

4.2 Developments of Less than 10 Dwellings



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Site Layout

Residential developments of less than 10 dwellings are frequently associated with rural village locations, urban infill plots or village exception sites for affordable housing. Each of these locations presents separate challenges for the designer, but the opportunity exists to respond to these challenges in a locally appropriate and environmentally sensitive way.

Section 3 provides information on the general principles of designing a good site layout. This section provides a number of examples of how this can be successfully applied to a variety of small residential developments.

Urban Infill

In urban locations, infill plots can be relatively compact, which can challenge designers to deliver an attractive development that does not adversely affect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. Courtyard housing can be used successfully on urban infill sites, particularly in areas of higher density. Courtyards provide good defensible space and can be designed to be formal or informal depending on the context.

Image 446 below illustrates an appropriate design for a high density urban infill development, where a frontage property has been demolished. In this example, a courtyard approach is adopted. No dwellings face directly onto the backs of existing properties to ensure residential amenity is not harmed.



446 Typical higher density urban infill

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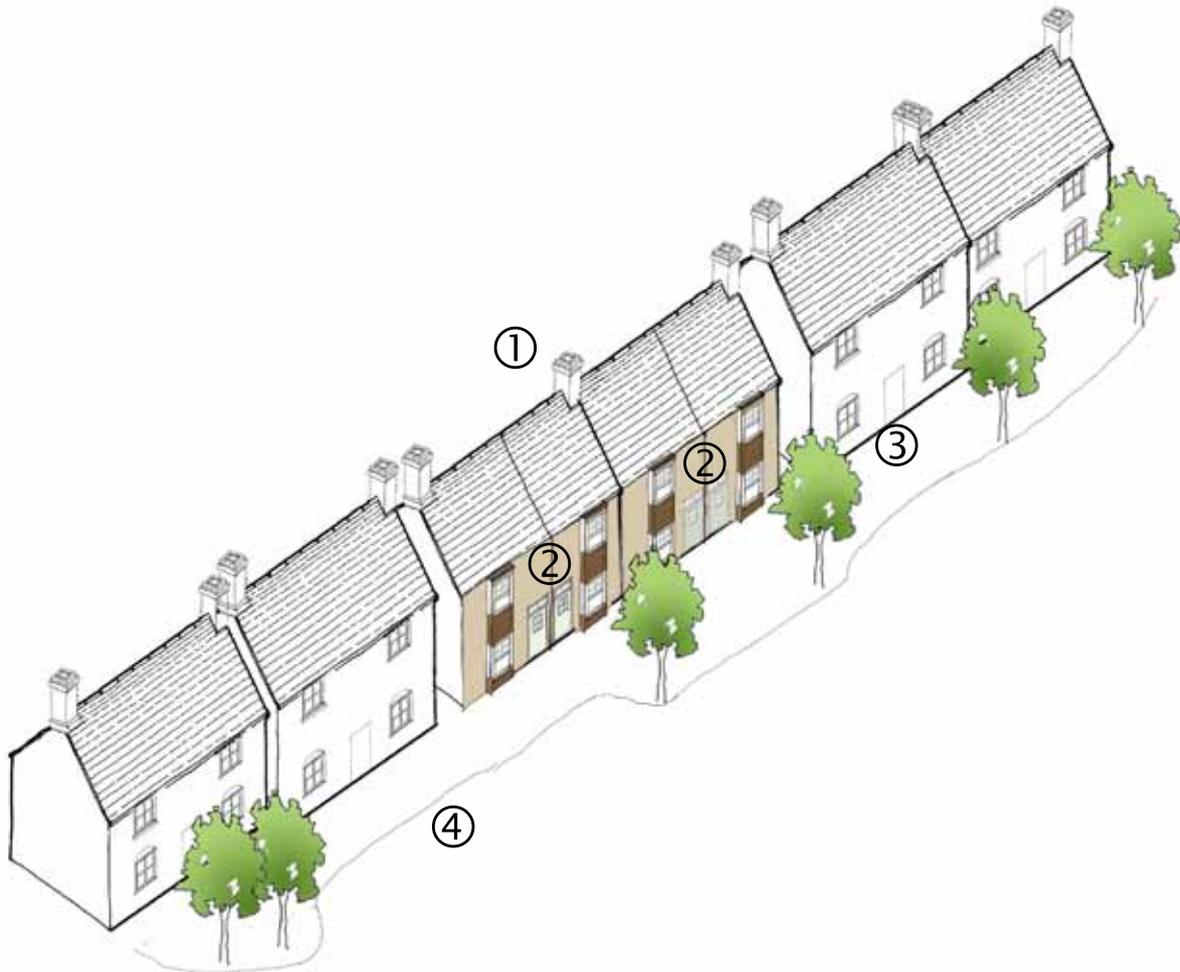
Village Infill

