

AECOM

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Churchill and Blakedown

Design Guidance and Codes

Final report

April 2026

Delivering a better world

Quality information

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Revision History

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4						

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**This chapter describes
the background,
purpose, process
and vision for the
Churchill and
Blakedown Design
Code**

01

Introduction

1. Introduction

This document aims to empower the local community to influence the design and character of their neighbourhood, and deliver attractive, sustainable development that meets the needs of local people.

1.1 Background

Through the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM has been appointed to provide design support to the Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council (CBPC) and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) by preparing this Design Guidance and Codes document.

- Consultants at AECOM prepared this report between March 2025 and August 2025 in conjunction with key

members of the CBPC. The finished document forms part of the evidence base for the review of the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan on design-related issues.

1.1.1 Aims

The aims of this document are to:

- positively influence the character and design of new development within the Neighbourhood Area (NA);
- set out clear analysis of the local context, focusing on topics where improvement is most needed;
- benchmark how these opportunities should be delivered, such that they are factored into considerations at site procurement, and the downstream design response.

The report cannot influence the quantum, location or type of development; other tools in the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan can cover these.



Figure 01: Churchill & Blakedown Signal Box

1.2 What is design coding?

Design coding involves setting out clear and specific guidelines for the determination of planning applications. These codes are intended to ensure that developments contribute positively to their surroundings in terms of aesthetics, functionality and sustainability. They can provide greater assurance for communities and clarity for developers about the design of new development.

1.2.1 Comply and justify

If a planning application deviates from the requirements of this Design Code document, applicants should submit factual evidence to support their proposed variations. They should demonstrate that the built result will be visually coherent and of the highest quality consistent with goals of this design code. Proposals that do not adhere to this guidance, and that do not furnish strong rationales, supporting documentation and comprehensive examination of available solutions, may be refused.

Reference to existing policy:

Where there is already reference to a theme within existing local policy or guidance, this has been highlighted alongside the below icon.



Example of a nested policy

Both design codes and guidelines are contained within this document, highlighted within coloured boxes as shown here. The difference between codes and guidelines is summarised below:

Design codes: Design codes are mandatory requirements for 0.1 design issues and are expressed with the word **MUST**.

Guidelines: Guidelines set out aspirations for design that is expected to be delivered and are expressed with one of two words:

- **SHOULD** reflects design principles that are strongly encouraged.
- **COULD** reflects design principles that are suggestions.

1.3 Who should use the guidance and codes?

This document will be used differently by different people in the planning and development process, as summarised in the adjacent table.

A valuable way codes and guidance can be used is as part of a process of co-design and involvement that seeks to understand and takes account of local preferences for design quality. As such the codes and guidance can help to facilitate conversations to help align expectations, aid understanding, and identify key local issues. The resulting design codes and guidance can then set out how to adequately respond to these issues in future development.

Design codes and guidance alone will not automatically secure quality design outcomes, but they will help to prevent poor outcomes by creating a rigorous process that establishes expectations for design quality.

Potential users	How they will use the design guidance and codes
Applicants, developers, & landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the codes and guidelines as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The design codes and guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council (CBPC) Council or Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the design codes and guidelines are complied with.
Community groups & local residents	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

Figure 02: User groups and how they will use the codes and guidance.

1.4 Planning Policy

1.3.1 National Model Design Code (2021)

The [National Model Design Code \(NMDC\)](#) report provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides policies to promote successful design. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide (NDG):

Context, Identity, Built Form, Movement, Nature, Public Spaces, Uses, Homes & Buildings, Resources and Lifespan.

This guide should be used as an overarching reference for new development where topics are not covered in local guidance.

Both the NMDC and NDG are companion documents setting out characteristics of well-designed places. They support the ambitions of the NPPF to utilise the planning and development process in the creation of high-quality places. The National Design Guide states that 'specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set at the local level'.

The guides are expected to be used by local authorities, applicants and local communities to establish further design codes (such as this) and guides that can deliver this in line with local preferences.

The design codes in chapter 4 of this document are structured using the themes within the National Model Design Code as shown on figure 01.

1.3.2 Planning Policy

Planning policy and guidance documents have guided the production of the design code, for full details refer to the [appendix](#) of this document.



Figure 03: The 10 characteristics of a well-designed place from the [National Model Design Code \(2021\)](#)

1.5 Neighbourhood Plan

This design code forms part of the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan. As such, it is a material consideration in the evaluation and determination of planning applications within the Churchill and Blakedown NA. The guidance and principles outlined in this design code are intended to be read in conjunction with the design policy detailed in section 4.2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The diagram on this page illustrates the position of neighbourhood plans within the broader planning policy hierarchy. This hierarchy encompasses national, local, and neighbourhood levels. At the national level, planning policies set overarching principles and guidelines for development across the UK. These are further tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of the region at the local level, through the policies of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), the Wyre Forest District of Worcestershire. At the neighbourhood level, the neighbourhood plan provides detailed and locally specific guidance.

Further information on relevant policies can be found in the appendix to this design code.



Figure 04: Typical relationship between neighbourhood plans, the local plan and typical policies.

1.6 Our Process

1 Inception Call

An initial call between AECOM and representatives from Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council took place on 6th December 2024. During this call, we explored the Neighbourhood Forum's key aims and objectives, addressing any initial concerns or queries. Questionnaires were distributed to the group to gather further input.

2 Site Visit

A two-day site visit was conducted on 5th March 2025. The purpose of this visit was to further explore the group's key aims and objectives, while also addressing any remaining concerns or queries. The visit included an in-person meeting with Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council to discuss the previously issued questionnaires. This was followed on a second day by a walking tour of Churchill and Blakedown's Neighbourhood Plan Study Area.

The tour allowed consultants to assess the local character and identify key features that contribute to its sense of place, such as heritage and landscape elements. The exercise also provided valuable local insight into the area's design challenges and opportunities, forming a crucial part of the evidence base for this document.

3 Review of 'Your Churchill and Blakedown' Consultation Findings

We reviewed the findings from the Churchill and Blakedown Community Consultation 2024 to understand the key issues for the community.

4 Policy Review, Baseline Analysis and Mapping Findings

In this step, we carried out a planning policy review, baseline analysis, producing design code analysis to inform the development of design codes. We also created an area type map to guide future planning and design considerations.

5 Engagement

We presented the first steps of the design code, explained what a design code entails, and provided a progress update to the steering group and members.



6 Draft Design Code Review

AECOM developed the first draft of the design code, based on insights gathered from the site visit, desktop analysis, and feedback from previous consultation events. The draft was reviewed by Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council, who provided valuable feedback. Subsequent drafts were produced and reviewed to ensure the design policies align with local and national planning frameworks.

7 Final Design Code Refinement and Sign-Off

Following additional reviews and refinements, the final design code was presented for sign-off by Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council.



Figure 05: Photo of a wall mounted postbox (part of the Local Heritage List) taken on site visit

1.7 Process, site visit, and engagement

This document has resulted from a collaborative effort between the Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council (CBPC) and AECOM, reflecting the priorities of local residents. The design coding process includes the following steps (see section 1.6 Our Process).

A two-day site visit took place on 5th and 6th March 2025 commencing with an in-person meeting between AECOM and representatives of the Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council (CBPC). The purpose of this meeting was to explore the group's key aims and objectives and to address any initial concerns or queries. This was followed by a tour of the Neighbourhood Area (NA).

This activity allowed consultants to appraise local character and the features informing its sense of place, such as heritage and landscape features. The exercise also provided valuable local insight into the area's design issues or opportunities. This investigation helped to create the evidence-base for this document.



Figure 06: AECOM and CBPC tour of Churchill and Blakedown NA

1.8 Place questionnaire

The CBPC were asked for feedback on the priorities for the Churchill and Blakedown Design Code. A questionnaire was issued to the group and the findings are summarised in the appendix

The outcomes have been organised under four themes:

- A Identity and built form**
- B Nature**
- C Movement**
- D Public spaces**
- E Village Centre**

The four themes have been taken from Locality's 'Place Assessment Toolkit', which simplifies the '10 Characteristics of a well-designed place' as set out in the National Design Guide (NDG). Please see Figure 03 for the 10 characteristics. These themes have been used to guide the structure of guidance and codes later in the report.

Identity and built form

- Celebrate the historical character with listed buildings such as Park Hall, Churchill Forge and the railway embankment and viaduct.
- Celebrate the development of Blakedown from a cluster of farm cottages through the growth of industry to a modern day commuter village.
- Celebrate the contrast between the conservation area and established agricultural community of Churchill with the distinct phases of post war development in Blakedown.

Nature

- Streams run down from the Clent Hills through mill pools to Gallows Brook and onward to the SSSI at Hurcott. The streams are bordered by important wetland areas, with alder trees and abundant wildlife.
- A network of footpaths and bridle paths criss-cross the NA, often following historic traveller paths, such as the Royal Ride by which Charles II escaped after the Battle of Worcester.

Movement

- The NA is framed by main roads, the busiest being the A456, which, together with the railway, splits the village of Blakedown. Traffic volumes, congestion and speeding are ongoing problems. Churchill Cross and Stakenbridge Lane is frequently the scene of accidents.
- Pedestrian safety, especially outside the school and along Station Drive is a concern. An especially dangerous spot is the narrow pavement under the railway bridge at Stakenbridge.
- Parking is an ongoing issue, at the station, the school and along those terraced streets where off street parking is not available.

Public spaces

- In addition to countryside access routes, the Sports and Recreation Centre and the Millennium Green are well used both by locals and visitors.
- The few information boards around the public areas need to be renewed and augmented

Village Centre

- This is at Blakedown. The central section of the village needs to attract more retail / customer businesses to enliven the area. However, customer parking issues currently limit footfall.
- Shop fronts should have uniformity with the age and general appearance of the outlets in this central area.

**Analysing Churchill
and Blakedown's
strategic location
and historic past is
essential to informing
the future**

02

**Neighbourhood
Analysis**

2. Neighbourhood Analysis

To understand the character of Churchill and Blakedown, it is essential to analyse the neighbourhood area to identify what makes it distinctive.

The National Design Guide outlines ten characteristics of a well-designed place. This analysis focuses on the following seven of those characteristics: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, and public spaces and uses.

By examining these characteristics, we can create a comprehensive picture of Churchill and Blakedown, which will inform the area types detailed in Section 3 and further guide the codes and recommendations in this design code.



2.1 Regional and Local Context

Churchill and Blakedown are located in the Wyre Forest District of Worcestershire.

The Neighbourhood Area (NA) is located 3 miles northeast of Kidderminster and about 13 miles southwest of Birmingham. The main road in the NA, Birmingham Road (A456), connects the area to these two centres.

The Churchill and Blakedown NA is rural and mostly covered by natural landscape. The main settlement is Blakedown, arranged along Birmingham Road, Belbroughton Road and the railway. Churchill preserves a stronger 'rural hamlet' feel, and is located north of Blakedown. Hurcott, to the east of the NA, consists of a farm and only a few houses.



Figure 07: Map showing the context of Churchill and Blakedown

2.2 Study Area

The design codes and guidance within this report cover the entire parish of Churchill and Blakedown (approximately 1,044 hectares), an area equivalent to the Neighbourhood Area (NA).

The Churchill and Blakedown NA is defined by the A451 to the north while the North Worcestershire Path draws the boundary to the east. The southern boundary is identified by plot boundaries and the western end by Hurcott Lane.

The NA is crossed by a railway, and the Blakedown station can be found on Station Drive/ Mill Lane. The railway bridge on Churchill Lane is a remarkable asset for the NA. A series of ponds and pools can be observed in the area, including Ladies Pool, Forge Pool and Swan Pool in Blakedown. Wide woodland patches can also be found in the NA, particularly to the west of Blakedown.



Figure 08: The railway bridge on Churchill Lane



Figure 09: Woodland in the NA



Figure 10: Blakedown railway station



Figure 11: Part of the network of former mill pools in the NA

Key











-  Neighbourhood Area (NA)
-  Open Access Land
-  Woodland
-  Water bodies
-  Roads
-  Railway
-  Railway Stations
-  Settlement Areas
-  Millenium Green
-  Sports Ground



Figure 12: Map showing Churchill and Blakedown's wider context and the NA

0m 500m 1km



2.3 Churchill and Blakedown Heritage

History and Origins

Both Churchill and Blakedown date back to at least the Domesday Book of 1086, with Churchill known for agriculture and Blakedown for its later industrial and transport development. The 18th and 19th centuries brought significant change with the construction of a turnpike road and a railway station, spurring growth and industry, including the notable Churchill Forge. Religious life centered around St James the Great Church in Churchill and a chapel in Blakedown – now also a church dedicated to St James the Great. The villages commemorate their war history with a memorial erected in 1920. Today, they offer a blend of rural charm and modern convenience, supported by local governance and active community life.

Conservation Areas and Listed Assets

Churchill and Blakedown are home to several heritage assets, showcasing a rich history spanning from the medieval to the industrial era.



Figure 13: Churchill Forge



Figure 15: Court Cottage



Figure 14: Church Of St James The Great, Blakedown



Figure 16: Churchill War Memorial

Listed features include buildings, scheduled monuments, and key landmarks that reflect the local cultural and historical importance.

Listed Buildings

- 1 **Ismere House (Grade II)** – Small country house. Mid-C18 with some mid-C19 and late C20 alterations. Brick with tile roof;
- 2 **Barn About 20 Metres West Of Ismere House (Grade II)** – Barn about 20 metres west of Ismere House GV II Barn. Mid-C18. Brick with tile roof.
- 3 **Parr’s Farmhouse (Grade II*)** – Parr’s Farmhouse GV II Farmhouse. Early C18 with some mid-C20 alterations. Brick with tile roof, gable-end stacks.
- 4 **Barn About 15 Metres South Of Parr’s Farmhouse (all Grade II)** – Barn about 15 metres south of Parr’s Farmhouse GV II Barn. Mid-C18 with some mid-C19 alterations. Brick with tile roof. L-plan.
- 5 **Churchill Old Farm (Grade II)** – Farmhouse. Late C18 with some mid-C20 alterations. Brick with tile roof, stone coped verges and gable-end stacks.
- 6 **Court Cottage (Grade II)** – House. Early C18 with some late C20

alterations. Brick on sandstone ashlar plinth with tile roof.

- 7 **Attlee House (Grade II)** – House. Early C19 with some mid-C20 alterations. Brick with slate roof, gable-end stacks. Two storeys with dentilled brick cornice.
- 8 **Church Of St James The Great, Churchill (Grade II)** – Church. 1868 by W J Hopkins. Sandstone ashlar with tile roof. Nave, chancel, tower in north-east angle.
- 9 **Hand Forge, North Mill Building and South Mill Building at Churchill Forge (Grade II)** – Three forge buildings most likely dating from the early C19, with water powered machinery for the production of tools and hand implements.
- 10 **Churchill War Memorial (Grade II)** – A First World War memorial, erected 1920, with later Second World War additions.
- 11 **Churchill Pound (Grade II)** – Village pound. Probably 1862, restored 1966. Brick with sandstone coping. Square plan.
- 12 **Park Hall (Grade II)** – Small country house. Early C18, extended and remodelled early C19 with some late C19 extensions. Brick with tile roof, half-hipped to left.



