

# 7 Building performance

Housing makes a significant contribution to CO2 emissions in the UK. The construction industry also utilises substantial volumes of non-renewable resources and generates pollution and waste. The need for sustainable approaches to building design is therefore fundamental if the challenges associated with climate change, resource depletion and pollution are to be addressed.

Traditionally, sustainable technologies such as wind turbines and solar panels have been retro-fitted to existing buildings, often to the detriment of the building design.

Section 3 explored at site wide considerations for sustainable development in larger scale developments. This section looks at how sustainable design and construction can improve the environmental integrity of housing, without compromising design quality.



# 7 Building performance Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document and those sections relevant to your application

Before you proceed have you read through the relevant Sections 2 - 6 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to Section 2.

**OVERVIEW OF SECTION 7:**  
This section should be read in parallel with 'Building Design (Section 5) to ensure that sustainable design measures

are integrated at the outset of the design process and that bolt-on solutions are avoided.

The choice of sustainable measures should be considered within the context of the site, and measures which are deemed acceptable for one location may not necessarily be acceptable for another.

Applicants should refer to the Character Study carried out in Section 2 to inform this process.

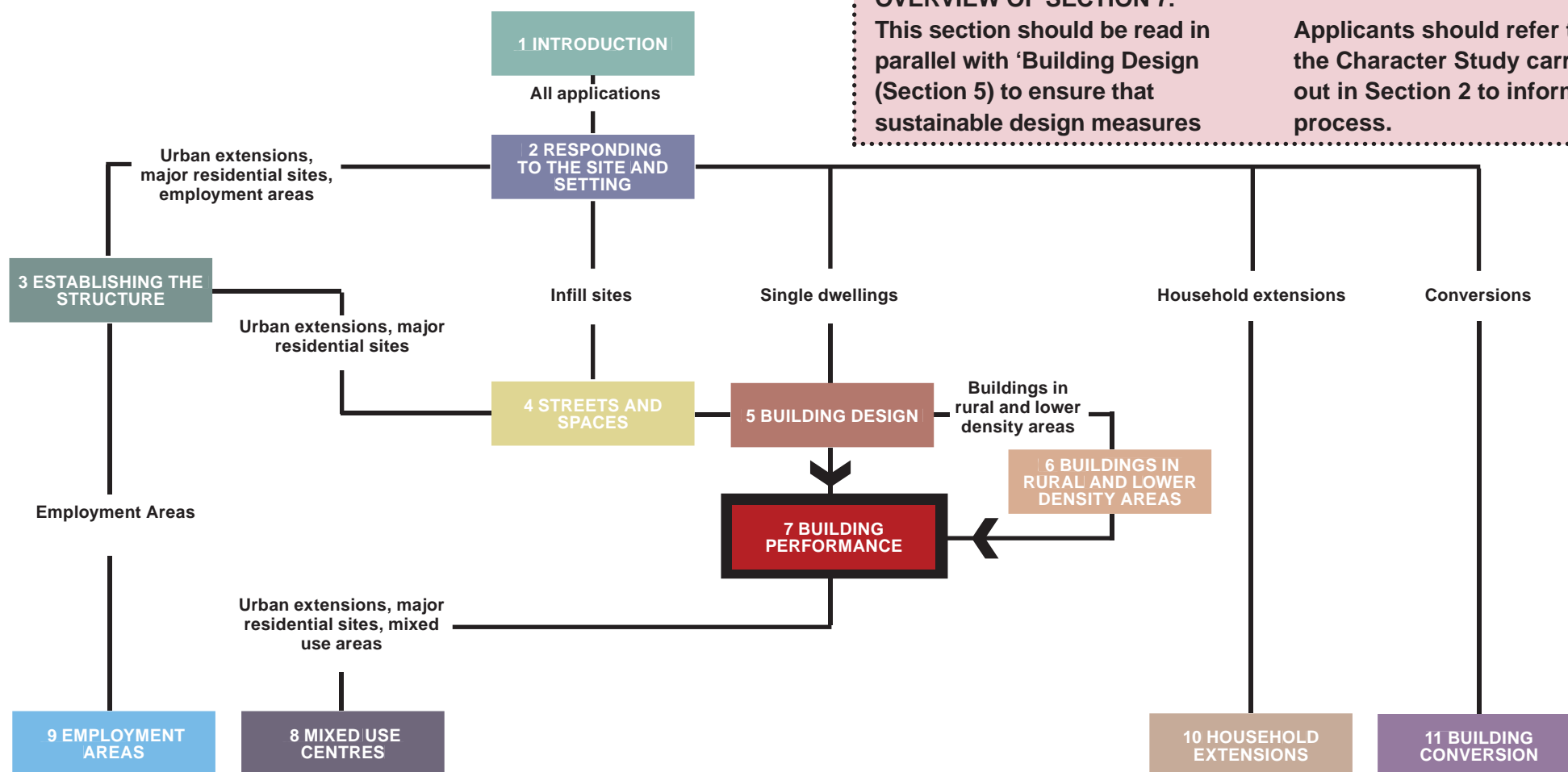


Fig 7.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

# 7 Building performance

## Introduction



Fig 7.2: Sustainability considerations should cover all aspects from energy to health and wellbeing

### 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The council has an adopted Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (Dec 2009). The aim of this Supplementary Planning Document is to provide guidance to planners, developers, architects and facilities managers on how to achieve the council's requirements in respect of sustainable design and construction when preparing planning applications for commercial developments over 1,000 square meters and residential developments of ten or more dwellings. Applicants with relevant applications should review this document.

7.1.2 The targets set out within this document have been superseded but the spirit and aspirations from the council to deliver sustainable development remains a strong priority.

### Targets for sustainable development

7.1.3 The current Government is committed to ensuring that all new homes are zero carbon from 2016 onwards. Changes will be introduced through the Building Regulations to meet this target.

7.1.4 For office and industrial development a different system of assessment is used under a Building Research Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating. This has five rating levels from pass to excellent.

7.1.5 The council aspires to new non-residential development achieving a level of performance equivalent to BREEAM excellent.

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

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# 7 Building performance

## Energy efficient and design principles



Fig 7.3: Building integrated photovoltaics and solar heater, RuralZED

### 7.2 Energy efficient design principles.

#### Orientation and lighting

7.2.1 For site wide guidance on orientation please refer to Section 4.

7.2.2 Buildings orientated simply to maximize sunlight and daylight penetration can often conflict with the principles of good urban design. As a general rule buildings should be orientated to first and foremost contribute to the structure and character of established environment or in the case of larger development the established structure of streets and spaces.

7.2.3 For example when developing an infill site in an urban area the building frontage should overlook the street and contribute to the established building lines. It should not restrict orientation to 30 degrees of south to maximize solar gains.

7.2.4 The depth of buildings can have a significant effect on natural lighting levels internally. Traditional residential buildings within the Vale have depths of 6 - 8m which are particularly effective in capitalising on natural lighting levels and natural ventilation.

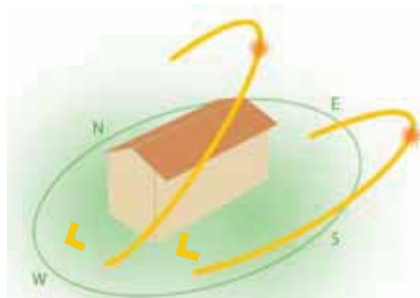


Fig 7.4: Optimum orientation relative to the sun

#### Principle DG83: Orientation

The orientation of a building should not be dictated solely by the sun. However there are means by which building design can take advantage of orientation.

Building depths should be limited wherever possible to maximise natural lighting levels and natural ventilation.

Homes should seek to avoid single-aspect which may cause homes to overheat (if south-facing) or create additional heating demands (if north facing).

South facing windows that maximise natural daylighting and warmth should be favoured for habitable rooms where this does not compromise provision of adequate overlooking onto the street.

North facing facades should seek to minimise large areas of glazing to prevent unnecessary heat loss in winter. Again this should only be applied where this does not compromise provision of adequate overlooking onto the street.

Design for natural light and consider the installation of roof lights or 'sunpipes' to provide daylight to areas without windows and solar-powered external lighting.

Applicants should consider inclusion of materials with high thermal mass within the building structure to absorb the sun's heat energy.

Provide shading to south facing windows to prevent overheating in summer months. This could be in the form of deciduous tree adjacent to the property.

#### Green roofs and walls

7.2.5 Green roofs and walls offer a wide range of sustainability benefits, including reducing storm water runoff, increased sound proofing, filtering water and increasing biodiversity. They also provide a radiant barrier to prevent rooms becoming hotter than the outdoor air temperature in summer. A green roof can be integrated into the design of a new extension, retrofitted to an existing flat roof or planned into individual units on a larger scheme.

#### Principle DG84: Green roofs

Consider whether the use of green roofs are appropriate within the context of the site

Ensure the building position and climate is suitable for the chosen green roof system.

# 7 Building performance

## Materials and construction



Fig 7.5: Locally sourced materials can increase the sustainability credentials of a building

### 7.3 Materials and construction

7.3.1 The choice and source of materials can have a significant bearing on the amount of energy used to construct and operate buildings.

#### Efficient re-use of materials

7.3.2 Where appropriate and practical existing on site materials can be considered for re-use. For example, re-use existing concrete as road fill or foundations.

#### Consider the environmental impact of materials

7.3.3 The use of sustainable building materials will be encouraged.

#### Evaluate the thermal mass of materials

7.3.4 Using high thermal mass materials can significantly reduce heat loss in winter. Traditional Vale buildings were frequently constructed using materials such as brick and stone, which store heat and release it slowly. Other materials that also have a high thermal mass must be justified as part of a comprehensive design concept, particularly in sensitive historic areas.

#### Principle DG85: Materials

Seek to recycle building materials where appropriate.

The use of materials with low-embedded energy or materials that can be recycled is encouraged.

The use of materials that have low toxicity is encouraged.

Where appropriate, consider the use of materials with high thermal mass that suit the character of the area.

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

# 7 Building performance

## Energy technology



Fig 7.6: Building integrated photovoltaics and solar heater, RuralZED

### 7.4 Energy technology

7.4.1 Heat and energy for buildings can be generated from a number of different sources including sunlight, wind and geothermal heat. Where appropriate, energy technologies should be integrated into the design of the building from the outset as part of an overall design approach.

#### Photovoltaics

7.4.2 For example, solar cells (photovoltaics) are used for electricity generation. Cells can be 'building integrated', into the building envelope as solar roof tiles or transparent solar membranes on conservatories, rather than retro-fitted to roofs as glass fronted panels which can result in negative visual impact.

7.4.3 Installing solar panels on houses does not generally require planning permission, however, permission may be required in certain circumstances, for example when installing a solar panel on the roof of flats or in a Conservation Area.

#### Solar thermal water heating

7.4.4 Solar water systems require a collector that can either be roof or wall mounted. Solar thermal water heating systems require a roof collector, but demand a larger surface area for the collector than photovoltaics systems. These systems tend to be visually obtrusive and should be carefully sited and designed from the outset. With care they can be positive design elements of a roofscape or an elevation.

7.4.5 Building integrated energy efficient solutions provide an opportunity to maximise energy generation on a building without significantly compromising the building design. They can make a positive contribution to the design of buildings, particularly where a contemporary statement is required.

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



Fig 7.7: Retrofitting solar water heating systems require careful planning to mitigate their visual impact

#### Principle DG86: Photovoltaics

For new development, integrated energy efficient solutions are preferable.

Any panels should be positioned on building surfaces that face within 90 degrees of south. They work best if they are not overshadowed and ideally on a pitch of less than 40 degrees. Do consider the character of the building and the area.

Designs should allow for system maintenance.

PVs can also be situated within gardens or on ancillary buildings.

#### Principle DG87: Solar thermal water heating

Any panels should be positioned on roofs that have a 30 – 40 degree pitch within 30 degrees of an east-west axis.

Consider the character of the building and the area.

Leave space for extra water cylinders if required for the chosen system.

Make sure that roofs are strong enough to hold the solar panels.

Designs should allow for system maintenance.



# 7 Building performance

## Energy technology

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

### Hydro-power

7.4.6 Small scale hydro-power can be used to convert energy from flowing water into electricity.

7.4.7 When hydro-power is considered a number of design issues should be taken into account including the appearance of turbines and associated infrastructure. The affect the system may have on neighbouring properties from noise, and vibration or change in water flow and finally, the impact of the system on the habitats and species in the watercourse. The Environment Agency should be contacted for further information. Planning permission is required for all water turbines.

#### Principle DG88: Hydro-power

Check the site to see if it is suitable.

Consult the Environment Agency.

Locate the power usage site or connection point to the national grid close to the water source.

Minimise the visual and noise impacts of turbines and other infrastructure by considering the design and position carefully.

Take measures to ensure that the ecology of a water source is not affected by diverting a proportion of its flow.

### Ground / air source power

7.4.8 Ground source heat pumps (GSHP) transfer heat from the ground into a building to provide space heating and, in some cases, to preheat domestic hot water. Planning permission is not usually required to install these systems and they usually do not have any significant design implications. Applicants should, however, consider the internal requirements of the plant and area of the ground needed for the system.

7.4.9 Air and water source heat pumps are also available. Air source heat pumps can be fitted outside a house or in the roof space but can be noisy and visually obtrusive and should therefore be carefully sited to minimise impact on the character of the area.



Fig 7.8: Archimedes screw, hydro generation, East Hanney

# 7 Building performance

## Water



Fig 7.9: Swales can be incorporated within the landscape

### 7.5 Water

7.5.1 Reducing the demand for water and in turn reducing the embodied energy within clean water is a critical consideration in sustainable building design. Measures such as installing water meters, water-saving devices such as dual flush lavatories and other water efficient fixtures and appliances can significantly reduce water consumption.

#### Harvest the rain

7.5.2 Rainwater storage systems harvest rainwater for irrigation, garden watering, toilet flushing or car washing. The simplest form of rainwater storage is a garden water butt and can usually be located on rear elevations. Underground storage should be considered in some sensitive locations or where the storage vessels are larger.

#### Re-use grey water

7.5.3 Grey water recycling systems re-use waste water from hand wash basins, baths and showers. Grey water systems can be installed in new or existing properties and have the potential to meet a significant proportion of domestic demand for water.

7.5.4 Grey water storage tanks are best located in roof spaces or underground so that they do not affect the exterior of a building or the street scene.

#### Principle DG89: Water

All water fittings in all homes and non-residential buildings (taps and showers) should be specified and installed as recognised low flow technology.

Use ultra-low or dual flush WCs.

Encourage rainwater harvesting or grey water recycling unless site conditions are such that it is not possible to install these systems.

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



Fig 7.10: Water butts are simple solutions to recycle rainwater



# 7 Building performance

## SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

### How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to **building performance** as part of an application.

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

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

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

**SUMMARY:** You will now have designed the building on your site.

If a pre-application meeting has not yet been held then this may be an appropriate time. This can be used to check that the Planning Authority are happy with the principles of the scheme and to agree any refinements that may be required.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG83: Orientation	Whilst the orientation and/or design of a building should not be dictated solely by the sun has the building design taken advantage of orientation or considered maximising solar gains?	
	Are building depths limited to maximise natural lighting levels and natural ventilation?	
DG84: Green Roofs	Has the applicant agreed with the council whether green roofs are appropriate within the context of the site?	
	Is the building position and climate suitable for the chosen green roof system?	
	Has additional structural support to the roof been allowed for, as green roofs are heavier than traditional ones?	
DG85: Materials	Has the applicant considered materials with low-embedded energy, materials that can be recycled and/or materials that have low toxicity?	
	Has the applicant considered materials from local sources wherever possible?	
DG86: Photovoltaics	Has the applicant considered solar roof tiles?	
	Are the position/location of any panels suitable?	
DG87: Solar thermal water heating	If proposed has the design considered the impact on the building and/or the character of the area?	
	Are the position/location of any panels suitable?	
DG88: Hydro-power	Is the site suitable?	
	Has the applicant consulted the Environment Agency?	
	Has the design minimised the visual and noise impacts of turbines and other infrastructure?	
DG89: Water	Has the applicant considered rainwater harvesting or grey water recycling systems?	

# 8 Mixed use centres

The Vale is endowed with very successful town and village centres that have developed over time around crossroads, centres of activity or stopping places, with the incremental growth of housing, retail, community and employment uses around the original core. Successful communities require a full range of local facilities and services conveniently located and integrated within a settlement and connected by safe and pleasant streets. All too often truly mixed use areas in new development is poorly designed, poorly located or lacks the vibrancy and activity of the neighbourhood centres we love.

Section 3.6 outlines the importance of incorporating a range of facilities within a neighbourhood that are conveniently sited and connected to residential areas by safe and direct routes. Planning new or designing within mixed use centres or neighbourhood hubs requires careful consideration. This section outlines the key principles to consider to achieve a successfully planned neighbourhood centre.



# 8 Mixed use centres Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document.

Before you proceed have you read through Sections 2 - 7 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to any sections that are relevant to your application.

**OVERVIEW OF SECTION 8: This section outlines the key principles to consider to achieve a successfully planned mixed use centre including:**

- 8.1 Access;
- 8.2 Layout and public realm;
- 8.3 Built form; and
- 8.4 Shopfronts.

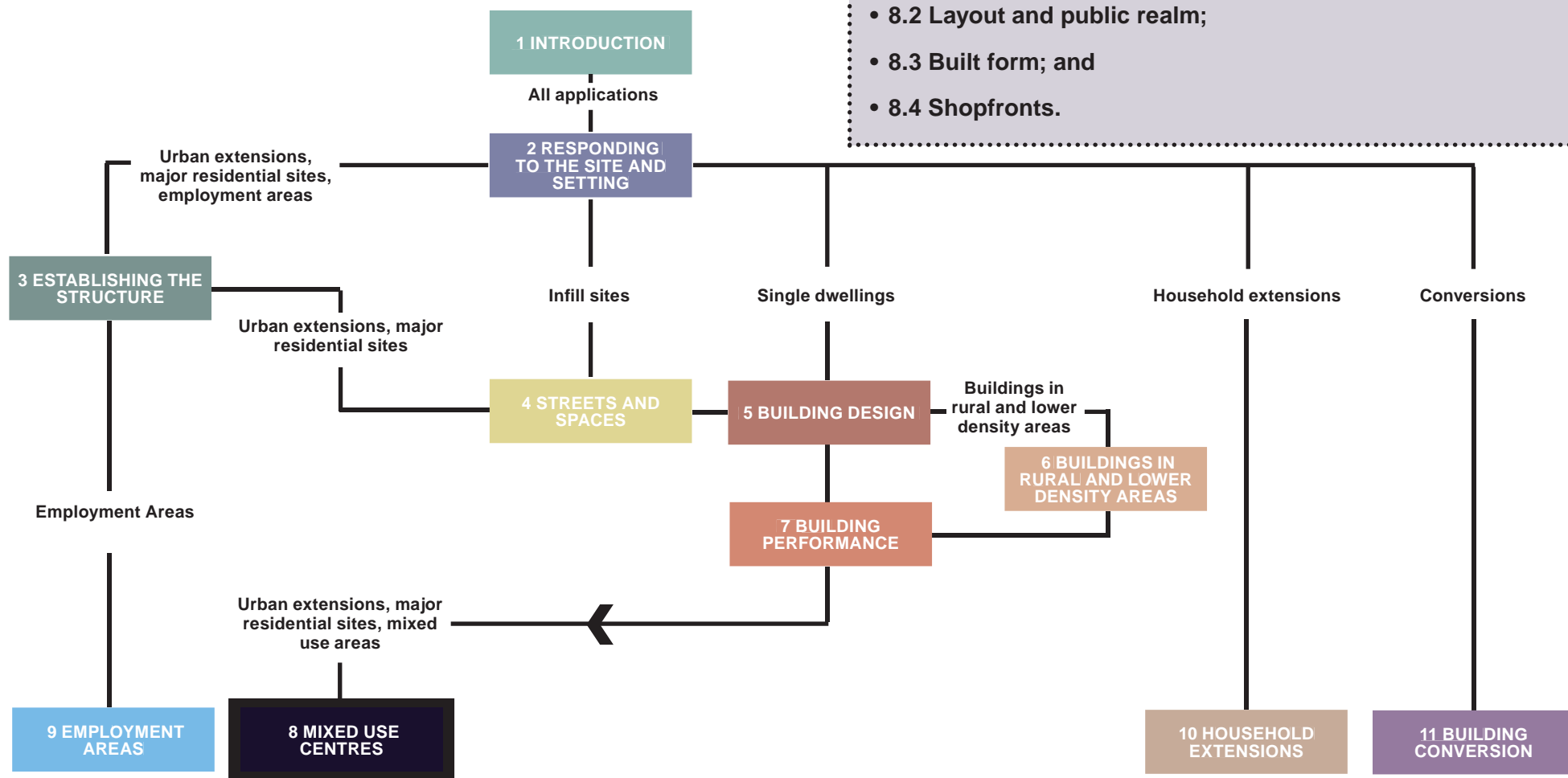


Fig 8.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide



## 8 Mixed use centres

### Access



Fig 8.2: Non-residential uses cluster around key streets and nodes

#### 8.1 Access

8.1.1 The link between successful commercial uses and accessibility has long been recognised. Shops, services and community facilities are more likely to thrive when located on well connected streets benefiting from passing trade, public transport accessibility and a walkable catchment of around 5 to 10 minutes (400 - 800m).

8.1.2 The benefits of mixed use development are numerous:

- Reduction in the need to use a car;
- More convenient access to facilities and local jobs;
- Greater opportunities for social interaction;
- Urban vitality and street life; and
- A greater feeling of safety, with 'eyes on streets'.

8.1.3 The range of services and facilities is linked to the density and quantum of supporting development. For example a village may support a local shop and pub whereas a major urban extension could have sufficient quantum to support a range of facilities, shops, schools and other community facilities.



