South Staffordshire Council

STATEMENT OF CASE

OF

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

INSPECTORATE REFERENCE:

APP/C3430/C/24/3346818

SECTION 174 TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

APPEAL BY:

Mr. Scott Folkes

SITE AT:

20 Springhill Park
Lower Penn
Staffordshire
WV4 4TS

Local Authority reference: 22/00007/UNDEV

CONTENTS

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Land Registry Title Register and Title Plan reference

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is prepared is respect of an appeal brought against the decision by South Staffordshire District Council in the following matters:

Section 174 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in the service an Enforcement Notice in respect of 20 Springhill Park, Lower Penn, Staffordshire. WV4 4TS

Appeal Reference: APP/C3430/C/24/3346818

2. SECTION 174 APPEAL AGAINST ENFORCEMENT NOTICE

2.1 The alleged breach of planning control is:

Construction of a wall and five pillars located in the position coloured green on the Plan attached to this notice, consisting of two sections of wall and five pillars, over 1 metre in height above ground level adjacent to the highway.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION AND REASONS FOR ISSUING THE NOTICE

3.1 The site comprises a detached two storey dwelling located on the northern side of Springhill Park. It is bordered to the east and west by further two storey dwellings, and to the north by residential properties in Wynne Crescent. The site as a whole lies within the defined development boundary of Showell Lane / Lloyd Hill

3.2 The reasons for issuing the Notice are:

1. It appears to the Council that the above breach of planning control has occurred within the last four years.
2. The constructed wall and five pillars fail to respect the character of the surrounding area and have introduced an incongruous, overly dominant feature, which is detrimental to the street scene and to the character of the area. This is contrary to policy EQ11 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy and to the guidance contained within the Council's adopted Village Design Guide.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

South Staffordshire Adopted Core Strategy

EQ11 – Conservation, Preservation and Protection of Heritage Assets.

South Staffordshire adopted Village Design Guide.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

25.05.2022 Planning application 22/00525/FUL submitted for 'Retrospective application for front boundary wall'. This application was refused on 20 July 2022.

6. SUMMARY OF EVENTS

6.1 The Council received a report of an unauthorised front boundary wall at 20 Springhill Park, Lower Penn om 7th January 2022.

6.2 A letter was sent to the owner of 20 Springhill Park dated 7th January 2022 outlining the breach of planning control and requesting contact to be made with the case officer.

6.3 The case officer had a telephone call with the owner on 17th January 2022 and requested a retrospective planning application to be submitted.

6.3 A retrospective planning application was submitted to retain the wall which was refused on 20th July 2022.

6.4 An appeal was submitted against the refusal to grant planning permission but the appeal was turned away by the Planning Inspectorate as it was out of time.

6.5 First Enforcement Notice issued on 20th September 2023 which was subsequently withdrawn due to an administrative error.

6.6 Second Enforcement Notice issued on 6th July 2024 which is subject of this appeal.

7. GROUNDS OF APPEAL

i. **Ground (a)** That planning permission should be granted for what is alleged in the notice.

ii. **Ground (e)** That the notice was not properly served on everyone with an interest in the land.

8. **<u>LPA RESPONSE TO GROUNDS OF APPEAL UNDER GROUND A-</u>** planning permission should be granted for what is alleged in the notice.

Impact on the character of the area

8.1 Policy EQ11 of the Core Strategy requires that new development "respect local character and distinctiveness, including that of the surrounding development and landscape […] by enhancing the positive attributes whilst mitigating the negative aspects", and that "in terms of scale, volume, massing and materials, development should contribute positively to the street scene and surrounding buildings, whilst respecting the scale of spaces and buildings in the local area."

8.2 The Council's 2018 Design Guide has been adopted and amplifies the principles set out in Policy EQ11 of the Core Strategy. The application site is within an estate that is relatively self-contained due to the configuration of roads between Showell Lane and Springhill Lane.

8.3 Whilst there are some roadside boundary walls within the area, these are predominately of a low height and the vast majority of property boundaries are either open or delineated by landscaping.

8.4 There are two properties eastwards of the application site [No.10 and No.8], where there is a high wall, however these have a limited width and are curved inwards, reducing their impact on the street scene, and therefore these walls are not comparable to the application site.

8.5 The wall that has been erected, is 1.8m high and extends across the entire width of the frontage and given its immediate surroundings of low boundary walls and landscaped boundaries, the constructed wall is an incongruous feature within the street scene.

8.6 As such, the proposal is detrimental to the street scene and to the wider character of the area. The Council's Village Design Guide states that applicants should "ensure boundaries are not visually intrusive……Usually it will be appropriate to continue the

pattern of adjacent boundaries (such as low walls, fences or hedges) as well as matching the building line and degree of set back from the pavement".

8.7 This development fails to respect its surroundings and introduces a visually intrusive feature into the street scene contrary to policy EQ11 and the Council's adopted Village Design Guide.

9.0 **LPA RESPONSE TO GROUNDS OF APPEAL UNDER GROUND E-** The notice was not properly served on everyone with an interest in the land.

9.1 A previous enforcement notice relating to the unauthorised pillar and wall boundary structure, dated 20 September 2023, was served on the appellant on 20th September 2023.

9.2 It was identified that the letter accompanying the enforcement notice dated 20 September 2023 had the incorrect breach alleged within the title of the letter. Whilst it was considered that the notice itself was served in accordance with section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, this error led to confusion for the recipients of the notice and therefore in the interests of those parties it was considered that the notice should be withdrawn.

9.3 A withdrawal of Enforcement Notice was authorised, dated 17th November 2023, and served on all parties who had been served with the notice, namely Scott Folkes (the appellant) and Debbie Folkes.

9.4 A second Enforcement Notice, subject of this appeal, was issued on 6th June 2024 under the second bite provision under section 171B(4)(b) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

9.5 The Notice subject of this appeal was served on all interested parties listed on the Land Registry Title Deed SF568771 (Appendix 1), namely Scott Folkes (the appellant) and Debbie Folkes.

10. CONCLUSION

9.1 The notice was properly served on everyone with an interest in the land.

9.2 The constructed wall fails to respect the character of the surrounding area and has introduced an incongruous, overly dominant feature into the street scene which is detrimental to the street scene and to the character of the area, contrary to policy EQ11 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy and to the guidance contained within the Council's adopted Village Design Guide.

9.3 The LPA's decision to take formal enforcement action accords with prevailing relevant national and local planning policy and guidance. It is therefore respectfully requested that the appeal is dismissed.

The electronic official copy of the register follows this message.

Please note that this is the only official copy we will issue. We will not issue a paper official copy.

Official copy of register of title

Title number SF568771 | Edition date 08.05.2018

- This official copy shows the entries on the register of title on 28 MAY 2024 at 18:10:05.
- This date must be quoted as the "search from date" in any official search application based on this copy.
- The date at the beginning of an entry is the date on which the entry was made in the register.
- Issued on 28 May 2024.
- Under s.67 of the Land Registration Act 2002, this copy is admissible in evidence to the same extent as the original.
- This title is dealt with by HM Land Registry, Birkenhead Office.

A: Property Register

This register describes the land and estate comprised in the title.

STAFFORDSHIRE : SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE

1 (13.12.2010) The Freehold land shown edged with red on the plan of the above title filed at the Registry and being 20 Springhill Park, Wolverhampton (WV4 4TS).

2 (13.12.2010) The Conveyance dated 10 May 1946 referred to in the Charges Register contains a provision as to light or air and other matters.

B: Proprietorship Register

This register specifies the class of title and identifies the owner. It contains any entries that affect the right of disposal.

Title absolute

1 (13.12.2010) PROPRIETOR: SCOTT DOUGLAS FOLKES and DEBBIE LOUISE FOLKES of 20 Springhill Park, Lower Penn, Wolverhampton WV4 4TS.

2 (13.12.2010) The price stated to have been paid on 29 October 2010 was £340,000.

3 (13.12.2010) The Transfer to the proprietor contains a covenant to observe and perform the covenants referred to in the Charges Register and of indemnity in respect thereof.

4 (13.12.2010) RESTRICTION: No disposition of the registered estate by the proprietor of the registered estate or by the proprietor of any registered charge, not being a charge registered before the entry of this restriction, is to be registered without a written consent signed by the proprietor for the time being of the Charge dated 29 October 2010 in favour of The Royal Bank of Scotland PLC referred to in the Charges Register.

C: Charges Register

This register contains any charges and other matters that affect the land.

1 (13.12.2010) If and so far as affected thereby the land is subject to the payment of a certain rent charges and other sums payable to the Trustees for the Inmates of Penn Almhouses and to the Trustees of Penn School.

By a Conveyance dated 11 November 1901 made between (1) John Roderick and Joseph Bennett Clarke and (2) Henry Herbert Ward it was stated that by a Conveyance dated 19 February 1900 made between (1) George Harry Bradney (2) John George Litton and George Henry Pownall (3) Thomas Francis Waterhouse and (4) Harriet Sophia Shaw Hellier and a Conveyance dated 9 November 1901 made between (1) Harry Sidney Pitt and Herbert William Hughes and (2) John Roderick and Joseph Bennett Clarke the land in this title was with other land informally exonerated from the payment of these sums.

No further details of the rentcharges or of the exonerations were supplied on first registration.

2 (13.12.2010) A Conveyance of the land in this title dated 10 May 1946 made between (1) Joseph Langford Mantle and (2) Gladys Elizabeth Sharratt contains restrictive covenants.

NOTE: Copy filed.

3 (13.12.2010) REGISTERED CHARGE dated 29 October 2010.

4 (08.05.2018) Proprietor: THE ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND PLC (Scot. Co. Regn. No. SC083026) of Mortgage Centre, P.O. Box 123, Greenock PA15 1EF.

End of register

Village Design Guide SPD 2009
Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans 2010
Open Space Strategy 2009

Delivery and Monitoring

Through Development Policy EQ13
LSP Environmental Quality Delivery Plan
Conservation Area Management Plans
Village Design Guide SPD (or subsequent revisions)

The monitoring arrangements are set out in the Monitoring Framework in Appendix 1.

Development Policies

7.58 The following Development Policies support Core Policy 4.

Policy EQ11: Wider Design Considerations

The design of all developments must be of the highest quality and the submission of design statements supporting and explaining the design components of proposals will be required. Proposals should be consistent with the design guidance set out in the adopted Village Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (or subsequent revisions) and be informed by any other local design statements.

Development proposals must seek to achieve creative and sustainable designs that take into account local character and distinctiveness, and reflect the principles set out below. The Council will encourage innovative design solutions.

A. Use

a) mixed use developments will be encouraged where the uses are compatible with and complementary to each other and to other uses in the existing community, and where the development will help support a range of services and public transport (existing or new);

b) proposals should where possible promote a density and mix of uses which create vitality and interest where appropriate to their setting;

B. Movement

c) opportunities should be taken to create and preserve layouts giving a choice of easy and alternative interconnecting routes, including access to facilities and public transport and offer a safe, attractive environment for all users;

d) provision should be made, especially within the proximity of homes, for safe and attractive walking and cycling conditions, including the provision of footpath links, cycleways and cycle parking facilities, and links to green infrastructure in accordance with Policies EV11 and HWB2;

C. Form

e) proposals should respect local character and distinctiveness including that of the surrounding development and landscape, in accordance with Policy EQ4, by enhancing the positive attributes whilst mitigating the negative aspects;

f) in terms of scale, volume, massing and materials, development should contribute positively to the streetscene and surrounding buildings, whilst respecting the scale of spaces and buildings in the local area;

g) development should relate to and respect any historic context of the site, including plot patterns and street layout taking account of the guidance contained in Policy EQ3;

h) development within or adjacent to a waterway corridor should take advantage of the waterside setting with an appropriate green corridor taking account of the aims and objectives of Policy HWB2;

i) development should take every opportunity to create good design that respects and safeguards key views, visual amenity, roofscapes, landmarks, and focal points;

j) development should take account of traditional design and forms of construction where appropriate, and avoid the use of inappropriate details;

k) development should incorporate high quality building design and detailing, with particular attention given to appropriately designed elements;

l) development must ensure a high standard of access for all and that safe and easy access is available to all potential users, regardless of ability, age or gender;

m) sustainable forms of development should be designed, incorporating renewable energy use, minimising waste production and providing opportunities for recycling, and minimising pollution. Development should seek to minimise water use including the incorporation of water recycling and harvesting, and ensure the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). Use or re-use of sustainable materials will be encouraged. Orientation and layout of development should maximise the potential for passive solar heating, taking account of the implications of solar heat gain;

D. Space

n) proposals should create pedestrian-friendly places that allow for necessary vehicular access;

o) places should be safe and secure, with effective natural surveillance;

p) well designed private and semi-private open space should be incorporated for all buildings, appropriate to the character of the area;

q) opportunities should be taken to support the development of a varied network of attractive, and usable publicly accessible spaces;

r) provision for parking should where possible be made in discreet but planned locations within the development;

s) design should seek to retain existing important species and habitats and maximise opportunities for habitat enhancement, creation and management in accordance with Policy EQ1.

The Council's Space About Dwelling standards are set out in Appendix 6.

Development proposals should be consistent with other local planning policies.

Explanation

7.59 The Council attaches significant importance to securing a high level of design quality in the District and this is reflected in the adopted Village Design Guide SPD (or subsequent revisions). The NPPF also refers to the importance of achieving high quality and inclusive design and the CABE publication "Making Design Policy Work" highlights a number of important issues to take into account in developing a policy approach to design.

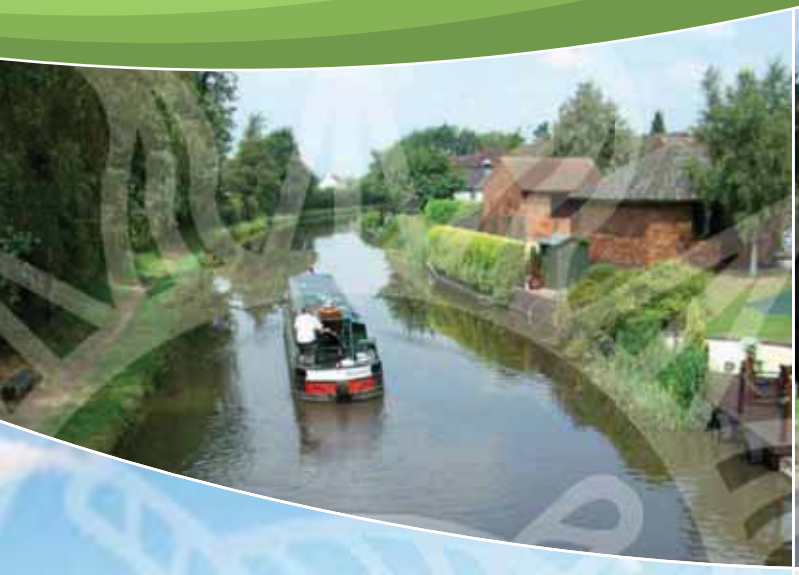
7.60 The design guidance set out in the above Policy identifies the importance of local character and distinctiveness, and gives guidance on achieving sustainable development, use, movement, form and space. Achieving safe designs will be important and issues relating to community safety are addressed in Core Policy 13 and Policy CS1.

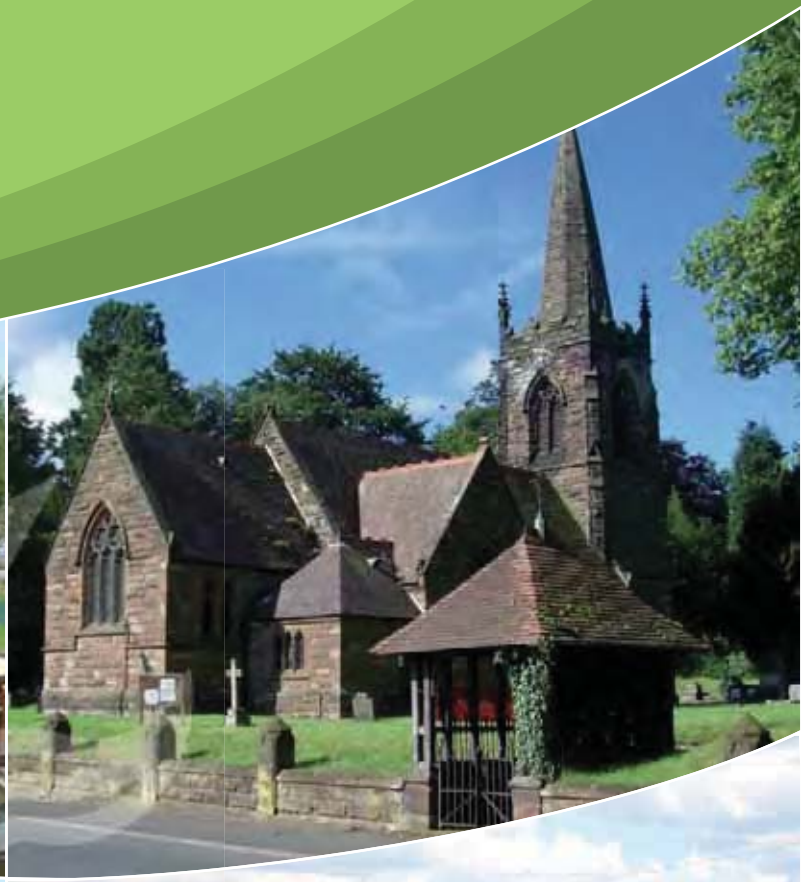
Key Evidence

Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2020
Southern Staffordshire Surface Water Management Plan Phase 1 2010
Planning for Landscape Change – Staffordshire County Council SPG 1996-

Village Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document





South Staffordshire Council

Adopted 15 September 2009

Preface

South Staffordshire is a special place. Located cheek-by-jowl with the urban areas of the West Midlands conurbation, and subject to constant pressure for development, it still retains a strong rural character. Landscapes within the District change from one part to another, reflecting differences in the underlying geology, and the location of villages within the landscape change too.

Protection of the Green Belt is an extremely high priority for the Council and residents have consistently expressed their desire for new development to respect the character of existing villages. The need to maintain the special interest of the District is not just important for residents. Visitors to South Staffordshire make a significant contribution to the local economy and ensuring that new development 'fits into' the local scene is an important element of maintaining the vitality of our villages.

The villages are a source of local pride and many are designated as conservation areas. Within these areas, and indeed throughout the whole District, there are noticeable differences in many buildings in terms of their materials, designs and details. These variations, known as local distinctiveness, give individual character to different parts of the District and in many cases there will be opportunities for this local character to be recognised and reinforced in new developments. Wherever new development is proposed, this guide advocates the highest standards using well-established principles of urban design as well as sustainable buildings that are highly energy efficient.

Publication of this guide represents a significant step forward for the Council in its commitment to the corporate aim, 'To be a Council which protects and enhances South Staffordshire's distinctive environment'.

The guide is intended for all those who are involved in the development process – including architects and developers, householders and planning consultants. It will be used as a basis against which new development is judged and assessed and will be an important tool for planning in South Staffordshire.

"I am delighted to commend it to you".
Councillor David Billson – Deputy Leader, Strategic Services

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1: Introduction

1: Introduction

1. The purpose of the Village Design Guide

1.1 This guide is intended to provide a basis to assist in the complementary development of the District, by focusing on the built characteristics which help to create the visual unity of the place.

1.2 South Staffordshire is defined by its landscape and the influence of its neighbouring areas. The District is a mainly rural area, comprising a collection of villages, which wraps around part of the West Midlands conurbation. As a consequence its character is established by the distinct sense of place created by the individual settlements and parishes. The parochial focus of the District, along with a shared social and built heritage contribute to establishing its over arching character as a 'Community of Communities' (South Staffordshire Council: Community Strategy).

1.3 The District offers a unique and attractive quality of life, with easy access to the West Midlands conurbation. The last 25 years has seen rapid housing growth in villages, and recent proposals for new employment have increased the need for guidance to ensure that new development does not compromise the environmental quality of the District.

2. Using the Village Design Guide

2.1 The guide aims to promote high quality design in all new development in South Staffordshire. It acts as a practical toolkit for: property owners, urban designers, developers, planners, and the local authority when considering development design, at both the major and minor scale. It encourages good practice in line with national and local design policy.

2.2 The Village Design Guide will be an important material consideration in determining planning applications and assessing design quality. The guide should act as a starting point to facilitate discussions between design practitioners, developers and the local authority, and more generally promote quality design across the District. The Village Design Guide includes tools which will be used to attempt to measure objectively the 'quality' of individual development proposals, and therefore justify decision making on planning applications.

2.3 It is expected that development proposals will be able to demonstrate consideration of the layers outlined in the Village Design Guide, and which build up to give an informed, locally appropriate design, as indicated in **Figure 1** (below).

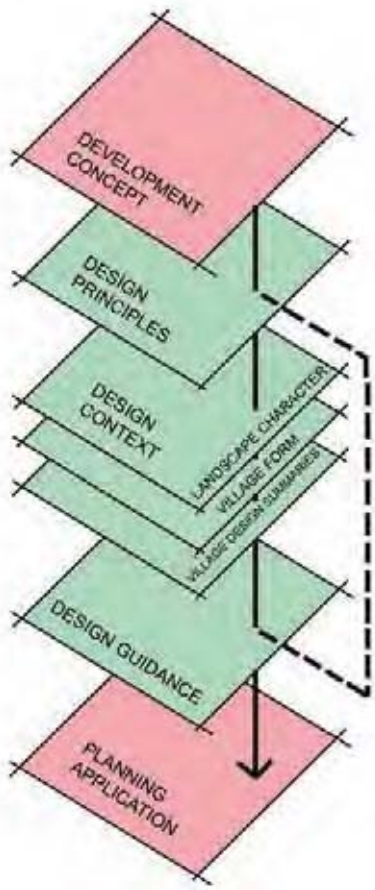


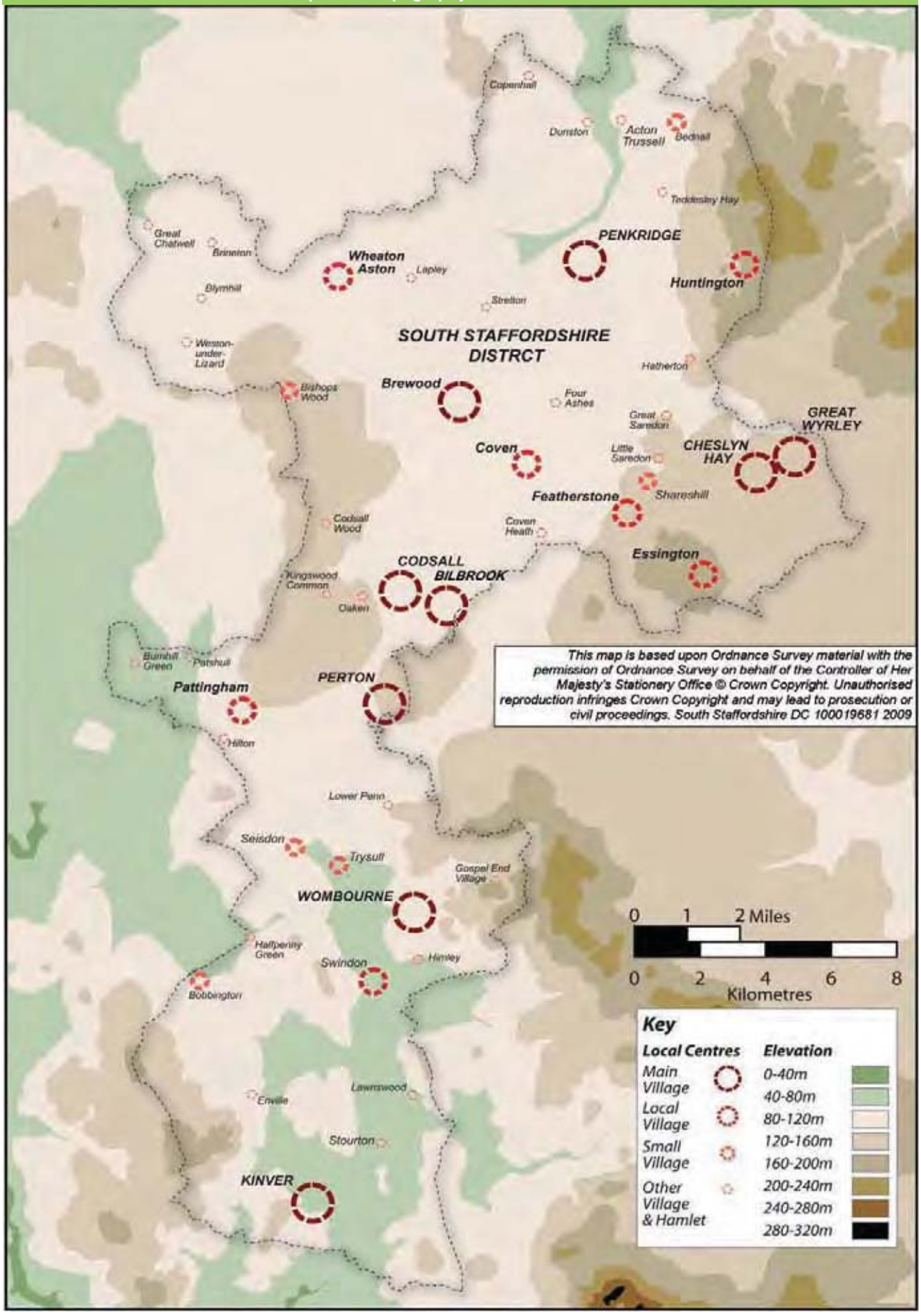
Figure 1: Layers of consideration for development proposals

3. Status of the Village Design Guide

3.1 The Village Design Guide was adopted by South Staffordshire Council on 15 September 2009 as a Supplementary Planning Document and in the implementation of Policy BE26, 'New Development Design Criteria', South Staffordshire Local Plan. As such, it is an important material consideration when determining planning applications and assessing design quality in new development (see Section 9).

3.2 The document is a supplement to local planning policies on design (See **Figure 2** on page 15), to provide detailed, practical advice for all those involved in the development process. The guidance incorporates relevant components of the following design quality analysis, creating a layering of approaches to development decision making.

Map 1: The topography of South Staffordshire



1: Introduction

4. Achieving development design quality

4.1 South Staffordshire Council is committed to raising design standards in all new development and expects high quality design to be the aim of all those involved in the development process. One of the Council's corporate aims is to: '*be a Council which protects and enhances South Staffordshire's distinctive environment*'. The challenge to developers and designers is therefore to achieve high standards of architecture and urban design in new development to create places which will attract admiration, now and in the future.

4.2 The Council expects this challenge to be met, and consequently presents this Village Design Guide to help achieve the following objectives - to:

- Improve the general quality of design in all new development across the District;
- Raise awareness of the importance and value of good urban design;
- Help developers to understand and meet the Council's and public's design expectations;
- Provide a basis for positive and efficient planning and decision making;
- Help avoid poor design and resulting planning delay or refusals;
- Inform and influence regeneration initiatives across the District and;
- Ensure that new development fits into the local scene.

4.3 The design guidance is therefore structured around a determination by the Council to improve the quality of life in the District, including through excellence in development design.

4.4 The overall aim is to ensure that high standards of design are met in new development, and that the distinctiveness of the District's environment is retained and improved. In this context 'new development' includes infills, single buildings, conversions and extensions.

4.5 Locally distinctive design is essential for creating sustainable development. The Village Design Guide, therefore, also highlights the importance of sustainability in new design, providing advice on incorporating energy efficient technologies into new development, as well as the use of sustainable materials and local materials.

An example of locally sensitive design

4.6 Consequently, the Council's objective is to increase design quality across South Staffordshire as a fundamental contributor to the quality of life and sustainability of the District.

4.7 Climate change is a key issue for everyone, including homeowners, businesses and developers. Improved design quality can have additional climate change benefits by:

- Facilitating energy efficiency within development design as a fundamental planning issue;
- Ensuring renewable energy generation is an essential site design issue;
- Reducing the need for travel by creating high quality local environments that facilitate pedestrian access to services;
- Designing layouts that give priority to pleasant direct travel by foot and bicycle to reduce dependency upon car travel;
- Ensuring street patterns give priority and afford safety for children, thereby minimising school journeys by car;
- Encouraging thoughtful design to reduce land-take and create interesting architectural compositions, combined with an integrated open-space pattern;
- Helping address the requirements of the Building Regulations and;
- Creating sustainable places.

5. The value of good design

5.1 Through careful and considered design, value can be added to a development. Research by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and others establishes a

range of potential benefits and values that can be generated from good design. Good design can:

- Add economic value as a percentage increase in saleable/rentable values;
- Help developments to sell or let more quickly;
- Enable more efficient use of land to generate development outputs;
- Create a value-added development by maximizing latent site opportunities;
- Create a legacy of environmental improvement and regeneration;
- Support and deliver transformational change to create new commercial markets;
- Generate health, education and community benefits;
- Create safer places, which are attractive to people and well used; and
- Support an improved quality of life.

5.2 The Village Design Guide will contribute to addressing the District's 'Quality of Life' by:

- Delivering a healthy, safe and attractive environment in which to live, work and relax;
- Facilitating healthy lifestyles through well-designed places that encourage pleasant walking and incorporate cycle routes;
- Creating places with a sense of peace, tranquillity and homeliness;
- Creating places that are valued, well-used and enjoyable, with greater self-policing and improved security and;
- Ensuring that places are open and welcoming.

5.3 Providing good quality design is proven to be important for the economy, providing good returns on investment because:

- Good quality workplaces attract staff;
- People maintain and improve a valued environment;
- Expenditure on leisure is attracted to quality places;
- Good design and quality spreads economic confidence over a wider area through a pump-priming effect and;
- Conversely, poor design downgrades its surroundings leading to significant public on-costs.

6. Measuring design quality

6.1 Good design does not have to be expensive or cost more than bad design. For example, higher specification, through materials may cost more initially, but a higher specification may bring a better return on investment. Nevertheless, good design is not simply about better specifications. It also covers the whole design of a development, including the response to its context, the layout, location and form.

6.2 Defining which aspects of 'good design' are to be valued - these include:

- An appropriate response to context, where new development is designed for its site, with carefully selected materials and detailing and account taken of the relationship to neighbours, concealment of detrimental views, accentuation of contours, topography, water, planting and historical and geological features;
- The effective use of the site's assets by exploring latent opportunities, such as views or canal side waterfronts, to inform the design of the development;
- A good urban structure - where the layout of development is permeable and well-related to its wider setting;
- Effective parking and servicing solutions to create efficient land use layouts;
- Integrated landscape design, so that open spaces are designed and located to be enjoyed;
- Achieving flexibility and variety in places to ensure that they are diverse and robust and can accommodate future change; and
- Ensuring that the development is fit for purpose and meets existing and future needs.

These basic design considerations contribute to achieving an 'inspirational design' and are expanded upon throughout this Village Design Guide.

7. 'Building for Life' - residential design

7.1 This design guide has been drafted to reflect the CABE/Home Builders Federation guidance 'Building for Life' (2008). This sets out 20 criteria under four general headings to assess: character, roads, design and construction, environment and community. The national design guidance in 'Building for Life' should be read alongside the locally specific guidance in this Village Design Guide.

2: Fundamental Principles of Development Design Quality

2: Fundamental Principles of Development Design Quality

1. Overview

1.1 South Staffordshire's rural nature and the modest size of it's settlements means that any small or large scale development can have a disproportionate impact on the character of the villages.

1.2 Large scale developments have the potential to enhance or regenerate the character of a settlement significantly, perhaps involving the creation of new neighbourhoods or places, which should complement and strengthen the character of an existing village. In contrast, the same effect can be achieved by the cumulative effect of smaller scale developments. It is, therefore, important that a consistent and cohesive quality is achieved in relatively minor development, such as new infill or the conversion and extension of existing buildings, to sustain village character.

1.3 It is a key objective of the Council to ensure that all new development makes a positive contribution to the fabric, visual character and enjoyment of the villages within the District. Fundamental design considerations which should be used to demonstrate and measure development quality are set out below.

2. Understanding Physical Context

2.1 In such a diverse landscape as South Staffordshire it is essential for potential developers to demonstrate an understanding of a site's physical context. Every site is unique and it is essential to understand those aspects which make it distinctive before committing to a design approach.

2.2 It is, therefore, first important to consider the basic components of each site when preparing design solutions using an audit of its:

- landscape and topographical setting;
- existing built character and the qualities of the adjacent built fabric;
- relationship to the village settlement pattern and street scape; and
- current use and functions.

2.3 Staffordshire County Council's Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is a complementary data set to their Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). It provides detailed and specific information on the evolution of the area's landscape, as well as an evidence base on the surviving aspects of its historic character. The County Council has a completed HLC and is in the process of developing an integrated assessment framework using both the LCA and HLC.

Focus on understanding the site's context

3. Site audit

3.1 Development proposals are never prepared in the abstract, so there will always have been some consideration of how to achieve the desired development. The extent and detail of such a site audit will clearly vary depending on the scale of the site. However, such analysis should be shared to demonstrate an understanding of the key factors affecting the site. This analysis should accompany all planning applications, and preferably be included in a Design and Access Statement to clarify how the analysis has informed the development's design.

3.2 Larger development proposals, or sensitive sites, will require more extensive and comprehensive audits, but all should include as a minimum: descriptive plans; photography and written explanation to describe the site. **Figure 2** opposite illustrates a list of key development design issues which could be relevant to a site audit.

3.3 Development proposals should make reference to the County HLC and its practical use and application should also form part of their recommendations on site audits.

Figure 2: Site Audit Checklist

Site audit components	Focus of analysis
Topography & terrain	Existing site levels: prominence, dominance, concealment contours and shapes, which influence how development fits in the land or street scape or built fabric.
Climate & exposure	Local climatic considerations, relating to location, exposure or degree of shelter.
Geology & soils	(a) The local stone and bedrock, which may have potential use in vernacular construction or be a focus as a rock exposure; (b) The potential for ground contamination and; (c) Existence of underground services and/or pipelines and easements.
Water & hydrology	(a) Local water features, natural drainage or wetland areas that can contribute to the character and biodiversity of the development and; (b) The potential flood risk.
Landscape setting & Vegetation	The extent, condition and character of trees, hedgerows, green spaces and other natural features which could influence the site layout, its landscape form and enhance the its biodiversity. The County Council's Historic Landscape Character (HLC) project has been instrumental in identifying overall date and origins for the District's distinctive landscapes.
Orientation	The site's relationship to the path of the sun, with the aim of maximising the southerly orientation and minimising over-shadowing of buildings and gardens.
Habitats, ecology & wildlife	The existing biodiversity of the site, its protected status, and the potential for enhancement.
Village scape character	(a) The relationships between groups of buildings including: building lines; corner relationships, local features and landmarks, key vistas and viewpoints; (b) The form, proportions and shape of the spaces defined by street facades, which, to a large degree, determines the character of existing village patterns and gives an infinity of possibilities for the layout of new developments and; (c) The importance of defining and considering such spatial relationships to which the particular features mentioned above are subordinate.
Settlement pattern	The adjacent and nearby street patterns which inform the approach to laying out new streets, to ensure new development reflects the positive aspects of its character and maintains the established settlement form.
Boundaries & edges	The public face(s) of a site are very significant as these create the first impression and have an important contribution to make to the character of the site.
Historic environment	(a) Historic buildings - indicating place evolution and cues for new design; (b) Listed buildings which may need to be integrated into the development; (c) Archaeological potential - above or below ground; (d) Conservations areas - where new development must preserve or enhance their special character; (e) Historic parks and gardens (f) Vernacular buildings - their character and characteristics and; (g) Local history - buildings included on the local list. (h) Historic Landscape Character – an assessment to identify historic depth and local distinctiveness across the District.
Building materials	The type, colours, texture, and finish for walling, roofing and component materials, both evident on site and within the local context. Locally traditional materials and vernacular components such as windows and doors are particularly important as these can help emphasise distinctiveness.
Existing built form	The precedent set by existing buildings on, or near the site in terms of their: height, scale, form, massing, skyline and roof scape.
Routes & street structure	(a) existing streets and traffic routes, including the scope for integration between new and existing routes; (b) Existing rights of way across or alongside sites and; (c) Existing and future pedestrian access.
Pedestrian lines or meeting places	(a) Public rights of way; (b) Understanding how people could use a site, including new open spaces and; (c) The role of meeting places, schools, shops and village centres as points of origin and destination.

2: Fundamental Principles of Development Design Quality

4. Complementary development

4.1 The Council's fundamental design objective is to stimulate development responsive to its neighbours. In order that new development shall complement and contribute to the continuing evaluation of the District's villages, it is essential that new designs, whilst being 'contemporary', i.e. of the present time and place, are part of the evolving built tradition in respect of their form, siting, materials and features.

4.2 This does not necessarily mean adopting a particular architectural style. However, it is essential that all new development is read as a positive contributor to the fabric of the place. This may mean remaining visually deferential to a valued street scape. Alternatively, where the scale is relevant and the site's immediate context is of poorer quality, the new development may need to accept the responsibility for creating a recognisable design enhancement within the village. In such circumstances the inspiration for the development design will still need to be drawn from the village context, rather than appearing alien to its wider context. In these instances the potential character-defining impact of the new development should mean that its built quality is raised to stimulate the regeneration of the site.

4.3 In considering building design, the Council will normally expect the following fundamental design parameters to be followed for all development:

- New development should make a positive contribution to the fabric of the village;
- Development designs should clearly demonstrate how they have responded to the challenges and opportunities of the site and context;
- The design of individual new buildings should lead naturally to architectural compositions of great beauty, where their grouping and sensitivity to their surroundings gives rise to an outcome 'greater than the sum of its parts'.
- Anonymous or standardised designs will not normally be acceptable;
- The functions of the building should be fully considered to ensure integration of services to avoid compromising key elevations; and
- Buildings should be capable of adaptation to accommodate potential changes in function without compromise to the development's design.

New development should complement existing character

5. Vernacular or traditional Design?

5.1 The adoption of 'traditional' styles for new development can be effective in integrating buildings into the village fabric. However successfully accommodating modern services into historic buildings, may require some sensitive compromises. Equally, the performance expectation of new buildings, in terms of comfort and facilities, means that re-creations of traditional vernacular building most often reflect, rather than reproduce, their predecessors' values.

5.2 It is of course feasible for new buildings to reflect the appearance of existing traditional buildings, so that fundamentals of scale, proportion, colour and texture enable them to quietly contribute to the established built fabric. Adoption of this approach will enable new development to appear comfortable, and develop a sense of belonging to the context.

5.3 Where historical precedents are used as the inspiration for the design and appearance of new buildings, the architectural details of the building

must be both convincingly authentic and relevant to the local built vernacular. This will require specific attention to accuracy in plan form, materials and the depth and texture of elevations so that the building avoids becoming a crude imitation of its more historical neighbours. The use of authentic local materials, attention to fenestration patterns and retaining depth in elevations should be a basic consideration in achieving convincing new buildings which adopt a vernacular or historicist design.

6. Contemporary development design

6.1 The Council will support well-mannered architecture of the present time and place which complements the character of the particular village and responds creatively to the challenges of the individual site and context, whilst being part of the evolving built tradition in respect of its form, siting, materials and features.

6.2 When new development is designed in an overtly contemporary style, it is important to ensure that the massing, scale, proportion, materials and elevation textures are appropriate to the established village character. Careful attention to these fundamental issues will enable innovative or even experimental new designs to be effectively integrated into the existing built fabric. However, for such challenging designs it is incumbent on the developer to demonstrate the appropriateness and quality of the design as a positive contributor to the village.

6.3 Designs may also be acceptable where buildings use sustainable materials and technologies in line with emerging best practice and advice. In meeting the required standards these should still reflect local massing, scale proportion and detailing.

7. Integrity and quality of materials

7.1 Given the relatively modest scale of the villages in South Staffordshire, and the consequent prominence of even small-scale development, it is clear that attention to the local relevance, integrity and quality of materials should be as high as possible. There will usually be a preference for materials sourced from the area or local historical precedent, as these will evidently be the easiest to integrate into the fabric of the village and reinforce its distinctiveness.

Inspiration from historic materials and techniques

7.2 The most important factor in considering appropriate materials for new development design is to ensure that their form, colour, texture and proportion are evidently related to the particular building and complement the village street scape. There may be opportunities to introduce new materials which harmonise with the existing, so long as they result in a coherent extension to the local palette of materials.

8. Increasing village 'legibility' to create a sense of place

8.1 'Legibility' is the ease with which the village is interpreted and understood as a place. Highly legible places will have a clear character and will facilitate ease of movement within the street patterns, using buildings as local landmarks. All development design should, therefore, contribute to enhancing the legibility of individual villages by being clearly borne out of its local context.

8.2 The District's village core areas tend to be clearly legible, because they have the benefit of gradually evolving with street patterns that consequently become familiar. However, latter day, large-scale development can lead to an insular imposed

uniformity of development layout, creating areas with little evident relationship with the historic core, other than by proximity.

8.3 Consequently, large developments need to focus on designing-in legibility by creating street scapes that are locally inspired, connecting to the wider village context. This could mean considering the creation of new distinctive character areas which complement and reinforce the cohesion of the wider village, as well as clearly establishing their own place and identity. Fundamentally, new neighbourhood character areas must be appropriate to the landscape and individual context, as well as being well-related to one another, to achieve an authentic balance of interest, harmony and variety, and create a positive sense of place.

8.4 Prominent locations, such as village entrances, corner sites or infill sites within core areas present key opportunities to improve legibility on the smaller development scale. In these areas the design of individual buildings should help to create positive features and local landmarks. These can be reference points within the village through the detailing, design, scale and form, and should always be positive.

9. Creating a well-connected structure for larger development sites

9.1 A satisfying and successful large-scale development will have routes that are well integrated into the village structure, with new streets creating good connectivity for vehicles and pedestrians. Fundamentally, developments should provide a network of streets, which focus foremost on making walking and cycling easy and direct, and thus limit the local use of vehicles.

9.2 All larger, new village developments should establish a clear street hierarchy, with the more heavily-trafficked 'primary' streets, providing peripheral access, and with more pedestrian-friendly streets integrated into the established fabric via a hierarchy of 'secondary' and, 'tertiary' streets. Where appropriate, for larger development, a transportation framework should set out the structure and movement arrangements for the site and define the street hierarchy, making clear the connections into the wider village and landscape context.

New development should connect to landscape setting

9.3 New development frontages within villages should always face the movement network and positively overlook public areas. The emphasis on enhancing green space in the villages will also encourage private gardens to be located together within the interior of a new block, enabling a maximisation of both privacy and networks of open land to be connected. It is also a fundamental requirement that buildings should always define new development blocks, not only to enable frontages to overlook the streets, but also to create opportunities for local landmarks.

9.4 Open spaces within villages should always have a clear function. Their location should create focal points and provide usable habitats within their fabric. Whatever the scale and nature of the open spaces created, they should be overlooked by building frontages, incorporate tree planting and be positioned at prominent locations within the street network.

10. Ease of access

10.1 The modest scale of the District's villages fundamentally requires ease and accessibility of movement by pedestrians. All new development

should, therefore, facilitate enhanced walking and cycling, to limit car journeys. Pedestrian permeability is essential in new development to create a choice of routes through an area. This requires a focus on a pedestrian-orientated, built structure and an accessible and welcoming public realm.

