



Catshill and North Marlbrook Design Guide

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Introduction

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1. Introduction

AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funded Neighbourhood Planning Programme, led by Locality.

This Design Guide has been produced to inform new development proposed in the area. It presents a summary of the key characteristics of Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish which make this a special place to live and visit. This information is then used to inform specific design guidelines to promote sustainable development.

The approach set out here is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which encourages local authorities to consider using design codes to help deliver high quality outcomes for new development. It is important, however, that guidance finds the balance between promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and allowing for innovation and originality. The NPPF suggests that 'design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics' (NPPF, 2018).

The NPPF also emphasises that 'the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities' (NPPF, 2018). It is therefore important that planning policies and decisions should address the connection between people and places and how any new development will respond to and integrate successfully into the natural, built and historic environment.

1.1. Objectives

The main objective of this document is to establish principles so that new development is designed and planned with regard to the existing character and context of the Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish within the Neighbourhood Plan. It sets out a series of design guidelines related to residential development.

The document initially provides context to the design guidelines including strategic issues identified during the consultation carried out by the Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish. The aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan, although not strictly design issues, need to be considered in the context of any design proposal.

1.2. Process

The following steps were undertaken to produce this document:

- Initial meeting with members of the Catshill and North Marlbrook Steering Group and site visit;
- Further site visits, character assessment and urban design analysis;
- Preparation of design principles and guidelines to be used to assess future developments;
- Draft report with design guidelines; and
- Final report.



Context

02

2. Context

2.1. Location and area of study

Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish is located in the District of Bromsgrove and the County of Worcestershire approximately 4 kilometres north of Bromsgrove and approximately 16 kilometres south-west of Birmingham. The Parish has a population of 6,858 according to the 2011 census and is situated close to the junction between the M5 and M42. The parish's local plan-making authority is Bromsgrove District Council.

The parish extends over several settlements: Catshill, Upper Catshill, North Marlbrook, Hinton Fields and Bellevue.

Catshill's name was first record in an Assize Roll from 1221 as 'Catteshulle'. The village became a centre of nail making, which was a thriving local cottage industry. The Bromsgrove area was the leading national centre for the nail industry and employed 2,500 nailers by 1861. This industry declined from the late 19th century until ceasing around the mid-20th century. The small cottages in the area, which were once nail shops and cottages have been re purposed as residential properties. The old A38 road, which follows various Roman and Saxon roads between Mansfield and Exeter, passes through the parish.

Catshill has a large service array including a GP surgery, residential care home, hotel, post office, garden centre, two supermarkets and several shops, pubs and restaurants. The Parish has three schools: Catshill First School, Catshill Middle School and a special education school of Chadsgrove School.



Figure 1 Neighbourhood Plan Area

.....© Google Earth Pro, 2020

2.2. Engagement

Members of the local community and local interest groups were invited to share their knowledge and experience with the Catshill and North Marlbrook Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. A meeting was held on the 15th of October 2019 and the feedback gathered has been used to inform this Design Guide.

Several key considerations and strategic issues emerged from the consultation, which have informed the preparation of this Design Guide. A number of matters have been identified which the Parish Council believe can be improved through better design. These include:

- Improving the appearance of the area as a place to live, work and visit;
- Fostering a wide variety of buildings, places and spaces which can be celebrated;
- Creating vibrant cultural areas contrasting with quieter commercial and residential areas;
- Enhancing active frontages and the pedestrian experience along primary routes;
- Ensuring adequate parking;
- Maintaining green buffers;
- Reducing pressure on local roads;
- Mitigating traffic issues on primary routes used heavily by commuters;
- Making the best use of highly valued but limited open space is limited; and
- Using opportunities for positive change through development and preventing adverse impacts.





Local character analysis

03

3. Local character analysis

3.1. Introduction

This design code assesses specific aspects of the local character such as streets, open spaces and rooflines. It builds on previous work done on landscape character. The landscape character work designated areas similar in form across the parish. This chapter will go into more detail about the kind of building forms, materials and layouts that predominate in Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish

This chapter has been informed by the Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Capacity Assessment was published in February 2018 (One Creative Environments Ltd, 2018). The report contains a landscape character assessment of the Parish and the capacity and suitability of each designated site to accommodate housing. This report should be referred to for specific guidance on the character of the 27 areas shown in Figure 2 to the right. These 27 character areas represent parts of the parish which have a similar urban or rural character, including elements such as housing type and topography.

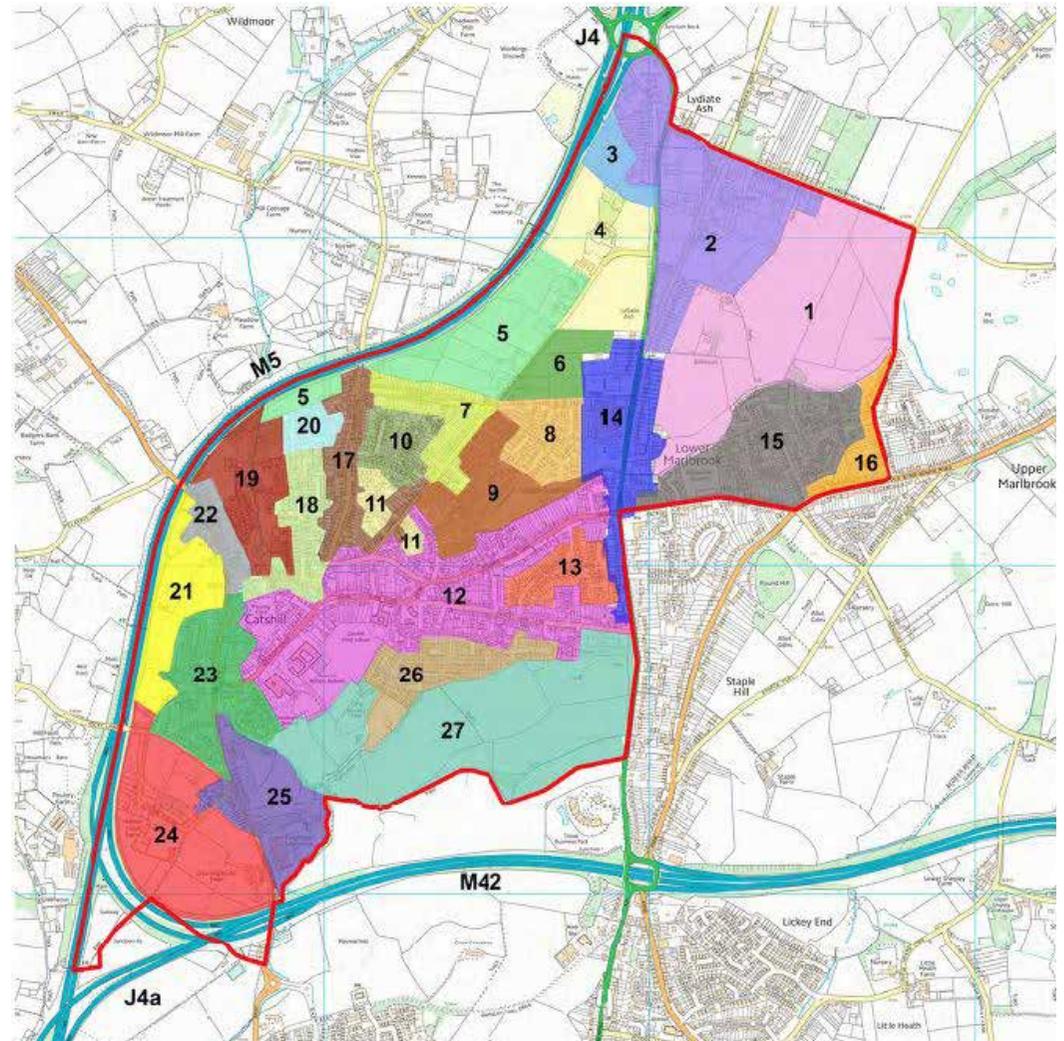


Figure 2: One Creative Environment Ltd Landscape Character Areas

Rural capacity

According to the Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Capacity Assessment, produced in the February 2018 by One Creative Environment Ltd, there are some rural areas within the Parish that have capacity to accommodate development.

The assessment concluded that not all of these sites are entirely suitable. The most common findings that tended to lead to a site being deemed unsuitable for development were issues with access, flooding and topography.

The sites were colour coded according to suitability from low (red), low/medium (orange), medium (amber), medium/high (yellow) and high (green).