Fig 8.3: In urban and rural areas local retail and facilities locate along key routes

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:  
Policy 32: Retailing and other main town centre uses  
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

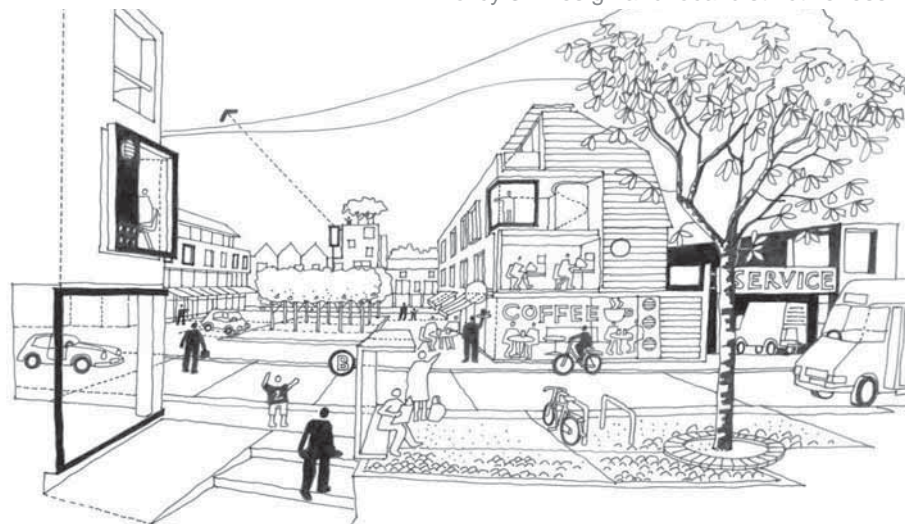


Fig 8.4: Illustration of mixed use centre

#### Principle DG90: Mixed use centres - Access

The location of mixed use centres and neighbourhood hubs is key to their viability and long term success. They should be conveniently located at the intersections of well connected streets and should be highly visible.

Accessibility for all users should be integrated into the design of the centre, with particular consideration given to how the elderly and disabled will access and use the centre.

Short stay / visitor and disabled car parking spaces and secure cycle parking should be integrated into the streetscape or landscape design with convenient access to capitalise on passing trade. The appropriate number, location and layout will depend on the local context.

A frequent bus route should serve the Neighbourhood Centre with bus stops conveniently located and well-overlooked to encourage patronage.

# 8 Mixed use centres

## Layout and public realm



Fig 8.5: Illustration of village green

### 8.2 Layout and public realm

8.2.1 Mixed use centres or neighbourhood hubs should be designed as a central focus for the community. They should provide an attractive and identifiable environment, supported by high quality public realm treatment including street furniture, materials, lighting and planting. All development within the centre should front onto the public realm and make a positive contribution to natural surveillance, identity and legibility.

8.2.2 Providing a public space will create a more welcoming pedestrian environment suitable for pavement cafés and a place for people to linger or meet friends. Setting the public space back from the road will reduce the intrusion of vehicles.

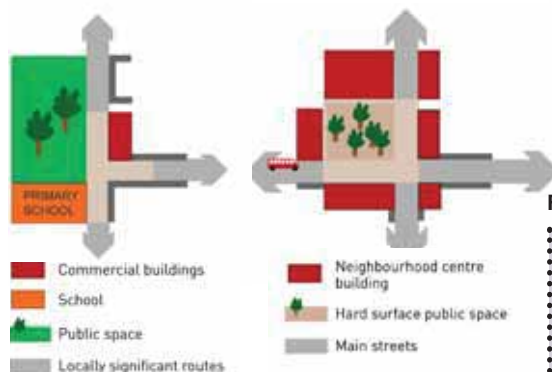


Fig 8.6: Abstract plan configuration of neighbourhood hub and mixed use centres



Fig 8.7: Ground floor retail with residential above focused around a village green - Poundbury

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:  
Policy 32 Retailing and other main town centre uses  
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

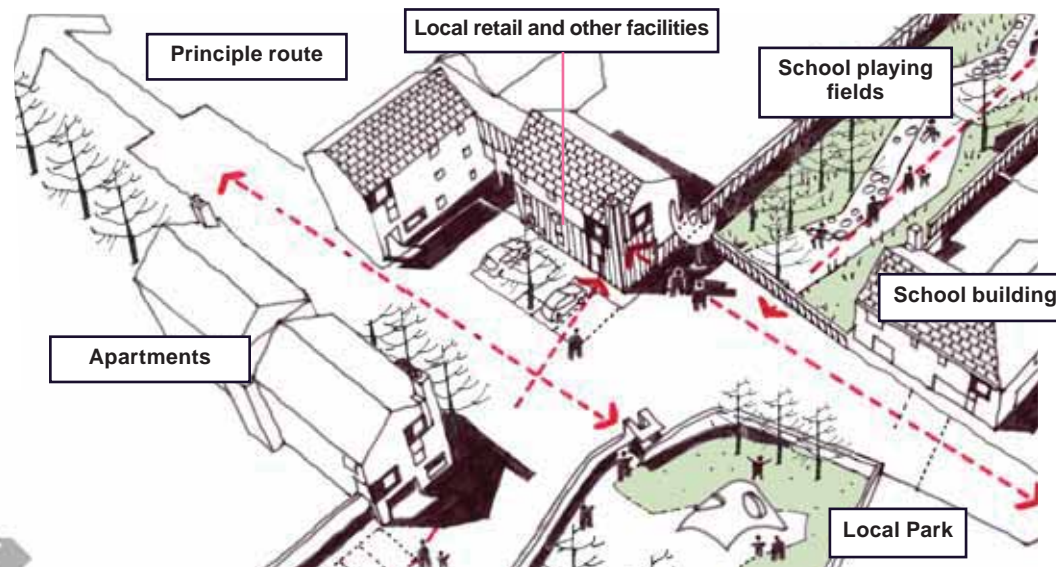


Fig 8.8: Illustration of general arrangement for neighbourhood hubs

### Principle DG91: Mixed use centres - Layout and public realm

Mixed use centres and neighbourhood hubs should be designed around streets or nodes. Avoid internal shopping centres or malls.

Cluster facilities around an appropriate scaled high quality public realm or public space as a central focus. This could range from a village green, a small public square to a simple widening of the street.

The size of public spaces created in neighbourhood centres should be related to the height of enclosing development to provide enclosure and a sense of place.

Servicing areas must not visually dominate the streetscene and dead frontage overlooking the public realm should be avoided.



## 8 Mixed use centres

### Built form



Fig 8.9: The height of buildings within a centre should be appropriate to its context and aid legibility

### 8.3 Built form

8.3.1 The clustering of buildings and the scale and massing of the centre or hub should contribute to its legibility. The heights and form of buildings will depend on their location within the District and the size of the proposed development. For example within a more rural village location a neighbourhood hub could consist of two or three 2-storey buildings clustered around a key node whereas in more urban locations or within larger urban extensions it may be appropriate to structure a number of 3 – 4 storey buildings, a school building and crèche around a public space.

8.3.2 Development within mixed use areas and neighbourhood hubs should generally be fine grain.

8.3.3 Sub-dividing development parcels into smaller plots has a number of benefits including:

- Generating more active frontages and entrances onto the street;
- Encouraging a 'human scale' and fine pedestrian grain;
- Providing a flexible basis for amalgamation if necessary which enables future incremental growth to take place; and
- Minimising costly and wasteful leftover space.

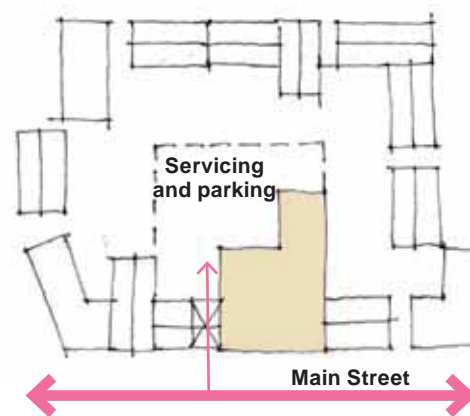


Fig 8.10: 'Wrap' or locate larger non-residential footprints such as supermarkets or leisure buildings within the block with a perimeter of active development



Fig 8.11: Building heights with 4 storey development within the mixed use centre, 3 storeys defining principal streets and 2 storeys elsewhere

#### Principle DG92: Mixed Use centres - Built form

The height of buildings within a centre should be appropriate to its context and aid legibility.

Include residential development within the mix above non-residential uses to ensure activity and surveillance throughout the day and night. Residential proposals within these locations should consider service yard locations, noise, odour, lighting and air quality issues.

Ground floor ceiling heights should be increased to provide more generous non-residential spaces.

Development within mixed use areas and neighbourhood hubs should generally be fine grain.

'Wrap' or locate larger non-residential footprints such as supermarkets or leisure buildings within blocks with a perimeter of active development.

All development within the centre should front onto the public realm and make a positive contribution to natural surveillance, identity and legibility.

Applicants should refer to Section 5.15 for apartment design.



# 8 Mixed use centres

## Shopfronts

### 8.4 Shopfronts

8.4.1 The guidance below should be applied to both new development and alterations to existing shopfronts.

8.4.2 There is a wide variety in the design, detail, style and appearance of shopfronts. However there are certain features that are common to most. Even in the most modern shopfront it is usually possible to identify a 'stallriser', 'fascia', and 'pilaster', and although not in a traditional form, elements that echo 'consoles', 'cornices' and 'fanlights'. In any design such elements should be compatible in terms of scale, proportion and materials in order to produce a well-balanced shopfront.

8.4.3 Shop frontages should be designed to reinforce the shop's identity and its location in the centre or hub whilst forming an integral part of the whole building, streetscene or cluster of buildings. The design needs to consider the overall style of the hub or centre and also respond or reflect the character of existing shop fronts within the settlement.

8.4.4 Ground floor units should be flexible and easily adaptable to respond to the changing needs of the neighbourhood and reduce the likelihood of vacant units.

8.4.5 The principal purpose of a shopfront is the advertisement and display of goods and services provided inside the building.

8.4.6 Retail frontage should reinforce the shop's identity and its location in the centre or neighbourhood hub whilst forming an integral part of the whole building and street frontage.

8.4.7 This can be achieved by considering the style of the whole building and that of its neighbours.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:  
Policy 32 Retailing and other main town centre uses  
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness

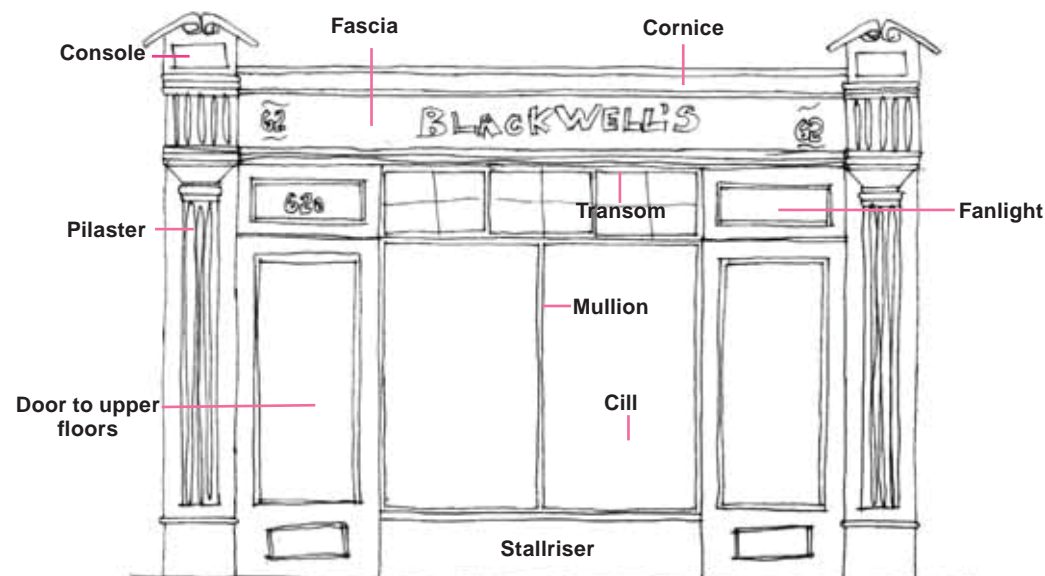


Fig 8.12: Basic elements of a traditional shopfront design



✗ Fig 8.13: The building frontage is dominated by oversized signage and signage on upper levels. It appears cluttered and detracts from the overall street scene



✓ Fig 8.14: A coordinated, uncluttered approach that is visually cohesive creates a more pleasant street environment

## 8 Mixed use centres

### Shopfronts



Fig 8.15: Abingdon shop fronts which are appropriate to their context

**8.4.8 Canopies:** The integration of canopies within shopfronts will be accepted in areas where this is prevalent to provide shelter, colour and interest and reflect the character of the District. It is important that these canopies are consistently applied and are made of a non-reflective material so that they do not adversely affect the appearance of the street scene.

**8.4.9 Security:** Security measures for retail and commercial units should be considered at the design stage and not 'added on' as an afterthought. A balance must be struck between ensuring that units are safe and secure while considering their impact on the appearance of the street. Solid external shutters can create an unwelcoming and hostile environment and should therefore be avoided.

**8.4.10** The preferred solution of light mesh grilles or lattice roller shutters allow shopfronts to maintain an 'open' feel and appearance but maintain a high degree of security.

**8.4.11 Signage:** The impact of external signage on the street scene can be significant. When carefully considered, signage can aid legibility and contribute positively to the streetscene. Poorly sited, overlarge or badly designed signage however can clutter the appearance of centres and neighbourhood hubs. There is therefore a need to create a careful balance between satisfying commercial needs of advertising and protecting the amenity and character of shopping areas.

**8.4.12** All signs should relate well in terms of size, scale and appearance to the building on which they are set and the streetscene of which they are a part.

**8.4.13** The signage should generally not extend beyond the defined shopfront fascia and should avoid lurid colours and excessive backlit illumination.

**8.4.14** Where adjacent shopfronts are of similar scale and appearance, designers should define a signage zone so a consistent height and scale of signage can be established across adjacent shopfronts.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:  
Policy 32: Retailing and other main town centre uses  
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness



Fig 8.16: Solid external metal roller shutters can create an unwelcoming and hostile environment and should therefore be avoided



Fig 8.17: Canopies should contribute to the streetscene



Fig 8.18: Overly lurid shopfronts and signage should be avoided



## 8 Mixed use centres

### Shopfronts

8.4.15 **Lighting:** Modest and subtle lighting of centres, neighbourhood hubs and individual shop-fronts can contribute to a lively and safer-feeling environment at night and should be encouraged. In the interest of minimising obtrusive light, projecting illuminated signs and flashing or neon signs should be avoided.

8.4.16 **Materials:** The character of the building, street and any adjoining buildings should be used to influence the choice of materials and colours. The number of different materials and colours should be kept to a minimum in order to avoid a clash with the adjoining buildings and the character of the street.

8.4.17 New shopfronts must be constructed from high quality materials and avoid lurid colours.

8.4.18 **Glazing:** Where appropriate glazing should be as extensive as possible to allow views in and out of shops. Sales counters and checkout counters should be located near to glazed areas so that they provide passive surveillance of external public spaces.

8.4.19 Full height advertisements or blanked-out panels should not be included where they are detrimental to the streetscene.

8.4.20 Glazed areas should generally be subdivided to achieve a well-proportioned shopfront and contribute to the scale and rhythm of an overall elevation.

#### Principle DG93: Shopfronts

Shopfronts should respond to the grain of individual buildings. The proportions of the shopfront should harmonise with the main building and its neighbours.

Within new build development, the shopfront should not be treated separately from the upper levels but considered as a coherent design.

Materials should reflect the existing range within centres or a palette agreed with the Council.

Shopfronts should not incorporate external security measures that negatively impact on the streetscene.

Shopfronts should not display over dominant or incongruous advertising.

All signs should relate well in terms of size, scale and appearance to the building on which they are set and the streetscene of which they are a part.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:  
Policy 32: Retailing and other main town centre uses  
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness



Fig 8.19: Shopfront integrates with overall appearance of the building



Fig 8.20: Corporate branding on historic buildings should be subtle and in-keeping with the buildings overall appearance



Fig 8.21: Coordination between shopfronts can create a more coherent street scene



## 8 Mixed use centres

### SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

#### How to use

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

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

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

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

**SUMMARY:** Applicants should now have a proposal which has responded positively to its setting and demonstrates how the proposal has been informed by its context. It should have established an appropriate structure and referred to relevant sections in accordance with Figure 8.1.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG90: Mixed use centres - Access	Is the location of any mixed use areas and/or neighbourhood hubs conveniently located at the intersections of well connected streets and highly visible?	
	Is the centre supported by an appropriate quantum of development within walking distance?	
	Is the design accessible for all users?	
	Does the design incorporate an appropriate number of parking spaces in an appropriate location?	
	Is the location accessible by public transport?	
DG91: Mixed use centres - Layout and public realm	Is the design based around the principles of streets, blocks and nodes?	
	Does the design incorporate an appropriate high quality public realm / public space?	
	Are service areas and large areas of parking screened from view?	
	Is blank frontage onto the public realm avoided?	
DG92: Mixed use centres - Built form	Are the building heights appropriate to the context and appropriate to the enclosure of streets and public spaces?	
	Is a mix of use proposed to ensure activity and surveillance throughout the day?	
	Are larger footprints such as supermarkets incorporated within a block and wrapped with development?	
	Does the design make a positive contribution to street frontage, natural surveillance, identity and legibility?	
DG93: Shopfronts	If apartments are included, do they conform to guidance in Section 5.15?	
	Does the design of shopfronts respond to the grain of the building and harmonise with the building as a whole and its neighbours?	
	Does the choice of materials reflect the palette within an existing centre or has a palette of materials been agreed with the Council?	
	Does the signage relate well in terms of size and appearance to the building on which they are set and the streetscene of which they are a part?	

# 9 Commercial / employment areas

The District has a number of regionally and nationally significant commercial / employment areas including Milton Park and Harwell Science Park. Over the local plan period these areas will grow significantly to provide employment for a growing population within the Vale. Whilst it is accepted that these areas are influenced and shaped by a different set of priorities to residential and mixed use schemes they can also conform to the basic principles of place-making to create quality workplace environments.

Commercial / employment areas that take a landscape led approach and invest in the areas between the buildings create better workplace environments and in turn, improve productivity, reduce sickness days and provide a more prestigious setting.



# 9 Commercial / employment areas

## Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document.

Before you proceed have you read through Sections 2 - 3 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to any sections that are relevant to your application.

**OVERVIEW OF SECTION 9:**  
This section outlines the key principles to consider to achieve a successfully planned commercial / employment area including:

- 9.1 Layout and access;
- 9.2 Parking and servicing;
- 9.3 Supporting facilities;
- 9.4 Built form;
- 9.5 Building frontage;
- 9.6 Signage;
- 9.7 Waste and recycling;
- 9.8 Building performance; and
- 9.9 Materials.

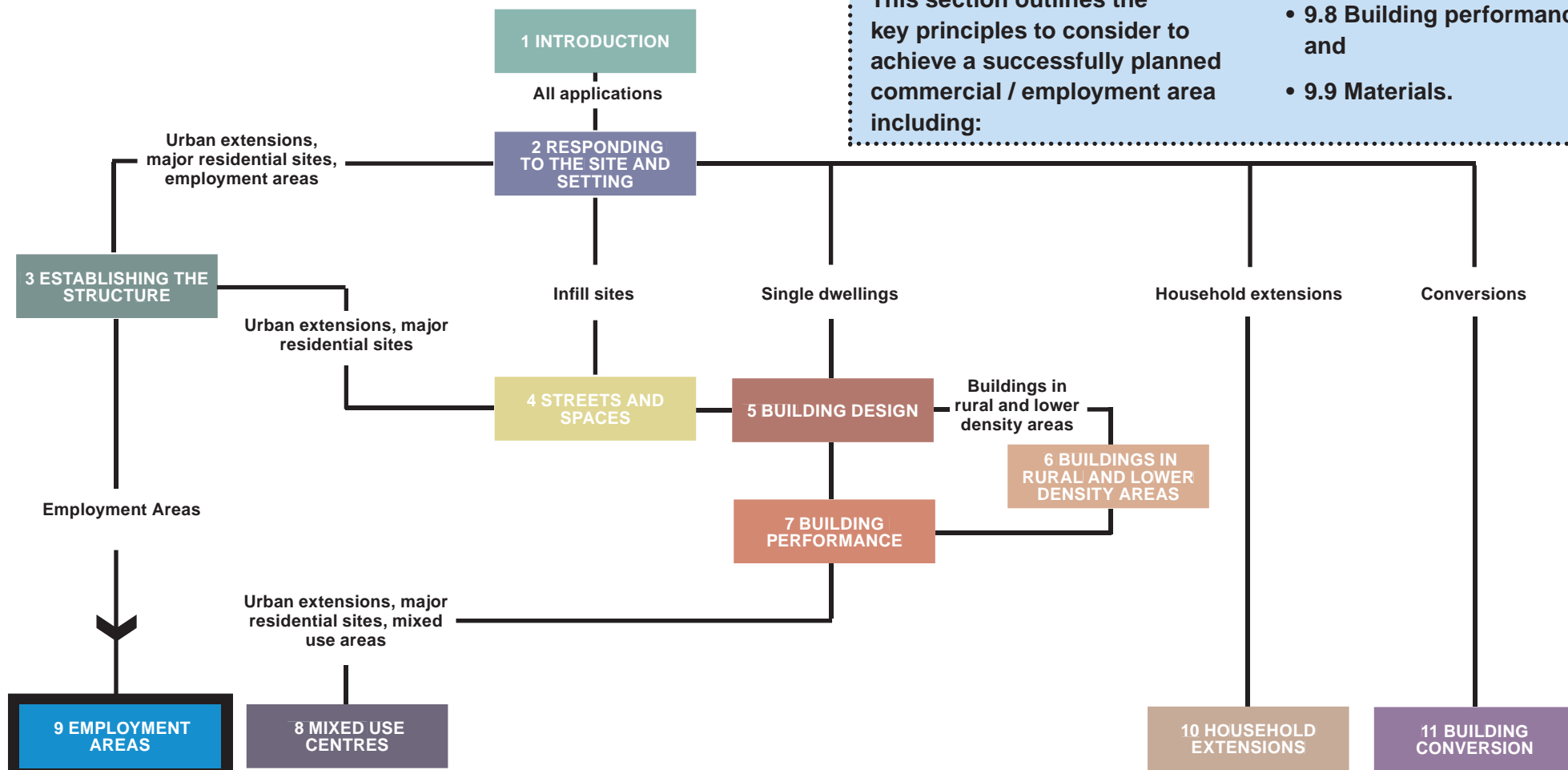


Fig 9.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide



## 9 Commercial / employment areas

### Layout and access



Fig 9.2: Office buildings set within a green environment at Milton Park near Didcot

#### 9.1 Layout and access

##### Layout

9.1.1 The principles of establishing a successful layout in Section 3 should also be applied to commercial and employment areas.

