development with habitable windows overlooking existing private space is proposed. This applies independently of the minimum spatial separation requirement.

## Garden proportions:

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

- 70sqm: three-bedroom house.
- 50sqm: two-bedroom house
- 10sqm per apartment for communal gardens: unless the site is easily accessible by foot to a public park or is located within a town centre

## Daylight/sunlight

Taller buildings can adversely affect the light to adjacent buildings, and the blocking of light to the windows should be avoided.

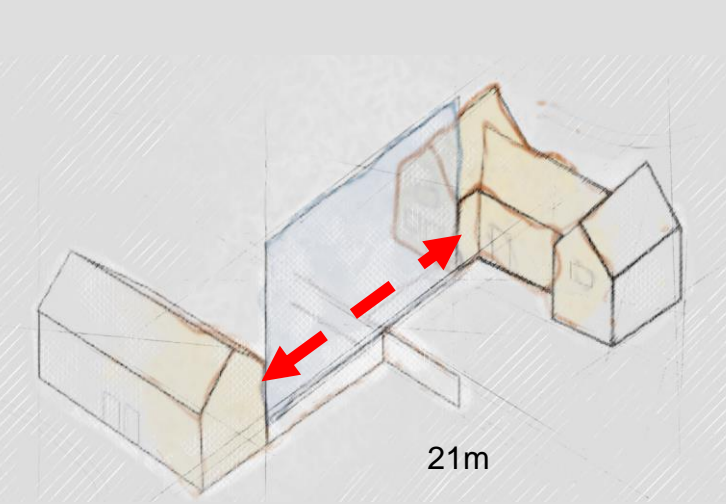
Sun path diagrams can be submitted with planning applications if there is potential impact to the daylight/sunlight of adjoining properties.

## Retaining Walls

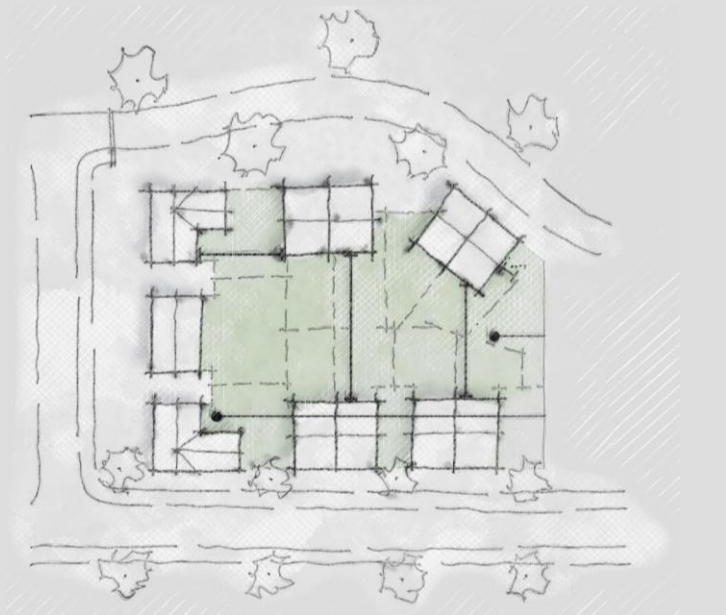
Retaining walls in residential developments should be accompanied with landscaping to avoid any negative visual impact.

Excessively tall retaining walls should be avoided in most cases. Where it is not possible to avoid this, the retaining wall should be well screened by landscaping or vegetation to reduce the visual impact of the wall. It should also be ensured that changes in levels on a development site do not result in a detrimental impact on overlooking and privacy for residents. Boundary fences above retaining walls should be avoided.

The layout of new developments should provide active frontages with habitable rooms facing on to the road and new rear gardens should back on to other rear gardens to ensure secure and well-enclosed private realm and to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties (as shown in **figures 15 and 16**).



**Figure 15:** Demonstration of separation distances for two storey buildings



**Figure 16:** Creation of secure private gardens, enclosed behind buildings.

Size of property	Minimum garden size (sq.m)
2-bedroom house	50
3 bedroom house	70
Apartments	10 per apartment for communal garden

# ≡ 45 Degree Code

All developments should accord with the 45 degree code in order to ensure the development does not result in a serious adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents or occupiers in accordance with Policy DM.25.

The 45° code is applied for planning applications for new extensions to existing properties which could result in the outlook or daylight to a habitable room from a neighbouring property being negatively impacted upon. The code ensures consistency and fairness between applicants and protects the existing amenity of existing occupiers.

Loss of light and overshadowing to neighbouring occupiers are important considerations in designing new development, especially in respect of extensions to existing buildings. In designing a new development or extension to a building or a dwelling house, care needs to be taken to safeguard the daylight to adjacent residential properties and protect them from overshadowing. The quality of daylight received by properties adjoining development sites can be severely restricted by buildings or extensions which are too close to the boundary or project too far into rear gardens

## Habitable Rooms

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

It will normally be unacceptable to design an extension with chamfered corners, asymmetrical roof etc. simply to avoid the 45° line as this leads to poor design. Please note that applications must satisfy other design principles as well as just the 45° code.

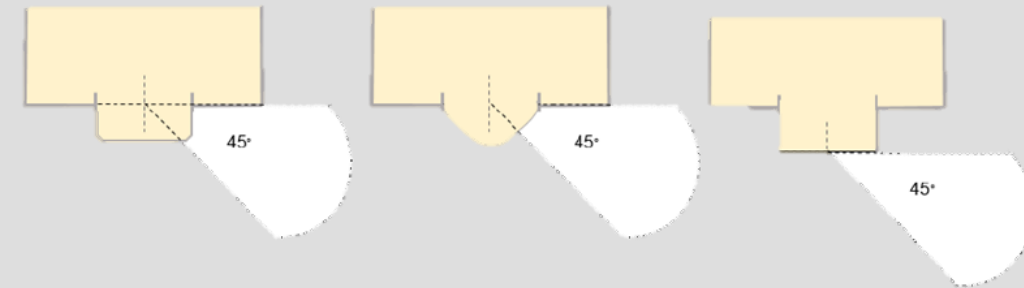
Where the neighbouring property has a conservatory or similar immediately adjacent to the boundary, the 45° line should be drawn at the centre of the original opening. Similarly where bay or bow windows are affected the line is drawn from the mid point at cill level at the back of the window where it joins the main wall.

The 45° code needs to be applied carefully and flexibly. We will take account of the particular circumstances at each site which might include orientation, differences in levels, existing structures, brick boundary walls (although not fences or vegetation which are less permanent than walls) and the distance between the affected window and the extension.

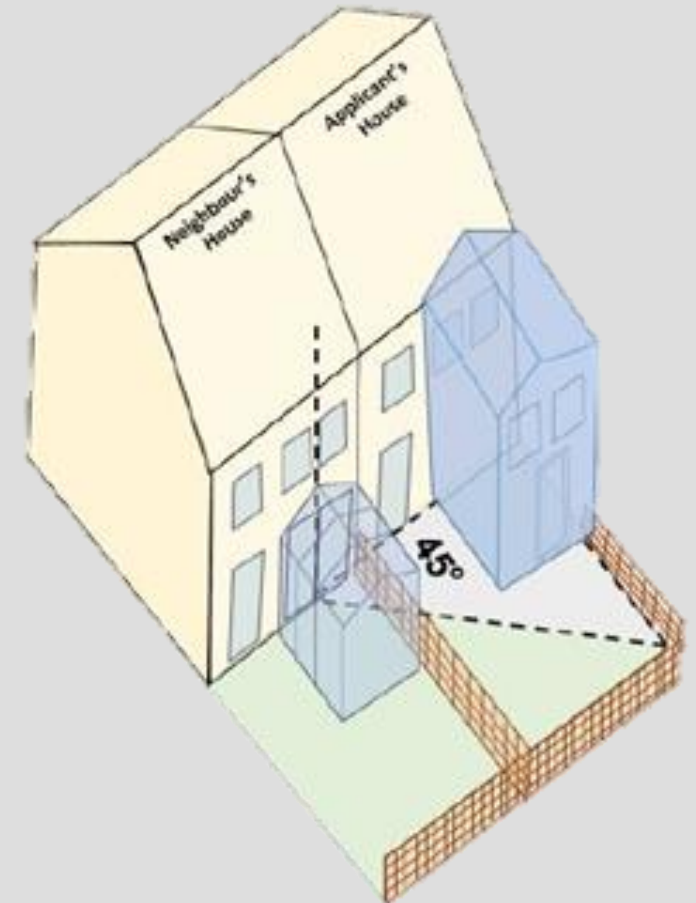
**As part of the validation process for residential applications we require a site layout plan demonstrating the 45° code. This measurement should be taken from the centre point of the nearest habitable room window of the neighbouring property.**

### For all extensions:

If the proposed extension crosses the 45° code it will result in a conflict with Policy DM.25. Any departures from the local plan will only be accepted where it can be demonstrated that there would be no serious adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers or there is a realistic fallback position.



**Figure 17:** Where to take a 45° code from on different examples



**Figure 18:** 45°code shown as an axonometric



# ≡ Detailing

## Design quality and appearance

The architectural approach to a design can result in markedly different results using the same masterplan, from a very traditional through to a contemporary aesthetic. Attention to detail in the design of individual building components through to the collection of features within a streetscene is critical, together with the selection of high quality materials that will weather well and have long life spans. Consideration should be given to the ongoing maintenance of the streetscene from the outset.

## Boundary treatment

Boundary hedgerows are a significant feature of local character, the loss of which can have a highly detrimental impact on local distinctiveness. Reflecting local boundary treatments, such as brick or stone walls, hedgerows, railings or of landscape features can provide a beneficial means of integrating new development into the existing environment and can be critical in the overall creation of character within a scheme. Please see page 31 for examples of boundary treatments.

Fencing is often selected as a cost effective means of creating a boundary treatment. Consideration should be given to its potential negative impact on the wider streetscene, particularly where this would entirely block through views and create dead frontages. Close boarded fencing on prominent corners, frontages and along highway corridors will be resisted in accordance with Policy DM.26.

## Materials:

Where a property is proposed to be extended, proposals should utilise materials that either match those of the existing dwelling, or add to the quality of the design.

A wide range of building materials are available, both new and reclaimed, to enable a suitable match to be found, for example to replicate brick, tile or slate from an existing building. Reference should be made to the local context in material selection.

Care should be given to the selection of the type, colour and size of bricks, roof tiles, mortar colour, lintels, sills and heads. Planning conditions to specify a palette of materials will be utilised where considered appropriate.

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

New and innovative design would be supported on a case-by-case basis when it is appropriate in terms of the local context and enhances the overall quality of the built environment in line with Policy DM.24



**Figure 19:** 2 Images of Silverwoods Estate, Kidderminster



# ≡ Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

There is an increasing drive to address climate change by introducing more renewable energy initiatives throughout new developments.

Policy SP.37 in the Wyre Forest Local Plan sets out that all new developments, and where possible redevelopment of existing buildings, should consider location, design, siting and orientation to maximise the use of natural heat and light and the potential for renewable energy micro-generation.

This means that the incorporation of renewable energy measures should be considered from the outset when designing new proposals to ensure that the layout will provide opportunities for measures such as solar panels.

Maximising solar gain, can reduce the need for artificial lighting and thus reduce carbon use. South or west facing roofs allow for electricity generation via photo-voltaic panels.