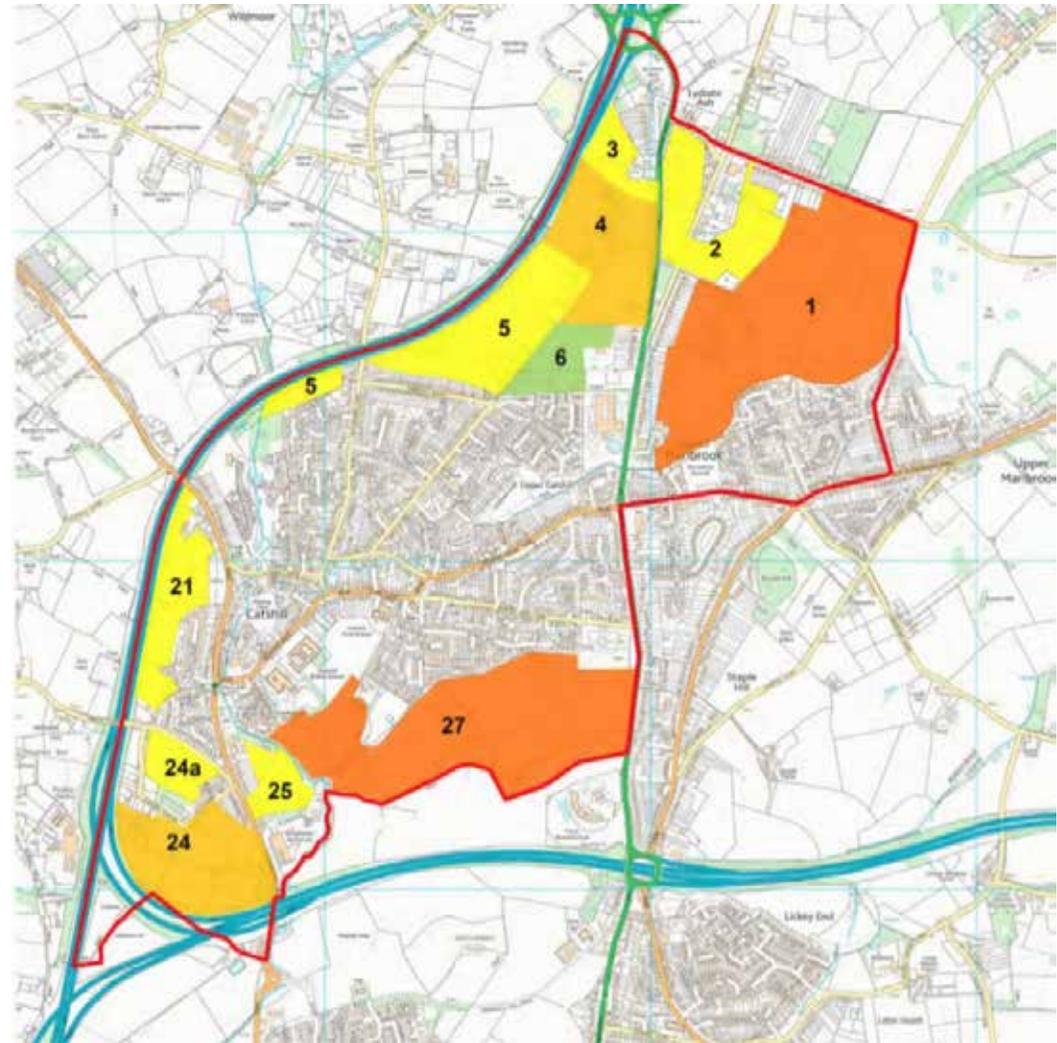


Figure 3: Capacity assessment of rural areas (One Creative Environments Ltd, 2018)

3.2. Elements of character

Streets and public realm

- The Stourbridge Road (B4091) and Birmingham Road (A38) have been the main catalysts for development within Catshill and North Marlbrook over a prolonged period of time. Houses were built along the Stourbridge Road first, creating what is known as *'ribbon development'* which is linear in form. This is where pre-20th century dwellings tend to be concentrated.

- Following on from this, Catshill grew eastwards along Church Road and Meadow Road (B4185). The village's centre drifted along with new development to the area around the junction of Woodrow Lane and Golden Cross Lane by the 1960s.

- From the 1960s onwards, Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish saw housing developments that gradually expanded the settlement to the south, north and east, with growth encouraged by the construction of the M5 motorway in 1962 and the M42 motorway in 1989. These two motorways provide a barrier to growth to expansion to the north, west and south.

- New buildings have largely infilled the gaps between existing dwellings and, in many cases, short cul-de-sacs and no-through roads have been used. These have helped create a sense of privacy through the absence of passing traffic.

- The public realm within these areas can be limited due to the predominance of private gardens and dead end roads. Often the streets only connect to the main road, rather than having a more porous pedestrian connection to other parts of the village.



Pattern and layout of buildings

- Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish is bounded on three sides by the M5, M42 and the A38. The Parish's existing built-up area is constrained in a triangular form with limited space for future development.

- Properties tend to face the main roads, with no through roads leading to cul de sac developments on backland infill.

- The housing types in developments within the Parish tend to be detached, semi-detached and terraced.

- Development appears to be denser towards the centre of the Parish, along the westernmost part of Golden Cross Lane (B4185). Here development tends to be more commercial than residential with examples of nailers' cottages.

- Battlefield Brook has had a large influence on the layout of the most recent development within the Parish. The Cowslip Close development has taken into account the low-lying and flood-prone characteristics of the area. The development has been split by the Brook and is connected over it via a bridge.

- In rural areas, the layout of the properties is influenced by topography. Catshill itself sits within a bowl structure with topography.

- Residential properties tend to be semi-detached or detached houses. Large properties are found on the outskirts of the parish due to the availability of space on the rural edges, and period of time in which they were constructed which is largely the Victorian era. The properties are set back from the road and have parcel of land linked to the property. They are commonly two storeys in height.

- There are various farmstead including large agricultural barns, houses and pre-war residential properties, located in the south of the Parish between the M5 and the M42. This area lies within the Green Belt.



Building height and roofline

- The most predominant building height is two storey, with a small proportion of bungalows scattered throughout the Parish. Developments tend to be linear in their heights, especially in the case of terraced developments. An example of this type of development is located in area 12 along the Golden Cross Lane (B1485).

- Pitched roofs are the most common roof type to be found in the Parish. There are some gabled roofs that are found in other areas of Catshill and North Marlbrook depending on the date of construction.

- Some roof elements have been added that add interest to the roof line. Chimney's are common in the Parish and can be found on the older properties especially in area 10.



Pitched roofs at multiple levels



Gabled roof

Car parking

- The majority of properties in Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish have been adapted to accommodate car parking due to the limited amount of street parking available. Some areas can experience congestion due to the on street parking, such as area 15.



Private parking



On street parking

Open space and landscape

- Public open space within the urban areas is very limited due to the density of development.
- The largest green space is the George Wagstaff Memorial Meadow which has recreation facilities including a playing field, pavilion and playground. Some of the occasional smaller green areas located between properties contain ornamental tree planting laid out in formal avenues. The spaces to the south offer connections to the wider countryside via Public Rights of Way, some accessed through passageways between residential developments. This network of pedestrian routes integrated between the village and the surrounding countryside are an important asset which allows for better connectivity.
- Landscaping in the Parish is largely derived from the vegetated ornamental front gardens of properties. This helps to create a rural feel in certain areas.
- Rural parts of the parish are crossed by numerous Public Rights of Way (PROWs). The fields are demarcated by mature, high hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Some fields are bounded by the M5.
- The Parish has a dense network of PROWs, some of which appear to be underused and have become overgrown.
- The Milton Road cycle path FP 515, 516C, that is located between the Stourbridge Road and Shelly Close, provides views of the open countryside, and forms part of the national Sustrans network route No.5
- Footpath 523B that begins near the War Memorial in Lower Catshill, links to the major footpath network known as the Royal Hunters Walks. This consists of the 'Hedgelayner Walk', 'Chartists Walk' and the 'Foresters Walk'.