9.1.2 The existing employment areas have a number of physical assets, including areas of open space, natural woodlands and water which employees should be able to see from their workplaces and enjoy in their breaks. New development and improvements to existing employment areas should improve connections to the surrounding landscape and create open, green vistas through the development to the surrounding landscape.

9.1.3 New development and improvements to existing areas should take a landscape led approach, focusing investment in areas that will significantly contribute to the quality of the workplace environment. Focus should be directed to the space around and between the buildings before the building design itself including:

- Spine roads or principal streets which could take the form of well planted boulevards to encourage walking and cycling;
- Central landscape areas or public space which form focal points;
- Connections to the countryside;
- Gateways into the areas;
- Entrance forecourts and parking areas for individual businesses; and
- Drainage and SUDs solutions.

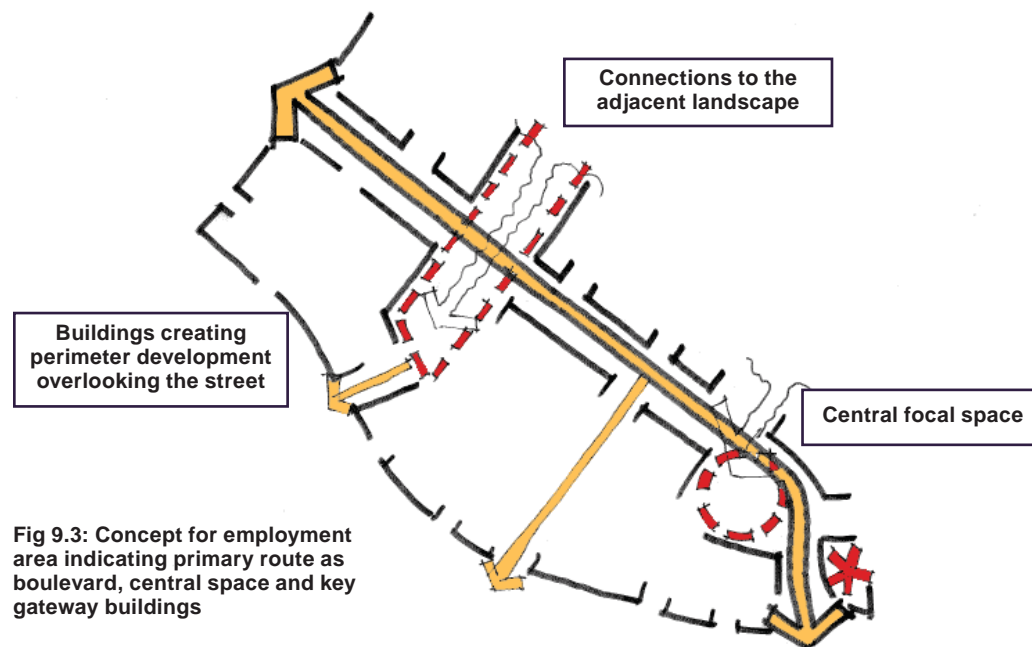


Fig 9.3: Concept for employment area indicating primary route as boulevard, central space and key gateway buildings



Fig 9.4: Layout plan showing indicative block layouts with frontage and entrances overlooking the boulevard

# 9 Commercial / employment areas

## Layout and access



Fig 9.5: Employment structured around high quality landscape design

9.1.4 Employment uses should be clustered around entrance forecourts. The forecourts will function as the main arrival space for groups of buildings and will incorporate visitor and staff parking. The entrances to individual buildings should face these areas with reception areas providing surveillance onto forecourt spaces. Forecourts should have a simple and robust aesthetic, softened with tree and hedge planting.



Fig 9.6: Entrance forecourt

### Access

9.1.5 Commercial and employment areas should be well served by public transport with good pedestrian connections to bus stops, rail stations and adjacent residential areas to minimise car use.

9.1.6 New employment development should be structured as a network of connected streets with development wherever possible fronting the street.



Fig 9.7: Entrance forecourt



Fig 9.8: Even larger employment uses can be grouped to create entrance forecourts as the main arrival space and to incorporate visitor and staff parking



### Principle DG94: Employment areas - layout and access

For the layout of new employment areas applicants should refer to Section 3 of this document and demonstrate how these principles have been met through the proposals.

New development and improvements to existing areas should take a landscape, led approach focusing investment in areas that will significantly contribute to the quality of the workplace environment.

Commercial and employment areas should be well served by public transport.

Proposals should be structured as a network of connected streets with development fronting the street wherever possible.

Office areas and storage space within B2 and B8 uses must be integrated within the curtilage of a single structure and avoid low quality ancillary buildings cluttering the development's high quality appearance.



## 9 Commercial / employment areas

### Parking and servicing



Fig 9.9: Large areas of parking and asphalt to the front of buildings should be minimised

## 9.2 Parking and servicing

9.2.1 Parking and servicing demands for commercial and employment areas can put significant pressure on land take and can often conflict with creating good, sustainable urban solutions.

9.2.2 Large forecourt parking located at the front of buildings can often result in a 'sea of parking' which can be confusing to find your way around and reduces overlooking of principal streets and spaces.

9.2.3 Forecourts should be limited in size functioning as the main arrival space for groups of buildings and will incorporate visitor and staff parking.

9.2.4 Cycle parking should be provided close to the entrance of commercial or employment buildings in locations with good surveillance.



Fig 9.10: Parking should be incorporated into the landscape design with tree planting breaking up the visual impact of parked cars



Fig 9.11 Applicants should consider light weight parking structures to minimise landtake

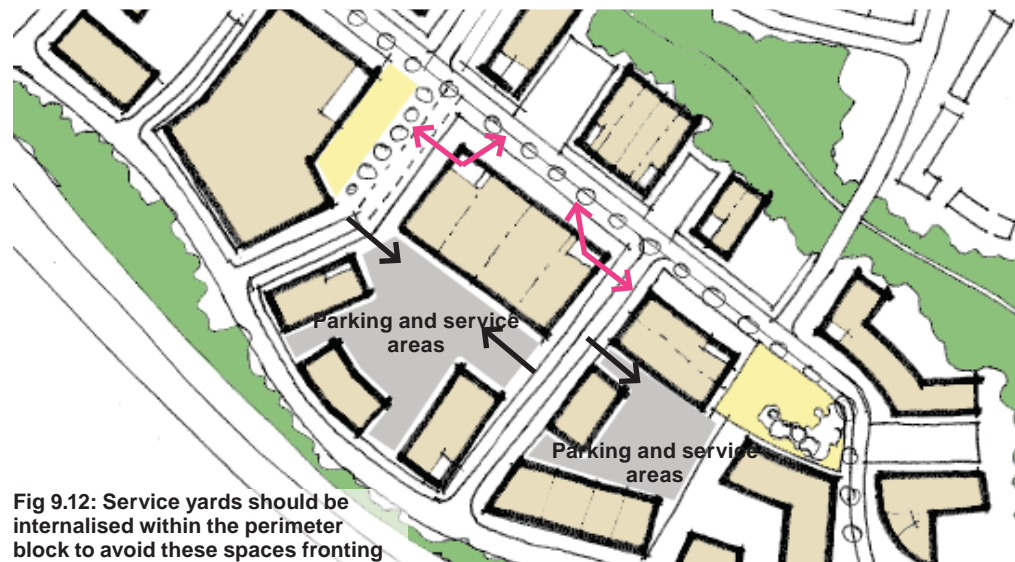


Fig 9.12: Service yards should be internalised within the perimeter block to avoid these spaces fronting onto public routes and landscape area

### Principle DG95: Employment areas - parking and servicing

Parking levels should conform to current standards, as set out in the Adopted Vehicle Parking Standards.

Service yards should be internalised within the perimeter block to avoid these spaces fronting onto public routes and landscape area.

Large forecourts with buildings substantially set back from the public realm should be avoided where possible.

Wherever possible large areas of surface parking should be positioned to minimise its impact

on the public realm. This could include internalising the parking within the perimeter block or locating it to the side or rear of the building.

Limited parking can be provided in small forecourts accommodating visitor and disabled parking. Applicants should demonstrate that the building line will ensure that a good streetscene is maintained.

Parking should be incorporated into the landscape design with tree planting breaking up the visual impact of parked cars.



## 9 Commercial / employment areas

### Supporting facilities and built form



Fig 9.13: Employment areas should be supported by local facilities to serve the working population

#### 9.3 Supporting facilities

9.3.1 Having a range of local facilities serving employees within a commercial area can significantly cut down on car borne trips and improve the workplace environment. Facilities such as creches, convenience retail, cafes, and gyms can also create focal points for employees.



Fig 9.14 Facilities such as creches can be hugely successful within employment areas

#### 9.4 Built form

9.4.1 Employment buildings should respond positively to the character and architectural traditions of the district in terms of scale, mass, form, materials and detailing. On business parks, as a general principle, the landscape and public realm should form the dominant feature within employment areas with the buildings forming a more neutral background. As such, the design of simple, rectilinear buildings within the landscape is promoted similar to traditional agricultural buildings.

9.4.2 Although the scale and massing of commercial buildings may vary from building to building, articulation of the ground floor can create a more human scale and establish a coherent and common design language throughout the development.

#### Principle DG96: Employment areas - supporting facilities

Where appropriate incorporate a range of appropriate, supporting facilities within employment areas to serve the needs of employees.

#### Principle DG97: Employment areas - built form

Keep designs simple. Larger footprint buildings can often appear bulky and should be broken down to comprise a number of simple geometric forms.

Articulation of the ground floor of buildings can create a more human scale and establish a coherent and common design language throughout the development.

9.4.3 This could be achieved through the use of glazing, articulation of cladding, establishing a datum line or facade detail. The horizontal emphasis can be visually reduced by including vertical divisions or elements.

9.4.3 Whilst it is accepted that some employment buildings will be of a significant scale, applicants should consider the impact of these buildings on views from the countryside and the wider context. Measures to mitigate their impact should be considered. For example, low profile pitches / barrel vault roofs may be preferable to angular flat roofs. Green roofs should be considered where appropriate.



Fig 9.15 Simple geometric forms with entrance areas and ground floor clearly articulated

# 9 Commercial / employment areas

## Building frontage and signage

### 9.5 Building frontage

9.5.1 Whilst it is recognised that the opportunity for active frontages can be limited within some commercial and employment uses, building entrances, reception areas and offices should be positioned to make a positive contribution to the surveillance of the public realm and forecourts.

9.5.2 Individual employment / commercial buildings within more urban areas should conform to the principles of creating successful perimeter blocks, providing continuity of building line, active frontage and enclosure. In urban locations, buildings should not be significantly set back and parking / service yards should be located to the rear.

#### Principle DG98: Employment areas - Building frontage

Wherever feasible buildings should be designed with a single entrance point serving reception areas, the main space and office.

Building entrances will front onto streets, spaces and forecourts and make a positive contribution to surveillance and legibility.

Entrances should be generous, covered areas which are welcoming and easily identifiable to help improve legibility and provide protection from the weather.

The position of reception areas and office space should be located to positively contribute to the surveillance of entrance areas and forecourts. Reception areas on corners overlooking entrance areas and forecourts contribute to the surveillance of those areas.

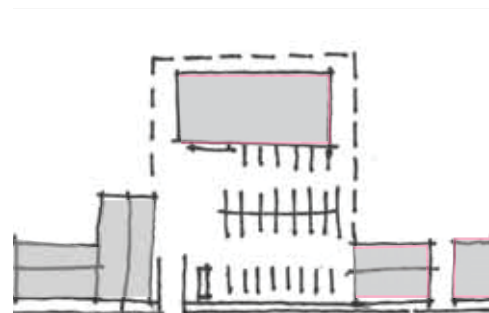


Fig 9.16 Commercial buildings within more urban areas should not be set back from the building line

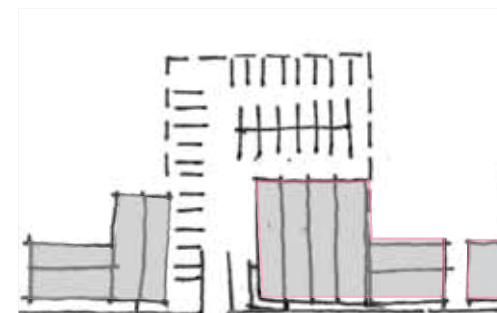


Fig 9.17 Commercial buildings should be integrated within the development block and maintain a consistent building line. Large areas of parking/ service yards should be located to the rear

### 9.6 Signage

9.6.1 Signage for commercial / employment areas can become over dominant within the public realm and detract from the quality of the surrounding streets and public spaces.



Fig 9.18 Signage should be focused around entrance areas or flank walls

#### Principle DG99: Employment areas - Signage

Stand alone signage for individual businesses should be avoided as this generally has a negative impact on the street scene. In larger employment areas estate signage with unified boards, listing individual companies may be provided at entrance points from the public highway.

Signage for individual businesses should be focused around entrance areas and / or on bare flank / walls.

Signage should not be overbearing or out of proportion with the overall building.



## 9 Commercial / employment areas

### Waste, performance and materials

#### 9.7 Waste and recycling

9.7.1 Business and employment uses inevitably create waste. The quantity and how it is dealt with is primarily down to the occupants, however, the design of the buildings can help users to minimise the impact of this waste.

##### **Principle DG100: Employment areas - waste and recycling**

A Waste Strategy specific to the end users should be produced and provided to the Local Planning Authority for written approval prior to the occupation of each building.

Each tenant should have access to adequate, hygienic, space in which to segregate the waste into various recycling streams and thus minimise landfill.

These recycling points should be conveniently located for the users and also for the efficient removal of the materials by collection vehicles.

These facilities must not be in plain sight of landscape areas or principal streets.

#### 9.8 Building performance

9.8.1 Sustainability principles should be integrated into all stages of design, construction and operation of the buildings. The emphasis, in terms of resources, is on reducing demand through solar orientation, natural ventilation, waste minimisation practices and reducing resources used, re-used and recycled. The intention is that the quality of the workplace will be raised through the application of these sustainability principles.

##### **Principle DG101: Employment areas - building performance**

Applicants are encouraged to attain the BRE's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of 'Excellent'.



Fig 9.19 Simple geometric forms with entrance areas and ground floor clearly articulated



Fig 9.20 Open plan designs capitalising on natural light can provide lights and airy spaces that allow future adaptability

##### **Principle DG102: Employment areas - materials**

A palette of materials should be agreed with the council

The selection of materials and colours should integrate in the landscape and could be used to reduce the appearance of bulk and massing of the building.

Care should be taken when specifying reflective materials and/or large areas of glazing within inappropriate settings to avoid glare and light pollution.

#### 9.9 Materials

9.9.1 The selection of materials and colours for commercial and employment areas can have a significant visual impact on the context. The selection of materials should also consider all sustainability issues and take a 'whole life cycle' approach. The use of traditional construction materials such as timber weather boarding or locally distinctive brick and roofing tiles, would help integrate employment / commercial buildings into the rural context.

Materials and architectural expression can be used to break up facades into its component parts (base, middle, roof) to reduce the bulk and massing of buildings, including vertical components or elements can reduce the horizontal emphasis.



## 9 Commercial / employment areas

### SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

#### How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has considered the design of commercial and employment areas as part of an application..

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

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

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

**SUMMARY:** Applicants should now have a proposal which has responded positively to its setting and demonstrates how the proposal has been informed by its context. It should have established an appropriate structure and referred to relevant sections in accordance to Figure 9.1.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG94: Employment areas - layout and access	Does the design conform to guidance in Section 3?	
	Does the design take a landscape led approach to the layout of the area linking to natural assets and creating landscaped spaces for workers?	
	Is the design structured around a network of connected streets?	
	Is the location accessible by public transport?	
DG95: Employment areas - Parking and servicing	Does the design incorporate an appropriate number of parking spaces in an appropriate location?	
	Are service areas and large areas of parking screened from view?	
DG96: Employment areas - Supporting facilities	If applicable does the design incorporate a range of appropriate, supporting facilities within employment areas to serve the needs of employees?	
DG97: Employment areas - Built form	Are larger footprint buildings broken down to comprise of a number of simple geometric forms to reduce their apparent bulk?	
	Are ground floors of buildings articulated to create a development with a more human scale?	
DG98: Employment areas - Building frontage	Does the design maximise the potential of active frontage with entrances fronting onto streets, spaces and forecourts and making a positive contribution to surveillance and legibility?	
DG99: Employment areas - Signage	Does the design mitigate the impact of signage onto the public realm?	
DG100: Employment areas - Waste and recycling	Has a strategy for waste and recycling been considered?	
DG101: Employment areas - Building performance	Is the applicant committed and do the designs support achieving a rating of BREEAM excellent?	
DG102: Employment areas - Materials	Has a palette of materials been agreed with the council?	
	Are the materials sustainable and do they mitigate against the impact on their setting?	

# 10 Household extensions

Extensions to dwellings can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of a dwelling itself and the street or area in which it is set. A well-designed extension can enhance the appearance and value of a property, whereas an unsympathetic extension can have a harmful impact, create problems for neighbouring residents, and affect the overall character of the area.

This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when extending a dwelling. It sets out the differing approaches that should be adopted when designing front and rear extensions, single storey and two storey additions, porches, garages and outbuildings.

Householders are encouraged to make their extensions as energy efficient and sustainable as possible, in line with the design principles set out in Section 7.



# 10 Household extensions

## Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document.

Before you proceed have you read through Section 02 and completed the relevant checklists? If not please go back to Section 02.

**OVERVIEW OF SECTION 10:**  
This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when extending a dwelling including:

- 10.1 Planning;
- 10.2 Listed Buildings;
- 10.3 Responding to local character;
- 10.4 Consider your neighbours;
- 10.5 Scale, form and massing;
- 10.6 Design considerations; and
- 10.7 Detailed principles.

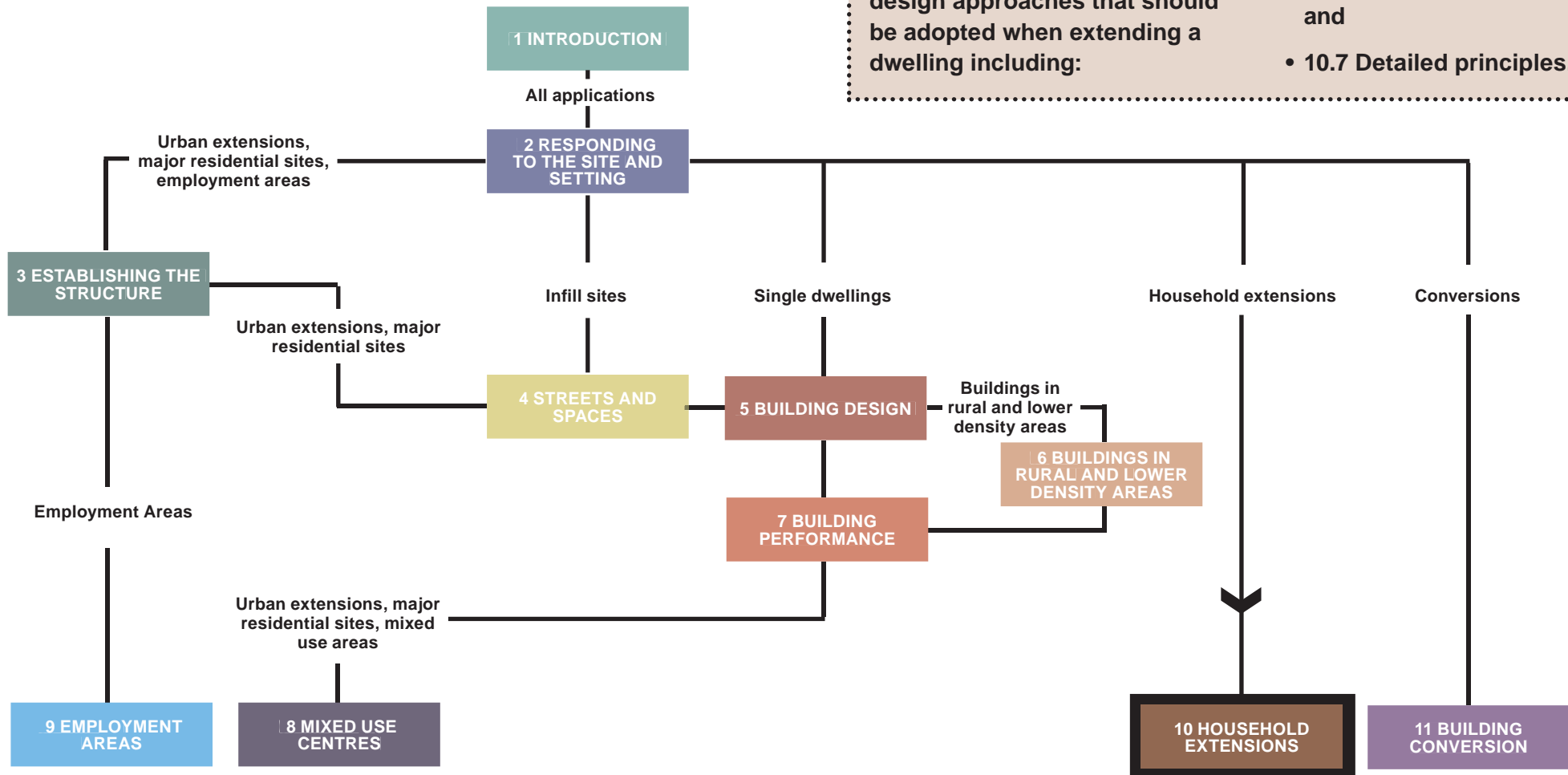


Fig 10.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide



# 10 Household extensions

## Planning and designations



Fig 10.2: Modern extension used to link two buildings

### 10.1 Planning

10.1.1 Some smaller-scale extensions may constitute 'permitted development' which means they do not need planning permission. The council's Planning Service can advise on whether planning permission is required through the permitted development enquiry form ([click here](#)) or alternatively, the Planning Portal website provides an interactive section. ([www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/100806\\_PDforhouseholders\\_TechnicalGuidance.pdf](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/100806_PDforhouseholders_TechnicalGuidance.pdf))

10.1.2 If planning permission is required the council has a validation checklist for householders ([click here](#)) to help people in preparing applications and ensure all necessary information is included.