The policy also requires that all new residential, employment or commercial developments should include electric vehicle charging points. These should be designed into an accessible location and should ensure that they do not create an obstacle to block pathways.

Applicants should also consider opportunities to incorporate features such as air source and ground source heat pumps. Heat pumps are an environmentally friendly low maintenance alternative to regular combustion boilers so incorporating these from the initial design stage of proposals would be supported.

Solar water heating systems are another option to incorporate into new schemes. They use the sun's thermal energy to heat water. The technology is well developed with a large choice of equipment to suit many applications. Ideally the collectors should be mounted on a south-facing roof, at an angle of between 10 to 60°. The panels can be bolted onto the roof or integrated into the roof with lead flashings.

## **Stand Alone Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes**

With the exception of wind turbines (see below), proposals for stand-alone renewable and other low carbon energy schemes are welcomed and will be considered favourably having regard to the provisions of other relevant policies in the Plan. These should be appropriately design to blend with the existing landscape as much as possible.



**Figure 20:** Example of an Air Source Heat Pump: Photo credit Nu-Heat



**Figure 21:** Solar Panels photo credit: Worcestershire County Council



# Section 4: Residential Infill Development

## Infill Development

Infill development comprises residential developments of up to 6 dwellings situated between existing dwellings, where the new plot has a direct road frontage. All infill developments will need to accord with Policy DM.2 of the Wyre Forest Local Plan.

Infill development can be a useful way of enhancing a streetscene and using land more efficiently in line with the objectives of the NPPF. However, if designed unsympathetically, it can result in a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of an area and result in undue harm to neighbouring amenity.

Within residential areas as identified in Policy DM.2, proposals for infill development will be supported when:

- There is no significant adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring property.
- There would be no significant adverse impact on the character of the area;
- A safe convenient and environmentally acceptable access approach, which has a clear presence in the streetscene, can be provided.

The diagram on the right provides a flow chart on how to ensure that developments relate well and reinforce the local context.

## Subdivision of Existing Plots

The subdivision of existing residential plots should create a new plot that is a similar size and shape to neighbouring plots.

The siting of the new dwelling(s) should also follow the existing building line within the street and similar parking arrangements to reinforce the character and appearance of the area.

## Design Checklist

The following key questions can be used by designers as a checklist when considering new backland and infill development.

It may be helpful to assess each element of the checklist and confirm whether a proposed scheme offers either a positive, neutral or negative response against each of these areas, providing a narrative associated with each element assessed to explain the designer's response:



# Section 5: Major Residential Development

## Introduction and Vision Statement

### Introduction:

Major residential developments are mainly sites that have been allocated from Wyre Forest District's Local Plan. Residential development can relate to both brownfield and greenfield land.

### Definition of 'major' development:

Major development can usually be defined as development of 10 or more residential dwellings and offer the opportunity to create new neighbourhoods with character.

### Site description:

Major developments are usually parcels of land which have been identified to support the housing need within the District.

### Key issues:

New homes in these locations will need to mitigate vibration, noise and air pollution from industrial or transport-related activities, particularly in relation to living rooms and amenity spaces. These sites vary in size and potential capacity, but each have similar constraints, often with limited access and street-facing frontages. See Policy SP.33 - Pollution and Land Instability for further guidance.

This section provides guidance on how to achieve good quality design in new largescale residential development. A summary of the process is as followed:

- Appreciating and assessing the existing context
- Create a vision
- Create a concept plan
- Play parks
- Parking, refuse and cycle storage

### Appreciating and assessing the existing context

The Council will require developers to consider the appropriate design response to the defining characteristics of that area, this can be done by producing a Constraints Plan.

The aim of a Constraints Plan is to ensure that local distinctiveness and character is maintained and to make the most efficient use of land, whilst allowing for high quality contemporary and innovative design.

An understanding of the following issues should be gained, as a minimum:

- Natural features including landscape, topography, ecology, trees and hedgerows, hydrology
- Human impact including boundaries, noise, settlement pattern, archaeology, place names
- Buildings and structures, including colours, materials, details, age, pattern, quality
- Movement patterns, including public transport, cycle routes, footpaths, roads, site access and parking
- Legibility, including the site's image, local views, strategic views, landmarks, nodes, gateways, barriers
- Adaptability and resilience, considering the site's ability to change
- Integration and efficiency, considering how the site can maximise use of sustainable energy and minimise resource consumption and waste

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

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

Conserve

Enhance

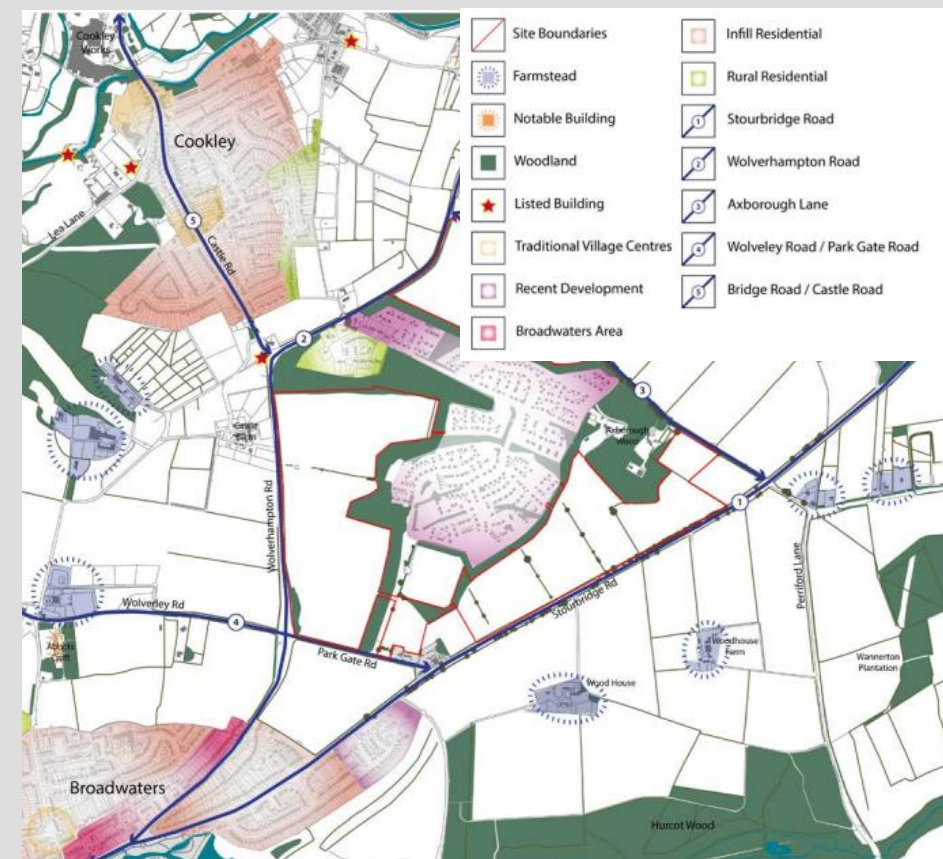
Transform

Indication of where largescale residential developments fall within the growth spectrum

### Vision:

The starting point for any design should be a clear vision of the type of place you wish to create. This can be expressed in a number of ways, including:

- Vision statement
- Use of appropriate design precedents
- Setting out how the site will interact with its existing context



**Figure 22:** Existing Character Analysis Plan by AFL Architects



# ≡ Concept Plan

## Create a concept plan:

After establishing a site vision, a concept plan should be created and ideally agreed with the planning department, allowing further design development to take place without the need for costly and time-consuming work.

The concept plan should include the following features, as a minimum:

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



**Figure 23:** Example of Potential Features within a Concept Plan

# Play Parks

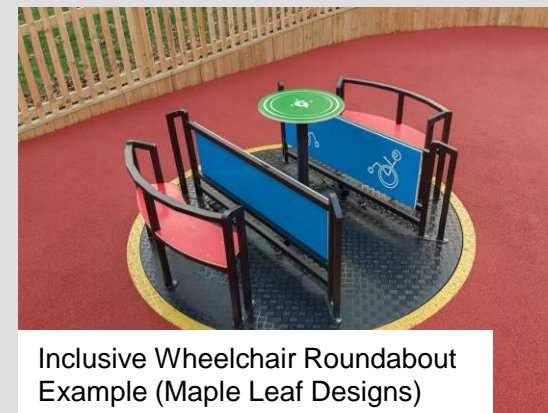
Play areas designed as part of new housing developments have an important role in ensuring that appropriate play provision is included for both new and existing residents in the area. Play parks provide a central hub for children to spend time outdoors engaging in fun physical activities. Therefore, it is important to ensure that they are well designed and inclusive for all to enjoy.

## Design Considerations

When designing a play park, consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Use of materials
- Amount of play equipment available
- Ensuring a good variety of different equipment types.
- Safety and security for children using the park
- Accessibility and inclusivity of the park for different user groups.

The design of the play park should be well thought out and the use of themes within play park design are encouraged. Any design linkages to the context of the local area and its history are also encouraged.



**Figure 24:** Examples of play parks within Wyre Forest



# ≡ Parking, Refuse and Cycle Storage

## Parking:

Parking should be detailed to ensure that a sufficient level of parking is provided in a manner which does not dominate the street scene nor impact upon built environment. For example:

- Driveways
- Detached and integral garages
- On street
- Parking bays etc

Before new parking is to be created, developers should refer to the site context to assess the parking arrangements. Where parking is provided, opportunities should be taken to incorporate green infrastructure such as tree planting to break up the visual impact of cars parked on the street. In general no more than 4 car parking spaces should be provided together.

## Refuse storage and electric charging points

Adequate space should be provided in new development, including identifying space and design of enclosures for bins. It is desirable that these are an integral part of the built environment.