10.2 New street scapes and paths should all be designed to be accessible for people in wheelchairs, or using buggies and pushchairs. This will mean ensuring integration of accessible features into the movement network. Similarly, development design should make a positive contribution to creating places which are accessible for people with impaired mobility. In designing the buildings and public realm, design attention should focus on how the place will be accessed and used. Designers should strive to exceed the basic accessibility standards set out in Part M of the Building Regulations.

10.3 The priority within the village structure should be given to pedestrian movement. Traffic movement should not be allowed to dominate village roads, which should be pedestrian focused.

10.4 Similarly, parking accommodation should be discreetly located, avoiding large areas of surface car parking, integrating extensive landscaping into the existing spaces.

11. The importance of spatial coherence

11.1 Historically the village core areas and street network will be formed by buildings which create a degree of spatial coherence through continuity and enclosure. This fundamental principle should equally apply to new development.

11.2 However, it is not necessary for all buildings to be at the back of the footway, or that a solid 'wall' of buildings is required to enclose streets, as continuity, particularly in the more peripheral, lower-density parts of villages can be achieved as much by the boundary treatment as the buildings. The important issue is to establish visual coherence in the street scape by focusing on the established spatial context and seeking to complement that structure.

12. Richness through diversity and variety

12.1 It is important for the sake of their vitality that villages retain or enhance their mix of uses. This will also contribute to the long-term sustainability and provide variety and greater choice for potential users. Historically villages would have comprised a greater variety of uses. Consequently, where neighbourhoods are being developed, the block development should always introduce richness through a mix of housing type, size and tenure, to ensure variety and flexibility across the village.

Richness of street scape created by variety of building forms

12.2 The need for richness of form and use will create a greater focus on the quality of good design, as artificially creating a mixed-use development requires careful attention to detail and functions. Mixed development echoing demographic diversity as regards family sizes and age structure can create richly-varying architectural compositions especially when designed in conjunction with integral open-space which gives opportunities to achieve both 'openness' and tree planting space with substantial land economy. Creative design solutions will provide efficient higher-density developments, responding to the contextual challenges set by the particular village.

2: Fundamental Principles of Development Design Quality

13. Creating an enhanced landscape and quality public realm

13.1 The rural nature of South Staffordshire means that its topography and landscape should be essential stimuli to the design of development. Integration of its natural features into the village structure will enhance its rural connections and network of green spaces. Therefore mature landscape features should be retained on site, with new development designed around mature trees, in particular to create an immediate impact on the development that might otherwise take many years to establish.

13.2 Villages should always appear functional, simple, accessible, robust and uncluttered. New planting should always be incorporated into new developments to create amenity space and local biodiversity.

13.3 The Council will normally expect new development to contribute towards the improvement of the public realm proportionately to its scale, possibly by creating new open spaces or investment in public art. New open space design should consider its long-term maintenance and management, including use of quality materials. Proposals should also demonstrate viable financial arrangements for maintaining new open spaces and show due consideration of hard landscaping, such as the quality and condition of the street scape, through reference to the West Midlands Streets for All Guidance Manual and similar guidance.

14. Accommodating car parking and servicing

14.1 To avoid compromising village fabric, car parking and servicing arrangements should focus on locating vehicles discreetly. Public parking areas should be carefully designed and incorporate tree planting.

14.2 Within larger new housing development rear courtyard parking may be the discreet and practical, although it will need to be overlooked from nearby development. On-street parking will be encouraged to service commercial areas via integral bays, where they may also contribute to traffic calming.

14.3 Within more modest new development in the village core, subject to ground levels, basement or sub-basement parking should be used to make efficient use of land and help reduce the visual dominance of parked cars.

Parking located discreetly on-site

14.4 Similarly, service areas should be accessible, but have a limited impact on the public realm or main village fabric; ideally located to avoid creating unattractive edges. Associated noise and light from service areas should be considered with regard to its impact on existing neighbours or premises.

15. Shop fronts and signage

15.1 Most of the villages contain some shop units and their design can have a significant impact on the character of the street. Well-designed frontages will create vitality and vibrancy in the street. Poor shop fronts will deaden streets and undermine the quality of the built fabric and public realm. As with all development, shop fronts should be well-proportioned to the building as well as to the street scape. In conservation areas they should also conform with the Council's 'Design of Shop Fronts & Signs in Conservation Areas' (1989).

15.2 In order to achieve this shop fronts should:

- Maintain historic shop fronts or their established proportions;

- Ensure proposals for alterations to shop fronts include full details of signage within proposals or planning applications;
- Be clearly related to the scale and proportion of the buildings of which they are an integral part;
- Maintain a sensitive approach to materials colours and texture relevant to the particular building and street scape;
- Ensure fascia signage, branding, hanging signage and other forms of branding are carefully designed and in keeping with the existing building and context;
- Ensure lighting is minimised, subtle and carefully integrated into the design. Internally illuminated, plastic fascia signage boxes should usually be avoided;
- Avoid standardised, corporate designs, which are not designed for the particular building or village;
- Ensure that security features are subtle. Where there is an identifiable requirement for security shutters these should be of latticed design to retain views into the shop.

16. Designing for sustainable development

16.1 In accordance with its Climate Change Strategy (2007), the Council is committed to securing sustainable development in South Staffordshire. New design should seek to exceed standards of sustainable design set out through the Building Regulations, with detailed consideration of environmental performance being demonstrated in all development proposals.

16.2 Developers will be required to demonstrate environmental performance through recognised environmental measurement systems. Residential development will be required to meet at least Level 3 in the 'Code for Sustainable Homes'. Non-residential development should use an equivalent of Building Research Establishments Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) and meet 'very good' standard as a minimum. It will be expected that the standard to be achieved will rise as technology improves.

16.3 High quality design is the key factor in securing innovative sustainable development. The following fundamental objectives should be considered in relation to sustainable design:

- National and regional policy requires larger developments to incorporate on-site renewable energy equipment to generate 10% of the energy demand from renewable energy sources. This threshold will be reviewed to reflect local circumstance in the Core Strategy;
- Where the site allows, buildings should be orientated to maximise opportunities for utilising the energy of the sun;
- Ensure building design permits natural lighting, ventilation, heating and cooling, reducing the need for mechanical conditioning of buildings;
- Incorporate sustainable drainage measures into buildings and sites to reduce surface water run off into the sewer network, and facilitate opportunities for biodiversity enhancement;
- Ensure adequate space for waste containers;
- Try to use locally sourced materials to avoid transport costs and enhance local distinctiveness;
- Enhance the network of green space and planting within all new developments to create opportunities for habitats and enhance biodiversity; and
- Ensure energy efficient fittings and appliances are included where these are to be provided as part of a development.

Examples of sustainable approaches to development

16.4 The Council will encourage continuous innovation in building construction techniques to minimise waste and improve thermal performance and quality. The Council will expect developers to outline the environmental performance of new buildings, where appropriate, in any Design and Access Statement.

17. Designing for adaptability

17.1 New development should be both durable and capable of being adapted over time, without substantial alteration. Most older buildings have served a variety of purposes, but have been successfully adapted to accommodate new uses.

17.2 To secure the long-term sustainable use of buildings emphasis should be laid on the flexibility and quality of internal spaces. This 'future-proofing' of buildings at the initial design stage will ensure that new development is able to withstand market, technological and social change. This is as important for residential property to accommodate an ageing society as commercial property.

17.3 New design, therefore, should aim to achieve adaptable and flexible development by:

- Ensuring, where feasible, that plots comprise scope to accommodate possible future expansion, preferably at the rear;
- Designing interior spaces to be flexible, including generous ceiling heights and simple stairs, and broad internal spans able to facilitate a variety of uses;
- Ensuring that prominent locations include accessible units with building depths, and formats flexible enough to provide scope for changing use over time and;
- Managing service requirements to ensure ease of servicing and flexibility and change of internal sub-divisions.

18. Designing for safety

18.1 Development design should contribute to increasing safety and reducing opportunities to commit crime. (See also Section 6: 4.6 - 4.7)

18.2 This will require designing to create places where natural surveillance is optimised for streets and open spaces. In particular, new development should create safer, more accessible places by:

- Ensuring that building design avoids blank frontages to the public realm;
- Ensuring clarity of definition of public and private places and minimising unstructured spaces and 'hideaways' within the layout, ensuring clear views along streets and access points to buildings and avoid unstructured 'left over' spaces;
- Facilitating active well-connected streets, integrated with busy routes, providing options where feasible;
- Designing in security measures to buildings to avoiding retro-fitting that will compromise the fabric of buildings or places;
- Minimising street furniture and urbanising street clutter within the public realm, while ensuring provision for people with impaired mobility;
- Securing effective management and maintenance of public and private areas; and
- Ensuring the built environment is well-lit after dark and well overlooked from nearby building frontages to maximise scope for informal surveillance.

18.3 The methodology to demonstrate the safety of new development should be included with development proposals, as part of the Design and Access Statement.

19. Designing out crime

19.1 The built environment does not cause crime – but crime can flourish within certain types of development. New residential developments should aim to create a safe environment for people to live. It is therefore important to consider crime prevention issues during the design process.

19.2 Key areas to address are:

• defensible space – clear definition of the private and public realm.

• design so as to create natural supervision of parking and play space

• pedestrian routes that are well related to other housing

• good, sensitively sited, lighting.

19.3 Further information and advice on crime prevention can be found within the Crime and Disorder section of the South Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership's Community Safety Strategy. Developers are also encouraged to follow the Police 'Secured by Design' initiative.

3: Understanding South Staffordshire's Landscape Character

3: Understanding South Staffordshire's Landscape Character

1. Overview

1.1 South Staffordshire is in essence a rural area, but is a District of great visual diversity, which includes some extensive settlements. Consequently, it is important to understand the evolution of the fabric of the District, in order to ensure that future development is based on an appropriate analysis of the area's physical context.

1.2 The fundamental requirement for any new development in South Staffordshire is that it should complement or enhance the local identity of the relevant village. Therefore, this section is designed to outline key landscape and built fabric characteristics in order to inform both the prospective developer of the Council's underlying expectations and justify the detailed design guidance presented in the latter chapters.

1.3 The character of South Staffordshire is, of course, influenced by the combination of its geology, landscape and settlement pattern. It comprises a collection of interrelated places which combine to create a visually rich environment. Consequently, protecting and enhancing those elements that contribute to the character of the District must be a key aspect of new development design.

1.4 Poor design at whatever scale will compromise locally distinctive patterns of village development, and erode the positive qualities of the District's character. The common use of standardised building designs and layouts, or the creeping 'suburbanisation' of rural settlements, resulting from poorly conceived building additions or village extensions, will have particularly significant impact on essential village characteristics.

1.5 To enable the distinctive characteristics of South Staffordshire to be understood, this section sets out a descriptive analysis to explain the essential relationships between the components of the District's character. These components are considered as following:

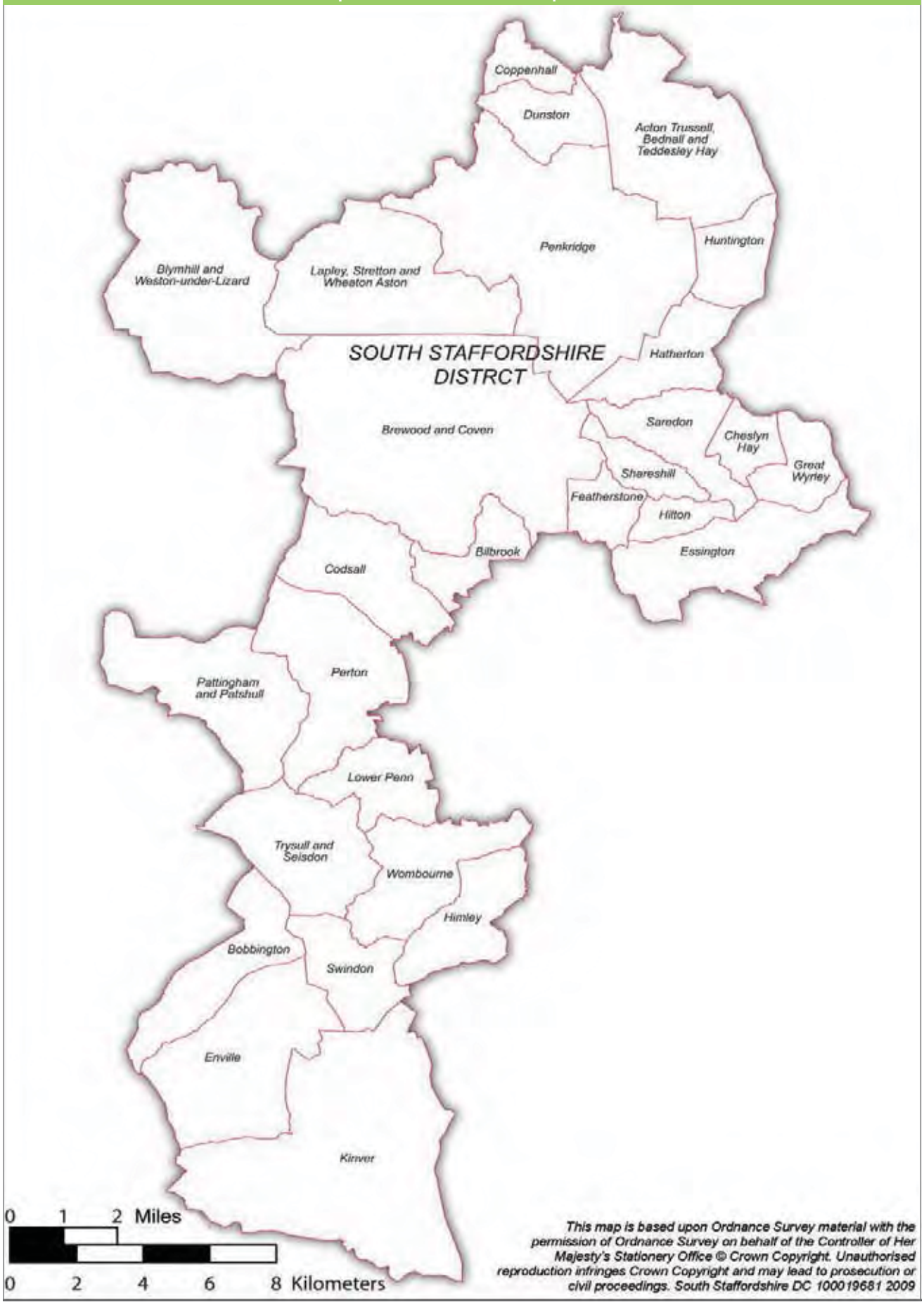
a) **Landscape character areas** – focusing on the patterns of the landscape, indicating the overall form, geology, vegetation and the broad grouping of buildings and villages. Here reference to Staffordshire County Council's HLC can be used to inform the broad landscape context (see section 2.3 on page 14). Design implications for the protection or restoration of landscape features are then identified. Natural England promotes the concept of 'Green Infrastructure' as a way of delivering a wide range of benefits for people and the natural environment. Further information can be found in Natural England's 'Green Infrastructure Guidance' (NE 176) and their 'Green Infrastructure Strategies' (NE 139). Reference should also be made to the West Midlands Regional Assembly's 'Green Infrastructure – A Prospectus for the West Midlands Region.';

b) **Village design summaries** – examining key characteristics of the larger villages and outlining relevant local design principles related to their street patterns, network of open spaces and development constraints. Existing conservation area appraisals and other relevant data sets, such as local lists, and Staffordshire County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) are relevant here. Another important source of evidence is the countywide survey of historic farmsteads. This maps and characterises the county's historic farmstead resource and builds and expands upon preliminary character statements produced by English Heritage. This information is also available from the county council;

c) **Characteristic building materials** – identifying locally distinctive building materials, emphasising the design influence these have for modern development design. Sections highlighting these are included in each Village Summary in Section 4 of this Village Design Guide, beginning on page 42.

d) **Historic Landscape Character** – can be used to identify the historic context of villages through an appraisal of surviving and legible historic landscapes and in conjunction with information from the Historic Environment Record (HER). Some field systems are likely to be closely associated with the formation of the villages in the medieval period and are consequently important to an understanding of the relationship between the village and its hinterland.

Map 2 : South Staffordshire's parishes



3: Understanding South Staffordshire's Landscape Character

2 Landscape character areas

2.1 The character of South Staffordshire is a reflection of three main landscape character types described as: the Staffordshire Plain; the Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau and 'Cannock Chase and Cankwood'. These are discussed below, and are shown on Map 3 opposite.

2.2 Staffordshire sits astride the boundary between the foothills of the Pennine Chain and the lower, gentler landscapes to the south. This creates a countywide diversity which is reflected in more subtle contrasts in South Staffordshire. The District as a whole is spatially dominated by former agricultural estates. While these have diminished in size, they survive as pockets, within an agricultural landscape and encapsulate the over arching rural, character.

2.3 The rural character of the District strongly contrasts with the neighbouring, more urban areas of Cannock, Dudley, Stafford, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The designated 'Green Belt' boundaries have been largely successful in retaining the distinctive edge of the urban areas, although this continues to be eroded by pressure from development. The rural-urban separation is one of the more sensitive and important characteristics of the District, and is essential to maintaining local identity. It is consequently a fundamental development design issue to be addressed, particularly on the eastern parishes.

2.4 To the north and west of the District the extensive gentle rolling countryside is enclosed by strong field patterns and large farmsteads. These are regularly spaced throughout the landscape, enclosing largely pastoral farming. This gentle, overtly rural landscape becomes more urbanised as one moves to the north east end of the District, bordering the adjacent urban areas. This has a much more diverse landscape of industrial, agricultural, residential and recreational uses, with some sprawling former coal mining settlements. The Design Guide aims to provide relevant guidance to address the breadth of the District's character.

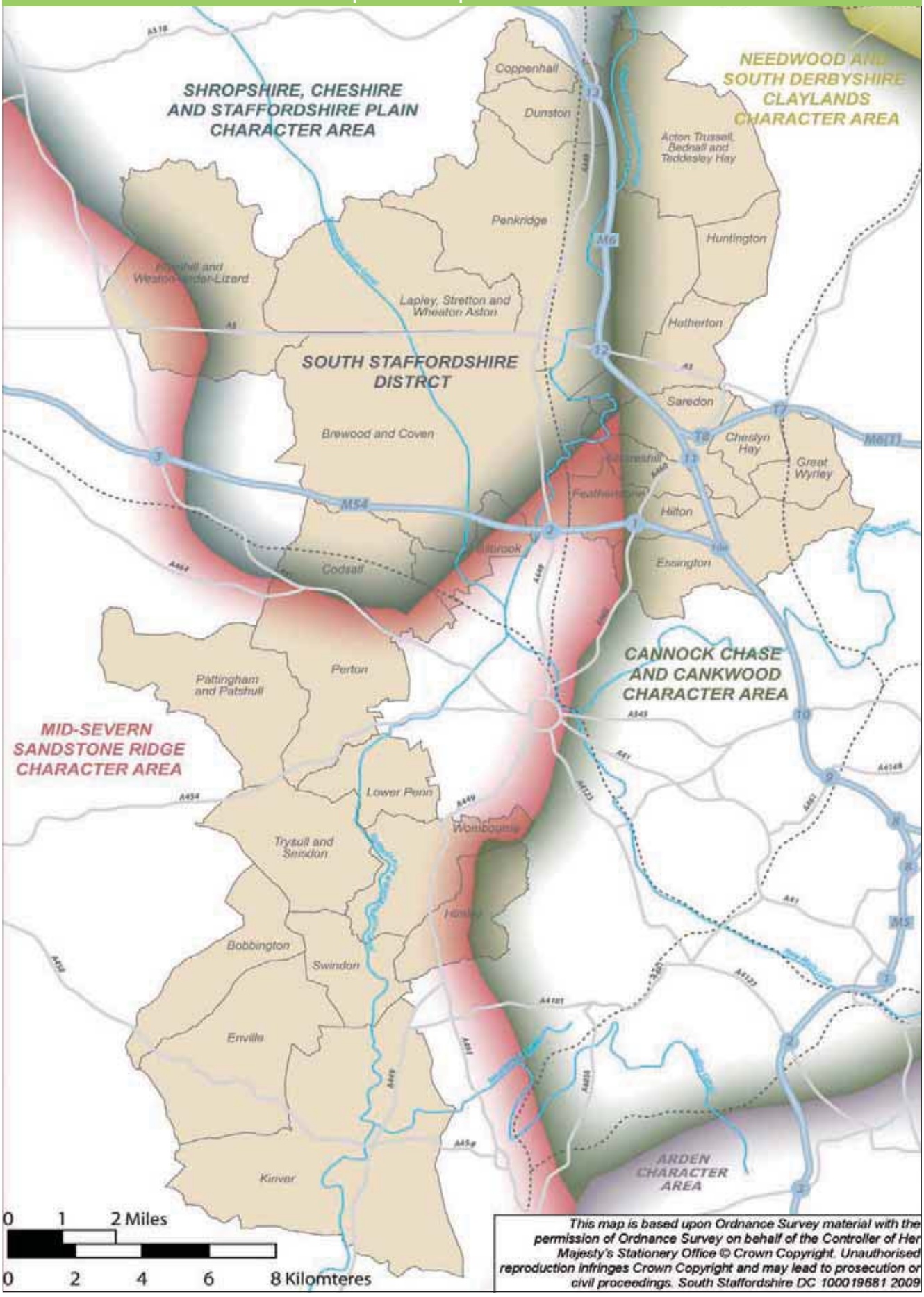
2.5 The historically strategic nature of South Staffordshire is emphasised by the variety of transport corridors which intersect within the District, and have a substantial impact on the fabric and form of the it's settlements. These include the east-west route of the former Roman Road Watling Street (A5), which runs parallel to the visually more aggressive M54. Running roughly north–south, the M6 has a major impact on the compartmentalisation of the District's landscape character. Similarly the corridor created by the A449, a major route into the urban core of Wolverhampton. Despite these, transport between villages north-south remains poor. The Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and the railway, also create enclosures though the District. Two further canal corridors branch away from the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal: the Shropshire Union Canal leading northwest through Upper Pendeford and Wheaton Aston and the Stourbridge Canal leading east towards Stourbridge at Stourton. These transport corridors have significant design implications for the District, both in terms of addressing and mitigating the impact of the motorway and railway enclosures, and connecting into the recreational and habitat potential of the canal corridors.

2.6 The District has a relatively diverse farming pattern. The high quality of agricultural land in South Staffordshire, aligned with the good communications network, gives farm businesses the relative flexibility to adapt to changing markets. However, the same proximity to markets, combined with the impact of agricultural diversification, urban expansion and pressures for recreational access to the countryside, create additional development pressures on the rural character of the area.

2.7 The distinctive character of the District, as a component of Staffordshire, is also influenced by the form of the settlements and the materials of the rural buildings. Historically these include the features such as square panelled, box-frame timber framed buildings. However, South Staffordshire is distinguished to a greater degree by the early and widespread use of brick. This material use extends across the range from the great estate houses, such as Chillington Hall, through substantial three-storey brick farm houses, down to modest colliery terraces. The implications and design cues which emerge from the historic fabric of the District are explored below for each character area.

2.8 The northern and southern parts of the District are also split by a particularly significant landscape feature. The prominent sandstone ridge that extends from Wolverhampton out to Pattingham and beyond forms an important watershed. North of this line i.e. the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain drains to the River Trent. South of the ridge i.e. the mid-Severn Sandstone ridge all drains to the River Severn.

Map 3 : Landscape character areas



3 Staffordshire Plain

3.1 The north-western parishes of South Staffordshire form part of the southern extent of the Staffordshire Plain. This is in itself part of the more extensive area defined by the former Countryside Commission and English Nature as 'Regional Area 61'. It broadly covers the parishes of: Codsall; Brewood & Coven; Blymhill & Weston-under-Lizard; Penkridge; Dunston; Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston, Coppenhall. This is a gently rolling area of farmland, leading to the borders with Shropshire, which also encloses the larger villages of Wheaton Aston, Penkridge, Brewood and Codsall.

3.2 The landscape is unified by the Triassic mudstones covered with deposits of glacial drift comprising, silt, gravels and peat. This underlying geology has inevitably had a major influence on the soils, building materials, ecology and land use of the area. The over arching character of the landscape is one of an intensive agricultural landscape, primarily of dairy farming, but with increasing amounts of arable farming, particularly towards Codsall.

3.3 The character area retains some extensive areas of historic parkland landscapes, enclosed by former agricultural estates. The parklands at Weston and Chillington are nationally important and are recognised as such by their Grade II* Registered Historic Parks & Gardens status. A further, undesignated, landscape park survives around Somerford Hall. Chillington's open estate landscape, designed by Capability Brown, contrasts with the less manicured agricultural landscapes beyond its boundaries, characterised by small to medium fields. Set within this landscape are dispersed, compact settlements, which have latterly expanded into the surrounding countryside, eroding both their historic, rural character and appearance.

3.4 While the relatively low lying nature of the plain creates a visually enclosed landscape from the sunken lanes and within the settlements, the scale of the landscape in this area is increasing as agricultural practices intensify. This is resulting in an increasing loss of hedgerows and boundary trees. The less disturbed areas of landscape maintain the historic, irregular field patterns. These are enclosed by deep hedges

Scattered settlements sit within the low lying landscape

of predominantly hawthorn, with some blackthorn and other shrubby species, interspersed with mainly oak, ash and sycamore trees. However, tree coverage is limited in this landscape, with the exception of the great estates, with relatively few woods or copses and no extensive forested areas. Consequently the breadth of the landscape is increasingly open to extended views, which has a significant impact on development design.

3.5 A characteristic of the Staffordshire Plain is the number of small meres, and ponds which are scattered across the landscape. These are the result of glacial deposits which have created some larger lakes, meltwater channels and lake beds, providing opportunities for habitats, but also include significant numbers of marl pits.

3.6 The area of South Staffordshire within the Staffordshire Plain is visually contained by the gently rising, higher land to the west, along the Shropshire border and east around Huntington and Featherstone. This creates the potential for long views across the character area from the periphery and into the neighbouring counties.

3.7 The character area is broadly distinguished by regularly spaced hamlets and modest market centres, with a dispersed series of large farmsteads dotted across the agricultural landscape. The typically three-storey brick farmhouses largely date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although examples survive from the later 17th Century. The villages are mainly sited on slight elevations of sandstone or free-draining glacial deposits, resulting in their historic core areas retaining their landmark importance within the low lying landscape. This characteristic has largely survived despite the 20th Century expansion of the peripheral village areas. Maintenance of this essential settlement pattern is a fundamental design objective.

3.8 The prevailing built form of the farms and villages is of a mellow red brick, with similarly tiled roofs. The low-lying domestic buildings contrast with the sandstone, large parish churches which dominate the smaller settlements. The churches are mostly spired, but there are a few with medieval towers and all tend to be grouped around a very clear village centre or space. Brewood is notable for its pair of substantial churches, with the medieval parish church of St. Mary & St. Chad exhibiting a 14th Century tower supporting a recessed spire and the early 19th Century, catholic church of St. Mary's designed by A W N Pugin, with a sharp steeple and spire. The modest scale of the settlements results in the village core being easily defined. Wheaton Aston and Brewood maintain their local market character, with a mix of shops and businesses, whilst in the more extensive and constrained settlement of Penkridge community and civic uses create this space. The legibility of the settlements is consequently a key feature of the various villages and needs to remain a focus for development design consideration.

3.9 Design principles: Staffordshire Plain

The following are important, landscape scale considerations which should inform the evolution of development design within the Staffordshire Plain Character Area, and are fundamental to the consideration of all new development, at either a major or a minor scale.

a. **Dispersed settlement pattern.** A key feature of the character area is the balanced dispersal of the settlements, emphasised by their defined edges enclosed by woodland groups. New development should avoid encroachment of outlying properties and strengthen landscape boundaries to maintain the compaction of settlements.

b. **Distant views.** The low-lying nature of the character area, surrounded by higher ground, means that new development may have a substantial impact across a broad extent of the landscape. A clear focus on scale and mass of new development will be essential, as well as adopting complementary, earth-coloured materials.

c. **Low lying structures.** The breadth of the landscape and the modest scale of the dispersed settlements require new development to be grounded within the broadly horizontal topography. This will mean that the form of new development needs to adopt a horizontal emphasis, with larger buildings, including agricultural storage units, carefully considering their roofscape, colours and textures, with extensive use of new planting visually to break up the mass of large buildings.

d. **Containment of settlements.** The retention of the village character requires the maintenance of the relative compaction of the settlements. This means that the edges of villages become an important design issue, as any peripheral development should be considered as complementary to the overall mass and identity of the place.

Scattered villages across the Staffordshire Plain

e. **Rustic, earthy material colours.** The District's rural character is emphasised by the adoption of materials, (including in the roofscape) which focus on mellow, earthy reds and reddish-brown colours. Consequently, it will be important to ensure that any new development design adopts materials which complement the local pallet of materials.

Roofscape and materials are important to fix low lying structures in the landscape

f. **Landscape restoration.** Despite the rural character, the intensification of agricultural practice and the spread of the built up areas has reduced both hedgerow and tree coverage. Consequently, tree planting and hedgerow conservation and restoration will be an important component of any development design to mitigate and integrate new development into the landscape.

g. **Contributing to the network of green spaces.** The intensification of agriculture and the spread of urbanisation have resulted in a reduction in the area's biodiversity, despite its rural character. Consequently, all development design will be required to consider methods of accommodating wildlife including the restoration of wetland habitats.

Materials should be selected to complement the environment

h. **Influence of the Historic Environment**. The Historic Landscape Character assessment is fundamental to an understanding of the evolution of the landscape within the Character Area. The historic environment encompasses many assets including historic buildings, above and below ground archaeological assets, which also contribute to an understanding of local distinctiveness. It is important to address these points at the design stage of any development.

4 Cannock Chase and Cankwood

4.1 South Staffordshire's north-eastern parishes fall within part of the landscape character area the former Countryside Agency and the County Council described as Character Area 67 - Cannock Chase and Cankwood. This is the western extent of the 'South Staffordshire Coalfield'. It covers the parishes of Acton Trussell and Bednall to the north, extending south through Teddesley Hay, Huntington, Hatherton, Shareshill, Hilton, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Essington and the eastern part of Featherstone. This part of the District is largely contained by the boundary of the M6 and the River Penk to the west and the M6 toll to the urban edge of Cannock, with the extent of Willenhall to the south.

The northern parishes in the character area of Acton Trussell and Bednall, Teddesley Hay are sparsely populated and located on a rolling plateaux of boulder clay which overlies Triassic mudstones. The soils are

generally non-calcareous stagnogleys which largely support dairy farms, with some mixed farming in a semi-regular pattern of hedged fields. There is a dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and small villages, with strong development pressures from the adjacent urban areas to the east and north, and some landscape restoration resulting from colliery works.

New hedgerows to contain village edge

River edge as a green space corridor

4.2 The rolling landscape has been eroded by the loss of trees and hedgerows to the extent that medium and long-distant views are provided across to the village edges and the District to the west. The scattered woodlands within this northern part of the character area have a strong, localised effect containing views and creating the distorted feel of a well-wooded landscape.

4.3 However, the proximity of the conurbation's urban edge has a strong influence on the landscape's broader character. The northern parishes retain a peaceful, strongly rural character of clustered farmsteads and roadside cottages. Nevertheless, the major transport corridors on the area (M6 & A5 in particular) dissect the area creating an erosion of the landscape quality and resulting in a disjointed compartmentalisation of the character area. The network of winding, ancient lanes also makes the area easily accessible and subject to commuter pressures, resulting in the deterioration of the landscape quality on the village fringe.

4.4 To the south of Watling Street (the A5) the character of the landscape changes and is more pressurised by the conurbation's urban fringe, with extensive areas of post-war development and estate development. The parishes of Cheslyn Hay and Great Wyrley in particular have a strongly post-industrial character, resulting from the railway and the coal mining industry. They have experienced substantial growth in the 19th and 20th centuries. Coal and clay extraction was important in this character from the 16th Century onwards, and past mining activities have had a significant impact on the shaping of both the landscape and the villages.

4.5 Mine closures have meant that the character area's southern part has taken on new characteristics in the form of post-mining settlements, with terraced housing and extensive estates more commonplace than the rest of the District. Latterly extensive landscape regeneration schemes have resulted in the creation of new post-industrial landscapes.

4.6 The shales, sandstones and clays of the coalfield area give rise to non-calcareous stagnogley soils, which would have originally supported acid grassland and wet heath, (which survives in part across the flat landform), but are now mainly used for stock rearing. This part of the District consequently has a post-industrial character, enclosed by remnant farmlands and poorer grade agricultural land. The agricultural pattern is diverse but focused on diary and livestock enterprises, with a more irregular field pattern, enclosed by thinner hedges but with hedgerow oaks. This area is particularly pressurised by post-war development sprawl, with an extensive impact from the infrastructure of the past mining activities, now becoming revegetated with pioneer birch woodland and mixed woodlands on reclamation sites.

4.7 This part of the District, sandwiched between the motorways and the encroaching urban areas in the adjacent Districts, creates specific development design requirements, with a significant need to focus on landscape restoration and regeneration of the built fabric of settlements.

4.8 The following landscape scale considerations should inform the evolution of design within the Cannock Chase and Cankwood character area, and should be fundamental to the consideration of all new development, at either a major or minor scale.

3: Understanding South Staffordshire's Landscape Character

New development should strengthen village enclosure

a. **Containment of settlements.** The post-industrial nature of the settlements and their enclosure by the major transport corridors means that the containment of the village is fundamental to the enhancement of built quality. Consequently, it will be important to ensure that new development design contributes to the visual enclosure of the settlements.

b. **Embolden distance views** The low-lying nature of the southern part of this character area, creates a need for a clear focus on addressing the scale and mass of the village forms, particularly given the post-industrial nature of the area. Therefore there is a need to both adopt earth-coloured materials to ground major development and consider the overall mass of the settlement.

c. **Legibility of post-war settlements.** The transformation of the former coalfield villages has created settlements dominated by low-density housing development which lacks distinction or identity. The design challenge will be to ensure that future development contributes both to enhancing built quality and creating more cohesive places with vibrant centres.

d. **Focus for distribution along transport corridors.** The proximity to the road transport network, has encouraged large distribution centres and business complexes. This factor combined with the relatively flat, open landscape creates a significant need to integrate or enclose substantial commercial and residential development into the wider landscape, by means of landform and generous landscape buffer zones.

Distant views across the landscape

e. **Landscape restoration.** The on-going restoration of the post-industrial landscape is a significant issue in this character area. All new development should contribute to the continuing enhancement of tree and hedgerow coverage.

f. **Accommodation of large agricultural/industrial units.** The development accommodation of substantial, monolithic business units within the landscape, particularly along transport corridors, will have a character-defining impact. The impact of the large scale units can be negative, but can be mitigated by adopting rustic, earthy material colours (reddish-brown, dark greens) and carefully considering the impact of signage. Consequently, the cladding and signage of business units should be an important design consideration.

g. **Influence of the Historic Environment**. The Historic Landscape Character assessment is fundamental to an understanding of the evolution of the landscape within the Character Area. The historic environment encompasses many assets including historic buildings, above and below ground archaeological assets, which also contribute to an understanding of local distinctiveness. It is important to address these considerations at the design stage of any development.

5 Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau

5.1 The southern parishes in the District fall within the landscape character area described as landscape Character Area 66 - Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau by the former Countryside Agency and the County Council. The landscape character area covers the South Staffordshire parishes of Featherstone and Bilbrook at its north-eastern extent, and then Perton, Pattingham and Patshull, Lower Penn, Trysull and Seisdon; Wombourne, Himley, Swindon, Bobbington, Enville and Kinver. The settlement character of this part of the District ranges from the late 20th Century, estate development of Perton to the medieval, agricultural villages of Bobbington and hamlets such as Halfpenny Green.

Landscape restoration is important for the setting of villages and open space corridors

5.2 The part of the character area in South Staffordshire is an area of Permo-Triassic sandstones, with a pronounced rolling landform. Soils are generally poor, free draining brown sands, with some podzols and brown earths. Palaeozoic rocks project in the southern part of the District, as well as Carboniferous marls, sandstones and conglomerates. These contribute to a gentle undulating landscape with extensive views provided from the pronounced ridge around Kinver, across to the flat plain on the western boundary, which is encapsulated by the landscape around 'Wolverhampton Business Airport'.

5.3 The area has a long history of occupation, with significant Roman activity and early deforestation by the mid-14th Century, creating broad views across the open landscape, particularly from the high point of Kinver Edge. The consequent need to consider the form and roofscape of the settlements from these vantage points should be emphasised. The agricultural landscape is largely flat, arable cultivation, with thin, incomplete hedgerows. There are patches of heathland and parklands, with woodlands largely confined to the low hill tops and ridges, especially around Kinver. The farming pattern is focused on cereals, but includes potatoes and sugar beet, reflecting the high quality of the agricultural land.

Landscaping is important to accommodate large employment units on village edges

5.4 Kinver Forest was the most westerly of the wood and heathland areas of Staffordshire to influence the vernacular style of building, with fine examples of timber-framed buildings in the village and surrounding estates. There are also examples of cave houses in the sandstone cliff of Kinver Edge, latterly used as outhouses, one of the most unusual building types in the District. In contrast, the character area is largely dominated by the use of the soft, mid-red brick and tiles, with wide use of grey slate. The higher status properties, such as the churches, are constructed in the local sandstone, which is also used occasionally for field boundaries or the plinths of older farmhouses. A Kinver peculiarity is examples of 'crow-stepped' gables which contribute to its relative diversity.

5.5 The character area contains a number of substantial villages and large villages, such as Kinver and Wombourne, although the settlement pattern is largely, broadly dispersed, with small villages and roadside

hamlets. Wombourne and Pattingham have become rather large villages. Wombourne sprawls out from a fairly compact centre arranged around the sports pitches which are fondly referred to as the 'village green' (dominated by a modern cricket pavilion) to peripheral modern housing and commercial estates. Pattingham, like Wombourne, retains its historic centre focused on the parish church and village green, but with extensive modern development expanding the village.

Distant view across landscape which should be maintained

5.6 The Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal runs north-south through the character area linking the settlements and, with the Stourbridge Canal, contributed to the early industrial development of the area. Kinver remains the largest historical industrial centre, but is a compact settlement. In terms of the landscape impact the canal tends to have a subtle visual impact, except at the most immediate level, but does introduce specific waterside building types associated with its use, not least the series of bridges.

5.7 The proximity to the large conurbation to the east significantly influences the area, with a creeping sub-urbanisation and busy road networks. The low-lying nature of the settlements, and weak field patterns, along with the deteriorating and unnecessarily closely trimmed hedgerows, exposes built form to distant views, including the accommodation of farm buildings.

5.8 To the south-west of the District a substantial area of the Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau retains the agricultural and landscape character of the great estates and their parklands. Enville Hall's parkland is particularly extensive and adds a historic, designed landscape type which is especially sensitive to poor building and landscaping. Enville itself is built in a flamboyant style with matching paintwork visually tying it to the estate and adding to the excitement and distinction of this deeply rural landscape.

5.9 In contrast to the District's northern villages, the more exposed nature of the landscapes means that the tall spires are often replaced by stumpy church towers and there are little or no sunken lanes. There may be no sunken lanes but a particular characteristic here are the roads which cut through sandstone outcrops and known as 'holloways'.

5.10 Building materials are a varied mix across the character area. The proximity of the fast arterial main roads through the District (many appearing to be traditionally coaching routes) encouraged the development of comparatively modern buildings, such as Victorian villas within the village cores, helping to add a diversity to the landscape of farmsteads and estate villages. Trysull and Seisdon are particularly distinguished for their thatched roofs and large barns in the very centre of the village.

Development should seek to reduce the fragmentation of settlements

5.11 Design Principles: Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau Character area.

The following landscape scale considerations should inform the evolution of design within the Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau Character Area. Some of these issues are also relevant for other character areas, but they are fundamental considerations to implementation of all new development in the South Staffordshire part of the Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau area.

a. **Distance views.** The low-lying character of the villages surrounded with key vantage points, results in roofscape and overall village form becoming important design issues, and it is essential to contain and avoid domestic sprawl into the agricultural landscape.

Intensification of arable production

Archaeological sites are an important design issue

b. **Fragmentation of landscape features.** The open nature of much of the landscape, with poor enclosure of arable fields creates only a limited cohesion to extensive areas of the landscape. Development design should, therefore, seek to contribute to the restoration of the visual cohesion of the landscape, linking the pockets of green space and enclosing settlements.

c. **Intensification of arable production.** The expansion and modernisation of cereal production in particular has made some agricultural structures redundant. The accommodation and mitigation of large, new storage facilities in the sensitive landscape is, therefore, a significant design issue, affecting the visual experience of the landscape.

d. **Proximity to urban areas.** The pressures for recreational use and facilities in the countryside have the potential to erode the character area, not only by the intensity of use but also by introducing new forms of landscape into the area, such as coniferous plantations and country parks. Careful attention needs to be given to form of planting on the village edge.

e. **Influence of the Historic Environment**. The Historic Landscape Character assessment is fundamental to an understanding of the evolution of the landscape within the Character Area. The historic environment encompasses many assets including historic buildings, above and below ground archaeological assets, which also contribute to an understanding of local distinctiveness. It is important to address these points at the design stage of any development.

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summaries

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summaries - Overview

1 Overview

1.1 The settlement pattern in South Staffordshire demonstrates a wide range of village forms within the rural landscape, which will have an impact on the scale and the character and design of new development. The villages are all of course unique in terms of their physical, economic and social fabric but they all share common characteristics which emphasises the cohesion of the District. Of the 36 individual settlements in the District, 23 were considered as key types, relating to their scale and function and the facilities and services which are available in the village.

The four key types are: **Main Service Villages (MSV); Local Service Villages (LSV); Small Service Village (SSV)** and **Other Villages (OV).**

1.2 This section will summarise the historic evolution and fabric of the villages, and the influence such location factors have on development design. Consequently, it outlines descriptions of twenty-two villages, grouped according to their location within the District and their scale, indicating specific local development design issues for each place.

1.3 Certain of the Other Villages and smaller hamlets in the District do not feature in this section. This should not be taken to imply that they are therefore of lesser importance, or that the principles and guidance given in this Village Design Guide do not apply to them. This is not the case.

1.4 The village summaries are intended to outline key design principles relevant for each place, as broad development design principles relevant to the particular locality. The descriptions, therefore, focus on the larger or more cohesive villages, with rural hamlets excluded as they will normally be subject to significant development restraint

1.5 The following drawings illustrate some of the issues which are discussed in the design guide. They represent two of the key village types, illustrating the expanded, relatively 'organic' pattern of settlement at Wombourne - a Main Service Village (**Figure 3**); contrasted with Perton - a planned Main Service Village (**Figure 4**) and Trysull - a traditional Small Service Village (**Figure 5**).

1.6 The village summaries that follow outline design principles and characteristics for all of the village types. Summaries are presented for the following villages:

Acton Trussell	**(OV)**	Featherstone	**(LSV)**
Bednall	**(SSV)**	Essington	**(LSV)**
Dunston	**(SSV)**	Bilbrook	**(MSV)**
Penkridge	**(MSV)**	Codsall	**(MSV)**
Huntington	**(LSV)**	Pattingham	**(LSV)**
Wheaton Aston	**(LSV)**	Perton	**(MSV)**
Brewood	**(MSV)**	Trysull	**(SSV)**
Bishop's Wood	**(SSV)**	Wombourne	**(MSV)**
Coven	**(LSV)**	Swindon	**(LSV)**
Cheslyn Hay	**(MSV)**	Bobbington	**(SSV)**
Shareshill	**(SSV)**	Kinver	**(MSV)**
Great Wyrley	**(MSV)**		

These summaries should underlie the design guidance presented in Sections 6 and 7.