In rural locations, infill plots can alter the character of a village if not carefully designed. A higher density development (e.g. an informal mews or courtyard) can be integrated provided the design and layout of the new buildings respect the traditional streetscene and character of the village.

Image 448 below illustrates an appropriate design for a village infill. In this example, the existing building line and form are maintained, but a contemporary element has been integrated into the traditional design.



447 Successful village infill, Marcham



- ① By utilising the same plan form as surrounding dwellings a new terrace of four dwellings can be inserted in the space where there was an unimportant gap or, previously one or two dwellings may have stood.
- ② The elevational treatment can be modern as long as it draws influence from the surroundings
- ③ Building line maintained
- ④ Parking a combination of on street and rear courtyard with side street access

448 Example of village infill plot

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Sub-division of Plots

The sub-division of residential plots to provide one or more additional dwellings represents one of the most common forms of new development in built-up areas.

The key factor for this type of development is that the site's context should dictate the approach that is adopted for designing and laying out the new buildings.

New buildings need to fit comfortably within the street, and there should be a positive relationship between the built form and the street.



449 Unsuccessful layout due to garage dominating frontage



450 Successful scheme, with contemporary design



451 Outbuildings are often converted to residential use and the plots are then subdivided accordingly

4.2

Developments of Less than 10 Dwellings

Case Study Wheelwright Court, Buckland

Mix & Density

Wheelwright Court provides a medium density development on a sensitive site within Buckland Conservation Area.

The density of 18 dwellings per hectare is successful as it is consistent with the density of the existing cottages along Summerside Road, to the south. High densities can be successfully delivered with good design and layout.

Design

Wheelwright Court comprises a series of traditional vernacular cottages. The layout of the development with short terraces around an informal mews reflects the character of Buckland village.

A sense of individuality has been added to each dwelling using subtle variation in design, such as differing porch designs, feature windows and boundary walls.

Materials

The palette of materials utilised evokes the character of a traditional street in Buckland. The choice of natural stone for walls is entirely in keeping with neighbouring properties and the introduction of small brick sections on the elevations provides a visual break to the terraces and adds variety to the streetscene. The use of stone tiles on the roofs is also consistent with the local vernacular, however the other roofing material choice of clay tiles is less appropriate as it is not apparent in Buckland. The least successful material choice is the use of asphalt on the access road, a more appropriate material such as pavers would have enhanced the development.

The overall quality of the development is significantly enhanced through the use of quality details and finishes such as timber windows and doors and appropriate paint colours such as sage green on doors.

Street Vista

The least successful aspect of Wheelwright Court is the arrangement of garages relative to dwellings and the impact of that arrangement on the vista available from Orchard Road. The choice of paint on garage doors is entirely inappropriate for the development and exaggerates their dominance of the streetscene. A more appropriate layout would have introduced a feature property at the end of the primary vista from Orchard Road. The images below illustrate the potential opportunity for improvements.