Click on the link below for the Churchill Conservation Area appraisal map (page 21):

[Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Churchill](#)

- 13 **Milestone (Grade II)** – Milestone. C18 with C19 alteration. The milestone is made of sandstone with a later cast iron plate refacing it.
- 14 **Church Of St James The Great, Blakedown (Grade II)** – Church of St James the Great - II Parish church. 1866, by G E Street, extended 1905. Sandstone rubble with machine tile roof. Nave, chancel and north aisle of 1905.
- 15 **Springbrook Forge North West Of Springbrook House (Grade II)** – Water-driven scythe forge, c1840. Red brick and Welsh slate roof. Single storey, gable facing. Basket-arched entrance with double plank doors, otherwise gable wall is blank.
- 16 **Harborough Hall (Grade II)** – House. Dated 1635, restored mid-C20. Timber-frame stuccoed, with machine tile roof.
- 17 **Churchill Forge** – A water powered hammer forge mill with associated mill pond and leats, situated on Ganlow Brook, north-east of Churchill village.

Scheduled Monuments

Non-listed Heritage Buildings

Churchill and Blakedown features numerous non-listed heritage assets, assessed in the Adopted Local Heritage List of the Parish of Churchill and Blakedown. These assets are 114 in total and include buildings as well as viaducts, railway bridges and urban furniture elements.



Figure 19: St. James the Great Church, Churchill
Churchill and Blakedown Design Code



Figure 17: Churchill Lane railway bridge



Figure 18: Mill Pool

- Key
- Neighbourhood Area (NA)
 - Railway
 - Roads
 - Buildings
 - Water bodies
 - Conservation areas
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Grade I listed
 - Grade II* listed
 - Grade II listed



Figure 20: Map illustrating Churchill and Blakedown's listed heritage assets

0m 500m 1km



2.4 Topography, Views and Flooding

Churchill and Blakedown's distinctive topography is shaped by the system of waterways and mill pools descending from the Clent Hills and joining the River Stour at Kidderminster.

Topography

The gently undulating topography of Churchill and Blakedown is a distinctive feature of the area. While the NA is mostly flat to the southwest, it becomes more sloped to the northeast.

The previously mentioned pools and ponds are located at the lowest altitudes, located in the central portions of the NA. The two settlements of Churchill and Blakedown are also at low altitudes, as well as the railway line that crosses the area.

Views

The hilly topography of the NA offers views of the open landscape and the two settlements of Churchill and Blakedown, particularly from the northeast of the area.

Flooding

The topography of the area make Churchill and Blakedown susceptible to localised flooding, particularly due to their historical water management systems and proximity to streams. However, there is limited documentation of severe flooding events in the villages.

Figure 22 shows a map of Flood Risk from Rivers and the Sea for the Churchill and Blakedown NA.



Figure 21: View of the open landscape

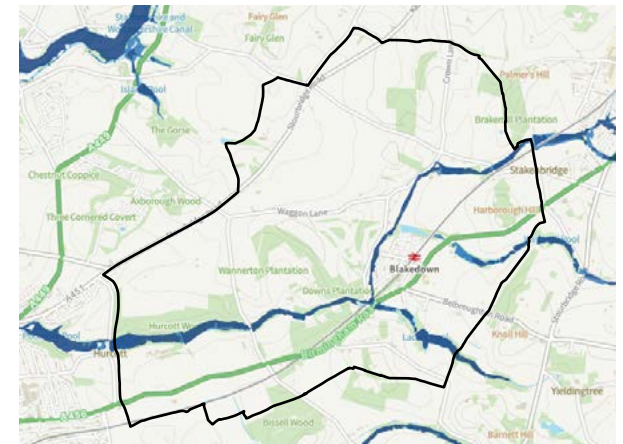


Figure 22: Map of Flood Risk from Rivers and the Sea for the NA.

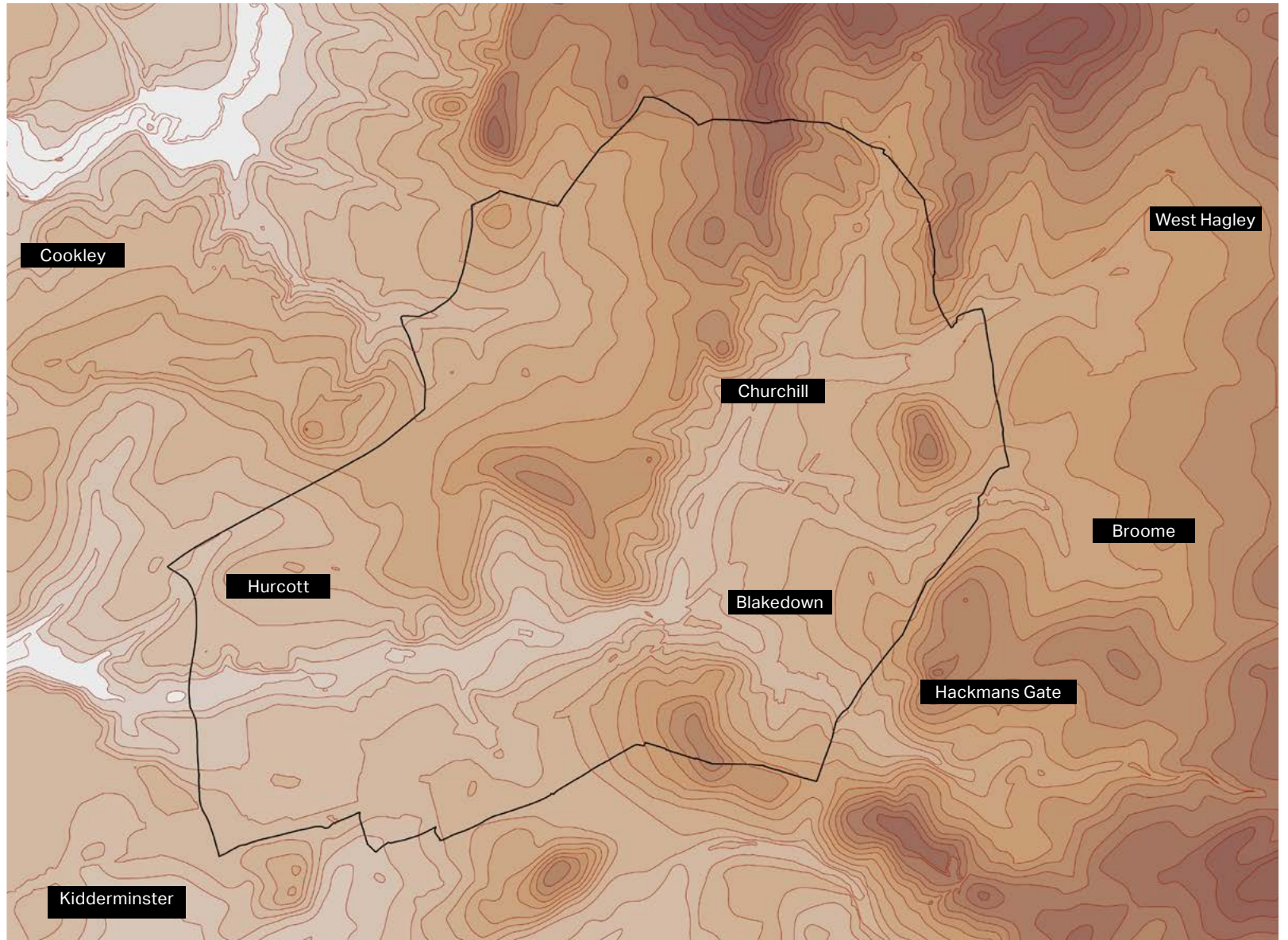
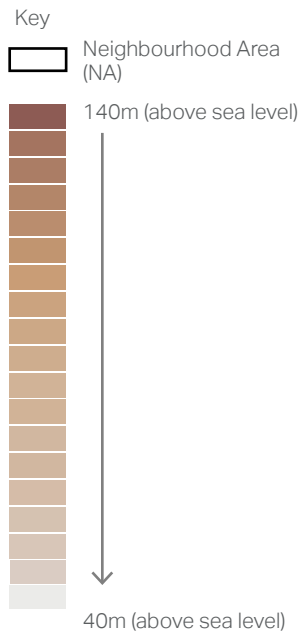
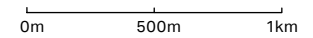


Figure 23: Map illustrating Churchill and Blakedown's topography



2.5 Uses and Facilities

The Churchill and Blakedown NA is mostly residential, however it includes a mix of residential, commercial, recreational, and historical land uses.

The area includes diverse residential options, such as terraced, semi-detached, and detached homes.

Commercial Uses

Most commercial activity is centred in Blakedown along Birmingham Road. Key amenities include two pubs (The Swan and The Old House At Home), a salon, a hairdresser, and the Post Office, which also houses a mini-market.

Education

Churchill and Blakedown are served by Blue Hoots Pre-School and Blakedown Church of England Primary School, both located on Birmingham Road.

Leisure

Local leisure facilities include the Churchill and Blakedown Sports and Recreation Centre and Tennis Club, the Recreation Ground, the Snooker Club and the Churchill & Blakedown Golf Club.

Other Uses

The area features two village halls—Blakedown Parish Rooms and Churchill Village Hall. Religious facilities include St James the Great Church in both Blakedown and Churchill. Blakedown railway station, located on Station Drive/ Mill Lane, provides rail access for both villages.

Green and Nature

The area contains significant green space and woodland, with notable sites including Hurcott Wood, Bissell Wood, and Downs Plantation.






























Figure 25: The Post Office on Birmingham Road



Figure 24: The Swan pub on Birmingham Road

Key

-  Neighbourhood area
 -  Railway
 -  Roads
 -  Services
 -  Food shop/ supermarket
 -  Pubs and restaurants
 -  Employment
 -  Education
 -  Leisure
 -  Retail
 -  Office
 -  Religious
 -  Hotel/ Accommodation
 -  Residential
 -  Green open space
 -  Private green space
 -  Woodland
 -  Water bodies
 -  Historic Interest
-
-  1 Churchill Village Hall
 -  2 Harborough Hall
 -  3 Churchill Forge
 -  4 Hurcott Wood
 -  5 Bissell Wood
 -  6 Downs Plantation
 -  7 Churchill & Blakedown Golf Club
 -  8 Ladies Pool

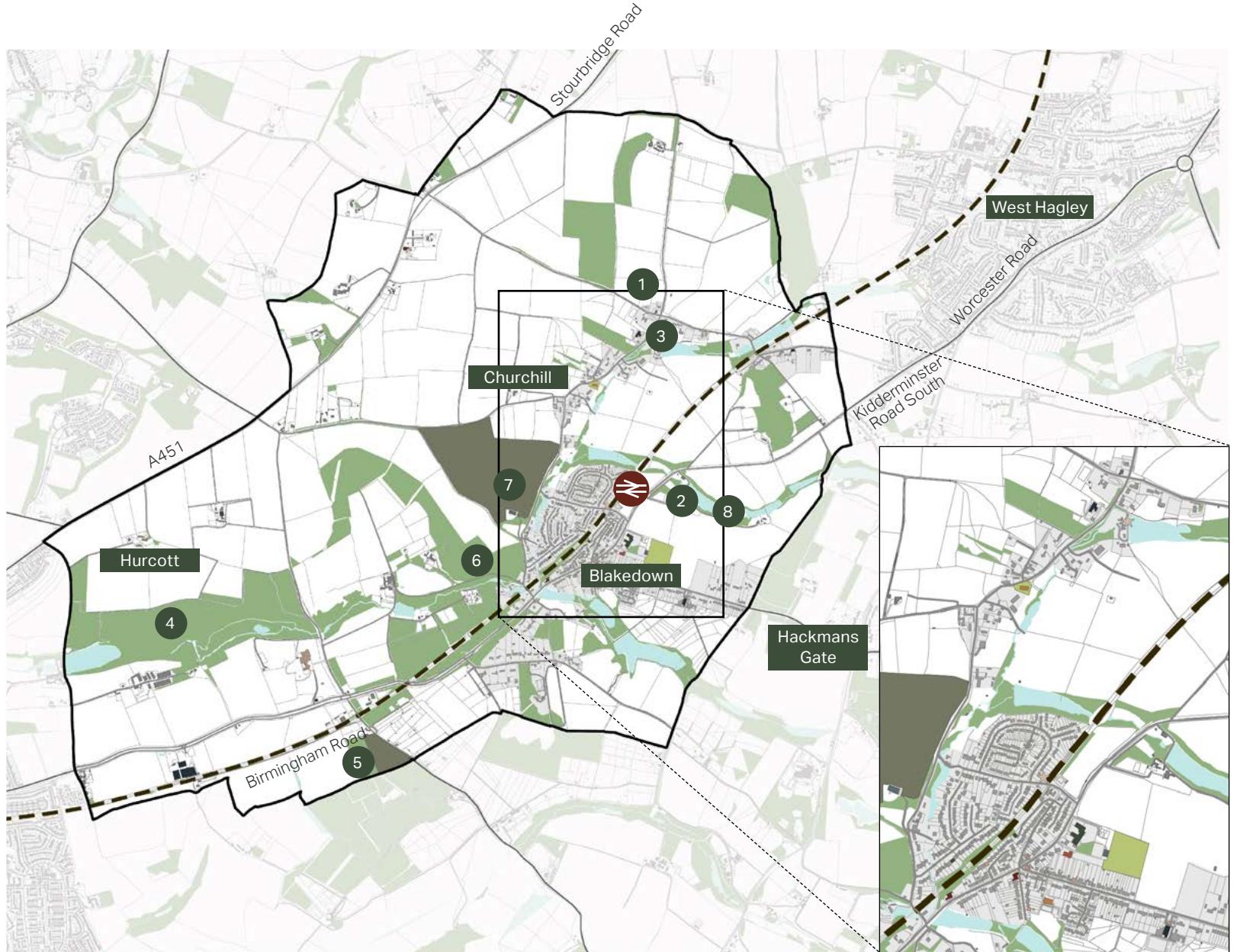


Figure 26: Map showing land uses and facilities at Churchill and Blakedown NA.

2.6 Built Form

The housing stock in Churchill and Blakedown is predominantly characterised by two-storey homes.

Building Heights

The Churchill and Blakedown NA includes a mix of housing, predominantly detached and semi-detached houses built in the twentieth century during the expansion of Blakedown village. Houses built in the 1900 – 1970 period benefit from long rear gardens, and generous private green space is a characteristic of the villages. However building plots allocated in the late twentieth, early twenty-first century are significantly smaller to meet intensified national density targets. New Wood Lane is an exception with bigger detached houses on wider plots. The streetscape along this lane feels more open and green, thanks to the wider plots and setbacks that provide space for greenery and tree-lined edges beside the carriageway.

Terraces and bungalows can also be observed. The first ones are generally located along the main roads, and some of them are Victorian and create a more regular and enclosed streetscape. Bungalows are mostly concentrated on Sculthorpe Road in Blakedown, where they create a continuous streetscape with joined-up façades.

Churchill has a much more rural feel, and includes cottages, farmhouses and converted barns. The only major exception is represented by Winston Court, on Stakenbridge Lane.

Buildings are mostly 2-storey high, with some exceptions, mostly represented by the bungalows on Sculthorpe Road.

For more precise measurements, please refer to the Area Types tables located on pages 36, 42, 48, and 54.

Landmarks

Significant landmarks, such as both the St James the Great Churches, stand out in the roofscape, however they are not visible from a long distance.