10.1.3 Building Regulations approval may also be required for any extensions or alterations to a dwelling. Advice on Building Regulations can be provided by the council's Building Control Service.

### 10.2 Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other designations

10.2.1 If through assessment in Section 2 a building has been identified as being Statutorily Listed or is located within a Conservation Area or AONB, some forms of development or alteration that would otherwise be classed as permitted development will require planning permission, Listed Building consent or combinations of these. You may need to submit a Design and Access Statement for applications for Listed Building consent and for planning applications in Conservation Areas.

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

10.2.2 More information can be found on the Council's website ([www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building)).

10.2.3 Extensions to historic buildings can be harmful if their significance is not fully understood. Further advice on alterations to your property can be requested through pre-application advice. [Click here](#) for further details.

10.2.4 As outlined in Section 2, the guidance in this Design Guide does not override consideration of proposals through an application for Listed Building consent.

# 10 Household extensions

## Local character and neighbours

### 10.3 Responding to the local character

10.3.1 The importance of responding to the setting is identified in Section 2 and applicants should now have an understanding of how the existing building contributes to its surroundings and the local character.

#### Principle DG103: Responding to local character

Respond to the character of the area and immediate neighbourhood within which your property is located.

Use this character as a starting point for design in terms of building form, size, position within the plot and relationship to plot boundaries.

Maintain established building lines.

Use simple uncomplicated building forms.

Use building materials and details typical of your area or demonstrate how the materials chosen are appropriate.

### 10.4 Consider your neighbours

10.4.1 When considering extending or altering a dwelling applicants should consider its impact on neighbouring properties. Consider size, how close it will be to them, overlooking and privacy. Think about how you would feel if they built the same thing.

#### Principle DG104: Consider your neighbours

Make sure proposed extensions do not intrude upon a neighbour's privacy.

All extensions should take into account the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing. Consider the position, size and form of the extension in relation to adjacent properties and the path of the sun.

Any extension to a house should not lead to an oppressive or overbearing impact, which would be harmful to the amenity of occupiers of nearby neighbouring dwellings.

In particular, two storey extensions

should not encroach beyond a 40 degree line taken from the edge of the nearest ground or first floor window of a habitable room of a neighbouring property.

Any side facing upper floor windows to habitable rooms (e.g. bedrooms) need to be carefully located and/or designed to ensure they do not cause overlooking problems for neighbouring properties.

A minimum distance of 12m is recommended between habitable windows and flank walls.

Carefully consider the position of new garages to avoid an increase in noise and disturbance from vehicle movements.

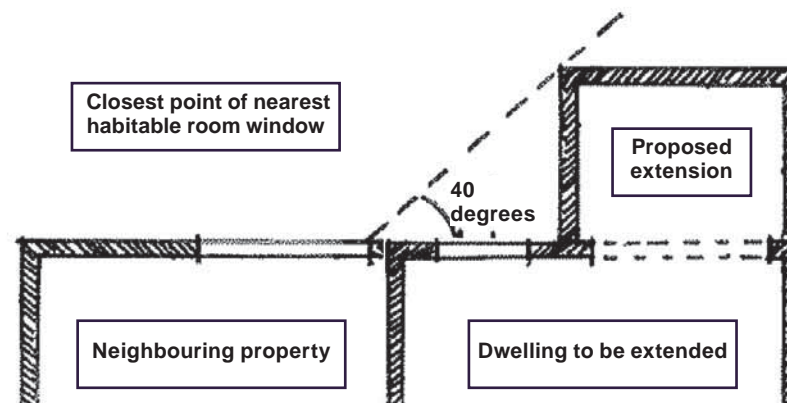


Fig 10.3 The 40 degree rule: The proposed extension should not project beyond the '40 degree line' (indicated by the dashed line) into the neighbours protected area



Fig 10.4 The 40 degree rule: The proposed extension should not project beyond the '40 degree line' (indicated by the dashed line) into the neighbours protected area

# 10 Household extensions

## Scale form and massing



Fig 10.5: Extension at East Hanney

### 10.5 Scale, form and massing

10.5.1 The scale, form and massing of an extension and how the extension relates to the original dwelling and its amenity space are critical considerations. Applicants should keep the form and scale of the extension proportionate to the house and plot. Extensions on dwellings that have been extended previously over time and/or proposed extensions which are considered 'over development' will not be accepted.



Fig 10.6 The scale and massing of the extension bears no relationship to the existing dwelling



Fig 10.7 The extension has an appropriate scale and massing in relation to the original dwelling

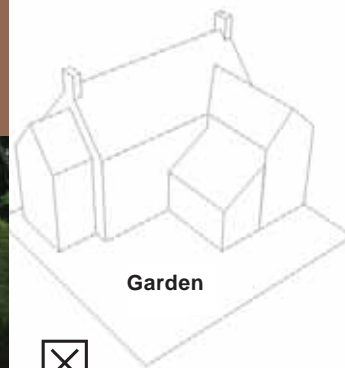


Fig 10.8 Multiple extensions over time can have a compound impact and overwhelm the original dwelling

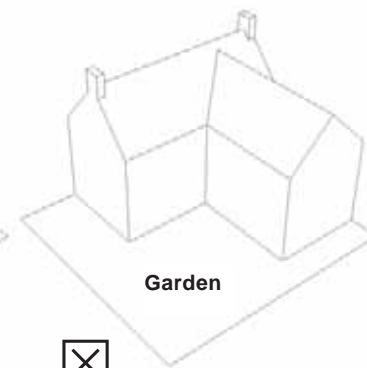


Fig 10.9 The size of the extension overwhelms the original dwelling and also results in a significant loss of private amenity

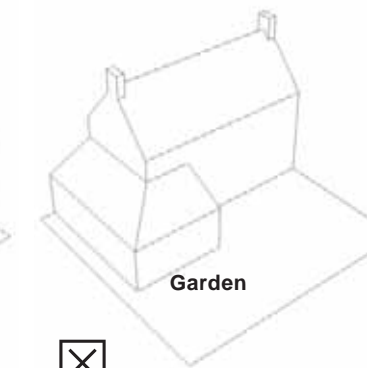


Fig 10.10 Extensions that wrap around the existing dwelling should be avoided

#### Principle DG105: Scale, form and massing

Extensions should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling.

The original building should remain the dominant element of the property whether you have one extension or several. The effect of any extension should not overwhelm the house from any given view point.

Any existing external access from the front of the dwelling to the rear garden is a significant asset to service the garden consideration should be given to the value of retaining this access.

Extensions should use simple, uncomplicated building forms to compliment and coordinate with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling.

Applicants should avoid proposals that wrap around the existing dwelling and involve complicated roof forms. This is likely to result in a bulky appearance.

The pitch and form of roof used on a dwelling adds to its character and extensions should respond to this where appropriate.



# 10 Household extensions

## Design considerations



Fig 10.11: A successful, simple rear extension



Fig 10.14 Successful extensions can be designed to reflect the architectural style of the existing building



Fig 10.15 Successful extensions can be designed as modern interventions with contrasting style from the existing dwelling

### 10.6 Design considerations

10.6.1 There are generally two design approaches that can be adopted when considering extending a property.

10.6.2 The first is to consider the materials, architectural features, window sizes and proportions of the existing building and to recreate this style to design an extension that matches or complements the existing building.

10.6.3 The second is to consider the proportion, materials, architectural features and window sizes of the existing building and to develop a contemporary response to those by taking cues from the key aspects. This approach requires a high quality design.

10.6.4 Both options can create successful, well designed extensions that can be mutually beneficial to both the house and the wider area.

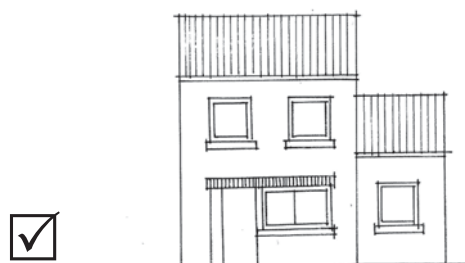


Fig 10.12 Side extension subservient to original dwelling with sympathetic window detail



Fig 10.13 Side extension with unsympathetic window detail

### Principle DG106: Design considerations

Extensions should respond to the design of the original dwelling and applicants should demonstrate how the Character Study from Section 2 has informed the design proposal.

Applicants that do not use materials to match those of the existing dwelling should demonstrate the appropriateness of the alternatives proposed.

Owners of listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas should also make use of the statutory list, conservation area character appraisals or any other

assessment of the building's significance when considering an extension so that their design sustains or enhances the features that contribute to its significance or better reveals them.

The position, size, proportion, height and style of new windows and doors and the ratio of solid wall to openings all help to define the character of a dwelling. It is important, therefore, that the extension responds to the existing pattern of window and door openings.

# 10 Household extensions

## Detailed principles



Fig 10.16: Front extensions can often detract from the appearance of the dwelling



Fig 10.17 Canopies were integrated very successfully in historic dwellings



Fig 10.18 Front extensions can often detract from the continuity of the building frontage

### 10.7 Detailed principles

#### Front extensions

10.7.1 Front extensions can often detract from the continuity of the street scene and damage the appearance of a dwelling.

##### Principle DG107: Front extensions

Front extensions will be resisted where they have a significant impact on the street scene or are damaging to the appearance of a dwelling.

Modest front extensions that reflect the character of the existing property are more likely to be acceptable.

When located close to a neighbouring property, front extensions should not normally project more than 1.4 metres in front of the dwelling.

Front extensions are more likely to be acceptable where the building line is staggered or where the dwelling is set well back from the road.

They should normally be designed with a pitched roof.

#### Porches and canopies

10.7.2 Porches and canopies implemented as extensions can often appear as 'bolt-on' and incongruous to the original dwelling. These structures are not appropriate for all dwellings. For example, simple terraced properties can appear over-dominated by the addition of a porch. In such cases, an internal porch may be a more appropriate solution.

10.7.3 Where porches and canopies are deemed acceptable they should reflect the character of the original dwelling in terms of their scale, details and materials.

##### Principle DG108: Porches and canopies

Canopies and porches will be resisted where they have a significant impact on the street scene or are damaging to the appearance of a dwelling.

Where they are located close to a neighbouring property, they should not normally project more than 1.4 metres in front of the dwelling.

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



# 10 Household extensions

## Detailed principles



Fig 10.19 Successful two storey extension complements the original dwelling

### Side extensions

10.7.4 Side extensions should normally be set back from the front of the house to retain the proportions of the original building and reduce the visual impact of the join between existing and new. This can be particularly important on symmetrical properties or identical semi-detached properties.

10.7.5 In built-up areas, the gaps between dwellings can often be small. Cumulatively, these gaps can make an important contribution to the character of an area. Extending at two storeys to the side of a detached or semi-detached dwelling can result in development right up to the site boundary, resulting in an inappropriate 'terracing effect'.

10.7.6 The problem can be exacerbated where an extension has the same roofline as the original building and where a neighbouring property already lies on, or close to, the boundary.

10.7.7 To reduce such a 'terracing effect', it is desirable to maintain a gap between the extension and the site boundary and for the extension to have a lower ridge height than the main building. The extent of the gap should be determined by the pattern of development in the area but, in general, it should not be less than 1 metre wide.

10.7.8 An alternative way of avoiding a terracing effect is to set the first floor element of the extension back from the front elevation – it should be set back at least one third of the depth of the dwelling.

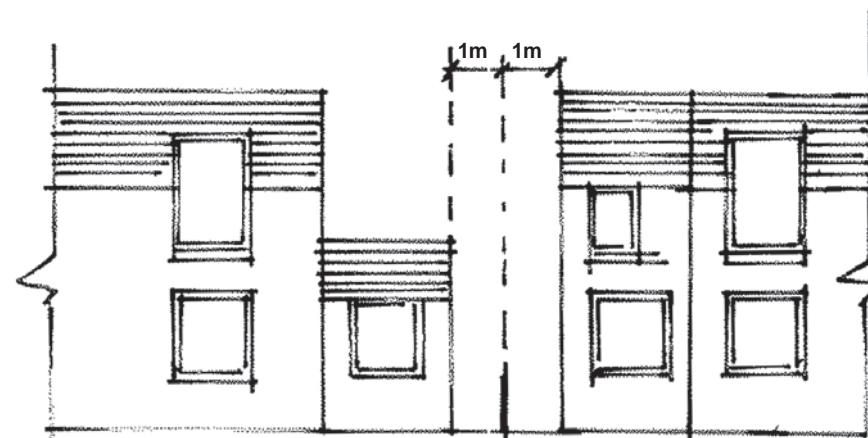


Fig 10.20 A minimum of 1 metre must normally be retained between the new side wall of the extension and the boundary of the site to prevent a terracing effect

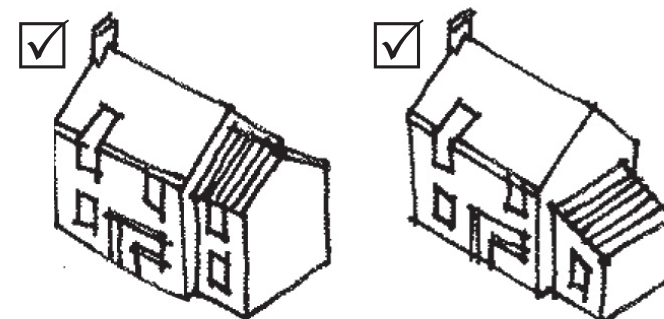


Fig 10.21 Extensions subservient to original dwelling with sympathetic roof and window details

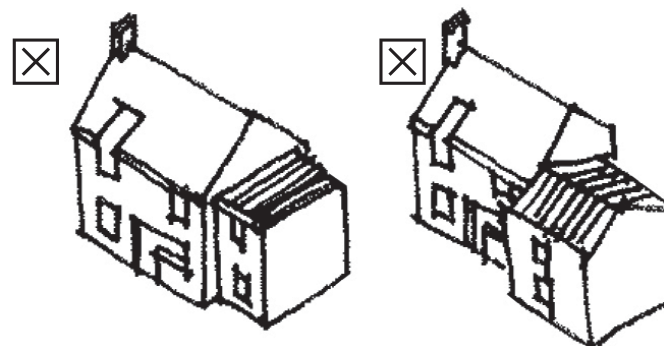


Fig 10.22 Flat roof on extension (left) does not sit well with the original ridged roof. Extension (right) is not subservient to, nor seamless with, the original dwelling. The extension also projects forward of the established building line



# 10 Household extensions

## Detailed principles

10.7.9 Where the original building has a pitched roof, two storey extensions should generally be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof. Single storey side extensions will have a lesser impact on the appearance of a dwelling than two-storey extensions.

10.7.10 A flat roof may be acceptable for a single storey extension, provided it is carefully designed – e.g. including a parapet wall with a coping stone on top.



Fig 10.23 Successful single storey extension

### Principle DG109: Side extensions

Side extensions should generally be set back from the front of the house.

Extensions that close an important gap within the street scene or lead to a terracing effect will not be accepted.

Two storey extensions should generally be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof.

The design of all side extensions should take into account the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, overshadowing and over dominance.

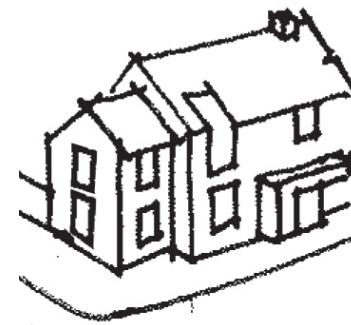
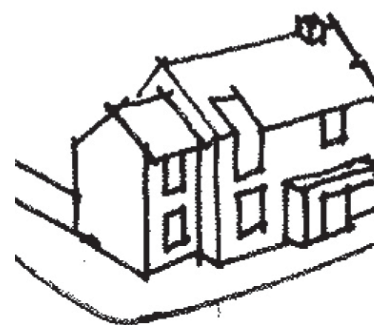


Fig 10.24 Extensions where side elevations face the street should incorporate windows to provide passive surveillance



Fig 10.25 Successful two-storey extension subordinate to the principle dwelling

# 10 Household extensions

## Detailed principles



Fig 10.26 Rear extensions which are not visible from the street and do not negatively impact on neighbouring properties can be expressed in many forms, including the use of contemporary architecture and materials

### Rear extensions

10.7.11 The design of all rear extensions should take into account the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, overshadowing and overdominance.

10.7.12 A general rule is that any two-storey element should not encroach beyond a 40 degree line taken from the edge of the nearest ground and first floor window of a habitable room of a neighbouring property.

10.7.13 The length of single storey rear extension should not normally exceed 6 metres on a detached dwelling, 4 metres on a semi-detached dwelling, and 3 metres on a terraced dwelling.

10.7.14 Extending terraced and semi-detached dwellings represents the most significant challenge in terms of potential loss of residential amenity due to the close proximity of neighbouring properties. Problems can be mitigated by limiting the scale of the proposed extension and applying the 40 degree rule (refer to Figures 10.3 and 10.4). Single storey extensions are easier to accommodate successfully. An alternative solution is for neighbours of adjoining properties to work together to extend both dwellings concurrently.

10.7.15 Where the original building has a pitched roof, two storey extensions should generally be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof.

10.7.16 Single storey rear extensions and conservatories often do not need planning permission as they can be built under 'permitted development' rights. The council's Planning Service can advise on whether planning permission is required through the permitted development enquiry form ([click here](#)) or alternatively, the Planning Portal website provides an interactive section. <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/application-advice/do-i-need-planning-permission-0>

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

### Principle DG110: Rear extensions

Rear extensions should not have a harmful effect on neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, overshadowing or overbearing.

An adequate distance between facing habitable rooms helps enable people to feel comfortable in their own homes (refer to Sec 5.10).

They should not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwellings usable amenity space.

Applicants should apply the 40 degree rule as set out in section 10.4.

Rear extensions which are not visible from the street and do not negatively impact on neighbouring properties can be expressed in many forms, including through the use of contemporary architecture.

# 10 Household extensions

## Detailed principles



Fig 10.27 Dormers successfully integrated into the roof to provide additional space

### Loft conversion and roof extension

10.7.17 A loft conversion is a space efficient means of extending the amount of living accommodation in a dwelling. The most significant challenge associated with loft extensions is how to introduce roof lights and/or dormers that are appropriate to the character of the original building.

10.7.18 Dormer windows should be designed as features principally to provide light and ventilation. They should be small and should sit appropriately in the roof-slope, well above the eaves line, well below the ridge line and set in from the gable ends.

10.7.19 Two or three smaller dormers are often more successful than a single large dormer. Flat roof or pitched roof dormers can be successfully integrated into the majority of building designs. However, the choice of design should be informed by the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

10.7.20 An alternative means of providing light and ventilation to a loft conversion is by introducing roof lights or windows into gable walls. Where possible, roof lights should be included on rear elevations where they are less likely to be visible in the street scene. In sensitive locations such as on Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas, 'conservation type' roof lights should be used.

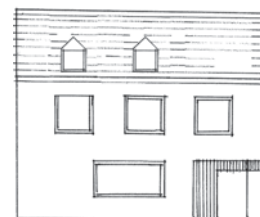


Fig 10.28 If dormer roof extensions are acceptable in their context, the position and proportion of dormer windows should respond to existing windows

### Principle DG111: Loft conversions and roof extensions

As a general rule extensions that alter the existing ridge of the roof or significantly alter the roof profile will not be accepted.

Dormer roof extensions should be set within the roof slope.

Where a clear rhythm of fenestration is established, the position and proportion of dormer windows should respond to existing windows and/or doors.

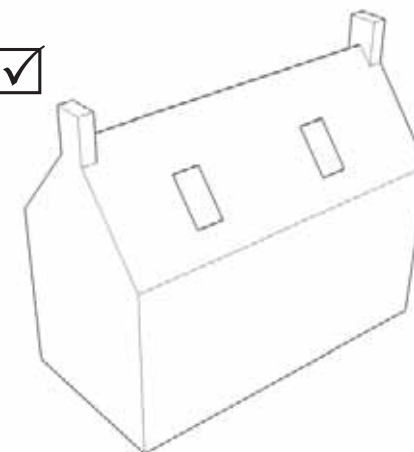


Fig 10.29 Loft conversion incorporating rooflights

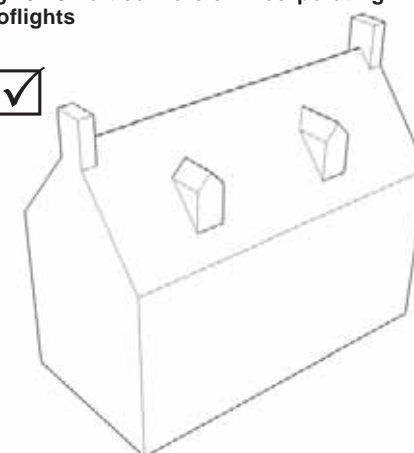


Fig 10.30 Loft conversion incorporating dormers

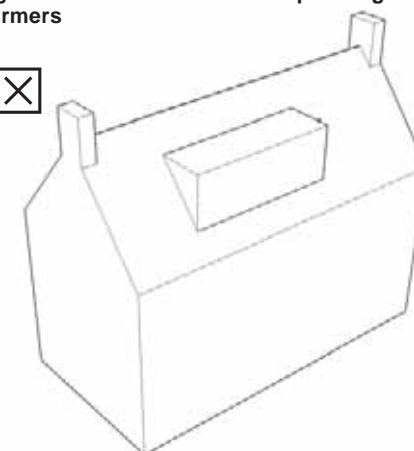


Fig 10.31 large flat roofed single dormer out of scale with the original dwelling



# 10 Household extensions

## Detailed principles



Fig 10.32 Outbuildings are challenging to design particularly those within view of the public realm

### Self contained annexes

10.7.21 Residential annexes generally provide self-contained accommodation and offer a degree of separation from the main dwelling. However, they usually need to be linked to the main dwelling, both physically and in terms of the inter-dependence of the use of the annex and the main dwelling.

10.7.22 Residential annexes should be designed in accordance with the advice for other residential extensions. In addition, they should share the front door and entrance hall of the main dwelling, and they should be designed to be capable of being incorporated into the main dwelling at a later date.

### Outbuildings and garages

10.7.23 The design principles set out above should be applied when considering new outbuildings or garages.

10.7.24 The size and scale of any outbuilding should not compete with the main dwelling.

10.7.25 The original building should remain the dominant element of the property whether you have one extension or several. The effect of any outbuilding should not overwhelm the house from any given view point.