1.7 **Historic character and assets**. The historic environment is a fundamental component to the distinctiveness of the District's settlements. Development proposals for specific villages should both make reference to, and show that they have consulted, the following information sources where and as relevant:

Staffordshire County Council

- HER
- HLC/LCA
- Historic Farmstead Survey
- Stafford County Record Office & William Salt Library

South Staffordshire Council

- Schedules of Listed Buildings and Listed Parklands
- Conservation Area Management Plans & Appraisals
- List of Buildings of Special Local Interest (Local List)
- Adopted Local Plan and emerging Local Development Framework
- Local history publications such as 'South Staffordshire Reviewed'.

Individual villages

- Village design statements (where available)
- Local history publications (where available)

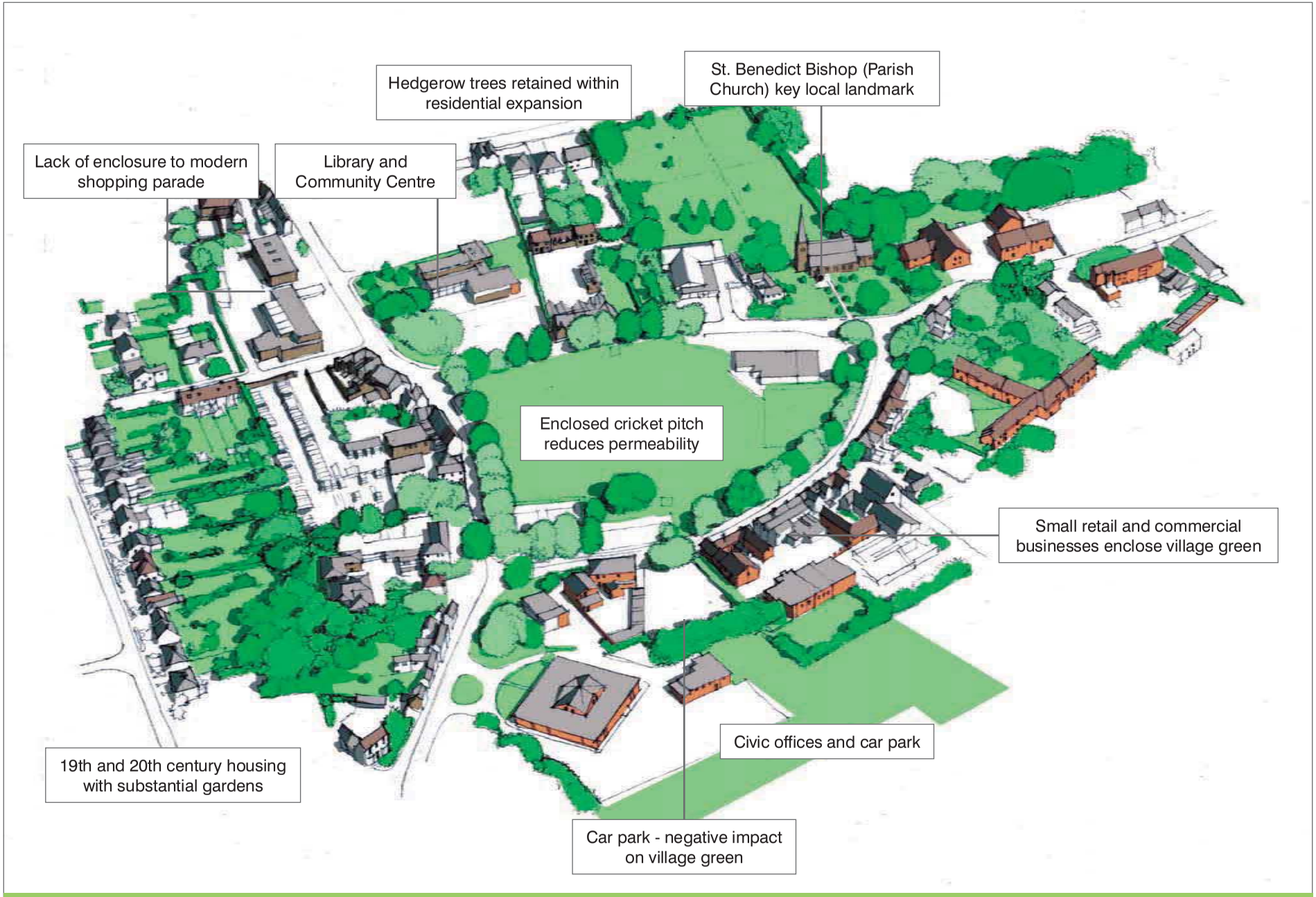


Figure 3: Wombourne - A 'Main Service Village' with a relatively 'organic' pattern of settlement

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summaries - Overview

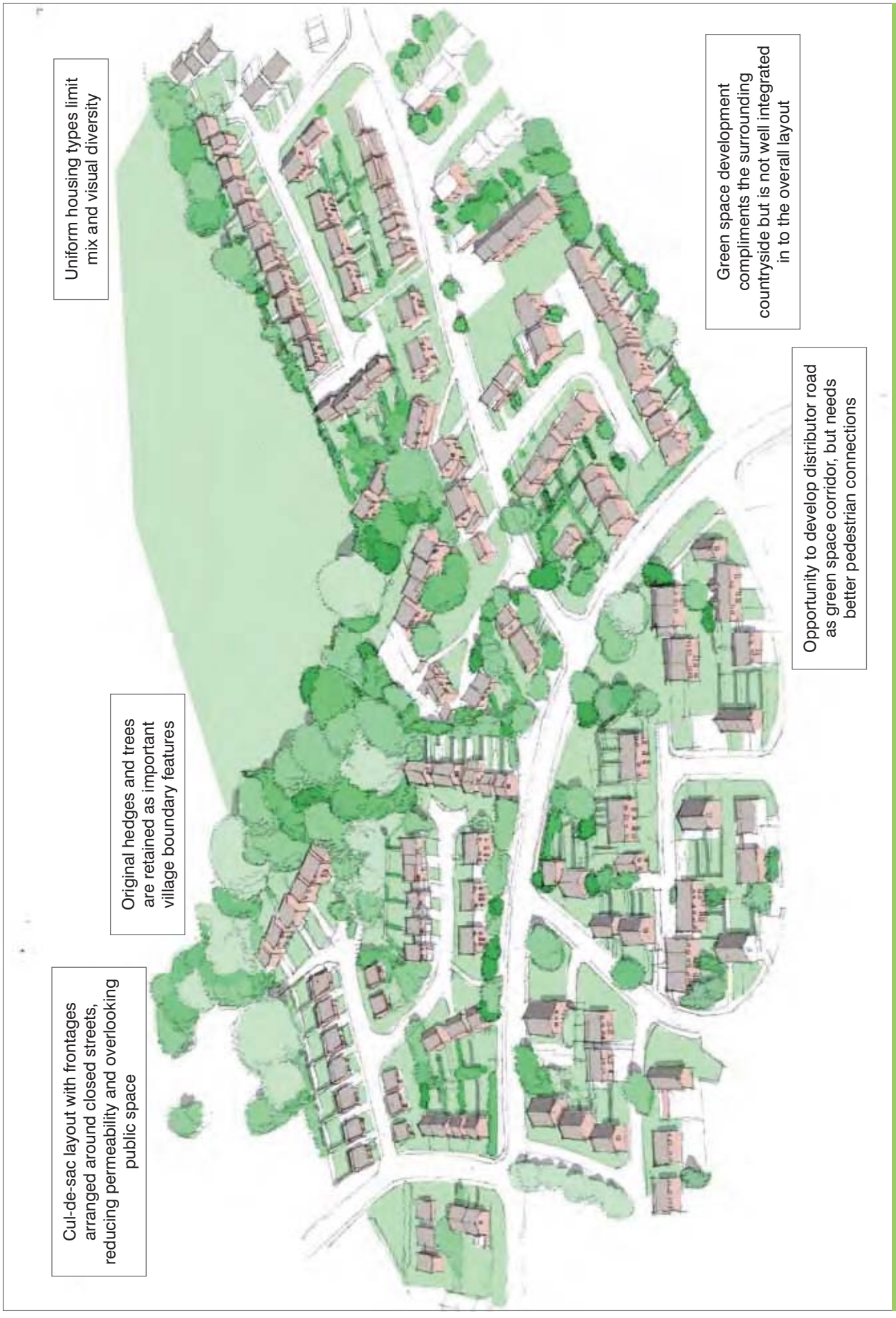


Figure 4: Perton - A planned 'Main Service Village'

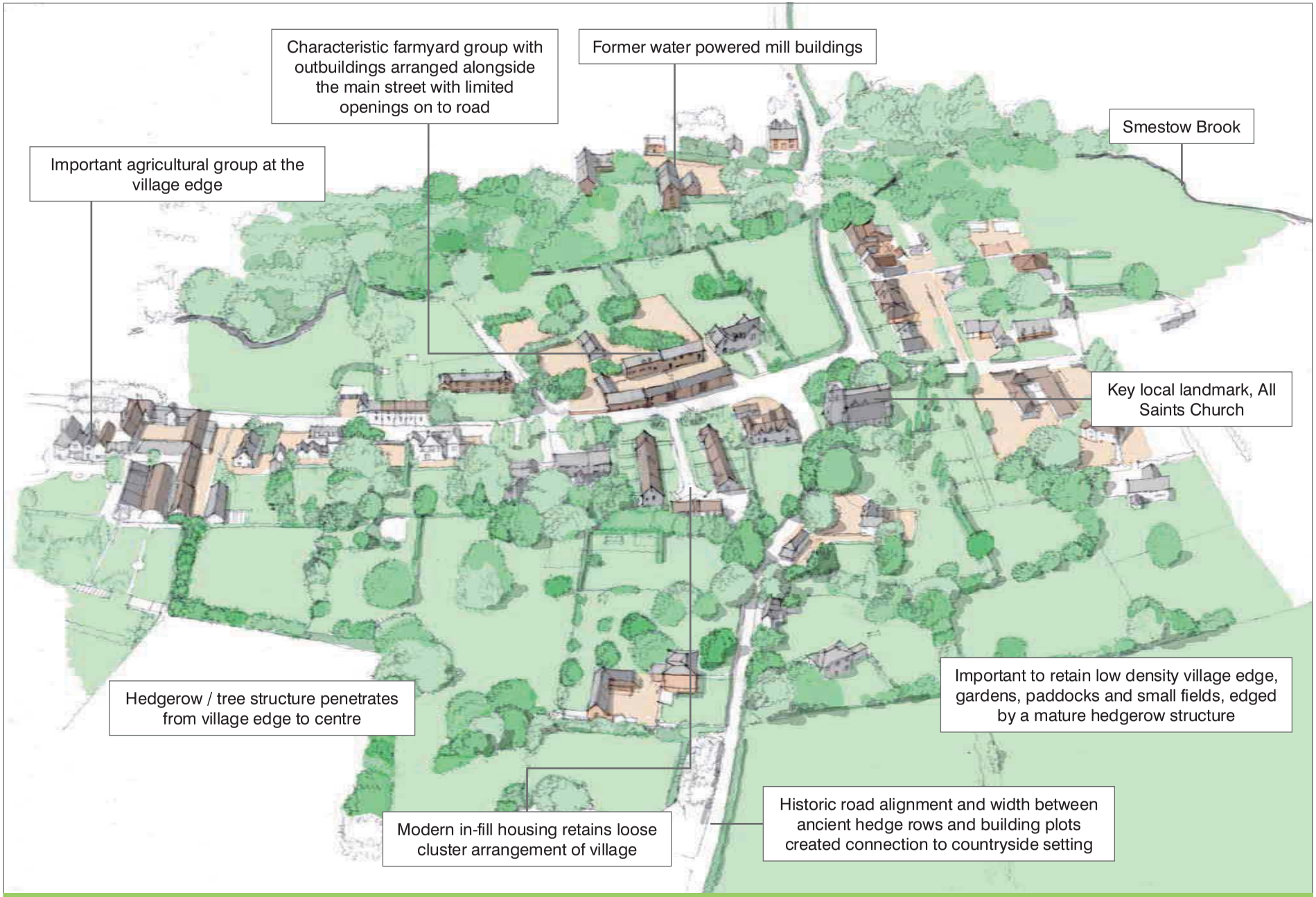


Figure 5: Trysull - A traditional 'Small Service Village'

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Acton Trussell

2 Acton Trussell (Other Village)

2.1 The village of Acton Trussell is located close to the M6, bounded by the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area on its western flank and enclosed by defined 'open countryside'. The village spreads to the east into the expansive arable landscape towards the A34 and the more isolated rural villages.

2.2 The village has Roman connections and medieval origins, with a mill recorded in Domesday at 'Actone'. The village is now largely notable for its early 18th Century timber framed moat house and school buildings, the relationship with the canal and the more modern development which clusters around Acton Hill. The village is overlooks the Church of St. James which dates from the 13th Century and sits alone on an adjoining hill, which covers the site of the Roman settlement in the area.

2.3 The village is clustered upon and around a shallow hillside, which affords glimpses of Stafford Castle, and is enclosed by an open agricultural landscape and the canal to the west. The enclosing rural landscape largely comprises large, open fields to the south, with a patchwork of smaller fields to the north, with limited tree planting and shallow hedgerows.

2.4 The village is of relatively modest proportions and retains an enclosed character owing to its visual and physical relationship with the canal. Residential properties extend to partially enclose the eastern canal banks and project out into the agricultural landscape. The village has expanded in the latter part of 20th Century, to encompass the former canal and farm buildings, and the scattered cottages to the north of the Moat House.

2.5 Latterly the village settlement pattern has developed a narrow, roughly lozenge shape, roughly bisected by Penkridge Road, and winding up the hill to Top Road. The structure of the village follows the hill's topography and creates a compact, cohesive group rising from the agricultural landscape, interspersed with scattered tree groups and bounded by low, neat hedgerows. Bank Top is lined with impressive mature trees which enhance the apparent scale of the hill, and both dominate and embrace the attractive residential environment. The flat, open fields to the west give views across to the River Penk and the M6, intruding into key vistas.

2.6 Building scale reflects the village's modest nature: late 20th Century, two-storey dwellings, interspersed amongst 19th Century cottages. A few cottages from the nearby Shugborough Estate contribute to local distinctiveness. Properties follow the topography up the hill and the built character is therefore both cohesive and domestic in character, with spacious settings and generous planting on-plot and in the street scape. The canal edge is relatively domesticated and incorporated into rear gardens or field boundaries. Canal structures form a key part of the fabric of the village, including its entrances and view points.

Materials

2.7 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Acton Trussell are:
Tiles: Blue/brindled clay
Bricks: Red/orange weathered, fired brown to blue
Facing: Some timber-framing
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

2.8 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Acton Trussell

2.9 Acton Trussell is an 'Other Village' with only a few open spaces or recreational facilities. The design guidance on minor development outlined below in Section 7 is most relevant, with specific attention given to the following in developing design proposals:

a. **Enhance village entrances.** The key entry points to the village, particularly from the south, along Penkridge Road and the north along Mill Lane should remain abrupt, understated, points of arrival. Any new development on the village edge and at these entrances should ensure the modest, uncluttered entry to the village core is maintained. This requires new development and domestic structures to avoid intrusive projection into the road frontage, maintaining the village core's green enclosure.

b. **Maintain the compact character of the village.** The hillside character and cohesion of the settlement should be maintained and enhanced, by integrating new development into the existing village framework, avoiding projections into the arable landscape, or the coalescence of peripheral buildings groups.

c. **Retain the grouping and mass of the built stock.** Any new development should ensure that building alignments continue to run along the contours of the hill to enhance its graded, stepped character, with careful attention to the uncluttered roof form and materials. The cohesion of the built stock should be enhanced by the retention of low-rise properties with narrow building plans, and the use of common, high quality materials.

d. **Simplicity of roofscape, appropriate colours and textures.** The modest scale of the village and its prominence as a cohesive entity within the wider agricultural landscape require attention to darker, earthy colours and textures. This is to help integrate the mass of the built form with the tree groups within the village core. Bright contrasting colours or complex roof structures should be avoided in particular, to ensure that the cohesion of the group and village form is retained.

e. **Retain visual connections with the countryside.** The visual connection to St. James' Church, and more distant views across the arable landscape should be maintained from within the village core, ensuring that the building group remains a feature evidently contained within the agricultural setting.

f. **Enhance the green edges.** The village's green edges should be strengthened visually to contain any apparent domestic progression into the agricultural landscape. The existing village edge is tightly enclosed by relatively open, arable fields. The current abrupt edges to parts of the village's residential areas increase its apparent domestic penetration into the open countryside, which could compromise its agricultural character unless it is contained by new boundary landscaping. New development, including domestic structures, particularly on the eastern and southern boundaries should serve to soften the village boundaries with appropriate, effective planting buffers.

g. **Strengthen green space networks.** The established green spaces and tree groups within the village framework should contribute to the creation of an enhanced network throughout the village. New development should incorporate existing planting and add new features to link with the village edge, enhancing the character of the village as a cohesive, wooded hillside development within the open arable landscape.

Maintain green space networks along with the character of the village

Careful management of development at gateways to the village

Enhancement of green edges is essential

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Bednall

3 Bednall (Small Service Village)

3.1 The small village of Bednall is located within an expansive arable landscape between the A34 and the M6, enclosed by the Green Belt. The village has the feeling of detachment and isolation, being only accessible by the relatively narrow Common Lane and Cock Lane. It has obscure medieval origins, with the present early-Victorian church of All Saints replacing a chapel of 12th Century origins.

3.2 The village is located on a shallow hillside, which falls away from the parish church to the open agricultural landscape to the southeast. The enclosing landscape largely comprises large open fields to the south, and a patchwork of smaller fields to the north. The landscape has limited tree planting and only shallow hedgerows.

3.3 Historically, the village grew up around the cluster of the church, Bednall Hall, and their associated farm units surround the junction of Cock Lane and Common Lane. Latterly, the village settlement pattern has developed a roughly linear form, extending along Common Lane, running east-west, to coalesce with former outlying cottages, but retaining only a shallow projection into the enclosing landscape. The modest expanse of the village, set within the dominant arable landscape, maintains its compact and cohesive character, despite its latter-day growth along the spinal lane. The building groups are largely set back from the spinal village road of Common Lane, creating an open, spacious character with opportunities for extensive street scape planting. There has been some more recent residential projection to the south, with this back-land development undermining the essentially linear form of the village.

3.4 The scale of the built fabric reflects the modest nature of the village, largely comprising cottages and low-lying properties, which sit within the landscape. Many have narrow plans, with their mass broken by a large number of gables. The built character is consequently largely domestic in character, flanked by a number of former agricultural properties. They have been converted or rebuilt and visually project domestic use into the enclosing countryside. These buildings of greater mass also tend to exhibit unbroken slate roof scapes.

3.5 Many of the traditional buildings were constructed for workers on the Hatherton Estate. They are richly detailed and make a significant and positive contribution to local distinctiveness in and around Bednall.

Materials

3.6 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Bednall are:
Tiles: Brown clay
Bricks: Red/brown
Facing: Some white painted brick render
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

3.7 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Bednall

3.8 Bednall is a 'Small Service Village' with only a very limited range of facilities, essentially comprising a school, church and a general store, with no open spaces or recreational facilities. The design guidance on minor development outlined below in Section 7 is likely to be most relevant, whilst specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals:

a. **Maintain the narrow, linear character of the village.** The cohesive linear form of the agricultural village should be maintained and enhanced, avoiding any development in depth, projections into the arable landscape, or the coalescence of peripheral buildings groups which might compromise the historic settlement pattern.

b. **Maintain the village entrances.** The approaches and entry to the village should remain low key, such that the point of arrival continues to be understated. New development on the village edge should enhance this modest statement and ensure that the properties and structures remain set back from the road frontage to maintain a strong, green spinal route through the village core.

c. **Ensure a modest scale and mass of the built stock.** The vernacular, domestic scale of the village's core built fabric requires new development to adopt similarly appropriate forms.

New development should maintain the variety of elevation and mass exhibited by the more historic cottages, avoiding extensive duplication of form and sprawling building plans. Cohesion should be created by the retention of low-rise properties with narrow building plans and the use of common, high quality materials, whilst concentrating on enhanced street scape planting.

d. **Focus on boundary treatment and green edges.** Village development, both within the core and on the edge, should create soft, green edges. Expanses of suburban style fencing should be avoided as these will visually deaden the street scape, compromising the rural character.

e. **Ensure visual connections with the countryside are maintained.** Views and physical connections with the enclosing countryside should be apparent within the village core, ensuring that building groups remain evidently a feature within the landscape, rather than becoming permanently divorced from their agricultural setting.

f. **Enhance the green edges.** The extension of domestic uses into peripheral former agricultural properties needs to be balanced by strengthening the green edge of the village. The existing village edge is relatively open, providing views into the extensive arable field beyond. Increasing domestic penetration into this landscape will compromise the agricultural character of the village, unless it is contained by new boundary landscaping. Similarly, the development impact of modern agricultural units should be contained by the introduction of extensive new woodland planting providing screening blocks of planting at key viewpoints.

g. **Enhance green space networks.** Any new village development should contribute to the creation of a network of green spaces throughout the village, incorporating existing and new planting better to connect the settlement to its agricultural setting.

h. **Adopt appropriate colours and textures.** The modest scale of the village and the relatively open countryside creates a need to ensure that new development adopts darker, earthy colours and textures visually to 'ground' buildings breaking up the mass of larger units to avoid the over dominance of agricultural storage buildings within the landscape.

Inspiration from historic scale and mass of existing buildings

Boundary treatments should create soft green edges

New development should adopt appropriate colours and textures

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Dunston

4 Dunston (Small Service Village)

4.1 The scattered village of Dunston is located in designated open countryside along the A449 and forms an important gateway to the District as a whole from junction 13 of the M6. The village extends along a ridge overlooking the motorway and the River Penk to the east and retains its rural, agricultural character. The village has Saxon origins as a farmstead, and is recorded in Domesday as Dunestone. The prominent, spired church of St. Leonard has medieval origins but was rebuilt in 1876. The church now overlooks the A449 and forms a loose group with a cluster of cottages.

4.2 The village is located in the Staffordshire Plain character area, sandwiched between the motorway and the railway, but retaining its attractive rural character. The landscape setting comprises large mainly arable fields, crossed by narrow lanes and divided by the A449. The building groups are enclosed by some impressive woodlands standing prominent in the relatively open arable landscape.

4.3 The settlement pattern comprises a collection of scattered building groups and small-holdings to the north of Dunston Hall, with a pair of large agricultural complexes and the largest loose nucleus of buildings arranged around the church. The village extends across the railway line along School Lane to a further cluster of cottages and modest farm units. The building groups are connected by narrow lanes and deep clipped hedges, further emphasising the scattered nature of the place. Immediately to the north of the church, a late 20th Century development has created a discreet village square, with modern housing enclosing an open green space. However, the modest nature of this recent development retains the scattered character of the village, which remains bounded by mixed arable and pastoral fields.

The built fabric

4.4 Dunston's built fabric is almost entirely brick, contrasting with the stone Gothic church. It is domestic in scale with cottages and detached dwellings forming a loose collection of buildings within the dominant agricultural landscape. Some of the traditional buildings in and around Dunston were constructed for workers on a farm owned by F C Perry. They are richly detailed and make a positive and significant contribution to local distinctiveness.

Materials

4.5 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Dunston are:

- **Chimney pots:** Buff terracotta
- **Tiles:** Blue clay
- **Bricks:** Red/brown brindled
- **Facing:** Some mock half-timbering to upper storeys
- **Doors & windows:** Timber

Archaeology

4.6 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Dunston

4.7 Dunston is a 'Small Service Village' with an extremely limited range of facilities, simply comprising a school, church and village hall. The design guidance on minor development outlined below in Section 7 is likely to be most relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Maintain the loose, clustered grouping of the village.** The nature of the village as a collection of modest building clusters should be maintained, enhanced and protected from any substantial peripheral development which would compromise its character by the coalescence of the groups.

b. **Enhance the role as District entrance.** The importance of the village as a defining entrance to the District should be preserved. Avoiding development that would encroach upon the A449 and enhancing the planting and green enclosure of the road frontage would ensure that the rural, agricultural character remains dominant.

c. **Widen the diversity of the built stock.** Any new development should adopt appropriate, vernacular forms and avoid the coalescence of building groups or duplication of types, to create an apparent estate development. Pattern-book design forms should be avoided, respecting the proportions and low-rise scale of the existing built fabric. Cohesion should be created by use of common, high quality materials, with narrow plans to reduce apparent mass, as well as focusing on enhanced street scape and site edge planting.

d. **Maintain focused views of the built fabric.** The village's location and scattered nature means that its dominant characteristics are its landscape components and parish church. Channelled views along the A449 and School Lane should be preserved and enhanced by substantial hedgerow and tree planting.

e. **Ensure visual connections with the countryside are maintained.** New development should not compromise physical connections with the surrounding countryside. Building groups should remain loose landscape clusters and features in, rather than divorced from, its agricultural setting.

f. **Strengthen the woodland groups and green edges.** New development should strengthen the woodland enclosure of the villages's various building groups. This should reinforce existing peripheral green spaces, better to integrate building groups into the agricultural landscape. Plot boundaries should be planted with deep hedgerows to create new wildlife corridors.

g. **Enhance green space networks.** Any new village development should contribute to the development of the network of green spaces within the M6 and railway line boundaries, incorporating existing and new planting to enhance the compartmentalisation of the village's landscape setting.

Existing clusters of buildings should be maintained

Visual connection with the countryside should be protected

Focus on the gateways which are dominant characteristics of the village

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Penkridge

5 Penkridge (Main Service Village)

5.1 Penkridge is located along the River Penk, to the north of the District, sandwiched between the M6 to the east, and the mainline railway to the west. The village is enclosed by green belt to the south, east and west and designated countryside to the north. It is roughly bisected by the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal which creates a gentle division running north to south through the settlement. A harsher division is formed by the A449, which has had a major impact on the quality of the villages's latter-day development. The village has Roman connections, with archaeological remains of a large fort at Kinvaston Hall Farm, and medieval origins.

5.2 The village is dominated by its tightly enclosed landscape setting and the linear transport routes. These create strong, impermeable edges to the settlement's boundaries, and a distinctively inward looking built form, arranged around the transport routes and separated from the enclosing, open countryside.

5.3 The historic core of the village is centred around Market Street which retains a cluster of historic buildings, dating from the 15th & 16th Centuries. The village settlement pattern grew from its historic function as a centre for horse trading and retains a weekly market. The centre has a mixture of low-rise houses and shops, many of which were originally half timbered and in-filled with wattle and daub. Victorian brick cottages are a feature of the lower end of Market Street, with a well preserved Tudor building, formerly the Blacksmith's Arms.

5.4 The impressive, Grade I listed 13th Century parish church, built of local Penkridge stone, dominates the built form and is a key landmark within the village. In contrast, the majority of the buildings are of a domestic scale, largely around 2-storeys, although with an increase in height along Stafford Road. Materials are a mix of red or buff brick and painted render.

5.5 Many of the traditional buildings in and around Penkridge were constructed for workers on the Teddesley Estate. They are often characterised by substantial, well-detailed chimneys, fish scale banding of the roof tiles and decorative timberwork on gable ends. They give a specific local distinctiveness which is expressed more strongly in and around Penkridge than any other village in the District.

Materials

5.6 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Penrkidge are:

Tiles: Blue clay, some with fish-scale banding
Chimneys: Well-detailed brick
Bricks: Red/brown brindled
Facing: Some timber-framing and decorative timberwork on gable ends; occasional brick string courses
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

5.7 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Penkridge

5.8 Penkridge is the sole 'Main Service Village' identified in the North area. The village offers a good range of facilities and services, and is notable for its pubs and restaurants. The design guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Sections 6 and 7 are relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Maintain the distinction of the village as a rural market centre.** The historic core area around Market Street should be enhanced as a distinctive area within the village and protected from development which would compromise its character.

b. **Strengthen the village character.** The impact of Stafford Road on the accessibility of the village should be addressed, with new development design contributing to traffic calming measures and enhancing the sense of arrival at the village core.

c. **Enhance the village entrances.** New development should contribute to the enhancement of the village entrances, creating clear points of arrival at the junctions with the countryside, particularly along Stafford Road, Cannock Road, Wolverhampton Road and Otherton Lane.

d. **Enhance the diversity of the built stock.** New development should contribute to enhancing the diversity of building types within the various village neighbourhoods. Wherever possible new development should maintain and strengthen the

local distinctiveness provided by the Teddesley Estate buildings. Pattern-book design forms should be avoided by respecting the proportions and low-rise scale of the existing built fabric. Cohesion should be created by use of common, high quality materials, as well as enhanced street scape planting.

e. **Maintain views out into the countryside.** Views out of the built up area to the surrounding countryside should be protected, particularly across the River Penk and established village edges like Teddesley Road and Wolgarston Way.

f. **Strengthen the greenbelt edge.** New development should contribute to the strengthening of the green enclosure of the village. The objective should be to reinforce the peripheral green space networks and maintain a clear and abrupt edge to the village's built form, for example as the established edge along the M6 motorway edge and Teddesley Road.

g. **Enhance the green space network.** New development should contribute to the development of the network of green spaces within the village, particularly those linked by the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and the River Penk. Where appropriate new development should incorporate existing and new planting to enhance the compartmentalisation of the village's fabric and create functional open spaces.

h. **Create new character areas.** Any new development's design should be highly permeable and closely integrated within the village fabric to create clear new character areas, functionally linked to the historic core and enclosing countryside.

i. **Integration of car parking areas.** Cars should be carefully accommodated within the village fabric, using on-plot or courtyard parking, with boundary enclosures and landscaping, avoiding open, unstructured parking in the village core.

5.8 Penkridge has an up-to-date Conservation Area Management Plan and Appraisal. This must be referred to when considering proposals for development which would impact on the Conservation Area or its setting.

The village character should be addressed enhancing a sense of arrival

Strengthen the character of historic buildings

Sensitive location of car parking

Connection to river side green space is important

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Huntington

6 Huntington (Local Service Village)

6.1 Huntington, is a village noted for its coal mining heritage, located on either side of the Stafford-Walsall Road to the east of Penkridge and north of Cannock, and enclosed by the green belt. The village is on the edge of Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and retains views of woodland enclosing the place. The main arterial road running through the village is the A34, which connects the village directly to the M6 at Junction 11 via the A460.

6.2 The village's landscape setting is one of agricultural land and forestry, creating an attractive landscape of outstanding natural beauty, enhanced by the regenerated woodlands located on the impressively landscaped former spoil heaps. These create a green backdrop to the village, connecting to the borders of Cannock Chase from where the land falls from over 700ft in the north east to 400ft in the south west.

6.3 The village developed rapidly in the early 20th Century to create a linear settlement pattern with terraced houses in pairs and groups developed along the Stafford Road. The village started coal extraction from the 17th Century, but remained as a hamlet until the development of the Littleton Collieries in 1897. This created a sharp increase in the population with 2,000 employees in the early 1980s. The colliery closed on 9 December 1993 and has now been redeveloped for housing and regenerated landscape.

6.4 The earliest surviving building group within the development boundary is Huntington Farm, which dates from the 18th Century. A few cottages at the north end of the village remain as part of the original hamlet. However, most of the later terraced houses and cottages date from the rapid expansion of the mining village in the early 20th Century. The village has continued to expand in the 21st Century with the development of the former colliery site to the west of Stafford Road, creating a new neighbourhood and village green within the enlarged village boundary. The defining characteristic of Huntington's traditional building stock is terraces of houses with prominent chimney stacks – clearly reflecting the ready availability of coal from the Littleton Colliery.

Materials

6.5 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Huntington are:

Tiles: Red clay
Chimneys: Prominent grouped stacks
Bricks: Red/brown
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

6.6 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Huntington

6.7 Huntington is the sole 'Local Service Village' in the North area of the Community Strategy. The village offers only the essential range of facilities, including a post office, shops, public house, community/ village halls and recreation provision, although recent development is increasing the range of shops. The design guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Sections 6 and 7 are most relevant to this village, whilst specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals:

a. **Retain references to the historic character.** The surviving built fabric and form relating to the former pit village should be reflected in any new development to outline the evolution of the place and create appropriate local landmarks.

b. **Strengthen the village character.** New development should reinforce the identity of Huntington as a clearly defined, linear village, with close visual connections out across the agricultural landscape. This should be achieved by strengthening the street scape and with emphasis on entrance points.

c. **Cohesive roofscape and materials.** The hillside character of the village requires particular attention to the quality and cohesion of the roofscape, which should be animated with vertical elements and gables, as well as adopting consistent, natural colours and textures in the use of materials.

d. **Maintain views out into the countryside.** New development should avoid blocking views out of the village core into the enclosing rural

landscape, whilst strengthening the enclosure of the landscape setting to the west and east.

e. **Enhance the village's connectivity.** New development should serve to connect the various neighbourhoods, particularly across Stafford Road, by means of an integrated network of open spaces, to provide access to the reclaimed landscape areas adjacent to the village core, in particular Littleton Leisure Park.

f. **Containment of the village edge.** Development on the periphery of the village should avoid extending inappropriately into the enclosing countryside. Development should be tightly enclosed by deep blocks of planting to maintain the separation and hillside character of the village. Stark fence lines along the countryside edge should be avoided. New planting along the village edge should also create functional wildlife corridors.

g. **Appropriate village density.** New development within the village core should encourage housing development at a medium to high density to make more efficient use of land and strengthen the cohesion of the residential neighbourhoods. Space should be retained within the street scape to accommodate on-street planting, whilst avoiding the creation of unstructured open spaces.

h. **Innovative modern design.** Further development within the village boundary should investigate the potential to adopt innovative development design. Such modern design should respect the massing, modest scale, proportions and the low-lying character of the historic core along Stafford Road while creating a clear architectural local connection with the village, in terms of materials.

i. **Limit impact of car parking.** New development should ensure that parking is accommodated on-plot, using integral or courtyard parking. On-street parking should only be accommodated within specifically created parking bays. These should be enclosed with street scape planting and accommodated without intrusion to the street scape.

Development should avoid blocking views of the village core

Example of a typical village street scape

Reminders of the village's history

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Wheaton Aston

7 Wheaton Aston (Local Service Village)

7.1 Wheaton Aston is a rural village located in open countryside to the north of the District. It lies approximately 6 miles to the west of Penkridge and 4 miles north of Brewood and is flanked by the Shropshire Union Canal. The village has medieval origins, developing slowly from the 13th Century as the focus for small farming community.

7.2 The settlement emerged as a cluster of farmhouses, a small chapel and cottages, around the site of the parish church. A few buildings dating from the late medieval period survive. This oldest part of village is sited on a small knoll around the church of St. Mary, which remains the most important landmark in Wheaton Aston. The village extended along Long Street during the 19th century to meet the canal and latterly in the 20th Century to the north creating a relatively compact and enclosed development pattern.

7.3 The village's landscape setting comprises open arable farmland, with the canal located to the north and the West Midlands Green Belt to the south east. The village centre retains the compact nature of the settlement, with tightly enclosed winding lanes within the core areas. The Shropshire Union Canal is an important landscape feature which contains the edge of the village to the north, and provides important vistas of the settlement. Views out of the village beyond the post-war housing in all directions create interesting views with a number of landmarks within the wider landscape. The intrusion of modern infrastructure on this rural scene is minimal.

7.4 The predominant village settlement pattern is now associated with its post-war housing development, which increased the village's population considerably. However, the focus remains on the historic core. This is encompassed by the Conservation Area and is a nucleated group, focussed around the church and village square creating a street scape which provides enclosed views. The core consists of winding narrow lanes such as Frog Lane, Mill Lane and School Road leading out to agricultural landscape. Consequently, despite the late 20th Century expansion, Wheaton Aston retains its compact rural character.

7.5 The built form of the village has two distinct features, those of the conservation area which consists of a variety of materials with red brick and rendered properties and arranged in high densities. In contrast, outside of the conservation area, post-war 1960s residential developments, which tend to be largely brick, either red or buff/brown coloured, with shallow roofs of slate or concrete tiles. Although quite compact much of the properties have spacious private gardens, creating opportunities for enhancement of green networks.

7.6 Although Wheaton Aston has a few 'estate' cottages there is a particular building detail that is local to this area. A 19th century builder called Smith enriched to gable ends of his buildings with a particular detail that is unique to this part of the District. This is locally distinctive and could usefully be incorporated into some new buildings in this area.

Materials

7.7 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Wheaton Aston are:
Roofs: Slate or concrete tiles
Bricks: Red/buff brown
Facing: Some timber-framing and rendering
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

7.8 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Wheaton Aston

7.9 Wheaton Aston is a 'Local Service Village' which offers a good range of facilities and services, including a school, post office, public houses, village hall and recreation/open space. Therefore, the design guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Sections 6 and 7 will be relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Enhancement of entrances.** New development should serve to enhance the village entry points, in particular along Long Street/Lapley Road and Broadholes Lane/High Street, to retain the immediacy of the entry from the open countryside.

b. **Strengthen the green edge.** New development should serve to enhance the green edges to the

village to better integrate the expanded settlement into its countryside setting, enhance the enclosure of the village and create a green network though the village. Development should not be constructed hard on the development boundary.

c. **Retention of key views.** New development should retain and enhance key external vistas, particularly of the Canal and the enclosing countryside, focusing on retaining distant views out of the village to maintain connections with its agricultural origins.

d. **Consistent materials choice and architectural detailing.** New development should adopt simple earth-derived colours, maintaining darker red brick and tiles, and avoiding stark contrasts within the street scape, while introducing innovation within the established palette.

e. **Enhance the village character.** Any new development within the village core should adopt a compact density, directly connected to the existing street structure to strengthen the historic character and settlement pattern.

f. **Encourage modern design.** Any new infill or replacement development should adopt innovative new development design, (while retaining the general low-rise, 2-storey scale) to broaden the variety and character of the built form and demonstrate the continuing evolution of the village residential areas.

g. **Protect and enhance the historic core.** Any new development should serve to enhance the setting of St. Mary's Church, including the modest open space which surrounds it. The limited views of the church from the surrounding countryside, emphasising its slightly elevated potion should be protected from intrusive development which diminishes the architectural importance of the landmark church building.

h. **Enhancement of physical and visual permeability.** Any new development should serve to enhance the recreational connections to the surrounding countryside and in the canal tow path. The limited view of the church should be protected and enhanced where possible, along with other channelled views between properties to maintain visual connections to the enclosing countryside.

7.9 Wheaton Aston has an up-to-date Conservation Area Management Plan and Appraisal. This must be referred to when considering proposals for development within the Conservation Area or in areas outside the Conservation Area which would affect views into or out of the Conservation Area.

New development should serve to enhance the village edge

A consistent choice of materials is important

Protecting the village's historic core is essential

Inspiration from village character

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Brewood

8 Brewood (Main Service Village)

8.1 The village of Brewood has ancient origins, with its name being traced to the post-roman period of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon settlement meaning, 'wood at the hill called Bre'. It is located at the high point at the eastern end of a low ridge within the Staffordshire Plan Character Area, overlooking the shallow valley of the River Penk and enclosed by green belt.

8.2 The landscape setting of the village emphasises the compact nature of the settlement, with winding lanes tightly enclosed by mature hedgerows. The roads focus on the modest Market Place at the junction of Sandy Lane, Stafford Street, Bargate Street and Church Road, whilst the prominent spire of the parish church of St Mary and St Chad dominates distant views of the village. The surrounding countryside is well wooded, channelling views out from the village, while the Canal is an important landscape feature which contains the edges of the village, and provides important vistas of the settlement.

8.3 Brewood's compact settlement pattern largely retains its radial form, growing out from the ancient market place, with a concentration of historic buildings surviving within the core area. The village grew slowly from the 13th Century, but with relatively extensive growth in the 19th Century when new brick terraces were erected along the radial routes. The mid-20th Century witnessed some considerable expansion, with further ribbon development to the north and east extending the village's development boundary.

8.4 The village exhibits an impressive variety of surviving building forms, ranging from 17th Century box-frame timber cottages, through to the formality of the elegant 18th and 19th Century villas. The properties are, in general, relatively modest in scale, mostly two-storey, with exceptions extending to three into the roof space.

Materials

8.5 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Brewood are:

Tiles: Hand-made red/brown clay

Bricks: Red/brown with some use of brick string and band coursing and decorative details

Facing: Rendering, some painted

Doors & windows: Timber

For development in Brewood, reference should be made to the Brewood Village Design Statement.

Archaeology

8.6 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Brewood

8.7 Brewood is a 'Main Service Village' which offers a reasonably good range of facilities and services, including a school, post office, medical facilities, shops, public houses, village hall, library, church and recreation provision.

8.8 Brewood is unique in having its own 'Village Design Statement' adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This set out a detailed analysis of the villages main characteristics. All new building In Brewood should be informed by and demonstrate reference to the Village Design Statement. In addition to this, the design guidance on both major and minor development, outlined below in Sections 6 and 7, will all be relevant, while specific attention should also be paid to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Retain Brewood's compact settlement pattern.** Proposals should maintain and strengthen the compact nature of Brewood's form, whilst avoiding visual fragmentation and sprawl, or the suburbanisation of the settlement pattern. This can be achieved by adopting tight, relatively dense development designs, which complement the village fabric.

b. **Strengthen the pastoral enclosure.** Development on the edge of the village should enhance the strong hedgerow patterns and pastoral setting, particularly along the main approaches to the village along Coven Road, Kiddemore Green Road and along the A449 to the northeast. It should also enhance the green edge and strengthen the Green Belt edge.

c. **Green space network.** Development will be expected to contribute to the apparent green and well-wooded character of Brewood, by including space for new or restored planting, maintaining its ancient character as "the wood at the hill" and creating clear linkages with the enclosing woodlands.

d. **Simple building details.** Brewood Village is relatively cohesive in terms of its built form. New development should, therefore, complement the established built fabric. Whilst innovation in building design is to be encouraged (particularly to ensure the efficiency of new buildings), this should be balanced by consideration of the site context and focus on the use of simple, well-detailed, vernacular building forms.

e. **Inspiration from local materials.** Building materials should reflect local precedents in colour, texture and proportion, relevant to the site's immediate context. The use of reddish-brown bricks and clay tiles for walls and roofs is encouraged, with only the exceptional use of rendered or painted brick in the village core, where a contrast may be considered desirable.

f. **Scale and proportion.** In general, new buildings should directly reflect the ridge height, roof span, roof pitch and eaves depth of surrounding properties, with an expectation that the scale will rarely exceed two and a half storeys outside Market Place in the village core.

g. **Complement the street scape.** New buildings and infill developments should normally face the back edge of the pavements, forming continuous frontages, which positively address the street. Parking, cycle and bin stores and other services should be accommodated within the envelope of the building group, avoiding public frontages.

h. **Retention of key views.** New development should retain key external vistas, particularly from the Shropshire Union Canal, the village edges (such as The Pavement) and the enclosing countryside, focusing on retaining distant views of the church spire and the relatively uncluttered residential roofscape.