Figure 27: 2-storeys terrace on Wheatmill Close



Figure 28: Typical two storey house on Belbroughton Road



Figure 29: Detached house with wide plot located on New Wood Lane



Figure 31: Two-storey house and cottage facing the street in Churchill



Figure 33: 1-storey bungalow on Sculthorpe Road



Figure 30: Typical detached house at Gladstone Place



Figure 32: Typical terraces on Birmingham Road



Figure 34: Typical 2-storey semi-detached house on Belbroughton Road

**This section
analyses Churchill
and Blakedown's
area types along
with specific
design codes and
guidance**

03

**Place Analysis, Area
Types and Codes**

3. Area Character Assessment and Codes

This chapter presents a place analysis of the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Area (NA), setting out 4 area types. This helps to inform a series of design guidelines that are both sensitive and responsive to local context, landscape setting, and character.

3.1 Understanding place

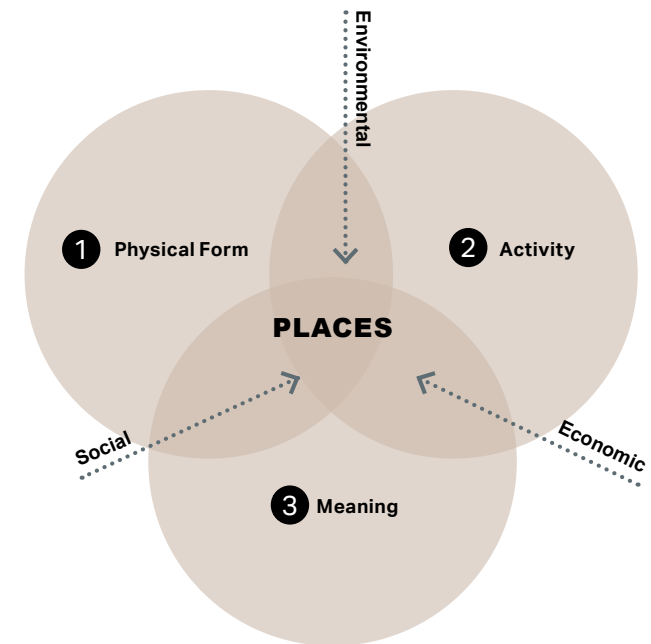
Achieving quality development starts with a comprehensive understanding of place. Places have a clear and strong identity and character. They are a combination of their physical form, their activities and their meaning to people. The adjacent diagram shows how these factors come together to create a successful place.

All new development must undertake its own comprehensive analysis of place to understand a proposal's broader context and establish aspirations and place-

specific responses to the location, siting and design of new development.

For the purposes of this document, the analysis contained within Section 2 helps to illustrate the variation in character, and thus the sense of place across the Churchill and Blakedown NA.

A series of 4 'area types' have been identified with further analysis showcasing what makes each area type special and distinctive. New developments should take note of the area type in which it is located, as each design proposal will require a tailored response based on its specific location within Churchill and Blakedown.



- 1 Physical conditions of existing built development including layout, form, scale, appearance, landscape character, waterways and flood risk.
- 2 Use, vitality and diversity, including community facilities and local services.
- 3 How a place is perceived, including local heritage, views inwards and outwards and social histories.

Figure 35: Diagram illustrating components which come together to create a successful place.

3.2 Identifying Churchill and Blakedown's area types

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) outlines the use of area types as a means of grouping places that share similar character, key features or distinctive attributes across the Neighbourhood Area (NA).

3.2.1 What are area types?

Area types are broad categories that group together areas with similar characteristics. These can include residential, commercial, industrial, or mixed-use areas. Area types seek to provide guidance and codes to enable and support future development and ensure it is of sufficient quality. Area types allow for the creation of guidelines that respect the existing character while facilitating future growth.

3.2.2 Establishing Churchill and Blakedown's area types

Area types were established through a combination of desktop studies, site visits, observations, analyses, and mapping exercises. A future vision for each area type has been developed,

guiding the creation of relevant design codes that reflect the diverse character of Churchill and Blakedown. Area types are grouped based on shared attributes, providing a foundation for consistent design codes and guidance. The following elements contribute to the character of area types:

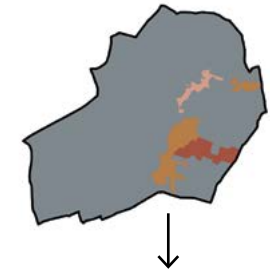
- Architectural features
- Widths and depths of blocks
- Street pattern and urban grain
- Building frontages and building lines
- Scale, massing and density

The four identified area types, illustrated in figure 40, are:

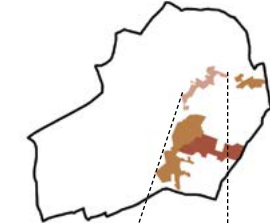
- Area 1 - Historic Streets
- Area 2 - Inter and postwar neighbourhoods
- Area 3 - Rural settlement
- Area 4 - Countryside

A character assessment has been undertaken for each of the areas to inform the area design codes.

Step 1. A baseline analysis is produced for Churchill and Blakedown identifying the varying character.



Step 2. The Neighbourhood Area (NA) is divided up into area types.



Step 3. A place analysis is undertaken for each Settlement Focus Area (SFA), and area-type specific codes are provided.

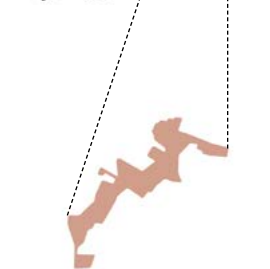







Figure 36: The process of area type definition.

Key

-  Neighbourhood Area (NA)
-  Historic streets
-  Inter/post war neighbourhoods
-  Rural settlement
-  Countryside

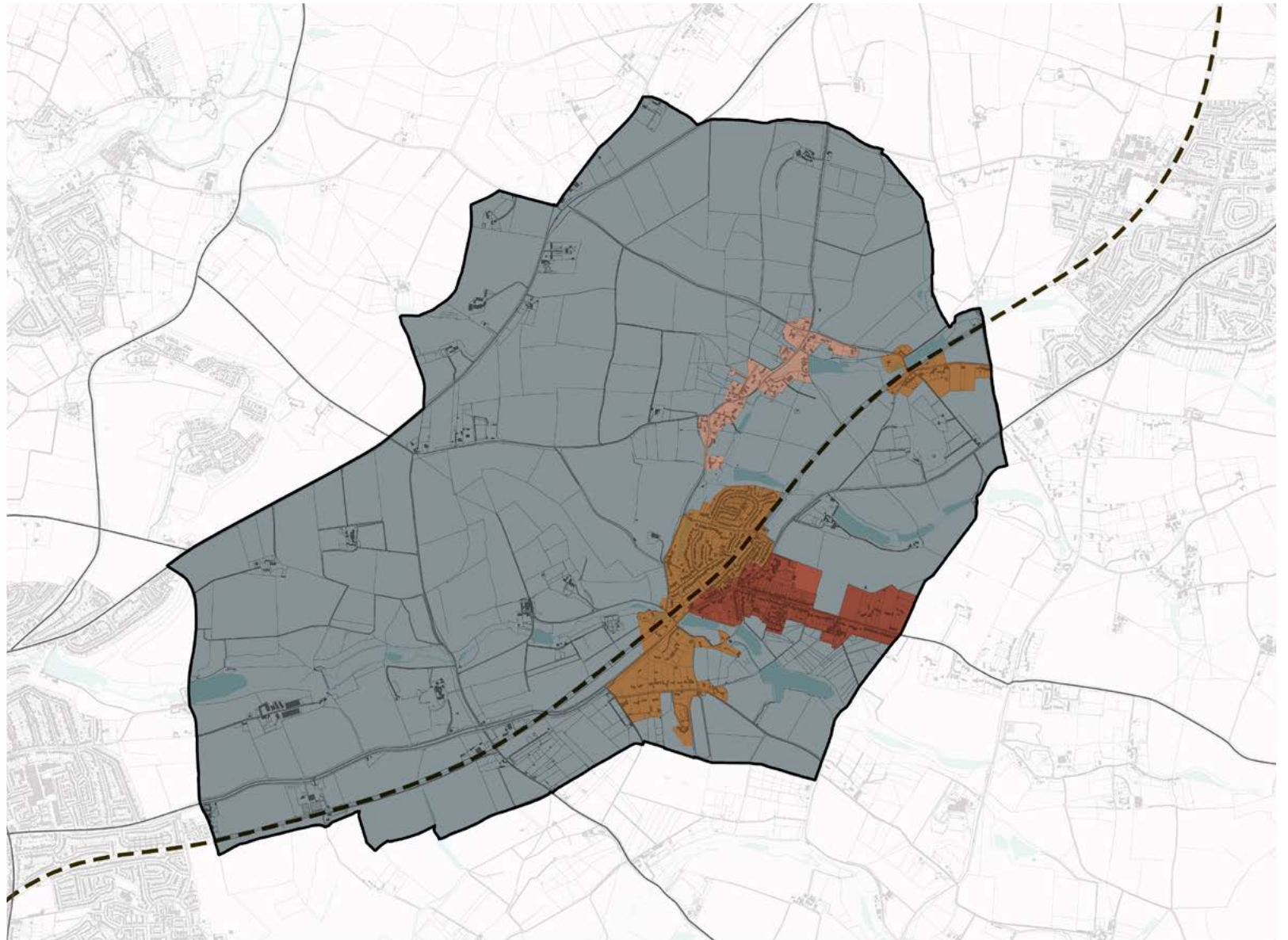
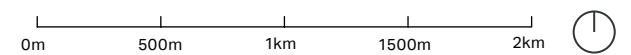


Figure 37: Map illustrating Churchill and Blakedown's area types.



**This section
provides a series of
design codes and
guidance that apply
to the different
Area Types**

04

**Design Codes and
Guidance**

4. Design Codes and Guidance

This chapter provides guidance on the design of development, setting out expectations that relevant planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area will be expected to address.

The guidelines developed in this section focus on residential environments. Development should not be viewed in isolation and the design and layout of the rural built form should respond to the wider development pattern and landscape context.

Understanding the character across the Neighbourhood Area is key to all new design proposals. The local pattern and use of streets and spaces, building types, materials and their interplay with the natural environment and wider landscape in which they sit will help to improve the character and identity of new developments, and make them more accepted locally. It is important that

any proposal takes full account of the local context and that the new design embodies the 'sense of place', both in terms of local character and distinctive features, particularly the listed buildings and the conservation area.

Responding to the context means recognising existing positive design solutions and using existing cues as inspiration. Proposals for a new scheme could adopt a traditional approach or a contemporary design that is innovating with purpose, whilst being in harmony with the built environment and landscape. There is not always agreement on aesthetic issues and architectural taste but using appropriate design precedents and a clear design process will give results that are less subjective and represent 'good design'.

Contemporary design should improve and enhance the setting and sustainability of the site/ Neighbourhood Area whilst not detracting from the appearance of landscape character.

The guidance in this section has been structured under the following themes:

- A Context**
- B Identity**
- C Built Form**
- D Movement**
- E Public Spaces**
- F Nature**
- G Views**
- H High Street Shop Fronts**
- I Sustainability**



Area 1

Historic Streets

Area 1 is the heart of Blakedown and includes the historic core of the settlement. Most of the activities of the NA are located in this area.

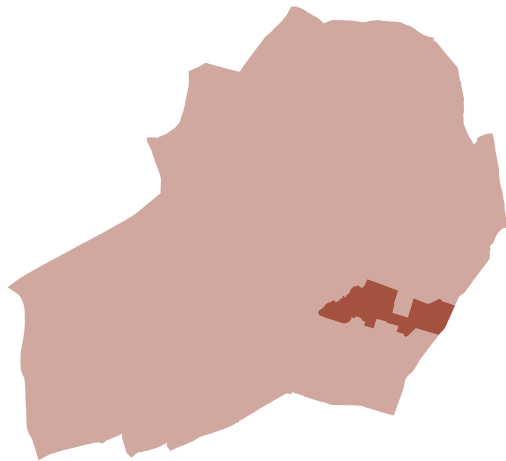


Figure 39: Area 1: Historic Streets

4.1 Area 1 Character Assessment

The settlement is arranged along Birmingham Road and Belbroughton Road, with their junction forming its focal point. Area 1 contains several key facilities for the Neighbourhood Area, including St James the Great Church, the Blakedown Parish Rooms and Blakedown Church of England Primary School. The settlement displays a range of characters, from the linear form along Belbroughton Road to the more compact and clustered development along Birmingham Road.

Built form measurements	
Indicative density ranges (FAR/DpH)	FAR: 0.2-0.5 20-25 DpH
Typical plot size range	5m (W) x 20m (D) 25m (W) x 75m (D)
Typical block size range	60m (W) x 80m (D) 170m (W) x 90m (D)
Building height range	2 storey

Table 01: Measurable built form elements within Area 1, Historic Streets

Movement & street pattern

- Birmingham Road and Belbroughton Road are the two key routes of the area.
- A series of secondary routes branch out from these two roads, providing access to further developments.
- Pavements are located on both sides of roads, providing a good pedestrian accessibility.
- Bus route 192 runs along Birmingham Road connecting the NA to Halesowen and Kidderminster.



Figure 40: View of Birmingham Road

Built Form & Appearance

- Predominantly red brick facades, with occasional rendered walls and grey roof tiles.
- Consistent architectural character, however building lines, vertical rhythm, and proportions vary.
- Traditional pitched roofs define the roofscape. Gables are parallel or perpendicular to the street.
- Features such as chimneys, bay windows and door porches add visual interest to the street scene.
- Two story Victorian terraced houses, detached houses and bungalows.



Figure 41: Red brick cottage on Belbroughton Road

Nature & Public Spaces

- Due to its compact, linear layout, the area has limited open space, with occasional pockets of green such as green space on Birmingham Road.
- Churchill & Blakedown Recreation Centre, located behind the St James the Great Church, provides a large green space, including a children's play area and sports pitches within walking distance.
- The Forge, Swan and Ladies Pools are also easily accessible from the area, providing natural amenity to the community.



Figure 42: Blakedown Green, Birmingham Road

Uses

- The area is mainly residential, however Birmingham Road includes activities.
- Three shops, two pubs and the Post Office are located on Birmingham Road, contributing to the character of the area.
- One school can be found just off Birmingham Road, namely the Blakedown Church of England Primary School. Also, the Blue Hoots Pre-School located behind St James the Great Church.
- The area benefits from local primary schools and community facilities, including St James the Great Church.



Figure 43: The Post Office and the local shop Crumbs

Area 1 Key characteristics:

- 1 Historic Core & Heart of the Village** Centered around the Birmingham Road - Belbroughton Road intersection.
- 2 Heritage & Historic Landmarks** Notable landmarks, such as St. James the Great Church, are the tallest structures and dominate the skyline.
- 3 Distinctive Historic buildings** Particularly along Birmingham Road, enhancing the area's character.
- 4 Linear Layout** The village is arranged along Birmingham Road and Belbroughton Road, with houses arranged along these routes or minor access lanes branching out from them.
- 5 Tight grain** Buildings are closely spaced and have narrow but deep plots, usually including wide back gardens.
- 6 Architectural Charm** Historic details such as chimneys, decorative window elements, decorative eaves details, and distinctive entrances contribute to the area's charm.



Figure 44: Photos of distinctive characteristics at Area 1.