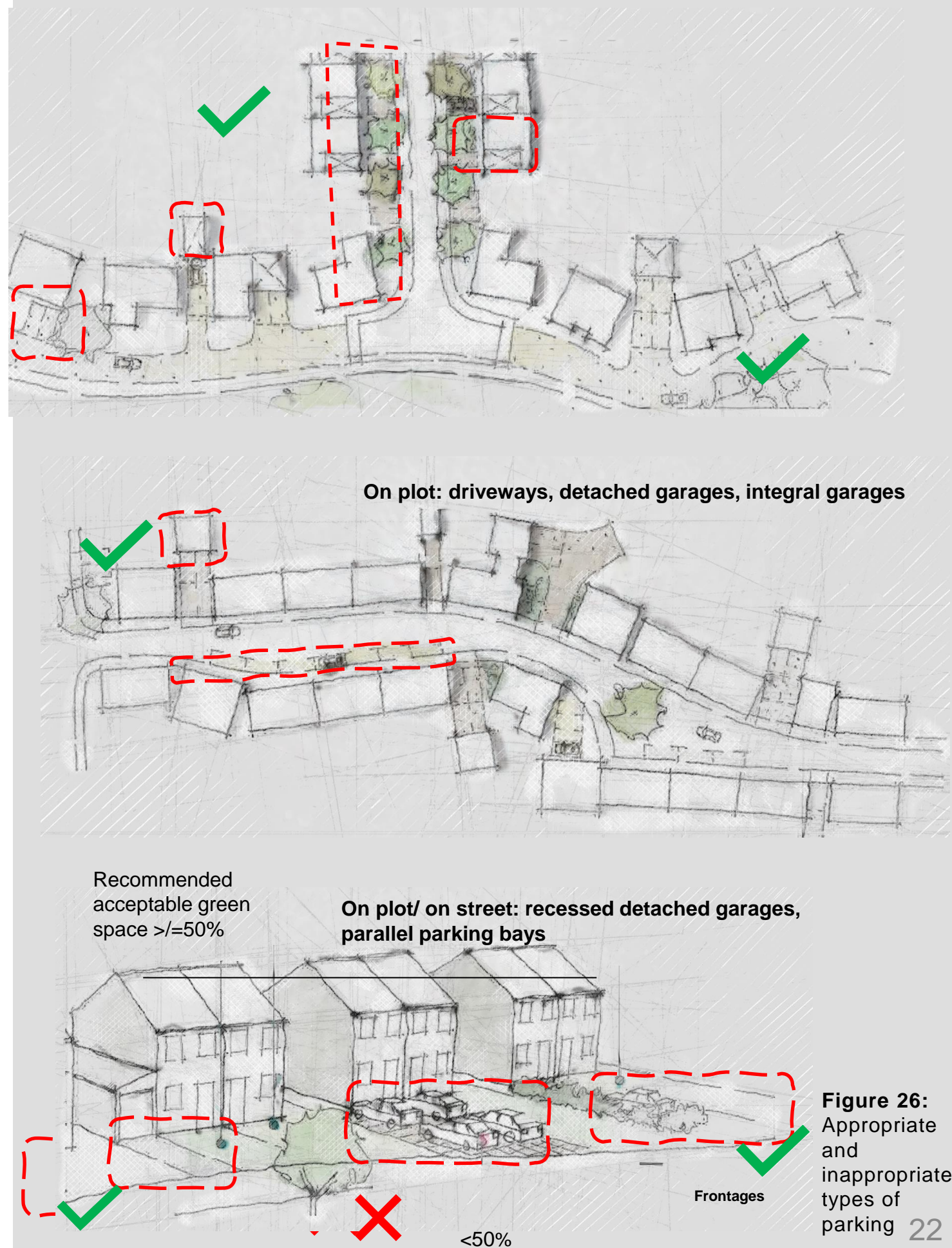
The integration of modern standard bin and cycle storage plays a significant role in the street scene and as such is a critical aspect of the delivery of well-designed places. The storage bins should therefore be a key design consideration from the outset, designed to be:

- Functional
- convenient
- visually pleasing
- Secure

At least 0.9m side access should be provided to access rear gardens from the road to allow for rear storage and to access the garden and cycle storage. All refuse storage should be provided to rear of buildings only. It will be accepted at the front of dwellings if a dedicated storage area is provided that is screened from public viewpoints.



Figure 25: Refuse storage Example



On plot: driveways, detached garages, integral garages

Recommended  
acceptable green  
space  $\geq 50\%$

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

Frontages

$< 50\%$

Figure 26:  
Appropriate  
and  
inappropriate  
types of  
parking



# Section 6: New Builds

## Key issues

Similar to major development, new homes will need to mitigate vibration, noise and air pollution from industrial or transport-related activities, particularly in relation to living rooms and amenity spaces. New build plots vary in size and potential capacity, but each have similar constraints, often with limited access and street-facing frontages.

## Space around the buildings:

The space around buildings often has multiple functions. The space may be needed for the retention or provision of trees & landscaping as an ecological resource, to provide a setting for the building and to accommodate refuse storage and parking facilities. Space will often be needed as an amenity for residents or to provide for children and young people's play and recreation.

Sufficient space between buildings is also required to ensure adequate sunlight, daylight and privacy between buildings is achieved.

It is therefore imperative that the layout and function of all space between buildings is addressed at the outset, as part of the design and layout of new build development.

## Scale, massing and roof form:

New builds should recognise the scale, massing and roof form of surrounding buildings and reflect these where they are a positive attribute of the area's character. Consideration should be given to the grouping of buildings, roof pitches, the detailing of eaves and gables, chimney stacks and the size/siting of any dormer windows.

## Entrances and windows

The entrance to residential buildings marks an important transition between public and private space. The main entrance to a building can be an important part of its architectural expression and aid a wider understanding of the function(s) of the building when viewed from the public realm. Main entrances should be clearly visible in the street, contributing to the overall legibility of the development, and must be fully accessible.

In larger buildings, this may require greater height or more considered design elements to ensure that the proportion and scale of the entrance reflects the overall scale of the building.

Where building design seeks to compliment that of neighbouring buildings, special attention should be paid to fenestration details. This will include consideration of the window proportions (horizontal or vertical emphasis), the relationship of the window with the surface of the building elevations (flush or set-back), the opening design (casement, sash or other), glazing bars (horizontal, vertical or none) and the external perception of storey heights.

Consideration needs to be given to avoid rear gardens backing on to noise receptors such as classified roads and railway lines where acoustic fencing would be required to mitigate noise impact.

## Architectural detail:

The architectural features and details on buildings can greatly influence their overall visual appearance and design quality. The architectural details must be informed by the chosen design and architectural style.

Modern interpretations of existing features based upon a demonstrable understanding of the original architectural style of an area can add further variety and interest to an area and help to strengthen local character and distinctiveness



**Figure 27:** Examples of new homes throughout the District

# Section 7: Employment Developments

In addition to sites allocated specifically for employment uses, Policy DM.9 of the Local Plan states that the provision of employment land and the conversion of existing buildings to support job creation throughout the District will be supported if they are in conformity with other policies in the Plan. This means ensuring that it can be demonstrated that the new employment use is appropriately designed and can integrate effectively with surrounding uses and is of an appropriate scale to the location.

## **Sustainable Employment Developments**

Policy DM.24 of the Local Plan states that new and innovative designs which promote high levels of inclusivity and sustainability will be encouraged and supported where they enhance the overall quality of the built environment. This also applies to employment sites. Incorporating renewable energy measures such as solar panels and ground source / air source heat pumps within new employment sites will be supported.

## **Noise and Pollution**

Policy SP.33 of the Wyre Forest Local Plan states that development proposals must be designed in order to avoid any significant adverse impacts from pollution. Therefore, development proposals should take into account any impact including cumulative impacts on noise, air quality and pollution. Measures should be taken throughout the design of the development to address issues. Where it is required, measures such as acoustic fencing should be provided. Design considerations such as the layout of the site can be used to tackle noise concerns by planning out where the most noise is likely to occur.

## **Economic Development outside Allocated Areas**

Proposals for economic development outside of the allocated areas as defined by the adopted policies map will be prioritised following the sequential approach of:

- a. Previously developed sites;
- b. Greenfield infill sites within a settlement outside the Green Belt;
- c. Greenfield sites adjacent to a settlement outside the Green Belt.

## **Materials and Landscaping**

Appropriate landscaping and materials can be used to address the visual impact of new and existing employment sites. Design consideration should be given to the type of landscaping provided on the site including the types of trees and vegetation provided. When designed effectively, this can also contribute towards reducing noise overtime.

Employment Developments should also take into account the existing landscape of the site including any trees already present on the site. On brownfield sites, the addition of extra tree planting will be supported.



**Figure 28:** OGL Software, Stourport: Photo credit OGL Software



# ≡ Design Parameters

## Permeability:

New development must be designed and laid out in a manner that permits a high level of permeability with the surrounding area, particularly for pedestrians. The emphasis should be to create an accessible movement network connecting the development to surrounding streets, footpaths, open spaces and public transport connections.

In addressing permeability, attention should be paid to desire lines and the need to avoid off-putting detours and barriers to movement. Development which impedes or reduces existing sustainable movement will not be permitted.

A successful sustainable movement network will be well used at all times of the day and this will help to encourage perceptions of safety and security. Nevertheless, development should provide natural surveillance and the network should be well lit, carefully landscaped and be protected from dangerous traffic.

## Cycle parking:

New developments should provide secure, sheltered, integrated and accessible cycle parking facilities. The Council will expect the cycle parking requirements to adhere to the Streetscape Design Guide.

Cycle parking facilities should be located in safe, well-lit and overlooked areas that are within close proximity to main building entrances. The facilities should provide weather protected parking and be built with durable, high-quality materials that are resistant to wear and age well.

## Car parking:

A thorough analysis of the need for car parking spaces should be undertaken, having regard to the nature and location of the development including its public transport accessibility level.

The design and layout of developments should ensure that they do not dominate the site or take precedence over the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. Parking spaces should be accessible, well lit, overlooked and carefully landscaped.

Soft landscaping  
used as a boundary  
treatment

Public path  
allows  
increased  
accessibility

**Figure 29:** An example of a car park at Wyre Forest House

Materials  
carefully  
selected

Well-sign  
posted

Complimented  
with soft  
landscaping

**Figure 30:** An example of cycle storage at Wyre Forest House







# ≡Roof Extensions

## Roof extensions

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

Dormer windows, which allow for additional headroom within roof spaces can be appropriate in certain situations, however these will be considered in the context of impact upon the character of the building and on neighbours' amenity and should reflect the window pattern of the dwelling. Dormers to fronts of properties will only be acceptable where this is a prevailing feature of the surrounding context.

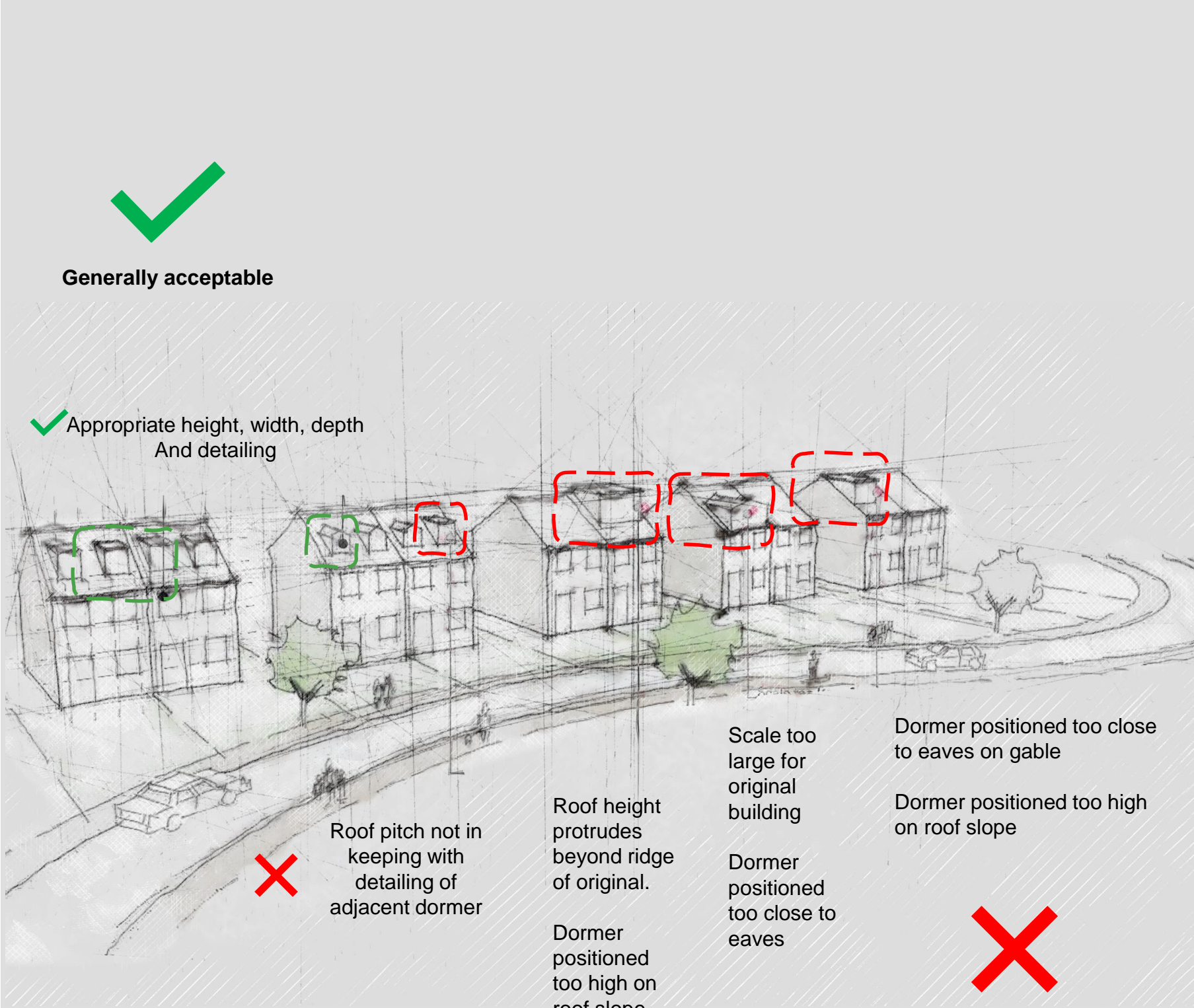
Material selection, and scale of window opening and position within the roofscape is critical in the success of dormers. The materials used in an extension should match or be sympathetic to the existing dwelling in terms of type, colour and texture. Changes in appearance as a result of weathering should be taken into account when selecting bricks and tiles.