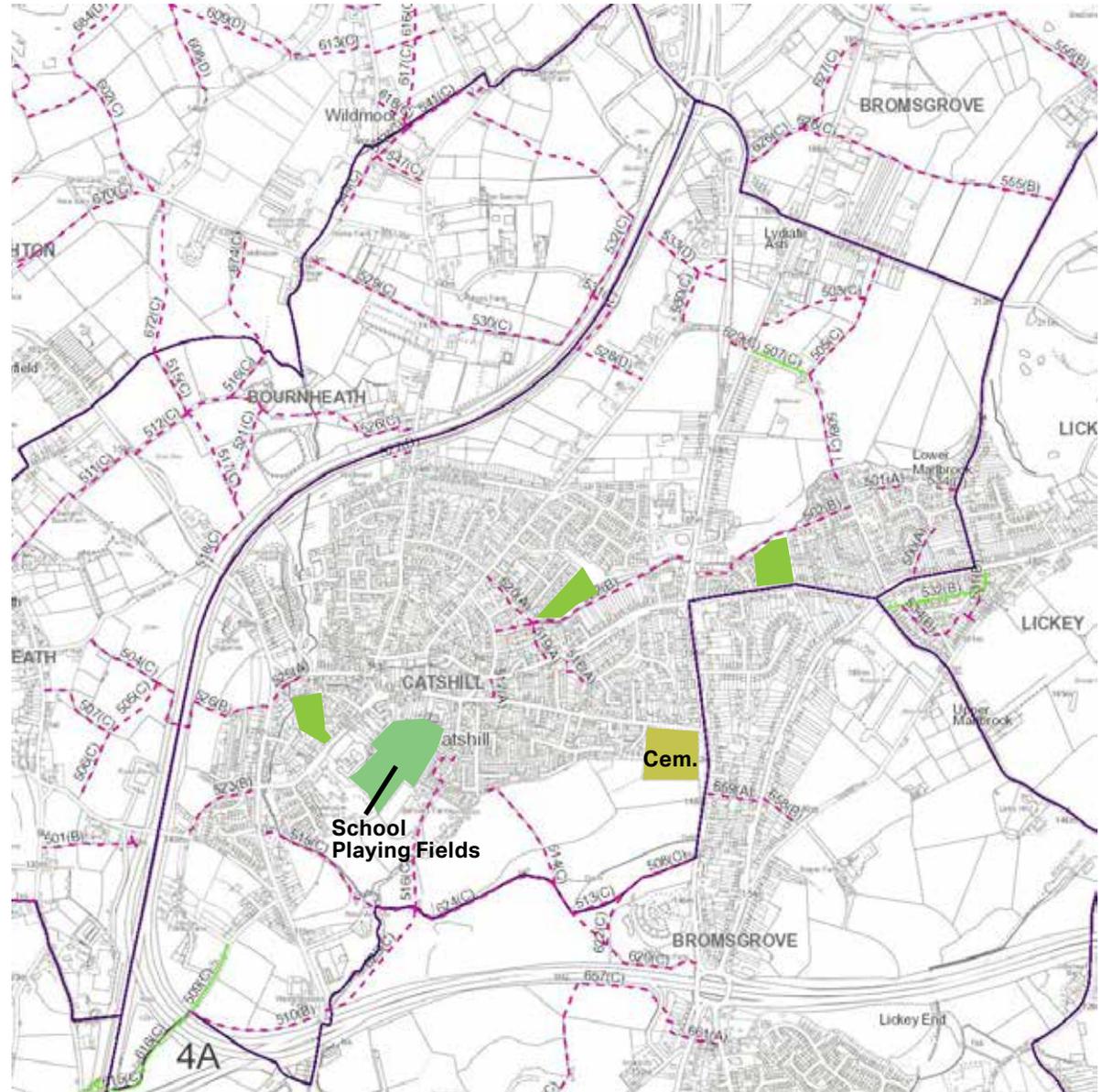


Figure 4: Green Spaces and Public Rights of Way. Source: Worcestershire County Council

Movement and connectivity

- The main access to residential areas is provided by the Birmingham Road (A38) and Stourbridge Road (B4091). The main east-west route follows Gibb Lane into Golden Cross Lane which becomes Braces Lane. Other roads tend to have more of a rural lane feel, bounded by large hedgerows, providing the areas with a more rural atmosphere and helping to provide an element of green infrastructure that runs throughout the Parish.

- Public realm in the area is limited to public space or footways. Public Rights of Way that leads from the urban fringe to the countryside are common in this area. However, these areas have features such as power lines and telegraph poles, leading to any new development to place these underground.

- There is no street lighting in many of the areas but light spill from the nearby motorways and residential areas is noticeable at night.

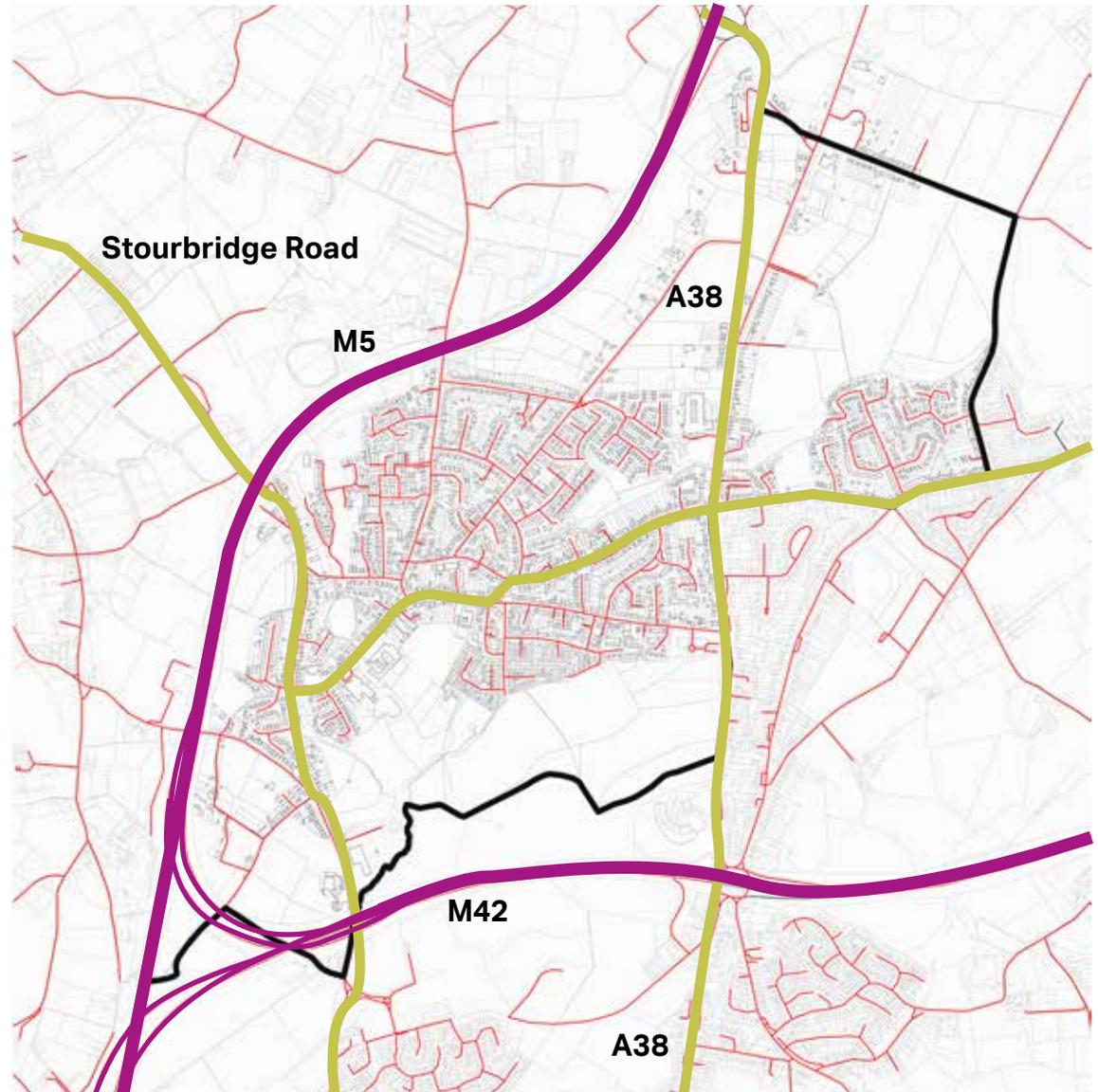


Figure 5: Catshill and North Marlbrook connectivity



Design guidelines

04

4. Design guidelines

4.1. Introduction

This section is divided into two parts. The first is a set of key elements to consider when assessing a development proposal. These are presented as general questions which should be addressed by developers and their design teams who should provide clarification and explanation as necessary. The second part is design guidance setting out the expectations of Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council.

It is important that full account is taken of the local context and that the new development responds to and enhances a “sense of place” and meets the aspirations of people already living in that area. The aim of this section is to produce design guidelines that help to assess design quality and appropriateness in residential development proposals. Images have been used to reflect good examples of local architecture.

The guidelines developed in this document focus on residential development, considering the character of the immediate neighbouring buildings and the townscape and landscape of the surrounding area. The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural environment should all help to determine the character and identity of new development whilst recognising that new building technologies can deliver acceptable built forms and may sometimes be more appropriate.

4.2. General design considerations

This section sets out a series of general design principles followed by questions against which the development proposals should be evaluated.

As an initial appraisal, there should be evidence that development proposals have considered and applied the following general design principles:

- Harmonise with and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form, movement pattern and land use.
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views.
- Reinforce or enhance the established character of streets and other public spaces.
- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity.
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality.
- Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness.
- Retain and incorporate important existing landscape and built form features into the development.

- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing.
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details.
- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features.
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other; to provide a safe, attractive and cohesive environment.
- Make enough provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours.
- Sensitively integrate energy efficient technologies within the scheme at the start of the design process.

Key points to consider when assessing planning applications

- The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment overview as to whether the design proposal has considered the context and provided an adequate design solution. Following these fundamental principles, there are number of questions related to the design guidelines which should be used to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of development proposals.

Landscape/townscape structure or settlement pattern

- What are the essential characteristics of the existing settlement and street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- Does the proposal respect local landscape features including topography and hydrology?
- What are the important landscape or historic features within and surrounding the site? Have these features including existing trees been considered in the proposal?
- If located near a listed building, does the proposal respond to the characteristics of the listed building?
- How does the proposal relate to its setting? Are there any important links both physical and visual that currently exists on and adjacent to the site?

- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-de-sac models? If not, why?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the new points of access and street layout take regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

Green spaces, public realm and street scape

- Does the new proposal respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features including trees on or adjacent to the site?
- In rural and edge of settlement locations does the development impact the tranquillity of the area and has this been fully considered?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been considered?

- Does the proposal positively contribute to the quality of the public realm and streetscape?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Have all aspects of security been fully considered and integrated into the design of the buildings and open spaces?

Pattern and layout of buildings

- What is the pattern and layout of existing buildings and have these been respected in the proposal?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of existing building layouts and their relationship with the main roads through the settlement?
- If the design is within or adjacent to a heritage asset, have the elements which contribute to their significance been considered in the proposal? (Heritage assets include listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, registered landscapes and registered battlefields.)
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting and significance of a heritage asset?

Views and landmarks

- What are the existing key views and visual landmarks in the area and have these been retained and enhanced in the proposal?
- Where long distance views exist, how are these respected in the design?
- Are new views and visual connections with the existing settlement and surrounding area incorporated into the proposal?
- Are new landmarks to be formed within the proposals?

Building line and boundary treatment

- Does the proposal respect the existing building line and harmonise with the adjacent properties?
- Have the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?
- Do the building heights and roofline cohere with the surrounding urban environment?
- Does the proposed development compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens?

- Has careful attention been paid to height, form, massing and scale of new buildings? Is it appropriate to reflect the adjacent scale or could a taller development be considered?
- If a proposal is an extension, is it subsidiary to the existing property so it does not compromise its character?

Architectural details and materials

- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?
- What are the distinctive materials in the area, if any? Do the proposed materials harmonise with the local vernacular?
- Does the proposal use high quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?

Parking and utilities

- Has adequate provision been made for car and cycle parking both private and public?

- Do the proposed private car and cycle parking locations complement the existing provision or introduce new approaches? If new, do these new approaches change the character of the street?
- Has adequate provision been made for bin storage including facilities for waste separation and recycling?
- Is the location of the bin storage facilities appropriate in relation to the travel distance from the collection vehicle?
- Has the impact of the design of bin storage facilities been considered, including quality of materials and location on the whole development? Could additional measures be incorporated to help integrate facilities into the development?
- Has the location of utilities including appropriate maintenance access been integrated into the proposal?
- Is the use of energy saving/efficient technologies encouraged and maximised? Are these technologies integrated into the proposal and not 'bolt on'?
- Has the lighting scheme been designed to avoid light pollution?

4.3. Design codes

The guidelines in this section should be applied as a starting point to all new development, regardless of where it is in the parish. These guidelines advocate character-led design which responds to and enhances the existing townscape. Reference to context does not mean to copy or use pastiche solutions. It means responding to what is around as inspiration and influence and it could be a contemporary solution that is in harmony with the surroundings.



Figure 6: Diagram of Design Codes

Code 1: Settlement pattern, street layout and connectivity and noise

Land use and density

- In the case of new development, the density should be appropriate to its site constraints and also respond to the density of the adjacent built form.
- Where appropriate, proposals should include a range of densities, building types and forms. A varied density and land use distribution adds interest and supports local facilities, public transport and helps reinforce the various distinct character areas.



Street layout and connectivity

- It's essential that all newly developed areas should provide the best possible access to neighbouring streets and local facilities. Establishing a robust pedestrian and vehicular network is essential to achieve suitable levels of permeability in any part of Catshill.

- A permeable street network provides people with a choice of different routes in all directions and allows traffic to be distributed more evenly across the network rather than being concentrated on certain congested roads. A highly permeable network has many short links, numerous intersections and minimal dead ends. This makes journeys more pleasant and encourages people to take other forms of transport instead of the car such as walking, cycling and public transport

- Vehicular and pedestrian routes should be designed to ensure that they are visually open and direct. In some areas, a degree of limited access is desirable to maintain a level of privacy. There is also the need to discourage other traffic cutting through the Parish at peak times, which can cause congestion.

Noise

- All areas of Catshill are affected by noise from the M5, M42 and the A38. Some potential sites for development are near one of these main routes.

- According to the Bromsgrove District Council High Quality Design SPD, development proposals should maximise the distance between noise sources, in this case the motorways, and sensitive areas such as residential properties.

- If development is considered within the proximity of these routes that cause heavy noise pollution, noise barriers and visual screening should be considered to minimise this effect.- All areas of Catshill are affected by noise from the M5, M42 and the A38. Some potential sites for development are near one of these main routes.

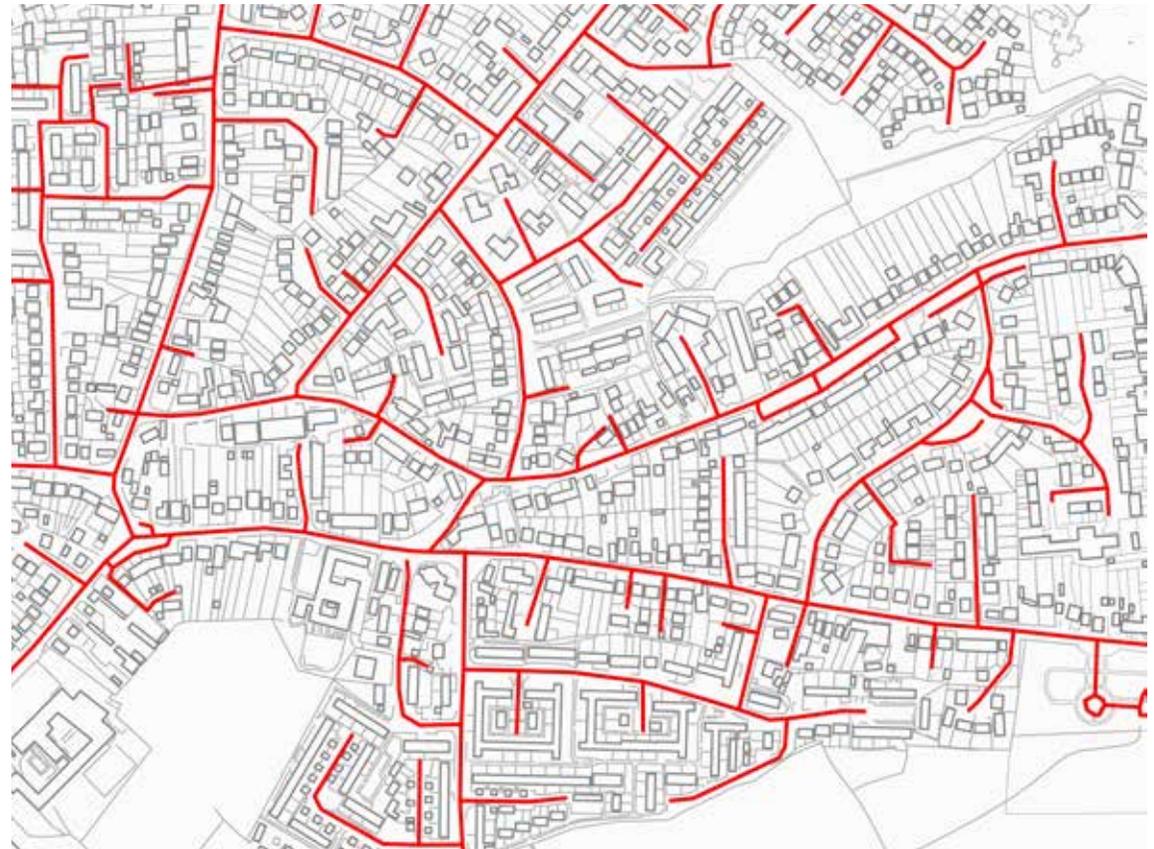


Figure 7: An example of the street layout in Catshill

- According to the Bromsgrove District Council High Quality Design SPD, development proposals should maximise the distance between noise sources, in this case the motorways, and sensitive areas such as residential properties.