4.2 Area 1 Future Opportunities

- Larger plot sizes and gardens should be maintained whilst exploring opportunities for off road /rear parking.
- Improving pedestrian connectivity and accessibility, and the creation of new footways where these are in accord with the rural setting.
- Improvements to accessibility to pools, streams and woodland.
- Public Rights of Way to be protected and improved.



Figure 45: Blakedown Church

4.3 Area 1 Design Codes

The following design codes have been developed for Area 1. These codes should be adhered to for future development.

Context

- Protect historic landmarks, particularly St. James the Great Church, ensuring new developments respect the prominence in the skyline.
- Views and vistas of heritage including St. James the Great Church should be protected.
- Protect and enhance existing assets of community value including the Blakedown Parish Rooms.
- Designs must respect the adjacent Swan Pool, Forge Pool and Ladies Pool.
- Encourage sensitive renovations that maintain or restore traditional decorative elements,

such as window details, doorways, and chimneys.

Identity

- Maintain development along the streets.
- Ensure new developments have limited setback to reflect the compact character of this area.
- Support community-led initiatives, including murals, artistic shopfront enhancements, and greening projects, to reinforce local identity.

Materials

- Develop a complementary and cohesive materials palette to be used across the area complementing the red brick materiality of the traditional Victorian buildings.
- Red brick and grey roof tiles should remain the predominant material for street-facing façades, reflecting the area's

historical roots, including building extensions and infill development.

- Incorporate traditional architectural details, such as bay windows, lintels and door porches.

Building Line and Setbacks

- Dwellings on the northern side of Belbroughton Road should have a setback included between 0-5 m, while it can be up to 10 m on the southern side.
- Buildings on Forge Lane should respect the regular setback of 8 m.
- On Birmingham Road, new development should reflect the more compact and tight layout of Area 1 with 0 to 5 m setbacks.
- Boundaries should prioritise hedgerows and red brick walls.



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Built Form

- Corner buildings must address both street facades, such as the corner building at the Birmingham Road - Belbroughton Road intersection.
- Building heights should generally be 2 storey, increased heights could be proposed at gateways, subject to proximity to adjacent buildings.
- Building height should be consistent with neighbouring buildings and not negatively impact on important vistas.
- Widths between facing buildings are recommended between 12 and 16 m.
- Front doors should either be flush or recessed within a porch.
- Establish an appropriate density standard typically from 20 - 25 dph and an appropriate floor area ratio, typically 0.2 - 0.5 FAR.



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- Maintain traditional pitched roofs, vertical rhythm, and uniform building lines to preserve the historic roofscape.
- Incorporate features such as chimneys, door porches and bay windows to reflect existing architectural charm.
- Ensure extensions and alterations align with the [Design, Amenity And Shopfronts Supplementary Planning Document](#), adopted in 2014, in Wyre Forest District Council.
- New homes should align with existing housing typologies, with typical plot dimensions of 5m (Width) x 20m (Depth) up to 25m (Width) x 75m (Depth).

Movement

- Boundary treatments to new dwellings adjacent to alleys should be designed to consider their character.
- Enhance pedestrian connectivity by improving crossings along major routes.

- Promote active travel in new development by designing accessible and pedestrian-friendly roads, through the use of alternative materials to tarmac, wide pavements and traffic calming measures.
- Introduce cycle storage at key destinations, such as The Old House At Home pub or the Blakedown Parish Rooms.
- Ensure non-residential uses, such as commercial properties, provide appropriate servicing and drop areas to prevent traffic congestion.

Nature

- Introduce street trees, planters, and greenery along Birmingham Road and Belbroughton Road to enhance the strong relationship of the settlement to the surrounding countryside.



[Design, Amenity And Shopfronts SPD](#) - Section 8

A2

Area 2

Inter and post war neighbourhoods

Area 2 includes most of the 20th century expansion of Blakedown. Built form is consistent with only some slight variation.

Blakedown underwent substantial growth during the Inter-war and Post-war periods, transforming from a hamlet into a village and significantly shaping its character.



Figure 46: Area 2: Inter and post war neighbourhoods

4.4 Area 2 Character Assessment

Area 2 includes Inter-war housing, dotted on New Wood Lane and Mill Lane. Most of the housing in this area is made of Post-war housing, which spreads to the west of the railway line but also fills the gaps between Birmingham Road and the railway.

The area is predominantly residential and despite its relatively recent development, it includes some historic buildings and landmarks.

Built form measurements	
Indicative density ranges (FAR/DpH)	FAR: 0.2-1 3-20 DpH
Typical plot size range	50m (W) x 90m (D) 7m (W) x 15m (D)
Typical block size range	30m (W) x 150m (D) 150m (W) x 400m (D)
Building height range	1-2 storey

Table 02: Measurable built form elements seen in Area 2

Movement & street pattern

- Mill Lane and Churchill Lane are the main routes as they connect Area 2 to other parts of the NA.
- The street pattern is irregular and includes curvilinear roads.
- Cul-de-sacs are very frequent, such as Wannerton Road, Elm Drive, Brookside Way and Lynwood Drive.
- One loop road, namely Sculthorpe Road, is found to the west of the railway.
- Parking solutions vary across the area, ranging from on-plot at the front to on-plot to the side and garages.



Figure 47: Wheatmill Close

Built Form & Appearance

- The predominant facade material is red brick, sometimes paired with render (ie. on Lynwood Drive).
- Roof tiles are mostly concrete tiles, with slate tiles and red pantiles exceptionally used.
- Buildings are simple in their design and often don't include significant architectural details. Door porches are can be observed as well as dormers and bay windows.
- House types include semi-detached houses, bungalows, detached houses and cottages.



Figure 48: Red brick detached house on Mill Close

AECOM

Nature and Public Spaces

- Area 2 is well integrated with natural features, with green verges and tree-lined roads present throughout, notably along Mill Lane and New Wood Lane.
- Mature woodland borders the area to the north and west, while a stream runs through the western end near Churchill Mill.
- There are some public spaces; a small green verge at the junction of Mill Lane and Sculthorpe Road includes a bench, litter bin, and a defibrillator and at the bottom end of Sculthorpe Road there is a meeting area with bench, flower borders and community noticeboard. The Signal Box has a community wildlife garden open to residents and to users of the Box."



Figure 49: New Wood Lane, with trees and green verges

Uses

- The area is predominantly residential, but also encompasses Blakedown Railway Station, which, whilst an essential service to the village, leads to congestion and commuter parking issues.
- The relocated Churchill & Blakedown Signal Box is now a community amenity.



Figure 50: Blakedown Railway Station

Area 2 Key characteristics:

- 1 Green Streets** Tree-lined streets, grass verges, and hedges enhance the street pattern.
- 2 Historic Landmarks** The Churchill Lane railway bridge is the most significant landmark, showcasing the heritage of the NA.
- 3 Suburban Character** A formal curvilinear street pattern, cul-de-sacs and repeating housing typologies define the suburban neighbourhood feel.
- 4 Woodlands & Mature Trees** Mature trees and woodland are visible, with generous plots allowing for greenery in gardens. Key routes feature tree lines, and woodland surrounds the area to the west and north.



Figure 51: Photos of distinctive characteristics at Area 2.

4.5 Area 2 Future Opportunities

- Extensions to buildings, especially to the sides, rear and accommodation in the roof.
- Larger plot sizes and gardens should be maintained whilst exploring opportunities for off road /rear parking.
- Improving pedestrian connectivity and accessibility, in particular for cul-de-sacs, and the creation of new footways where these are in accord with the rural setting.
- Improvements to accessibility to pools, streams and woodland.
- Alleys to be protected and improved, with appropriate lighting.”



[Wyre Forest District Local Plan \(2016-2036\) - Adopted April 2022](#) - Policy DM.24: i

4.6 Area 2 Design Codes

The following design codes have been developed for Area 2 which should be adhered to for future development.

Context

- Designs must respect the adjacent natural features, including woodland and the pools.
- Encourage sensitive renovations that maintain or restore traditional decorative elements, such as door porches as well as dormers and bay windows.

Identity

- Development should be open, allowing for larger plots and gardens that follow a repetitive rhythm.

- A formal curvilinear pattern should be preferred over a formal linear pattern.
- Preserve strong building alignments on Sculthorpe Road, Mill Lane and Wannerton Road.
- Support community-led initiatives, including public art, shopfront enhancements, to reinforce local identity.
- Encourage community greening, such as the Wildlife Garden at the Signal Box.

Materials

- Red Brick should be the predominant material for facades, reflecting the area's historical roots.
- Render can be used to complement red brick, provided it does not overpower the primary material.
- Grey hanging tiles should be used for roofing, aligning with the traditional look of the area.

Building Line and Setbacks

- Building Set Backs along Sculthorpe Road, Wheatmill Close and Mill Close should be between 5 and 10 metres from the back edge of the footpath.
- Building Set Backs for Mill Lane, Brookside Way and Stakenbridge Lane should be between 5 and 25 metres from the back edge of the footpath to allow for large front gardens.
- Building Set Backs for Elm Drive, Lynwood Drive and Roxall Close should be between 5 and 15 metres from the back edge of the footpath.
- Boundaries should include low to medium hedges or low walls with hedges. Open plots are also acceptable, as they reflect the local character.

Built Form

- Building Lines Buildings should be set back with generous gardens, ensuring a consistent alignment throughout the area.
- The distance between buildings facing each other should range from 18 to 25 metres.
- Plot dimensions should typically range between 7m (Width) x 15m (Depth) up to 50m (Width) x 90m (Depth). Proposed developments should be consistent with the surrounding plot dimensions. Gardens and plot sizes should be retained, and the development of rear gardens should be avoided.
- Entrances should face the street with a clearly defined main access. Front doors should either be recessed within a porch or placed behind a projecting porch.
- Roofscape should feature traditional pitched or hipped roofs. Gables can be used to introduce variation and visual interest.

- The subtle variation could be accommodated within the street, with a maximum difference of one storey between building heights.
- House types should consist of a range of typologies including semi-detached, bungalows, detached houses and cottages.

Movement

- Maintain a clear separation between pedestrian walkways and vehicular carriageways.
- Parking should be set back behind boundaries and within drives, and can be at the front of the building or to the side. Screening measures, such as hedges or trees, are recommended to reduce the impact of car parks on the streetscape.
- Protect and enhance existing alleys for walking, with improvements to lighting where appropriate.



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- Traffic calming measures should be incorporated especially around the railway bridge at Stakenbridge, as well as along the length of Stakenbridge Lane and Rocky Lane, with special attention to the Churchill Lane / Iverly Lane crossroads.
- Given the high level of on-street parking, design solutions should aim to balance the needs for parking and traffic. Clearly demarcated parking spaces could help avoid parking dominance on streets.
- Ensure driveways do not obstruct pedestrian or vehicle movement.
- Provide bicycle parking in areas such as the Blakedown railway station.

Nature

- Street trees and verges should be preserved to protect wildlife habitat, particularly on Mill Lane.

- Grass verges should be encouraged within new development.
- Maintain the openness and green environment created by front gardens.
- Introduce pocket parks at key locations. Parks should be overlooked by neighbouring properties.

Uses

- Support independent businesses operating from residential properties, whilst ensuring that business activity does not have adverse impact on neighbouring houses or on the community identity.
- Where possible and appropriate, support infill development on brownfield and underutilised sites.

A3

Area 3 Rural Settlement

Area 3 includes the whole settlement of Churchill, which is rural and reflects the character of the Wye Forest countryside.



Figure 53: Area 3: Churchill

4.7 Area 3 Character Assessment

Churchill kept a similar character throughout the last two centuries, with only a few more recent additions. That allowed it to preserve its natural feel, defined by the presence of abundant nature in and around the settlement.

The built form also reflects this character, including a number of farmhouses, converted barns and cottages. The main use is residential, contributing to the tranquility of the area, and at the centre of the settlement is a carefully preserved Conservation Area.

Built form measurements	
Indicative density ranges (FAR/DpH)	FAR: 0.1-0.3 5-12 DpH
Typical plot size range	110m (W) x 75m (D) 15m (W) x 30m (D)
Typical block size range	190m (W) x 110m (D) 55m (W) x 85m (D)
Building height range	1-2 storey

Table 03: Measurable built form elements seen in Area 3

Movement & street pattern

- Churchill Lane, Rocky Lane and Stakenbridge Lane are the main routes of the area.
- The street pattern is arranged around these three main routes, particularly Churchill Lane, with access lanes branching out from it.
- Parking solutions include on-plot at the front and on-plot to the side parking, as well as garages.



Figure 52: Lane at Churchill Forge.

Built Form & Appearance

- The predominant facade material is red brick, however render and yellow brick (Winston Court) can also be observed.
- Roof tiles are mostly slate tiles, with concrete tiles, red pantiles and Rosemary tiles exceptionally used.
- Buildings include architectural details such as dormers, chimneys, lentils, roof dentillation, floor fascias, door porches and 'black and white' facades.
- House types include detached houses, farmhouses, cottages, converted barns and apartment blocks (Winston Court).



Figure 54: Red brick detached house with door porch, dormers and chimney

AECOM

Nature and Public Spaces

- Area 3 is totally surrounded by open countryside, which is also reflected in the settlement. Wide green verges and mature trees are an integral part of the streetscapes, contributing to Churchill's rural feel.
- A watercourse runs alongside Churchill Lane, contributing to the natural character of Area 3. AA mill pool is located in front of Churchill Forge.
- There are no significant public spaces in this area. However, Public Rights of Way branch out from Churchill Lane and Waggon Lane and provide access to the open countryside surrounding the area.



Figure 55: Churchill Lane, with mature trees, hedgerows and green verges

Uses

- The area is predominantly residential, with the only exceptions of Churchill Village Hall and St James the Great Church on Churchill Lane.



Figure 56: Churchill Village Hall on Iverley Lane

Area 3 Distinctive Characteristics

- 1 Rural feel** Churchill village preserved its rural feel through time, with rural house types being predominant and nature being an integral part of the local setting.
- 2 Open landscape** The surrounding open landscape is the setting of Churchill. Public Rights of Way make this asset accessible by the local population.
- 3 Historic landmark buildings** St James the Great Church, Churchill Forge, Churchill War Memorial.
- 4 Linear Layout** Arranged along the historic Churchill Lane, with farmhouses, cottages and detached houses facing the street.
- 5 Lakes and watercourses** Water features are a remarkable asset for Churchill, contributing to the character of the village.
- 6 Network of informal footpaths** encourages active lifestyles and recreation for residents of Churchill and attracts visitors.



Figure 57: Photos of distinctive characteristics at Area 3.

4.8 Area 3 Future Opportunities

- Extensions to buildings, especially to the sides, rear and accommodation in the roof.
- Larger plot sizes and gardens should be maintained whilst exploring opportunities for off road /rear parking.
- Improving pedestrian connectivity and accessibility, in particular for cul-de-sacs, and the creation of new footways where these are in accord with the rural setting.
- Improvements to accessibility to pools, streams and woodland.
- Alleys to be protected and improved, with appropriate lighting.

4.9 Area 3 Design Codes

The following design codes have been developed for Area 3 which should be adhered to for future development.

Boundary Treatments

- Retain and repair existing boundary walls and hedges; any new enclosures should be constructed using historically appropriate materials (red brick).

Views and Vistas

- Key views of St. James the Great Church must be preserved; any development should not obstruct these sightlines.
- Preserve views from the edge of the settlement to the surrounding landscape.
- Any necessary screening (e.g., from intrusive modern developments) should be provided using appropriate tree planting rather than solid barriers.