8.9 Brewood has an up-to-date Conservation Area Management Plan and Appraisal. This must be referred to when considering proposals for development within the Conservation Area or in areas outside the Conservation Area which would affect views into or out of the Conservation Area.

Simple building materials

Vernacular building forms

Inspiration for new development should be taken from existing examples

Retention of key views is essential

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Bishop's Wood

9 Bishop's Wood (Small Service Village)

9.1 The hamlet of Bishop's Wood lies three miles to the west of Brewood on the Shropshire Border, just south of the A5, flanking the junctions of Ivetsey Bank Road and Old Coach Road. It is entirely enclosed by the Staffordshire Green Belt.

9.2 The village began to develop as a settlement in the 19th Century. Its name probably derives from the country residence of the early Bishops of Lichfield.

9.3 The landscape setting of Bishop's Wood is dominated by rolling arable land, with deep hedgerows enclosing large fields and scattered clusters of prominent farm buildings. The centre of the village follows the ridge line along Ivetsey Bank Road and affords distant views to the north and east across the District. To the west the modern village falls away from the ridge and settles into a shallow valley as it approaches the County boundary. This characteristic assists in tempering the impact of the modern built form of the village, emphasising the dominance of its agricultural setting.

9.4 The settlement pattern remained scattered until the late 1960s. A comprehensive redevelopment, complete by 1971, coalesced the collection of cottages and created the current enclosed village form. This development simply overlay the more densely developed housing estate onto paddocks and smaller fields to the west of Ivetsey Bank Road and the Old Coach Road. This also resulted in the pub becoming located in the centre of the village, close to the axial point of the much expended settlement. However, the church and school remain detached from the core of the village to the south of the main building groups.

9.5 The village is a mix of 19th Century cottages and late 20th Century houses. The built form has evolved from farm workers cottages to low-density terraced and semi-detached housing. Plots are relatively generous with off-road parking, while streets incorporate hedges and trees. Development scale remains modest two-storey, the materials helping to integrate buildings into the arable landscape.

Materials

9.6 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Bishop's Wood are:

Tiles: Hand-made red/brown clay
Bricks: Red/brown
Facing: Rendering, some painted
Doors & windows: Timber

For development in Bishop's Wood, reference should be made to the Brewood Village Design Statement.

Archaeology

9.7 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key development design principles: Bishop's Wood

9.8 Bishop's Wood is a 'Small Service' Village', largely built to suburban densities on the periphery of the District. It has only a very limited range of facilities, including a village hall, playing field, church and public house. The limited facilities and tight greenbelt enclosure mean that it is only to be able to accommodate a very limited range of pressures within the development boundary before the existing settlement pattern becomes compromised.

The design guidance on minor development outlined below in Section 7 is most relevant, with specific attention to the following in design proposals.

a. **Maintain the compact character of the village**. The hillside character and cohesion of the settlement should be maintained and enhanced by integrating new infill carefully into the existing village pattern. Obtrusive projections into the landscape, including excessive domestic extensions or prominent garden buildings, should be avoided.

b. **Maintain the degree of diversity of built form.** The surviving 19th Century, former farm workers cottages create interest in the character and density of the contemporary village. These modest terraces should be retained, where appropriate, to avoid erosion of the diversity of the village's built form and loss of its connections to its origins.

c. **Maintain the understatement of village entrances.** The key entry points, particularly along Ivetsey Bank Road, should remain abrupt and understated as points of arrival into the village. Development on the village edge, and at these entrances should protect entry to the village

core, strengthening hedgerows to emphasise the dominant agricultural character. This will require new development and domestic structures to avoid intrusive projection forward into the road frontage, maintaining established building lines and the village core's green enclosure.

d. **Retain the grouping and mass of the built stock**. Any new infill development should ensure that building alignments continue to run along the contours of the hillside to integrate the built form into the rolling landscape. Careful attention should be paid to maintaining uncluttered roof forms and the established mass of the built stock should be enhanced by the retention of low-rise properties with narrow building plans, and the use of common, high quality materials.

e. **Simplicity of roofscape, appropriate colours and textures.** The modest scale of the village and its prominence as a cohesive entity within the wider agricultural landscape require attention to darker, earthy colours and textures. This is to help integrate the mass of the built form with the tree groups and hedge lines within the village core. Bright contrasting colours or complex roof structures should be avoided in particular, to ensure that the cohesion of the group and village form is retained.

f. **Retain visual connections with the countryside.** Any new infill development should ensure that the visual connections to the wider agricultural landscape are maintained from within the village core. In particular the loss of vistas from Old Weston Road out of the village, across rooftops should be maintained, ensuring that the building groups remain evidently contained within the agricultural setting.

g. **Enhance the green edges.** The green edges of the village should be strengthened visually, by additional tree planting to create greater visual enclosure, and reduce any apparent domestic progression into the agricultural landscape. The village's various edges are tightly enclosed by relatively open arable fields. This characteristic could increase the apparent domestic penetration into the open countryside, compromising the rural character of the village, unless the built form is contained by new boundary landscaping. New development, including domestic structures, on all boundaries should serve to enhance the wooded edge to the boundaries creating effective planting buffers.

h. **Strengthen green space networks.** The existing green spaces and tree groups within the village framework should contribute to the creation of an enhanced footpath network, linking the village to its agricultural setting. Any new infill development should incorporate existing planting, and add new features to strengthen the character of the village as a cohesive, wooded hillside development within the open arable landscape.

Strengthen neighbourhood centres

The diversity of built form should be retained

Enhance the green edge to the village to emphasise the arable enclosures

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Coven

10 Coven (Local Service Village)

10.1 Coven is a small village, located in the South West of Staffordshire and was originally a manor in the parish of Brewood. Located on former heathland the village developed around a former windmill 2 miles south east of Brewood, flanked to the east by the A449, Stafford Road which 1 mile south joins the M54. To the west lies both the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and the River Penk.

10.2 Coven remained a small working village at the centre of the agricultural landscape until the late 19th Century, providing locksmiths, chain making and iron smelting. There are still remnants of the past era in the form of a tiny chapel which is now named 'The Church on the Common'. The first recorded population of the village was in 1851 when there were 800 people, the population today is approximately 3,300, but it still remains very rural.

10.3 The village landscape is tightly enclosed by arable farmland and is entirely within the West Midlands Green Belt. The village offers little potential for expansion beyond the village boundary.

10.4 The settlement developed along Brewood Road, south of the parish church of St. Paul built in 1857, creating a winding linear pattern. The village developed as a small cluster of buildings including the village foundry, and a modest chapel until the later part of the 20th Century, creating a series of cul-de-sacs extending from Brewood Road. Brewood Road is the artillery road which runs through the village joining Stafford Road to the east.

10.5 The current building forms are predominantly 20th Century residential, but some older buildings retaining the village's heritage. These include the timber framed Grange Farm west of the church and The Beeches, whose land was used to develop modern housing developments. The dominant building materials are simply brick and tile.

Materials

10.6 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Coven are:

Tiles: Hand-made red/brown clay
Bricks: Red/brown, some painted
Facing: Timber-framing, some hidden
Doors & windows: Timber

For development in Coven, reference should also be made to the Brewood Village Design Statement.

Archaeology

10.7 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

10.8 There are a number of buildings in and around Coven which were constructed for workers on the Somerford Estate. Although relatively small in number they make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness.

10.9 The building density is spacious, with generally low rise, two-storey residential housing estates with some larger three-storey older properties. To the north of the village edge the newer post-war estates create clear edges of the village. Much of the newer development has taken place to the northeast.

Key Development Design Principles: Coven

10.10 Coven is a 'Local Service Village' which offers a reasonably good range of facilities and services, including a post office, medical facilities, shops, public houses, village hall and recreation/open space and allotment provision. Therefore, the design guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Sections 6 and 7 will be relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Enhance the villages entrances.** The character of the settlement needs to be enhanced by retaining a focus on the key entry points from the north along School Lane, and the west and the south from Brewood Road.

b. **Scale and proportion.** In general, new buildings should directly reflect the ridge height, roof span and eaves depth of surrounding properties, with an expectation that the scale will rarely exceed two and a half storeys.

c. **Cohesion of materials.** New development should enhance the general cohesion of the village by focusing on the use of red brick and tiles.

d. **Complement the street scape.** New buildings and infill developments should normally face the back edge of the pavements, forming continuous frontages, which positively address the street. Parking, cycle and bin stores and other services should be accommodated within the envelope of the building group, avoiding public frontages.

e. **Retention of key views and physical permeability.** New development should retain key external vistas, particularly from the Shropshire Union Canal and River Penk, the village edges and enhance both visual and recreational connections to the enclosing countryside, focusing on retaining distant views.

f. **Strengthen the village character.** New development should serve to create the apparent narrowing of the suburban streets by an increase in the density of development and the enclosure of frontages with boundary walls, hedgerow planting and street trees. The spinal route of Brewood Road in particular should be enhanced by street tree planting creating a linkage to the enclosing countryside.

g. **Strengthen village facilities.** New development should serve to support the development of the existing village facilities, ensuring that the street scape is enhanced around such facilities as well as improving pedestrian access.

h. **Strengthen the pastoral enclosure.** Development on the edge of the village should enhance the strong hedgerow patterns and pastoral setting.

i. **Strengthen the greenbelt edge.** New development on the periphery of the village, and particularly the green belt boundary, should contribute to the enhancement of the green edge of the built form. Particularly along Brewood Road and School Lane, leading out into the open countryside.

Strengthen village character

Enhance character with complementary materials for landmarks

Maintain the cohesion of materials in the street scape

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Cheslyn Hay

11 Cheslyn Hay (Main Service Village)

11.1 Cheslyn Hay remains a distinctive village, despite its 20th Century growth and the encroachment of the transport network. The village is located south of Cannock on the edge of the District and is separated from Great Wyrley by the local railway.

11.2 The village is enclosed by farmland to the south, west and northwest, forming part of the West Midlands green belt.

11.3 Despite some scattered occupation in the early 17th Century, the village traces its real development back to the enclosure of Cheslyn Common in 1797. The subsequent opening of coal mines in the parish reportedly brought, "some respectable inhabitants to the place", and stimulated the 19th Century expansion of the village as a key part of the Staffordshire coal mining industry. The village has latterly spread from its original nucleus near the junction of High Street and Low Street towards the enclosing motorways. The village core retains the tight urban grain of the 19th Century growth and buildings dating from this period, interspersed with pockets of green space. Attractive views out to the enclosing countryside are maintained from the village core to the north and west. 20th Century housing development on the village edge has a more suburban character, and is interspersed by an emerging network of green spaces which maintain access to the enclosing countryside.

11.4 The dominant residential building types within the village date from the late 19th Century and early 20th century and are largely red brick. The dominant character of this early housing is terraces or semi-detached cottages with substantial chimneys. Many of these buildings have good terracotta detailing – reflecting the skills and materials of the local brick and tile making industries – and the core of the old village contains some very attractive buildings from this period. Vernacular buildings predating this period are rare. The village has expanded rapidly in the last century to provide a full range of services benefiting from its accessibility. The latter expansion of the village has been characterised by sprawling peripheral development which extends into the surrounding farmland.

Materials

11.5 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Cheslyn Hay are:

Roofs: Slate or blue or red/brown clay tiles

Chimneys: Prominent brick stacks with buff terracotta pots

Bricks: Red, some painted

Facing: Render, some painted, also terracotta string-course detailing

Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

11.6 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Cheslyn Hay

11.7 Cheslyn Hay is a 'Main Service Village'. The village offers a good range of facilities and services. The design guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Sections 6 and 7 will all be relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in design proposals.

a. **Maintain the village core.** Development should focus on enhancing the identity of the relatively compact village core, by respecting the scale, massing and enclosure of the red brick properties.

b. **Strengthen the village character.** New development in the core areas should respect the massing, modest scale, proportions and the vertical emphasis of the elevations of adjacent properties.

c. **Appropriate village density.** New development within the village core should deliver new housing development, to make efficient use of land, and strengthen the centre's viability.

d. **Enhance the village identity.** Development should serve to reinforce the identity of Cheslyn Hay by strengthening the local boundaries, with particular emphasis on the gateway points into the village at Station Road, Saredon Road and along Landywood Lane on the southern boundary.

e. **Encourage modern design.** Innovative new development design will be encouraged to strengthen the village core areas and avoid the

further loss of green space within the village framework.

f. **Maintain views out into the countryside.** New development should protect the key views out of the village core into the enclosing countryside.

g. **Limit impact of car parking.** New development in the core areas should accommodate parking on site by means of courtyard or undercroft parking provision, absorbing parked cars without intrusion.

h. **Strengthen the Green Belt Edge.** Development on the periphery of the village should enhance the hedgerow patterns and avoid stark fence lines along the countryside edge.

i. **Green Space network.** Development will be expected to enhance the network of green spaces which link the outer areas of the village to the core, particularly adding to tree coverage in the street scene leading out along Saredon Road.

j. **Retain or reinstate period detailing.** Surviving period features and materials, should be reflected in new development to animate and create visual movement in frontage properties.

Development density should be maintained in order to preserve key views

Appropriate village density of new development

Maintain village core by respecting the scale, massing and street enclosure

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Shareshill

12 Shareshill (Small Service Village)

12.1 Shareshill is an attractive village located about 6 miles south of Cannock, on relatively high ground above Cannock Road, enclosed by the green belt. The village retains its close physical and visual connection to the enclosing mixed arable and pastoral landscape. It is located close to the busy A460/M6 junction, but retains its rural character and remains largely unaffected by the proximity to these main vehicular routes.

12.2 The village is dominated by the 14th Century tower of the impressive St Mary's Church, which was re-built in 1740 after the destruction of the original church. The settlement pattern of Shareshill remains compact and cohesive, with clear views out to the enclosing countryside and an inward focus on the church tower. The density of development in the village core retains the historic street pattern and enclosure of the road frontage, with generous gardens to the rear, connecting green spaces. The narrow streets retain their rustic informality to emphasise the enclosed, inward looking character of the village. The periphery of the village encloses a number of farm units, with their functional agricultural buildings retaining a contribution to the compact rural and agricultural character of the village, despite their conversion to new uses. The village has latterly expanded with some peripheral 20th Century development to the east, which projects the low density development into the countryside.

12.3 The village exhibits a range of built form, from timber-framed late 16th Century cottages through to modern residential properties. Its modest scaled buildings are mainly 2-3 storeys in height. However, some of the larger properties have an off-white render, retaining clay tiled roofs and large chimney stacks while the agricultural buildings tend to have slate roofs. Many 19th Century residential properties tend to exhibit decorative eaves and brickwork, some with blue Staffordshire brickwork. Some buildings show the influence of the Vernon family from nearby Hilton Hall.

12.4 Although not as numerous as elsewhere a small number of cottages associated with the estates of Hilton Hall can be found in Shareshill and its surrounding areas.

Materials

12.5 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Shareshill are:

Roofs: Slate or blue clay tiles, decorative eaves

Chimneys: Prominent, narrow stacks with string course near top

Bricks: Red/buff brown, Staffordshire blue for detailing, especially at eaves

Facing: Timber-framing and some rendering painted off-white

Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

12.6 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Shareshill

12.7 Shareshill is a 'Small Service Village' with a restricted range of facilities, simply offering a church, school, village hall, playing field and public house. It is more accessible to the nearby extensive facilities in Cheslyn Hay. The design guidance on minor development outlined below in Section 7 will be most relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following when developing design proposals.

a. **Appropriate village density.** Any new development within the village core should create a relatively dense pattern to strengthen village character.

b. **Maintain views out into the countryside.** Visual connections to the agricultural landscape should be retained with new development avoiding the loss of established views.

c. **Enhance the green village edge.** Development on the village edge should enhance the green fringe contain the village's built form in the landscape, particularly with views from Cannock Road. The character of the woodland enclosure should be enhanced to contribute to green space networks.

d. **Green space network.** Existing trees and planting space should be retained in new development to enhance the green spaces which link the edge of the village to its core, particularly adding to the woodland edge character at key view points such as from Church Road. Cross-village routes, such

as Elms Lane, should be extensively planted to soften the urbanising impact of new development.

e. **High quality contemporary architecture.** Any new development should adopt imaginative design, acknowledging the scale, mass and materials prevalent within Shareshill, to demonstrate the village's continuing evolution.

f. **Enhancement of the village entrances.** It is important to balance proximity to major road networks by enhancing the sense of arrival and entry into the village at its key entrances. This will require attention to the development enclosure, adopting locally relevant building materials and details.

g. **Proportionate alterations and additions.** Domestic scale additions should remain in scale with the individual building and the modest proportions of the village's built fabric. Dominant, bulky additions should be avoided and building materials, colours and textures should be rustic and earthy and avoid strident visual impact.

h. **Limit the impact of car parking.** The accommodation of car parking should be carefully considered to avoid dominating village frontages or street scapes and losing opportunities for street scape planting. Integral, rear courtyard or undercroft parking provision will be encouraged to absorb vehicles without intrusion.

Focus on the authenticity of details

Maintain views of key landmarks

Maintain appropriate density of development

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Great Wyrley

13 Great Wyrley (Main Service Village)

13.1 Great Wyrley is located along the A34 (Walsall Road) south of the M6 toll motorway, within the former South Staffordshire Coalfield. Coal and ironstone mines were working in the area from 1642, although the village remained little more than a scattering of dwelling until the early 20th Century. The 18th and 19th Century industrial development stimulated the growth of the village, based on local coal and nearby iron industries. The canals, roads and railways brought skilled men and materials, and new factories were built at Church Bridge at the northern end of the village. The modern village remains enclosed by the railway to the west and Watling Street to the northeast.

13.2 Despite its expansion in the modern era the village retains visual connections to its surrounding agricultural setting, and is contained by the Green Belt to the south and east. The enclosing landscape includes some coarse grassland of uneven levels, consisting of the overgrown deposits from disused collieries.

13.3 The settlement pattern of Great Wyrley is roughly linear, arranged along a ridge line, developed along the old Walsall Road (A34). It has developed relatively slowly, during the 20th Century along this north-south route, and is consequently contained by the two strong edges of the railway and Walsall Road. These hard edges contribute to retaining the distinctive identity of the village, despite the apparent merge with neighbouring Cheslyn Hay.

13.4 The majority of building form is relatively low density residential development much of which is mid-late 20th Century estate development. The village retains some clusters of 19th Century and Edwardian development along the Walsall Road, but in essence the settlement exhibits a great variety of built form. There are few buildings which predate the 19th Century, with the most notable being the impressive Church of St. John dating from 1844.

Materials

13.5 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Great Wyrley are:

Roofs: Slate or blue or red/brown clay tiles and ridge tiles

Chimneys: Prominent brick stacks with buff terracotta pots

Bricks: Smooth red, close jointed

Facing: Render, some painted, also terracotta string-course detailing

Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

13.6 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Great Wyrley

13.7 Great Wyrley is identified as a 'Main Service Village' and offers a good range of facilities, including a school, medical services, public houses, a number of local shopping centres, recreation space and employment areas. It is also accessible to the leisure centre at Cheslyn Hay. The design guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Section 6 and 7 will be relevant to this village, while attention should also be given to the following when developing design proposals.

a. **Maintain views out into the countryside.** The visual connections to the enclosing countryside and distant landscape should be retained, and any new development should avoid eroding views particularly from the Walsall Road.

b. **Strengthen the Green Belt edge.** Development on the periphery of the village should further enhance the landscape boundary to create a clear edge and containment of the built form of the village. The character of the woodland enclosure should be enhanced to improve the green space networks.

c. **Green space network.** Space should be retained in any new development to enhance the network of green spaces which link the outer areas of the village to the core. These should contribute to the woodland-edge character and the strong enclosure of the arable fields. The cross-village routes and street frontages should be extensively planted.

d. **Strengthen the neighbourhood centres.** Any new development should contribute to the enhancement of the identity and viability of the compact neighbourhood centres by respecting the scale, massing and tight street enclosure of the existing red-brick properties. Particular care should be taken to respect the proportions of street frontage properties.

e. **Strengthen the neighbourhood character.** New development in the core areas of the village should respect the massing, modest scale, proportions and the vertical emphasis of the visual elevations of adjacent properties.

f. **Appropriate village density.** New development within the neighbourhood areas should create housing development to make efficient use of land, and should be of a greater density in the core areas.

g. **Enhance the village entrances.** Development should contribute to the reinforcement of the identity of Great Wyrley by strengthening local landmarks and creating a sense of arrival, with particular emphasis on the entrance points into the village along Walsall Road, (south of Holly Lane), Station Road (adjacent to the station), the junction with the Watling Street roundabout and the Holly Lane/Gorsey Lane junction.

h. **Encourage modern design.** Any new development should adopt innovative new development design, to demonstrate the continuing evolution of the village core areas, in particular making space to enhance the green space network within the village framework.

i. **Limit the impact of car parking.** New development should avoid dominating the street scape and losing opportunities for street scape planting by means of integral, courtyard or undercroft parking provision absorbing parked cars without intrusion.

Enhance village gateway and greenbelt edge

Strengthen neighbourhood centres

Increase village density

Maintain the cohesion of materials

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Featherstone

14 Featherstone

14.1 The village is located on the low lying land to the west of the Cannock Road, within a patchwork landscape of large arable fields, which create an important buffer with the M54 to the south, and the extensive prison estates, located nearby to the west. To the east of the village lie the extensive Hilton Park estates. The combination of Featherstone's recent economic history and its tight enclosure retains the perception of a close, well-defined community.

14.2 The village has ancient connections, described as a scattered settlement in the land holdings of the Monastery of Wolverhampton in 994. It remains tightly enclosed by the largely agricultural landscape included as Green Belt. The area remained sparsely populated until the sinking of the Hilton Main Colliery in the immediate post Great War period. The population rose from 39 in 1921 to some 1,500, with the original colliery estate having been expanded by an extensive new housing development. The pit closed in 1969, but the village has continued to grow as a result of its accessibility, creating a modern day estate, enclosed by the Green Belt boundaries.

14.3 Featherstone is now largely dominated by its sub-urban, low-rise residential areas. These are accessed directly from the peripheral vehicular routes, to create a series of culs-de-sac, strongly contained by the agricultural edge and creating an inward looking settlement pattern. The views to the south are contained by enclosing rear gardens creating a green edge to the open arable fields. There is minimal connection to the surrounding landscape, but a modest green space network has developed within the settlement. There is no strongly defined village centre, and housing plots tend to be dominated by open frontages and off-street parking areas, providing potential opportunities for street scape planting.

14.4 The dominant building forms are late 20th Century, low rise, low density housing featuring generous garden spaces, with some attractive inter-war development surviving, including the primary school which creates a key focus along The Avenue.

Materials

14.5 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Featherstone are:

Roofs: Slate or concrete tiles
Bricks: Red/buff brown
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

14.6 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Featherstone

14.7 Featherstone is a 'Local Service Village' which offers a limited range of essential facilities catering for the immediate area. The village includes a post office, convenience shops, a public house and village/ community hall, a doctor's surgery and church. The design guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Section 6 and 7 will all be relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Strengthen the village character.** New development in the core areas should reinforce the identity of Featherstone as a clearly defined and cohesive place, by strengthening the street scape and with particular emphasis on gateway points, both into the village from Cannock Road and New Road and within the village core.

b. **Encourage modern design.** Innovative new development design, respecting the massing, modest scale, proportions and the low-lying character of the village, should be encouraged. New development should contribute to the enhancement of the village centre's facilities, green space connections and strengthen the village core areas, avoiding the loss of open spaces within the village framework.

c. **Enhance the village's connectivity.** Any new development should serve to connect the various neighbourhoods by means of an integrated network of spaces, linking to open, accessible footpaths and the village core.

d. **Maintain views out into the countryside.** New development should avoid eroding existing views out of the village core into the enclosing arable landscape, while strengthening the enclosure of the landscape setting to the (M54 boundary).

e. **Appropriate village density.** New development within the village core should encourage housing development to make more efficient use of land and strengthen the local centre's viability. New development should avoid creating unstructured open spaces, by a tighter focus on the street frontage.

f. **Limit impact of car parking.** New development should ensure that parking is accommodated on-plot, while ensuring that frontages retain space for landscaping and street tree planting. Internal or courtyard parking should be encouraged, absorbing parked cars without intrusion to the street scape.

g. **Strengthen the Green Belt edge.** Development on the periphery of the village should enhance the hedgerow patterns and tree planting to create woodland edge. Stark fence lines along the countryside edge should be avoided to create a new village edge green space and wildlife networks.

h. **Retain heritage references.** Surviving street scape features relating to the former pit village should be reflected in any new development to outline the evolution of the place, and create local landmarks.

Strengthen the village character and community

Street scape references to the former pit village should be retained

Enhance village connectivity and services

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Essington

15 Essington (Local Service Village)

15.1 Essington is located along the B4156 (Wolverhampton Road) south of the M6 and is also in close proximity to the junction merging on to the M54. Essington for many centuries formed part of the Bushbury parish, which until 1934 was part of the Cannock Rural District. Coal, clay and iron have been mined in Essington Wood since the middle ages. In the village of Essington, there are two adjacent small quarry lakes surrounded by woodland. The lakes and the woods act as local meeting places. These lakes are encompassed by the village's residential developments on three sides.

15.2 Essington has now become a popular residential area, enclosed by the Green Belt which ensures that it does not merge with the neighbouring conurbation. The village has been subject to a considerable amount of sub-urban development in the latter part of the 20th Century. The majority of the landscape to the south is urbanised, separated by a critical green gap, and the M6 to the east. The immediate setting is, however, agricultural in character.

15.3 The village developed along a cross roads of Brownshore Road and Wolverhampton Road, creating a three-legged linear form. It remained limited in scale until the post-war period, but expanded with substantial development, particularly from the 1950s. Later 20th Century housing developments are located to the western side of the village, extending further in to the countryside. They are radial in character, with a secondary route running across the B4156. This housing development has changed the village's traditional linear character and opened up opportunities for potential further growth.

15.4 The built form of the village is largely late 20th Century, low rise housing, of red brick. A number of traditional buildings have a timber-framed core and a cluster of buildings along Bognop Road are early 18th Century. The Methodist Chapel, erected in 1883, is also of red brick. The paler brick post Great War development, includes the fine Church of St. John the Evangelist built in 1932. There has been considerable suburban development in the post-war period with many low density two-storey residential properties creating new neighbourhoods across the village.

Materials

15.5 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Essington are:

Tiles: Red/brown or blue clay

Bricks: Buff brown/blue

Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

15.6 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Essington

15.7 Essington is a 'Local Service Village' providing a limited range of essential facilities, including a school, post office, shops, public houses, churches and recreation spaces. Therefore, the design guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Section 6 and 7 will all be relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Strengthen village core.** Any new development should serve to enhance the viability and attraction of the existing village facilities by means of clear and well designed pedestrian access.

b. **Enhancement of entrances.** Entrances create very sudden views and impressions of the village along Hobnock Road, Brownshore Lane and Blackhalve Lane in particular. New development should serve to enhance these important entrances, creating a clear entry and enclosure of the village edge.

c. **Density of development.** New peripheral development should be designed in a compact form, directly addressing street frontages and accommodating services to the rear to maintain the continuity of the building group. The cohesion of the village character relies on retaining the compact density nature within the various, connected neighbourhoods, while maintaining a domestic scale of the settlement's core.

d. **Protection of village edge.** Development impinging upon the village boundary should strengthen its green edge with substantial new planting, providing connections to the wider landscape and enhancing key distance views of the village.

e. **Retention of views of the parish church.** New development should serve to protect prominent views of the parish church on Wolverhampton Road, both from within the village centre and across the wider landscape.

f. **Access to the village.** Any new development which takes place on existing developed land or newly allocated should aim to improve connectivity to the village core. This is to maintain good urban form and frontage.

g. **Encourage modern design.** Innovative new development design will be encouraged to include strengthened connections between neighbourhood area and the village core, avoiding the loss of green space within the village framework.

h. **Parking provision and siting.** New development design should make appropriate provision of vehicles, ensuring that parking facilities do not dominate the street scape or building group. Vehicles should be located on-plot in gated, under ground or to the rear of buildings.

i. **Enhancement of green spaces.** New development should serve to ensure that the village street scape is enhanced with extensive new planting to visually narrow the existing open, suburban-style character of the streets, enclose frontages and create improved connections to the wider countryside.

Development density should aim to improve neighbourhood connectivity

Maintain the continuity of the building group

Strengthen the green edge through substantial new planting

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Bilbrook

16 Bilbrook (Main Service Village)

16.1 Bilbrook has effectively merged with its larger and more ancient neighbour on its western boundaries, Codsall. It does, however, have a distinct village centre around Duck Lane/Lane Green Road. The settlement was an outlying farming village on the edge of Codsall which expanded due to the location of the Boulton Paul Aircraft production plant to the eastern edge of the village. It is located between the A449 (Stafford Road) and the A41 (Holyhead Road). It is well served by the railway network that runs through village, connecting it to Telford and Wolverhampton.

16.2 Prior to the 1850s, Bilbrook was a small farming village composed mainly of the estate of Billbrook Manor, with its constituent farm workers cottages. In 1849 the railway came, joining Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury. Bilbrook Church was built in 1898, extended in 1951 and again in 1965. As late as the 1950s, the small church was still surrounded by trees as now it is hemmed in by other buildings. Bilbrook owes its expansion to the building of the Boulton Paul aircraft factory in 1936. Its arrival led to the building of a number of housing estates around Joeys Lane as well as the construction of the station in 1934. Before the Great War there was no development on the left of Bilbrook Road.

16.3 The much expanded village has created a distinctly 20th Century, suburban character. It has an abrupt development edge opening to the largely arable agricultural landscape. It is enclosed by the West Midlands Green Belt on all its sides. Farmland to the east and north, emphasises the enclosure of the settlement, which retains a compaction and important visual connections to the enclosing agricultural landscape.

16.4 The settlement pattern is defined by the arterial roads leading off the Bilbrook Road/Lane Green Road, the enclosure of the railway and the countryside edge. The low rise form of the village is enhanced by the extent of the planting and green spaces within the village. The two schools are prominent features within the village, both having a large amount of recreational space which serve to separate the two villages and create the basis for a network of green spaces.

16.5 The village offers a great variety of 20th Century building forms, particularly residential properties relating to the interwar period and the post-1960s. However, the scale of development is largely low rise with spacious plots and extensive green edges and gardens. There are a number of notable open spaces providing good links to the enclosing countryside.

Materials

16.6 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Bilbrook are:

Tiles: Red clay
Bricks: Red
Facing: Render, some painted
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

16.7 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Bilbrook

16.8 Bilbrook is a 'Main Service Village' which offers a good range of facilities and services which are spread across two key centres, including a school and employment land. Therefore, the design guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Section 6 and 7 will be relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Create new character areas.** The design of new development should be highly permeable and closely integrated with both the established village fabric and the enclosing countryside. New housing in particular should face and enclose new streets and create walk able linkages to the village centre.

b. **Street scape enhancement.** The low rise, street scape should be enhanced by a particular focus on additional tree and hedge planting to create a network of green spaces, linking the village core with the enclosing countryside.

c. **Landscaping of car parking areas.** Car parking should be integrated into the village fabric by means of boundary and integral tree planting to avoid sprawling open areas in the village core.

d. **Enhance the diversity of the built stock.** The village character should be strengthened by means of facilitating a greater diversity of building types within the various village neighbourhoods, while respecting the low-rise scale of the existing built fabric. Cohesion should be created by use of common, high quality materials, as well as focusing on enhanced street scape planting.

e. **Enhance the village entrances.** New development should contribute to the enhancement of the village entrances, particularly at the junctions with the countryside.

f. **Maintain views out into the countryside.** New development should protect views out to the surrounding countryside to provide visual linkages to the agricultural setting, particularly along Pendeford Mill Lane and Watery Lane and the established village edge.

g. **Strengthen the Green Belt edge.** New development should contribute to the strengthening of the boundary planting, to reinforce the enclosure of the settlement within the surrounding countryside and create a clear and abrupt edge to the village's built form.

h. **Enhance the green space network.** New development should incorporate existing and new planting to enhance the compartmentalisation of the village's fabric, maintain the established open spaces and create a clear network of green spaces.

Enhance diversity in the built streets

Enhance the village's character areas

Highways impact on the village edge needs containing

Cohesion of materials is important

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Codsall

17 Codsall (Main Service Village)

17.1 Codsall has ancient origins and is actually recorded in the Domesday Book, with a population of six people, developing slowly until its major expansion in the later 20th Century. The settlement is located centrally in the District, to the west of nearby Wolverhampton.

17.2 The historic parts of the village have long since been enclosed by the extensive growth of the settlement to the south and east. However, its medieval origins and rural landscape setting are retained by the Norman doorway of the ancient Church of St Nicholas, and the open views across the agricultural landscape to the west.

17.3 The much expanded village has created a distinctly 20th Century, suburban character with an abrupt development edge opening to the largely arable agricultural landscape. The modern settlement pattern is defined by the arterial roads leading off the crossroads at Histons Hill/Elliots Lane and Wolverhampton Road. At the crossroads is located the Council's offices. The village's low rise form is enhanced by the extent of the planting and green spaces within the village. These lead towards the countryside edge, creating valuable networks of green space to the north and west. Farmland to the west and northwest, emphasises enclosure of the settlement in the greenbelt.

17.4 The village offers a great variety of building forms, but the scale of development is largely low-rise with spacious plots and extensive green edges and gardens. Development was in three phases: Historic – around the church and Church Road/Wolverhampton crossroads; Post railway – elegant Victorian and Edwardian 3-storey villas and, Post-war. In common with much of the District, the buildings are largely brick and tile. The occasional use of render is consequently all the more striking when on landmark buildings.

17.5 A particular local characteristic is the use of low sandstone walls alongside the pavements on several roads. Codsall had a number of sandstone quarries exposed and exploited by the construction of the Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton railway line. These locally distinctive walls should be retained and in some instances it may be appropriate to repeat this detail in new developments in the village.

Materials

17.6 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Codsall are:

Tiles: Red clay

Bricks: Red

Facing: Render, some painted

Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

17.7 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Codsall

17.8 Codsall is a 'Main Service Village' it offers a good range of facilities and services, spread across two key centres. Therefore, the design guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Section 6 and 7 is relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Maintain the distinction of the village character areas.** The historic core around St. Nicholas's Church should be retained as a distinctive character area and be protected from any peripheral development which would serve to separate it from the open countryside.

b. **Strengthen the village character.** The density of development within the village centres, particularly around Wilkes Road/Wolverhampton Road should be increased to improve the legibility, viability and identity of the village centres.

c. **Create new character areas.** The design of new development should be highly permeable and closely integrated both with the established village fabric and its enclosing countryside. In particular, new housing should face and enclose new streets and have walk able linkages to the village centre.

d. **Green space enhancement.** The low-rise street scape should be enhanced. A particular focus should be on the additional planting of trees and hedges, to create networks of green spaces, linking the village core with the enclosing countryside.

e. **Landscaping of car parking areas.** Car parking should be integrated into the village fabric by means of boundary and integral tree planting to avoid sprawling open areas in the core of the village

f. **Enhance the diversity of the built stock.** The village character should be strengthened by facilitating a greater diversity of building types within the various village neighbourhoods, while respecting the low-rise proportions of the existing built fabric. Cohesion should be created by use of common high quality materials, as well as by focusing on enhanced street scape planting.

g. **Enhance the village entrances.** New development should contribute to the enhancement of the village entrances, particularly at the junctions with the countryside, for example along Watery Lane/ Bilbrook Road and Birches Road/Codsall Road.

h. **Maintain views out into the countryside.** Views out to the enclosing countryside are mainly established along the village edges.

i. **Strengthen the Green Belt edge.** New development should contribute to the strengthening of the boundary planting, to reinforce the enclosure of the settlement within the surrounding countryside and create a clear and abrupt edge to the village's built form, as per the established edge along Keepers Lane and Oaken Lanes and Church Lane.

j. **Enhance the green space network.** New development should incorporate existing and new planting to enhance the compartmentalisation of the village's fabric, maintain the established open spaces and create a clear network of green spaces.

17.9 Codsall has an up-to-date Conservation Area Management Plan and Appraisal. This must be referred to when considering proposals for development within the Conservation Area or in areas outside the Conservation Area which would affect views into or out of the Conservation Area.

The diversity of building stock is important

Cohesion of materials is also important

Green space enhancement of the street scape

Landscaping of car parking areas

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Pattingham

18 Pattingham (Local Service Village)

18.1 Pattingham is located in a rural landscape, towards the Shropshire border, approximately 8 miles west of Wolverhampton and 10 miles north east of Bridgnorth.

18.2 The relatively extensive village dominates the rural landscape setting, on a plateau of keuper sandstone within the mid-Severn Sandstone Ridge character area. The village is enclosed by large, open fields with neat hedge rows, with tree groups largely confined to the enclosure of the parish church and the area north of the historic core, extending along High Street and Patshull Road.

18.3 The village can claim Saxon origins, although little physical evidence remains, and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The parish church of St. Chad dates from the 12th Century with the prominent west tower built around 1330, now supporting a spectacular spire built in the late 19th Century. This is a focal point across the village and the wider rural landscape.

18.4 The successful farming community was grouped around the parish church where the settlement pattern developed along the High Street/Wolverhampton Road. This remains the core of the village and is the focus of the conservation area. The village retained its tightly grouped, linear form, tightly grouped along these roads despite some modest expansion of the village in the late 18th Century, stimulated by the growth of industry in the nearby conurbation. Further linear growth of the village, continuing along High Street, Wolverhampton Road and Clive Road occurred from 1869 with the succession of the Earl of Dartmouth to become the Lord of the Manor. Farm buildings and cottages were added around this date, many of which survive to consolidate the fabric of the centre of the village.

18.5 The village expanded substantially in the latter part of the 20th Century, with more contemporary housing development, built to generous, suburban style plots. These are located to the south of the historic core, and project into the arable landscape, creating an abrupt edge to the village, enclosed by narrow hedgerows. Despite this growth Pattingham's agricultural character remains with the site of the former pound now providing space for the village hall and recreation ground at the core of the village. The space of road between the church and the Pigot Arms, and the unusually wide junction is a remnant from the post-medieval layout of the village, when this site, occasionally referred to as the 'Bull Ring', was used for blood sports up until the 19th Century.

18.6 The village fabric retains its historic building forms, in the village centre, with tightly enclosed, narrow street frontages with long narrow plots to the rear. The built scale is domestic vernacular along the High Street, while the similarly scaled modern day village stretching fingers into the enclosing agricultural landscape. Despite this expansion the village has remained relatively compact and legible, dominated by red brick properties at the core, with narrow plots and slate roofs lining the street frontage.

18.7 Many cottages and farmhouses in and around Pattingham were constructed for workers on the Patshull Estate. They have prominent gables, overhanging eaves and verges with narrow upright window openings. These are some of the most locally distinct buildings in the District.

Materials

18.8 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Pattingham are:

Tiles: Blue clay

Bricks: Red/brown

Doors & windows: Timber, with diamond latticed cast iron casements in Patshull estate cottages

Archaeology

18.9 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Pattingham

18.10 Pattingham is 'Local Service Village' it offers a limited range of facilities and services including a school, post office, local shops, and public houses. It has a prominent village hall with public recreation space. The village benefits from its relative proximity to the extensive facilities available in Perton. Therefore, the guidance on minor development outlined below in Section 7 will be the primary focus, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Authentic development details.** The compact, historic core requires a focus on the scale, form and detailing of new development, complementing the vertical elevation rhythms, dark, earthy colours and textures of the historic core with convincingly authentic architectural details. Particular, attention needs to be given to window patterns, brick colours and street scape proportions, and new development should retain and strengthen local distinctiveness by reference to Patshull estate buildings.

b. **Focus on the parish church.** The focus of the street scape views should remain on St. Chad's Church, as both a gateway landmark along High Street, Wolverhampton Road and Patshull Road.

c. **Enhance distinctive character areas.** The distinctive character areas within the village boundaries, including the compact, domestic scale of the historic core along High Street, the landscaped, substantial properties around St. Chad's Church and the rural edge, should be identified as distinctive areas within the village boundaries. New development should enhance their positive characteristics, particularly the visual and physical connections to open countryside.

d. **Density of development.** The continued cohesion of the village relies on retaining the compact character and domestic scale of the settlement's core while retaining views out to the countryside. New peripheral development should be designed to reflect the filtering of density towards the village edge. The village core should be retained in a compact form, directly addressing street frontages and accommodating services to the rear.

e. **Enclosure of the village edge.** The expansion of the village has projected into the relatively open arable landscape. New development should, therefore, enhance the enclosure and limit the erosion of the arable edge and landscape context by the strengthening of back land planting.

f. **Parking and service accommodation.** New development within the village core should discreetly accommodate space for vehicles and services within landscaped areas on-plot, avoiding further reliance on-street provision, or unrelieved areas of surface parking.

g. **Importance of village gateways.** All the village approaches and gateways, particularly those along Patshull Road, Moor Lane and Wolverhampton Road, create very sudden, character defining views of the village as they emerge from the arable landscape. Focus should be on the quality of development in the these areas, strengthening the village's green edge and the quality of materials and detailing.

18.11 Pattingham has an up-to-date Conservation Area Management Plan and Appraisal. This must be referred to when considering proposals for development within the Conservation Area or in areas outside the Conservation Area which would affect views into or out of the Conservation Area.

Enclosure of street-frontage is important

Inspiration from vernacular building types

Maintain density of development

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Perton

19 Perton (Main Service Village)

19.1 Perton is now associated with the modern settlement built on the site of a disused airfield on the extreme western edge of the Wolverhampton conurbation. However the parish has ancient origins and the main coaching route from Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury ran through the new estate parallel to the current line of the A41. At the heart of the old settlements was Wrottesley Hall whose very large estate lands extended as far as Wombourne and included parts of Bilbrook. Although close to the urban area, the village's primary setting is the undulating, agricultural landscape of the Stour Valley.

19.2 The settlement pattern is distinctive and bears little resemblance to traditional Staffordshire village layouts. The River Penk was diverted to create two artificial lakes which form the core of the settlement. The main community facilities - churches, shops, health care facilities - are grouped around this landscaped area in a zoned space separate from the main access loop. The layout is low density and includes large areas of surface car parking alongside the grassed parkland. Businesses and other facilities are low rise and set back from the main road behind car parks and around a pedestrianised precinct.

19.3 Beyond the core area the layout is residential in character and dominated by the circulation network, in particular the 3 mile loop road (The Parkway) and its dependent network of residential access roads and culs-de-sac. The design allows for efficient vehicle movement and there is in places a separate pedestrian network.

19.4 Housing layouts are low density and inward facing around access roads. The green spaces along the loop roads, pedestrian circulation routes and the boundary to the open countryside are dominated by garden boundaries. This undermines the intimate village character which is a distinctive feature of older South Staffordshire settlements.

19.5 Housing unit design is typical of the 1970s and 1980s, being mostly detached and semi-detached units with garages and individual enclosed gardens. There is little variety in the combination of unit types, and the detailing of houses, including the choice of materials, does not reflect the local vernacular.