452 Wheelwright Court site layout



453 Medium density, traditional design in a rural setting using local stone and stone slates



454 Existing vista and surfacing materials



455 Alternative vista and surfacing materials

4.3 Replacement Dwellings



456 Bothy Vineyard House, Frilford by David Wylie Associates

4.3 Replacement Dwellings

Site Layout

Proposals for the replacement of existing dwellings should be carefully considered in the context of the existing character of the area.

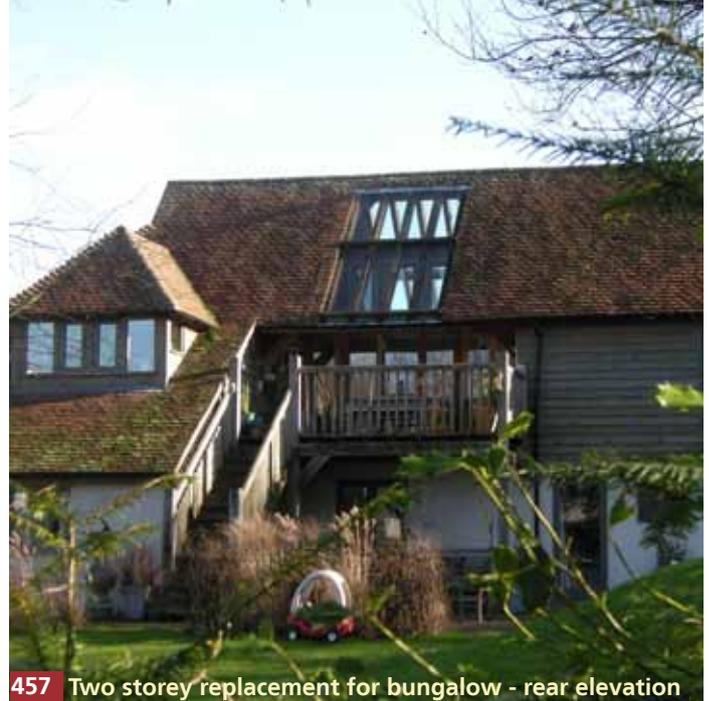
The most appropriate siting for a replacement dwelling is often on the footprint of the original building, particularly where the original building was planned and developed as part of a wider development.

The size of the replacement dwelling should be appropriate to the size of the site, and should carefully take into account its impact on the character of the area and the amenities of neighbouring properties. Excessive increases in size can result in a site appearing "over-developed", which could potentially harm the character of the area.

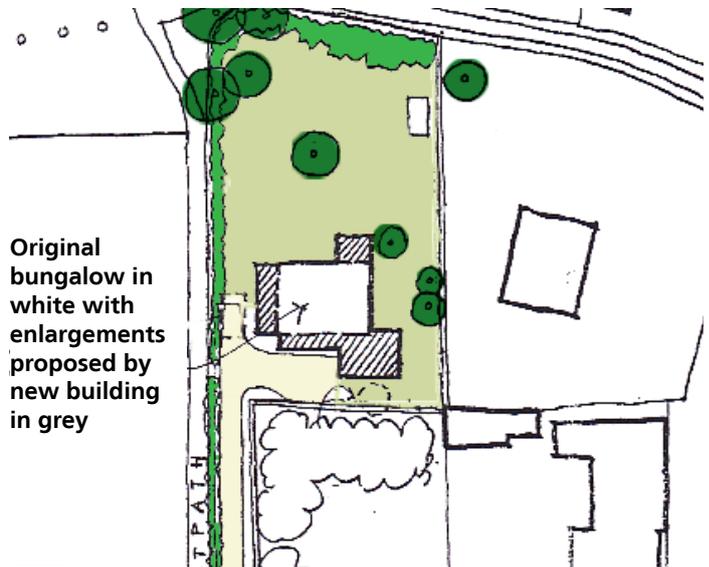
It is also important to ensure the replacement building fits comfortably within the street and there is a positive relationship between the built form and the street.