Built Form

- Any new development should complement the existing built environment in terms of scale, height, and massing.
- New housing developments should respect the existing character of residential areas with pitched roofs, red brick, and sympathetic proportions.
- Any buildings on the edge of the settlement should include landscaping to mitigate visual impact on the surrounding landscape.

Public Spaces

- External lighting should be improved on key paths but still kept minimal and designed to prevent light pollution, preserving the area's natural darkness and historic character.



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- Interpretation boards and signage should be improved within the area to improve legibility and accessibility to the countryside.

Nature

- Development must respect existing habitats, with measures in place to avoid disruption to local wildlife, particularly bat roosts, bird nesting areas, and ancient woodland.
- Preserve and enhance tree-lined avenues, such as Churchill Lane.
- Use native plant species to maintain biodiversity and support local ecosystems.
- Removal of trees and planting surrounding the area should be avoided.

Movement

- Any modern interventions, such as cycle paths or accessibility improvements, should be designed to integrate the historic landscape of the Conservation Area.
- Measures should be taken to prevent increased vehicular pressure on Churchill Lane and the surrounding streets.
- Pedestrian-friendly traffic calming measures should be implemented, such as reduced speed limits, enhanced crossings, and shared-space road designs where appropriate.
- Existing pedestrian routes should be maintained and enhanced to support safe movement through the settlement and surrounding areas.
- Developments must not obstruct public rights of way and should prioritise pedestrian connectivity.

- Wayfinding and accessibility improvements should be sympathetic to the historic environment, using traditional materials and discreet signage.

A4

Area 4 Countryside

Area 4 includes the countryside that surrounds the villages of Blakedown and Churchill, which covers most of the NA. The topography is slightly hilly with wide woodland patches and hedgerows.

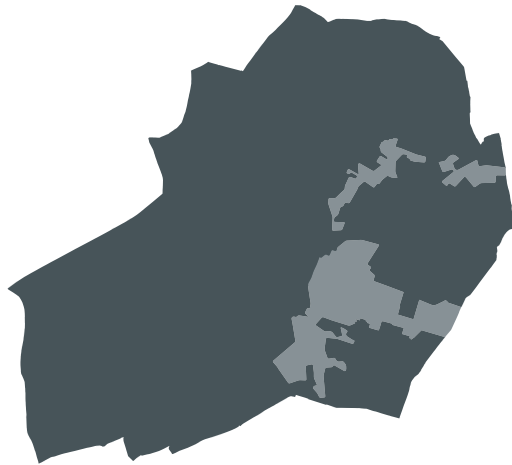


Figure 59: Area 4: Countryside

Built form measurements	
Footpath widths	1 - 3m
Building footprint range	300 - 2500m ²
Building height range	1 - 3 storeys

Table 04: Measurable built form elements seen in Area 4.

Movement & street pattern

- Birmingham Road and Stourbridge Road are the main routes, however a network of rural roads runs through the area. These include Rocky Lane, Waggon Lane and Perriford Lane.
- Roads include green verges and hedgerows, reflecting the rural character of the area.
- Roads create a connected network, and dead-end roads or cul-de-sacs are limited.



Figure 58: View of the open landscape in the Neighbourhood Area

Built Form & Appearance

- Buildings include farms, barns and detached houses scattered in the countryside.
- Elevation materials include red brick and render, while roofs include slate tiles and Rosemary tiles.
- Architectural details include door porches, lintels, bay and bow windows, dormers, round windows and chimneys.



Figure 60: 2-storey house in Area 4

Nature and Public Spaces

- Nature is predominant in Area 4, and includes open landscape characterised by pastoral land, woodland and hedgerows.
- Watercourses, lakes, ponds and pools are remarkable features of this area. Swan Pool, Forge Pool and Ladies Pool are the most popular and are located next to the Blakedown settlement.



Figure 61: Waggon Lane

Uses

- Uses mainly include houses and farms.
- The Old Waggon and Horses 1812 pub is located on Stourbridge Road.
- Other rural activities such as a Christmas Trees shop at the northern end of the NA can be found.



Figure 62: The Old Waggon and Horses 1812 pub on Stourbridge Road.

Area 4 Distinctive Characteristics

- 1 Natural and authentic** The area includes open landscape and represents the authentic rural character of the Wyre Forest district.
- 2 Rural heritage** Historical rural buildings are found in the area, showcasing the rich rural heritage of the area.
- 3 Connected and accessible** the area includes a vast network of Public Rights of Way which makes the countryside accessible.
- 4 Diverse** A series of different landscapes are found in the area, including woodland, watercourses, lakes and pastoral land.



Figure 63: Photos of distinctive characteristics within Area 4.

4.10 Area 4 Future Opportunities

- Larger plot sizes and gardens should be maintained whilst exploring opportunities for off road /rear parking.
- Improving pedestrian connectivity and accessibility, and the creation of new footways where these are in accord with the rural setting.
- Improvements to accessibility to pools, streams and woodland.
- Public Rights of Way to be protected and improved.”

4.11 Area 4 Design Guidance

The following design guidance have been developed for Area 4 which should be adhered to for future development.

To ensure the protection of the landscape and its unique character, the following guidance must be adhered to for any new development:

1. The conversion or re-use of existing buildings in the open countryside should be encouraged. External works to any conversion should be largely cosmetic and have a minimal visual impact on the landscape to which it relates.
2. Proposals should be positioned behind natural screening (e.g. trees and other planting) so as not to obstruct views of the surrounding landscape. Additional screening should be incorporated into any given proposal where necessary. Innovative and sustainable



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screening methods include green roofs and plant walls. Such screening will help outbuildings to blend into natural surroundings such as domestic gardens and open space.

3. Agricultural or commercial proposals should refrain from using materials and colours that contrast with the surrounding landscape. Complementary and contextual colour palettes are encouraged so as not to disturb the local landscape character.
4. To maintain open land and separation between the village of Churchill and Blakedown and surrounding larger settlements, it is imperative to adhere to clearly defined boundaries and ensure sensitively designed development.

5. Proposals showcasing exceptional and innovative architectural styles (such as "Paragraph 80 houses", isolated homes in the countryside that can be exceptionally built, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, chapter 5, paragraph 84) may be considered where they can provide harmony with the character of the surrounding open countryside, as well as incorporating high-quality sustainable design.
6. Land uses must be complementary to the countryside and uses that require illumination at night-time must be avoided such as leisure, employment and industrial uses.
7. Sustainability-led proposals such as renewable energy infrastructure should be

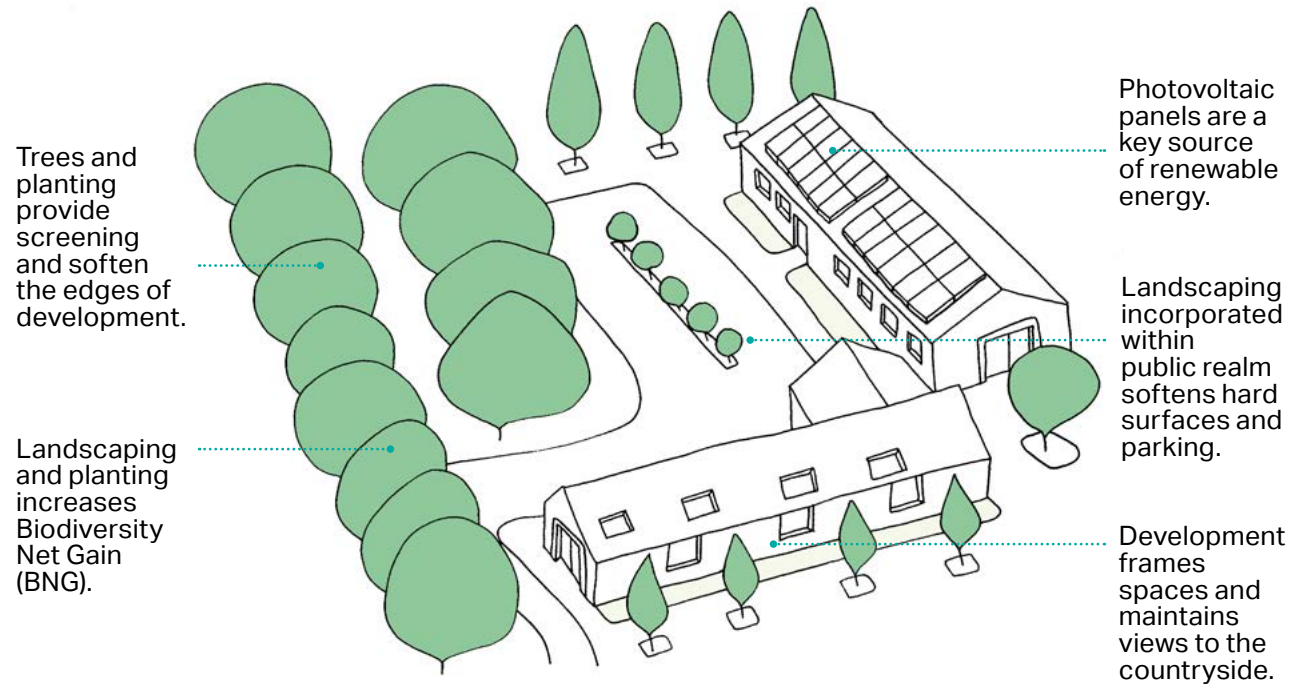


Figure 65: Proposals should be positioned behind natural screening and utilise renewable energy sources such as solar.

considered on the grounds of its positive legacy. Small-scale renewable energy sources should be encouraged for providing power to rural developments. However, such infrastructure should be screened or integrated within developments in order to mitigate visual impact on the open countryside.

8. Any lighting or illumination of a development must consider its necessity, as well as its impact on surrounding properties, particularly where powerful lighting is being proposed. Any lighting infrastructure must balance its necessity with that of the power, scale and orientation

being proposed. This is to avoid overly powerful lighting that can impose on the amenity of other plots, as well as to mitigate undue light pollution in the open countryside.

9. Opportunities to increase and improve biodiversity net gain in the neighbourhood area should be taken at every opportunity, for example preserving natural habitats, planting trees and hedges to provide screening and the creation of wildflower meadows in unused fields.
10. Measures must be employed to protect the distinct character and spatial integrity of the Churchill and Blakedown NA and its surrounding settlements

which can be preserved whilst facilitating sustainable development for the benefit of all communities involved.

11. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) must be undertaken as part of any new development and planning applications.
12. A stewardship and maintenance plan must be commissioned as part of any new development.

**This section
provides a series
of design codes
and guidance that
apply to the whole
Neighbourhood
Area**

05

Area Wide Design Codes

5. Area-Wide Design Codes and Guidance

This chapter provides guidance on the design of development, setting out expectations that relevant planning applications in the Neighbourhood Planning Area will be expected to address.

The guidelines developed in this section focus on residential environments. Development should not be viewed in isolation and the design and layout of the rural built form should respond to the wider development pattern and landscape context.

Understanding the character across the Neighbourhood Planning Area is key to all new design proposals. The local pattern and use of streets and spaces, building types, materials and their interplay with the natural environment and wider landscape in which they sit will help to improve the character and identity of new developments, and make them more accepted locally. It is important that

any proposal takes full account of the local context and that the new design embodies the 'sense of place', both in terms of local character and distinctive features, particularly the listed buildings and the conservation area.

Responding to the context means recognising existing positive design solutions and using existing cues as inspiration. Proposals for a new scheme could adopt a traditional approach or a contemporary design that is innovating with purpose, whilst being in harmony with the built environment and landscape. There is not always agreement on aesthetic issues and architectural taste but using appropriate design precedents and a clear design process will give results that are less subjective and represent 'good design'.

Contemporary design should improve and enhance the setting and sustainability of the site/ Neighbourhood Planning Area whilst not detracting from the appearance of landscape character.

The guidance in this section has been structured under the following themes:

- A Context and Identity**
- B Built Form**
- C Movement**
- D Nature and Public Spaces**
- E Sustainability**



Design Code A: Context and Identity



[Wyre Forest District Local Plan \(2016-2036\) - Adopted April 2022](#) - Policy DM.24: d

5.1 Design Guide A: Context and Identity

Context

The local patterns of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural environment should inform the character and identity of any new development.

A1 – Local Context

All new development should:

- Set out a clear and positive response to the area in which development is sited or adjacent to;
- Explain how this document has been considered and how the local context has informed the design in the design and access statement, supporting the planning application;
- Sensitively respond to the surrounding context by incorporating high quality materials and design that complement neighbouring buildings in terms of scale, form, massing, and proportions. Designers do not necessarily need to imitate the existing design profile of the NA. Successful, complementary and modern interpretation is successful if an authentic,

innovative, and contemporary approach to design is adopted;

- Integrate, organise, and arrange new buildings and streets with the existing street pattern, urban grain and layout of the surrounding buildings and streets.

A2 – Development Goals

New development should:

- Protect residential amenity, both of new and existing residents.
- Contribute to the creation of diverse communities, places and spaces.
- Encompass sustainability principles.
- Respond to the context and character of the area.
- Make efficient use of brownfield land (previously developed).

Identity

The identity or character of a place is informed by the way buildings, streets, spaces, materials, landscape, and infrastructure are combined, as well as the human experience. Distinctive places are locations that stand out and are easy to remember because they are special in some way. This could be because of their landscape, culture, history, buildings, economy, environment, community life, or overall beauty.

New development should add to the history and thus identity of the overall place, respecting and enhancing positive character features. This approach will help to create harmonious and organic development, which is well grounded in its locality. The following guidance is recommended to ensure new development either harmonises, complements or innovates within its surroundings.

A3 - Design response

Designers must respond to the character of the Neighbourhood Area with one of the following three approaches, considered in the following order:



Harmonise - clearly respond to existing characteristics within the Neighbourhood Area, street and site, including scale, form, and appearance.



Complement - doing something slightly different that adds to the overall character and quality in a way that is nonetheless fitting, for example, additional high quality materials but harmonising in scale, form and positioning.



Innovate - doing something of high design quality that is different but adds positively to the built-form and character and is considered an exemplar approach for others to follow. For example, developing innovative building form and use low embodied energy and high quality materials that add to the overall design quality, sustainability and richness of the area.

Exceptions - Deviations from this code are permissible but should be justified and align with the intent of this Design Code. The code is designed to support, not restrict, creative and outstanding design solutions that either match or complement the historical character of the villages, enhance sustainability, or meet local housing needs (such as affordable housing provision, or homes for younger or elder residents).

The following are exemplary cases of new development in Churchill and Blakedown, demonstrating best practices that either harmonise with, complement, or innovate the village’s character. Each approach’s design principles are described with the intention of showcasing best practices for developers.



Harmonise



Figure 66: Example of harmonising residential development on Birmingham Road

1. Building is set back and bounded by a medium-rise brick wall.
2. The building line and wall help to keep the sense of enclosure on this part of the street.
3. Architectural details, chimneys and proportions are consistent with the surrounding character.
4. Red brick façades complement with the surrounding character.



Complement



Figure 67: Example of complementing residential development on Churchill Lane. The black and white elevations are an addition but complement to the character.

1. Historic urban fabric has been respected through the layout, scale and massing of the building.
2. The black and white façade adds to the character without disrupting it.
3. The architectural details and window proportions could be improved to ensure consistency.