Ensure that ridge heights are lower than the original building. Eaves heights should not exceed those of the original building

The use of flat roofs has the potential to have a significant impact on the aesthetics of a development. As such, proposals incorporating flat roofs will be assessed on their merits.

Any projections should not detract from an established building line at the front of the property.

In order to preserve the privacy enjoyed by the occupants of neighbouring dwellings, the positions of windows and the inclusion of features such as balconies should be carefully considered. Please see Residential Amenity chapter for further guidance on this matter.



Generally acceptable

✓ Appropriate height, width, depth  
And detailing

✗ Roof pitch not in  
keeping with  
detailing of  
adjacent dormer

Roof height  
protrudes  
beyond ridge  
of original.

Dormer  
positioned  
too high on  
roof slope

Scale too  
large for  
original  
building

Dormer  
positioned  
too close to  
eaves

Dormer positioned too close  
to eaves on gable

Dormer positioned too high  
on roof slope

✗ Generally unacceptable

**Figure 33:** Appropriate and inappropriate roof extensions



# ≡ Roof Extensions: Dormers

## Dormer design:

To be acceptable, a dormer window or roof extension should be set in the centre of the roof face or positioned so that it is as unobtrusive as possible where features on the building allow this, such as behind an existing two-storey rear extension.

The Council will normally refuse roof extensions that would be as wide as the house and create the appearance of a large box. Where the roof can be extended, the Council recommend that you build a modest dormer window extension.

The style of the windows, materials, glazing pattern, sill and lintel treatments of the existing windows should be taken into account when designing a new extension. Such details must be indicated on application plans.

## Summary:

Any roof extension can have a big impact on the appearance of a house and the surrounding area and therefore it is important to make the size of the extension subservient to the size of the roof face within which it would be set.



**Figure 34:** Appropriate and inappropriate dormer designs



## ≡ Rear Extensions

## Rear extensions:

Rear extensions should be designed to be clearly subordinate to the main dwelling. They should be an appropriate height, width, depth and reflect or complement the detailing and materials of the original building.

Rear extensions may be acceptable unless there is a detrimental impact on the adjacent properties as assessed by the 45-degree rule. Please see the Residential Amenity section for further guidance on this matter.

Rear extensions should respect the existing character of the area and the appearance of the streetscene by avoiding a harmful terracing effect and other incongruous additions.

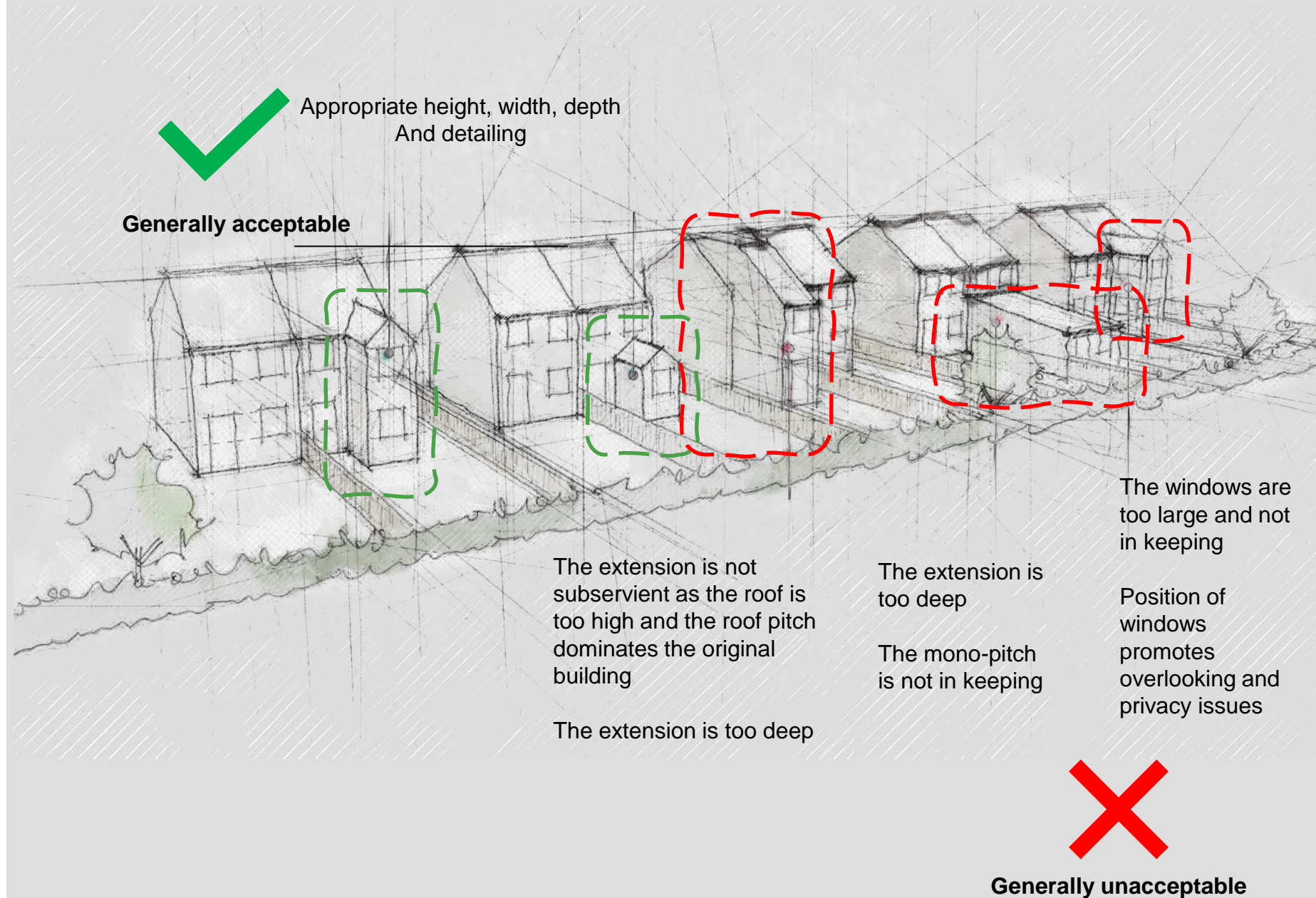
They should also ensure that ridge heights are lower than the original building. Eaves heights should not exceed those of the original building.

Distinctive landscape elements such as trees should not be compromised.

The use of flat roofs has the potential to have a significant impact on the aesthetics of a development. Therefore these proposals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The materials used in an extension should match or be sympathetic to the existing dwelling in terms of type, colour and texture. Changes in appearance as a result of weathering should be taken into account when selecting bricks and tiles

The detailed design of the windows and surrounds is also an important consideration. The style of the windows, materials, glazing pattern, sill and lintel treatments of the existing windows should be taken into account when designing a new extension. Such details must be indicated on application plan.



**Figure 35:** Appropriate and inappropriate rear extensions



# ≡ Front and Side Extensions

## Front and side extensions:

Side extensions should appear smaller in scale and massing in order to be subordinate to the main dwelling. Any proposal for a first floor storey side extension should be set down from the ridge of the existing house and set back from the front elevation (the minimum distance for this should be 0.75 metres from the front elevation of the original building).

Side extensions should respect the existing character of the area and the appearance of the streetscene to ensure that the development does not overwhelm the original dwelling and appears subservient.

Ensure that the “front face width” of extensions is based on the original proportions of the house to be extended. Single storey extensions should have a maximum of 4/7 width taken cumulatively on both sides of the dwelling house.

## Exceptions to the 4/7<sup>th</sup> Rule

The 4/7<sup>th</sup> rule can be disregarded if

- The side extension is setback more than 2 meters from the front elevation of the dwelling or;
- When the extension would still retain the visual dominance of the original dwelling.
- When the extension would not diminish the design of the original dwelling.

In order to demonstrate that an extension is subservient the front elevation must be set back by a minimum 750mm from the original front elevation. The ridge height of the proposed side extension should be set down at least 0.25 meters lower than the ridge height of the main existing dwelling house. Each case will be considered on its individual merits.