- If development is considered within the proximity of these routes that cause heavy noise pollution, noise barriers and visual screening should be considered to minimise this effect.

Hierarchy of movement

- Catshill is located between the M5, M42 and the A38. Traffic during peak times becomes heavily congested with drivers using alternative routes, such as the narrow Woodrow Lane for example. Proposals for new development should demonstrate how congestion impacts have been addressed.

- The network of streets should be designed to enable direct and convenient walking and cycling routes to public transport stops and to the village centre. Streets should be considered as spaces for use by all, not just for vehicles. It is important in the case of new developments, that the design of streets should consider the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

- Streets should be differentiated based on their character, role and function. It is suggested that streets should be identified based on their proportion to the scale of development. Recommended dimensions for two street types are shown in figures 8 and 9.

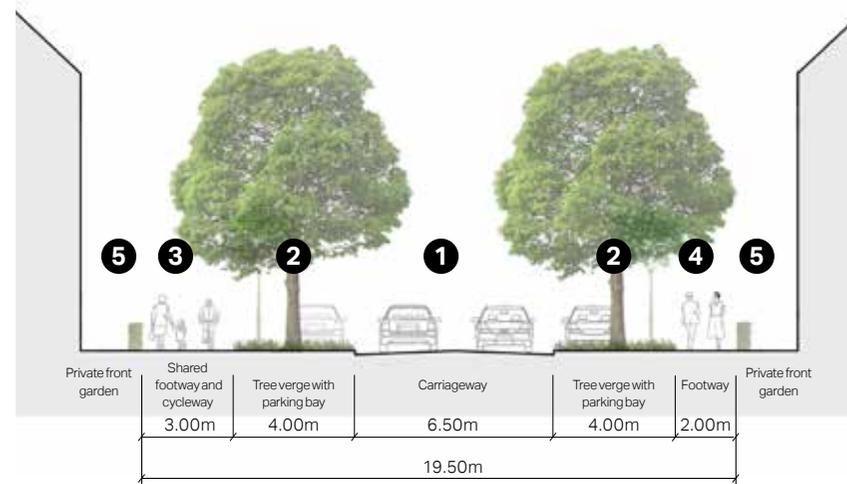


Figure 8: Section showing indicative dimensions for primary roads. In some places trees may be omitted from one or both sides although they help with placemaking, contribute to local biodiversity, and create a positive micro-climate.

1. Carriageway (village-wide traffic).
2. Green verge with tall trees. The latter are optional but would be positive additions. Parking bays to be inset into the verges to avoid impeding moving traffic or pedestrians.
3. Shared footway and cycleway - cyclists to be segregated from vehicle traffic.
4. Footway.
5. Residential frontage with boundary hedges and front gardens.

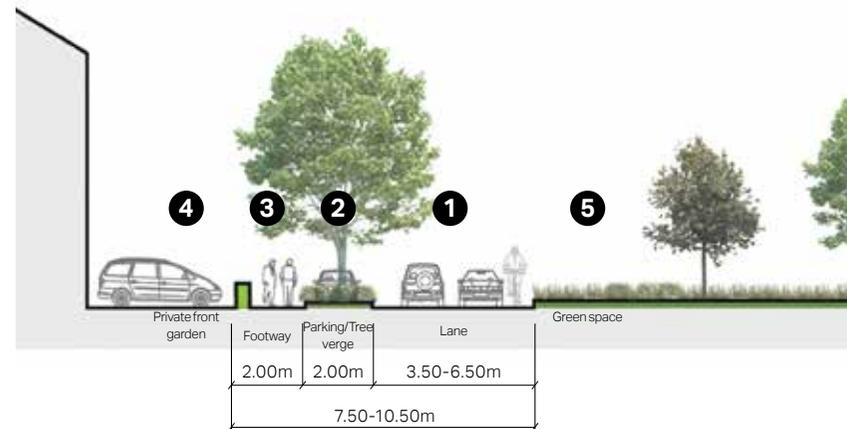


Figure 9: Section showing indicative dimensions for Edge Lanes. The lane width may vary to discourage speeding or provide space for parking.

1. Shared lane (local access) - width to vary.
2. Green verge with trees. The latter are optional but would be positive additions. Parking bays may be interspersed with trees to soften the impact of parked cars.
3. Footway.
4. Residential frontage with boundary hedges and front gardens.
5. Green space, with trees or hedges to manage the transition to the countryside.

Code 2: Buildings

Building layout and line

- Urban structure relates to the pattern and arrangement of urban blocks, streets, buildings, public realm and landscape. The size and organisation of any block varies depending upon diverse parameters such as locations, desired land use and density. At an urban scale it is important to achieve a good mix of block form and block size, to facilitate adaptability over the years and ensure a good variety of use within the new parts of the development.
- New development should respond to the existing pattern of development within the parish, taking cues from existing block sizes and structures, patterns of plots subdivision and the relationship between the built and the non-built private space.
- The site should have clear, accessible links from the original routes.
- The layout of properties can provide building fronts and entrances to public spaces and private backs to private spaces. This helps avoid the creation of unsupervised public spaces that may encourage anti-social behaviour. However, sometimes within terraced developments footpaths should be provided to give access to the rear of the properties.
- The majority of properties in Catshill are detached, semi-detached and terraced and are set back from the road with driveways and front gardens. New developments should consider neighbouring properties to determine the most appropriate layout. Dwellings should be positioned to allow neighbours to easily view their surroundings to help provide some deterrent to anti-social activity.
- The way buildings sit in relation to the street can have significant consequence on the success of a development. The main façades and entrances of buildings should usually face the street, which additionally allows for natural surveillance and enhances frontage activity. Referring to the 'Secured to Design', boundaries the street should clearly indicate the difference between public and private spaces. Walls, fences and hedges should preferably provide an open view (Official Police Security Initiative, March 2019). Therefore, the boundaries that surround the property at the front should be no taller than metre in height to aid natural surveillance. (PG19) The side and rear boundaries should be at least 1.8m in height.
- The building line, where suitable, can have subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions. Small setbacks can be used to help soften the interface with the public realm.



Diversity of building form

- To promote successful living and working environments for the future, different sizes and types of building should be accommodated.
- Within larger developments, social housing is a key element that must be included within the scheme itself. To promote social inclusion, its advised that social housing is not distinguishable from the private housing by its design, nor banished to a less attractive site.



Set back detached property



Bungalow



Detached house

Roof line

- Creating a varied roof line is a significant element of designing attractive places. There are certain elements that serve as guidelines in achieving a good variety of roofs:
- The scale of the roof should always be in proportion with the dimensions of the building itself;
- Monotonous building elevations should be avoided, with subtle changes in the roof line encouraged;
- If there are any locally traditional roof detailing elements they should be considered and implemented where possible in the case of new development;
- Dormers, if used selectively, can add variety and interest to roofs.