Built Form

Great care must be taken to ensure that the scale of the replacement dwelling is not unduly dominant. Reference should be taken from the local vernacular to determine the most appropriate proportions for the replacement dwelling. Modern room heights can put pressure on the need for higher eaves heights, however careful design techniques such as placing the first-floor ceiling above the level of the eaves by using coving can ensure that the building retains more traditional proportions. Similarly, traditional buildings usually have shallow plan depths which directly affects massing and ridge heights. The replacement of traditional dwellings, therefore, should reflect the local vernacular in terms of building depth.



457 Two storey replacement for bungalow - rear elevation



458 Example of contemporary replacement dwelling - plan



459 Example of replacement dwelling - front elevation

4.3 Replacement Dwellings

Where accommodation requirements cannot be met by maintaining traditional proportions, it may be more appropriate to introduce additions to the traditional plan form, such as bays and wings, to provide the additional accommodation, rather than increasing the proportions and bulk of the building. Such elements should be visually “subordinate” to the building’s form.

As stated above, the height of traditional buildings was often determined by the building’s depth. In some instances it may be acceptable for replacement buildings to be taller than the original. Taller buildings can be visually acceptable where the overall scale and proportion of building is in keeping with the character of the area – e.g. to provide a steeper roof pitch to reflect the traditional character of the area.



460 Replacement dwelling at Bothy Vineyard



461 Mixing contemporary design with the existing traditional form of the Bothy (below). Siting, openness and height were key to this sensitive site



462 The bothy has been restored as part of the dwelling Bothy Vineyard House by David Wylie Associates - Design Award Winner 2006

4.4 Conversion of Large Buildings to Flats



4.4

Conversion of Large Buildings to Flats

Design

The conversion of a building into self-contained flats is a common form of development in urban areas. Not all buildings are suitable for or capable of conversion to flats – for example small terraced and semi-detached houses are less likely to be successful because of the limited space available. Older large houses and the upper floors of business premises are typically the most appropriate properties for conversion to flats.

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 – reference should be made to section 4.6 below on the appropriate design for residential extensions.

Character

When buildings are being converted to flats, the priority should be to retain the character and appearance of the original building. Stripping of any historic features should be avoided.

Where partitions are required to separate larger rooms or to introduce additional floors, they should not cut across windows. Similarly, any reductions in ceiling heights, if required for example to accommodate air conditioning or additional pipework, should not be visible externally.



464 Conversion to flats can be undertaken sensitively



465 Modern elements should be harmonious



466 Rooflights should not be overly large or dominant

4.4

Conversion of Large Buildings to Flats

Architectural Details

If dormers are required, careful consideration needs to be given to their design, proportions, materials and position on the roof slope to ensure that they are appropriate to both the building and the character of the area.

An alternative means of providing light and ventilation to a roof space is to include roof lights. Wherever possible, roof lights should be included on rear elevations where they are less visible in the street scene. If the principle of roof lights is acceptable on a Listed Building or in a Conservation Area, "conservation" roof lights should be used.

The conversion of buildings to flats can lead to the requirement for external pipework, flues, vents, meters, satellite dishes and aerials which can detract from the quality of the development. Wherever possible, service pipes should be grouped together and routed through existing features such as redundant chimneys. All such functional features should be kept off publicly visible elevations. Alternatively, features such as meters can be recessed behind purpose designed doors as an integral part of a building's façade.

Satellite dishes and television aerials should be planned as part of residential conversions to provide a shared facility and so prevent the need for future retro-fitting by individual occupiers. Where practical, satellite dishes and television aerials should not be publicly visible – e.g. by placing them behind parapets or in roof valleys.

Access and Parking

The conversion of buildings to flats can create significant problems with parking and access. It is government policy to reduce the dominance of the private car, and therefore in some locations reduced levels of parking may be appropriate, however a conversion to flats should not exacerbate on-street parking problems as a result a lack of on-site parking spaces. Where



467 Atriums can be effective at providing light



468 Dormers should be small and appropriately designed



469 Conservation rooflights suitable for historic buildings



470 Sun pipes let light into windowless rooms



471 External service can dominate



472 Letterboxes have to be carefully integrated