Materials

19.6 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Perton are:
Tiles: Blue concrete
Bricks: Red/brown
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

19.7 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Perton

19.8 Perton is a 'Main Service Village'. It offers a good range of essential services for the local area, such as schools, shops, a post office, community hall, pubs and spaces. The demand for facilities within the village is therefore likely to remain stable, and the pressure for redevelopment will be limited to the modification or replacement of individual residential units and the existing public and commercial facilities in the village core. Because of the planned character of the village, a number of issues should be taken into account when considering proposals. The village core has a number of structural and functional limitations which should be addressed. Issues likely to arise include:

a. **Village - Layout.** The existing layout imposes a rectangular plan on the village centre which is at odds with the scale and intended character of the village settlement. It also conflicts with the adjacent naturalistic parkland landscape. Large scale rebuilding proposals should re-address this issue, considering how areas for both vehicles and pedestrians can be reorganised into a more traditional street layout which is more integral with its surroundings.

b. **Public Space.** The separation of movement types between wholly pedestrianised and car dominated environments should be reconsidered so that less dependence is placed on zoned access types. The isolation of the core from the loop road could be addressed through the creation of a through traffic route with commercial frontages and shared access types generating a more active village centre. This should be reinforced by a hierarchy of space types which includes the landscaped open space. Avoid large, visible car parking areas.

c. **Village Centre - Mixing of Land Uses.** The zoning of retail and community uses away from residential areas is untypical of South Staffordshire villages. Redevelopment proposals should aim to reintegrate uses with residential units built in the core area. This will support a more diverse and secure village centred.

d. **Built Form and Detailed Design.** Within an overall master plan, reconstruction in the village centre should aim to create a hierarchy of built form with key facades, entrances and building mass arranged around main public spaces. This should aim to reproduce the close relationship between built form, functional importance and public spaces which is characteristic of more traditional settlements in the area. Materials choice should be consistent and related to the hierarchy of built form.

e. **Residential Areas.** Opportunities to enhance existing residential areas are limited by the green belt setting and the lack of additional land within the village for new development. Where opportunities for new housing do arise, proposals should respond to their location within the village:

   i) Creating effective frontage to public areas including the loop road and the landscaped spaces in the village centre

   ii) Employing non-standard design and detailing to create distinctive local landmarks and gateways for instance at village entrances, junctions and other visible locations within the development.

   iii) Creating a more natural settlement edge through variety of massing, orientation and building line.

f. **Minor Development.** Extensions and infill development should follow the guidance set out in Section 7 and with reference to local distinctiveness issues set out in point 19.5 above.

Village edge enhancement is important

A public green space opportunity for enhancement

A typical residential area

Important to ensure cohesion of minor development through material choice

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Trysull

20 Trysull (Small Service Village)

20.1 Trysull is a compact settlement situated in the shallow, broad valley of the Smestow Brook approximately six miles to the south-west of Wolverhampton. Traditionally an agricultural settlement, farming is mainly arable with pasture for a few sheep, but mainly horses. Early maps show a mill located alongside the brook; some buildings remain on the site.

20.2 The village is grouped around a cross roads close to a bridging point over the brook. Although an ancient settlement (the church is medieval) it has never expanded beyond a limited group close to the junction. Its maturity is reflected in the diverse range of building types and spaces, and the organic edge the village forms with the surrounding countryside.

20.3 Trysull has a subtle hierarchy of scale which reinforces its strong focus around the road junction and the church; this includes the cottages grouped along the edges of roads, and larger houses, villas and farms which create gateways at the edges of the village. Small scale pasture is mixed with mature gardens and tree planting at the village perimeter.

20.4 The village is lower density than most rural settlements in the area and the large gardens and mature tree planting in and around the village are one of its distinctive features.

20.5 The village contains a mixture of buildings from its earliest timber framed houses through to late 20th century buildings. A particularly noticeable characteristic are the early 20th century buildings erected by the Mander family. These constitute the most significant concentration of 'Arts and Crafts' style buildings in the District and they make a positive and significant contribution to 'local distinctiveness'.

Materials

20.6 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Trysull are:

Roofs: Some thatch, red/orange clay tiles

Bricks: Red/orange

Facing: Render, some painted, or painted rough coat

Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

20.7 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development design principles: Trysull

20.8 Trysull is a 'Small Service Village'. It offers a very limited range of services for the local area, such as a school, church, village hall, pubs and open spaces. Development is likely to be either infill or small scale and the minor development guidance outlined in Section 7 will apply. Specific attention should also be given to the following when developing design proposals.

a. **Development scale and density.** New development will be expected to reflect the existing village scale and density. This is quite varied; different scale and density types being juxtaposed, i.e. cottages and large farmhouses/ farm buildings. The existing low density pattern should be respected, although the precedent of farm courtyard groupings within the village suggests there is limited scope for conversion or new development at a higher scale within single sites. All proposals will have to be justified by their impact on the village scape.

b. **Protection of green space.** The village has limited public space, but large areas of gardens and small fields which are an important part of its low density character. New development will only be allowed if this pattern can be protected and enhanced.

c. **Village gateways and edge.** Trysull has well defined gateways and edges. New development must not encroach on the village entrances unless it can be shown to complement the existing hierarchy of scale, density and visual impact from the roadway. Development at the countryside boundary should protect the distinctive pattern of small fields and gardens.

d. **Boundary treatments.** Garden boundaries in Trysull are typically hedgerows, including edges to main roads; new development should reflect this pattern, and existing native species hedges and trees should be retained where possible.

e. **Building style**. The South Staffordshire vernacular of local brick and roof tiles is prominent within the village, particularly on farm buildings. As in other villages in the district, this is combined with painted render or rough coat and more modern brick types to create a varied village scape. New development should promote and strengthen local distinctiveness such as this variety.

f. **Paved Surfaces.** Large surfaced areas, for instance car parks, will be resisted. Courtyard groupings and subdivision should be used wherever possible to reduce the visual impact of car parking. Where it is necessary, the shallow depth of development alongside the road must be taken into account: poorly positioned car parks could create a negative boundary to the road on one side or to the countryside on the other. Generally, they should be positioned to the rear of properties and suitably enclosed with native species hedgerow and trees (not conifers or other fast growing screening types). Permeable surfacing should be used rather than tarmac.

g. **Permeability.** The village has a legible crossroads layout with a clearly identified focal point. New development will be expected to enhance this setting. Proposals for cul-de-sac development will be resisted; layouts should create useable and secure routes which connect one part of the village to another and do not confuse the dominant access pattern.

20.9 Trysull has an up-to-date Conservation Area Management Plan and Appraisal. This must be referred to when considering proposals for development within the Conservation Area or in areas outside the Conservation Area which would affect views into or out of the Conservation Area.

New development to reflect traditional brickwork and tilling

Focus on key landmarks

Importance of diversity and building form

Enhancement of village gateways

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Wombourne

21 Wombourne (Main Service Village)

21.1 Wombourne is a large village located within the Stour Valley 6 km south west of Wolverhampton. Although retaining a rural character, its varied economic base and proximity to the nearby urban area helps explain the expansion of the village beyond the typical bounds of a South Staffordshire agricultural settlement. In particular, Wombourne provides an ideal base for commuters, and much of the housing which spreads out from the village centre is a mix of typical 20th century suburban housing styles.

21.2 In spite of development pressures, however, Wombourne has been successful in retaining a rural sense of scale and layout pattern. This owes a great deal to the 'village green', an enclosed cricket field which is edged by mature trees, house frontages and a church spire. There are few historic buildings but the general pattern of building form and the generous scale of the green has helped sustain a robust village identity. The area around the green is enclosed by 19th century streets and houses which add to its character. These drew their influences more from the adjoining Black Country to the south rather than the South Staffordshire vernacular seen elsewhere in the District.

21.3 The later suburbs which spread out in large blocks of standardised house types are less successful visually or functionally, but are prevented from overwhelming the village by distinctive green corridors which bisect the built up area and draw the surrounding countryside into the heart of the settlement. These include the wooded course of the Smestow Brook, the disused railway line (now the South Staffordshire Railway Walk) and the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal.

21.4 The long village edge with the countryside is dominated by modern estate developments and lacks the diversity of the village scape. More recent developments attempt to address this, for instance along Bridgnorth Road, but fail to create distinctive gateways or project a village identity which responds to the South Staffordshire landscape.

Materials

21.5 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Wombourne are:

Tiles: Blue clay tiles
Bricks: Red/brown brindled, some painted
Facing: Render, painted
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

21.6 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key development design considerations in the Wombourne

21.7 Wombourne is a 'Main Service Village' offering a range of facilities and services. In addition, it has a number of industrial sites.

The village has proved capable of absorbing development pressures in the past. However, many of the developments do not relate well to the green space structure or to the countryside edge, resulting in weak gateway areas and a lack of built form hierarchy. The integration of new development into the exiting fabric must be enhanced if the village is to protect its distinctive scale and identity.

21.8 The guidance on both major and minor development outlined below in Sections 6 and 7 will apply to developments in Wombourne. Design issues specific to the village include the following:

a. **Enhancement of the village green.** The village's most distinctive space is subject to traffic and redevelopment pressure. Development proposals should ensure active and dense frontage is created facing the green, with car parking to the rear.

b. **The existing two and three story scale should be maintained:** The church spire is the exception and its role as the village focal point should be protected. Avoid single storey flat roofed structures and gaps in the frontage, and protect existing tree planting and the area of the green/cricket field itself from encroachment. Commercial signage should be restricted to conventional, low key fascias. Avoid detached, projecting or illuminated signage. These considerations should apply to the main streets leading away from the village green as well as the green itself, so thresholds into the village centre can be controlled and improved.

c. **Development edge to green space.** The village is divided by attractive green corridors, i.e. the former railway and the canal. New development should enhance their setting; creating active frontages along their edges. Avoid positioning back gardens and car parks against public areas. Where possible access should be enhanced and form an integral part of public realm layout.

d. **Development edge to open countryside.** On the village edge, many rear gardens border open countryside. New development should create a more diverse and active edge, noting local village precedents with a variety of scales. Avoid inward facing development. Building lines should vary, with open spaces and tree/hedgerow planting.

e. **Development of suburban housing areas.** The lack of distinctiveness within many of the housing areas should be addressed by local hierarchies of scale and development density, achieved through infill and larger scale development.

f. **Enhancement of entrances.** Village entrances are currently marked by gaps in housing areas. New development should seek to create distinct thresholds which relate in scale and form to the settlements village character and project its identity.

g. **Detailed development design.** Wombourne's character is less dependant than some South Staffordshire villages upon a local architectural vernacular; open space pattern, topography and overall scale are more important. Infill development should avoid disrupting existing street lines and scales, unless a local landmark building can be justified by its position at a junction or near open space. Older street scapes typically have a varied styles and materials, with red brick prominent, sash windows and other finishes, such as cream painted render and (limited) local sandstone. Street frontages and building groups are often responsive to slopes, with gable ends 'stepping up' the slope.

21.9 Wombourne has an up-to-date Conservation Area Management Plan and Appraisal. This must be referred to when considering proposals for development within the Conservation Area or in areas outside the Conservation Area which would affect views into or out of the Conservation Area.

Infill development should avoid disrupting existing street lines and scale

Maintain two- and three-storey scale

Gateways should be enhanced

Enhancement of village green

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Swindon

22 Swindon (Local Service Village)

22.1 Swindon is a small village in the Smestow Valley between Wombourne and Dudley, located entirely within the Green Belt enclosing the West Midlands conurbation. It developed slowly from the late medieval period with the growth of a local iron foundry. The industry was hugely influential and contributed to the 19th Century growth of the village, becoming its main employer and the dominant built form, until the closure of the steelworks in 1976.

22.2 The former Swindon Iron Works site, and much of the older terraced housing, located along the canal have been cleared and redeveloped. However, the village retains its focus on the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal, which forms an important linear green space and a link to its industrial past.

22.3 The enclosing landscape setting is an attractive mix of arable and pastoral agriculture with wooded slopes rising above and embracing the village to the south west. The modest Smestow Brook and the canal jointly link the village to its surrounding landscape, creating distinctive green corridors through the village.

22.4 The modern-day settlement pattern has a spacious, open feel and is strongly influenced by the canal, and the spinal route of Wombourne Road/The Holloway. The village edges are largely simple fence lines, hard against the pastoral fields, with relatively little enclosure by hedges or trees. The canal forms the main focus of the public realm corridor within the village.

22.5 Much of the modern village housing dates from the late 20th Century, and is low-rise and suburban in architectural character, arranged in small-scale estates and cul-de-sacs. These tend to run parallel with and enclose the river and canal, reducing permeability and accessibility within the village. The focus of the village remains around the canal crossing so the mid-19th Century Church of St. John remains on the periphery of the village, projecting into the open countryside to the west. Consequently, the village lacks the higher densities at the core of some of the older medieval villages in the District, or a clear focal point around the parish church.

22.6 The built form retains a small number of older properties at the village core, limited to the main road frontage. These are mostly unadorned 19th Century properties, related to the industrial expansion of the village, constructed of brick and tile. Swindon's remaining historic buildings are loosely grouped at the junction of Wombourne Road and the High Street and include a 19th Century Chapel and a red brick barn with diamond pattern ventilation openings. The later 20th Century housing is low-rise, largely constructed of a lighter red-brick and tiled roofs.

Materials

22.7 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Swindon are:

Tiles: Blue clay

Bricks: Red/brown/blue brindled, some painted

Facing: Render, painted

Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

22.8 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Swindon

22.9 Swindon is a 'Local Service Village'. It offers a limited range of services, such as a school, shops, an in-store post office, community hall, pubs and open spaces. Further development is constrained by the topography of the river valley. The brown field site of the steelworks has already been redeveloped and future development is likely to be limited to smaller scale and infill projects. Therefore, the design guidance on minor development outlined in Section 7 will be relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Enhancement of main road frontages.** New development, including infill, should consolidate the street pattern by reducing the dominance of the highway, enhancing street frontages with enclosure and on-site planting. Front garden areas should be enclosed and planted to reduce the apparent width and suburban character of the streets.

b. **Enhancement of village character.** New development should serve to increase density in key locations, particular along the main road. Accommodation for vehicles should be discreetly located. Large gaps in the building groups, particularly in the area of the Smestow Brook and the canal, should be avoided.

c. **Improvement of visual diversity and building hierarchy.** The replacement of much of the housing stock in the past 40 years has reduced Swindon's visual diversity. New and infill development should address this by the encouragement of greater variety and innovation in house types. The focus should be on retaining an appropriate low-rise scale, while avoiding uniformity, or repetitive detached house types.

d. **Creation of local landmarks.** Key development sites within the development boundary should serve to make a positive enhancement and consolidation of the village core, creating local landmarks linked to the setting of the river and the canal.

e. **Enhancement of the canal and water corridors.** New development should focus on creating active frontages to the Smestow Brook and the canal corridors, managed as enhanced public realm.

f. **Improvement of permeability.** The visual legibility of the village should be enhanced, ensuring the current insular nature of the village is addressed by the creation of non-vehicular through routes, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

g. **Greater enclosure of the village edge.** New development should aim to create a more varied village edge environment, including the creation of defined gateways at the main road entrances. Proposals which include repetitive elements visible against the river valley setting should be rejected in favour of building types which make a positive contribution to the enclosure of the village edge and avoid proposals which present rear garden-fencing to the open countryside.

Importance of diversity in building form

Avoid uniformity or repetitive building types

Need to enhance main road frontage

Enhancement of canal and water corridors is important

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Bobbington

23 Bobbington (Small Service Village)

23.1 Bobbington is a small rural village with medieval origins, mentioned in Domesday and with a church that retains Norman construction. The village is the focus of an predominantly agricultural landscape, entirely enclosed by the Green Belt and located on the County boundary with Shropshire, west of the West Midlands conurbation.

23.2 The village is enclosed by an expansive arable landscape on the elevated watershed between the river valleys of the Severn and the Stour. This is open gently undulating agricultural land, with large flat fields and limited hedgerow trees. The landscape is enhanced by areas of managed parkland and tree groups which border the village and neighbouring hamlets. The former Second World War airfield, now known as 'Wolverhampton Business Airport', located immediately to the east indicates the relatively gentle nature of the topography.

23.3 The modern settlement pattern is arranged in linear form, set back from Six Ashes Road. The spinal road runs in an arc to the south of the historic Holy Cross Church, and the site of the Red Lion Inn. The village grew up in the 20th Century around this cluster of buildings spreading along the street, bounded by paddocks to the north and open fields to the south. The strong linear form retains the scattered development character, extending the village along Six Ashes Road, east and west into the arable landscape. The modern road frontage lacks definable character and there is little sense of a focal space. Housing is set back from the road, but without creating the wider public route that might exist at the heart of the village. The space north of the church, i.e. between the village and stream, has lost its historic importance relative to the road frontage, as the mill and pond have gone and has become a 'back land'.

23.4 The relatively isolated village retains its close physical and visual relationship with the enclosing countryside and supports a modest population. The development pattern retains a spacious and green character even at its core which accommodates a small number of public and commercial buildings.

23.5 The village's built form is largely inter-war in character, with low density red brick and slate roof dwellings. These are interspersed by the occasional cream rendered 19th Century properties, distinguished by their narrower plans, taller ridge lines and steeper roofs. Modern additions to the village have contained the use of red/orange brick. The village remains cohesive, despite stretching out into the landscape, by virtue of the general arrangement of properties, running along Six Ashes Road and the constrained development boundaries. The enclosing landscape contains several buildings of historic interest including Bobbington Hall, Blakelands, Bobbington House, and Leaton Hall

Materials

23.6 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Bobbington are:
Tiles: Blue clay
Bricks: Red/brown brindled, some painted
Facing: Render, painted
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

23.7 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Bobbington

23.8 Bobbington is a 'Small Service Village' and has a school and a post office. The small scale of the village and its green belt enclosure is likely to constrain new development to small scale infill or modification of existing properties. Therefore, the design guidance on minor development outlined in Section 7 will be relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Enhancement of spacious linear frontage.** New extensions and infill development will have a disproportionate impact because of the visibility of the linear street frontage and the low density of the settlement pattern. New additions should be careful to remain both proportionate to the existing dwelling and retain the spacing between existing buildings.

b. **Create positive gateways and landmarks.** New development should make a positive contribution to the cohesion of the existing building group, and contribute to the introduction of discrete landmarks, particularly at the entry points along six Ashes Road, Church Lane and Brantley Lane.

c. **Consistent materials choice and architectural detailing.** New development should adopt simple earth-derived colours, maintaining darker red brick and tiles, and avoiding stark contrasts within the street scape, while introducing innovation within the established palette.

d. **Encourage modern design.** Any new infill or replacement development should use innovative new development design (retaining the general low-rise, two-storey scale) to broaden the variety and character of the built form and demonstrate continuing evolution of the village core.

e. **Enhance village green spaces.** New development should contribute to the enhancement of existing spaces within the village development framework, including enclosure and landscaping of car parking areas, to limit the expanse and visual impact of parked vehicles.

f. **Protect and enhance the setting of the church.** The setting of Holy Cross Church, including the existing open space to its north and east of the church, linking to surrounding countryside should be protected from inappropriate development.

g. **Avoid visual projection into the agricultural landscape.** Back land development, or infill development projecting deep into rear garden areas should be avoided to maintain the cohesion of the built form. Careful detailing and siting should also be given to domestic storage in rear gardens, again to avoid domestic projection into the agricultural landscape.

h. **Retention of key views.** The limited view of the church from Six Ashes Road should be protected and enhanced where possible, along with other channelled views between properties to maintain visual connections to the enclosing countryside.

i. **Strengthen the Green Belt edge.** New development on the village periphery and particularly the Green Belt boundary, should enhance of the green edge of the built form. The existing linear woodland enclosures should be enhanced to improve green space networks, particularly along Brantley Lane and Church Lane, leading out into open countryside.

Retention of key views through the village

Green Belt development should compliment the landscape

Consistent material choice which is in keeping with existing architecture

4: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Village Summary - Kinver

24 Kinver (Main Service Village)

24.1 The village is located along the valley of the River Stour, below the heath and wooded sandstone escarpment of Kinver Edge, which dominates and overlooks the settlement.

24.2 The landscape setting of the village is enclosed by the woodland and the river valley, with the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal running roughly parallel to the river and creating a significant green wedge separating the core of the village from the outer lying areas developed along Dunsley Road. The canal provides a series of attractive views, although the views from the river are occasionally rather too focused on the sprawling back land development which detracts from the village.

24.3 The settlement pattern is characterised at its core by the medieval High Street, which retains remnants of the former burgage plots, which extend to the rear to create narrow, linear garden and development sites towards the river and the escarpment below St. Peter's Church. The latter day development, mainly from the 20th Century has grown from this core to create a series of lower density, suburban residential areas, with extensive tree and garden planting.

24.4 The scale of development in the village is generally low rise and domestic with building forms developing from historic cave dwellings and the surviving 17th Century timber-framed, rendered buildings through to the more widespread use of brick from the following century onwards. Roof pitches in the core areas are steep, reflecting the narrow roof span. The outer lying areas become more eclectic in form, but generally retain the low-rise scale and dominant red brick and white-painted render of building elevations. Roofs are of particular importance to the cohesion of the place, and are largely red-brown clay tiles or blue-grey welsh slate. The occasional use of concrete roof tiles, introducing new colours and textures can be unduly intrusive.

Materials

24.5 The building materials typically and frequently seen in Kinver are:

Tiles: Red, blue black clay
Bricks: Red/orange, some painted
Facing: Render, painted
Doors & windows: Timber

Archaeology

24.6 There is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the historic cores of villages and mitigation may be required at some point in the planning/development process.

Key Development Design Principles: Kinver

24.7 Kinver is a 'Main Service Village'. It offers a good range of essential services for the local area, such as schools, shops, a post office, community hall, pubs and open spaces Therefore, the design guidance on both major and minor development outlined in Sections 6 and 7 will all be relevant, while specific attention should also be given to the following in developing design proposals.

a. **Enhancement of entrances.** Sudden views and impressions of the village are created along the brow of Enville Road, the junction of Compton Road & Meddins Lane and on entry into High Street from the south. These gateways should be preserved from intrusive development.

b. **Roof scape: materials and details.** Its valley bottom setting, below Kinver Edge, gives an unusual focus on roofscapes, consequently requiring careful attention in building design. Particular attention should therefore be given to the coherence of the village roofscape, ensuring:

- complementary colour and texture of materials;
- relatively narrow and steep roof spans; and
- the animation of roof slopes with details such as flues and projecting gables.

c. **Authenticity of infill development.** The compact, attractive historic core requires new development adopting a historicist form to ensure that elevation details are convincingly authentic, particularly in terms of window form, and openings, depth of reveal, materials and street scape proportions.

d. **Density of development.** The cohesion of the village relies on retaining the compact density, nature, and domestic scale of the settlement's core while retaining views out to the enclosing countryside. New peripheral development should also be designed in a compact form, directly addressing street frontages and accommodating services to the rear. Low density, suburban housing layouts are particularly to be avoided.

e. **Proportion and detail of shop frontages and signage.** The linear, commercial core along High Street requires careful attention to the detailing of shop frontages in terms of both materials and their relation to building elevations, to ensure that the street scape remains cohesive and is not unduly disrupted by ill-considered and overly dominant individual signage.

f. **Retention of views of the parish church.** Prominent views need to be retained of the parish church on Church Hill from within the village centre and across the valley bottom.

g. **Access to water fronts.** Where appropriate new development should enhance the accessibility of the enclosing green spaces, including canal- and riverside edges, either physically or visually.

h. **Enhancement of the green space character.** The village is enclosed by substantial woodland areas extending from Kinver Edge and Enville. New development should seek to enhance this connection to the landscape context by the retention and inclusion of street frontage and back land planting.

i. **Back land and 'burgage' plot development.** Development design of back land sites, including car parking, should retain the narrow, linear form and planting to avoid large unstructured expanses of open land. However development on burgage plots may be unacceptable in principle as the plots and the layout that they create are very important elements of the "special historic interest" of the conservation area.

j. **Accommodation of parking.** The development or enhancement of parking areas within the village core should retain a reflection of the linear burgage plots by extensive boundary and on-site planting.

24.8 Kinver has an up-to-date Conservation Area Management Plan and Appraisal. This must be referred to when considering proposals for development within the Conservation Area or in areas outside the Conservation Area which would affect views into or out of the Conservation Area.

Encourage the use of traditional materials and detail

Traditional street frontage should be maintained

Authenticity of infill development

Roofscape is a visible element and key design issue

5: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Building Materials

5: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Building Materials

1 Locally distinctive building materials

1.1 The roughly linear shape of South Staffordshire, strategically sandwiched between the industrial conurbation of the West Midlands and the rural extent of Shropshire and Worcestershire, has resulted in a great variety of building influences. The District boundary consequently does not establish an abrupt change in building traditions, nor present unique styles or building materials. However, South Staffordshire does present exemplars of the vernacular form, locally influenced by the changing landscape, geology and social traditions, as well as the availability of good transport links. This has created a subtle architectural language which largely emanates from its rural, agricultural traditions. It is consequently important to understand the District's built heritage, and the design cues that emerge from its fabric, in order to integrate new development into the established village structure.

1.2 The Council expects that all new development will be 'demonstrably contextual'. However, this requirement is not intended simply to create pastiche versions of vernacular buildings, rather to respond innovatively and sensitively to the form, texture, colours and details of the particular site. The following sets out common materials found across the District which help reinforce its cohesion as a place.

A common selection of materials found across the District

2 Timber-framing

2.1 The villages of South Staffordshire exhibit a range of timber-frame buildings. The older established villages, such as Brewood, Penkridge and Kinver, retain greater numbers of such buildings, while they are less common in the coalfield villages. This early method of building construction drew on a ready supply of good local materials, with both agricultural buildings and domestic dwellings constructed with a box-frame form. Within the villages, box-frame timber buildings often survive as local landmarks, often with overhanging 'jettied' upper storeys, many of which are now listed.

A typical timber-framed building

2.2 Historic timber-framed buildings within the villages often expose the vertical and horizontal structural members. Often these have been latterly exposed, along with bracing members and other decorative features. Such structural timbers would have been in-filled with wattle and daub, and finished in lime-wash for weather-proofing. The more recent addition of modern paints to the timbers tends to give a starker appearance to the timber frame, which consequently erodes their subtlety as a building type and interest. From the late 17th Century the timber panels were often in-filled with decorative brickwork, known as noggin. Architectural fashions in later centuries also resulted in many timber-frame buildings becoming entirely brick clad, or plastered overall, concealing the underlying timbers and the origins of the building.

An example of a timber-framed building in Kinver

3 Renders and lime renders

3.1 Vernacular timber framed buildings were historically usually coated with a lime render as a weather-proofing layer. In some cases full weather-

proofing was used for timber-frame buildings, with lime plaster used on top of wooden laths. Less often, brick buildings were coated with a protective lime render as a decorative façade feature, sometimes worked to appear as stone. Modern cement-based renders create contrasting surfaces with hard, impermeable surfaces with a rather engineered, 'mechanical' appearance, in contrast to the softer, warmer appearance of lime-based mortars.

3.2 Rendered surfaces on the District's historic buildings were painted in a limewash, usually limited to a range of simple colours such as cream, near white or stone, although the basic palette does extend to some earthy greys. However, brighter and pastel colours have not been widely used. Other more basic finishes include paint or lime-wash to brick buildings, and these are also generally near white in colour. It is important, in order to integrate new development into villages, that elevation colours are based on local precedent.

4 Brickwork

4.1 South Staffordshire is most notable for the quality of its brick buildings, particularly the great estate houses, such as Chillington Hall. The reason is the District's Keuper Marl Clay, which is perfectly suited for brick making, with many of the estates and larger villages having produced their own bricks. The local brick is red-brown in colour, soft in construction and weathers to produce a rough texture. The accessibility and practicality of brickwork established common and early use of the material across the District.

4.2 Staffordshire is of course notable for 'Blue' or 'Engineering' bricks developed in the Black Country. This material is generally not used for the construction of large elevation areas. Where blue bricks are used in the District they are usually confined to the creation of architectural patterns on 19th and early 20th Century buildings, or used to create damp proofing within courses close to the ground.

4.3 It is important when designing for new brick construction, particularly within the historic parts of the villages, to understand the brickwork 'bonding' pattern as well as the material. Attention to bonding will add texture to the elevation, help reinforce authenticity and potentially add to its structural integrity. The length of a brick seen in a wall face is called a 'stretcher', the visible brick end is called a 'header'. English Wall Bond, the commonest and strongest bond, displays alternative courses (layers) of stretchers and then headers. Flemish Bond displays alternate headers and stretchers in each course. More modest and functional agricultural buildings used a Garden Wall Bond (GWB), English GWB having a course of headers spaced usually between 4 or 5 rows of stretchers, and Flemish GWB having a course of alternate headers and stretchers spaced between 4 to 5 courses of stretchers. Modern development will be encouraged to explore the textural potential of brick bonding to enliven elevations.

Commonly seen red-brown brickwork

5 Stone

5.1 In contrast to other parts of the county, stone construction is largely confined to the construction of key civic or church buildings and is not widely used in the District. This is because the characteristic red Keuper sandstone is relatively soft and not suited to small-scale construction. It is notably used in the construction of churches where the scale of the ashlar blocks are more resistant, although even here the soft stone can cause problems of surface erosion if not carefully protected by effective rainwater goods.

6 Plain clay tiles

6.1 The most common, historic roofing material in the District is the red-brown clay tiles made from local Keuper Marl, also used to make bricks. Consequently, where properties survive intact the overwhelming characteristic is of soft, earthy coloured buildings, blending into the landscape. The clay tiles - called plain tiles - are of small scale, typically 10 x 6 inch (or 265mm x 165mm) have a fine sand texture, and the oldest handmade tiles are slightly bowed which gives character to the roof lacking slightly in later machine-made products. They require a relatively steep pitch

5: Understanding South Staffordshire's Design Context: Building Materials

of 40-50 degrees to shed water effectively. The colour of the tiles will vary, from deep terracotta to a charred matt-black, and from purples, to pale reds, the combination creating great texture within the roofscape. This variation in colour of historic tiled roofs creates a richness often missing in modern developments.

Red-brown clay tiles made from local Keuper Marl

7 Slate

7.1 The strategic location of South Staffordshire, and availability of transport connections resulted in the common usage across the District of blue-grey Welsh slate. Slate is lighter and more durable and weatherproof than clay, and with the coming of the railways became widespread across the country. It can also vary in colour from dark blue/grey to purple/grey, though the colour differences are subtle. Slate can be laid at a shallower pitch than clay tiles, enabling Georgian and Victorian buildings in the main settlements to adopt deeper plans. A green/grey Westmoreland slate is found in some parts of the District, particularly around the Penkridge area.

8 Modern materials

8.1 It is vital that modern materials are chosen with great care as they are fundamental to ensuring new development is evidently contextual, as well as demonstrating sustainability in terms of local sourced materials. In particular, care is needed in terms of the use of concrete or other modern mass produced products within the village historic core. Interlocking concrete roof tiles, for example, will have a pronounced stepped appearance, creating an unfortunate contrast to the relatively smooth finish of natural Welsh slate. In particular interlocking concrete roof tiles, for example, because of their large size and thickness have a coarser overall texture and stepped appearance quite at variance with the scale of domestic properties and traditional local village character. Similarly, reconstituted stone or slate products are unable convincingly to create the subtle colour or textures of historic materials. The Council consequently encourages developers not only to use locally sourced materials, but also ensure high quality materials are used where possible.

8.2 The use of modern materials and construction techniques can create opportunities for innovation and exciting design, and is important in helping create the District's future architectural legacy. But this should always be tempered by the over arching need to be appropriate to the village's context.

8.3 It is advisable to ensure that materials are agreed at the approval stage of planning permission, both to avoid delay in securing subsequent approval for planning conditions and to ensure that their fundamental importance to the development quality is clearly understood. The Council will consequently expect materials to be selected and justified in terms of the local context. Agreement of details of materials will, therefore, normally be required prior to granting detailed planning permission, and should normally be set out in detail in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

9 Paving materials

9.1 A variety of material has been used for paving in the District, including paving bricks and stone setts. New development will be expected to follow materials and patterns set by existing local examples.

10 Sources of information

10.1 The sources of historical information listed under 1.7 on page 38 should also prove valuable in establishing details of historic materials used on buildings in the different parts of South Staffordshire. Of these Staffordshire County Council's Historic Farmstead Survey could prove especially useful.

6: Major Development - Residential and Commercial

6: Major Development - Residential and Commercial

1. Introduction

1.1 The planning of larger housing and commercial or industrial sites involves the creation of new village scape as well as individual buildings. This scale of development requires a comprehensive approach to site analysis and design. The responsibility for creating a functional and distinctive place (the art of place-making) lies with the designer. The guidance in this chapter addresses issues specific to larger sites, showing how local distinctiveness can be protected, and high quality place-making achieved, through a thorough appraisal of context and the application of established design rules.

1.2 The guidance in this section starts with site appraisal and proceeds through related aspects of design. Designers are recommended to study organic patterns of settlement in South Staffordshire and provide evidence showing that the proposed design has adapted or interpreted locally distinctive features.

1.3 The guidance in this section applies to both residential and commercial design. Issues which are relevant to the larger volume structures of commercial development are dealt with at the end of the section.

1.4 The section is organised under the following headings:

- Understanding the Site
- Creating the Structure
- Sustainable Development Design
- Commercial Development - Design Issues

2. Understanding the site

a) Site analysis

2.1 Applicants should begin the design process by preparing a thorough assessment of the site and its surroundings. This is needed to answer two related questions:

a. What are the unique characteristics of this site and its setting which may have a bearing on the project?

b. What is the potential revealed by this information, and how can it help add value to the project?

2.2 Although site conditions will vary, there are core issues which are relevant in most cases. Use the Site Audit Checklist in Section 2 (page 15) to establish which are likely to apply to each site. Contact the Council, to discuss information likely to be needed, particularly in specialist areas such as built heritage, conservation or biodiversity, and the County Council's Cultural Environment Team.

Major new development should complement the existing village diameter

2.3 The amount of illustrated information required with an application, i.e. in a Design & Access Statement, should be considered at this stage, identifying relevant information, mapped on to scaled base maps. A sequence of drawings, from analysis through to final design, will provide a detailed justification for the proposed application and should be included with the planning submission.

2.4 The Council will expect the following issues to be addressed in the initial site analysis stage.(See also **Figure 6** on page 96).

a) **The location and accessibility of facilities.** These will include shops and schools within the existing community, taking into account access from the site by foot or bicycle, by public transport or car. Ideally, local facilities will be within a 500 metre walk of the site. Important facilities such as secondary schools should be mapped, and convenient travel radii around each should be indicated for each key facility.

b) **The capacity of the local transport network.** Plans should indicate the existing access points on to the site and their connections to the wider network and key regional centres, footpaths,

canal towpaths, public rights of way and cycle paths. Specialist consultancy advice may be needed, i.e. in assessing the capacity of nearby roads and junctions to accommodate increased traffic flows. Bus stops and routes near the site should be mapped. Transport capacity information complements the local facilities analysis described above.

c) **Local planning policy.** Planning policy should be interpreted and demonstrably understood at the project's outset to establish appropriate development parameters, like densities, mix of affordable housing and provision of play space.

d) **Existing site conditions**. The site's condition and context should be established including, where appropriate:
   i. **Topography.** The position and orientation of slopes both within the site and in relation to the surrounding landscape;

   ii. **Solar orientation.** To identify the focus for new buildings, including consideration of the site's exposure to prevailing winds;

   iii. **Neighbouring uses.** To identify the potential exposure to damaging environmental effects, for instance road noise, and the existence of any barriers or screens, both positive and negative;

   iv. **Existing natural features.** The development may need to accommodate trees, hedgerows or watercourses, both as features of the design and possible habitat. This may require specialist surveys to identify protected species, and clarify the potential impact and appropriate mitigation. Natural features adjacent to the site or in its vicinity should also be recorded, for instance blocks of woodland, water bodies or river courses;

   v. **Existing built fabric.** An evaluation of existing buildings should be undertaken, including identifying statutory and locally listed buildings, as well as other historic buildings which contribute to the area's character; along with distinctive smaller features such as manhole covers, kerb details and street lighting fixtures. A photographic record will often be required to show the position and extent of these features.

   vi) **Historic Environment**. The Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) should be consulted to determine the significance of the historic environment of the development site and its surrounding area. Where major schemes are concerned early consultation with Staffordshire County Council's Cultural Environment team and the production of a desk based assessment at the pre-application stage will inform on the archaeological potential and can contribute to the preparation of a robust mitigation strategy. This work should be conducted by a suitably qualified archaeologist working within the relevant Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) standards and guidance (revised 2008).

   vii. **Relevant designations.** This should include identifying and demonstrably understanding statutory constraints such as, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas, SSSIs and Public Rights of Way.

   viii. **Flood Risk.** The extent of potential flooding within the site should be established early in the design process. The Environment Agency's website will identify the site's annual flood risks, at a potential occurrence rate of once in a 100 years (1:100) and up to extreme flood events, once in a 1000 years (1:1000). (Note that this will not include flash flood events).

   ix. **Services.** The existence of over ground (electricity cables) and underground services (water, gas) should be established. The utilities companies hold information about these. Note that not all services may be mapped, for instance land drainage.

   x. **Landscape and village character.** This can be carried out by a combination of mapping and photographs and should record the site context both in its immediate vicinity (e.g. the streets surrounding the site) and its wider hinterland. The record should identify village characteristics which will inform the development design, such as the scale of nearby streets, the mix of uses,

and the appearance and orientation of street frontages. A photographic and sketch record of architectural styles, materials and details would be useful to help integrate new development into the existing settlement pattern. Reference should also be made to the Staffordshire Historic Landscape Character study, which is held by the Staffordshire HER. The production of an archaeological desk based assessment would contribute greatly to the understanding the village characteristics.

xi. **Key views.** These should include views both into and out from the site, as well as important vistas to local and more distant landmarks.

xii. **Visual and physical permeability.** Major development schemes should demonstrate how the site and its surroundings can be accessed and traversed, both on foot and by car. Relevant information might include any visual or physical obstacles within the site, such as a large group of trees or buildings, and also the ease with which the site can be located in relation to local landmarks.

b) Site appraisal

2.5 Once the site analysis has been carried out and recorded, the information can be used to assess the site's development potential. This is the first stage in site design and should be carried out as systematically as possible. Where conclusions are drawn from site analysis, for instance regarding the possible position of site entrances, or the key access routes through the site, they should be recorded on a base plan.

2.6 The Council will expect applicants to consider how their development can add value to the village's fabric and character. Examples of how a site's potential can be maximised include:

a) Considering how a development can be designed to reflect the site's topography. This might include, for instance, stepping facades up a slope, or positioning frontages in relation to a river course. Elevated or overlooked sites need careful consideration in order to manage their visibility in the wider landscape - roof lines visible on a skyline, for example, could have a negative or positive impact depending upon the context.

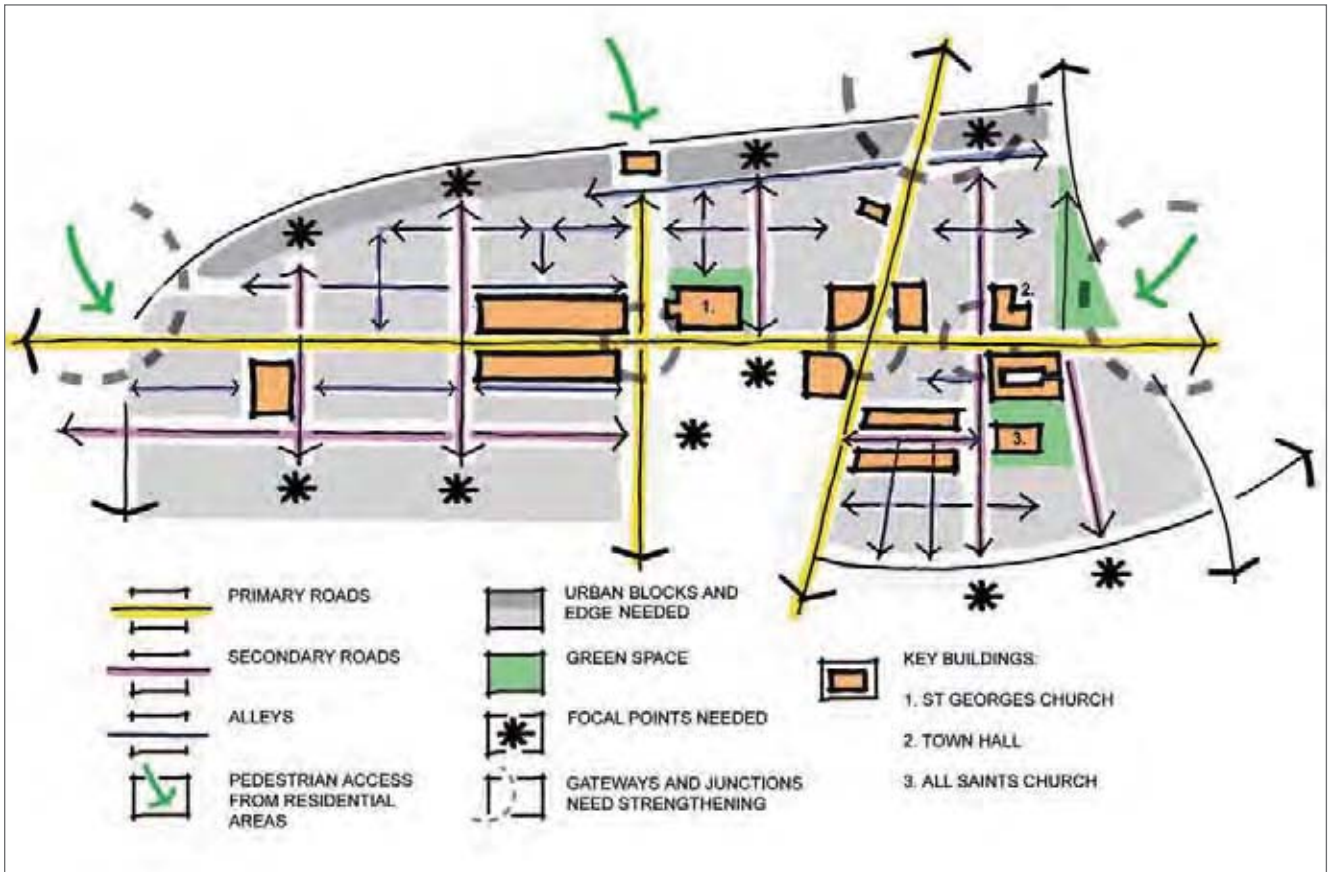


Figure 6 : An example of a site analysis plan

b) Village capacity studies should be consulted to reveal the pattern of local service centres and allow some initial conclusions to be drawn about the necessity of providing new facilities within the site.

c) Sustainability issues must be addressed throughout the design process. The potential for on-site renewable energy generation should be demonstrated and maximised through the careful orientation of building groups. Open or low-lying areas within the site should be used to create a sustainable drainage scheme.

d) The results of the biodiversity survey should be used to define existing open space areas within the site. Opportunities to link wildlife corridors between the site and its surroundings should be exploited, for instance through connection of hedgerows and new planting opportunities.

e) Integration of transport systems will need to be considered at the outset. Major new residential or commercial development should be able to incorporate, or even initiate, sustainable transport networks such as cycle routes, bridleways, footpaths and the utilization of canal towpaths, where available.

f) Integration of the site with the wider environment should clearly emerge from the analysis work. Perimeter building within the site, for example, could be designed to complement the existing street scape, and sight lines to landmarks used to organise building groupings. The positioning of focal points within the site could be generated by the intersection of through routes originating beyond the site boundary.

g) The pattern of the village's existing built form should inform development density and block organisation. It may be appropriate to create continuity between existing spaces and public realm within the development by focusing on the architecture, materials and detailing of existing buildings as important design cues.