Roofs with gable features



Roof line with chimney features



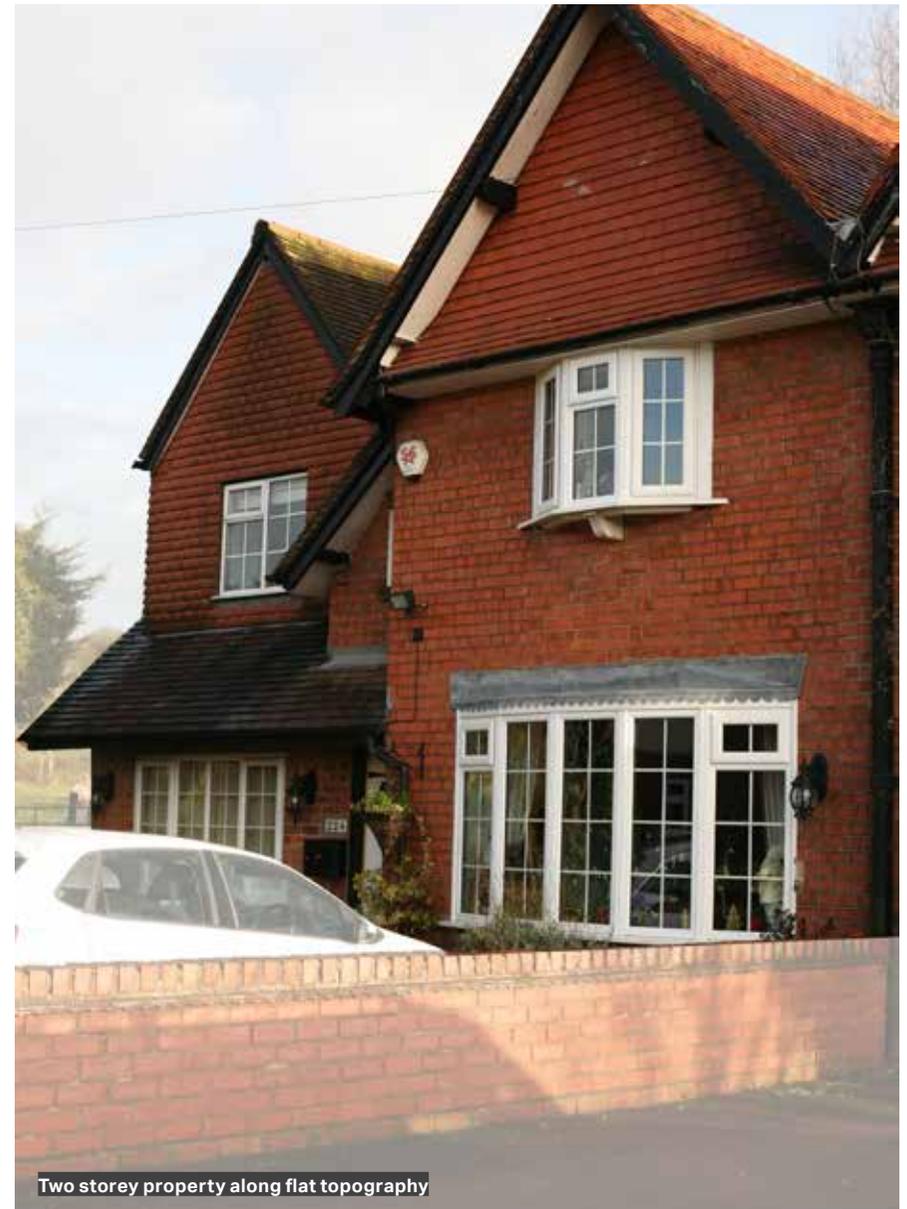
Staggered roof line

Building scale and massing

- Buildings should be sympathetic in scale to the context and should not be taller than 2-2.5 storey in residential areas. The character of the development or infill development should contribute to a harmonious whole, taking into consideration their neighbours and the continuous urban form.
- Subtle variation in height is encouraged to add visual interest, such as altering eaves and ridge heights. Another way of adding variation is by the adjustment of frontage widths and plan forms. This would be appropriate in both central and more suburban locations.
- Some areas within the Parish are influenced by the topography of the area. Properties should sit on the flattest area and step up the hill, this should avoid any blank walls at the ground level. Properties that protrude above the skyline should contribute positively to views.



Two storey property on high topography



Two storey property along flat topography

Code 3: Boundaries and frontages

Boundaries

- Development should front onto the street and back gardens should back onto other back gardens - public fronts, private backs. Front gardens should be a minimum of 3 metres depth, or 6 metres if cars are parked in front of the house.
- New development should use boundary features which are complementary to the street and that enhance the character of the Parish.
- The use of panel fencing for publicly visible boundaries should be avoided. The materials proposed for new boundary features should be of high quality, responding to the village character and have strong attention to architectural detailing.
- Boundary treatments should reinforce the continuity of the building line along the street. A minimum height to wall, fence, and hedge of 1.8m is recommended for rear gardens for safety. Front garden boundaries are recommended at a maximum of 1m in height to provide natural surveillance to the surrounding properties.



Stone boundary wall



Hedges as boundary treatment

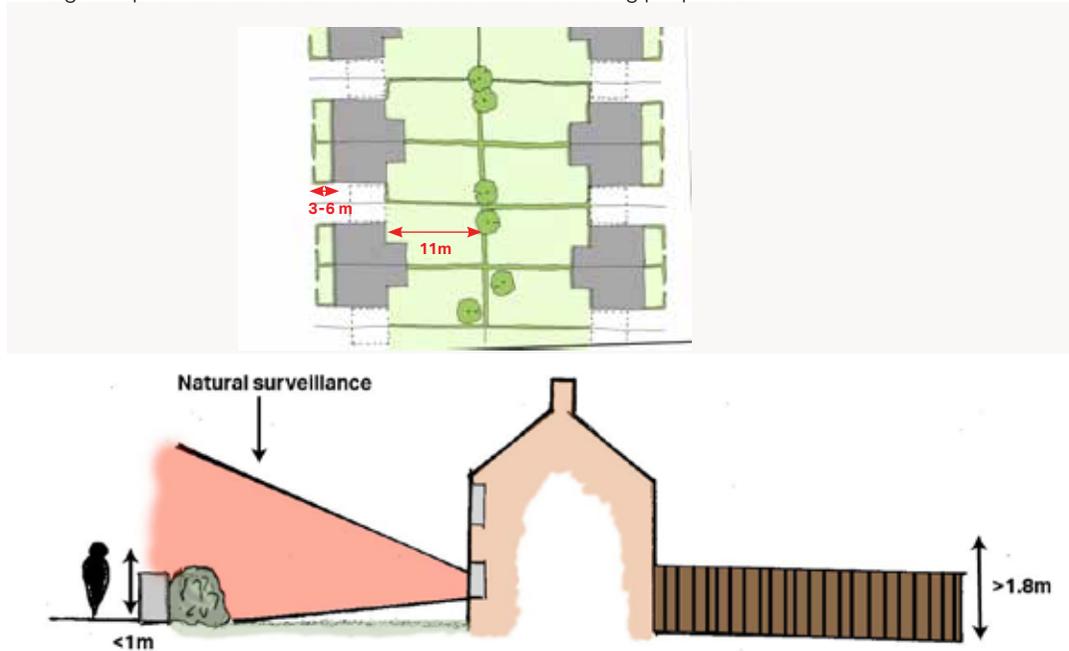


Figure 10: Garden (top) and boundary (bottom) dimensions

Privacy

- In any new development appropriate privacy measures should be considered from early stage design. Issues such as overlooking from streets, private and communal gardens, courtyards and open spaces into private property, predominantly for residential units should be considered. Set-back from the street, front garden landscaping and added detailed architectural design should help in balancing privacy of front living spaces with the need for overlooking of the streets.
- It is important to clearly distinguish between private and public space. Clear ownership boundaries should be established so that spaces feel safe and are appropriate for the right user group.
- For privacy, back gardens should be at least 11 metres in depth.



Code 4: Parking and storage

Parking and servicing

- Access to public transport should be considered to move to a more environmentally friendly travel solution. Cycle lanes should be considered alongside creating accessible footpaths for people walking.
- Incorporating parking is an essential part of good urban design practice and is a critical factor in the creation of attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods. A good mix of parking typologies should be aimed for which will be dependent on and influenced by location, topography and market demand. The arrangements for car parking should be safe and convenient to those properties or shops.
- The predominant parking mode in housing development should be on-plot, to the side or front parking courts. In some cases, when adjoining to existing developments, on street parking could be considered as an option. However, in this case it should be designed to minimise the visual impact of vehicles, hard surfaced areas, and impediment to traffic flow.



Garages

- Where provided, garages should be designed either as free-standing structures or as an addition to the main building. In both situations, it should be aimed to reflect the architectural style of the main building, looking an integral part of it rather than a mismatched unit.
- Often, garages can be used as a design element to create a link between buildings, ensuring continuity of the building line.
- Opportunities should be created to include electric vehicle charging points in new developments and existing on-street parking spaces.



On street parking

- On street parking should be arranged either perpendicular or parallel to the carriageway. It should be designed to avoid overly impeding traffic flow and can serve a useful informal traffic calming function.
- Opportunities should be created for new public car parking spaces to include electric vehicle charging points.

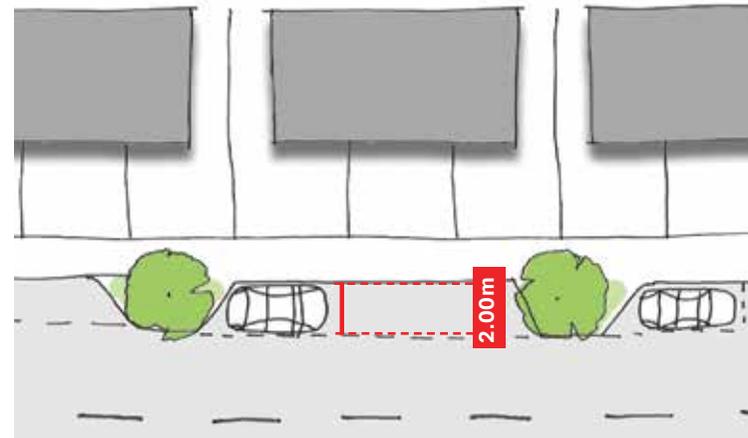


Figure 11: On street parking on the front of properties.

On plot parking

- Parking combined with soft landscaping, softens the visual intrusive concrete can have. Front garden depth from pavement back should be sufficient for a large family car.
- Hard standing and driveways should be constructed from porous materials to minimise surface water run-off.
- If communal parking is necessary in a development, bays should be sited in small groups, close and adjacent to homes. This solution could be used when space is limited for a development, e.g for flat developments. They should also be within view of active rooms and have designated bays for each individual property.