10.7.26 They should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling.

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



Fig 10.33 Outbuilding is a dominant feature with the use of contrasting material making the structure stand out



Fig 10.34 Garage structure too large for the dwelling



Fig 10.35 Garage obscures dwelling from the street



Fig 10.36 Garage structure too large for the dwelling



Fig 10.37 Outbuilding dominates and compromises the external space



Fig 10.38 Garage structure obscures dwelling

# 10 Household extensions

## SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

### How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to the design of a **household extension** as part of an application.

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

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

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

**SUMMARY:** Applicants should now have a proposal which has responded positively to its setting and demonstrates how the proposal has been informed by its context. It should now conform to the principles set out above in Section 10.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG103: Responding to local character	Has the applicant demonstrated how the proposal responds to and respects the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood?	
DG104: Consider your neighbours	Has the applicant considered and demonstrated that the proposal does not have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to overshadowing, privacy or an oppressive or overbearing impact?	
	Does the proposal comply with the 40 degree rule?	
DG105 / DG106 / DG107 and DG108: Scale, form and massing	Is the extension a simple, uncomplicated building form that compliments and coordinates with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling? The original building should remain the dominant element of the property.	
	Is the roof form appropriate to the original dwelling? Generally this should be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof.	
DG106: Design considerations	Do the materials proposed match those of the existing dwelling or has the applicant demonstrated the appropriateness of the alternatives proposed?	
	Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?	
DG109: Side extensions	Is the side extension set back from the front of the house? If not, has the reason been justified?	
	Does the side extension retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid creating a 'terracing effect'?	
DG110: Rear extensions	Does the rear extension avoid detrimental impact on the existing dwelling's usable amenity space?	
DG111: Loft conversions and roof extensions	Are any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?	
	Does the position and proportion of dormer windows respond to the location of existing windows and/or doors?	



# 11

## Building conversions

There are many buildings throughout the Vale within settlements and in the countryside that are no longer used or are vacant. These buildings include farm buildings, factories, chapels, schools and mills. The re-use of existing buildings within the Vale is a key objective in terms of preserving their contribution to settlements and the countryside but also in sustainability terms. The embodied energy in a buildings fabric is considerable i.e. it takes a lot of energy to demolish and rebuild existing buildings.

With this in mind the council seeks to encourage the re-use of buildings wherever possible particularly when the building makes a positive contribution to the character of an area. Their conversion and re-use however must be done with great care in order to ensure that the essential character of the original building is not lost or that the contribution the building makes to the wider area is not compromised.

This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when converting a range of existing building types. It should be noted that conversion to residential use is not always the most appropriate solution, particularly where the building is listed or is situated in an isolated location in the open countryside.

Compliance with building regulations is also a key consideration for any building conversion and may require significant alterations to the original building. In these cases the council may consider the conversion of the building as not appropriate or acceptable.





# 11 Building conversions

## Process

The figure below indicates where you are within the document.

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

**OVERVIEW OF SECTION 11:**  
This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when extending a dwelling including:

- 11.1 Agricultural buildings;
- 11.2 The conversions of chapels, schools and churches;
- 11.3 Conversion of commercial buildings; and
- 11.4 Refurbishments.

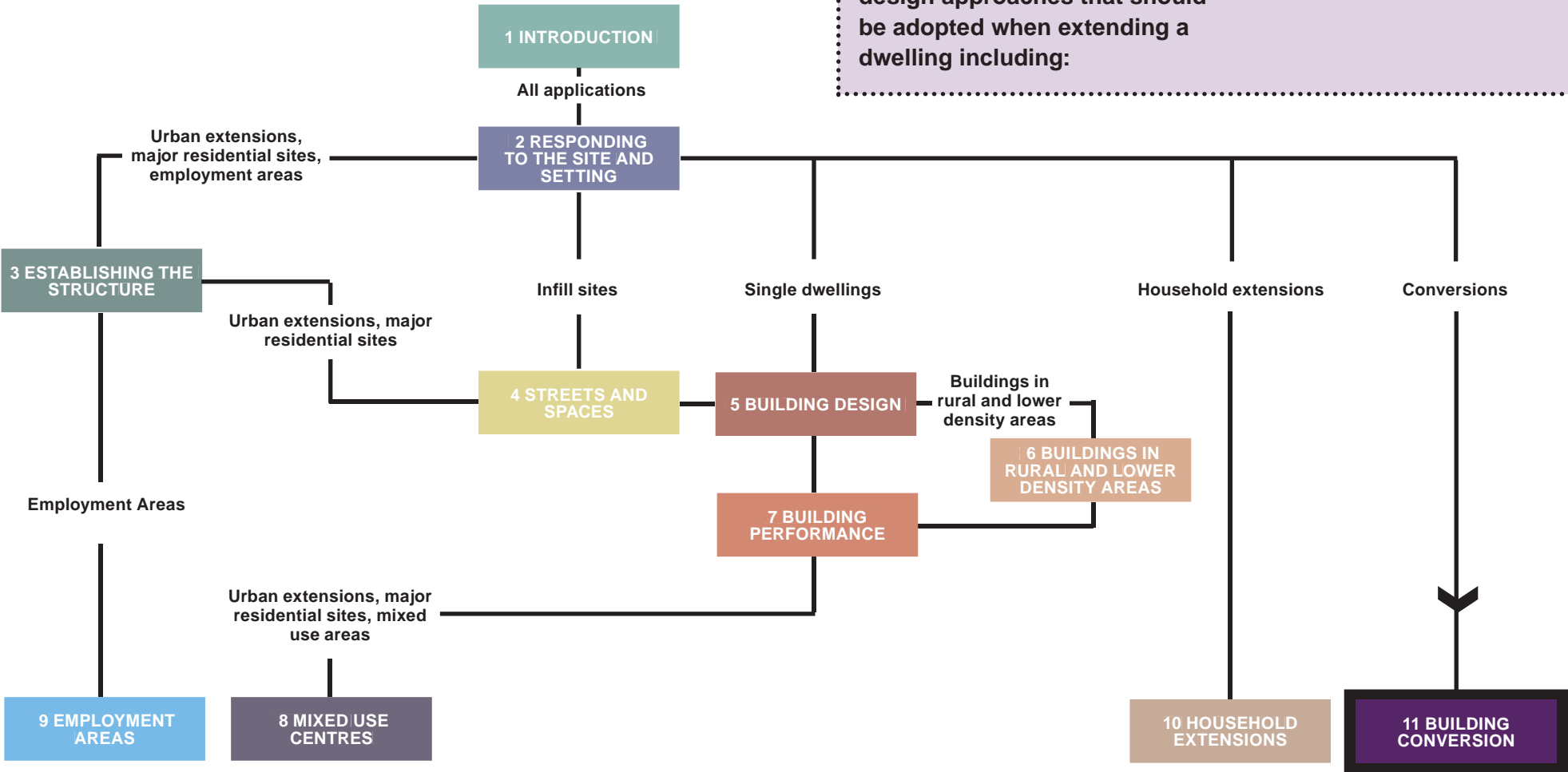


Fig 11.1: Flow chart indicating structure of the guide

# 11 Building conversions

## Agricultural buildings



Fig 11.2: Example of unconverted agricultural building

### 11.1 Agricultural buildings

11.1.1 The conversion of traditional agricultural buildings such as barns, stables and cartsheds, is the most common form of conversion in the Vale.

11.1.2 Continuation of the original agricultural use is usually most appropriate to preserve the character and appearance of such buildings. However, if a building is no longer needed or suitable for modern agricultural purposes, its disuse can result in the building falling into disrepair. Conversion to an alternative use is a successful way of securing the future of such traditional agricultural buildings.

11.1.3 This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when converting agricultural buildings to other uses. It should be noted that residential conversions are not always the most appropriate solution, particularly where the building is listed or is situated in an isolated location in the open countryside. Non-residential uses may be easier to accommodate.

#### Structural integrity

11.1.4 Many agricultural buildings will have been unused for extended periods of time or they may not have been well maintained – consequently, their structure may have suffered. The structural integrity of a building will be a critical factor in determining whether it is capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension.



Fig 11.3 Successful barn conversion

11.1.5 If substantial rebuilding or extension is required, it is unlikely that planning permission will be granted as the proposed works would no longer constitute a conversion.

#### Architectural and historic characteristics

11.1.6 The importance of an agricultural building to the history, character and appearance of an area can be assessed with reference to its age, design, form, materials used, roof structure and the presence of any architectural detailing.

11.1.7 The form of traditional agricultural buildings typically comprises substantial stone, brick or timberframe walls, uninterrupted roof slopes, long ridge lines, few openings apart from the large wagon doors, substantial timber roof structures, and large internal spaces.



Fig 11.4 Traditional courtyard arrangement

11.1.8 Architectural detailing may include patterned brickwork, dentil courses, buttresses, arrow slits and gable parapets.

11.1.9 These features are essential to the building's character and, therefore, need to be retained as part of the proposed conversion.

11.1.10 Agricultural buildings typically have an informal farmyard or open field setting. The proposed conversion should respect the building's setting, either as part of a group of traditional buildings or as part of the surrounding landscape.



Fig 11.5 Glass roof tiles and small high level windows allow light to penetrate the building

# 11 Building conversions

## Agricultural buildings

### Design approach

11.1.11 The primary objective of all conversions must be to retain the character and appearance of the original building. This may require compromises in terms of the residential layout and the provision of natural light into all habitable rooms.

11.1.12 The introduction of conspicuous domestic features such as chimneys, satellite dishes, aerials, porches and additional window or door openings tend to be out of character with the original building and, wherever possible, such features should be avoided. Natural light can be provided by introducing glass roof tiles, glass insertions into honeycomb brickwork and slit windows. Existing openings in elevations can be used for windows or doors, and to 'borrow' light into the more central parts of the building. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.

11.1.13 Internal walls should be retained where ever practically possible and the introduction of additional walls kept to a minimum. Timber roof trusses should be retained and not cut or removed to provide head height at first floor level.

11.1.14 Dis-proportionately large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character. Residential type features such as conservatories should be avoided. Wherever possible, existing ancillary buildings such as car-sheds should be used as garaging to avoid the need for new buildings. Conversions should not subdivide historic farmyards.

11.1.15 Landscaping and boundary treatments need careful attention and should be designed to be as simple as possible. Hard and soft landscaping should be kept informal, and walls, fences, kerbing and any other urban features should be avoided where they would harm the building's agricultural character or farmyard setting.



Fig 11.6 Existing hay doors retained and contributes significantly to the character of the barn



Fig 11.7 Successful retention of existing openings



Fig 11.8 Domestic style porch and projecting roof lights detract from the barns character

### Principle DG112: Agricultural buildings

A structural report will need to be submitted with any planning application to demonstrate that the building is capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension.

If substantial rebuilding or extension is required, it is unlikely that planning permission will be granted as the proposed works would no longer constitute a conversion.

The conversion must retain the character and appearance of the original building. This should be established through the applicants Character Study (Section 2).

The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.

Existing opening in elevations should be used for windows and doors. New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings.

A simple window design is usually most appropriate.

Extensions or ancillary buildings that dominate the original building will not be accepted

Landscaping, boundary treatments and access roads should be simple, informal and reflect the agricultural character of a farmyard setting.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:  
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness  
Policy 39 The historic environment



# 11 Building conversions

## Chapels, schools and churches



Fig 11.9: Example of successful conversion retaining original porch

### 11.2 The conversion of chapels, schools and churches

11.2.1 This is less common in the Vale than barn conversions. Similar to barn conversions, the design challenges associated with the conversion of these buildings often relate to the creation of room and floor divisions in buildings which originally comprised large internal spaces.

#### Architectural and historic characteristics

11.2.2 The defining characteristics of chapels, schools and churches are often similar, comprising formal proportions and a simple rectangular footprint, tall sash windows, brick or stone arches, uninterrupted roof slopes, long ridge lines, and large internal spaces, sometimes with mezzanine floors. Architectural detailing may include stained glass windows, ornate timberwork and plasterwork on walls and ceilings, and ecclesiastical memorials. These features are essential to the building's character and, therefore, need to be retained as part of the proposed conversion.

11.2.3 Chapels, schools and churches are typically located in central village locations. The buildings rarely include much external space, which can present a challenge for residential conversion in terms of providing amenity space and minimising any overlooking of neighbouring dwellings.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:  
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness  
Policy 39 The historic environment



Fig 11.10: Internal floor division is visible through window



Fig 11.11 Unsuccessful removal of original entrance



Fig 11.12 Successful retention of feature windows

# 11 Building conversions

## Chapels, schools and churches

### Design approach

11.2.4 The primary objective of all conversions is to retain the character and appearance of the original building. This may require compromises in terms of the residential layout and the provision of natural light into all habitable rooms.

11.2.5 The introduction of conspicuous domestic features such as satellite dishes, aerials, and dormer windows tend to be out of character with the original building and, wherever possible, such features should be avoided. If additional light is required, it may be appropriate to introduce glass roof tiles or appropriately designed rooflights (i.e. conservation rooflights which are designed to be flush with the roof plane ).

11.2.6 The internal wall divisions should be retained wherever possible and the introduction of additional walls or floors should be kept to a minimum. Existing window openings and window detailing, such as stained glass, should be retained and refurbished.

11.2.7 Where additional floors are introduced, they should not cut across tall windows in such a way as to be visible from outside the building.

11.2.8 Large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character.

11.2.9 Any existing ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible, and the inclusion of additional detailing which would detract from the character of the building should be avoided.

11.2.10 Landscaping and boundary treatments should be designed to be as simple as possible.

11.2.11 Paint colours and finishes should be chosen to reflect the character and appearance of the building.



Fig 11.13 Successful retention of original porch



Fig 11.14 Small rooflight allows light to upper floor

### Principle DG113: The conversion of chapels, schools and churches

The conversion must retain the character and appearance of the original building. This should be established through the applicant's Character Study (Section 2).

The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.

Existing opening in elevations should be used for windows and doors.

A simple window design is usually most appropriate.

New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings.

Where additional floors are introduced, they should not cut across tall windows.

Large extensions or ancillary buildings that dominate the original building will not be accepted.

Existing ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible.

Landscaping and boundary treatments should be designed to be as simple as possible.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:  
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness  
Policy 39 The historic environment



# 11 Building conversions

## Commercial buildings



Fig 11.15: Industrial character retained in conversion

### 11.3 Conversion of commercial buildings

11.3.1 A variety of commercial buildings have played a significant role in the history of the Vale, including mills, shops, pubs and breweries. The design challenges associated with the conversion of these buildings can vary significantly and can be particularly difficult for buildings such as mills and breweries which have large internal spaces and tall ceiling heights.

11.3.2 These larger buildings are often converted into self-contained flats which have additional amenity, parking and storage requirements that should be considered at the outset of the design process. Applicants should refer to Section 5.15 for guidance on these requirements

11.3.3 Where a property is being converted to flats, the development should, where possible, be contained within the existing building envelope. If extensions are necessary, for example to accommodate a lift or to meet building regulations, proposals need to be carefully designed

#### Architectural and historic characteristics

11.3.4 Whilst pubs and shops usually have a domestic scale and design, industrial buildings such as mills and breweries are usually much larger, with a more formal architectural composition.

11.3.5 The defining characteristics of these industrial buildings include formal proportions usually in a rectangular plan, and large windows (i.e. plate glass in iron frames with top-hinged openings, small pane timber sash windows or Crittall Windows).

11.3.6 Roof forms tend to be relatively simple, but where buildings have large floor plans, the space may have been spanned by a multi-ridged roof with a central light atrium. Architectural detailing may include arched brick window and door openings, ornate brickwork and iron fittings on external elevations, and internal iron rafters and structural braces. These features are part of the history and character of the building and, therefore, should be retained as part of the conversion.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:  
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness  
Policy 39 The historic environment



Fig 11.16: Successful conversion with retention of many of the industrial features.



Fig 11.17 Ornate brickwork adds character to historic building



Fig 11.18 Original features and openings retained



# 11 Building conversions

## Commercial buildings

### Design approach

11.3.7 The primary objective of all conversions is to retain the character and appearance of the original building. Consequently, conversion schemes need to be carefully designed.

11.3.8 The introduction of uncharacteristic features such as satellite dishes, aerials, and dormer windows should be avoided. If additional light is required, it may be appropriate to introduce glass roof tiles or appropriately designed rooflights.

11.3.9 The internal walls should be retained and the introduction of additional walls or floors should be kept to a minimum. Existing window openings and detailing should be retained. Where additional floors or mezzanines are introduced, they should not be visible through windows.

11.3.10 Large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character. Wherever possible, existing ancillary buildings such as storage sheds should be used as garaging to avoid the need for new buildings.

11.3.11 Existing commercial or industrial fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible. Original features such as internal metalwork can make a positive contribution to the final scheme. The introduction of additional detailing, which would detract from the character of the building, should be avoided.

11.3.12 Landscaping and boundary treatments need careful attention and should be designed to be as simple as possible. Walls and fences should be avoided where they would harm the building's character or setting.

11.3.13 Paint colours and finishes should be chosen to reflect the character and appearance of the building.



Fig 11.19 Atrium used to allow light to upper floors



Fig 11.20 Simple landscaping softens industrial buildings

### Principle DG114: The conversion of commercial buildings

The conversion must retain the character and appearance of the original building. This should be established through the applicants Character Study (Section 2).

The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.

Existing opening in elevations should be used for windows and doors.

A simple window design is usually most appropriate.

New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should

not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings.

Where additional floors are introduced, they should not cut across tall windows.

Large extensions or ancillary buildings that dominate the original building will not be accepted.

Existing commercial or industrial fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible.

Landscaping and boundary treatments should be designed to be as simple as possible and in keeping with the industrial aesthetic.

Commercial buildings converted to flats should comply with the principles set out in Section 5.15.

# 11 Building conversions

## Refurbishment



Fig 11.21: Refurbishment of thatched dwelling

### 11.4 Refurbishment

11.4.1 The Vale is fortunate to have a rich architectural heritage, with over 2,000 listed buildings (ranging from large country houses to modest cottages), 8 Historic Parks and Gardens and 52 Conservation Areas. Collectively, these contribute to the distinctiveness of the District and represent a valuable architectural, historical and economic resource.

11.4.2 The architectural heritage of the Vale should be safeguarded for future generations to enjoy. This does not mean, however, that all buildings need to be preserved unchanged. Instead, their sympathetic refurbishment, alteration and adaptation will be encouraged to prevent possible disuse and decay.

11.4.3 Where a building is listed, consent will be required for any external or internal alterations which affect its special interest. Whilst all proposals are considered on their merits, certain works to Listed Buildings are unlikely to be acceptable in principle. Examples include installing UPVC windows, re-pointing walls in cement-rich mortars, removing original features such as fireplaces and staircases, painting exteriors in inappropriate colours, installing satellite dishes or other domestic paraphernalia on prominent elevations, and adding poorly designed extensions.

11.4.4 This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when refurbishing buildings.

### Structural integrity

11.4.5 As with conversions, building restorations and renovations can encounter structural problems. Where there is any uncertainty about the impact proposed works would have on the structural integrity of a building, a structural report will need to be prepared.

Refer to the following Local Plan policies:  
Policy 37 Design and local distinctiveness  
Policy 39 The historic environment



Fig 11.22: UPV windows should be avoided when refurbishing historic properties



Fig 11.23 Windows and doors should be refurbished to complement the character of the building



Fig 11.24 Successful refurbishment retaining historic features

# 11 Building conversions

## Refurbishment

### Design Approach

11.4.6 The primary objective of all refurbishments is to retain the character and appearance of the original building. Consequently, conversion schemes need to be carefully designed.

The approach, however, may differ depending on the design and location of the building. For example, the post-war building boom resulted in many houses being built which are of neither good traditional or modern design. If refurbishment is being considered, then the opportunity should be taken to improve the appearance of such dwellings.

11.4.7 In more historic buildings, it is important to retain any features which contribute to the architectural character of the building. In the past, architectural features have often been removed and replaced in the mistaken belief that they cannot be repaired. Stripping the historic fabric should always be avoided and, wherever possible, architectural features should be retained and repaired

11.4.8 A key consideration in all refurbishments, but particularly for refurbishments of historic buildings, is the compatibility of modern building methods and materials. For example, historic buildings with solid wall construction are not compatible with modern cavity wall construction, as solid walls are designed to absorb moisture whereas cavity walls are designed to keep moisture out. Similarly, it is rarely successful to retrofit buildings with damp proof courses and concrete floors as these can restrict moisture movement and prematurely decay the building's fabric.

11.4.9 The choice of materials should be compatible with the building – for example, on historic buildings, lime mortar should be used on solid wall construction instead of modern cement as it allows the wall to breath. External paints should also be breathable, which will be compatible with the building and will help prevent peeling and cracking.

11.4.10 Where a refurbishment proposal includes an extension, reference should be made to the advice set out in Section 10.

11.4.11 The design of any extension should be appropriate to the scale, layout and design of the original building. In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate to design a light-weight modern extension rather than copy the style of the original building. Wherever possible, inappropriate modern additions should be removed as part of any refurbishment.

#### Principle DG115: Refurbishment

As with conversions, building restorations and renovations can encounter structural problems. Where there is any uncertainty about the impact proposed works would have on the structural integrity of a building, a structural report will need to be prepared.

The refurbishment must retain the character and appearance of the original building. This should be established through the applicant's Character Study (Section 2).

In more historic building's features which contribute to its character should be retained.

Consider the compatibility of modern building methods and materials.

Where a refurbishment proposal includes an extension, reference should be made to the advice set out in Section 10.



# 11 Building conversions

## SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

### How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to the design of a **building conversion** as part of an application.