Innovate



Figure 68: This updated dwelling on Belbroughton Road, originally a typical 1930s detached house, takes cues from surrounding properties in terms of scale, massing, roofscape and building line.

1. This dwelling is in a contemporary style but there are clear references to historic character through roof heights, and the angles of the pitches.
2. Building line and set back dimensions are consistent with the other dwellings on the street.

A4 - Legibility, key views, and gateways

To aid legibility and protect local character, new development must:

- **Protect important views:** Locally significant views (see Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan) are locally defining features which shape the identity of the NA. As such, they should be protected and enhanced, the impact of any new development should be mitigated.
- **Protect views at the settlement edge:** Proposals on the settlement edge must be unobstructed of both inward and outward key views. Views of both landscape and built form within the Neighbourhood Area are locally defining features that contribute to legibility and way-finding.

- **Protect and create views for way-finding:** Buildings should be oriented to maintain existing key views or to create new views/ vistas which can contribute to local way-finding. Views of both landmark buildings (i.e., St James the Great Church) and surrounding landscape features should be utilised to promote legibility within the area. Streets must be terminated with key views within any new development,
- **Enhance key gateways** at the settlement edge, creating new gateway locations for vehicles or pedestrians. Gateway locations play a key part in defining the character of the village, fostering an important sense of arrival. Any new gateways must be identified at the design stage, and given special consideration.



Figure 69: Views of St James the Great Church enhance legibility and aid in wayfinding.



Figure 70: The view of open countryside north of New Wood Lane should be protected and enhanced.

B

Design Code B: Built Form



[Wyre Forest District Local Plan \(2016-2036\) - Adopted April 2022](#) - Policy DM.24: b, g, i

5.2 Design Code B: Built Form

Churchill and Blakedown's buildings are some of the neighbourhood area's most defining features. They act as important links to the village's rural history. Any new development should be in keeping with these buildings in order to maintain the neighbourhood area's strong sense of place. "Identikit" housing does little to acknowledge local vernacular and creates places that could be seen anywhere in the UK. The scale, massing, building heights, frontages, facades, fenestration and entrances are crucial to shaping the overall look and feel of a neighbourhood. All new development must adhere to the following codes.

B1 – Scale and Massing

Building scale and massing should be in keeping with the prevailing development pattern. Plot depths and widths must be in keeping with the typical plot depths and widths of the surrounding buildings.

B2 – Heights

The prevailing existing building heights for each character area are set out in section 4 and should inform the design of new buildings. A variable eaves line and ridgeline is encouraged to create interest but variation between adjacent buildings should be a maximum of 0.5 storeys.

B3 - Building Line and Set-backs

The building line and set-back should reflect the street and be set back no more than a maximum of 1.5m from adjacent buildings

unless additional landscaping or tree-planting is being introduced to maintain the enclosure of the street scene. Where buildings are set back from the pavement, boundary features should define the plot and connect to the adjacent buildings (i.e., hedges or local stone walls).

B4 - Facades

Building facade design should respect the horizontal rhythm of plots and building subdivisions on the street in order to maintain visual continuity or add to the visual interest where required.

B5 - Fenestration

Building fenestration and pattern should be in keeping with the predominant positive building character on the street or harmonise with adjacent buildings of good character.

B6 - Entrances

Building entrances should address the street with a main access and fenestration that emphasises the main front access from the street. Where buildings are located on corners and junctions, the building facades must be designed to address both streets by incorporating fenestration. The entrance can be located on either facade of the building, subject to access requirements which should adhere to Approved Document M of the UK Building Regulations (Access to and use of buildings).

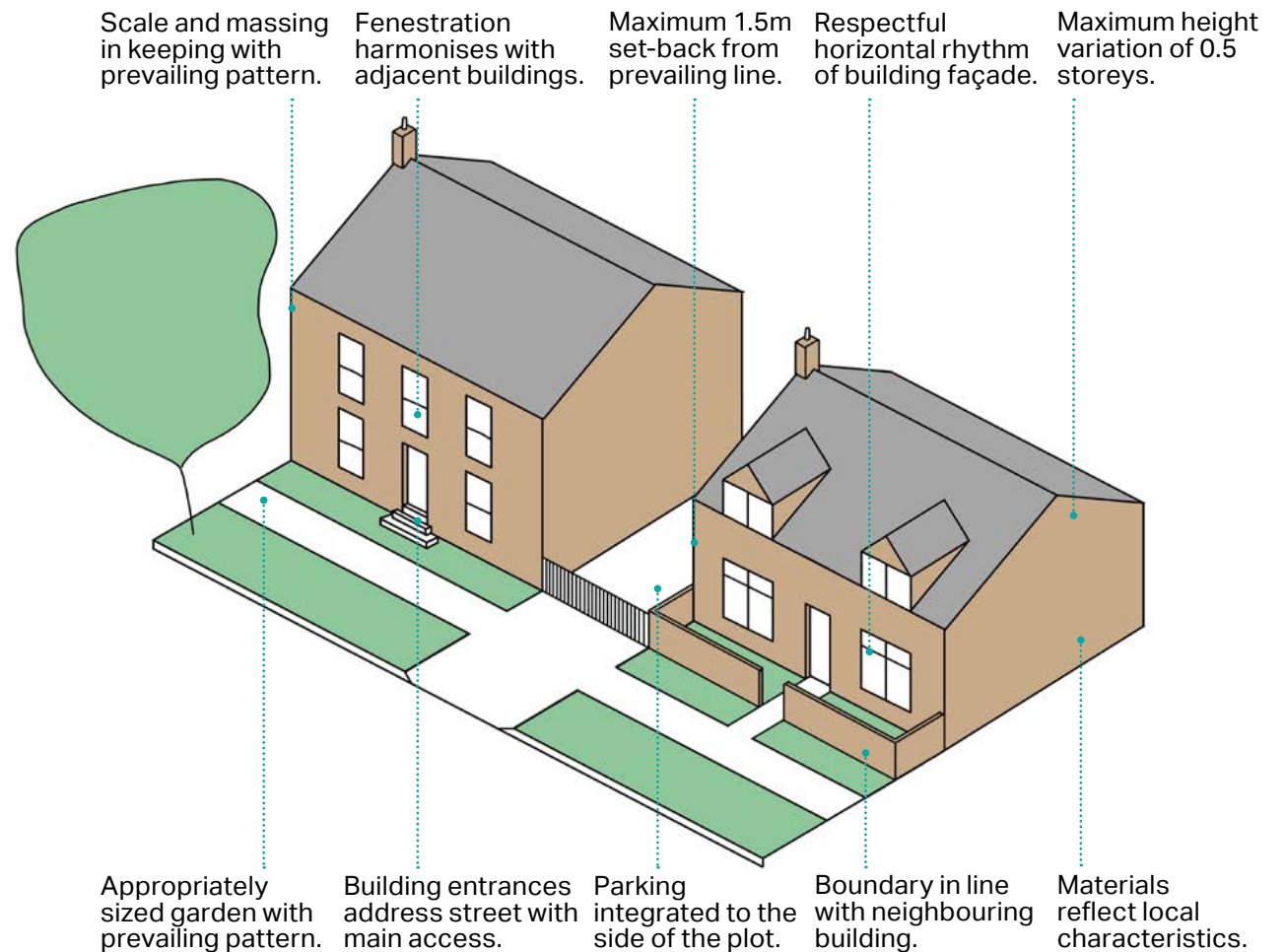


Figure 71: Diagram showing built form design and parking responses to neighbouring buildings.

B7 - Orientation

Buildings must be orientated to address public spaces to provide overlooking and safety.

B8 - Urban Grain

The grouping of buildings is important in the organisation and arrangement of new developments of more than one dwelling. The grouping and combinations of housing typologies must reflect the surrounding existing development, i.e. terraced, semi-detached and detached buildings, and the combination must be studied and reflected in the layout.

B9 - Density

The prevailing density described in section 4 should inform the density of any new development. If new development departs from the

surrounding densities, this should be justified and discussed as part of the planning application.

B10 - Interfaces

New development must respond to the surrounding interfaces, which can vary depending on the position of the site within the settlement. For example, significant new development may interface with both the “Rural Edges” and the “Inter/post war neighbourhoods” area types. Large scale development must successfully transition between both interfaces. It is recommended that large scale development establishes a clear hierarchy of street designs that integrates with the surrounding interfaces.



Figure 72: The informal dense urban grain of the “Historic Streets” area type.



Figure 73: The formal urban grain of the “Inter/post war neighbourhoods” area type.

B11 - Conversions, Extensions and Outbuildings

- Conversions, extensions and outbuildings should emulate or reference the architectural detailing and character of the primary dwelling. Details (e.g. finials, coping string courses and window and door surrounds) of the existing dwelling should be carefully considered.
- Outbuildings should ideally be positioned behind screening so as to be out of the public view (e.g. trees, hedges, planting and existing buildings).



Figure 74: A stone extension to a historic building which is harmonious in scale and materials.

B12 - Bin Storage

- Access and storage for bins should be provided and bin stores should be designed to be integrated with plot boundaries.
- A refuse strategy must be developed as part of planning applications, which must comply with planning policy and technical standards.



Figure 75: Designated bin storage within the plot boundary.

B13 – Parking

Parking must be designed to be integrated into the street and parked cars must not dominate the street. The following guidance must be adhered to:

- Parking should be integrated on plot and, where possible, with parking spaces set behind the building line, generally to the side of the plot being advisable. For narrow dwellings it is preferable to retain a small front garden with a boundary wall, as opposed to an open hard surface parking space.
- Where parking is required at the front of the plot it should be accorded sufficient space. Street trees and planting must be provided to break up cars, avoiding over dominance of the cars on the street.

- Carriageway entrances are arched entrances to rear courtyard parking which maintain the building lines of denser historic areas such as the “Historic Streets” area type.
- Rear parking must be integrated within courtyard development in keeping with the character of courtyards within the “Historic Streets” area type. Courtyards must combine both parking and dwellings. The sole use of courtyards for parking should be avoided. Rear parking can be delivered on plot and must be within the curtilage of the plot.

For further advice on parking design, designers must refer to best practice design guidance within Manual for Streets (2007) and Building for a Healthy Life (2020). See the Appendix to this document for further details.

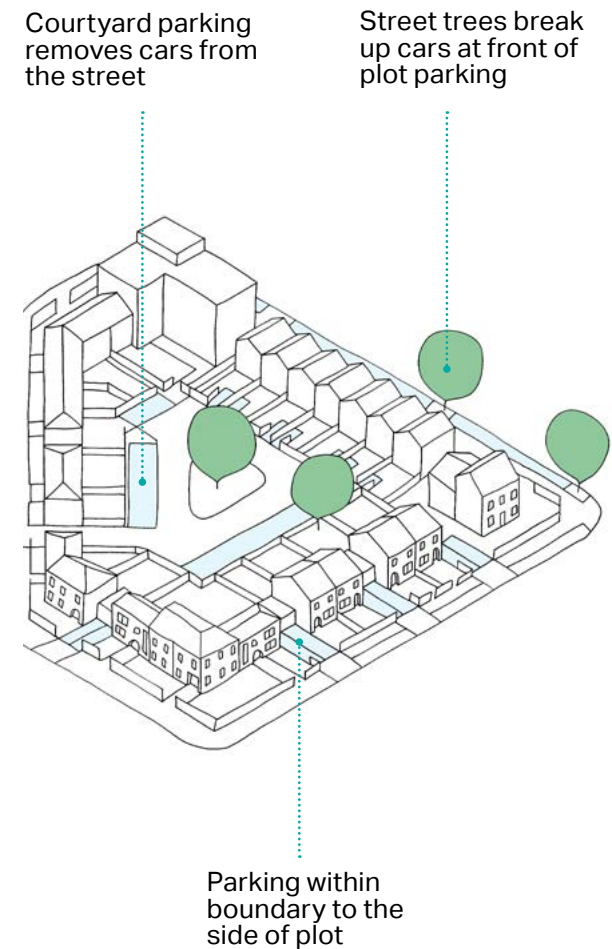


Figure 77: Parking solutions for new development.

C Design guidance and codes: Movement



5.3 C: Movement

Successful development depends upon a movement network that makes connections to destinations, places, and communities, both within the site and beyond its boundaries. The following design codes and guidelines aim to help the creation of a connected movement network for both vehicles and pedestrians within Churchill and Blakedown, as well as enhancing the streetscene.

Disconnected



Connected



Figure 78: The differences between a disconnected and connected network of streets as illustrated in the National Model Design Code. Connected streets help to reduce walking distances and set a long-lasting framework for movement.

C1 - A safe and connected neighbourhood

New development within the Neighbourhood Area must help to create safe, connected, and attractive environments that promote healthier lifestyles and reduce reliance on cars.

Connected and permeable

- New development should avoid using cul-de-sac solutions in order to promote a permeable movement network that doesn't impede pedestrians and cyclists.
- New development must integrate with the PRow network when schemes are located within proximity of a footpath.
- New development must provide clear, accessible, and safe links to adjacent neighbourhoods and amenities such as shops, parks and schools.

Safety

- Any footways created as part of new development must be well-lit and overlooked by buildings to ensure passive, natural surveillance. New development should avoid having rear boundaries or blank side gables facing directly onto new and existing footpaths and cycleways.
- Pedestrian pathways should be well-connected, safe, and accessible. This includes upgrading pavements, adding tactile paving for visually impaired individuals, and ensuring all pathways are well-lit and free from obstructions.
- Methods to encourage slow-vehicle speeds should be promoted, such as changes in materiality, raised tables, narrowing of roads widths, landscape, and minimising the corner curb radius.

C2 - Streetscape design

- New streets should feature unified street furniture, consistent landscaping, and lighting that respects the historical context while improving pedestrian safety and comfort.
- New development should consider treating tertiary routes/residential access lanes with other materials than tarmac, to highlight the priority of pedestrians over vehicles.
- New development should ensure pavements are wide, well-maintained, and barrier-free to accommodate pedestrians of all abilities, including those with mobility impairments.
- Pavements should be provided on at least one-side of the carriageway within new development, poor condition existing streets should be improved.



Figure 79: Example of paved route (Gladstone Palace)



Figure 80: Example of pavement with tree line (Mill Lane)

D

Design guidance and codes: Nature and public spaces

5.4 D: Nature and public spaces

It is now widely acknowledged that access to nature and green space has an extremely therapeutic effect on the mind. The National Model Design Code recognises this in paragraph 57:

“Nature is good for health and wellbeing, for biodiversity, shading and cooling, noise mitigation, air quality and mitigating flood risk as well as contributing to tackling the climate emergency. Nature is also central to the creation of beautiful places.”

Opportunities to protect, improve and engage with the existing green infrastructure network within Churchill and Blakedown should be a key driver for all new development.



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D1 - Extending and maintaining the green infrastructure network

Grass verges, gardens, mature street trees, and native hedgerows contribute to the leafy, rural character of Churchill and Blakedown. This green infrastructure network must be protected and enhanced wherever possible.

- New development should reflect the green character of existing streets through the placement of street trees within adequate verges alongside the carriageway, on plot, or in open spaces.
- Existing and new planting should knit together at a range of scales, with minimal breaks to create connected habitats and routes for wildlife.

- New development must retain existing trees and hedges wherever possible, incorporating them into new landscape design, and replacing them if lost. Retained trees and hedges should be considered at the earliest design stage.
- The use of native planting species should be favoured to avoid the impact of invasive species on the biodiversity of local habitat.
- Front of plot areas and rear gardens should be of sufficient size and landscaped appropriately to fit in with the prevailing native trees and planting pattern or to enhance the green character of the area where it is lacking to enhance Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

What does good look like in Churchill and Blakedown?