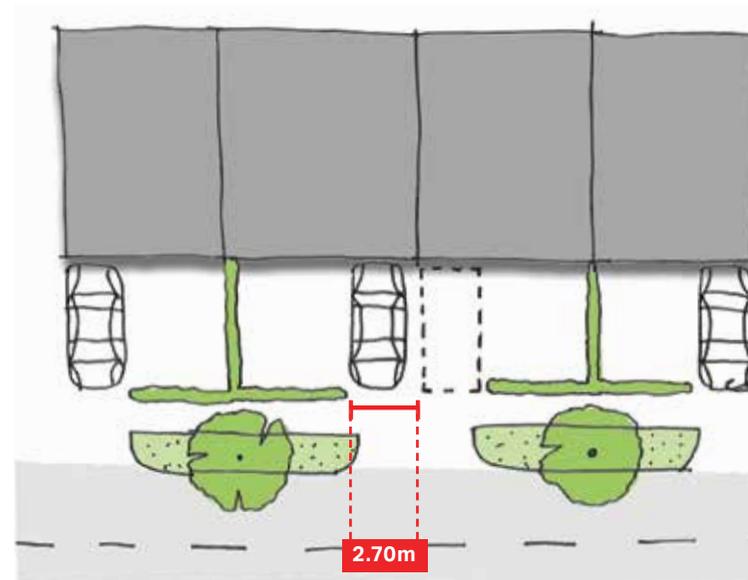


Figure 12: On plot front parking solution.

Cycle parking

- A simple way to encourage cycling is by providing secured covered cycle parking within all new residential developments and publicly available cycle parking within any public realm.
- For residential units, where there is no garage on plot, covered and secured cycle parking should be provided within the domestic curtilage. The use of vegetation could be used to mitigate any visual impact on spaces and buildings nearby.



Bin storage

- Within new development accessible bin storage should be provided. The size of the storage should be influenced by the container size it needs to house.
- Within the Parish, residents are required to place their bins at the kerbside for collection. New developments should consider the accessibility to the kerbside within the development, such as turning space within a cul-de-sac. If space is limited and turning spaces are not achievable, a designated bin site / location / area should be provided.



Code 5: Extensions and alterations

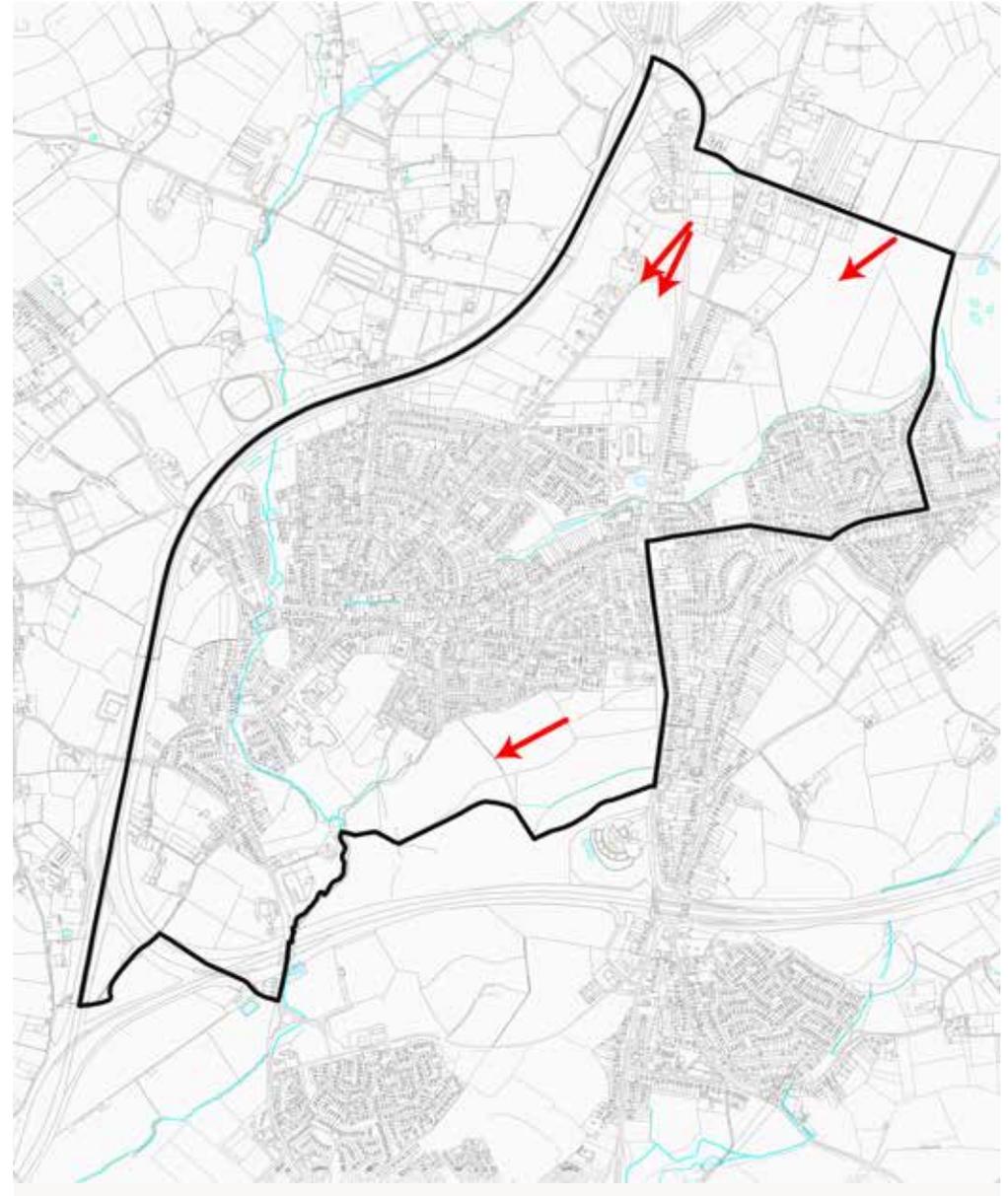
- Any extension or alteration to a property should enhance the dwelling and give consideration to the impact on the dwelling. The alteration/extension should be of similar scale, mass and materials of the existing building. Keeping within the width, height and bulk in proportion to the original property avoids the extension becoming the central feature of the building.
- The local character should be considered when an extension or alteration is submitted for planning. The character should be considered due to effect that it can have on the local street scene.
- The alteration should reflect the local distinctiveness of the original building, such as the pattern of spacing. It should also incorporate the local styles and features that can be found nearby on the original building and the neighbouring ones. This includes roofing form and angle to help maintain the harmony between the two constructions and avoid any maintenance issues.
- Any extension or alteration should take into consideration the neighbouring property to avoid any intrusion onto their property and privacy. The extension/alteration should avoid the following:
 - **Overlooking** – issues may occur if the alteration is overlooking a neighbour's private amenity or living space. However, overlooking extensions/alterations are desirable in certain locations where they are overlooking public spaces. This would naturally provide some natural surveillance and deter criminal activity.
 - **Overshadowing** – an extension/alteration should not reduce the amount of daylight to a neighbouring property. The District Council will make reference to the 'Building Research Establishment's guide to good practice' site layout planning for daylight and sunlight'.
 - **Overbearance**- The extension/alteration should not dominate, overwhelm or visually intimidate on a neighbouring property.

It is important to refer to Permitted Development Rights for Householders (MHCLG, 2019), which explains the extensions that householders can implement without the need to apply for planning permission.



Code 6: Views and landmarks

- New development proposals should not be visually intrusive. This should be achieved through the appropriate scale and design including screening where appropriate.
- New development should be in keeping with the surrounding landscape and consider the typography as Catshill and North Marlbrook sits within a bowl structure in the local landform.
- In any new development, buildings should be designed to respond to existing view corridors or reinforce views of existing landmarks. Landmarks should be viewed clearly as they contribute to the wider legibility of the area.
- The development should also take the opportunity to enhance and/or create views, vistas and skylines and other features such as trees, hedgerows where possible. Where appropriate development could have the opportunity to develop and frame locally important views through the creation of boulevards or carefully placed gaps throughout, providing interest with vistas beyond.
- Views to the south west provide an open vista towards the Malvern Hills which is almost totally uninterrupted by development. Other important vistas are in the north of the Parish where rolling countryside can be viewed from Halesown Road and Alvechurch Highway.



Code 7: Green spaces

- New development should provide sufficient open space appropriate to the location and size of the dwelling, preferably through front and rear gardens and grass verges.
- Front gardens in new development proposals should add to the quality of the surrounding landscape and contribute to the character of Catshill and North Marlbrook. Trees should be retained and enhanced in new development proposals.