3. Residential development

a) General principles

3.1 The basic components of development form are sustainable, visually coherent building groups linked by animated spaces (i.e. streets). The Council will normally expect developers to use the perimeter block type for larger developments . In its simplest form this comprises outward facing units at the site perimeter, with private spaces including gardens and parking areas grouped in the middle. This development design pattern will ensure that the public spaces between blocks are enlivened by active frontages rather than private boundaries.

3.2 It is good practice to develop the distinctive features of the design at the earliest block structure stage rather than deferring decisions to the later, detailed design stage. Issues which should be considered include:

a) Responsiveness to Site and Context;
b) Access, Public Space and Landscape;
c) Hierarchy of Built Form.

These are discussed in detail on the next page.

6: Major Development - Residential and Commercial

Figure 7: An example of an Illustrative village development site

Figure 8: An example of an inappropriate non-contextual design

b) Responsiveness to site and context

3.3 Constraints and opportunities mapped at the analysis/appraisal stage should be used to define the basic development design structure. **Figure 7** (left) uses a fictional large development site to illustrate typical contextual issues which could occur in any of the villages in South Staffordshire. In this example the site is dual-faced, bounded on one side by a village centre, and on the other by a river with views beyond to open countryside. A standardised response might propose an inward looking grouping of housing around a cul-de-sac, with rear gardens oriented to the site perimeter. This solution would diminish the wider environment on all sides (see **Figure 8**, left bottom) and would be unacceptable as a planning proposal.

3.4 **Figure 9** (below) shows a more appropriate contextual solution. The site is developed as a single perimeter block with terraced housing fronting the village streets and detached villas facing the river. This reflects the pattern of existing built form, and enables active frontages to be maintained to the pavement on one side and the riverside footpath on the other. The flexibility of the block form allows a variety of scales and types to be used, and the organisation of private space in the middle of the block creates protected space which does not impact on its surroundings.

c) Access

3.5 Access and the public realm are as important in determining layout as the development block structure. Public spaces should be designed as positive features of the designed environment, as well as functional access corridors.

3.6 The typical settlement pattern in South Staffordshire has a distinctive hierarchy of streets and spaces which reflects the relative functions and importance of different areas. This creates variety in the street scene and helps residents and visitors orientate themselves. **Figure 10** (page 100) shows a typical pattern of spaces: a focal market place and primary street, with a dependant network of secondary streets and tertiary alleys.

3.7 The Council will expect applicants for large developments to develop a comparable hierarchy of spaces, based on the constraints and opportunities identified early in the design process, and the emerging block structure. This should reflect functional differences between spaces rather than cosmetic differences in landscape detailing.

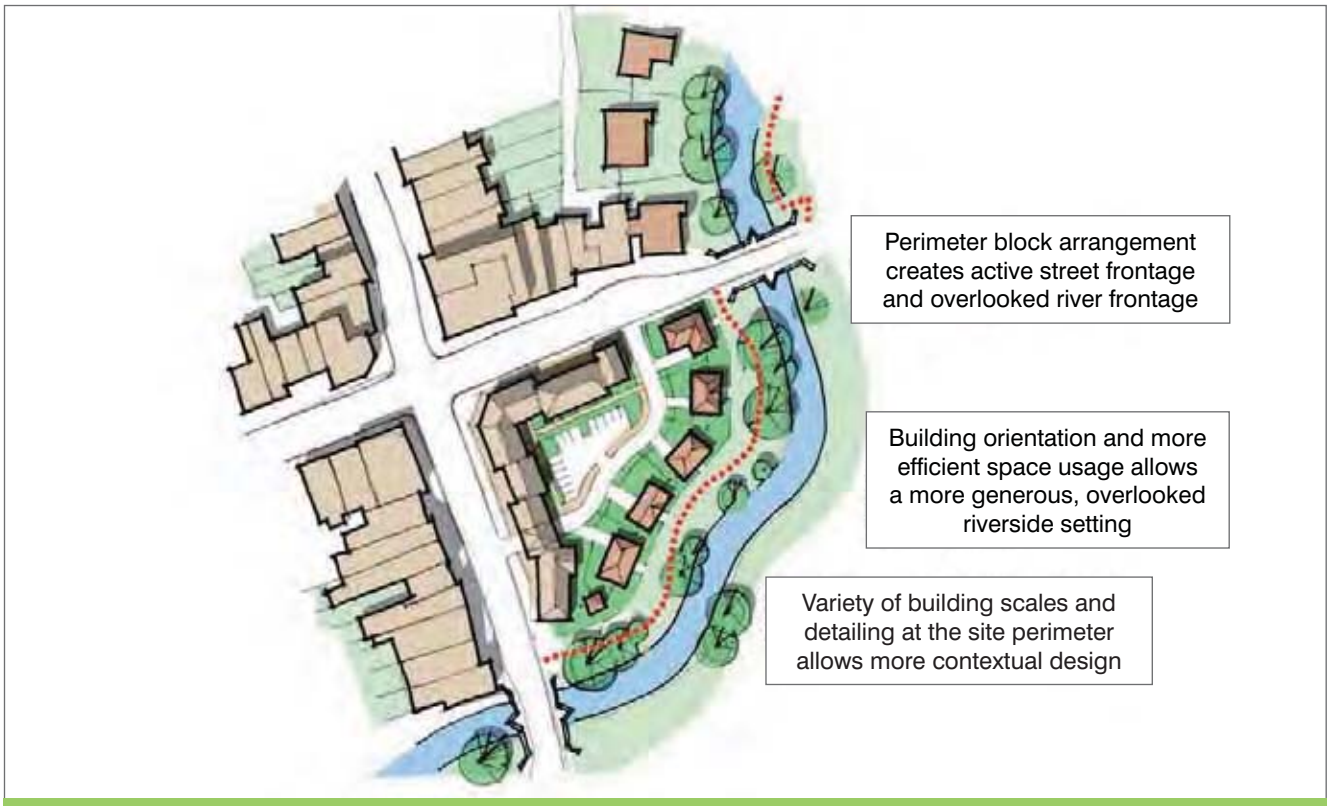


Figure 9: An example of a site responsive design

6: Major Development - Residential and Commercial

Figure 10: Public realm hierarchy

3.8 **Figure 10** (above) illustrates a fictional site for a proposed housing development bounded on one side by a major traffic route (dual carriageway) in a landscaped setting, on two sides by A roads with good urban frontages, and on the fourth by a narrow country lane (no through route) with some cottages and open countryside beyond.

3.9 The layout proposal shows how public space can be used to animate the site layout. A hierarchy of spaces has been developed around a focal space which links visually with the country lane and open countryside. A primary route leads from this space and focuses on a landmark building outside the site. The proportions of the street, its function (vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access) and its relationship to the focal space communicate its status. A related network of secondary streets allows traffic access to the different circulation, and a tertiary street - narrower and with shorter sight lines - runs alongside the landscape buffer to the dual carriageway. The grouping of development blocks should facilitate a variety of housing types to reinforce the public realm hierarchy, including village houses and flats towards the village core, and lower density housing towards the landscaped and rural edges.

d) Public realm

3.10 Public spaces should be integrated into the development and form part of a network of socially useful spaces. Such spaces will be used if they have a purpose, look attractive, are well maintained and feel safe. The Council will expect that specifications for the design of the public realm should:

a) Ensure that streets and spaces have a clearly defined role in relation to development blocks and the circulation network. Unstructured or 'Left over' space will not be acceptable;

b) Be aware that much of the essential character of villages comes from lanes with irregular twists and turns, half-concealed views, picturesque corners and informal cottage groupings. Due account should be taken of this when large developments are planned and the best compromise reached between it and any need to ensure that streets and spaces within new development maximise visual and physical permeability in their design and relate logically to block structure and focal spaces, landmarks and clear sight lines;

c) Embrace the principles of Safe Streets and Home Zones whilst accommodating a combination of uses (for instance pedestrian, cycling and vehicular) where appropriate, creating varied and well-used routes;

d) Ensure that routes, play areas and communal spaces are overlooked from building frontages, and accessed from front doors. Passive surveillance will enhance security and direct access will increase use;

e) Ensure that public and private spaces are clearly delineated;

f) Avoid the unnecessary segregation of spaces and routes from the main development structure, particularly integrating with play areas within developments, ensuring they are overlooked by enclosing uses;

g) Avoid blank walls adjacent to primary routes.

e) Soft landscape

3.11 Given the District's rural character, tree, shrub and grassland planting should form an integral structural component in development design proposals. Apart from the amenity spaces it provides, new planting should create a landscape setting for the development and help integrate it into its village and rural setting. New planting should be used to frame attractive views and as a screen, for instance to hide services and car parking. It will also have important environmental benefits such as providing habitat and space to incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems.

3.12 It is recommended that a landscape architect be employed to carry out an assessment of the site's potential and draw up detailed open space and planting designs to form part of development design and accompany the application. The Council will expect landscape schemes to be based on best practice and incorporate the following:

a) Existing Landscape features, such as tree groups and hedgerows where possible, incorporated into the site layout.

b) Landscape structure planting should be sufficiently robust to retain and enhance biodiversity. This may include additional planting to create viable wildlife corridors, both within the site and linking with external features. An ecological report is recommended in order properly to assess existing environmental assets and identify the best strategy to protect and enhance them.

c) Where watercourses, drainage ditches and ponds exist on site, they should be retained as amenity and environmental assets where possible, subject to the advice of the Environment Agency.

d) New structural planting should be implemented as soon as possible, ideally before construction operations have begun, so that it has a longer establishment period.

e) Existing and new planting should be protected during construction operations in accordance with BS5837: 1991. This will require planning during the design stage.

f) Tree and shrub planting should generally make use of native species, particularly species characteristic of the South Staffordshire area as indicated above in Section 3. The Council's tree and landscape officers can advise further. Native varieties are recommended as they will be most likely to flourish in the local soil and climate conditions, and will be both visually complementary and support a wider range of native wildlife.

g) Street scape planting, including those close to pedestrian and cycle routes, will require careful siting and species selection. Both native and ornamental species should be considered in terms of their mature height and spread in order to avoid conflict with nearby buildings, overshadowing and leaf litter problems.

h) Security in public areas should be maintained by avoiding dense shrub planting which could provide hiding places. Clear stemmed trees will maintain clear views under the canopies as they mature and should be planted to avoid restricting effective street lighting.

i) The maintenance implications of a landscape scheme should be considered at an early stage, particularly on informal or 'natural' areas such as hedgerows and wetlands which will require specialist management to retain their appearance. A detailed maintenance plan and schedule should be drawn up to accompany the application and inform cost estimates, and clearly identify management regimes.

f) Hard landscape

3.13 Well-designed spaces can harmonise a street scene as effectively as good architecture, while poorly-detailed public realm can fragment villages and add to their visual clutter. The Council will expect major applications to be accompanied by detailed plans showing the specification of hard landscaping areas. These should include the extent and combinations of different materials, unit dimensions, and the specifications of edge and other details, for example kerbs and steps. It is recommended that the following should be considered by developers. Good practice in paving design includes:

a) Simple paving design. The rural character paving materials should be simple, robust and functional. Elaborate patterns or newly-introduced contrasting paving materials should normally be avoided.

b) Functional paving design should be used to reinforce movement patterns and the village's spatial hierarchy. A limited palette of materials should be used, to distinguish primary from secondary and tertiary routes, while avoiding complex patterns.

c) Paving materials should also be used to identify the scale, function and status of the location. In village centres, natural stone materials or bound gravel will be recommended, depending on the existing character. In less visible locations a range of clay and concrete paving products are available. Asphalt will be 'the norm' for the rural edge, perhaps incorporating stone chippings into the surface to modify its urbanising appearance.

d) Paving areas should avoid large areas of small unit paving.

e) Materials should complement the historic palette within the village, including colour and texture.

g) Vehicular access

3.14 Vehicular access should be carefully integrated into the public space network. It is expected that most access roads within developments will be designed to a standard capable of adoption by the Highway Authority.

To ensure this does not override the design objectives set out above, access design should start with the organisation of blocks and focal spaces rather than a vehicle access plan. Once a block structure has been established, vehicle access criteria can be applied, and the design adjusted if necessary, to ensure an adoptable standard can be achieved.

3.15 Applicants should discuss their proposals with the authority's highways engineers at the earliest opportunity to avoid having to make major changes later on which may compromise the design.

h) Car parking

3.16 If considered as an integral part of public space design car parking can make a positive contribution, helping to reduce car speeds and giving car owners

a stake in the successful community ownership and management of the street scape. The following are recommended options.

3.17 Courtyard car parking within development blocks is a logical use of the perimeter block type. This arrangement can free up space in the streets surrounding the block and provides security for car owners. If poorly designed, however, it can dominate the courtyard form, wasting opportunities for shared amenity space. Proposals for courtyard parking will be expected to:

a) Avoid designing the perimeter block and the space itself to accommodate car parking standards. Amenity should come first with car parking designed into the landscaping, paved areas, seating and other features;

b) Consider how the vehicle access entrances are to be designed, and the pedestrian access from car park to the building entrance;

c) Break up blocks of car parking where possible through use of tree planting and the subdivision of parking between smaller courts.

3.18 On-street parking is an effective method of controlling traffic speeds. Parking bays in combination with a 'shared surface' approach to highways design (i.e. little or no kerb) and landscape design will create a mixed domestic street scape. This approach can create excellent residential environments in high-density, village centre areas, and should be considered at the earliest possible stage in development design.
Parallel parking takes up least room; echelon parking at 45, 60 or 90 degrees to the street edge will be supported only where there is sufficient street width. On-street parking proposals should:

a) Ensure that rows of parking do not become a monotonous or dominant feature of the street scape: blocks should be interspersed with street tree planting in regular bays between parking spaces;

b) Ensure that pinch points are provided for pedestrian crossing;

c) Delineate parking bays where possible using paving design rather than line painting on the road surface;

d) Avoid unnecessary signage which can contribute to visual 'clutter'.

3.19 On-plot car parking. This includes garages and village house style developments where the garage is incorporated into the ground floor of the house. Although popular, this style of car parking lessens development density and can contribute to the 'standardisation' of a layout or the domination of a frontage with garage doors. Proposals will therefore be expected to:

a) Ensure that front gardens are retained as amenity space, and are clearly delineated from the surrounding public space. Proposals which create completely paved in curtilage parking spaces to the front of properties will not be acceptable;

b) Ensure that garages are not dominant features of the street scape. This will require considering the visibility of detached garages in relation to the main frontage setting back from the elevation, the specification of garage doors, and the positioning of village house garages in relation to the street edge.

6: Major Development - Residential and Commercial

i) Hierarchy of built form

3.20 The pattern of building blocks and spaces in a development can be reinforced by a clearly articulated hierarchy of built form. In traditional settlement patterns this is expressed either through formal or informal groupings (see **Figure 11** below).

An Informal Grouping

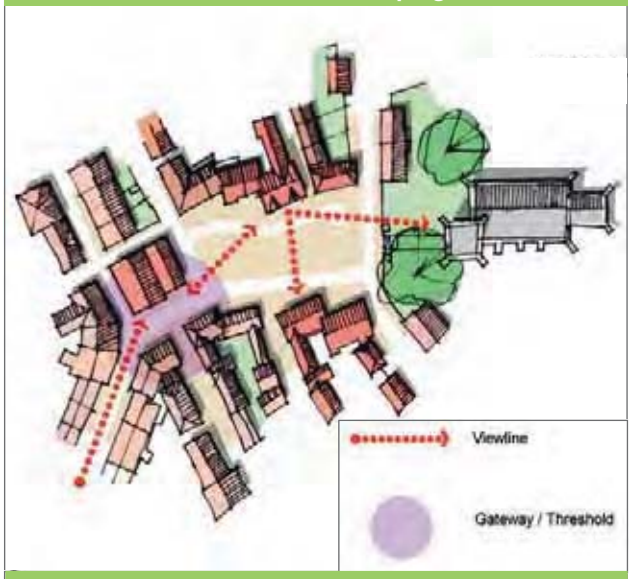
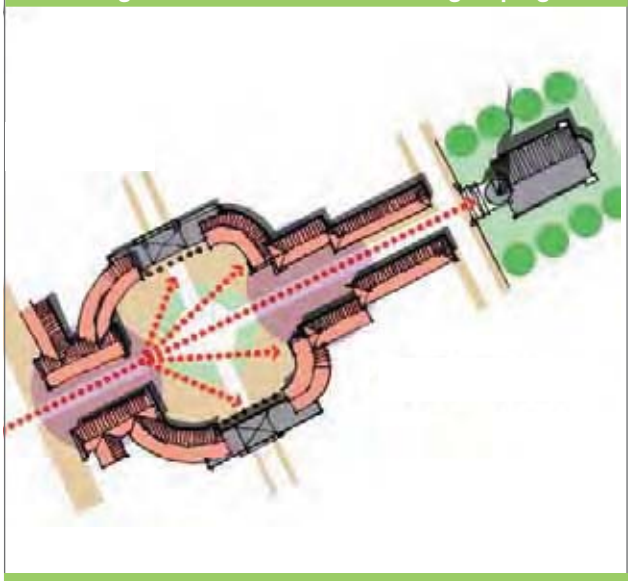


Figure 11: Informal and formal grouping



A Formal Grouping

3.21 Formal hierarchies depend upon symmetrical architectural groupings and are very rare in South Staffordshire (with the notable exception of country houses). They are relevant, however, because of the clarity of layout that can be created for large new development. Use of formal village scape needs to be carefully managed in the context of new development. The Council will expect the scale of any proposed development to be justified carefully in relation to function and the existing village setting.

3.22 Informal hierarchies are the characteristic development pattern in South Staffordshire's villages. **Figure 11** (left) shows a typical informal village scape grouped around a focal building, in this instance a church. The grouping of buildings around public space and the height, massing and relative position of façade elements follows a gradient from domestic terraces in side streets, through three storey village houses, to the focal tower or spire. The hierarchy is spatially more complex than the formal arrangement, allowing points of view to subsidiary landmarks as well as the focal building.

j) Street scape

3.23 The village street scape in South Staffordshire is diverse, with a visually legible pattern of building. Modern development can benefit from adopting some of its features, without resorting to imitation or pastiche. Design issues which applicants should consider include:

a) **Context.** Open countryside, suburban development or an established village centre? These contextual issues will help determine the overall scale and hierarchical pattern of development across the site.

b) **Settlement edge.** Consider the site's exposure to views from different locations: near views along a prominent road frontage, for instance, or more distant views from across neighbouring meadowland. How can building type, scale and form create an attractive interface with the existing landscape ?

c) **Use.** Where appropriate, the gradient of scale and form should reflect the pattern of use within the settlement, increasing towards the community centre and ideally focussing on public buildings. The arrangement of built form and public space should make use of view-lines and hierarchies to reinforce important areas.

d) **Entrances.** Entering and leaving the development can be made memorable by the scale and positioning of buildings to create thresholds.

e) **Legibility and permeability.** The experience of moving through the development can be assisted by designing public space and built form in a way that reinforces the hierarchy from edge to centre.

f) **Corners.** Consider how these can be used to create subsidiary landmarks.

g) **Local distinctiveness.** Characteristic features in existing village scape should be taken into account alongside considerations about distinctive design proposals.

3.24 The site appraisal and analysis process described above is the starting point for contextual design and should generate initial site layout ideas. The Council will not accept proposals which impose a standardised layout of housing types with no sense of village scape structure or responsiveness to their context.

3.25 Design quality will be established in a scheme by getting the structural components right; site analysis and appraisal and the development of a block and public realm structure. Design quality can then be secured by applying the appropriate standards at both the design concept stage and the detailed design stage.

4. Sustainable development design

4.1 This section reviews the design standards the Council will expect for new development in South Staffordshire. Many of these standards are concerned with environmental sustainability and construction quality, and address the management and operation of the development beyond its completion date.

a) Accessible design

4.2 The Council will expect accessibility to be designed into the project from the earliest stage. The access requirements of different age, social and physical ability groups should be considered, ensuring they are integrated into the emerging design concept. It is recommended that applicants develop an Inclusive Design Strategy at the start of the project which itemises the key access issues, for instance the design of internal and external access spaces.

4.3 An Access Statement will be required setting out the developer's proposals for access. This will develop the approach established through the Inclusive Design Strategy. English Partnership's Guidance Note on 'Inclusive Design' provides a useful checklist of issues to be covered in such a Statement. It requires major proposals to outline the access issues anticipated on the site and the solutions proposed, illustrated with access plans and management / maintenance statements.

b) Inclusive design

4.4 The Council's specific policies on housing need and affordable housing should be consulted in relation to specific sites. Affordable housing should be integrated into larger developments and residential developers should avoid designing socially segregated areas. The Council will expect proposals for larger residential sites to incorporate a range of tenure types reflecting the needs of the local community, including an appropriate proportion of affordable housing.

4.5 To avoid segregating affordable housing within the development, tenure types should be distributed across the site, so that the type of tenure cannot be identified by the location or appearance of individual properties.

6: Major Development - Residential and Commercial

c) Design for safety

4.6 Design proposals for larger residential developments within all villages should consider appropriate security issues. Personal safety and the protection of property are considered by the Council to be vital to the long term success of communities, and this can best be secured by designing out the potential for crime at the outset. The strategy for addressing safety issues should be set out in the Design and Access Statement.

4.7 Developers are encouraged to seek 'Secured by Design' accreditation from the local police service, which sets out minimum standards. Recommended practice includes the following:

a) Creating public spaces which are animated and overlooked by their adjoining uses. This can be achieved by designing frontages to overlook and open onto public routes. This should include the full hierarchy of routes within the development, from footpaths and play areas to paved routes and car parking areas;

b) Encouraging a sense of ownership of the public realm through the grouping of buildings in relation to open spaces. Avoid creating building blocks which have a weak functional relationship to adjoining public spaces;

c) Large stretches of blank property boundaries and walls fronting public spaces should be avoided and when short lengths occur they should be related in their materials to adjoining buildings;

d) Avoid dense areas of shrubbery and woodland planting which could reduce sight lines and increase fear of crime;

e) Ensure maintenance strategies are in place so that neglect cannot accumulate in a particular area.

d) Sustainable residential design

4.8 The Council is committed to achieving more sustainable residential development and will expect proposals for new residential development to achieve a minimum of Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The code is a standard for key elements of design and construction which affect the sustainability of a new home, and is the national standard for sustainable homes, for designers, builders and home-buyers. More detailed information about the code can be obtained on the DCLG website. For commercial development, the Council will expect non-residential properties to meet a minimum of 'very good' standard, measured on the BREEAM standard.

4.9 In order to achieve the Code for Sustainable Homes, Level 3 as a minimum, the Council will expect the following issues to be considered:

a) The orientation, form and massing of buildings. Orientation should maximise solar gain, reducing heating and lighting requirements and providing the best position for solar collectors and photovoltaics;

b) The orientation of buildings in relation to the prevailing wind, maximising any benefits from wind turbines;

c) Use window size and position to maximise daylight penetration. Louvres and thermal mass can control overheating in summer;

d) Seal buildings so that ventilation heat loss is minimised;

e) Design buildings to accommodate natural ventilation;

f) Install devices which reduce water consumption, for instance low water volume WCs and water aeration taps;

g) Consider rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling systems which are commercially available;

h) Select materials and construction processes which minimise energy consumption – locally sourced materials, for instance, reduce transport costs.

e) Key sustainable development issues

4.10 Key sustainable development issues that should be considered for major developments include:

a) **National and regional policy.** Requires larger developments to incorporate on-site renewable energy equipment to generate 10% of the energy demand from renewable energy sources.

This threshold will be reviewed to reflect local circumstance in the Core Strategy;

b) **Sustainable urban structure.** The development should be designed to minimise car journeys and maximise 'walkability';

c) **Local transport links.** The proximity and nature of local transport links, local community centres and other important facilities such as shops. Assess local provision in relation to the 'walking catchment' (generally taken to be 800 metres, or a 10 minute walk). The development may need to incorporate its own local centre if these facilities are not within easy walking reach;

d) **Variable speed limits.** Within housing schemes uses should be prioritised, e.g. walking, cycling, play streets, etc., with traffic minimised to a safe level and speed. Also, consideration and provision should be made for variable speed limits within housing and village areas;

e) **Parking.** Plan for amenity and walk ability, and incorporate parking design alongside these other factors considering the parking area design itself as a potential public realm asset;

f) **Mix transport modes.** Prioritise transport modes as: walking, cycling, bus, car, rather than segregating them into separate routes. Cycle routes should provide practical access as well as amenity, and cycle storage should be planned both in the residential areas and the local centres;

g) **Maintenance.** Plan building, landscape and public spaces with maintenance in mind to ensure the initial specification is realistic and will survive over time;

h) **Historic environment.** There is a need to understand the historic resource of an area, its significance, its sensitivity to, and capacity for, change. The sources of historical information listed under 1.7 on page 38 should again prove valuable in these regards.

i) **Landscape assessment.** Carry out an assessment, including a tree and habitat survey, to establish the existing site ecology and a strategy to protect and enhance ecological assets. Incorporate these elements as far as possible into the overall site structure rather than trying to segregate them;

j) **Site topography.** Exposure to prevailing winds and existing shelter belts. These factors can influence the provision of renewable energy generation;

k) **Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).** The control of surface water runoff through the creation of swales and retention ponds should be incorporated into the development design to combine sustainable objectives and the provision of open space amenity;

l) **Biodiversity** is an important component of any sustainability strategy. South Staffordshire is a rural area and development proposals will be expected to contribute to the natural diversity of the District. In particular, native species form an important part of its distinctiveness, and all development proposals should focus on securing a net increase in local biodiversity. Carry out an assessment, including a tree and habitat survey, to establish the existing site ecology and a strategy to protect and enhance ecological assets. Incorporate these elements as far as possible into the overall site structure rather than trying to segregate them. Specialist advice should be sought at an early stage.

4.11 Maintaining existing natural features enclosing or within the villages, such as woodland and watercourses, will also have environmental benefits. Woodland screens create shelter and micro climates which may reduce energy consumption, and open space networks can be adapted to handle surface water run-off.

6: Major Development - Residential and Commercial

5. Commercial development

a) Introduction

5.1 This section deals specifically with the design of larger commercial developments including storage and warehouse buildings, offices and modern agricultural buildings. It should be read in conjunction with the guidance above, which applies equally to commercial buildings.

The typical South Staffordshire farmstead forms a courtyard style grouping of red clay or slate pitched roof buildings, with red brick elevations. These larger structures are part of a hierarchy of agricultural building scales which include the farmhouse and outhouses.

The scale and function of modern agricultural buildings often has a more dominant impact on the

Figure 12: Key Issues - Scale, materials and detailing within urban areas

Figure 13: Key Issues - visibility impact across rural landscapes

5.2 The function and economics of modern commercial and agricultural buildings tend to dictate a simple, unarticulated building envelope of lightweight artificial cladding. The lack of articulation and shallow pitched roofs emphasise the bulk of the structures. In a rural landscape, these types of buildings present particular design challenges. **Figure 12** (above top) illustrates typical problems. Near and middle distance viewpoints can create a stark scale contrast between the rural context and the building bulk. In addition, the site compound can generate visual 'clutter' - stored materials, vehicles, portacabins and the site boundary, usually marked by a perimeter security fence.

5.3 From longer, elevated viewpoints, the upper parts of the structures are visible as horizontal elements imposed on the landscape, contrasting awkwardly with the vertical landmarks of church towers and spires. In this wider setting an ill-judged, large structure can spoil a landscape panorama (see **Figure 13** above). Traditionally, larger buildings in the District have been connected with farming. landscape and therefore needs to be tempered by adopting appropriate colours, siting and building forms. The design aim should be the reduction of apparent scale through siting, uses of materials, scale relationships, the orientation of building groupings and the treatment of service areas.

b) Siting

5.4 South Staffordshire is rural landscape affording occasional longer views over a wide area. In order to ensure that all development has a positive impact, its position in relation to the existing landform and its potential for significant screening elements, such as woodland, must be demonstrated.

5.5 As a general rule, larger buildings should not be set on higher ground where the building profile can break the skyline. In locations below the skyline, screen planting should be used to help to conceal the building, or as a minimum break the façade up into smaller components. (See **Figures 14** and **15** opposite top)

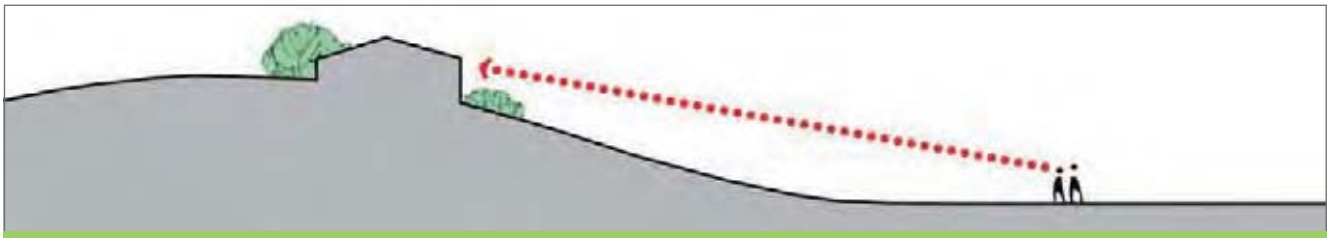


Figure 14: Siting (a) - Avoid locations that will break the skyline

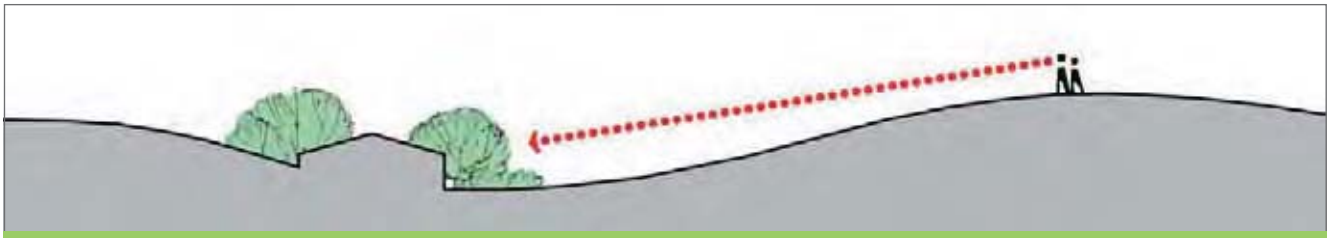


Figure 15: Siting (b) - Larger structures can be more easily screened at lower levels

5.6 Larger buildings set into slopes usually require cut and fill to create a level platform. To minimise this, buildings should be set parallel with contours rather than at right angles to them. This will also reduce construction costs and energy consumption during construction. It will also help avoid large scale engineering of slopes in the vicinity of the development, for instance retaining walls and steep sided bunds, which restrict screen planting.

Colours in the landscape are muted, usually by the inherent shadow texture of leaf and soil. Positioned in a level or lower area, a building may still be visible in the wider landscape, particularly the roof area, emphasising the need for rustic textures and colours modified in their tone by grey or brown, e.g. grey-green or grey-blue, such as bottle greens and browns, rather than white or black.

5.7 Where development has a road frontage, large commercial buildings should be set towards the front of plots, with service areas located to the side or (preferably) the rear of the development. This creates a more positive road frontage, particularly if the main facade can be 'enlivened' or its mass reduced by subsidiary structures such as main entrances and offices (see **Figure 16** below).

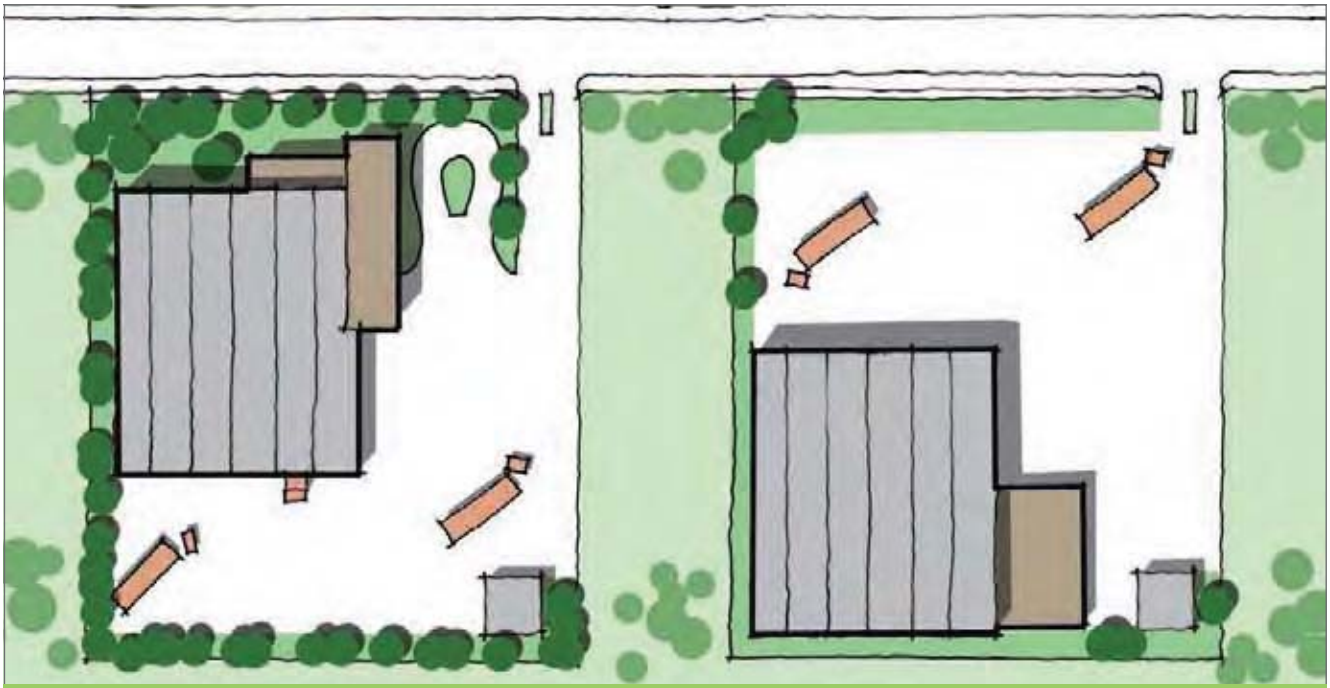


Figure 16: Siting (c) - Site responsive (good) and standardised (poor) layouts and building groups

6: Major Development - Residential and Commercial

5.8 Avoid setting new building development at the rear of plots, behind service areas, which will create an unattractive road frontage and will be reliant on detached signage for business promotion

5.9 Repetitive orthogonal layouts for commercial development are difficult to integrate into a rural landscape such as South Staffordshire which is made up of informal visual components. New layouts should respond to the topography and landscape to ensure open agricultural character remains prevalent

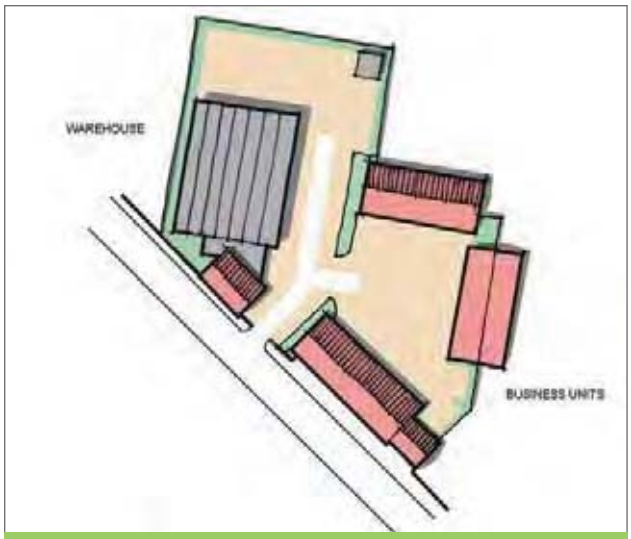


Figure 17: A site responsive layout

5.10 Traditional farmyards in the area often form courtyard arrangements and this approach should be adapted to a new development. In **Figure 17** (above), business starter units and a warehouse have been informally grouped around a single entrance, the site layout determined by the shape of existing boundary lines such as hedgerows and the line of the main road. The road perimeter is defined by the brick facades of the warehouse office and starter unit side walls. In design terms the visual benefits are:

a) a hierarchy of building scales (which helps reduce the impact of the large building);

b) a perimeter treatment which uses local red brickwork rather than sheet cladding to the road facade (reflecting traditional farmyard perimeter walls and buildings);

c) an informal building grouping which has visual interest and reduces the apparent size of the structures through avoidance of repetition;

Historic architectural groups still dominate some settlements

The importance of green edge to village character

d) an informal layout which reflects existing site conditions and is visually more integrated into its setting.

5.11 Existing woodland, individual trees and features such as hedgerows should be retained and enhanced. They will provide instant screening and will help integrate the development into its surroundings. As with all major development there should be a net increase in biodiversity resulting from the development.

c) Building form

5.12 The large volumes of commercial and agricultural buildings require careful visual mitigation. This can be achieved through detailed design focusing on the massing of the building, the scale relationships between different site elements, the selection and combination of materials.

d) Building mass

5.13 The building mass of larger structures should be relieved by breaking down some of the component parts into separately expressed elements. This could include emphasising the building entrance and office areas separately from the main bulk of the building. This can be achieved in a variety of ways: material and height contrast, setting the office element forward, creating a distinctive roof structure (see **Figure 18** below).

5.14 The variation of massing will help break up the outline of the building, reducing its bulk whilst increasing its architectural impact. This could have

Commercial development with conventionally positioned office unit

Commercial development with office, landscape, signage and car parking integrated into overall layout

Figure 18: Contrasting layout types

commercial advantages, particularly if the building reception area is designed into an attractive landscape setting visible from the road frontage (see illustrations).

5.15 Where developments have a road frontage, visually active features such as offices and entrances should be set towards the frontage. In more central village settings, the frontage could be to the back of the pavement to maintain the visual continuity of the street line.

e) Materials

5.16 The visible exterior of modern commercial buildings is usually lightweight cladding fixed to an internal structural frame. This has the advantage of flexibility - a wide range of durable cladding materials are available and can be used in a variety of combinations. Many of these, however, will be inappropriate in a rural setting because of colour, light reflectivity and texture.

5.17 Developers should present a justification for their material selection in terms of the building's relationship with its context. This may include preparing visualisations of the building from key viewpoints, showing how the materials choice, along with siting and form, fits into the wider landscape.

5.18 In general terms, the materials selection will be expected to complement its setting, be durable and weather well. Materials which create unnecessary contrast or are liable to stain or deteriorate quickly will not be accepted. In environmentally sensitive areas, such as attractive open country settings or near conservation areas, the requirements may be more stringent.

5.19 Materials choice should also aim to minimise energy consumption and maximise renewable energy generation. Where possible, materials should be sourced locally to reduce transportation costs. Recycled materials should also be considered where appropriate.

5.20 The colour of external materials on large structures has a significant influence on the visibility of the buildings in the wider landscape. The typical background colour palette should be assessed at an early stage in the design development process. In rural South Staffordshire colours should be 'rustic' and earthy, such as greens, browns and deep reds or greys. Lighter materials tend to be more conspicuous and should be avoided, particularly for roofing materials which reflect more light.

5.21 Darker colours tend to reduce the apparent bulk of a building against its landscape backgrounds. In more open areas, where buildings will be seen against the sky, it may be appropriate to consider cladding horizontally, with the darker colours at the base and contrasting colours on the upper

sections. This will help reduce the apparent bulk of the building.

f) External areas

5.22 Securing a positive visual impact for a commercial development will also depend upon the layout of the external areas. Service areas often have vehicles parked up, materials in storage, lighting fixtures, a perimeter security fence and corporate and directional signage. Collectively these can create substantial visual 'clutter' and should be carefully mitigated by screening and siting enclosed by building blocks.

5.23 Screen planting is an important function of mitigating external areas by structural tree planting. The site analysis and appraisal will reveal key sight lines to the building which require screening and will determine the positioning of tree groups relative to the buildings. Species choice should reflect prevailing conditions and the mature size of trees should also be considered.

5.24 The choice of new landscape planting species should be appropriate for its setting and be accompanied by a maintenance plan. The planting specification should reflect the native species mix of trees and shrubs and be designed to complement the informal planting patterns of rural areas.

g) Biodiversity

5.25 This is an important aspect of open space design. Proposals will be expected to show how existing habitat-rich features such as watercourses, hedgerows and unimproved grassland will be protected. Management regimes (often requiring fairly low resource input) should be specified which will preserve the features and enhance them.

5.26 Developers should consider how open spaces within the site area can contribute to its mitigation through sustainable design. In particular the potential for surface water management in swales or balancing ponds (Sustainable Urban Drainage SUDS) should be demonstrated, as well as grey water recycling and reed bed sewage treatments.

Example of Sustainable Urban Drainage

5.27 Formal planting and ornamental species are more likely to be appropriate in village centres. Avenue planting of single tree species may be suitable along entrance roads or main street frontages. Dense screens of tree or shrub planting to public areas should be avoided.

h) Hard landscape

5.28 Although commercial areas require substantial areas of hard-standing to fulfil functional requirements, the design of service and access should also be integrated with the wider landscape strategy. This will ensure, for instance, that opportunities for tree planting within car parks are exploited.

5.29 Large areas of unrelieved hard surfacing should be avoided, with functions broken into discrete blocks and separated by planted areas. Ensure proper provision is included for pedestrian and cycle access (including bike storage).

5.30 The design of SUDS should intercept runoff from impermeable paving areas (with fuel interceptors installed where appropriate, e.g. to heavy vehicle areas). Permeable paving should be used where possible, for instance in pedestrian or car parking areas.

5.31 High specification landscape is appropriate in some settings, for example at office entrances or alongside village road frontages. The design should reflect the status and character of the specific setting, focusing on a simplicity in choice of materials.

i) Fencing

5.32 Perimeter fencing should be avoided where possible, and boundaries planted with native hedgerows. Towards major road frontages which are overlooked by nearby properties, the security perimeter should be reduced to a minimum, and preferably replaced with a building line. Where a security fence and / or gate alongside public areas is unavoidable, a high quality product should be specified which can accommodate hedgerow planting, for instance steel pale or vertical mesh fencing panels, powder coated in a dark green colour. Palisade or chain link fences will not normally be acceptable fronting public areas, and should only be used, if painted in a suitable colour, and mitigated with tree planting.

Hard surfacing broken up by planting

j) Signage

5.33 Proposals for commercial sites will be expected to include signage design as part of the planning submission. This should integrate signage types, from large logos to directional signage within the site. The strategy should be minimal. Where frontages face public areas, the building should be set close to the street frontage so that signage can be fixed to the facade or on a separate sign unit close to the building. Internally-illuminated signs should be avoided. If a site has multiple occupants, signage should be integrated into a single system (including site maps and directions) rather than multiple separate signs.