The following images demonstrate best practice and recommended design cues.



Figure 81: New Wood Lane includes green verges on both sides as well as tree lines. Buildings are set back contributing to the open and natural feel of the road.



Figure 82: Mature trees are common and add value to the natural character of the area.



Figure 83: Paving is used at Gladstone Place to highlight the priority of pedestrians over vehicles.



Figure 84: Tree line on Churchill Lane.

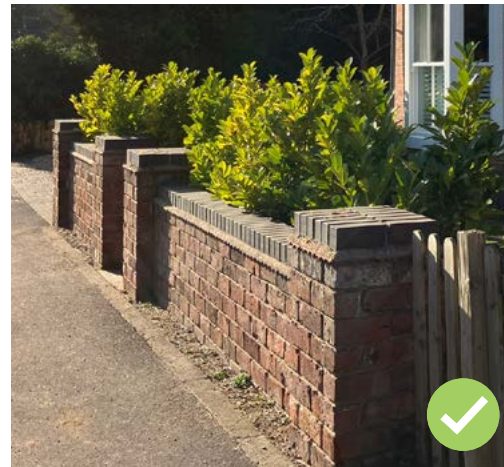


Figure 85: Low red boundary walls are a positive boundary treatment and consistent with the character of the area.



Figure 86: Personalised front gardens enhance the character of Belbroughton Road.

D2 - Landscape setting and the settlement edge

New development must integrate sensitively with the surrounding landscape, particularly on the periphery of each settlement. Design principles for sensitive peripheral development include:

- 'Soft' boundaries should be created between built form and the wider landscape by encouraging natural screening through landscape planting including hedgerows, wildflowers, and trees, characteristic of the wider landscape.
- Lower density development should be prioritised, with buildings not exceeding 2 storeys in peripheral locations.
- Dwelling frontages must be orientated towards the open

countryside (i.e. outward facing) and avoid rear boundaries facing the landscape.

- Buildings interspersed with tree planting could help to soften the visual impact on the surrounding countryside.
- Links must be provided for both pedestrians and cyclists to the wider countryside, and where possible, connect to the existing Public Right of Way network.
- Street hierarchies that arrange primary roads and over-engineered turning heads to abut the wider landscape must be avoided.



Figure 87: Stakenbridge Lane offers views of the surrounding countryside, aiding legibility and help to enhance the sense of place.



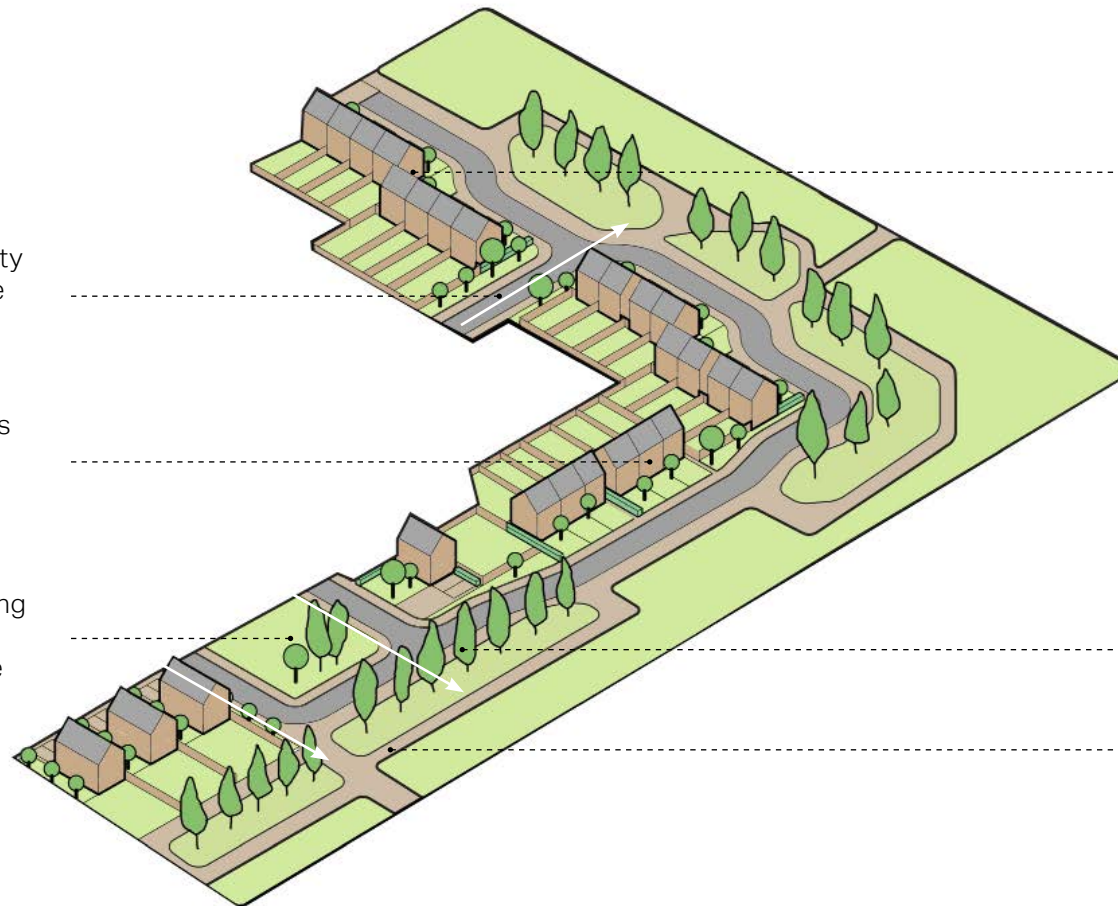
Figure 88: The retention of mature trees and hedgerows helps to naturally screen new development.

A sensitive response to the settlement edge

Streets terminated by views of the surrounding countryside - aiding legibility and helping to enhance the sense of place.

Frontages oriented towards the open countryside (outward facing).

Landscaping and positioning of open spaces allows the landscape to penetrate the development, creating a 'soft' edge.



Variation in building line and setback avoids a solid wall of development, and creates a varied edge character.

Development naturally screened by trees and planting, softening its visual impact on the surrounding countryside.

Pedestrian connections link the edge of the settlement with the open countryside.

Figure 89: A sensitive response to the settlement edge is required. Indicative edge lane development model example (built form facing surrounding landscape), including trees and hedgerows that soften views to development.



D3 - Public space design

- The creation of new “village greens” should be considered within new developments of over ten homes to reflect the character of historic Churchill and Blakedown. These green spaces could act as the core of the development, providing residents with immediate access to green space and increasing the overall quality of the development.
- Within any new development, public spaces should be universally accessible, with appropriate pathways, adequate seating, and accessible facilities.

- New buildings must be orientated and organised to frame open spaces to provide overlooking and natural surveillance.
- New public spaces must be well connected with the surroundings including crossings, footpaths and cycleways to improve their accessibility and inclusivity for pedestrians.
- Parking for bikes and abundant seating areas should be available in public spaces to promote walking, cycling and other sustainable travel modes over car journeys.



Figure 90: Temporary uses such as markets and other community events can help to activate village greens and commons. Please note: this is a precedent example.

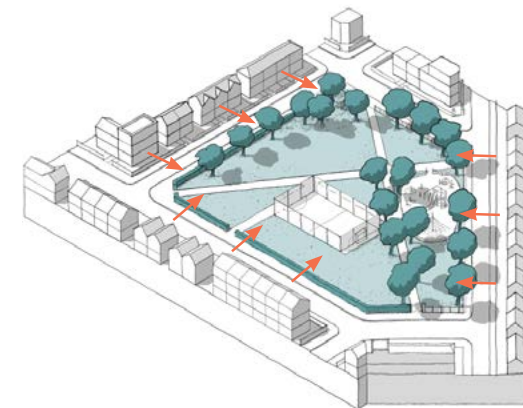


Figure 91: Public spaces should be overlooked by surrounding buildings to provide natural surveillance.

D4 - Water sensitive urban design

All development proposals should promote methods to mitigate increased risk of storms/flooding through water sensitive urban design, including the introduction of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and permeable surfaces.

- Homes should not be sited in high risk flood areas.
- Permeable surfaces, such as permeable pavements and porous concrete, should be considered to allow rainwater to permeate through, replenishing groundwater reserves and reducing the strain on conventional drainage systems.
- New development should consider integrating SuDS, which includes techniques such as green roofs, rain gardens and swales. This will help to effectively manage stormwater run-off whilst reducing the risk of flooding.

Street tree planting: SuDS designed into highway provision can provide dual-use benefits when integrated with street tree provision.

Green roofs and walls: Provide capacity to hold and attenuate water run-off as well as ecological and leisure benefits.

Soakaways and filter drains: Shallow ditches and trenches filled with gravel or stones that collect uncontaminated water and allow it to percolate into the ground.

Rain capture: Water butts and other rainwater harvesting systems collect rainwater for use in gardens or for non-potable uses, reducing water consumption.

Basins and ponds: Attenuation ponds that are normally dry but fill during a rain event and then either store or gradually discharge water to the system.

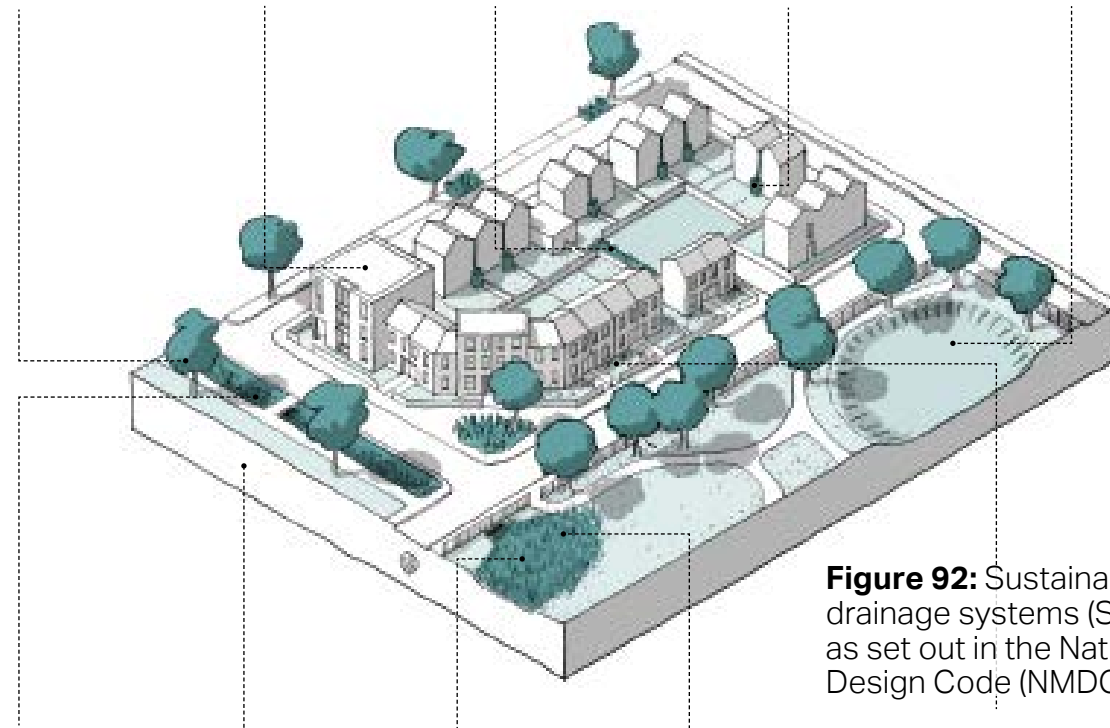


Figure 92: Sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) design as set out in the National Model Design Code (NMDC).

Swales: Shallow channels that provide attenuation while also channelling water to other features such as ponds.

Retention tanks: In high density schemes water can be attenuated in underground structures.

Rain gardens: Containers and ditches with native drought tolerant plants release water gradually and filter out pollutants.

Reedbeds and wetlands: Topography can be used to create wetlands that provide attenuation capacity as well as filtering out pollutants and providing habitat for wildlife.

Permeable surfacing: Surfaces that allow water to percolate into the ground. Includes natural surfaces, gravel and low traffic volume engineered road surfaces and hard-standing in front gardens.

E

Design guidance and codes: Sustainability and resources

5.5 E: Sustainability and resources

Sustainable design incorporates innovative practices at all scales to achieve less impactful development footprints, whilst future proofing homes, settlements, and natural environments. Reducing the use of imported natural resources whilst increasing utilisation of local and sustainable, natural resources can help to achieve this.

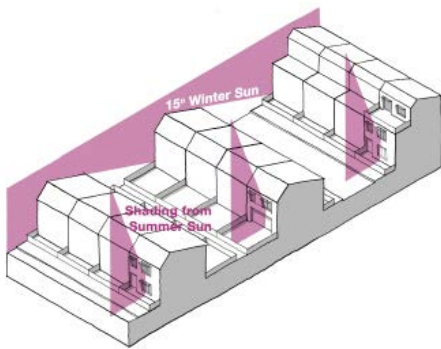


Figure 93: Passive design and orientation principles, as set out within the National Model Design Code.

E1 – Passive design measures and orientation

It is paramount that new development seeks to implement passive design measures which will improve the energy efficiency of new buildings. Any new development should:

- Aim to reduce energy demand by employing passive design principles (e.g., window orientation, solar gain, solar shading, increased insulation, ventilation with heat-recovery).
- Optimise streets and buildings for solar orientation. Aim to increase the number of buildings on site that are oriented within 30° of south (both main fenestration and roof plane) for solar gain, solar energy (solar panels) and natural daylighting. However, this should not come at the cost of the prevailing character of a street.

- Consider building form and thermal efficiency - point-block / terraced / semi-detached / detached all have different energy efficiency profiles. Local design preference and character considerations could ease acceptance for development.
- Development should also adopt a fabric first approach in line with the Government's emerging Future Homes Standard and Part L of the UK Building Regulations in order to attain higher standards of insulation and energy conservation.

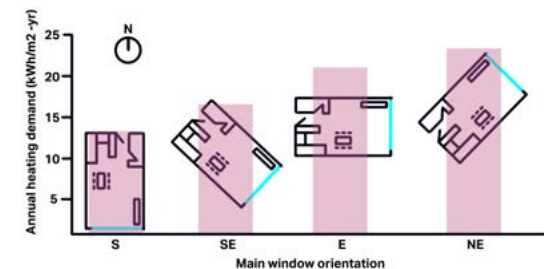


Figure 94: Building orientation influences the annual heating demand.