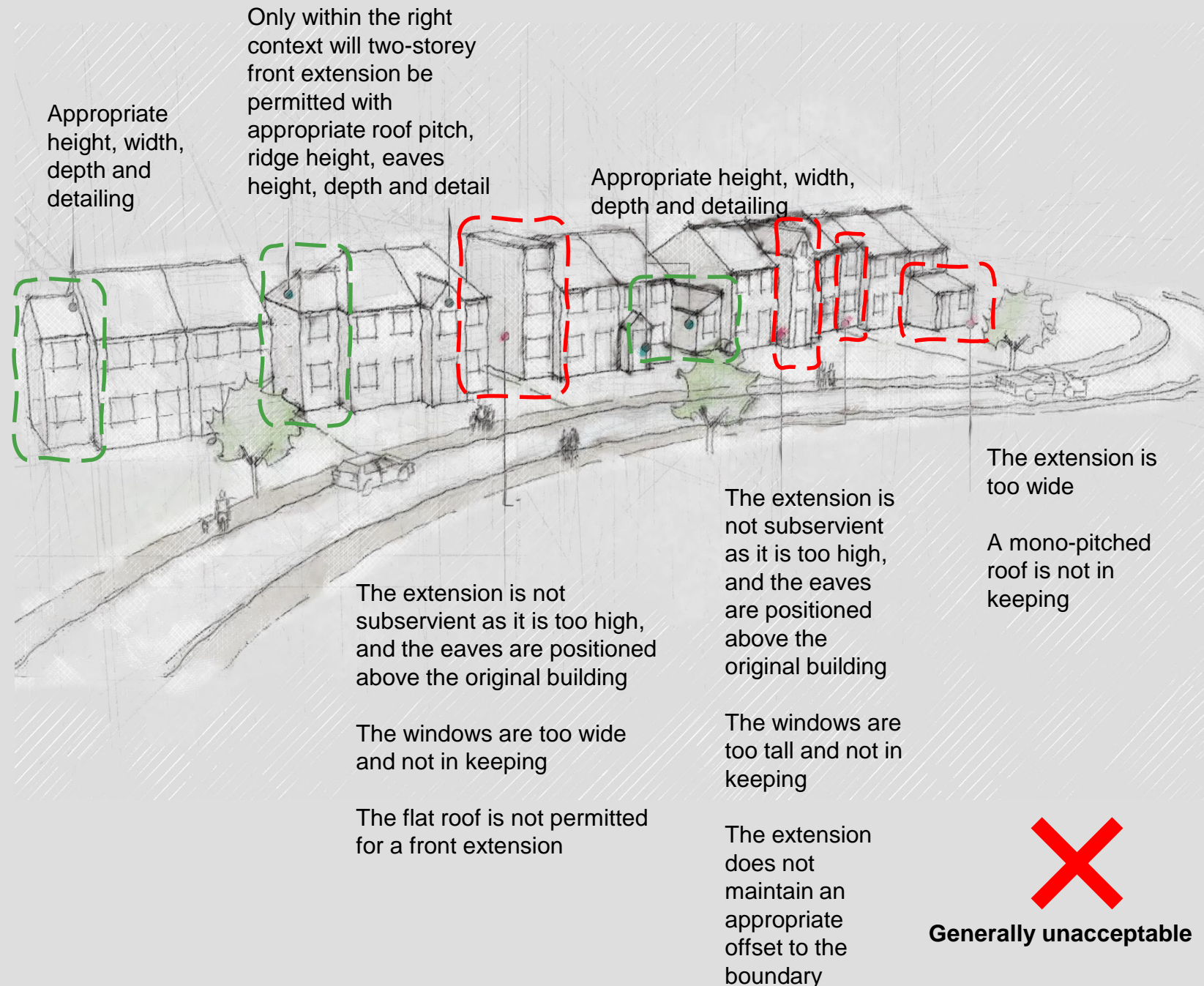
The use of flat roofs has the potential to have a significant impact on the aesthetics of a development. As such, proposals incorporating flat roofs at two storey will be resisted.

Any projections should not detract from an established building line at the front of the property.

Front and side extensions should maintain original frontage rhythms by stepping back slightly from the original building line. Distinctive landscape elements such as trees should not be compromised.



## Generally acceptable



**Figure 36:** Appropriate and inappropriate front and side extensions



# ≡ Parking Provisions

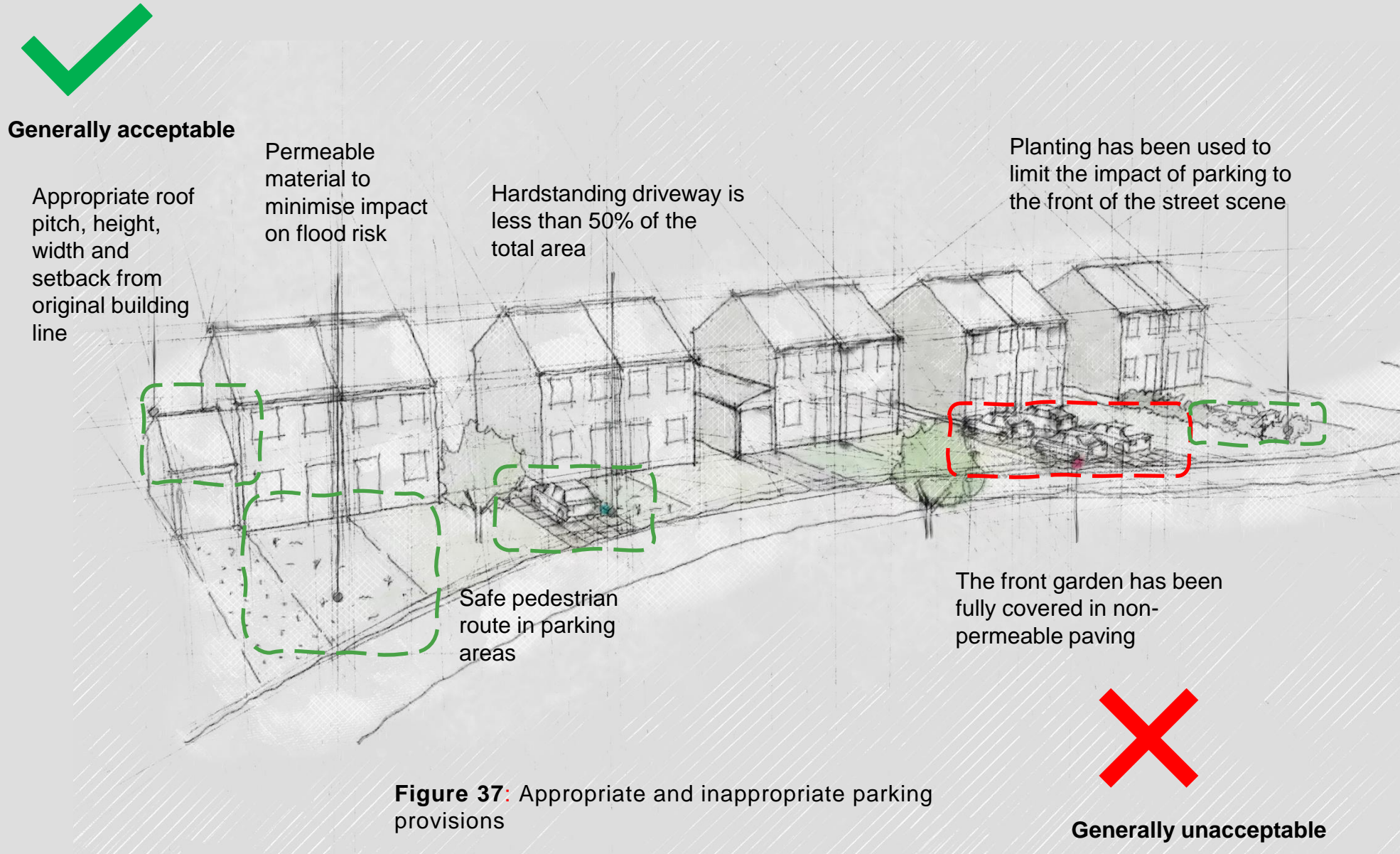
## Parking provisions:

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

- Garages attached to the sides of dwellings should follow the same guidelines as extensions
- Garages and car ports should generally be set back from the existing dwelling so as not to dominate the streetscene
- Where hardstanding is proposed at the front of a property, this should not constitute more than 50% of the total area Permeable paving materials are supported as a means of minimising the cumulative impact on flood risk. It is also recommended to consider incorporation of soft landscape features and boundary treatments to minimise negative impacts upon character and pedestrian specific movement routes to ensure safety

On any development a single parking solution may be ineffective and often a variety of solutions is the most successful approach. As the design agenda has evolved there has been a move away from courtyard parking; however, this still has its place within some developments.

The solution should be most appropriate to the context and the challenges and opportunities it presents.



## ≡ Other Residential Extensions

### Annexe:

If the purpose of the extension is to provide accommodation for a family member, it must not have a separate entrance. The extension must be connected internally to the rest of the house, and must not include a separate kitchen, nor be designed so that it is capable of being used as a separate dwelling.

### Balconies:

To ensure neighbouring properties are not overlooked, a flat roof must not be used as a balcony where direct overlooking of neighbouring properties would occur. .

### Outbuilding:

Most houses in the District will be able to make use of their permitted development rights to build a detached outbuilding without the need to apply for planning permission.

This guidance outlines the scale, design and location of outbuilding that may prove acceptable, should a planning application be needed, and which uses of the outbuilding may prove acceptable.

### Design:

External materials should be like those used on the rear of the existing house, or otherwise sympathetic to their garden setting. The roof design style should be suitable to its setting.

### Air Conditioning

Air conditioning units should not be located on the principal elevation of the property and should be situated to the rear or side of the property to avoid any negative visual impacts on the street scene.

The Council will not normally allow rear access to an outbuilding. Doors and windows should be installed primarily only within the front elevation to avoid overlooking neighbouring plots. Side and rear facing windows would only be permitted where officers are satisfied that the enjoyment of the neighbours' garden would not be compromised. We may require the use of frosted glazing to address overlooking concerns.

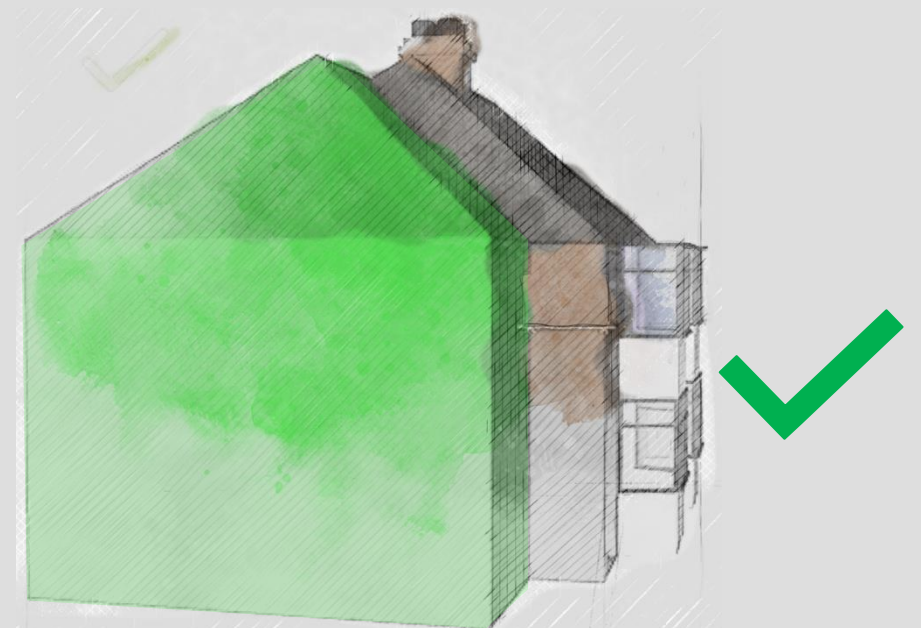
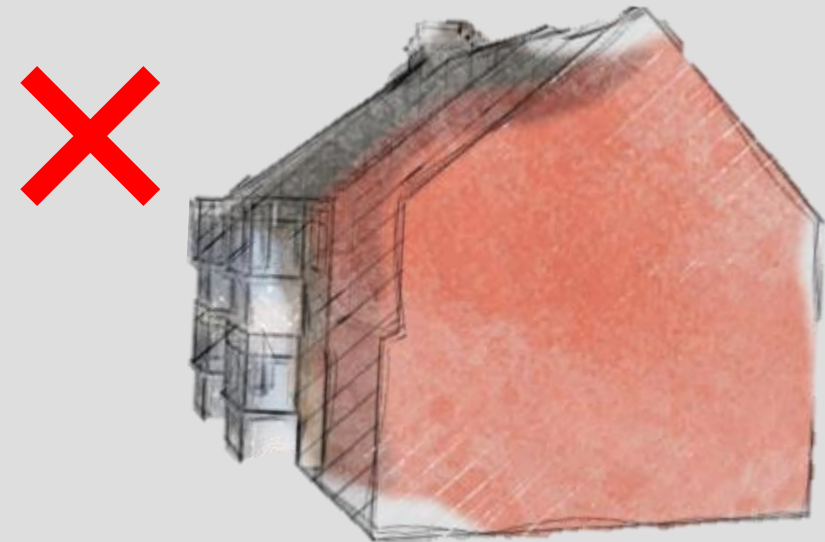
### Outbuilding use:

It is essential that an outbuilding must only be used in a manner incidental to the main house. The Council will refuse, any application that proposes an independent residential unit or has been designed in a way that may facilitate future use in such a manner.