7: Minor Development

7: Minor Development

1. Introduction

1.1 It could be argued that 'minor development' is the characteristic pattern for South Staffordshire. Historically, the District's villages have grown with the accumulation of small scale developments such as extensions, gap site infill and individual new build. The modest scale and local sourcing of materials and construction techniques helped shape the built character of settlements, creating a degree of visual cohesion. The challenge for designers is to retain this organic development pattern using modern building techniques and materials. The Council is keen not to impose a specific design blueprint. Developers are, however, required to demonstrate a contextual approach to all minor development, in order to complement the individual villages.

2. Minor development types

2.1 Minor development (i.e. 8-week planning application periods) is grouped into four categories:

a) Infill buildings,
b) New or replacement buildings,
c) Extensions,
d) Conversions.

The following definitions are intended as a general rather than a comprehensive guide:

a) Infill buildings. Development on gap sites in otherwise continuous or otherwise visually consistent building frontages. Because of the proximity of existing buildings and the density of built form there are a number of detailed and immediate contextual issues which need to be considered in these locations (see **Figure 19** below).

Figure 19: An infill site

b) New or replacement buildings. Individual new or replacement buildings, even if set apart from other buildings, can have a significant negative impact if its relationship with its surroundings is not taken into account at the design stage. Conversely, sensitively designed new development can enhance its setting, or even add a new landmark (see **Figure 20** below).

Figure 20: Any new or replacement buildings should enhance the village street scene

New or replacement buildings must be contextual and should not impose themselves on the established village scene.

c) Extensions - additions to existing buildings. These require careful thought in order to retain the qualities of the existing building and avoid disrupting the functional and visual relationship with surrounding development (see **Figure 21** below).

Figure 21: An extension

d) Conversions. Modification of an existing building from its original use. South Staffordshire possesses a rich mix of vernacular buildings, many of which have conversion potential. The Council will seek design solutions which are sensitive and innovative (**Figure 22** below).

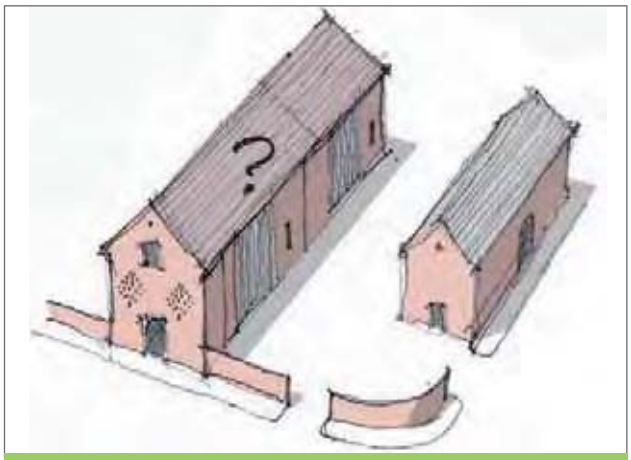


Figure 22: Potential conversion

3. Minor development design guidance

a) General issues

3.1 Smaller building projects often affect established environments, both built and natural. The status and sensitivity of a site may not be immediately apparent and it is strongly recommended that applicants seek the advice of Council officers at the earliest opportunity - ideally before detailed design work has started.

3.2 It is not necessary for an area to be covered by a statutory designation for it to be significant. A barn conversion project, for instance, might destroy the nesting and foraging sites of protected bat species. Time and resources will need to be allowed by the applicant for a professional survey to be undertaken and, if necessary, mitigation measures agreed.

3.3 Similarly, the Conservation Team should be consulted on any proposal affecting a Locally Listed Building or a site contained within a designated Conservation Area. In these cases the application will usually need to include a Heritage Statement to justify the works to the historic building.

3.4 This document provides guidance on a range of related design issues which may include specialist areas such as conservation, biodiversity or sustainability. The text and illustrations identify features typical of the built and natural environment of South Staffordshire. Applicants should use the guidance as a baseline for discussion with Council Officers.

The following issues should be examined when preparing a development design.

b) Street scape (height and width of street and building form)

3.5 Village built character is derived from the visual relationship between its component parts. This includes the simple proportions of the street (its width in relation to enclosing elements to either side) and the regularity of the street line (whether the street is straight or curved).

A planned, regular street grid allows long sight lines, consistent frontages and the possibility of framed landmarks. Minor development in this type of street environment can contribute to the overall permeability of the area; poorly designed development can detract from its visual consistency.

Street scape creates village character

7: Minor Development

3.6 Many of the villages in South Staffordshire have developed organically over time, and have an irregular street layout and building scale. The pattern of building has an underlying logic. In the older villages, building and street scale tends to reflect economic and social importance, usually increasing in size towards the centre of the settlement. The parish church and market place are at the top of this hierarchy, with larger houses, inns, farmhouses, barns and smaller vernacular buildings grouped around a variety of street widths. Minor development must be carefully integrated into such settings, taking into account the variations of scale and form which underpin the layout.

3.7 Applicants should consider the width of the street and the height of existing buildings in relation to this width. Minor development should not reduce the scale and enclosure of the existing street, or create overshadowing, overlooking or diminution of the existing street scale (see **Figures 23** & **24** opposite).

3.8 The established height of the street at ridge level, roof pitch and eaves width should be taken into account. In a village which has a generally consistent ridge height, proposals which visibly lower or raise the ridge height will not normally be acceptable.

3.9 An increase in height above the established ridge line may be acceptable at a focal point - for instance on a street corner or terminating a vista. Applicants should provide plan drawings and other forms of visualisation, including three-dimensional images as appropriate, to show that the proposal can be justified in terms of its context.

3.10 The position of existing local landmarks should be taken into account in the development design. Development which competes with or overshadows existing focal points will not be acceptable. The Council encourages development which provides an enhanced setting for existing landmarks.

3.11 In application drawings the width of the street and its cross section should be shown before and after development, to identify that the development complements the scale and proportion of existing buildings.

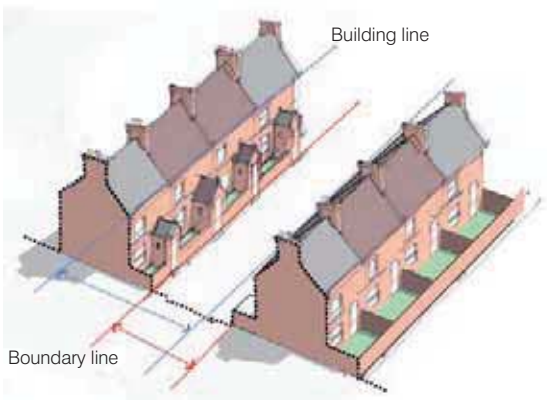


Figure 23: An example of street scale

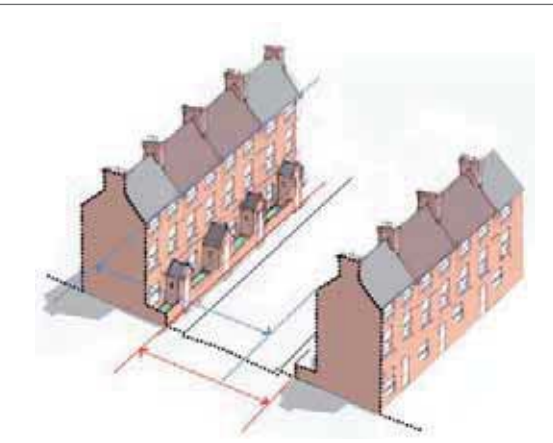


Figure 24: Another example of street scale

c) Building form (building massing, plot width, site organisation, proportion of façade elements, relationship to footway)

3.12 The form of a development is related to its mass and the organisation of its key components, for instance the position of the entrance, the arrangement and type of window openings, the position of the building in relation to public areas, and the type of private space around the building.

3.13 Building form is closely related to use and tends to be more diverse in the larger village centre areas where there may be a range of contrasting uses in close proximity. Building forms tend to be more consistent in suburban, residential locations, particularly in the more modern suburbs where house types are often standardised.

3.14 The Council encourages diversity of use within the constraints set by the Local Plan and emerging Local Development Framework, and would like to see

this reflected in the range of development proposals coming forward. Key issues to explore include:

a) Buildings on corner sites should be designed so that an active façade is presented to both street elevations;

b) Blank elevations to public spaces will not normally be acceptable;

c) Building lines normally run parallel to the back of the pavement. The floor plane, wall-to-wall, should be considered as a whole both in its shape and treatment in order to avoid such monotonous effects.;

d) Street frontages which have a continuous building line, (i.e. uninterrupted by gaps between buildings);

e) Development layouts which propose openings between existing and new build will need to be justified in terms of the pattern of existing openings along a street frontage, for instance alleys and passageways. Openings which weaken an existing frontage will not be acceptable;

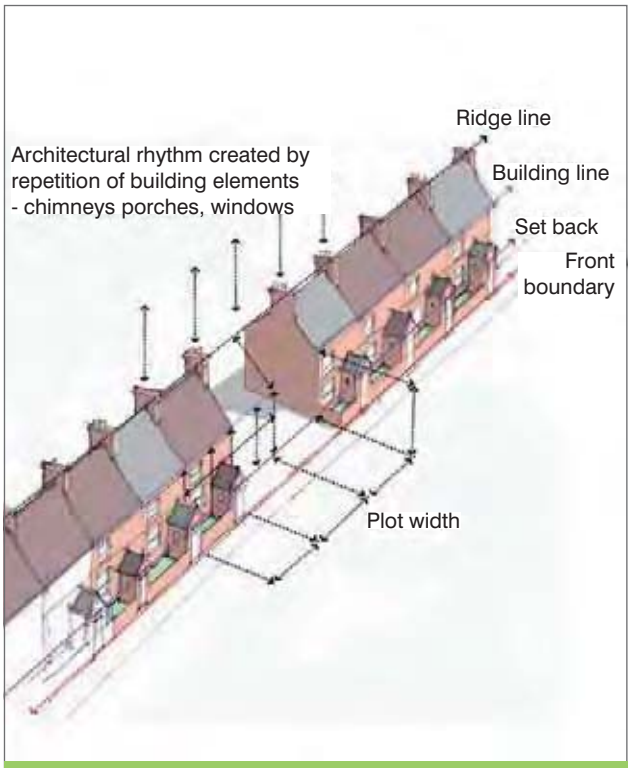


Figure 25: An example of street scape pattern

f) New development will be expected to respect and complement the historic building pattern, including the existing arrangement of garden spaces;

g) The typical arrangement of existing building elevations should be reflected particularly where the repetition of features, such as entrances or window openings, forms a characteristic visual 'rhythm' in the street scape. Proposals which interrupt or ignore established street scape patterns without clear justification will not be acceptable (see **Figure 25** below left);

h) Where a scale contrast can be justified, for instance in a street with a varied building pattern, the change may need to be 'stepped' between the two scales in stages in order to limit its visual impact on the overall street scape. Sudden changes in scale will have to be justified by applicants with reference to the immediate context and sight lines from all appropriate nearby viewpoints;

i) Proposals which create blank gable ends to existing building groupings will not normally be acceptable.

d) Building scale

3.15 South Staffordshire is characterised by vernacular styles which reflect locally available materials and craftsmanship. With a limited palette of materials and styles, local builders have, over many years, created the District's distinctive villages. Much of the beauty of this environment lies in the detailing of individual buildings, the type of roof tiles, the roof pitch angle, a simple brick cornice or string course.

3.16 The Council expects infill development proposals to take into account local detailing and materials, particularly where modern construction will be juxtaposed with existing buildings. This will often be the case where the site is located within an existing continuous street frontage. Where proposals lie within a Conservation Area, or affect the settings of listed buildings, close attention must be given to local patterns, textures and colours.

e) Building materials

3.17 Typical building materials in South Staffordshire are outlined above in Section C. The following design issues should be considered:

7: Minor Development

a) Preference will be given to development proposals which specify materials complementary to, or matching in quality, existing building materials;

b) New materials, where possible, should be sourced locally (i.e. bricks using locally sourced clay), both to respect the character of the area and to minimise energy intensive transportation and costs;

c) The colour and texture of materials should be chosen to match or complement the characteristics of existing buildings, particularly where an area is characterised by consistent use of a particular material;

d) The unit size for elevation materials including, brick, stone, block work, tiles or cladding should reflect the scale of the established setting;

e) The thickness, colour and treatment (e.g. flush or struck) of brickwork mortar joints radically alters overall appearance and colour of walls..

f) Where proposals include contrasting materials, the proposed palette will need to be justified in terms of the immediate and wider context;

g) The detailing of vernacular architecture in South Staffordshire is an important resource for new design especially in those villages where there is a locally distinctive style (see village summaries in sections 7-28). Whilst, development which unimaginatively copies existing details, or creates a 'pastiche' of local styles will not normally be acceptable; there will be cases where local distinctiveness should be recognised and reinforced.

h) The interpretation of vernacular detailing is possible provided clear justification for the design proposal, based on the local context, can be presented with the application. It may be possible to 'reinterpret' traditional styles using more contemporary detailing and materials; for instance the relative massing of different parts of a facade, the arrangement of window openings or the thickness of a wall as indicated by the depth of window reveals;

i) Where possible, choice of materials should normally be dictated by their structural necessity and brickwork, for instance, should be load bearing and the structural junctions between materials should be visible rather than concealed by ornamental details;

j) The detailing of roofs is particularly important in achieving visual consistency. Roofing materials should generally be selected to complement those adjacent, and the pitch of roof planes should generally reflect the established street setting;

k) Dormer windows or gables should only be introduced where they are an established part of the village scene. Where not the case and where new dormers would be highly visible from the street, they should be avoided in favour of flush-fitting roof lights which retain the roof slope. However, roof lights are not always appropriate in front elevations of buildings in a conservation area.

f) Site perimeter (boundary treatments, landscape and parking)

3.18 The site perimeter, between the built form and the site boundary, should be carefully designed as it is the interface between the development and its surroundings. It may include mature residential gardens with hedge or ornamental planting, or distinctive boundary walls integral with farmhouses or agricultural buildings.

3.19 Proposals for new minor development will be expected to reflect the prevailing pattern of gardens and private space enclosure, and the degree of set back of the building line from the pavement. Proposals

Traditional boundary enclosure helps integrate development in village scene

that undermine established patterns of perimeter development, for instance through inappropriate positioning of car parking, will not be accepted.

3.20 Front boundaries to properties should be aligned to match adjacent properties and the regular pattern of enclosure.

3.21 The method of site enclosure, should be treated as a key part of the minor infill design, and an opportunity to unify street frontage. The Council will expect applicants to reflect existing walling detail in the choice of brickwork, its bonding and coping.

3.22 Perimeter fencing specified purely for security reasons will rarely be acceptable on minor development sites. The Council will not accept security type fences, for instance steel palisade fencing, fronting public areas. Security gates for single houses or small infill developments are not appropriate in conservation areas.

3.23 Lateral boundaries between properties within front gardens should also be considered part of the overall design and should not be designed solely around security or privacy considerations. The use of panel or palisade fencing to separate front gardens will be opposed.

3.24 In some settings, for instance mature village residential areas, the tree and shrub planting within gardens can be a distinguishing feature of the area, particularly where it forms the boundary of properties. This can apply to front, side and rear gardens. Proposals for new development should allow space for perimeter planting, and specify appropriate hedge/tree species in the landscape plans accompanying the application.

3.25 Hard landscaping materials to paths, driveways, parking areas and courtyards should reflect similar materials used in adjacent properties. However, permeable paving (which absorbs rainfall and helps prevent runoff into the drainage system) should be considered in preference to impermeable materials such as concrete and asphalt. Alternatives, depending on the context, might include unbound gravel, permeable bound gravel, clay or concrete setts. Large areas of small unit paving should be avoided in village locations.

3.26 Car parking should be considered an integral part of overall site design and preferably located away from the street frontage in integral garages or parking courts. As a general rule the existing pattern of car parking should be used as a guide. Proposals which allow car parking to dominate the street scene will not be permitted.

3.27 Outbuildings in rural areas often contribute to local village character at its perimeter and should be retained where possible and adapted for new use.

3.28 Garages should also respect the scale and detailing of small, historic out-buildings in the District and should be positioned so they do not disrupt the visual unity of the village. Particular design care needs to be taken in the specification of garage doors to avoid sub-urbanising impact.

3.29 Lighting of external areas should be carefully designed to avoid light pollution and maintain the dark skies of rural areas. Luminaires should have downward directional lighting.

4. New and infill development examples

Figure 26: Unacceptable infill

4.1 **Figure 26** (above) is an example of inappropriate development on a gap site. Although the scale of the new residential units is comparable with the existing terraced housing, the built form is at odds with the urban context. The building line is set back from the existing line, the roof line is lower and the front garden space is deeper and lacks the characteristic brick wall enclosure.

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Figure 27: Contextual infill

4.2 **Figure 27** (above) shows a design that would be more acceptable infill within the village. The roof line and building line have been maintained, together with the repetition of garden wall and projecting porch at the back of the pavement. In other respects the traditional terraced form has been more freely interpreted, larger windows and a roof light to an attic room, for instance. A comparable building material has been used, but varied with timber cladding panels that are visually related to the key façade elements.

4.3 The variation that occurs over time as owner occupiers adapt their houses and gardens means that the terraced form is adaptable, provided key features are retained. Modern design can exploit this flexibility to introduce originality and contrast.

4.4 Many of the villages in South Staffordshire have developed over time and have an irregular street layout and building scale. The pattern of building tends to reflect economic and social importance, usually increasing in size towards the centre of the settlement.

4.5 Infill development will always have a significant impact on the village's street scape, and therefore must complement the existing scale relationships, including the street's width and function, and the scale of adjoining properties. The massing of adjoining buildings, both in the foreground and background, will help determine the scale of the infill development.

4.6 A corner infill development may require a stronger architectural design to match the prominence of the location but not all corners need landmarks.

4.7 In **Figure 28** (below) a gap site is shown at the junction of two streets; to the right a residential street of mid 19th Century two-storey terraced housing, to the left a mixed grouping of older three-storey properties on a retail street. Proposals for the gap site will have to mediate between the scale and character of the two streets, and provide a sufficiently positive architectural presence on the corner site.

Figure 28: Gap site

4.8 In **Figure 29** (below) the development scale matches the two-storey residential street but fails to step up to the height of the retail properties. This is compounded by the building line, set back from the pavement to create surface car parking, and the poorly detailed frontage with inappropriate glazing and horizontal brick panels.

Figure 29: Inappropriate design

4.9 **Figure 30** (below) shows a more acceptable pattern of development. The height and massing of the frontages is subdivided allowing the increase in scale to be 'stepped up' across the site. The prominent corner location, at the edge of the village centre, justifies a focal feature - in this case a low clock tower over the entrance.

Figure 30: Contextual design

4.10 The infill development maintains the building line of the existing properties, to the back of the pavement - car parking is placed to the rear of the building and accessed via a passage. In this example the scale and massing of the development avoids sudden changes in scale which might disrupt the visual unity of the street scape. It may in certain circumstances be appropriate to create a more dramatic, or deliberate scale change.

5. Conversions

a) General principles

5.1 Existing rural and agricultural buildings should normally be retained and new, sustainable uses found for them which avoid compromising their character or appearance. However, where located in the open countryside, or in green belt, they may be restricted to their agricultural uses and the principle of conversion should not be assumed.

5.2 Conversion to residential or office use, may be a positive development, saving many buildings from neglect, but such proposals for building conversion should retain as many of the original building's qualities as possible. Applicants will be expected to submit detailed justifications for both internal and external alterations, including survey drawings of the existing building. Design statements should make clear the extent and purpose of proposed changes.

5.3 The qualities of the existing building should be established through survey of the fabric, consideration of its original use and study of its history. The distinctiveness of a building may lie in its context, its function or its structure, or all of these things. A successful conversion will retain these qualities whilst creating space for new uses. Modern design is often the most appropriate choice for agricultural building conversion, enabling the complementary adaptation of large spaces for new business or residential uses.

5.4 **Figure 31** (below) shows a non-residential building with some of the characteristic features of South Staffordshire's vernacular architecture. These structures were designed for a working environment and have the virtues of simplicity and robustness of detailing. They also reflect local conditions in the use of building materials and details, such as the diamond pattern of ventilation holes.

b) Conversion examples

5.5 **Figure 32** (overleaf opposite top) illustrates aspects of building conversion (based on the example in figure 30 which will not be acceptable. Note that many of the features have a 'traditional' character, such as the dormer windows and roof lantern, but are alien to this simple agricultural building.

5.6 Many vernacular buildings form part of a larger group. Removal or unnecessary adaptation of contextual features will also not be supported to achieve a conversion scheme.

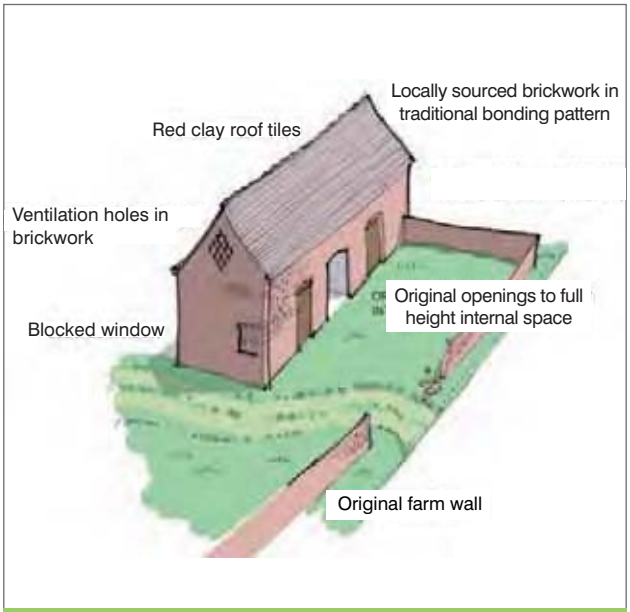

Figure 31: A typical vernacular building

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5.7 **Figure 33** (opposite bottom)) shows a more successful conversion proposal. As in the previous illustration, the former barn has been converted to residential use with an inserted internal floor and new rooms under the roof space, a detached garage and formal gardens. The original building outline has been preserved using flush fitting conservation roof lights and carefully-designed windows which retain the original barn openings. The ventilation holes have also been retained and fitted with internal glazing.

Successful barn conversion in Acton Trussell

5.8 The full-height internal space, with exposed roof timbers, has been retained in the structure's central half, illuminated by glazing to the original barn doors and roof lights. Fittings were specified to complement the simple building fabric, avoiding unnecessary ornament.

5.9 Externally the original boundary wall has been rebuilt and discreet new openings created. Although reuse existing outbuildings is always preferable, in this case a new garage was created, set back from the main façade and built in complementary materials. The garden design reflects the informal rural setting, avoiding 'suburban' borders in favour of native species and foliage planting.

5.10 Staffordshire County Council's Historic Farmstead Survey, itself part of a broader regional survey, is supported by guidance in the form of an assessment framework to help ensure the sustainable management of change to historic farmsteads.

c) Building details

5.11 The Council will expect the size and scale of a building's internal space to be a key consideration in conversion proposals. Many traditional buildings made use of full height spaces with the roof structures exposed, and it is expected that these will be substantially retained.

5.12 New partitions and internal floors, including mezzanines, should be kept to a minimum. Where necessary, they should correspond to the structural bays and window positions of the existing building.

5.13 The new fabric should preferably be designed so that it is distinguishable from the original building. This can be achieved by materials choice and also by creating physical separation, for instance setting the edge of a floor plate back from the interior face of the existing wall (this can also have air circulation and heating benefits).

5.14 Fixtures and fittings should reflect the robust character of the local vernacular. Generally, ornament should be avoided in favour of expression of material and function. This can be achieved using modern as well as traditional materials, and it is preferable if the design can help distinguish between new and original fittings. Avoid standardised 'heritage' product ranges.

5.15 Some buildings provide nesting for protected species such as bats and owls and it is an offence to damage to disturb their habitat. Conversion projects may have to be adapted to accommodate native fauna. Natural England can advise on habitat surveys and mitigation measures that may need to be included with a planning application.

5.16 The characteristic building materials of South Staffordshire are listed in Section 3. The Council will expect applicants to source new materials, where possible, from within the locality. This might include, for instance, the characteristic red clay roofing tiles and brickwork seen on many traditional South Staffordshire buildings. Rainwater goods should reflect the character of the building and robustness of traditional construction, specifying metal rather than plastic for guttering and down pipes.

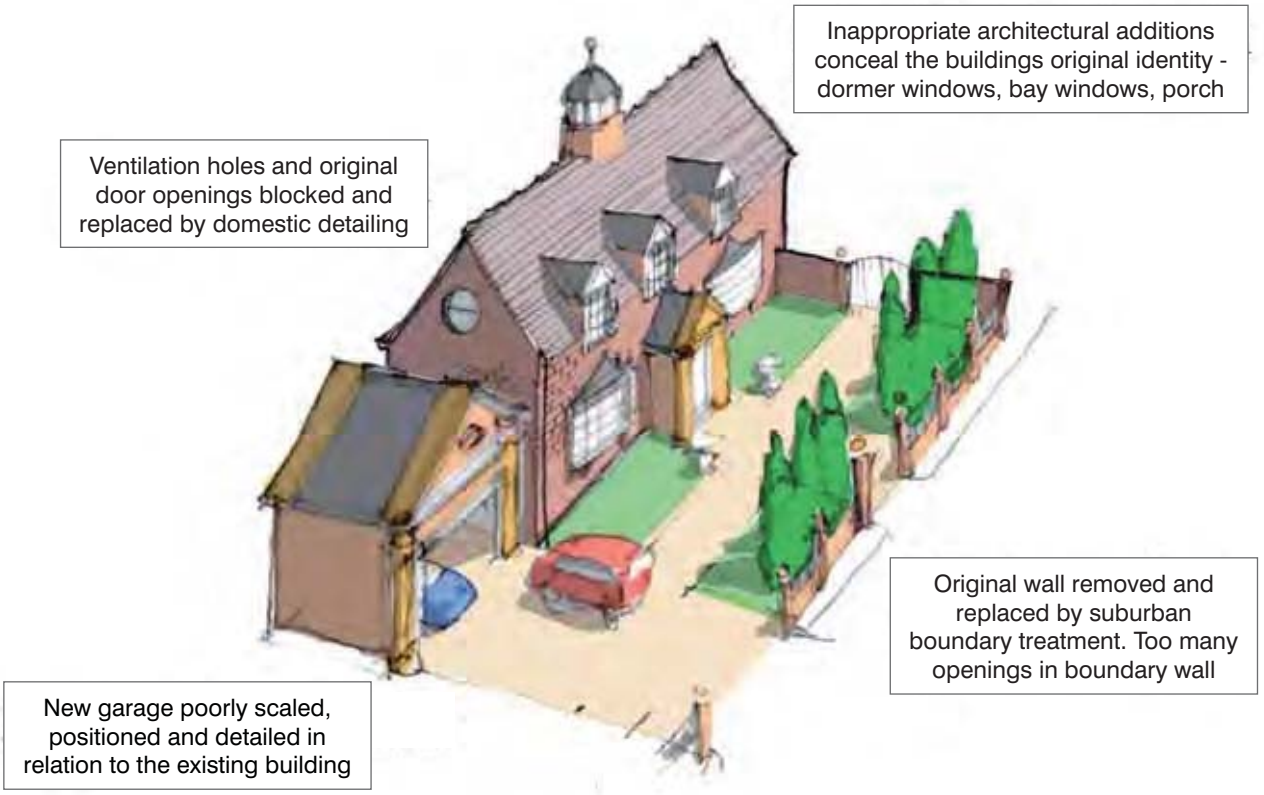


Figure 32: Inappropriate conversion proposals

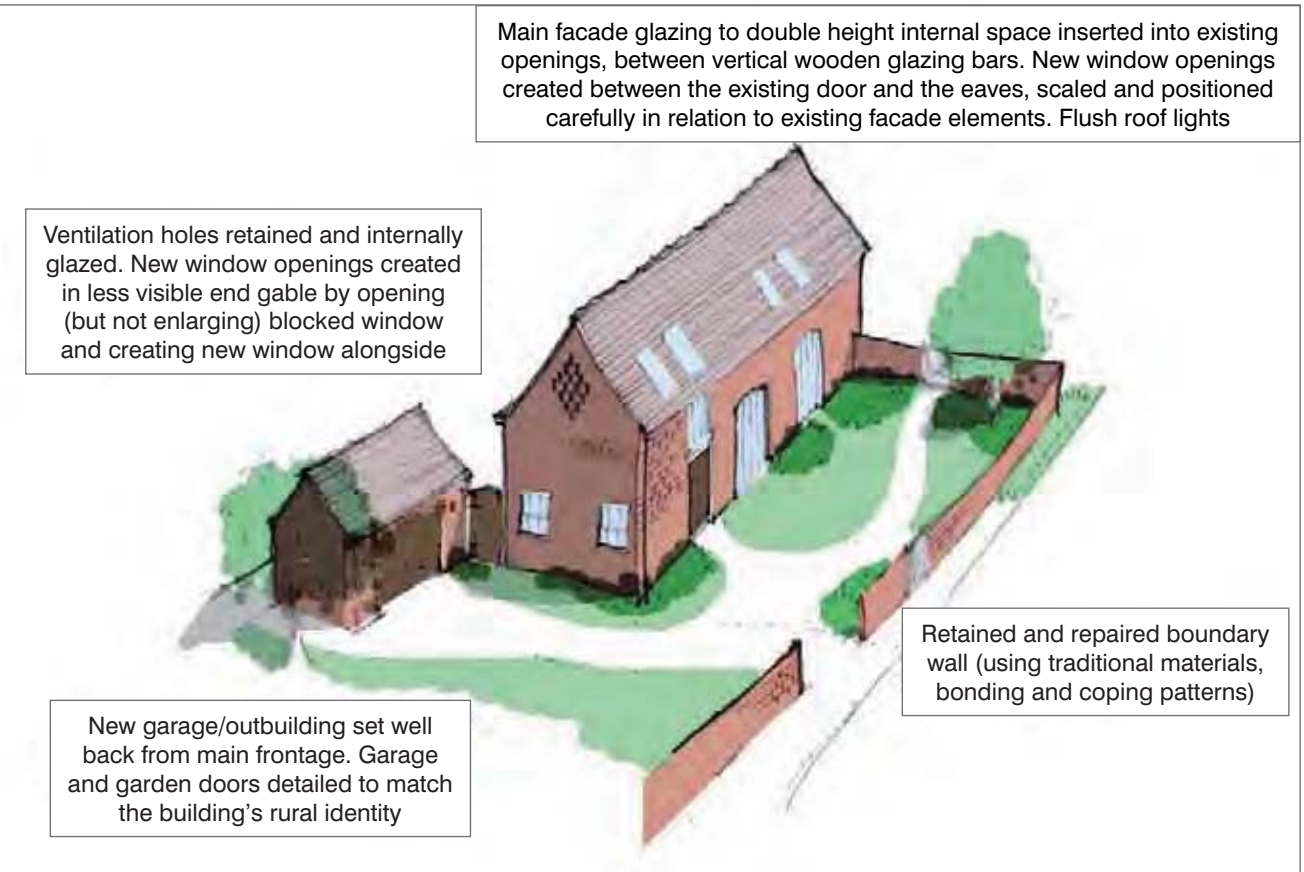


Figure 33 : Low key, appropriate conversion proposals

7: Minor Development

5.17 The strength, simplicity and lightness of modern materials such as aluminium, steel and glass may facilitate new uses The junction between new and old should be honestly expressed, emphasising the structural qualities of the junction and making the contrast readily comprehensible.

5.18 Window and door openings are often the most distinctive elements of a facade composition and will be functionally related to the historic use. Alteration to the proportion of doors, windows, and new openings should be avoided where possible, as they could undermine the visual and historic integrity of the building.

5.19 Existing openings should be retained and new openings kept to a minimum. It may be possible to unblock former doors and windows. It will not usually be acceptable to block up existing openings or alter their size or proportions. Where possible, existing door and window frames and fittings should be retained.

5.20 New glazing is often required to maintain thermal performance. The Council will consider secondary glazing provided it does not adversely affect the buildings interior. Standard window replacement products are usually not acceptable: In most cases a bespoke glazing unit in complementary materials will be required, and these should normally have simple details reflecting the 'working' nature of the original buildings rather than more elaborate, domestic detailing.

5.21 The functional relationship between external openings and the building's interior should be retained where possible. A full height barn door, for instance, should create natural lighting for a full height space within the building. New glazing and door openings should be justified on functional grounds and designed to fit the building's external elevation. Roof lights should only be used where necessary, and be positioned according to the building's structural bay rhythm.

6 Extensions

a) General principles

6.1 Extensions are, by definition, additional components and should consequently remain ancillary or subservient to the original building. They also involve, in most cases, creating a permanent addition not intended by

Dunston Business Park. A successful conversion of a former agricultural complex to new business use which retains the character of the original buildings.

the original designer. This can create problems where a building has modest historic or architectural value that could be diminished by an ill-planned extension. Extensions should always demonstrably complement the form and character of the original building, rather than result in its transformation. In other cases difficulties can arise from the impact of an extension on a planned environment such as a residential estate. Failing to take into account the distances between existing buildings, for instance, can create overshadowing, or spoil the appearance of a street frontage.

6.2 In the case of listed buildings, locally listed buildings or buildings within Conservation Areas, applications for extensions will be subject to stringent criteria regarding their impact on the building, and a reasoned justification will be required to detail the size, use, form and materials.

6.3 It is recommended that applicants contact the Conservation Team prior to carrying out any design work for extensions on listed buildings.

6.4 **Figure 34** (opposite) illustrates an example of a village street pattern. In the absence of a unified street

design some street scapes' character derive from the regular ordering of façade elements such as windows, doors and porches, and ill-considered changes can have a disproportionate effect on the repose and unity of the street scene Proposals for extensions should always take into account both the design of the original building and of the pattern of building in their locality.

New (left) meets old (right) at Enville

This will include the gaps between buildings, the scale of garden spaces and the degree of overshadowing and overlooking that may be generated. Proposals for extensions which are larger, taller or architecturally more dominant than the buildings they are attached to, or which are unduly prominent in the street scape, will not be acceptable.

Figure 34 : Example of a village street pattern

6.5 The criteria can vary depending upon whether the extension is planned for the front, rear or side of the building. Because of the impact on the street scape, extensions projecting forward of the existing front facade of a building, other than small porches or canopies, will not normally be accepted.

Figure 35: Acceptable extension proposal

6.6 **Figure 35** (above) shows a building extension proposal which may be acceptable in a residential location. The side extension has been recessed back from the front elevation and roof line (1 metre is the normal minimum for this kind of set back). Detailing has been carefully matched - for instance the window openings which match the existing in scale, frame design and depth of reveal. The brickwork and roofing materials have also been chosen to complement the existing. The front porch has been scaled and detailed to match the existing canopied front doors.

6.7 The illustration in **Figure 36** (overleaf top) shows an unacceptable extension proposal. Although the new build is similar in scale to the previous proposal, the lack of set back, flat roof design and the poorly matched building materials are an imposition on the existing building and street scape.

6.8 **Figure 37** (overleaf below) shows a similarly unacceptable proposal with an over-dominant extension which transforms the simple property and fails to respect the scale or proximity of nearby housing. Because of the degree of overshadowing and overlooking of nearby properties, this design would probably be rejected for both front and rear garden locations.

7: Minor Development

Figure 36: Unacceptable extension proposal

Figure 37 : Unacceptable extension proposal

b) Critical dimensions

6.9 The critical dimensions for most housing extension types in a residential estate setting are shown in **Figure 38** (on page 129). They reflect agreed minimum standards necessary to protect privacy, access to sunlight and minimum space standards for residential amenity. However, where the site conditions allow, it may be possible to vary some of these standards. For instance, if there is a significant variation in ground level which affects sight line and overlooking issues, or for properties set in their own grounds in lower density settings. Each case will be judged on its merits, and applicants should ensure their proposal is accompanied by supporting information explaining the site's individual context.

6.10 Extensions which project forward into the street scape from the existing façade will not normally be acceptable (small porch structures are an exception, provided their scale and detailed design are appropriate in their context).

6.11 A significant set back, ideally up to 1 metre back from both facade and roof plane will normally be required to retain the focus on the original gable. In some instances this set back may need to be increased, for instance where a 2-storey extension is proposed between close set detached dwellings.

6.12 For side extensions, a side passageway of 1 metre width or greater will be required between the extension and the property boundary. Where this is not possible, provision for household waste containers must be provided in a well-designed enclosure at the front of the house. The design of the enclosure will have to form part of the application submission.

6.13 In order to protect minimum standards for amenity purposes and the storage of waste bins, the Council will be unwilling to accept proposals which will take up more than 50% of the useable garden area. Exceptions to this rule may be possible, for instance where the existing yard is already so small as to be of little practicable use. In all cases, provision should be made for bin storage.

6.14 Single-storey rear extensions projecting more than 3 metres from the property will not normally be permitted where it may intrude upon the enjoyment of adjoining properties. For 2 storey extensions, proposals will be rejected which project beyond a 45 degree line taken from the nearest habitable window of any adjacent dwelling.

6.15 The proposed extension should not increase the chances of overlooking of adjacent properties. In order to maintain privacy standards, window openings in extensions will normally be required to be a minimum of 21 metres from habitable room windows in any surrounding residential properties.

6.16 Permission will not normally be granted for extensions which include habitable room windows above ground floor level which are within 10.5 metres of the rear boundaries of other residential properties.

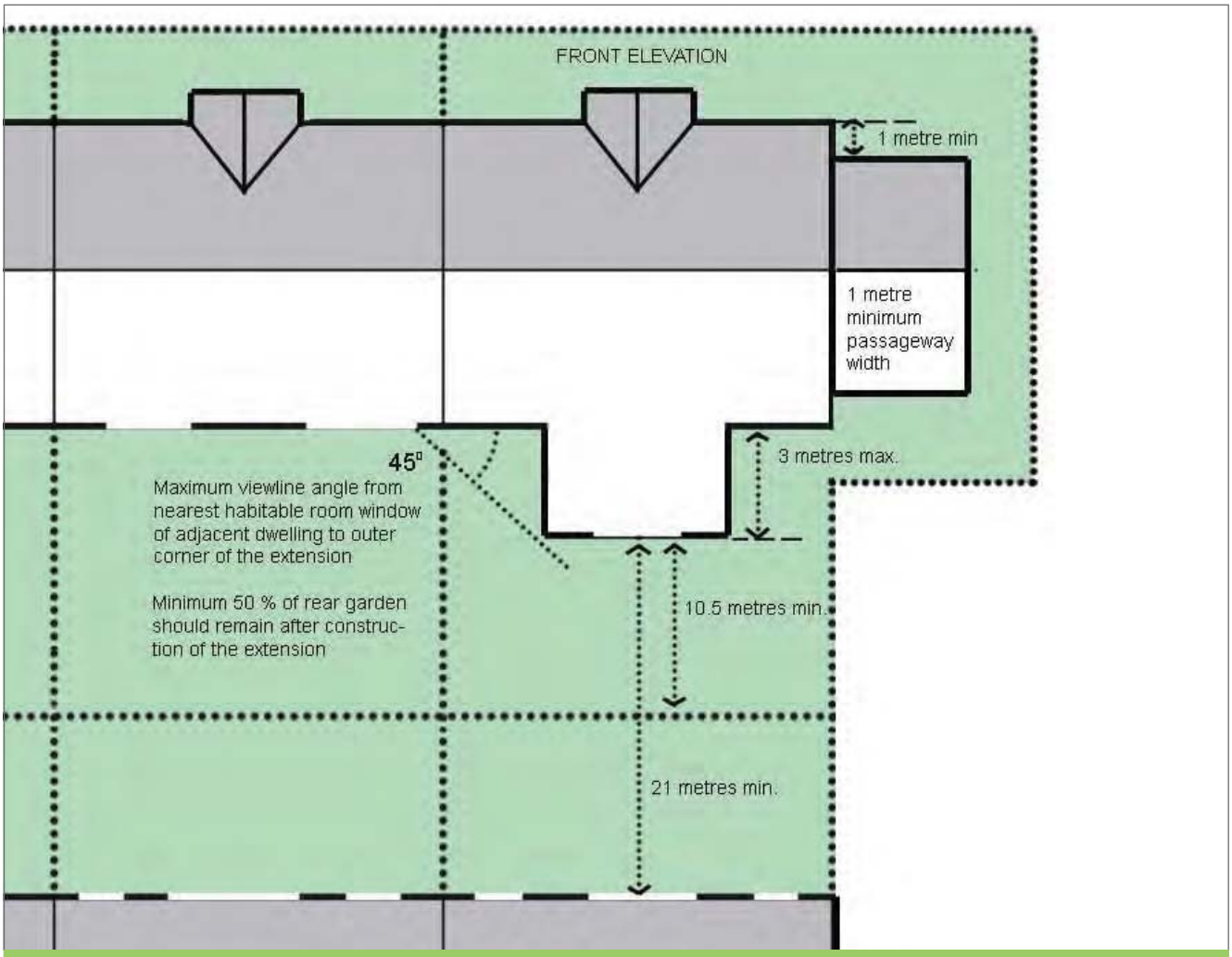


Figure 38: Critical dimensions for housing extensions

6.17 Extension proposals which result in the loss of an in-curtilage car parking space will normally only be acceptable if an alternative parking location is available.

c) Garages

6.18 The County Council's highway standards should be consulted for information about minimum dimensions for parking spaces, carports and garages. Applicants should avoid the extensive replacement of existing front garden space with hard-standing for vehicles.

6.19 Garages may be defined as an extension and will normally be subjected to the design guidance set out above. They should be constructed of materials complementary to the main building, should not project forward of the main façade, or be positioned between the house and the road, and should not overshadow neighbouring properties.

Example of a timber garage door with reveal

7: Minor Development

6.20 The design and finish of garage doors requires careful consideration. In some settings, for instance conservation areas, a timber rather than metal door will be required, and a sufficient depth of reveal.

d) Conservatories

6.21 Conservatories will normally only be acceptable in rear garden locations, and should be positioned such that overshadowing or overlooking of neighbouring properties is avoided. Where an elevation of the conservatory is in close proximity to a neighbouring property, that side of the conservatory should be visually closed with walling or opaque glazing.

6.22 The conservatory extension should be designed to complement the original building and reflect its rural village context. On listed buildings, locally listed or other traditional buildings (especially in conservation areas) conservatories should be specifically designed for the particular building concerned . In these cases standard extensions from a 'pattern book' are unlikely to be suitable or acceptable. Therefore, the plinth wall and conservatory frame should be built of materials consistent with the host building and adopt rustic, earthy colours, rather than startling white.

6.23 Conservatory proposals for former agricultural buildings, traditional or vernacular properties, will not normally be accepted, as this could be judged to be out of character with the existing building.

Conservatories should complement the original building

8: Works Affecting the Historic Environment

8: Works Affecting the Historic Environment

1. Introduction

1.1 South Staffordshire is distinguished by the quality and interest of its built heritage, which is a constantly changing but finite resource. It ranges from attractive village centres, humble cottages to grand estates, canal side structures and agricultural buildings. The built heritage assets of the District consequently require special attention when considering development design. This section sets out guiding principles which will form the basis of the Council's approach to the preservation and enhancement of the built heritage of the District in terms of the impact of development.