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

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

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

**SUMMARY:** Applicants should now have a proposal which has responded positively to its setting and demonstrates how the proposal has been informed by its context. It should now conform to the principles set out above in Section 11.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION	CHECK
DG112: Agricultural buildings	Has a structural report been submitted with any planning application to demonstrate that the building is capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension? If substantial rebuilding or extension is required, it is unlikely that planning permission will be granted as the proposed works would no longer constitute a conversion.	
	Does the conversion retain the character and appearance of the original building as established in the Character Study? The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.	
	Has the conversion used the existing openings in elevations for windows and doors. New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.	
	Does the landscaping, boundary treatments and access roads reflect the agricultural character of a farmyard setting?	
DG113: The conversion of chapels, schools and churches	Does the conversion retain the character and appearance of the original building as established in the Character Study? The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.	
	Has the conversion used the existing openings in elevations for windows and doors? New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.	
	If additional floors are introduced, do they avoid cutting across tall windows?	
	Are existing ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings retained wherever possible?	
	Is landscaping and boundary treatments designed in a simple manner that does not detract from the building?	
DG114: The conversion of commercial buildings	Does the conversion retain the character and appearance of the original building as established in the Character Study? The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.	
	Has the conversion used the existing openings in elevations for windows and doors. New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.	
	Are existing commercial or industrial fixtures and fittings retained wherever possible?	
	Is the landscaping and boundary treatment designed in a simple manner and in keeping with the industrial aesthetic?	
	Do commercial buildings converted to flats comply with the principles set out in Section 5.15?	
DG115: Refurbishment	If required has a structural report been submitted with any planning application to demonstrate that the building is capable of refurbishment without substantial rebuilding or extension?	
	Does the refurbishment retain the character and appearance of the original building as established in the Character Study?	

# A

# Biodiversity and planning







## ➤ A.1 Introduction

A.1.1 Biodiversity simply describes all living things – the variety of life on earth – all plants, animals and the places that they live. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity is a key indicator and component of sustainable development. In the design guide biodiversity is used to describe important habitats and species which may be affected by, or could be enhanced by development activity.

A.1.2 The aim of this appendix is to provide basic guidance on what the Council expects in relation to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity related to development proposals. It should give applicants and developers greater certainty and avoid delays in processing planning applications. Information on providing biodiversity enhancements and designing wildlife habitats into new developments can be found throughout the main body of the design guide. There is a wealth of published information available elsewhere which will be referred to and should be used to aid developers in making biodiversity related decisions.

A.1.3 The Vale of White Horse contains a rich variety of natural habitats of local, national and international importance. There are a total of 123 designated nature conservation sites in the Vale including 2 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), 23 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 84 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), 5 Local Nature Reserves and 9 Geologically Important Sites .

A.1.4 In addition to protected habitats there are a large number of protected species found in the Vale. The majority of protected species receive protection as a result of them being rare or of limited distribution, but also as a result of persecution, as is the case with badgers. As a result it is perhaps unsurprising that the majority of biodiversity issues associated with planning applications arise as a result of the presence of a protected species.

A.1.5 In line with the National Planning Policy Framework all developments in the Vale will be expected to contribute to the Governments commitment to halt the loss of biodiversity and deliver net gains where possible.

A.1.6 This appendix will provide basic information on the habitats and species most commonly encountered in planning process as well as laying out the steps that a developer / applicant will need to take when considering these issues.





## ➤ A.2 Legislation

A.2.1 All protected species and habitats mentioned within this document are covered within one of the following pieces of legislation:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended;
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CROW Act 2000);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010;
- The Badgers Act 1992;
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997; and
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

A.2.2 Differing procedures and processes will need to be followed depending on the piece of legislation concerned and the penalties for not complying with the legislation will vary accordingly. In addition to the legislation the Council takes a strong stance in the protection of non-statutory sites (LWS) and priority habitats and species.

A.2.3 For further information and guidance applicants should refer to the following key guidance documents:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly chapter 11;
- ODPM Circular 6/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their impact within the planning system; and
- Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development BS 42020:2013.



## ➤ A.3 Protected Species

**A.3.1** Protected species are present throughout The Vale and they are the biodiversity issue most often encountered in the planning system. The Council takes a pragmatic approach to protected species issues and will only ask for surveys where it believes that there is a reasonable likelihood of a particular species being present. Protected species occur in many types of habitat although there are clearly some types of application, which have a much higher probability of affecting protected species, and these are outlined in Table 1 of this appendix.

**A.3.2** Protected species are a material consideration when the Council is considering a development proposal. Full information about the presence of a protected species will be required before the planning application can be determined. In line with the NPPF the council will expect developers to provide net gains for species and habitats when considering development proposals.

**A.3.3** In order for the Council to be in a position to determine the application the applicant / developer will be expected to provide the following information:

- Up to date surveys to an appropriate degree of detail carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist;

- Where appropriate, information on how the development will avoid harming the species in its existing location;
- Details of measures to enhance the provision of species within the development or create new additional opportunities for that species;
- Details of mitigation measures employed to mitigate the harm caused by the development to that species where avoidance is not possible; and
- Details of the compensation measures to be provided where mitigation is not possible.

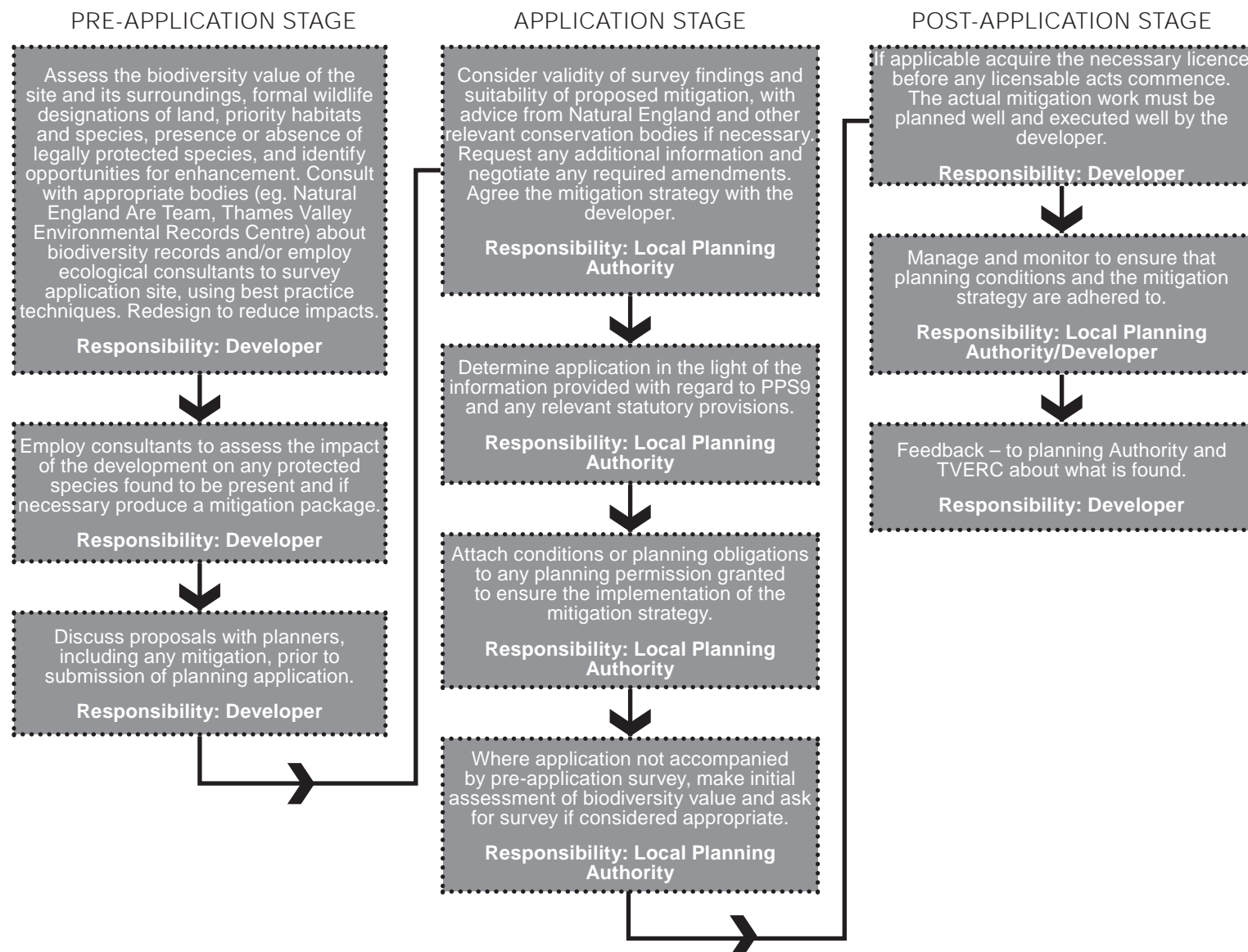
**A.3.4** Applicants are strongly advised to enter into pre-application discussions to ensure all the relevant information is provided before submitting an application. It is important to note that with many species, surveys can only be satisfactorily conducted at certain times of the year when the species is active. Early consultation is therefore important to avoid undue delays to applications arising as a result of the need to carry out surveys within the relevant seasons.

# A Biodiversity and planning

**A.3.5** Surveys will not be conditioned as part of a planning permission. Surveys should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist and provide sufficient detail to allow the Council to make informed decisions. As a guide the Council would as a minimum require the following information to be provided in the survey:

- What species are involved?;
- What is the population level likely to be affected by the proposal?;
- What is the impact of the proposal on protected species?;
- Is the impact necessary or acceptable?;
- What can be done to mitigate the impact?, and
- Will a licence be required from Natural England?

**A.3.6** Fig A.1 provides a visual interpretation of the steps a developer / applicant should take in considering a development with the potential for impacts on protected species or habitats:



**Fig A.1** Stages in the planning process for a site where protected species may be present (Adapted from the Bat Conservation Trust)



# A Biodiversity and planning

A.3.7 The species most commonly encountered in development proposals in the Vale are set out in Table 1. This also sets out the issues associated with them, guidance on what can be done and who can help.

SPECIES	WHAT IS THE ISSUE?	WHAT CAN I DO?	CHECK
<b>Bats</b>	The majority of planning cases in the Vale where a protected species survey is likely to be needed relate to bats. This is because bats are often associated with man made structures and can occur in just about any type of building.	Bat provision can usually be designed into new developments or conversions but it is important that this is identified at an early stage of planning to avoid undue delays.	Figure 1 gives some guidance on where it is reasonable to expect bats may be found.  Bat mitigation guidelines – A.J. Mitchell-Jones <a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk">www.naturalengland.org.uk</a>  Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 2nd Edition – Bat Conservation Trust (2012) <a href="http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/batsurveyguide.html">http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/batsurveyguide.html</a>
<b>Great crested newts</b>	Great Crested Newts (GCN) breed in ponds, but spend 75% of their lifecycle on land in long grass or rough vegetation up to 500 metres away. They hibernate in the gaps between stones in walls or rockeries, and in piles of logs.  Just about any pond can have GCN resident, from small garden ponds up to farm field ponds.  Development sites that don't contain ponds can still be affected if they provide terrestrial habitats for GCN resident in nearby ponds.	Mitigation to avoid damage or disturbance to GCN populations is usually possible. The type and cost of the mitigation is dependant on the population size and the potential impacts of the proposal.  Early consultation with the council is advised if there are likely to be any impacts on GCN.	Great crested newt mitigation guidelines – English Nature publication <a href="http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/810429">http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/810429</a>
<b>Nesting birds</b>	All nesting birds receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as you may expect nesting birds are found in many places but particular care should be taken where a scheme involves the removal of trees, hedgerows or other dense vegetation. Care should also be taken for work involving roof structures and the eaves of buildings where swifts, swallows and house martins may be present.	In general work which may involve disturbance to nesting birds should only be undertaken outside of the nesting season which runs from the end of February to early August. Where there is a loss of nesting habitat as a result of a development the Council would normally expect appropriate replacement nesting opportunities to be provided as part of the development.	Contact the RSPB: <a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk">www.rspb.org.uk</a> 01767 693 690  Swift Conservation: <a href="http://www.swift-conservation.org/">www.swift-conservation.org/</a>

SPECIES	WHAT IS THE ISSUE?	WHAT CAN I DO?	CHECK
<b>Barn owls</b>	As the name suggests Barn owls are often associated with barns and all types of agricultural buildings but they are also associated with a wide variety of derelict and unused buildings.	Barn owls should not be disturbed whilst they are nesting. The nesting season runs from the beginning of April to the end of September. Nesting and roosting sites should be protected, where it is not possible to avoid impacts developers will be required to provide alternative roosting or nesting locations as near to the original nesting sites as possible	The Barn Owl Trust: <a href="http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk">www.barnowltrust.org.uk</a>
<b>Badgers</b>	Badgers can be found in woodlands, in areas of scrub, large gardens, (particularly if there are relatively undisturbed) and on undeveloped or brownfield sites within towns. Their setts have large holes which are broadly oval in shape. Badger setts are sometimes confused with enlarged rabbit holes or foxes holes (earth's). If you are unsure contact the Council for advice or employ an appropriately qualified consultant to determine what species are involved.	Badgers have very large territories and will use various setts within this area. Mitigation for badgers is often a complex and costly business and it is best to avoid impacting on badger setts and the surrounding areas if at all possible.	Badgers and development – English Nature 2002 <a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk">www.naturalengland.org.uk</a>
<b>Reptiles</b>	All native reptiles are protected, in the Vale grass snakes and slow-worms are the most often encountered whilst adders and the common lizard are less common.  Reptiles can be found on a variety of habitats including urban areas and are often associated with brownfield sites, old railway lines and other open sunny habitats.	As with all protected species it is best to avoid impacts but where this is not feasible it is often possible to provide appropriate mitigation and or compensation to offset any negative impacts.	Reptiles: guidelines for developers – English Nature 2004 <a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk">www.naturalengland.org.uk</a>

SPECIES	WHAT IS THE ISSUE?	WHAT CAN I DO?	CHECK
<b>Water voles</b>	<p>Water voles are associated with watercourses including canals, rivers, streams, ditches and even sometimes ponds. They are found in both rural and urban areas and although in decline are found throughout the Vale.</p> <p>Water voles are fully protected. Any development that is likely to either directly or indirectly affect a habitat that has potential to be used by water voles will be expected to provide survey information to determine the presence or absence of the species.</p>	Providing mitigation and compensation measures for water voles is often expensive and time consuming and development impacts on water voles are best avoided.	<p>Advice available from Natural England: <a href="http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31013?category=9012">http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31013?category=9012</a></p>
<b>Otters</b>	<p>The population of otters in the Vale is expanding following the national trend for the recovery of the species. Otters are primarily associated with river systems but occasionally may be found in smaller streams and ditches particularly near where these connect to the main rivers.</p> <p>Any development that affects the banks of rivers should consider the potential for the development to impact on local otter populations.</p>	Developments that are likely to affect otter holts are unlikely to be permitted. Mitigation is often very expensive and complex.	Contact the Environment Agency 01491 828355
<b>Dormice</b>	Dormice are generally associated with woodlands and species rich hedgerows in the countryside. Any development which threatens woodland or involves the loss of hedgerows or damages the connectivity of hedgerow networks should consider the possibility of impacts on dormice.	Mitigation for dormice is usually possible but needs to be planned well in advance of any development proposals.	Contact Natural England: <a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk">http://www.naturalengland.org.uk</a>

**A.3.8 Important Note:** Proposals which disturb or in any way affect many of the species above are likely to require a Licence from Natural England and no development will be possible without first obtaining a licence.



**A.3.9 Habitats.** Protected habitats are less often encountered in development proposals as their locations are relatively well known and documented. Proposals for development on any undeveloped site (brownfield or greenfield) should consider the potential for direct or indirect impacts on designated sites (this includes statutory and non statutory sites) and priority habitats (as defined in S.41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act). Information on the location of these sites can be obtained from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC).

**A.3.10** Priority habitats have not all been mapped and it is not uncommon for these to be identified as a result of development proposals. If this is the case the presumption would be against allowing development unless it can be demonstrated that the proposals can avoid impacts on the priority habitats and provide enhancements for the long term. If it is not possible to avoid impacts on priority habitats or provide sufficient on site mitigation then the developer would be expected to provide off site compensation. Biodiversity offsetting is favoured as a means of compensating for the loss of Priority habitats.

**A.3.11** Early consultation with the Council is recommended for any development that has direct or indirect impacts on a designated site or priority habitat. Indirect impacts would include things such as disturbance resulting from noise, light, dust or increased pressure from people or their domestic pets.

Figure 1

**Trigger list of where bats are *likely* to be present and where developers can reasonably be expected to submit a bat survey.**

- (i) Proposed development which includes the modification, conversion, demolition or removal of buildings and structures (especially roof voids) involving the following:
- all agricultural buildings (e.g. farmhouses and barns) particularly of traditional brick or stone construction and/or with exposed wooden beams greater than 20 cm thick;
  - all buildings with weather boarding and/or hanging tiles that are within 200 m of woodland and/or water;
  - pre-1960 detached buildings and structures within 200 m of woodland and/or water;
  - pre-1914 buildings within 400 m of woodland and/or water;
  - pre-1914 buildings with gable ends or slate roofs, regardless of location;
  - all tunnels, mines, kilns, ice-houses, adits, military fortifications, air raid shelters, cellars and similar underground ducts and structures;
  - all bridge structures, aqueducts and viaducts (especially over water and wet ground); and
  - all developments affecting buildings, structures, trees or other features where bats are known to be present.
- (ii) Proposals involving lighting of churches and listed buildings or floodlighting of green space within 50 m of woodland, water, field hedgerows or lines of trees with obvious connectivity to woodland or water.
- (iii) Proposals affecting quarries with cliff faces with crevices, caves or swallets.
- (iv) Proposals affecting or within 400 m of rivers, streams, canals, lakes, or within 200 metres of ponds and other aquatic habitats.
- (v) Proposals affecting woodland or field hedgerows and/or lines of trees with obvious connectivity to woodland or water bodies.
- (vi) Proposed tree work (felling or lopping) and/or development affecting:
- old and veteran trees that are older than 100 years;
  - trees with obvious holes, cracks or cavities; and
  - trees with a girth greater than 1 m at chest height.
- (vii) Proposed development affecting any feature or locations where bats are confirmed as being present, revealed by either a data trawl (from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre) or as notified to the developer by any competent authority (e.g. planning authority, Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation or other environmental or conservation organisation).

# A Biodiversity and planning

A.3.12 The types of habitat most commonly encountered in the planning system are listed below:

HABITATS	VALUE	PROTECTED SPECIES ASSOCIATED WITH HABITAT	ADVICE AND REFERENCES
<b>Ponds</b>	Ponds are a priority habitat. Ponds of all shapes and sizes can have significant ecological value, including small garden ponds and seemingly dry and derelict ponds	Great crested newts Water voles. Bats Reptiles	Restoration” of ponds is often not the best option – it is better to create new ponds adjacent to the existing ones to provide a variety of habitats. Where ponds are lost to development new ponds should be created in compensation.  <a href="http://www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk">http://www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk</a>
<b>Hedgerows</b>	Native hedgerows provide many important habitat functions such as winter food sources for birds, nesting sites and safe commuting routes connecting otherwise isolated habitats. Hedgerows are a priority habitat.	Nesting birds Reptiles Badgers Bats Great Crested newts Dormice	Efforts should be made to retain hedgerows within developments. Retained hedgerows should be buffered from surrounding development and not incorporated into domestic boundaries. Where retention is not possible native species rich hedgerows should be provided in compensation
<b>Rivers, streams, canals and ditches</b>	Watercourses are important wildlife corridors allowing the movement of species throughout the landscape. They are also important habitats in themselves.	Water voles Great crested newts Native crayfish Bats Reptiles	Any development which impacts on a watercourse either directly or indirectly may need the consent of the Environment Agency and it is best to contact them early in the planning process: <a href="http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/">http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/</a>

HABITATS	VALUE	PROTECTED SPECIES ASSOCIATED WITH HABITAT	ADVICE AND REFERENCES
<b>Wildflower grasslands</b>	Some of the most diverse habitats in the Vale occur on the chalk grassland of the Chilterns and N. Wessex Downs as well as the rich riverside meadows along the Thames.	Nesting birds Reptiles	Most of the important grasslands are within designated sites and development of these areas should be avoided. If priority habitat grasslands are identified on development sites then the developer should consider how to avoid direct or indirect impacts. Mitigation should be provided where impacts cannot be avoided and as a last resort compensation will be required if it is not possible to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity.
<b>Ancient or veteran trees</b>	Old trees provide habitats for many species as well as being important landscape features in themselves	Bats Nesting birds	Impacts on ancient or veteran trees should be avoided wherever possible. Applications involving the loss or deterioration of ancient trees will be strongly resisted
<b>Woodlands</b>	Ancient woodlands are irreplaceable habitats which are widespread across the Vale.	Bats Nesting birds Badgers Dormice Reptiles	Impacts on ancient woodland should be avoided. Mitigation for impacts is generally difficult. The diverse nature and structure of ancient woodlands means that replacement planting is generally not considered to be adequate mitigation / compensation. Applications involving the loss or deterioration of ancient woodlands will be strongly resisted.
<b>Traditional Orchard</b>	Traditional Orchards are a priority habitat	Bats Nesting birds Badgers Dormice Reptiles	Traditional fruit tree orchards and cobnut plots, whilst of artificial origin, have often escaped agricultural intensification and are important refuges for a wide range of wildlife. The total area of traditional orchards has declined drastically in recent years and the conservation of the remaining orchards is a high priority.



**Sources of further information:**

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- <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/76006>
- Badgers and development – Natural England <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/73034?category=19010>
- Barn owls and Rural Planning Applications – A guide for developers and planners – Barn Owl Trust,
- <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/76007?category=40030>
- BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development.
- British Standards Institute
- <http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030258704>
- Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom - IEEM 2006
- <http://www.cieem.net/ecia-guidelines-terrestrial-freshwater-and-coastal>

**Key contacts:**

- Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC), c/o Oxfordshire County Council, Signal Court, Old Station Way, Eynsham, OX29 4TL. Tel: 01865 815451.
- [tverc@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tverc@oxfordshire.gov.uk)
- Natural England - Web site: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk>

# B

## Glossary of terms



# B Glossary of terms

**Access:** The point(s) of vehicular or pedestrian entry/exit to a site.

**Active Frontage:** The interface between buildings and streets is characterised by multiple entrances and windows, which allows interaction between public realm and the premises facing the street.

**Adaptability:** The ability of a building to respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions.

**Amenity Space:** External space for recreational purposes.

**Block:** A form of development where the perimeter is defined by streets

**Building Line:** The line defined by the frontages of buildings along a street or road.

**Building Interface:** The area between the back of foot way on the street and the building line.

**Built Form:** Buildings and structures

**Bulk:** The combined effect of volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Also called massing.

**Character:** The combination of features of a building or a place that give it a distinctive identity.

**Character Area:** An area with distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently to give the area a distinctive identity.