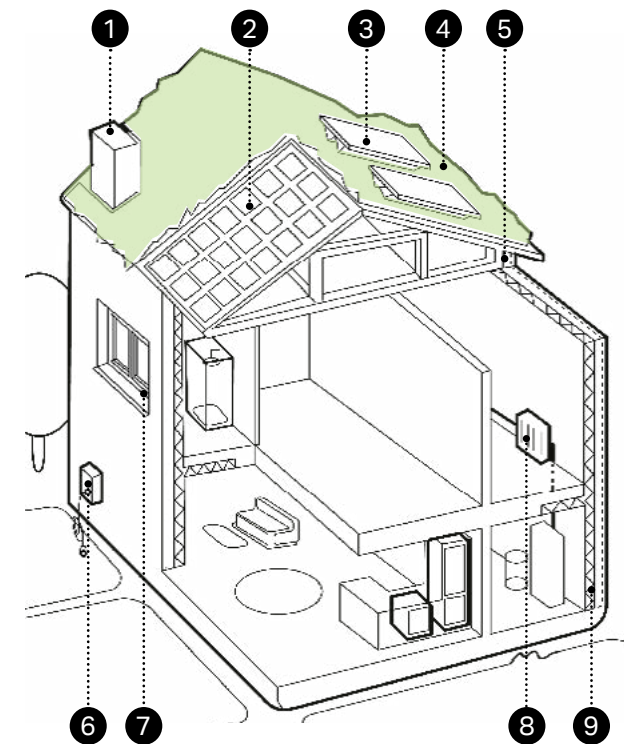


E2 - Integrating renewable energy in new developments

The integration of renewable energy systems in all new developments across the Churchill and Blakedown NA should be promoted, aligning with the Future Homes Standard for sustainable building practices.

- The installation of solar photovoltaic panels should be encouraged on suitable roof spaces in all new residential and commercial buildings, where orientation and inclination permit effective solar gain.
- The incorporation of solar water heating systems could be encouraged as a standard feature in new developments to reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources for heating.

- The use of ground-source and air-source heat pumps should be encouraged in new developments to provide efficient heating and cooling solutions, significantly reducing the carbon footprint of building
- There should be an understanding of local wind speed and direction for micro-generation wind turbines.
- Utilities, highway authorities, telecoms companies and other stakeholders could be consulted when designing and delivering projects to minimise energy usage and disruption during the construction stage and reinforcement of the electricity grid for additional electric vehicles and renewables.



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Mechanical ventilation system. | 6. Electric vehicle charging point. |
| 2. Integral solar tiles. | 7. Insulated windows and doors. |
| 3. Solar panels. | 8. Efficient utilities and appliances. |
| 4. Green roof. | 9. Wall insulation. |
| 5. Roof insulation. | |

Figure 95: Some of the possible sustainability measures that could be employed within new development.

This section sets out general design considerations as a quick reference guide for stakeholders

06

Checklist

6. Checklist

1

This section sets out a general list of design considerations by topic for use as a quick reference guide in design workshops and discussions.

General design guidelines for new development:

- Does new development integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity to allow accessibility and connectivity?
- Is there an opportunity to reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets and other spaces?
- Does the proposal harmonise with and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use?
- Does the proposal relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views?
- How can the local architecture and historic distinctiveness be reflected, respected, and reinforced?
- Does the proposal adopt contextually appropriate materials and details?
- Have important existing features been retained and incorporated into the development?
- Have surrounding buildings been respected in terms of scale, height, form and massing?
- Are all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space well related to each other?
- Has adequate open space been provided for the development in terms of both quantity and quality?
- Does the proposal incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features?
- Has management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities been considered by the proposal?

1 (continued)

Street grid and layout:

- Are energy efficient technologies (for example ground or air source heat pumps, rainwater harvesting, biomass and solar energy) positively integrated where appropriate?
- Does the proposal make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape, or the amenities of neighbours?
- Is there an opportunity to implement passive environmental design principles (for example, site layout being optimised for beneficial solar gain, techniques to reduce energy demands and the incorporation of renewable energy sources)?

2

Street grid and layout:

- Does the proposal favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?
- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are they reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

3

Local green spaces, views & character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?

3 (continued)

Local green spaces, views & character:

- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how will this be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention e.g. permeable landscaping, swales etc.?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

4

Gateway and access features:

- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

5

Building line and boundary treatment:

- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

6

Buildings layout and grouping:

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?
- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings orientated to incorporate passive solar design principles, with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night? This is to reduce peak loads. And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?

7

Building heights and roof-line:

- What are the characteristics of the roof-line?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now, or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof-mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over shading?

8

Household extensions:

- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of side extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?
- Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?
- Can any materials be re-used in-situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?
- If a household extension is built to the side or rear of the property, does it allow for easy access from the front of the house to the back, ensuring that bins remain accessible?
- Does the extension restrict or prevent access to the rear garden making it more difficult to store and manage outdoor items like bins and storage, or impact the ability to perform maintenance?
- Does the storage negatively impact the visual appearance of the property, which may require certain design adjustments when building the extension?

9

Building heights and roof-line:

- What is the distinctive material in the area?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?
- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Do the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?
- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design?
For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.
- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced?
E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

10

Car parking:

- What parking solutions have been considered? Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered and can electric vehicle charging points be provided?
- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/ communal facility where appropriate?
- Can car ports or cycle storage incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels or a bio-diverse roof in its design?

This appendix summarises the findings of the place questionnaire, planning policy and guidance documents that have informed this design code.

07

Appendix

7. Appendix

The Building Regulations 2010

The Building Regulations 2010 cover the construction and extension of buildings. Building regulations approval is separate from planning permission and both may be required. Building regulations approval may also be required for alteration projects including:

- replacing fuse boxes and connected electrics;
- installing a bathroom that will involve plumbing;
- changing electrics near a bath or shower;
- putting in a fixed air-conditioning system;
- replacing windows and doors;
- replacing roof coverings on pitched and flat roofs;
- installing or replacing a heating system; and
- adding extra radiators to a heating system.

The Building Regulations 2010 can be found at the following link: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/2214/contents/made>.

The Future Homes Standard (emerging)

The emerging Future Homes Standard (FHS) will complement the Building Regulations 2010 and aims to ensure that new homes built from 2025 produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes delivered under the existing regulations. The FHS aims to decarbonise new homes by focusing on improving heating, hot water systems, and reducing waste. This will be achieved in part by replacing current technologies with low-carbon alternatives.

To meet the specifications set out in the FHS, the Government updated Parts F and L of the current Building Regulations in 2021. These specifications must be adhered to when constructing, extending or renovating UK homes. Part F introduces new standards for ventilation, while Part L sets out minimum energy efficiency performance targets for buildings, airtightness requirements and improved minimum insulation standards.

For further information on the changes to Part L and Part F, please refer to the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings>.

7.5.1 National Guidance

National Design Guide (2019)

The National Design Guide (NDG) sets the ten characteristics of a well-designed place and demonstrates what good design is in practice. The characteristics are: Context; Identity; Built Form; Movement; Nature; Public Spaces; Uses; Homes & Buildings; Resources; and, Lifespan.

The NDG should be used as an overarching reference for new development where topics are not covered in local guidance. The NDG notes that a well-designed place is unlikely to be achieved by focusing only on the appearance, materials and detailing of buildings.

The NDG can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>.

National Model Design Code (2021)

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) is the Government's detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guidelines and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the following ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide (NDG):

- Context
- Identity
- Built Form
- Movement
- Nature
- Public Spaces
- Uses
- Homes and Buildings
- Resources
- Lifespan

The NMDC and NDG are companion documents setting out characteristics of well-designed places. They support the ambitions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to utilise the planning and development process in the creation of high-quality place-making. The NDG states that "specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set at the local level",

The guides are expected to be used by local authorities, applicants and local communities to establish further design codes and guidance (such as this design code) that can deliver in line with local objectives.

The NMDC can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>.

Building for a Healthy Life (2020)

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) was formerly known as Building for Life and is the Government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The new name reflects the key role that the built environment has in promoting wellbeing.

The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed schemes, as well as useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

BHL can be found at the following link: <https://www.udg.org.uk/publications/othermanuals/building-healthy-life>.

Manual for Streets (2007)

Manual for Streets (MfS) aims to bring about a fundamental culture change in the way streets are designed and adopted. It comprises technical guidance focusing on lightly trafficked residential streets. Many of its key principles may be applicable to other types of street, for example high streets and lightly-trafficked lanes in rural areas. MfS is used predominantly for the design, construction, adoption and maintenance of new residential streets, but it is also applicable to existing residential streets subject to redesign.

MfS can be found at the following link: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7e0035ed915d74e6223743/pdfmanforstreets.pdf>.



Figure 96: The front cover of the National Model Design Code (Part 1: The Coding Process).

Figure 97: The front cover of Building for a Healthy Life.

7.5.2 Local Planning Policy and Guidance

The Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Area is a civil parish located to the east of Kidderminster in the Wyre Forest District of Worcestershire. The locality is currently under the jurisdiction of two tiers of local government: Worcestershire County Council and Wyre Forest District Council.

The following planning and design documents were reviewed to understand the policy context under which this document has been produced. The codes and guidance contained within this document complement these other planning documents prepared for the District. New development proposals will need to demonstrate that they have undertaken review of the local planning context, showing how they have considered the relevant documents.

Relevant planning and design guidance

Adoption date

The Wyre Forest Local Plan (2016 - 2036)	April 2022
Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2026	July 2017
Green Infrastructure SPD	Emerging
Housing SPD	April 2024
Design, Amenity and Shopfronts SPD	July 2024
Wyre Forest Cycle Strategy SPG	April 2002
Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance	August 2012
Churchill Conservation Area Character Appraisal	November 2014
Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment Interactive Map	August 2012

Scope of document

- Development plan
- Planning and design guidance
- Conservation area appraisal
- Character Assessment

The Wyre Forest Local Plan (2016 - 2036)

The Wyre Forest's Local Plan sets out the overall vision along with the planning policies used to guide and determine future planning applications in the Wyre Forest District. It details the scale and distribution of new development and includes land allocations and designations. The Local Plan sets out broad aims and objectives for development, guiding where development should occur, how much development is needed, and how land should be protected.

The Local Plan sets out how the district will accommodate its housing and employment needs up to 2036 through sustainable, positively planned development. It includes a strategy to deliver 5,520 new homes by 2036 as part of the overall housing requirement, and a policy target for an average of at least 90 affordable dwellings per year over the plan period. The Plan also includes a Spatial Development Strategy, which

guides development to ensure it is appropriate in scale and balanced.

The Strategy sets out six strategic policies to provide context and framework to subsequent policies set out in the Local Plan. Strategic policy SP.1 sets out a housing requirement of 1,439 homes to be delivered in the 'Kidderminster Eastern Urban Extension' over the plan period. Policies SP.3 - SP.6 describe strategy for achieving the development target and site allocations. In particular SP.6 relates to the role of existing villages and rural areas.

The Local Plan also includes numerous strategic and design policies which relate to new development. Key policies are summarized below:

SP.22 - Landscape Character

Ensures that new development protects and enhances the unique landscape character including individual settlements.

SP.28 - Green Infrastructure

Ensures that the existing green infrastructure network is safeguarded and expects that new development will retain, protect, enhance and create green infrastructure assets.

DM.7 Open Space

Ensures that open spaces, both private and public, are safeguarded from development.

DM.8 - Provision for open space, sports pitches, and outdoor community uses in housing development.

Sets out required standards for open space provision.

DM.22 - Safeguarding the Green Belt

Ensures that the greenbelt is protected

DM.23 - Safeguarding the Historic Environment

Ensures that proposals protect, conserve and enhance all heritage assets and their settings.

DM.24 - Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness

Emphasizes the importance of high-quality design for all new developments to enhance the character and appearance of the area.

DM.25 - Design of Extensions and Alterations

Ensures that the design of extensions reflects local character and not impact the amenity of the neighboring residents or occupiers.

DM.26 - Landscaping and Boundary Treatments

Ensures that landscaping and boundary proposals are in keeping with local context and reflect existing materials.

DM.29 - Re-use and adaptation of rural buildings

Ensures that the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings are appropriate to their setting.

Two strategic site allocations are identified in the Local Plan for the Neighbourhood Area. These are summarized below:

SP BLK1 - Station Yard, Blakedown

A 0.27 ha site allocation for station car parking for 120 spaces.

SP BLK2 - Land off Station Drive, Blakedown

This is a 2.74ha, area of land allocated for 50 dwellings and car parking. Construction for the housing will be completed in 2026, with the parking area reserved for future use to ease commuter parking problems around the area of the station.

Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2026

The Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan is in development and once adopted will replace the existing 2016 - 2026 Neighbourhood Plan.

The existing Neighbourhood Plan sets out the following planning policies which guide development in Churchill and Blakedown to 2026, based on an overarching vision and objectives.

Policy topics include:

- Traffic and Transport
- Heritage and the Environment
- Business and the Economy
- Housing

Development coming forward before the end of the existing Neighbourhood plan period should refer to existing policies.

When the emerging Neighbourhood Plan is adopted or 'made' it will become a statutory planning document. It will form part of the Wyre Forest District

Development Plan, and the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will be given significant weight by Wyre Forest District Council Planners when making decisions on planning applications in Churchill and Blakedown Parish. The Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan Steering group are responsible for the day-to-day management of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

This design codes and guidance document forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan on design-related issues.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Wyre Forest District Council has produced several SPDs which provide specific guidance relating to the design of homes and neighbourhoods. These include:

Design, Amenity and Shopfronts SPD (2024)

Adopted in July 2024, this SPD aims to enhance the appearance and functionality of shopfronts to improve the overall streetscape and support local businesses. It emphasises the importance of high-quality materials, appropriate signage, and maintaining the character of the area.

The SPD can be found at the following link: <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/media/cqaf2ouz/design-amenity-and-shopfronts-spd-adopted-july-2024.pdf>

Housing SPD (2024)

This document provides design principles on how householder developments (i.e. extensions) can be carried out in accordance with local planning policies. For example, residential extensions will be supported where they do not compromise privacy of neighbouring properties, overly obstruct/dominate the original building, and are made of materials that either match or complement the original building.

The SPD can be found at the following link: <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/housing-spd/>

Wyre Forest Cycle Strategy SPD (2002)

This document sets out a proposed cycle route network and promotes the use of cycling to improve transport choices.

The SPD can be found at the following link: <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/media/zcukp21k/cycle-strategy-spg.pdf>

Landscape Character Assessment SPD (2011)

This document provides detailed guidance on the key landscape character areas within the Worcestershire, their features, and how development should be managed within them.

The SPD can be found at the following link: <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/media/he3jzosj/wcc-landscape-character-sg-nov-2011.pdf>

Emerging SPDs

As part of the production of the Local Plan, Wyre Forest District Council are also preparing a further SPDs for Green Infrastructure which is due to be adopted in June 2025.

Conservation Areas

Wyre Forest District Council has published Conservation Area Assessment or Appraisals which include character specific design guidance for each of the 17 conservation areas in the District. The Conservation Areas contained within the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Area are:

Churchill Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2014)

Churchill Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CA) was adopted in 1991 and revised in November 2014. Churchill Conservation Area encompasses a small rural hamlet containing buildings that mainly date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Appraisal can be found at the following link: <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/media/u2vn3gvd/20150116-churchill-ca-cappraisal-web-version.pdf>

Character Assessment

Worcestershire County Council has published Landscape Character Assessment Interactive Map.

The Interactive tool is an interactive tool for identifying the patterns and individual combinations of features – such as hedgerows, field shapes, woodland, land use, patterns of settlements and dwellings which make each type of landscape distinct.

The Interactive mapping tool can be found here: https://gis.worcestershire.gov.uk/website/LandscapeCharacter/?_gl=1*ux1brp*ga*OTgzMTI3MjMwLjE3NDI5ODE1MTY.*ga_RSBCTX039R*MTc0Mjk4NTYzMi4yLjEuMTc0Mjk4NjIwMy4wLjAuMA.

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