1.2 The fundamental objective is to ensure that change is managed within the historic environment in ways that sustain, reveal or reinforce the District's cultural and natural heritage. The following principles are based on the recent English Heritage, 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment' (2008) and should inform proposals for the repair, renewal or change to historic places. It sets out a framework for the sustainable management of the historic environment through a series of specific principles, which should inform development design on the District's 'historic assets'. These can include the historic built environment, historic landscape character, above and below ground archaeological remains.

1.3 The Council will expect that every effort should be made to eliminate or minimise adverse impacts on significant places within the villages and landscape. Change is inevitable and will be acceptable if the distinctiveness of the village or building is not eroded in the process. However, it can also be neutral or beneficial in its effect on heritage values. It is only harmful if some elements of historic or architectural significance are eroded. Development proposals will, therefore, be measured against the balance of public benefit of the proposed change to the historic environment asset against the harm to the place. This requires a clear understanding of the evolution of the building, area, archaeological site, etc., its contribution to the fabric of the village and the value placed on it by local communities.

2. Conservation principles

a) General principles

2.1 The following key principles provide a comprehensive framework within which the Council will consider development proposals and base decisions:

1. The components of the historic environment are a shared District resource;
2. Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the District's historic environment;
3. Understanding the significance of places within the District is vital to inform successful development design;
4. Significant places should be managed to sustain their fundamental values;
5. Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent;
6. Learning from past decisions is an essential contributor to quality development design.

b) Assessing heritage significance

2.2 A detailed understanding of the heritage significance of a place needs to be demonstrated to ensure consistency in development design and decision making. The following issues should be considered to inform the development of heritage statements supporting development design:

Canals are key component of South Staffordshire's history and environment

1. Understand the fabric and evolution of the place;
2. Identify who values the place, and why they do so;
3. Relate identified heritage values to the fabric of the place;
4. Consider the relative importance of those identified values;
5. Consider the contribution of associated objects and collections;

6. Consider the contribution made by setting and context and compare the place with other places sharing similar values;
7. Articulate the significance of the place.

This can be aided by reference to the 'Understanding Heritage Values' section of English Heritage's Conservation Principles – Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (April 2008), which describes the Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic, Communal, Social and Spiritual value of places. Contact should also be made with the Cultural Environment Team at Staffordshire County Council and with the Conservation Officers at the Council.

c) Managing change

2.3 In managing change to significant places and historic assets. The council will apply the above principles in making decisions about change to significant places and will encourage designers to:

1. Demonstrate sufficient information about the place. Understand the contribution to the significance of the place; investigations and evaluation maybe required. This may include habitats, archaeological deposits or concealed structures.

2. Consider the effects on authenticity and integrity. A comprehensive understanding of the integrity of the place and authenticity of its fabric should inform the proposed development design and choice of materials.

3. Take account of sustainability. Significant places should be used and managed in ways that will ensure their significance is appreciated by generations to come. Quality new development design should contribute to creating the heritage assets of the future, as well as complementing the existing fabric.

4. Repair and re-use of sound materials. The re-cycling of materials is a traditional building practice and contributes to environmental sustainability. Re-use of traditional materials recovered from elsewhere may also contribute by maintaining demand for traditional materials and ensuring that traditional craft skills continue to be used.

5. Consider the potential reversibility of changes. Changes to historic fabric to accommodate new uses should be capable of being removed without causing fundamental damage or loss to historic fabric.

6. Routine management and maintenance. The conservation of historic buildings and significant places requires appropriate routine management and maintenance. Regular monitoring should identify the need for periodic repair, and temporary works should be undertaken to prevent problems from escalating. Temporary solutions should be timely, effective and reversible.

d) Repair

2.4 Repair is necessary to sustain the heritage values of a significant place. Proposals which seek to change significant historic buildings or places will need to provide sufficient information to understand the various impacts on the significance of place. They will also need to outline the long-term consequences of the proposals in order to demonstrate that alternative solutions for the building or place would not be compromised.

Successful and subtle repair at Shareshill Church

Need for maintenance and repairs to retain components

e) Restoration

2.5 New development may involve recovering or revealing elements of heritage value otherwise lost. Proposals for restoration of historic buildings always require careful justification. In determining whether these are acceptable, the heritage value of the elements must outweigh the value of those to be lost.

2.6 Clear evidence needs to be provided to illustrate the evolution of a building or place and how proposed works will be done in line with this. The key objective should be to provide compelling, verified evidence of the original planned layout and materials, and demonstrate how the proposal will restore this character and form. Mitigation through recording is particularly important here. The results should be deposited in the county Historic Environment Record.

2.7 However, restoration may not be acceptable if the place was ruined as a result of a historic event. Restoration of exceptional places like this deny the strong visual and emotional evidence of important historical events. Ruins play a major part in the landscape and define the character of place.

2.8 In proposing restoration, maintenance implications need to be considered to demonstrate viability and sustainability in the long term.

f) New work and alteration

2.9 Proposals for new work or alterations should aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future. Quality design is required at all levels from small interventions in historic buildings through to work to major buildings and developments. This will be achieved through the selection of an appropriate choice of materials and craftsmanship, as well as careful consideration of the relationship of all the parts and its context.

g) Enabling development

2.10 This is development that delivers substantial benefit to a place, but would be contrary to other objectives of national, regional or local planning policy. Enabling development is only considered appropriate if the public benefit outweighs the harm to other material interests, such as rescuing a listed building at risk, or enhancing a significant place. English Heritage sets out the strict criteria in which enabling development is appropriate to a place, if it:

- will not harm its heritage value/setting materially;
- avoids fragmenting the place's management;
- will secure the place's long-term future and sympathetic purpose;
- is necessary to resolve problems arising from the place's inherent needs;
- clear sufficient funds are unavailable elsewhere;
- is the minimum for securing the place's future and minimises harm to other public interests;
- outweighs any disadvantages of the development being contrary to other policies.

2.11 In addition, if an enabling development meets all the criteria set out above, the local planning authority will only grant planning permission if the:

- impact of the development is precisely defined within the planning application;
- achievement of heritage objective is intrinsically linked to the enabling development, in line with ODPM Circular 05/05, Planning Obligations;
- historic asset concerned is repaired to an agreed standard, or funds are made available to do so;
- implementation of the consent is monitored and planning obligations are seen to be fulfilled.

3. Listed Building Consent

a) General principles

3.1 Works for the demolition of a listed building, or for any alteration or extension to its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, will require Listed Building Consent (LBC) before the work can begin. When considering whether to grant LBC, the local planning authority needs to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building; its setting and features of special architectural or historic interest.

3.2 It is, therefore, necessary to demonstrate what makes up the special interest of the building and what impact the work will have on this. It is important to recognise that the published listed building description is principally an aid to identification and not intended to provide a comprehensive record of all its important features.

3.3 The Council will not accept an application for consideration until it has sufficient information to provide such understanding. Early discussion with the local authority is always helpful and provides an opportunity to identify any special information requirements. A joint inspection of the property may also be useful.

b) Application information

3.4 Proposals which involve relatively modest works, which do not have a significant effect on the special architectural or historic interest of a building, normally require the following basic supporting information, a:

- plan, to identify the building, and detailed drawings to describe the works for which consent is sought;
- statement to explain and justify the proposed works.

3.5 More complex proposals potentially have a significant effect on the architectural or historic interest of a building. Such applications may involve or relate to:

- significant changes to the setting, appearance or fabric of a listed building;
- proposals for demolition of all, or significant parts of, a listed building;
- related planning applications for change of use involving significant alteration to the listed building;
- the cumulative impact of a series of relatively minor works of indifferent quality.

3.6 In these cases, in order to demonstrate that the proposals will not have a damaging impact on the building, proposals will be expected to provide the local authority with the following additional information:

a) Measured drawings of all floor plans and external or internal elevations affected by the work proposed. (There should be two sets, one showing the structure before work and another showing it, or new development to replace it, after the work);
b) Photographs of all elevations (in cases of demolition), or of the interior or exterior part affected (in cases of alteration and extension) and to show the listed building's setting. Where detailed alterations are proposed, they need to be fully described;
c) Detailed measured drawings, specifications and photographs of affected features.

3.7 LBC is required when any small changes such as windows, doors, staircases or fireplaces, even if items are not original to the building. At various stages, English Heritage will be consulted on more important applications. Applicants for LBC must be able to justify their proposals. They will need to show why works which would affect the character of a listed building are 'desirable or necessary'. They should, therefore, provide sufficient information to enable them to assess the likely impact of the proposals on the 'special architectural or historic interest' of the building, as well as on its setting.

c) Extent of listing

3.8 Anything fixed to the Listed Building or in the 'curtilage' of the building, for example any structures within the grounds of the listed building (which have been there since 1948) are also considered listed. The Department of Culture Media and Sport has a statutory duty to compile a register of listed buildings and can provide more details of the listing (a description) to enable you to identify the building or structure.

It is a criminal offence to alter, extend or demolish a listed building without the necessary consent, or not in accordance with the conditions of the consent. This can lead to prosecution of the owner, or person carrying out the works. If in doubt, contact South Staffordshire Council for advice.

4. Scheduled Ancient Monuments

4.1 Scheduled Monuments are recognised as nationally important and consent for works is handled by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) in conjunction with English Heritage. This lies outside the control of the local authority, so it is advised that any application likely to impact a Scheduled Ancient Monument or its setting should first be discussed with the Staffordshire Inspector for Ancient Monuments who is based at: English Heritage, The Axis, 10 Holliday Street, Birmingham B1 1TG, 0121 625 6820

5. Conservation Areas

a) General principles

5.1 Many of South Staffordshire's villages include conservation areas, the District's canals are also linear conservation areas. The prime consideration should be the impact of new development on the quality and interest of conservation areas, rather than that of individual buildings. The Council is preparing Conservation Management Plans and Appraisals, which should be referred to when making development proposals. Development within conservation areas should result in the preservation or enhancement of its character and appearance, and should therefore be a stimulus to high quality design. New buildings should not directly imitate earlier styles, but should be designed with respect for their context, making a positive contribution to the village's character and appearance.

b) Assessment of proposals

5.2 Special regard should be given to building scale, height, form, massing, respect for traditional frontage patterns, vertical or horizontal emphasis, and detailed design (e.g. scale and spacing of window openings, and the nature and quality of materials). Where such information is likely to be required, discussions need to take place as early as possible with the local planning authority. There will be a general presumption in favour of the preservation of the District's listed buildings and thus will be reflected in the assessment of proposals for alteration, extension or demolition. The prime consideration for the council in determining an application for consent will therefore be the avoidance of unnecessary demolition or unsuitable and insensitive alteration.

c) General Permitted Development Order

5.3 Planning permission is required for certain types of relatively minor development in Conservation Areas which are elsewhere classified as 'permitted development' under the planning acts. These works include: various types of cladding, inserting dormer windows into roof slopes, the erection of satellite dishes on walls, roofs or chimneys fronting a highway and the installation of radio masts, antennae or radio equipment housing with a volume in excess of two cubic metres. The size of house and industrial extensions that may be carried out without specific planning permission is also more restricted. It is, therefore, recommended to seek the advice of the Conservation Team at an early stage.

6. Archaeology

6.1 The origin of many South Staffordshire villages is medieval and, in some cases, can be traced back to Saxon times. Traditionally, much of our understanding of their origins and development is based upon documentary records such as charters, court rolls and taxation records (including Domesday). However, the early origins and developmental of many of the villages' remains poorly understood and this lack of understanding can influence current and future planning decisions and the archaeological advice provided therein. In recent years archaeological investigations, as part of the planning process within village centres and on the fringes of settlements, have provided invaluable physical evidence in support or clarification of the established documentary record. Since 1990 archaeology has been established as part of the planning process through PPG16: Archaeology and Planning and the forthcoming PPS15. Within these guidance documents early consultation is advised when considering the historic environment. Within well-established settlement cores the potential to encounter archaeological remains is higher, although it is also the case that previous recent development may have impacted upon earlier archaeological remains. Careful consideration is given to the location and positioning of a scheme, its scale and method of construction, before providing advice on the potential for either preservation in situ or on reasonable levels of mitigation on specific schemes.

7. The archaeological advice process

7.1 The Cultural Environment team at Staffordshire County Council Archaeological provide advice to the local planning authority. This is driven by the relevant guidance and must be informed, transparent and reasonable. In all cases an understanding of a site's known archaeology and documentary history will inform the potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains to be present. In some cases it may be advisable to prepare a Desk-Based Assessment to inform this process. Where significant remains are known to exist, or are considered likely to be present, advice may include the need for archaeological investigation prior to the determination of a planning application to inform the decision-making process.

7.2 Alternatively, if sufficient information is available and a potential for less significant archaeological remains to be present then it may be sufficient for the archaeology to be dealt with via a condition on any planning permission. A range of options for archaeological mitigation are available and the nature of the response is dependent upon the location, type, scale and detailed proposals of any given application. Again, early consultation, particularly on larger schemes, will enable discussions on developing an appropriate mitigation strategy to manage future risk within a given project. Staffordshire County Council manages the HER and an abbreviated version of this data set sits upon the Heritage Gateway website. The Cultural Environment team are able to provide advice and assistance to interested groups and organisations including District planning officers, members of the public and prospective developers.

9: The Planning and Design Process

9: The Planning and Design Process

1. The structure of the planning process

a) Pre-application discussion

1.1 South Staffordshire Council is determined to be actively involved in the design and development process. Encouraging pre-application discussions with the council at an early stage can help identify opportunities and constraints in relation to a site and development. Additionally, it can help assist developers in understanding what will be required for planning applications and how best to manage the planning process for the site.

1.2 South Staffordshire Council will ensure all relevant council professionals attend meetings so as to bring effective, accurate and definitive planning and development advice and where possible consult other bodies such as Staffordshire County Council, the Highways Agency and Environment Agency.

1.3 The following guidance is provided to developers with regard to engaging in pre-application discussions with the Council:

- Have a clear idea of the project brief, but be prepared to recognise legitimate planning issues in finalising the brief for development after initial discussions with the Council;
- Make sure the key planning policy messages in respect of the site and proposal are understood as a basis for the discussion;
- Ensure that an initial site visit has taken place. More detailed urban design analysis will be needed to accompany any application, but a basic grasp of the site issues will be expected as the basis for any pre-application discussion;
- Be positive in responding to advice from the planning officers. Their role is to help ensure high quality and appropriate development in the context of the local planning framework; and
- Be prepared to share early sketch plans and ideas. These will be treated as work in progress and can help to evolve design thinking. It is not advisable to seek pre-application discussions when the 'finished scheme' has been designed, as this may result in abortive work for the applicant.

b) Design review

1.4 Design review allows developers, their designers and the Council to talk about and cross-examine the design, individually and together, towards improving and refining the design. It can provide a system for trouble-shooting and conflict resolution.

1.5 Design review is integral to a successful design process and should be undertaken both formally and informally, through the evolution of the design of the development. It can range from informal discussions or take a more formal format such as a design workshop, involving the design team, the client and the Council. Formal pre-application discussions with the Council will form one part of design review. Planning Officers will undertake design review when a planning application is submitted for determination, based on this Guide, utilising the Design Review Framework provided at the end of this section. Recording design reviews, particularly where this has involved the Council, and writing this up concisely as part of the Design and Access Statement for a planning application is encouraged. This can help explain why certain aspects of a development have been designed in a particular way.

2. Design appraisal toolkit

a) Introduction

2.1 Taylor Young have developed a Design Appraisal Toolkit which is a simple, but a structured and objective way of assessing whether a master plan or development proposal will create a well-designed environment. The method can be used to assess a large development, individual site, building, a master plan or planning application and involves scoring the proposal against a list of urban design criteria. The results can be displayed as easy to read graphs (as illustrated below).

b) Stage 1: Assessment.

2.2 The proposals should be assessed against the list of objective criteria or 'urban design expectations'. The criteria in **Figure 39** (opposite) have been tailored to South Staffordshire and cover issues of context, local distinctiveness and national environmental standards and accessibility criteria. The design proposal is scored from 1-5, 1 being 'does not meet expectations' and 5 being 'exceeds expectations'.

Urban Design Expectations	1 Does not meet expectations	2 Meets expectations in a limited way	3 Meets expectations to a satisfactory level	4 Meets expectations to a good level	5 Exceeds expectations	
Context						
Protect Local Amenity		2				
Protect and Enhance the Landscape Setting				4		
Enhance the public realm	1					
Subtotal						7/15
Local Distinctiveness						
Reinforces rural character and sense of place		2				
Enhances historic / architectural qualities				4		
Enhances natural heritage			3			
Enhances conservation area					5	
Innovation in design and layout	1					
Subtotal						15/25
Vitality						
Use, mix and tenure		2				
Density / intensity of development		2				
Re-use of buildings		2				
Adaptability		2				
Subtotal						8/20
Environmental Standards						
Environmental Performance - BREEAM standards		2				
Code for Sustainable Homes	1					
Energy efficiency		2				
Subtotal						5/15
Enhancing Biodiversity						
Provision of open space and landscape		2				
Protect and enhance current habitats and species		2				
Subtotal						4/10
Creating Safe Places to Live and Work						
Natural surveillance			3			
Building layout reduces crime			3			
Accessible and inclusive design			3			
Subtotal						9/15
Accessibility						
External connections and integration			3			
Pedestrian and cycling provision			3			
Network of legible routes			3			
Subtotal						9/15
TOTAL						**57/115**

Figure 39: Design Appriasal Scoring Sheet

9: The Planning and Design Process

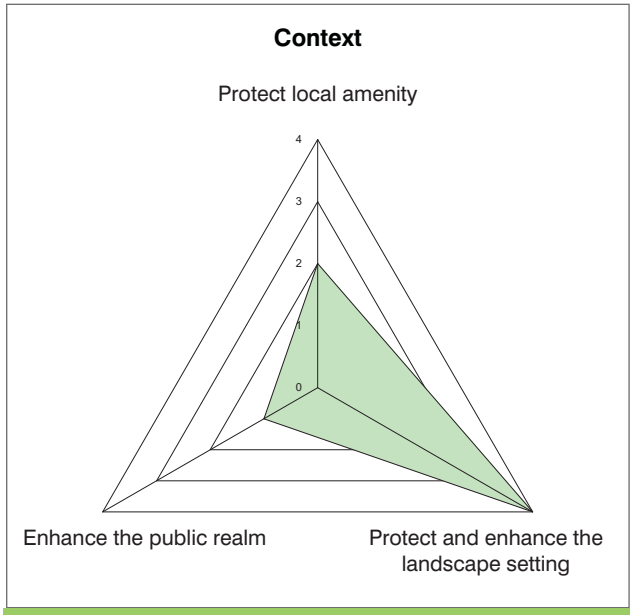


Figure 40: Urban design expectations

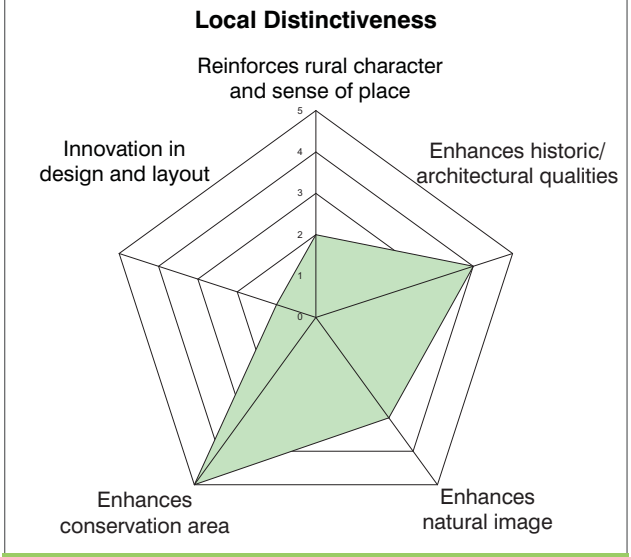


Figure 41: Local Distinctiveness

c) Stage 2: Criteria graphs

2.3 The graphs above illustrate how the proposals meet the urban design expectations. A well designed proposal achieves maximum coverage of the splat graph. In **Figure 40** (above top), the proposal clearly has a strong commitment to protecting and enhancing its landscape setting (scoring a maximum of 4 points), but is weak in how it addresses the public realm (only scoring 1 point).

2.4 The Local Distinctiveness graph (**Figure 41** above bottom) illustrates that the development proposal strongly enhances the historical and architectural qualities of the area and places value on the natural heritage, but clearly lacks innovation in its design and layout.

The results of the appraisal may lead to a review of the scheme layout to strengthen this aspect of the development proposal.

2.5 The Local Distinctiveness graph above illustrates that the development proposal strongly enhances the historical and architectural qualities of the area and places value on the natural heritage, but clearly lacks innovation in its design and layout. The results of the appraisal may lead to a review of the scheme layout to strengthen this aspect of the development proposal.

d) Stage 3: Full design appraisal graph

2.6 The graph in **Figure 42** (below) combines all the results of the appraisal and provides the overall picture of how well the proposal meets design expectations. The aim is to achieve maximum coverage of the splat graph for the 'perfect design solution'. Here are the results of this case study:

Figure 42: Full design appraisal

2.7 The design appraisal tool offers assurance that the development proposals will:

- provide fully inclusive access to the site or buildings and that the design is also committed to creating safe places to live and work, whilst enhancing the local distinctiveness of the place (as all meet the criteria by 60% and over)
- contribute adequately to local distinctiveness by reinforcing rural character and a sense of place (by scoring 50%)
- enhance biodiversity and contribute to vitality (e.g. by encouraging mixed use over single uses on a site)

2.8 The results highlight that the design fails to meet expectations in terms of its contribution to the context, as it fails to address the public realm adequately (scores less than 50%) or meet national environmental standards (as it fails to meet the Code for Sustainable Homes).

2.9 As a result of the urban design appraisal, the proposed design could be amended to provide a better design solution.

3. Consultation and public engagement

3.1 Consultation is a vital stage of the design process. It can help to trial out ideas, communicate information and improve local knowledge. The type and nature of consultation will vary with the scale and significance of the development. South Staffordshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement should inform the approach to public consultation on development projects in the area, whether this is led by the Council or developers.

3.2 It is recommended that developers commence public consultation prior to submission of a planning application. This should be timetabled to ensure sufficient time to revise the design before the planning application is submitted. The form which developer-led consultation might take will range from an informal discussion with neighbours about a house extension, to a formal public exhibition or event. Public meetings should generally be avoided as these are not the most effective means of communicating often complicated information about development projects.

3.3 Developer led consultation should be undertaken after discussion with and agreement of the Council. Developers should ensure that consultation is properly resourced in terms of explanatory materials and staff to explain and describe the proposal. It will be important that any formal and informal consultation is recorded and 'written-up' to explain comments made, and how the design has evolved to reflect local people's concerns and ideas as relevant. This could be included as a stand-alone report and/or as part of the Design and Access Statement.

4. Making a planning application

a) Introduction

4.1 When the development proposals are finalised planning applications can be made. Before this, however, it will be expected that development proposals will have been shared with the Council, and pre-application and design issues discussed with the applicant. This should help to ensure that the design of development is of an appropriate quality when the application is submitted (see also Sections 4.6 and 4.7).

4.2 Pre-application discussions will also identify the design-related information that will need to accompany a planning application. Without the full range of supporting design information the Council may not be in a position to validate a planning application. Importantly, all planning applications should be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement.

b) Policy compliance

4.3 All development proposals should conform with existing layers of planning policy - see Appendix 1.

c) Design and Access statements

4.4 A Design and Access statement is required by Government to accompany planning applications for new development, except for householder applications outside conservation areas. The length and level of detail of such statements should reflect the scale and complexity of the development proposed.

4.5 In general the statement should cover a number of important aspects of the development, explaining to the Council the design and proposal in terms of the following:

- Design Process, including site analysis, consultation and evolution of the scheme;
- Uses and activities to be developed on site;
- Amount of development, how much development is proposed;
- Layout and the arrangement of buildings, routes and spaces;
- Scale relating to how large the buildings are (height, width, length) and the context;
- Landscaping, including how open spaces will be treated and managed; and
- Appearance, specifically the design, materials and details related to the context;

4.6 Design and Access Statements should provide the narrative for the whole design process and clearly explain the design rational for the development. These statements need to do much more than simply describe the development.

4.7 The Council will look closely at the content and quality of Design and Access Statements to ensure that they meet the statutory requirements. The recommended source of advice on producing design and access statements is 'Design and Access Statements - How to read, write and use them' (CABE, 2007). They should be started early and evolved as the design progresses, not rushed and completed at the end of the process as a tick box exercise. Designers and architects should contribute to the drafting of the statement to help convey the ideas and principles behind the scheme. Sufficient resources should be directed to ensure the Design and Access Statement is fit for purpose.

d) Implementing development

4.8 The design process does not end when a planning application is approved. Implementing development to the approved plans and details is imperative, and quality management is needed through this important stage of design and construction.

4.9 Planning conditions may need to be discharged prior to the commencement of development on site, and applicants may wish to discuss conditions with the Council at pre-application discussions.

4.10 In design terms, conditions will be used to control the specification of materials and the details of design. The Council will need to be satisfied of the quality and appropriateness of materials and details to discharge such conditions. It may be sufficient to provide sample units of the materials, but in some cases the Council may wish to see larger sections or samples on site. Reducing the quality of the specification after the planning approval and/or discharge of conditions will not be acceptable, and the Council may take enforcement action to ensure quality standards are maintained.

5. Recognising good design - awards and standards

5.1 The council encourages developers to achieve high design standards and demonstrates this through design awards and standards. There are a number of ways that developers and clients procuring development might wish to demonstrate design quality. Three national awards and standards include:

- **Building for Life** - the national benchmark award for well designed housing and neighbourhoods in England. It is awarded to new housing projects that demonstrate a commitment to high design standards. Building for Life is managed by CABE and the Home Builders Federation.

- **BREEAM** - The 'Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method' validates the sustainability of different types of development. The Council encourages its use in all non-residential development. Development is rated on a scale from PASS, to EXCELLENT and a certificate awarded.

- **Code for Sustainable Homes** - allows home builders to be recognised for going beyond current building regulations in terms of environmental performance. The Code is supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Building Research Establishment. New homes are awarded a rating from 1 to 6 stars, based on performance against sustainability criteria, with six stars being the highest standard, equating to carbon neutral.

5.2 In addition South Staffordshire Council has its own '**Conservation Design Awards**' which are awarded biennially or triennially to recognise schemes and projects which have achieved the highest qualities in their respective fields.

10: Appendices

10: Appendix 1 - Planning Policy Context

1. Planning policy context

Supplementary Planning Document

1.1 The South Staffordshire Village Design Guide has been prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document, as part of the emerging Local Development Framework for South Staffordshire Council.

1.2 The South Staffordshire Village Design Guide conforms with all national, regional and local planning policy, planning guidance and statements.

1.3 The South Staffordshire Village Design Guide has been prepared to be compatible with the objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (formerly RPG11, 2004), which highlights the importance of rural renaissance and quality design. It also conforms with the Staffordshire Structure Plan (1998-2011) it provides the strategic context for local plans dealing with detailed land use policies, the relevant policies are listed in **Figure 43** opposite.

1.4 The South Staffordshire Village Design Guide also conforms with the South Staffordshire Local Plan. Local plan policies still have effect until superseded by the Council's Core Strategy and generic Development Plan Policies. The relevant Local Plan policies have been 'saved' and are listed below.

1.5 This Village Design Guide provides further advice and support to Local Plan Policy BE26 New Development - Design Criteria of the South Staffordshire Local Plan, adopted December 1996.

Local Plan Policy BE26 New Development - Design Criteria states that new development should:

a) be sympathetic with the appearance and character of the surrounding area and be appropriate in scale, mass, design, materials, layout and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings and spaces;

b) Have a satisfactory means of access and have adequate car parking provision;

c) Avoid placing an undue burden on existing services, the local road network or other infrastructure;

d) Include provision for landscaping appropriate to the character of the surroundings;

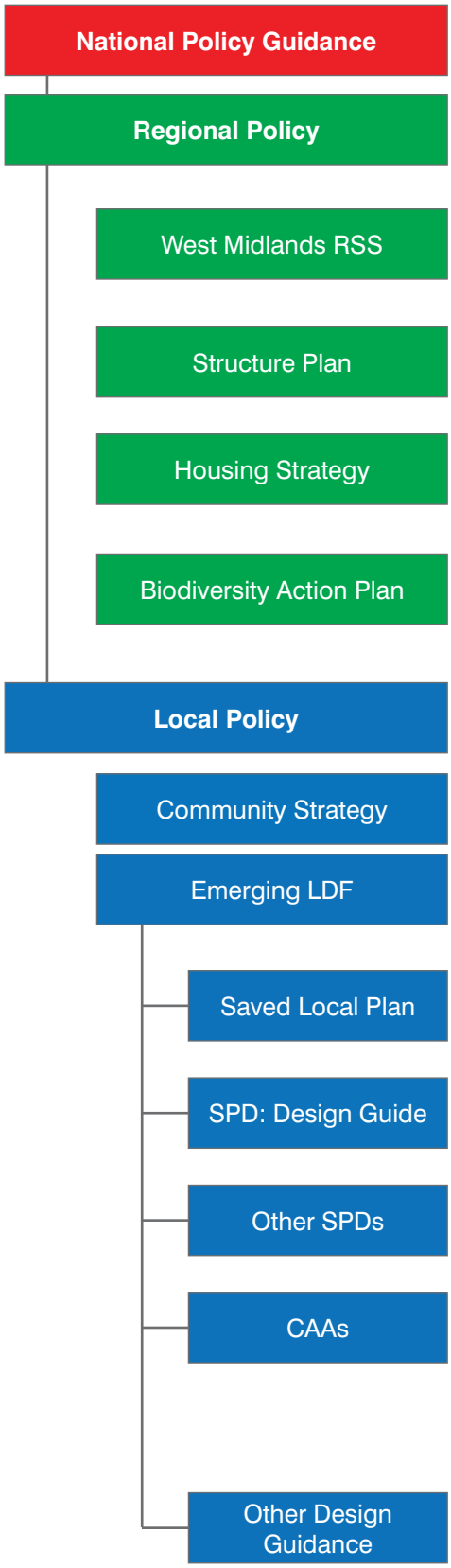
e) Retain any important open area, gap in a frontage or natural or built features, such as trees, hedges, walls, fences and banks;

f) Avoid harming the amenities of neighbouring residential properties;

g) Avoid any adverse affect on the architectural or historic character and setting of a listed building.

Figure 43: Summary of the planning policy context

National	Policy
Natural England	NE 139: Green Infrastructure Strategies NE 176: Green Infrastructure Guidance
Regional	**Policy**
Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (formerly RPG11, June 2004)	South Staffordshire sits outside Major Urban Area (MUAs). The renaissance of rural areas is a priority. Protection of rural character and sense of place Quality of built environment Landscape character areas
Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan (1998-2011)	It provides a comprehensive, sustainable strategy relating to land use, transportation and the environment. It provides the strategic context for local plans dealing with detailed land use policies and site specific developments.
West Midlands Regional Assembly	Housing Strategy, 2005; Green Infrastructure – A Prospectus for the West Midlands Region, 2007.
Planning for Landscape Change, 2000 (Staffordshire County Council)	Regional landscape areas and types aiming to improve the management of woodlands within the region.
Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan	The Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (SBAP) has been in place since 1998. It is used by a wide variety of partners throughout the county in developing policy, targeting priorities and accessing funding for biodiversity action.
Local	**Policy**
Community Strategy	Aiming to create a safe and healthy place to live, with prosperous villages and thriving communities, where everyone can develop their abilities to the full, and pass on to future generations a better environment.
Emerging South Staffordshire Local Development Framework (LDF)	Issues and Options paper, Consultation 1996 (council is working towards preferred option for Core Strategy)
South Staffordshire Adopted Local Plan (Saved Policies, September 2007)	BE26 New Development - Design Criteria BE5,7,9 &12 - Conservation Areas BE20-22 - Re-use of rural buildings BE25 - Location of new buildings BE27 & 28 - Drainage/watercourses RE1 - Renewable Energy R1,2,4,5,6,8,10 &16 - Recreation and leisure facilities OC1 - Open Countryside C1 - Re-use of rural buildings C4 - Dwellings in the countryside C8 - Extensions GB1,4,5 & 6 - Green Belt LS1,2,5,6,7,9,10,11 & 12 - Landscape
Conservation Areas	NC2,3,4,5,7,8 & 9 - Habitats and Site Protection Blymhill, Lower Penn, Brewood, Pattingham, Chillington, Penkridge, Codsall, Penn (Vicarage Road), Enville, Trysull, Himley, Weston-under-Lizard, Kinver, Wheaton Aston, Lapley, Wombourne, Along the Staffordshire & Worcestershire, Stourbridge and Shropshire Union canals
Conservation Area Management Plans and Appraisals	Brewood, Blymhill, Codsall, Kinver, Lapley, Lower Penn, Pattingham, Penkridge, Trysull & Seisdon, Wombourne, Wheaton Aston.
South Staffordshire Local Design Guidance (Supplementary Planning Guidance)	'The Conversion of Redundant Farm Buildings, A Policy and Design Guide', South Staffordshire Council Staffordshire Residential Design Guide - Extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt, and extensions to dwellings formed from conversions of rural buildings in the Green Belt, 2001. Design of Shop Fronts and Signs in Conservation Areas (1989) Weston under Lizard & Blymhill Design Guide (1997) Brewood Village Design Statement (2002)



10: Appendix 2 - Glossary & contacts

Active Edges
Building frontages containing features which include activities e.g. building entrances, shop fronts, etc.

Adopted Local Plan
General development control polices used to determine planning applications and identify sites where particular development can take place. It was adopted in December 1996 and covered the period up to 2001. A review of the Plan was started, however, in 2005, the Council decided to move forward with a Local Development Framework (LDF).

Biodiversity
The ecological richness of an area represented by the number of plant and animal species present; which development should enhance rather than harm.

BREEAM
The Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method - a set of environmental standards. Attainment of a particular level is often encouraged and for some developments required.

Buildings of Special Local Interest (Local List)
South Staffordshire Council is preparing and maintaining a List of Buildings of Special Local Interest – a 'Local List'. This identifies local buildings and structures important in their archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic terms which the Council will take action to preserve as far as possible.

CABE
The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. It is the Government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space.

Conservation Areas
A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest designated by the council to help preserve and enhance its character and appearance. There are currently 18 conservation areas in South Staffordshire: Blymhill*; Brewood*; Chillington; Codsall & Oaken*; Enville; Himley Village & Parkland; Kinver*; Lapley*; Lower Penn*; Pattingham*; Penkridge*; Shropshire Union Canal; Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal; Stourbridge Canal; Trysull & Seisdon*; Weston-under-Lizard; Wheaton Aston* and Wombourne*. Those marked * have up-to-date Conservation Area Management Plans.

Conservation Area Management Plans
Provide guidance through policy statements to assist in the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Section 69(2) of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, which places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas.

Contemporary Design
Design particular to a specific point in time. It can be used in the context of the past, but is usually used to mean design particular to the present time period. Architectural historians usually refer to contemporary design at present as 'post-modern'.

Context
In terms of design and architecture, the characteristics of the area in which a place, building or site sits. These include vernacular and period styles, street pattern, topography urban form, legibility, landscape and views.

Continuity
The quality of an unbroken street frontage which creates enclosure and defines the shape of the space thus formed. It is the most important element in creating unity of the street picture together with the street's architecture whether as a formal design or an informal common theme of style, scale, materials and building heights.

Enclosure
Enfolding of a space by its surrounding buildings, walls or landscape. The relationship between the size of the space and the height of its "walls" can give feelings ranging from confinement to spaciousness; creating these variations in forms of space is one of the major accomplishments of the site planning.

Exposure
A lack of enclosure, either through a lack of continuity or a space which is large in comparison to the height of buildings, walls and landscape enclosing it.

Green Roof
A low pitch or flat roof on which plants are grown in a 'soil' layer in order to soften its appearance when seen from above. Expensive in construction but claimed to achieve insulation savings.

Historic Environment Record (HER)
A detailed database held and maintained by Staffordshire County Council containing information about the history and archaeology of areas and places.

Historic Farmstead Survey
A countywide survey of historic farmsteads which maps and characterises its historic farmstead resource and builds and expands upon preliminary character statements produced by English Heritage. This information is held and maintained by Staffordshire County Council.

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
A data set compiled and held by Staffordshire County Council. It provides information on the evolution of the area's landscape, as well as an evidence base on surviving aspects of its historic character and is complementary to their Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

In-fill Development
Development which fills a small site sandwiched between existing buildings; or larger sites which fill a 'hole' in the urban fabric. The closeness of adjacent buildings makes it important to respect the context.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)
A data set compiled and held by Staffordshire County Council that is complementary to their Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC).

Legibility
The layout and design of development so as to help people form a mental map and easily identify routes through the area and their relationship to landmark features and destinations, e.g. the local centre. This implies distinctiveness in the design of each street picture and distinction between 'through' routes and intimate localised and detailed building groupings. It may also require an appreciable build-up to, and of, the neighbourhood centre.

Listed Buildings
A building or other structure officially designated as being of special architectural, historical or cultural significance. Listing a building imposes restrictions on what an owner might wish to change or modify in the structure or its fittings.

Listed Parklands
Parkland included on the Register of Parks & Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. Inclusion safeguards the features and qualities of key landscapes for the future. Listing sites of special interest increases awareness of their value and encourages those who own them, or who play a part in their protection, to treat sites with due care.

Local Development Framework (LDF)
A planning framework of policies to deliver the spatial strategy for the District. It will be made up of a portfolio of individual documents known as Local Development Documents, which will guide the development of the District. These documents, and the policies they contain, will replace the Local Plan.

Local List
See 'Buildings of Special Local Interest' above

Local Service Village
Smaller villages or settlements with essential facilities used by the local population.

Main Service Village
Larger villages or settlements that have a good range of facilities and services.

Massing
A common phrase used by professionals to refer to the height, bulk and volume of buildings, the density of their distribution and physical closeness of their relationship. With 'scale' these are important qualities which need determining at an early design stage.

Natural Surveillance
The overlooking of public spaces from windows of nearby buildings or busier adjacent areas in order to deter crime or anti-social behaviour.

Organic
When referring to urban form, 'organic' is a term for a pattern of development which grew up over a considerable period of time naturally, incrementally and unplanned. It may be characterised by winding streets of irregular pattern and widths and informal market places which can be highly attractive, as opposed to 19th century unplanned city expansion which had the opposite outcome.

10: Appendix 2 - Glossary & contacts

Other Villages
Settlements that have a restricted range of facilities and services, such as a church, pub or playing field.

Overlooking
Natural Surveillance from nearby buildings (see Natural Surveillance)

Period (of Architecture or Design)
Architecture, landscape architecture or urban layouts designed to a specific style common to certain historic periods, e.g. Baroque, Georgian etc. As opposed to 'vernacular' design (see 'Organic' above).

Permeability
A quality which provides a choice of convenient and self-evident routes along which to traverse an area.

Plant (Industrial)
Miscellaneous machinery found in or around commercial and industrial buildings, related both to the manufacturing operations and to the servicing of the buildings, e.g. air-conditioning units, external ducting, etc.

Public Realm
The area which is freely accessible to the public. This includes streets, footpaths, parks, car parks, open land as well as the inside of some public buildings. In a wider sense it may refer to open areas which are private but comprise part of the publicly-visible scene, e.g. cricket pitches, building forecourts, etc.

Robust Design
Design which has stature and implied strength or development which can withstand the test of time and changing demands and uses. It implies that evanescent or fleeting design fashions should be avoided, or only accommodated when they respond to the acknowledged local design context.

Roofscape
The roof scenery of a street or urban area including roof shapes, materials and detailing, chimney stacks, tall structures and trees – the skyline and its silhouette. Especially when viewed from a distance or elevated position the roofscape can become an important defining feature of the townscape. Conscious roofscape design assumes an important rôle in new housing areas which commonly lack variety of building sizes and shapes and vertical features such as chimneys or gables, spires and turrets.

Scale
The relationship of a building and its features to human size. Small sizes of the building elements – windows, doors etc – as well as the building itself can achieve domesticity; larger building elements represent grandeur and self-importance. Scale is of overriding importance where new buildings are introduced into the context of small-scale village groupings, whilst small-scale cottage designs may be incongruous in larger-scale formal settings.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Monuments scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. This supports a formal system of Scheduled Monument Consent for any work to a designated monument. Scheduling is the only legal protection specifically for archaeological sites.

Setback
The distance between the front of a building and the back of the pavement. The judicial use of setbacks to achieve considered effects can have a distinctive effect on enclosure and visual richness of a street.

Small Service Village
Small villages or settlements with a modest level of facilities, such as a school or Post Office, used by the local population.

Stakeholders
People and organisations, such as servicing providers and highways, heritage and other authorities, with a vested or statutory interest in a development This includes the developer, adjoining landowners, residents, local businesses, local community and business groups, the local authority and statutory consultees.

Street Frontage
The physical boundary between the street and the adjacent. A street frontage can be 'live' or 'active' when it contains access points to a building or public open space, 'dead' when it is a blank wall or glass façade, and 'absent' when there is no boundary, for example when the land use is a car park.

Street scape
The picture presented by the view along a street This is, importantly, formed by the shape of the area enclosed by the street facades; the design and relationship of its defining buildings, walls, structures and vegetation; the surface of the street, wall-to-wall, and street furniture.

Suburban
Development typical of the last 100 years where large areas of countryside at the edges of cities, towns and villages were developed into housing estates These were characterised by low-density, detached or semi-detached 'cottage'-type housing attempting largely unsuccessfully to create a more rural character – the garden suburb. Nevertheless they represented a popular departure from Victorian inner city terraces.

SUDS
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems are drainage systems, often combined with green space, allowing surface water to drain away seeping naturally and gradually into the ground. This can economise on costs and reduce flooding surges.

Sustainability
The ability to sustain a level of building or other economic activity without adverse effects on future generations; a phrase often extended incorrectly to embrace social inclusion, economic growth and environmental friendliness within its aims.

Village scape
The pattern of topography, streets, spaces and buildings particular to that village; the view; locations of landmarks; feelings of enclosure and exposure; and of continuity and breakage of street frontages created by the layout of the buildings.

Urban Grain
The urban grain is the complexity and scale of the pattern of buildings and spaces of an urban area. The fine urban grain of many old villages and neighbourhoods is characterised by small blocks with a large number of streets, lanes and passageways and considerable variations in the spacing of, largely, small-scale buildings. Modern town centre redevelopment with large development blocks and subservient minor open space features would be examples of a coarse urban grain.

Vernacular
The traditional, local building style and materials which evolved through functional needs, without the input of professional architects.

Vista
A distant view; in the urban design sense a view towards a single point such as a landmark building channelled along an avenue or by valley sides.

Visual Richness
The quality of a building elevation or village scape which is highly detailed or contains a variety of interesting features at a variety of scales.

West Midlands Streets for All Guidance Manual
An English Heritage publication providing guidance on the way in which streets and public open spaces are managed. Sometimes known as the 'public realm', these spaces range from city squares to country lanes. Their appearance is often the product of several different agencies each with their own priorities. Copies of the manual are obtainable from English Heritage.

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Village Design Guide
Supplementary Planning Document

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South Staffordshire Council

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