**Combined Heat and Power (CHP):** The combined production of heat, usually in the form of steam, and power, usually in the form of electricity from a single source, close to where they are to be used.

**Conservation Area:** An area that has been designated as having special architectural or historical interest.

**Context:** The physical setting for a development.

**Context Appraisal:** A detailed analysis of the features that define and influence the area that surrounds a development site.

**Defensible Space:** A space that encourages safety and does not create opportunities for crime.

**Density:** A measure of the number of dwellings or people per hectare.

**Design:** The creative process of making spaces and places.

**Design Code:** A document that sets out the design and planning principles that will apply to development in a particular place.

**Design Guidance:** Documents that provide guidance on the appearance of development in a given area.

**Design Principle:** A statement that summarises design guidance.

**Design and Access Statement:** A document that sets out the design approach proposed for a development. The document will also address any site constraints and opportunities.

**Development Control:** The process through which a local authority determines whether planning permission should be granted for a development.

**Elevation:** An external face of a building, or the height of a site above sea level.

**Enclosure:** The arrangement of buildings, walls, trees etc to provide different levels of containment of a space.

**Facade:** The external face of a building or group of buildings that face the public realm.

**Fenestration:** The placement of windows on the exterior of a building.



# B Glossary of terms

**Figure ground:** A two-dimensional map of an urban space that shows the relationship between built and unbuilt space. It is used in analysis of urban design and planning.

**Form:** The physical appearance of a development – its 3 dimensional shape.

**Footprint:** The 2 dimensional shape created by a building or group of buildings on the ground.

**Grain:** The general shape and direction of building footprints.

**Greywater:** Wastewater generated from plates and wash-hand basins, showers and baths, which, because it is nearly as clean as potable water, can be recycled onsite for uses such as toilet flushing, landscape irrigation and constructed wetlands.

**Heritage assets:** A range of geographical components of the historic environment which have been positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. These include listed buildings; old buildings that are not listed but still have local historical importance; scheduled monuments; war memorials; historic wreck sites; parks; historic gardens; conservation areas, archaeological sites and so on.

**Hierarchy:** A logical sequence of spaces, streets or building forms, increasing or decreasing in size or density throughout a development.

**Landmark:** A building or structure that stands out from surrounding buildings.

**Layout:** The arrangement of buildings, streets and spaces in a development.

**Legibility:** The degree to which a place can be easily comprehended by its users so that navigation through that space is easily achieved.

**Local:** distinctiveness Similar to character – the features that define an area or development.

**Massing:** The volume of a building or group of buildings.

**Masterplan:** An evolving plan that establishes the framework and key elements of a site including routes, spaces, uses and so on.

**Mixed-use:** The combination of complementary uses within a building, site or area.

**Movement:** The passage of people and vehicles through buildings, places and spaces.

**Movement network:** The term “movement networks” refers to the physical infrastructures that allow people to navigate between land uses or destinations.

**Node:** A place where activity and routes are concentrated.

**Passive surveillance:** The monitoring of public space through the placement of buildings and activities in such a way as to maximise visibility and foster positive social interaction.

**Permeability:** The degree to which a residential development can be penetrated by foot, cycle and vehicle and the connectivity of the development to adjacent developments.

**Permitted Development:** Development that is deemed to be permitted without the requirement to submit a formal planning application. Development is usually small scale.

**Place:** A space in the built environment that has some meaning for people due to the activities and uses which characterise the space, or the quality of the space itself.

**Place-making:** Creating the physical conditions that residents find attractive, safe, neighbourly and legible.

# B Glossary of terms

**Public realm:** The spaces between buildings accessible to the public; including the highway, green areas, squares etc.

**Scale:** The size of a building relative to neighbouring buildings.

**Sense of place:** A property of space with strong identity and character that is deeply felt by local inhabitants and visitors.

**Street Furniture:** Includes litter bins, seating, lighting, bus shelters and signs.

**Street hierarchy:** An urban planning technique for laying out street networks. It is conceived as a hierarchy of routes that embeds the link importance of each road type in the network topology (the connectivity of the nodes to each other).

**Streetscape:** The character and appearance of the street environment.

**Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs):** Natural drainage solutions that provide an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses.

**Sustainable Development:** Development that meets the needs of today's generation, without compromising the needs of tomorrow's generation.

**Termination, terminated view:** A building or other feature which is placed at the end of a view down a street or square, to aid enclosure or provide a landmark.

**Topography:** A description of the shape of the land.

**Townscape:** The urban equivalent of landscape: the overall effect of the combination of buildings, spaces, views and features.

**Urban Design:** The process of making places, incorporating the design of buildings, spaces and details.

**Urban Grain:** The pattern development in a settlement.

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# C

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Oxfordshire County Council (2009) Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire.

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# D Conservation Areas





# D Conservation Areas

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

- Abingdon Town Centre
- Abingdon, Albert Park
- Abingdon, Northcourt
- Appleton
- Ardington & East Lockinge
- Ashbury
- Baulking
- Blewbury
- Bourton
- Buckland
- Buscot
- Charney Bassett
- Childrey
- Coleshill
- Cumnor
- Denchworth
- Drayton
- East Hanney
- East Hendred
- East Lockinge (See Ardington)
- Faringdon
- Fyfield & Netherton
- Goosey
- Great Coxwell
- Grove
- Harwell
- Hatford
- Hinton Waldrist
- Idstone
- Kingston Bagpuize
- Kingston Lisle
- Letcombe Bassett
- Letcombe Regis
- Little Coxwell
- Littleworth
- Longworth
- Marcham
- Milton
- North Hinksey
- Pusey
- Shellingford
- Shrivenham
- Sparsholt
- Stanford in the Vale
- Steventon
- Sutton Courtenay
- Uffington
- Wantage - Town Centre
- Wantage - Charlton
- West Hanney
- West Hendred
- Woolstone
- Wytham

**The District has a number of adopted Conservation Area Appraisals which are listed below:**

- Northcourt Conservation Area, Abingdon
- Wytham Conservation Area
- East Hendred Conservation Area
- Bourton Conservation Area
- Cumnor Conservation Area.

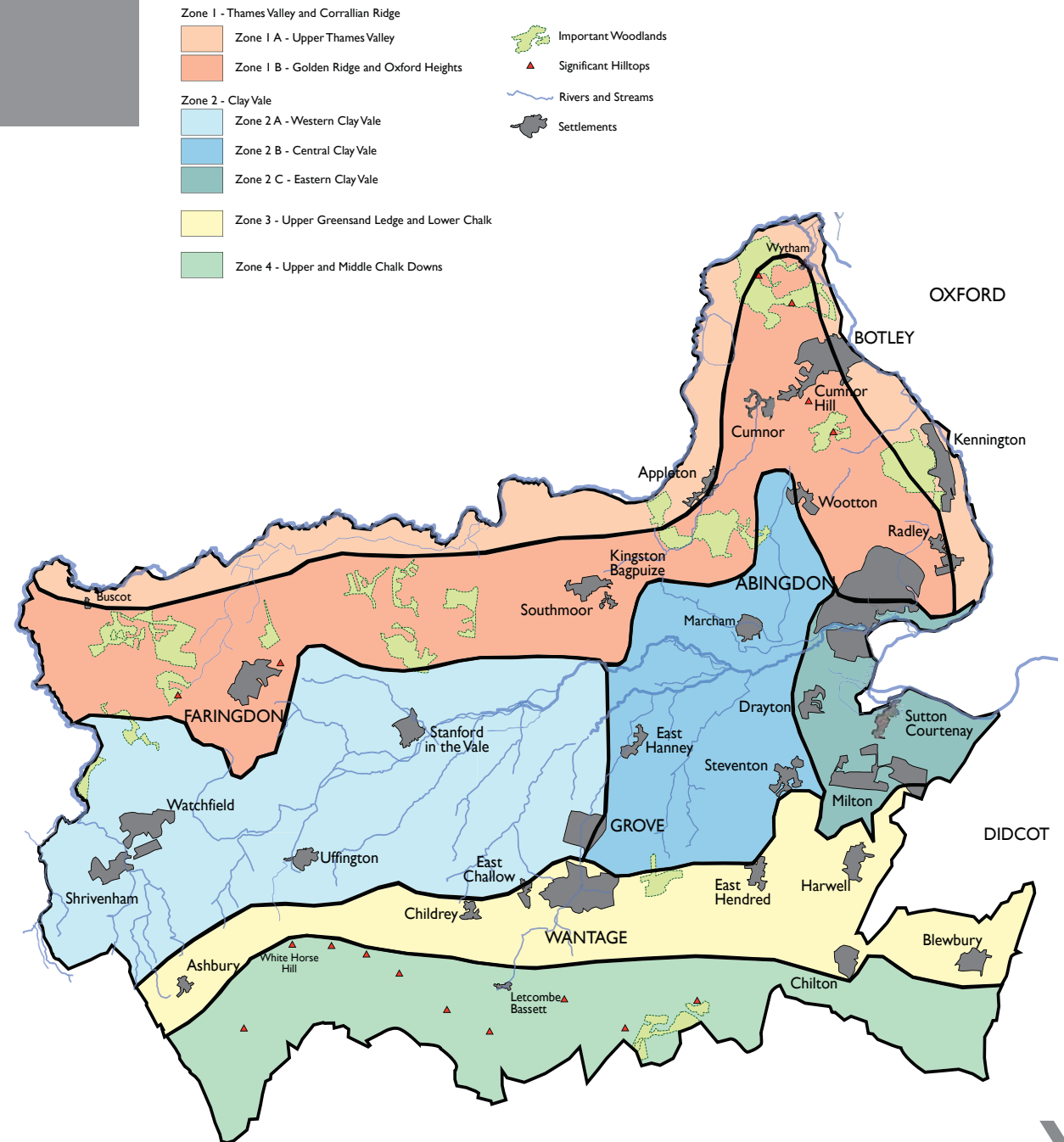
E

# Vale of White Horse character



## E.1 Geology

E.1.1 A study of the geology of the District can help to understand why towns and villages appear the way they are today. Geology can dictate where a settlement is located, its size and the main building materials.





# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 1: Thames Valley and Corallian Ridge

- Zone 1A: Upper Thames Valley.
- Zone 1B: Golden Ridge & Oxford Heights.

E.1.2 Zone 1A is the northernmost zone; it comprises the Oxford Clay beds of the Thames Valley, which run from Buscot in the west to Wytham in the east. Zone 1B is the Corallian Ridge which is a remnant of a coral reef formed during the Jurassic period. The ridge is made up of limestone and sandstone. It stretches from Faringdon to Kennington and Radley. An area of Greensand is apparent around Frilford where heathland plants are evident.



15 View of Oxford from Boars Hill

## Zone 2: Clay Vale

- Zone 2A: Western Clay Vale.
- Zone 2B: Central Clay Vale.
- Zone 2C: Eastern Clay Vale.

E.1.3 Zone 2 is comprised of Kimmeridge and Gault Clays which originally would have been waterlogged marshy lands and thickly wooded areas. Settlements took shape on slightly higher ground as 'islands' which is denoted by the suffix 'ey', examples include Hanney and Goosey.



16 North of Coleshill



17 River Thames, Buscot

# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 3: Upper Greensand Ledge and Lower Chalk

E.1.4 Zone 3 is comprised of a larger area of Greensand with lower chalk towards the North Wessex Downs. This zone stretches from the western villages of Ashbury and Childrey through to Wantage, the Hendreds and as far as Blewbury in the east.

## Zone 4: Upper and Middle Chalk Downs

E.1.5 Zone 4 is the southern most zone, it comprises the Middle and Upper Chalk of the Downs. The Zone has relatively few settlements, except for farmsteads around the Ridgeway. The land is mainly used for grazing due to the poor soil conditions.



20 View north of Watchfield



18 White Horse Hill



19 View south from Kingston Lisle

## E.2 LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

**E.2.1** Although geology has a very strong influence on the character of a settlement, other factors such as local traditions, history and technology can also influence the evolution and appearance of a settlement. Image 21 below divides the Vale into separate character zones, taking into account geology, landscape and a physical assessment of individual settlements in each zone.

**E.2.2** The following sections provide an overview of the character of each of the zones.

**E.2.3** It should be noted that the individual character of the five largest settlements in the District, Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Wantage and Grove, is more varied because of their size and history. These settlements do not therefore fit comfortably into the individual character zones and, therefore, they are described separately.

### Zone 1 - Thames Valley and Corralian Ridge

- Zone 1 A - Golden Ridge and Wooded Estate Villages
- Zone 1 B - Eastern Thames

### Zone 2 - Clay Vale

- Zone 2 A - Western Vale Villages
- Zone 2 B - Central Alluvial Island villages
- Zone 2 C - Lowland Villages

### Zone 3 - Rolling Farmland Villages

### Zone 4 - Chalk Villages

### Zone 5 - Upper Chalk Downs

▲ Significant Hilltops

— Rivers and Streams

■ Settlements





# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 1: Thames Valley and Corallian Ridge

E.2.4 Zone 1 covers approximately one third of the land area of the Vale. The area follows the path of the River Thames, which bounds the District to the north and east. Here, the landscape is a mixture of water meadows and pasture on slightly higher ground.

E.2.5 To the south is the Corallian or Golden Ridge, a higher area of land along the crest of which lie various settlements.

E.2.6 The zone contains many areas of deciduous woodland, including some ancient woodlands, particularly along the Corallian Ridge and in the north-eastern corner of the Vale.

E.2.7 In the east, the proximity to Oxford allowed for a wide variety of building materials to be transported into the District. In the west, until the railway connected into Faringdon, materials were restricted to those that were available locally. This meant less influence by external factors and fashions in favour of traditional materials such as limestone, stone slates and thatch.

E.2.8 Zone 1 is subdivided into two separate sub-zones to the east and the west of the Vale. These subzones are appraised below:

- Zone 1A - Corallian Ridge and Wooded Estate Villages
- Zone 1B - Eastern Thames



24 Buckland



25 Estate Cottages, Colehill



26 Cumnor Hill



22 North Hinksey



23 River Thames, Abingdon

# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 1A: Corallian Ridge & Wooded Estate Villages

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.2.9 The northernmost part of the Vale abuts the River Thames and contains soft Oxford Clays covered by gravels and alluvium. The landscape combines a diverse mix of water meadows, small woodlands, pasture, with willows along the river banks and hedgerows. The Corallian Ridge runs the length of the District and beyond in either direction. In the west the ridge, also known as the Golden Ridge, is bisected by streams, which have formed steep slopes. In the Faringdon area, this is evident in the form of Badbury Hill and Faringdon Folly Hill. Much of the ridge is characterised by woodland, including a significant area of ancient woodland.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.2.10 The majority of the settlements are set back from the river on higher ground along the ridge line. Settlements here are often based around country estates and large manor houses with gardens designed to look out over the north-facing scarp.

E.2.11 Settlements are typically limestone villages built of locally sourced, hard Corallian Ragstone, and their elevated position often provides spectacular expansive views.





# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 1A: Palette of Materials

**E.2.12** The defining building features include limestone, which helps create the distinctive character of the area. Steep pitched roofs, narrow gables and dormer windows are typical of the area.

### E.2.13 Walls:

- Random, uncoursed rubble, local corallian limestone with a variety of bed widths and colours;
- Ashlar limestone dressings;
- Coursed stone appears on later dwellings;
- Colour washed lime render often covers stone beneath;
- Berkshire orange brick - usually on smaller Victorian dwellings or on Georgian properties;
- Decorative brickwork - often blue or buff for chimneys, quoins, doors and window detailing;
- Timber frame with render or brick infill panels; and
- Weatherboard is restricted to conversions from agricultural or cottage industry uses.

### E.2.14 Roofs:

- There are three roofing materials that are equally dominant:
- Stone slates;
- Thatch was traditionally locally sourced long or wheat straw with flush ridges;
- Orange plain clay tiles, and
- Blue slates

### E.2.15 Windows & Doors:

- Timber sash and casement windows and iron leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

### E.2.16 Timber Finishes:

- The paint colour palette is narrow, with white or similar pale colours. Estate colours in villages such as Buscot and Coleshill;
- Tar and pitch on barns and exposed timber frames; and
- Untreated oak.

## Roofs



36 Stone slates



37 Blue slate



38 Typical thatched roof with dormer



39 Local orange plain clay tiles

## Timber Finishes



40 White painted timber windows



41 Buscot estate paint colours

## Walls



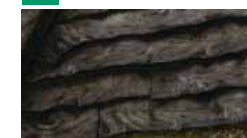
32 A variety of shades of coursed and uncoursed limestone



33 Colour washed Render



34 Berkshire orange brick with blue headers



35 Natural and stained weatherboard - traditional and modern



# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 1A: Settlements with distinct character

E.2.17 The larger settlements in the Vale have individual characteristics which do not always accord with the character zone in which they are located. Whilst Faringdon is influenced by the character of Zone 1, it has developed its individual character because of its history, location and size.

E.2.18 Faringdon is the largest settlement in Zone 1A, and has panoramic views across the Thames Valley from its perch on the Golden Ridge. There is a relatively broad spectrum of building materials influenced by the arrival of the canal and railway, including brick, stone and limewashed and painted renders. The predominant roofing materials are blue and stone slates.



42 London Street, Faringdon



43 Lechlade Road, Faringdon



50 Gravel Walk, Faringdon



51 Dove Court, Faringdon



48 Traditional Georgian colours



49 Traditional heritage colours



44 Berkshire orange brick



45 Painted render



46 Coursed limestone



47 Slate

# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 1B: The Eastern Thames

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.2.19 The eastern Thames and Oxford Heights area differs from the area to the west primarily due to its proximity to Oxford. It is a much more developed area, where better transport links have led to the availability of a wider range of building materials.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.2.20 Many of the settlements in Zone 1B are situated in low lying areas in close proximity to the River Thames. One of the largest settlements in the zone is Botley, which sits on the edge of Oxford. The topography rises up from the Thames at Cumnor Hill, from where there are expansive views to the north. Abingdon is the largest town in the District, but still retains its character as a historic market town.

## Zone 1A

Abingdon (north of River Ock)	Foxcombe Hill
Boars Hill	North Hinksey
Botley	Kennington
Cumnor Hill	Radley
	Wootton



55 Boars Hill



56 North Hinksey



52 View west to Boars Hill



53 River Thames



54 North Hinksey



# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 1B: Palette of Materials

**E.2.21** The Corallian limestone again has a strong presence, particularly on cottages in villages.

### **E.2.22** Walls:

- A mix of uncoursed and coursed corallian limestone. Usually smaller regular shaped stones with Ashlar limestone dressings;
- Colour washed lime render often covers earlier stone beneath;
- Berkshire orange brick - predominates in urban areas;
- Decorative brickwork - often blue or buff for chimneys, quoins, doors and window detailing;
- Timber frame with render or brick infill panels; and
- Weatherboard is usually found on conversions.

### **E.2.23** Roofs

- Plain clay tiles predominate in the zone and often replace earlier stone or thatch;
- Blue slate is also common; and
- Thatch is generally found in rural settlements on smaller dwellings and barns. Usually locally sourced long or wheat straw.

### **E.2.24** Fenestration and Doors:

- Timber sash and casement, iron leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

### **E.2.25** Timber Finishes

- The paint colour palette is narrow, with white or similar pale colours. The exception is in urban locations, where a broader palette is observed;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame; and
- Untreated oak.

## Roofs



**60** Orange /red plain clay tiles



**61** Blue Slate



**62** Typical thatched roof

## Timber Finishes



**63** White painted timber windows



**64** White painted timber door

## Walls



**57** Light to mid range shades of Corallian limestone - either coursed or uncoursed



**58** Colour washed Render



**59** Berkshire orange brick with blue headers





## Zone 1B: Settlements with distinct character

E.2.26 The larger settlements in the Vale have individual characteristics which can differ from those of the zone in which they are located. Abingdon and Botley have developed individual characteristics largely influenced by their history, location and size.

### ABINGDON

E.2.27 Abingdon is the largest town in the District. The built history of the town includes buildings which date from the 15th century, including the chapel of St John's Hospital, a refuge for travellers, and almshouses around St Helen's Church. Brick is the predominant building material in Abingdon, although render and stone are also well used. The predominant roofing material is clay tiles.



65 Almshouses



66 Ornate Victorian detailing



67 Morland Brewery conversion



68 Contemporary use of brick and clay tiles. Flood risk addressed by raising ground floor level

# E Vale of White Horse character

## BOTLEY

E.2.28 Botley is one of the largest settlements in the Zone. Although it was first settled in Saxon times, its major development has taken place since the 1930's and generally to the west of the ring road. The character of Botley includes a mix of styles, ranging from stone cottages and Victorian terraces to 20th century residential suburbs.

E.2.29 Cumnor Hill extends to the west of Botley and links to the village of Cumnor. It has a distinctive low density, well landscaped character, and includes a variety of substantial detached properties and a number of contemporary apartment buildings.

E.2.30 A broad spectrum of building materials has been used in the Botley and Cumnor Hill area, including brick, render, stone, and more modern materials such as metal and glass. The predominant roofing material is plain clay tiles.



83 Original windows maintained



84 Contemporary metal windows



79 Red/orange brick with buff banding



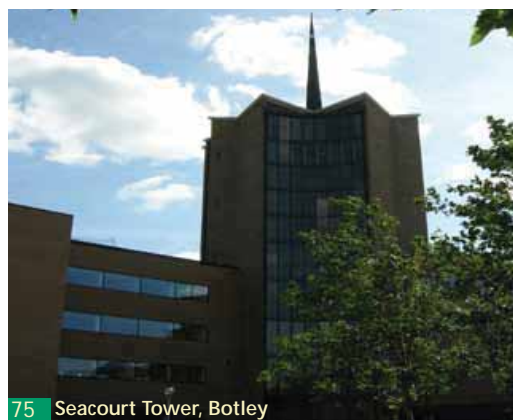
80 Modern infill based on 1930s design



81 Uncoursed limestone with ashlar dressings



82 Clay tiled extension to stone cottage



75 Seacourt Tower, Botley



77 Uncoursed limestone cottage



76 Typical Victorian terraces



78 Modern Flats



# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 2: The Clay Vale

E.2.31 The Clay Vale is the largest of the character zones. It is a broad low-lying area of Kimmeridge and Gault Clays, with fields predominantly used as pastureland. Throughout the Clay Vale, Willow trees lie along the river valleys and streams.