Suitable uses for an outbuilding may include storage, children's playroom, home working space, greenhouse or hobby room, small business if there are no more than 3 appointments a day per week, otherwise a planning application will be required. Usually primary living accommodation, such as a bedroom, bathroom or kitchen would not be allowed.

Conditions may be attached to any planning approval to ensure such facilities are not installed and any outbuilding that fails to comply with such conditions would be at risk of Enforcement Action.

Side Extensions must be set back by 0.75m as a minimum to prevent a harmful terracing effect.



**Figure 38:** Examples of inappropriate and appropriately set-back side extensions



# Summary

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

## Fenestration

Fenestration, including the scale, rhythm, proportions and elements of detail used for window and door openings plays a critical role in the success of housing design. In the case of residential extensions, care should be taken to ensure that the existing horizontal and vertical rhythm together with the proportion of openings is either reflected or complemented as demonstrated in figure 39.

## Roofscape

Roofscape is a key character forming feature of detail in residential design. This includes the shape and pitch of roofs, as well as the materiality. Flat roofs on extensions will not normally be considered appropriate where they do not form part of the original design of the house, however in some circumstances where they are not visible from the public realm and the use of a flat roof may result in a reduced visual impact, they may be considered acceptable, particularly if designed with a contemporary aesthetic style.



Figure 39: Appropriate and inappropriate approaches to fenestration

# Section 9: HMO standards

## Introduction

Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are properties rented out to at least 3 people who are not from one household (for example, a family) but share facilities like a bathroom or kitchen. Most HMOs are conversions or subdivisions of larger houses and currently, as of 2024, planning permission is only usually needed for HMOs which will provide a home for 7 or more people.

## National Planning Policy and Guidance:

The NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF requires the planning system to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Whilst there is no specific reference to HMOs within the NPPF, housing policies do aim to support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. This requires the council to reflect on provision of the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community, including for those who require affordable housing, students, families, and people who rent their homes etc.

**The Planning Practice Guidance** echoes the content of the NPPF in that it does not provide specific advice on HMOs, however, it does provide guidance on planning for the housing needs of different groups.

## Planning context:

In accordance with the Use Class Order (2021) HMOs fall within use class C4, which relates to the ‘Use of a dwellinghouse by 3-6 residents as a ‘house in multiple occupation’

HMOs therefore currently require express planning permission once they exceed 6 people if that change results in a material change in use. Large HMOs, formed from seven unrelated residents or more, become Sui Generis. Sui Generis is a “class of its own”, and no Permitted Development Right exists to change a HMO with 7 or more residents from any use.

Consequently, for the change of use of any premises to a HMO for 7 or more residents, an assessment has to be made as to whether a material change of use from the prior lawful use has occurred and, if it is determined that it has, then planning permission is required. This is set out further on **Figure 40** on the right.

## Design Considerations

Planning applications relating to new HMOs should ensure that appropriate cycle storage and refuse storage is provided along with ample communal garden areas. All habitable rooms are to have windows with an outlook and light.

The entrance to HMOs should be made from the road only and avoid the use of back entries to access the property and main entrances to buildings and bedrooms should consider measures to address ‘design out crime’.

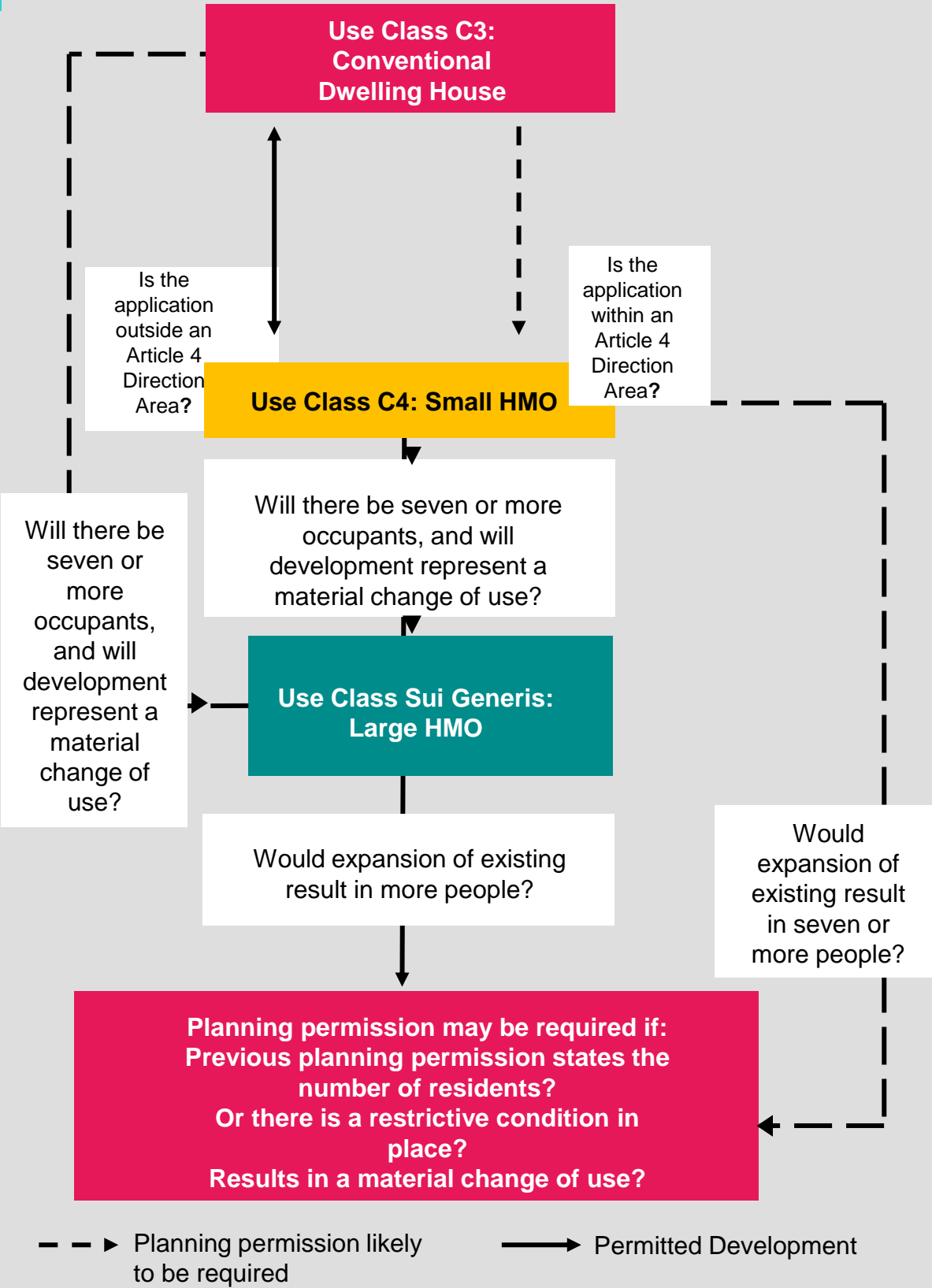


Figure 40: When does an HMO need planning permission?



# Section 10: Listed Buildings and Conservation

## Introduction

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest where it is desirable to conserve or enhance the character or appearance of that area. In addition to the quality of buildings, there are many other factors which contribute to the value of a conservation area – the historic layout of roads, public spaces, parks, trees, street furniture, street surfaces, views and vistas – these are all significant contributors to the appearance of an area and give it its special character. Similarly, all alterations or extensions to Listed Buildings will require specific consideration and proposals will be expected to preserve the special architectural or historic character, appearance and setting of those buildings.

## Extensions:

Extensions should be designed to specifically conserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area. All extensions should respect and complement the architectural and historic character of the original house. Special attention should be given to matters such as siting, scale, height, massing, detailed design and the appropriate use of materials. It will generally be necessary to use specialist building techniques, traditional materials and comparable architectural detailing which reflect the special quality of the building and surrounding area.

Attention should also be given to the conservation of spaces and views between buildings, as these often contribute greatly to the special character of an area. The loss of front gardens to hardstanding / car parking will generally be discouraged. The Council will look to retain soft landscaping and trees in front garden areas due to the visual contribution they make to the character of an area.

Front boundary walls, railings, gates and gateposts also make a valuable contribution to the character of an area and should be preserved where appropriate. It will usually be necessary for any new boundary treatments, gates, gatepost to respect the original character, height and materials of the frontage to the property and those in the surrounding streetscape.

It is strongly recommended that you discuss your proposals with the Council's Conservation Officer and Development Management Team prior to submitting an application.

## Loss of historic fabric:

Loss of historic fabric is an important consideration when designing an extension and should be minimised by using existing openings where possible. Any new openings, new additions, or EV Charging points will be reviewed to ensure that their impact on the Listed Building is minimised, sympathetic to the structure and appropriate to the overall design.

## Demolition of Listed building:

Any proposal for the demolition of a Listed Building will need to have substantial justification, showing that the existing building is not capable of being repaired or reused. The complete demolition of a historic building is rarely necessary, requiring clear and convincing justification and being exceptional for GII listed buildings and wholly exceptional for GI and II\* listed buildings, especially if a building has been properly maintained. The Statutory Consultees will be consulted on any proposal for the demolition of a Listed Building.

It is also important to note that where consent is granted to demolish a Listed Building there is no presumption that a replacement structure would be approved.

Conserve

Enhance

Transform

Indication of where listed and conservation development fall within the growth spectrum

## Design of Focal and Landmark Buildings

Policy DM.24 states that where appropriate, development proposals should enhance landmarks and their settings.

This means that design proposals should ensure that the prominent views, vistas and skylines of Bewdley, Stourport-on-Severn, Kidderminster and the village settlements are maintained and safeguarded, particularly where they affect existing landmark buildings.

This can be achieved through measures such as providing suitable designs which are sympathetic to the existing setting of the landmark building and do not detract from its significance. When designing proposals affecting listed buildings or conservation areas, reference should be given to any character appraisals that may have been undertaken for the conservation area, if applicable.