E.2.32 Historically, it was a quiet rural area of self sufficient villages and hamlets. Between 1790 and 1840 significant changes took place due to the arrival of the canal and railway, which led to materials being imported into the area from further afield.

E.2.33 During this period a number of brickworks were set up in the area to take advantage of the rich clay soils. These were located in Stanford in the Vale, East Challow, Childrey and Uffington. Brick replaced stone as the principal building material and was used in the construction of new dwellings, the repair of older buildings and to add detailing such as quoins and window surrounds to stone buildings.

E.2.34 The Uffington Brick and Tile Company, which was sited to the north of Uffington within the Clay Vale, provided a large quantity of bricks to Wantage and the surrounding villages.

E.2.35 The arrival of the canal and railway led to the development of Victorian brick and blue slate terraces within villages and as extensions to some villages.

E.2.36 Zone 2 is subdivided into three separate subzones to the east, west and centrally across the Vale, these sub-zones are appraised below:

- Zone 2A - The Western Clay Vale Villages
- Zone 2B - Central Alluvial Island Villages
- Zone 2C - Lowland Villages





# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 2A: The Western Clay Vale

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.2.37 The Western Clay Vale stretches from the north of Uffington as far as the Corallian Ridge near Faringdon, eastwards to Charney Bassett and westwards to Bourton. The pastures and hedgerows of the clay soils are concentrated in the west, between Woolstone and Lyford.

E.2.38 The landscape was once heavily wooded, but is now relatively open largely due to the loss of Elm trees in the 1970's. Some hedgerows have also been removed to create larger fields.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.2.39 As the original landscape of the Clay Vale was low lying and either heavily wooded or very wet marshland, it had relatively few settlements.

E.2.40 These are generally smaller villages and hamlets, usually located on outcrops of gravel raised above the wet land.

E.2.41 One of the largest settlements in the zone is Grove, which differs significantly in character from the other settlements as it has been substantially expanded since the Second World War.

Zone 2A	Fernham	Shippon
Baulking	Grove	Shellingford
Bourton	Hatford	Stanford in the Vale
Charney Bassett	Longcot	West Challow
East Challow	Lyford	



91 View across Zone 2A from below White Horse Hill



92 View northwards towards Shrivenham



94 Charney Bassett



95 Victorian Gothic, Charney Bassett



93 Shellingford's stone cottages

# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 2A: Palette of Materials

E.47 Although a clay zone, the proximity to stone has led to stone being the predominant building material. It is a rural zone with many wide frontage cottages and low thatched roofs.

### E.48 Walls:

- The local coursed corallian limestone with a variety of tones;
- Uncoursed stone appears on the earliest of dwellings or former agricultural buildings;
- Colour washed render is rarely found but usually covers stone beneath;
- Brick is less frequently used;
- Brick has a common decorative use on stone buildings for quoins and window detailing; and
- Weatherboard is usually found on outbuildings and agricultural buildings and conversions.

### E.49 Roofs:

- Roofing materials predominantly stone slates;
- Clay tiles are often a later replacement for stone slates;
- Thatch is also common on smaller cottages; and
- Blue slate is less common - usually found on later dwellings.

### E.50 Fenestration and Doors:

- Timber sash and casement, iron leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

### E.51 Timber Finishes:

- The paint colour palette is narrow, with white or pale colours such as greens and greys. The exception is in urban locations, where a broader palette is observed;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame; and
- Untreated oak.

## Walls



96 Light Corallian limestone with brick, ashlar and wooden dressings



97 Colour washed render

98 Blue headers



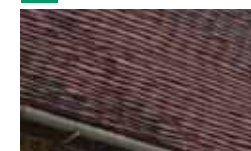
99 Stained weatherboard

100 Natural oak weatherboard

## Roofs



101 Traditional and modern replacement stone slates



102 Red plain clay tiles

103 Traditional thatch

## Timber Finishes



104 White painted timber doors and windows

105 Green painted timber windows



# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 2A: Settlements with distinct character

E.52 The larger settlements in the Vale have individual characteristics which can differ from those of the zone in which they are located. Grove has developed its own character which is largely dominated by its post war expansion.

### GROVE

E.53 Grove is the largest settlement in Zone 2A. The buildings include a number of older buildings, which are concentrated around the conservation area. The majority of development in Grove, however, is of post war construction. In the old village, the traditional materials include stone, brick, render and timber framing. The roofing materials include blue slate and plain clay tiles, but also thatch and stone tiles.



110 Blue slate



111 Orange/red plain clay tile



112 Thatched dormers



113 Half hipped thatch roof



114 Black and white painted timber doors and windows



115 Edwardian green painted door



107 Render and timber frame



106 Brick and timber frame



108 Brick and tile cottage



109 Modern dwellings based on traditional designs



# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 2B: Central Alluvial Island Villages

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.54 To the east, the Gault Clay meets the Kimmeridge Clay and together the two form a wide unbroken vale as far as the Thames at Abingdon. There are extensive alluvial flats and gravel terraces where the Ock meets the Thames.

E.55 A number of watercourses such as the Letcombe Brook, Land Brook and Childrey Brook flow through the area. These led to the building of a number of water mills which provided the power for the production of flour, silk and wool at different periods in the Vale's history.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

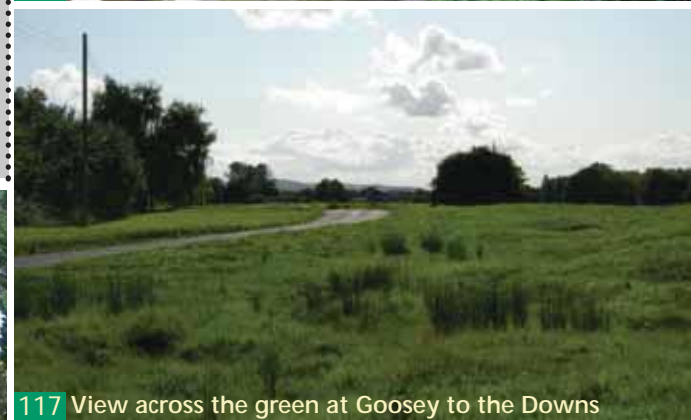
E.56 The 'island' villages were established in pre-Norman times on a gravel bed set in the marshy low lying Vale. This gave rise to the building of raised causeways to connect settlements as the surrounding lower fields had the potential to flood.

E.57 Goosey is a prime example of an island village. It comprises a group of houses, cottages and farm buildings scattered around a large green, originally intended for keeping geese. It has retained its essential character over the centuries.

<b>Zone 2B</b>	East Hanney	Garford
Cotford	Frilford	Marcham
Denchworth	Frilford Heath	West Hanney
Dry Sandford	Goosey	



116 Letcombe Brook at East Hanney



117 View across the green at Goosey to the Downs



119 Marcham



120 Thatched cottage, Grove



121 Farmhouse, Goosey



118 Gatehouse, Denchworth

# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 2B: Palette of Materials

**E.58** The location of this zone traditionally provided access to a variety of materials. The clay provided local bricks, with stone and timber also being readily available nearby. This zone has the greatest mix of materials for walls and roofs with no one material predominating. Small wide frontage, 1.5-2 storey cottages are most prevalent.

### E.59 Walls:

- Local coursed corallian limestone with light to mid tones and smaller bed widths;
- Uncoursed stone appears on the earliest of dwellings or former agricultural buildings. Timber framing with either brick, stone or lime render infill;
- Berkshire orange brick - often with blue headers;
- Brick has a common decorative use on stone buildings for quoins and window detailing; and
- Weatherboard is usually found on outbuildings and agricultural buildings.

### E.60 Roofs:

- Stone slates;
- Orange or orange/red clay tiles; and
- Thatch with a plain, flush ridge.

### 11.4.7 Fenestration and Doors:

- Timber sash and casement, iron leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

### E.61 Timber Finishes:

- The paint colour palette is narrow, with white or pale colours such as greens and greys. The exception is in Marcham, where a yellow paint has been applied;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame;
- Untreated oak; and
- For more detail on paint and stain colours see appendix D.

## Walls



**122** Berkshire orange brick - often with blue headers



**123** Local limestone in narrow beds - often with brick detailing



**124** Timber frame with lime render infill

**125** Timber frame with brick infill

## Roofs



**126** Stone slates

**127** Orange/red clay tile



**128** Orange plain clay tiles

**129** Thatch

## Timber Finishes



**130** Black and white painted windows and doors

**131** Yellow paintwork - a local colour to properties in Marcham



# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 2C: Lowland Villages

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.62 Zone 2C stretches from Steventon in the west to Appleford in the east, and from Harwell in the south northwards to the south of Abingdon.

E.63 The wider landscape contains expansive open arable fields on thin gravel terraces, which overlay the clay sub soil.

E.64 The Thames passes along the northern boundary of this zone. The area is bisected by the A34, and views to the east are dominated by Didcot Power Station.

E.65 The area west of the A34 is characterised by a feeling of openness. There are wide views over the area from Steventon Hill to the south of Steventon village. The flat open landscape provides views of the North Wessex Downs to the south and the Corallian Ridge to the north.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.66 There are a number of fine examples of traditional timber frame buildings with brick and render infill panels in the area.

E.67 Particularly good examples can be found in Steventon, Sutton Courtenay and Harwell.

Zone 2C	
Abingdon (south of	Harwell
River Ock)	Milton
Drayton	Steventon
	Sutton Courtenay



132 Steventon Causeway



135 Sutton Courtenay



133 River Thames



136 Stone cottage, Drayton



137 Victorian farmhouse, Steventon



134 Causeway cottages



# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 2C: Palette of Materials

**E.68** This area of the clay vale is dominated by the use of timber framing and brick from local brickworks. The orange/red Berkshire brick is often combined with blue or buff in detailing, string courses or diaper work.

**E.69** A variety of building forms are found here with a mix of:

- Small wide fronted cottages often in rows;
- Substantial detached 2-2.5 storey houses;
- Corner and 'L' shaped forms;
- Prominent gables; and
- Jettied first floors.

### E.70 Walls:

- Timber framing with either brick, limestone or lime render infill;
- Berkshire orange brick;
- Frequent use of contrasting detailing - blue headers, buff brick courses, diaper work and dentilation; and
- Weatherboard is usually found on outbuildings and agricultural buildings and conversions.

### E.71 Roofs:

- Orange or orange/red clay tiles;
- Thatch with a plain, flush ridge; and
- Blue slate.

### E.72 Fenestration and Doors:

- Timber sash and casement, iron and timber leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

### E.73 Timber Finishes:

- The paint colour palette in rural areas is narrow, with white or pale colours such as greens and greys;
- In urban areas and on larger dwellings, greater use of Georgian and Victorian colours particularly on doors;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame; and
- Untreated oak.

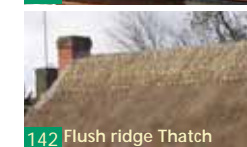
## Roofs



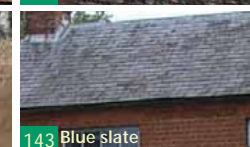
140 Orange clay tile



141 Red/orange clay tile



142 Flush ridge Thatch



143 Blue slate

## Timber Finishes



144 Painted and stained timber windows



145 Ornate leaded casements



146 Georgian green door



147 Georgian porch

## Walls



138 Berkshire orange brick with a variety of features including: blue headers and string course, buff detailing, diaper work and dentil and bottle work



139 Timber framing with brick, stone or render infill

# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 3: Rolling Farmland Villages:

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.74 Zone 3 stretches from Letcombe Regis in the west to Blewbury in the east, and from East Hendred in the north to the southern boundary of the Vale.

E.75 The Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand is a transitional landscape area, situated between the Chalk Downs and the flat Clay Vale. This area of Greensand becomes broader in the east of the District.

E.76 From Wantage to Blewbury, the Lower Chalk forms a broad plateau below the Downs which is particularly evident to the north of East Hendred. Here, the landscape is dominated by open arable fields with limited hedgerows.

E.77 In other areas the Lower Chalk spreads out and creates small valleys, forming an undulating landscape below the Downs, such as around the hamlet of Ginge.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.78 The villages in Zone 3 are situated at the edge of the northern scarp of the North Wessex Downs. They are located along a spring line running through an area of Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand.

E.79 The built environment in Zone 3 includes a mix of small hamlets and the second largest settlement in the Vale, Wantage

## Zone 3

Ardington  
Blewbury  
Childrey  
Chilton  
East Hendred  
Ginge  
Letcombe Regis  
Lockinge  
Sparsholt  
Upton  
West Hendred  
Wantage



148 View from East Lockinge



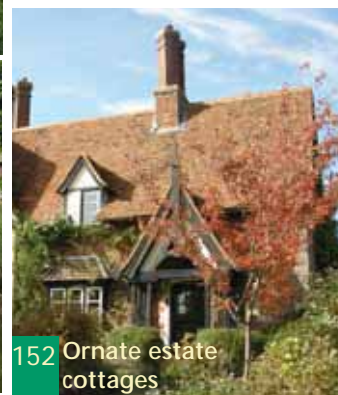
149 The restored Childrey village pond



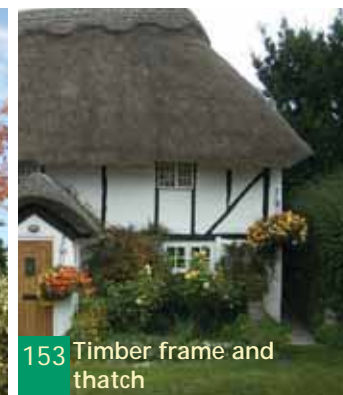
150 View through East Hendred



151 Narrow timber framing



152 Ornate estate cottages



153 Timber frame and thatch



## Zone 3: Settlements with distinct character

### WANTAGE

E.80 The larger settlements in the Vale have individual characteristics which can differ from those of the zone in which they are located. Wantage has developed individual characteristics largely influenced by its history, location and size.

E.81 Wantage is the second largest settlement in the Vale. Originally a small Roman settlement, the town has changed dramatically over the centuries particularly with the arrival of the canal and railway and, in recent years, with the redevelopment of parts of the town centre.

E.82 The Uffington Brick and Tile Company provided a large quantity of bricks for Wantage in the 19th Century, which enabled the development of Victorian red-brick properties.

E.83 Traditional building materials in Wantage include orange brick (sometimes with blue headers) and render, with blue slate and plain clay tile roofs.

### Roofs



158 Orange clay tile



159 Clay tile - gabled



160 Thatch



161 Blue slate - steep pitch

### Timber Finishes



162 Heritage green timber door and windows



163 Black stained timber

### Walls



154 Commonly square or narrow Timber framing with patterned brick or rendered infill.



155 Berkshire orange facing brick with burnt or blue headers



156 Lime render



157 Weatherboard



# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 3: Palette of Materials

E.84 This zone has the most predominant use of timber framing and brick. Originally infilled with limewashed wattle and daub or early brick, however this was often replaced with modern brick or plaster.

E.85 The Victorian estate villages of Ardington and Lockinge often recreate the medieval timber framing, but within a highly decorative Gothic style.

E.86 A variety of building forms are found here with a mix of:

- Taller often deep plan cottages;
- Substantial detached 2-2.5 storey houses;
- Corner and 'L' shaped forms;
- Prominent steep pitch gables; and
- Jettied first floors.

### E.87 Walls:

- Timber framing with either brick or lime render infill;
- Berkshire orange brick; and
- Frequent use of detailing - herringbone pattern.



168 Blue slate with small dormer



171 Orange/red plain clay tile - decorative ridge



169 Timber frame and render



172 Metal detailing reflecting historic former use



170 Original timber doors and windows are maintained



173 Contemporary window designs



164 Imposing Georgian features



166 Harmonious Victorian street design



165 Grove Street, Wantage



167 Industrial conversion

# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 4: Chalk Villages along the Spring Line

E.88 Zone 4 stretches from the west of East Challow to Idstone. The villages open out to the south onto a steeply rising landscape with large open fields.

E.89 In other areas the Lower Chalk spreads out and with its small valleys forms an undulating landscape. Near Uffington the Lower Chalk narrows to form a ledge.

E.90 The Icknield Way runs at the foot of the Lower Chalk where the Chalk meets the Greensand. Watercourses drain from springs towards the River Ock.

E.91 The area around the Upper Greensand and the lower slopes of the Lower Chalk is characterised by considerable tree cover and a gentler landscape than the Upper Chalk Downland.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.92 Zone 4 is characterised by small settlements, with Uffington being the largest. The character of the villages is distinctly rural, typically comprising informal cottages and farmsteads, although some villages include large Manor houses.





### Zone 4: Palette of Materials

E.93 The most prominent material is local chalk blocks set on a foundation of sarsen stones. Sometimes sarsen stones alone make up the walls. As these are extremely difficult to cut, they are always laid as whole stones in a random uncoursed fashion.

E.94 Small 1.5-2 storey wide frontage cottages often with thatched roofs predominate.

#### E.95 Walls:

- Chalk block either regular sized and laid in courses or random sized and uncoursed;
- Sarsen stone mixed with other materials such as chalk or brick;
- Timber framing;
- Berkshire orange brick usually used for brick quoins and detailing around windows and doors and repairs to chalk;
- Colour washed lime render; and
- Weatherboard on outbuildings.

#### E.96 Roofs:

- Thatch with a plain, flush ridge;
- Red/orange clay tiles;
- Stone slates; and
- Blue slate.

#### E.97 Fenestration and Doors:

- Timber sash and casement, iron leaded casement windows; and
- Timber doors.

#### E.98 Timber Finishes:

- The paint colour palette in rural areas is narrow, with white or pale colours such as greens and greys often with black contrasts;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame; and
- Untreated oak.

#### Walls



180 Examples of coursed chalk block and uncoursed chalk and sarsen stone construction



181 Timber frame and render often over chalk or stone



182 Brick repairs

183 Brick detailing

#### Roofs



184 Hipped thatch

185 Half hipped thatch



186 Stone slates

187 Red/orange clay tile

#### Timber Finishes



188 Cream painted door and railings

189 Pale green painted timber door



# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 5: The Upper Chalk Downs

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

E.99 This zone is characterised by large open fields. There are numerous woodland areas, including mixed and deciduous plantations. Larger areas of deciduous woodland are found at the western end of the zone, in the vicinity of Ashdown Park, including some areas of ancient woodland.

E.100 The north-facing escarpment of the North Wessex Downs is prominent. The Ridgeway, Britain's oldest road, runs along the top of the Downs and includes a number of nationally important archaeological sites such as White Horse Hill and Waylands Smithy.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER

E.101 Zone 5 is sparsely settled, with only one settlement of any size, Letcombe Bassett. The remaining built environment comprises a mix of farmsteads and the notable Ashdown House.

E.102 Ashdown House is constructed of chalk blocks with stone quoins. The building has Dutch and

E.103 French influences and its hipped roof is topped by two large chimneys and an octagonal cupola.

E.104 The house is unusually tall and narrow, which is emphasised by the openness of the landscape within which it is set, and includes a detached pavilion on each side.

### Zone 3

Letcombe Bassett



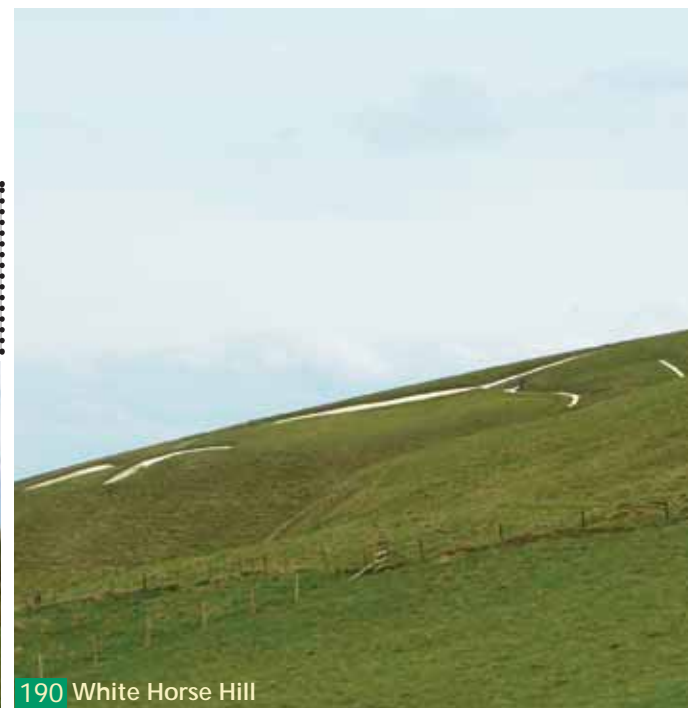
192 Dragon Hill



193 Waylands Smithy



194 Ashdown House



190 White Horse Hill



191 Watchfield Windfarm from the Downs

# E Vale of White Horse character

## Zone 5: Palette of Materials

E.105 The most prominent material is timber framing infilled with either chalk, stone or render.

E.106 A rural, open zone which is contains predominantly farms and farm cottages.

E.107 Large detached farmhouses often set in a courtyard of associated outbuildings.

E.108 Small 1.5-2 storey wide frontage cottages often with thatched roofs.

### E.109 Walls:

- Timber framing with chalk, stone or render infill;
- Chalk block random sized and uncoursed;
- Sarsen stone mixed with other materials such as chalk or brick;
- Weatherboard on outbuildings and extensions to cottages;
- North Wessex orange brick as a sole facing material usually on outbuildings or used in repairs; and
- Colour washed lime render.

### E.110 Roofs:

- Thatch with a plain, flush ridge; and
- Red/orange clay tiles.

### E.111 Fenestration and Doors:

- Timber sash and casement, iron leaded casement windows;
- Timber doors;
- Timber Finishes;
- The paint colour palette in rural areas is narrow, with white or pale colours such as greens and greys often with black contrasts;
- Tar and pitch on barns and timber frame; and
- Untreated oak.

### Walls



195 Timber frame with render or brick infill



196 Render often covers chalk or brick beneath



197 Uncoursed chalk with brick repairs



198 Replacement weather board



199 Weatherboard extension



200 Painted chalk & brick



201 Sarsen stone and flint

### Roofs



202 Hipped thatch



203 Thatch and tile



204 Orange clay tile



205 Red/orange clay tile

### Timber Finishes



206 Painted windows & stained door



207 Black and white painted windows





URBAN  
INITIATIVES  
STUDIO

Proctor and Matthews  
Architects