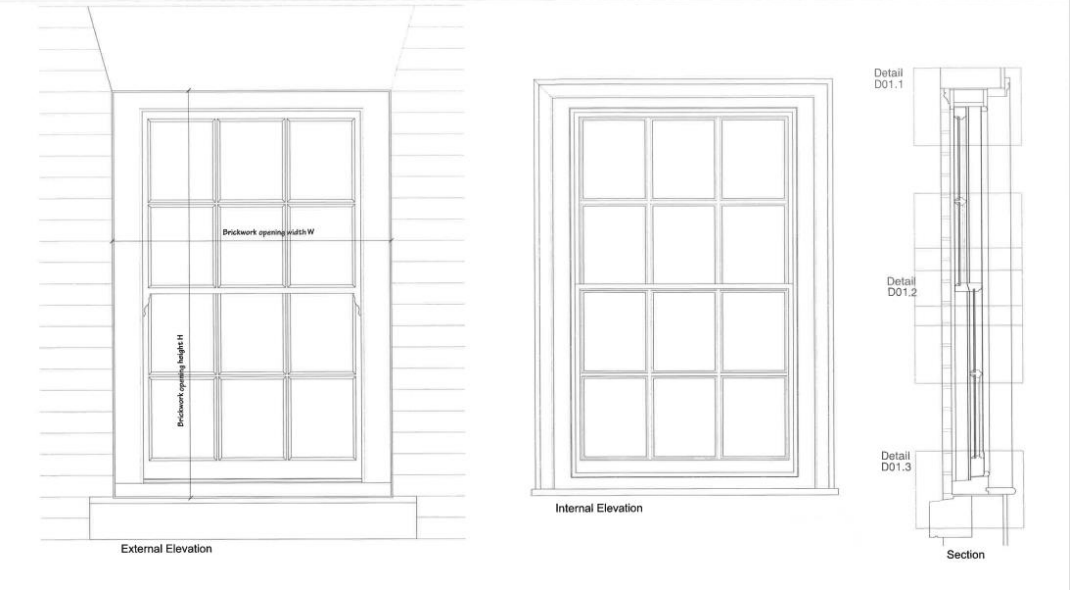


Figure 41: Box sash window example



# Section 11: Shopfronts

## Introduction:

High quality design plays an important role in the viability and vitality of shopping areas. Shop fronts should be designed to be compatible with both the individual building and the general street scene. Planning permission is required for any new or replacement shop fronts and any other alteration which affects the external appearance of the building. Conservation area consent may also be required in the case of major works. Ensuring shop fronts are well maintained will be crucial to improving the design quality across the District.

Planning permission is generally required for: new shopfronts; alterations to an existing shopfront including, canopies & external security measures; change of use and demolition or removal of any part of a building within the conservation area. Conservation area consent may also be required in the case of major works

Shop front design and signage should make a positive contribution to the townscape with high quality, active façade design and maximise the delivery of positive frontages with particular attention paid to the design of corners, entrances and openings.

## Key issues:

The most common issues with shopfront are:

- Inappropriate materials
- Disproportionate signage
- Inappropriate illuminations
- Visual clutter including stickers and notices
- Poorly designed

## Planning and Policy Context:

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

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

- Reflect the existing building's proportions
- Reflect the street
- Reflect historic styles

## Reflect the existing buildings proportions:

New shop-fronts, and alterations to shop-fronts should consider the overall proportion, form, and scale of the building's upper floors. Doors, fascia's & windows should all be in proportion with the building and street scene.

## Reflect the street:

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

## Reflect historic styles:

In historic areas, or where a more traditional appearance is desirable, shopfronts incorporate traditional elements such as fascia boards, cornices, pilasters, appropriately sized uninterrupted stallrisers, and avoid large expanses of unbroken glazing. These elements create an appropriate architectural frame that results in a well-proportioned design.

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

Conserve

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Transform

Indication of where shopfronts fall within the growth spectrum

Frontage respects upper proportions of building

Reflects building pattern



Well-proportioned signage

Appropriate architectural frame

**Appropriate shopfront**

Projecting sign disrupts building pattern

Fascia too large and not in keeping with the scale of buildings

High level signage clusters facade



Fascia is not in keeping with The building's scale

Inappropriate materials

Untidy appearance

**Inappropriate shopfront**

**Figure 42:** Appropriate and inappropriate shopfronts



# ≡ Shopfront Components

A generic traditional shopfront will be made up of the following components, seen on the right.

## **Cornice**

A horizontal moulded projection that crowns a shopfront

## **Fascia**

A horizontal board often displaying the name of the shop

## **Pilaster**

A non-structural pillar framing the sides of the shopfront

## **Stallriser**

The solid base of the shop front

## **Capital**

Top of a pilaster or column

## **Brackets**

Structural or decorative element projecting from a wall to carry a weight or connect one or more elements

## **Transom light**

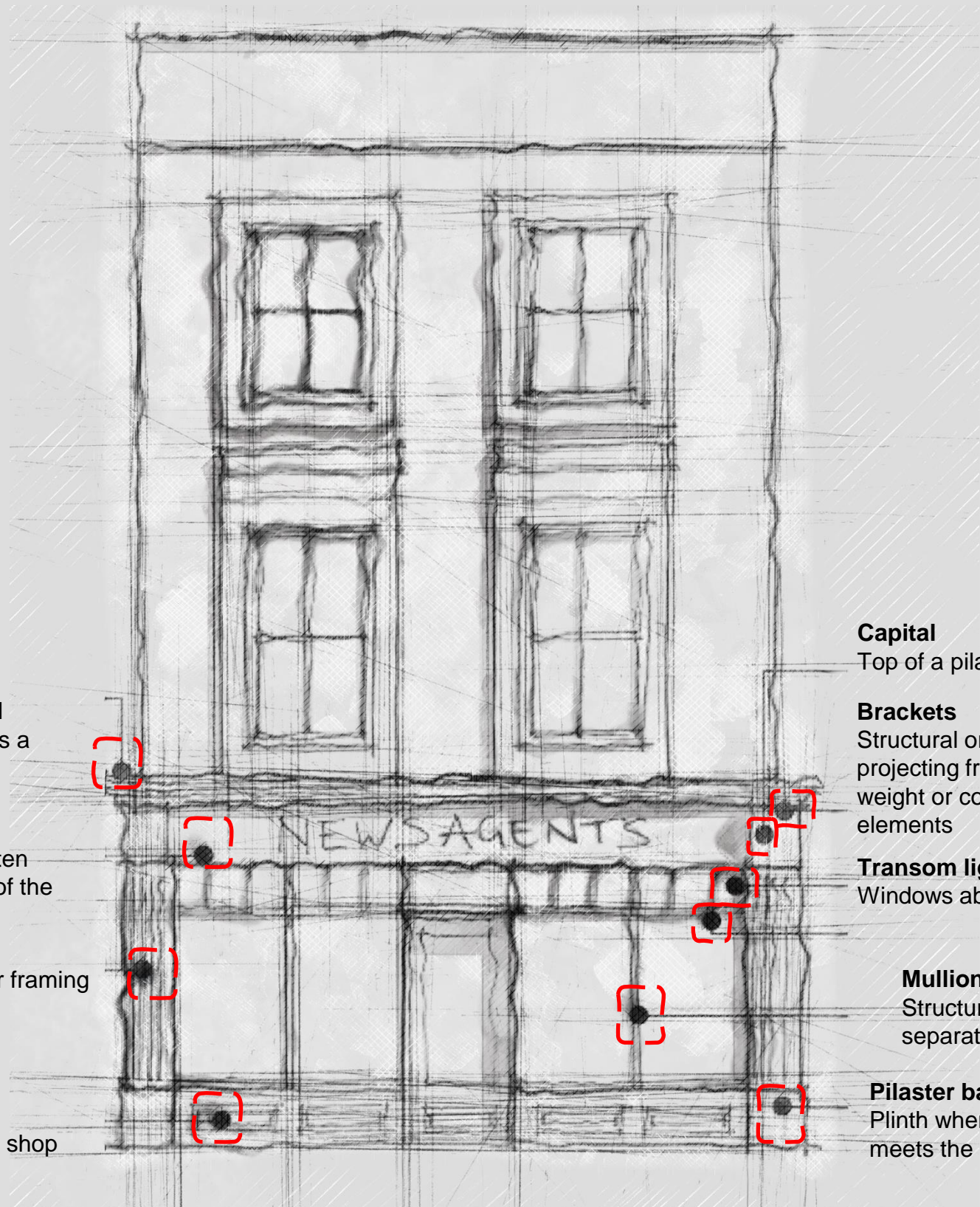
Windows above a transom

## **Mullion**

Structural vertical post separating windows

## **Pilaster base**

Plinth where the pilaster meets the ground



**Figure 43:** Traditional shopfront components

# ≡ Shopfront Design Example

**Figure 44**, on the right-hand side is a shopfront example of what applicants or developers should strive for when restoring or doing alterations to a shop front, within the District.

Awnings are both functional and act as an advertisement. Therefore, consideration should be given to awning design as they can impinge on pedestrian and highway safety.

Applicants should refer to the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations when submitting an application for advertisement consent.

Please see the appendix for further examples of both traditional and modern shop front design examples.



Traditional Shopfront  
Design V6

Graham Luxford Architect, Dip Arch RIBA February 2017

**Figure 44:** Traditional shopfront Design



# Section 12: Advertisements

## Introduction

Well designed signs can project an image of quality, confidence and permanence. Policy DM.27 states that proposals for advertisements should not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the area or building which they are displayed.

The Council is likely to approve signs which are:

- In character with the scale of the building;
- Located at fascia level;
- Respectful of the architectural features of the building, including first floor windows and shop front details;
- Fascia box signs which do not protrude more than one course of brick;
- Designed using a style of lettering appropriate to the character of the building;

## Illuminations:

Illumination can highlight attractive features of a shopfront and facilitate an attractive night-time buzz, but needs to be well integrated. Excessive illumination causes light pollution and is therefore wasteful of energy.

Illuminations should:

- Not create a cluttered visual appearance
- Consider the impact and quality of light on the street scene.

Where the Council considers that the principle of illumination is acceptable, the light source should be designed so that it is not directly visible to drivers on adjacent roads or likely to cause nuisance to nearby residential properties. The level of illumination should be kept to a minimum. We do not support the flashing of lights.

Internally illuminated signs should:

- avoid large areas of illumination, especially with white or light-coloured back grounds;
- should be safe and not conflict with traffic signs or signals, CCTV or speed cameras;
- should not be detrimental to residential amenity by elements such as flashing lights or neon tubing;
- o use matt materials; and
- o conceal wiring and junction boxes.

## Fascia:

The fascia is the most important area of a shopfront for advertising the business. In general, good signage works within the established proportions and confines of the fascia board and avoids applying larger more modern signs onto it.

Fascia signs should:

- be designed as part of the building and not treated as an unrelated addition;
- be of an appropriate size and design;
- be sited sympathetically on the building;
- not obscure or remove traditional detailing;
- be recessed to prevent the side being visible; and
- not extend across separate buildings.

## Projecting and hanging signs:

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

Projecting and hanging signs should:

- be related in style and character of the building or area;
- be at fascia level and be positioned so as not to be a danger to pedestrians and vehicles;
- be limited to one for each building; and not be larger than the fascia sign.

Conserve	Enhance	Transform
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Indication of where advertisements fall within the growth spectrum

## Shop Signs

### Conservation area and listed buildings:

Special consideration should be given to the location and design of signage or advertisements when they affect heritage assets or their setting. These assets include listed or historically important buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens and scheduled ancient monuments. Signage design that is proportionate in size, of a sympathetic design, respectful of architectural detail, and *located in a way that respects what is significant about the heritage asset are likely to be approved. Lighting of signage on historic buildings or in historic areas will require particular care and may not always be appropriate.*

Shop signs:

*Signs are a crucial element of shop fronts and can contribute to the attractiveness of shopping areas. The following considerations should be made in respect of signs to be displayed on new and existing buildings;*

- *consider signs as part of the shop front design;*
- *signs should be in character with the existing shop front, the building and the area as a whole. Their character is determined by their size, shape, position, materials, colour, and type and the extent of illumination;*
- *signs should not obscure architectural features or detail, or form an over-dominant feature;*
- *siting a sign above fascia level is not normally acceptable; and*
- *the character of a building or area should not be prejudiced by inconsistent and competitive signs;*
- *should be safe and not conflict with traffic signs or signals, CCTV or speed cameras;*
- *should have an acceptable impact on the amenity of the surrounding area;*
- *should be considered with regards the ‘overall’ impact on an area as too many adverts within an area could lead to adverse impacts on amenity such as clutter.*



Figure 45: An acceptable array of shop signs, within a Conservation area



# Section 13: Public Realm in Town Centres

## Introduction:

Good public realm plays a vital role in enhancing the economic prosperity, vitality and quality of life in urban and rural centres. When designed well, they create attractive and comfortable places to enjoy. If not designed well, however, they can introduce large, bland, and spaces that reduce, dramatically, the desirability and prosperity of a place.

## Activity/mix of uses:

Public realm should create vibrancy. Careful consideration should be given to the interface between retail, commercial and public use.

## Scale and massing

Scale and massing requires very careful consideration. In some cases, this may be because over prominence could result in an oppressive environment, however it should also be recognised that new public realm development can be too small for the site. It should generally seek to compliment the scale of existing and proposed urban environments within the local area.

## Layout:

The layout of a public realm development should create a logical and coherent network of spaces and functions, addressing the relationship between public and private space as well as considering the integration of functional spaces such as servicing and car parking.

Development should complement and potentially integrate the surrounding pattern of blocks and streets, providing effective and logical links to the movement network in the wider area.

## Movement:

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

Enhance sustainable and active transport modes:

Priority should be given to street users; pedestrians and cyclists, access for mobility impaired, and access to public transport should be considered as a priority. Further consideration needs to be given to ensure commercial access and servicing can be achieved. Design key junctions to ensure ease of movement and reduce the impacts of traffic.

Strengthen linkages and connections for pedestrians:

The movement network through a site should be logical and coherent with continuous pedestrian routes orientated on desire lines. The design and orientation of buildings should contribute to overall legibility.

Connect the activities and services within the centre to the surrounding neighbourhood:

The relationship between pedestrians and cars should be addressed where appropriate, incorporating traffic calming measures and exploring shared surface materials to provide a more integrated environment.

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

Expand connectivity outside of the centre: Linkages should be created out of centres, connecting into green infrastructure and waterways.

Conserve

Enhance

Transform

Indication of where public realm development falls within the growth spectrum



**Figure 46:** Kidderminster Town Centre which is primarily used by pedestrians



# ≡ Town Centre Development

## Town Centre Development

Town Centre developments should create or enhance a local distinctiveness incorporating a high standard of design. This includes:

- Designing in relation to an established built hierarchy, reflecting the scale, density, and block pattern of contextual areas whilst exploring more contemporary styles that reflect a modern commercial use.
- Considering the interface between development and the surrounding context. In dense urban environments this will often require responding to an established public frontage.

### Public space:

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

Principles for town centre developments can include:

- Create social and civic hubs (such as squares), for workers or customers, enclosed by high high-quality materials.
- Create an appropriate mix of hard and soft landscaping, incorporating and enhancing any existing green infrastructure and considering boundary treatments, where appropriate.

- Ensure active street edges are present. This can be done through the use of keeping building lines and frontages to the street strong with variety and detail providing Interest;
- Carefully consider the relationship between public and private space – ensuring public spaces are subject to natural surveillance and are enclosed; where uses bound the street, these should be maximised in their potential for passive surveillance; the design of the frontage should respond to this.

### Adaptability, flexibility, sustainability

It is important to:

- Design development which will be used throughout the day and the evening to encourage more people into town centres outside normal working hours
- Support a mix of uses across the town centre, appropriate to creating a centre that remains active after the traditional 9 am to 5.30 pm opening hours.
- Support clustering of activities to retain an active and healthy early evening economy, looking to retain families and workers within the centre and attract a rising residential population to support activity in the centre after traditional opening hours.

### Designing for Inclusivity

All developments should consider further adaptability to minority groups. In particular:

- Encouraging where possible, off road charging points for electric vehicles to ensure that charging cables do not trail across footpaths
- Requiring cycle paths to be incorporated within roads on new developments to reduce the risk of accidents between cyclists and pedestrians and where this is not possible, requiring a distinguishable line on split pedestrian/cycle paths to aid those with a visual impairment.
- Encouraging Visually Impaired friendly smooth surfaces on new developments to reduce the tripping risk of uneven surfaces.



**Figure 47:** Stourport Basin, Stourport on Severn (Photo credit Canal and River Trust)



**Figure 48:** Tactile Paving example (Photo Credit: All About Vision)



# Section 14: Development in the Green Belt and Rural Areas

## Character:

Any form of development in the Green Belt, where deemed acceptable in accordance with the Local Plan and NPPF, should create or enhance a local distinctiveness incorporating a high standard of design. This includes:

- Designing in relation to the character of the surrounding area, taking inspiration from the local vernacular and design styles.
- Being reflective and considerate towards heritage assets and ensuring that the design of any development does not detract from the significance of a heritage asset.

In rural areas it may necessity implementing adequate landscaped buffers, including mature planting and treelines to screen or soften the development.

## Extensions in the Green Belt

Dwellings within the Green Belt can extend 75% of the floor area and volume of the original dwelling including basements as of 1948. Any previous extensions to the original dwellinghouse must be added to the proposed extension floor area and volume allowance when calculating the 75%.

In light of this any extension proposed must take into account any outbuildings within 5m of the original dwelling as part of the extension and this will count towards the 75% allowance.

## Barn Conversions

The conversion of an existing barn to a new use is acceptable in principle, providing the proposal is well designed to preserve the character and openness of the Green Belt. Policy DM.29: Re-use and adaptation of rural buildings sets out criteria which proposals to convert existing buildings must follow in order to be considered acceptable.

## Outbuildings

Any outbuilding proposed particularly outside of adopted settlement boundaries will need to be considered carefully to ensure it does not result in a proposal which could effectively be creating a new independent dwelling. In rural areas, ancillary buildings should be designed as part of the overall layout to result in an integrated group of buildings in close proximity to the dwelling house.

The materials used should be respecting of the existing character of the dwelling.

The conversion of residential outbuildings to self-contained units should be designed sympathetically to ensure that they are reflective of the original property and do not detract from the existing character of the area or result in a detrimental impact on the street scene.

All development in the Green Belt should be highly respectful of the character of the area and this should be demonstrated throughout the proposals.

## Replacement Dwellings

The NPPF states that within the Green Belt any replacement building must be within the same use and not materially larger than the existing building (including any extensions) it replaces. Within the Wyre Forest district it is considered that a building up to 20% larger than the original building, or the size of the existing building (whichever is the greater).



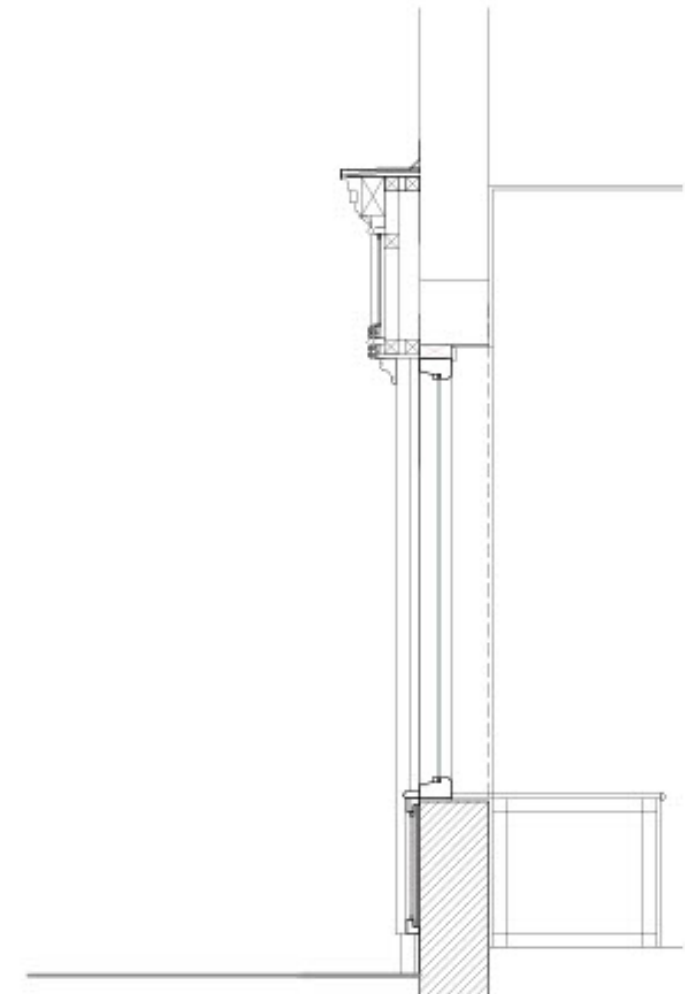
**Figure 49:** Looking down at Burlish Park Golf Club.  
Photo credit: P L Chadwick



**Figure 50:** Example of a Barn Conversion in Wyre Forest  
Photo Credit: Halls, Kidderminster

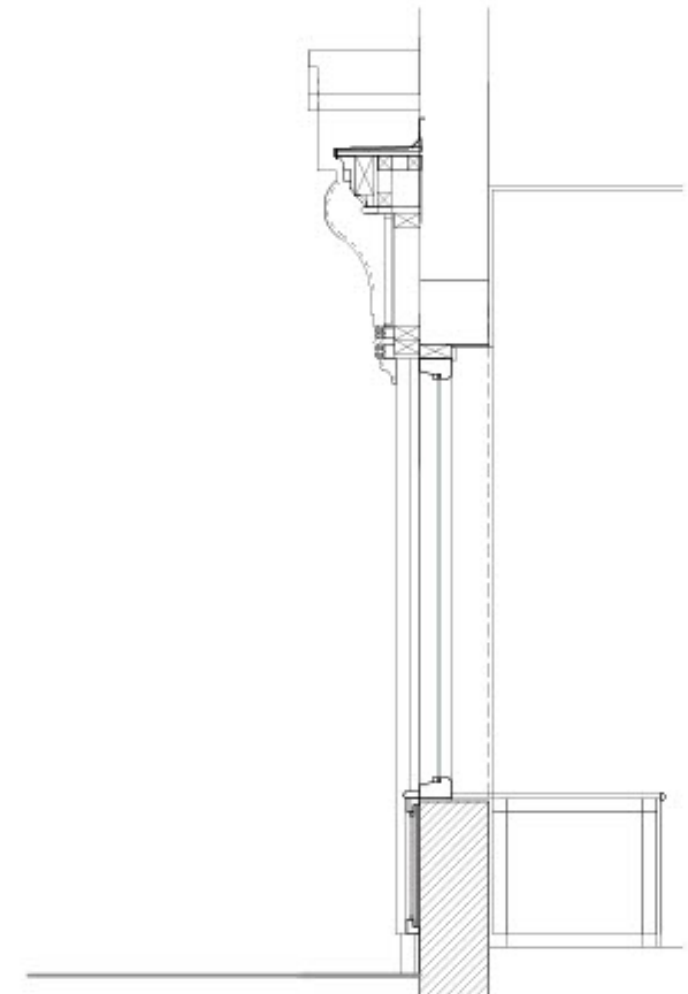


## Traditional Shopfront Example 1



Traditional Shopfront  
Design V1

## Traditional Shopfront Example 2



Traditional Shopfront  
Design V2



## Modern Shopfront Example



Photo Credit: Mark Chater

## Projecting Sign with Swan Neck Lighting Example



Photo Credit: Mark Chater





**Wyre Forest**  
District Council

**Wyre Forest District Council**

Planning Policy Team

Email: [planning.policy@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01562 732928

[www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning-policy](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning-policy)