Public/open spaces and green infrastructure

- Green Infrastructure and the open spaces in the area should be maintained to ensure there are recreational spaces for residents and areas for biodiversity. Improvements should protect, restore and enhance existing green infrastructure and increase its functionality.
- Public spaces should be designed to incorporate pedestrian routes and provide accessibility to disabled and elderly people. The consideration of the use of natural features within the site such as slopes, trees and planting helps create attractive places and encourages biodiversity.
- Any new development should maintain any recognised Green Infrastructure and open spaces within the development's proximity.
- Playing fields should be retained and enhanced as a community asset.



Pedestrians and cyclists

- Pedestrian routes should be well designed and well placed within new developments. Direct routes are encouraged. When designing pedestrian and cycle routes they should be logical, well designed and constructed to a high standard using high quality of materials.
- Cycle routes should be safe and direct and should be part of a well-connected network within Catshill and the surrounding green spaces.

Landscaping

- Planting local species within a new development can help reinforce the distinct natural qualities of the place and aid integration with neighbouring properties. A landscape design helps integrate properties and help maintain the rural character of the Parish.
- Using elements within overall landscape strategies such as hedges, shelter belts can help developments integrate into the existing landscape.



Code 8: Shop fronts

All Shopfronts should be of high quality and respect the existing character of the place. The following guidelines apply to all developments permitted.

Stallriser: A stall riser must be incorporated into the design for the full width of the shopfront, except for the door opening. The height of the stall rise must be between 0.3 metres and 1.0 metre.

Panelling: Any timber panelling used in doors, stall risers, pilasters or other elements of the shopfront must comprise a constructional timber panel and must not comprise the application of timber beading to a flat timber surface.

Fascia: The shopfront design must include a full-width projecting fascia. The fascia must consist of a surrounding frame, creating an area for a shop-sign. Fascia with lettering of between 250mm and 300mm will read well from street level and from across the road if the correct font and colour are selected where the size of the fascia is defined by the building typology or detailing, the font size should be proportionate to the fascia.

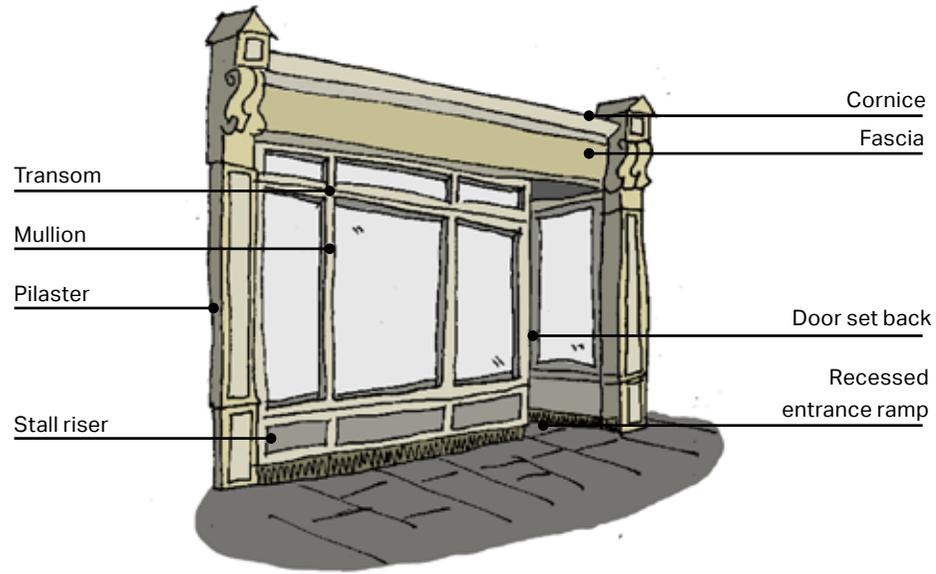
Lighting: If lighting is incorporated into the design of the shopfront, then it must comprise projecting light to create external illumination of the shop sign area, and not comprise internal lighting for a transparent shop sign.

Shutters: If shutters and shutter boxes are incorporated into the design, then they must be placed internally, behind the shopfront. When in an open position, shutters must not block the shop window opening. Shutters must be perforated or of such construction to allow vision to the interior beyond.

Fascia should be projected full width with shop sign lettering between 250-300mm to read well. An hierarchy of lettering enhances the readability and effectiveness of the signage

Display should be organised to promote visual connection to the interior of the shop.





General Principles of Shop Design



Poor example of shop front.



Transparent shutters to promote active frontage



Good example of shop front.

Code 9: Materials and architectural details

- It is important that the materials used in new developments are of a high quality and reinforce the local distinctiveness of Catshill and North Marlbrook. The development should combine elements of characteristics from the built and natural environment.
- Development proposals should demonstrate that the palette of materials has been selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment.
- There is opportunity for innovative and creative material suggestions in new buildings, restorations and extensions that may compliment what already exists.
- Materials proposed for use in new development and building extensions shall match or be guided by those used in the existing building or area and subtle variations by street.
- Architectural detailing shall typically display elements that equate to those on existing traditional buildings which provide interest, scale and texture to form and elevations.

Materials:

Example roof materials



Slate tiles



Concrete tiles



Clay tiles

Example facade materials



Red bricks



Render



Pebbledash

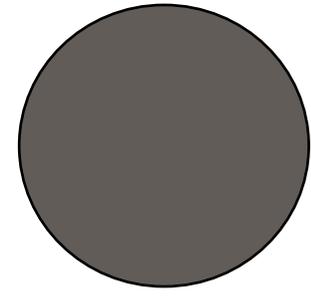
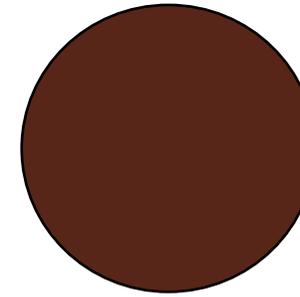
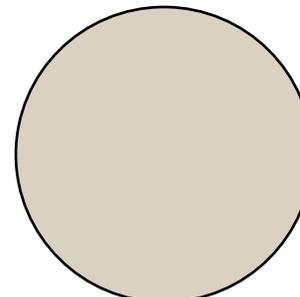
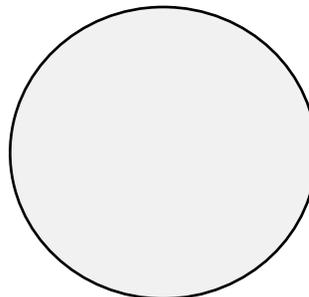


Combined material

Example decorative brickwork



Colour palette



Architectural details

Proposed building façades should indicate the importance of each storey using composition of materials and architectural details.

Contemporary architectural solutions may be appropriate, but they must be well considered, high-quality designs which use materials which reinforce or complement the local vernacular, forms, massing and detailing to reflect the existing built fabric of Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish.



Porches



Decorative brickwork



Brick chimneys





Roof decorations

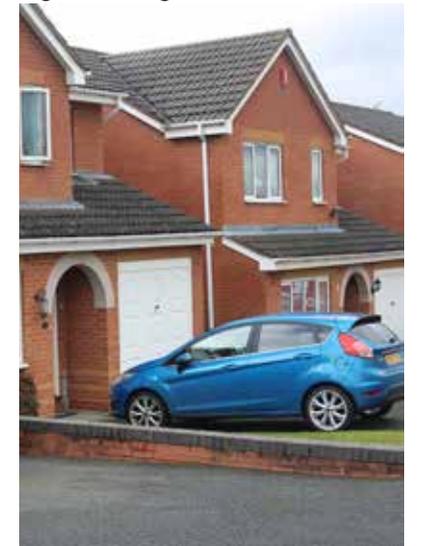
Decorative building cladding



Staggered roofline



Bay windows



Garages/Driveways

Code 10: Sustainability

The following section elaborates on energy efficient technologies that could be incorporated in buildings and at broader Parish design scale as principles.

Use of such principles and design tools should be encouraged in order to contribute towards a more sustainable environment

Eco design

Energy efficient or eco design combines all around energy efficient, appliances, and lighting with commercially available renewable energy systems, such as solar electricity and/or solar water heating.

Starting from the design stage there are strategies that can be incorporated to incorporate technologies such as passive solar heating, cooling and energy efficient landscaping which are determined by local climate and site conditions.

Bromsgrove District Council has stated in their Local Plan (Bromsgrove District Council. (2011)) that new developments aim to be using an increased proportion of energy from renewable resources. Developments should be built to higher design standards ensuring increased energy and water efficiency.

Sustainable drainage systems will be used to help mitigate against flooding and strengthen the local Green Infrastructure. Bromsgrove District Council is promoting Green Infrastructure as an essential element in the development process.

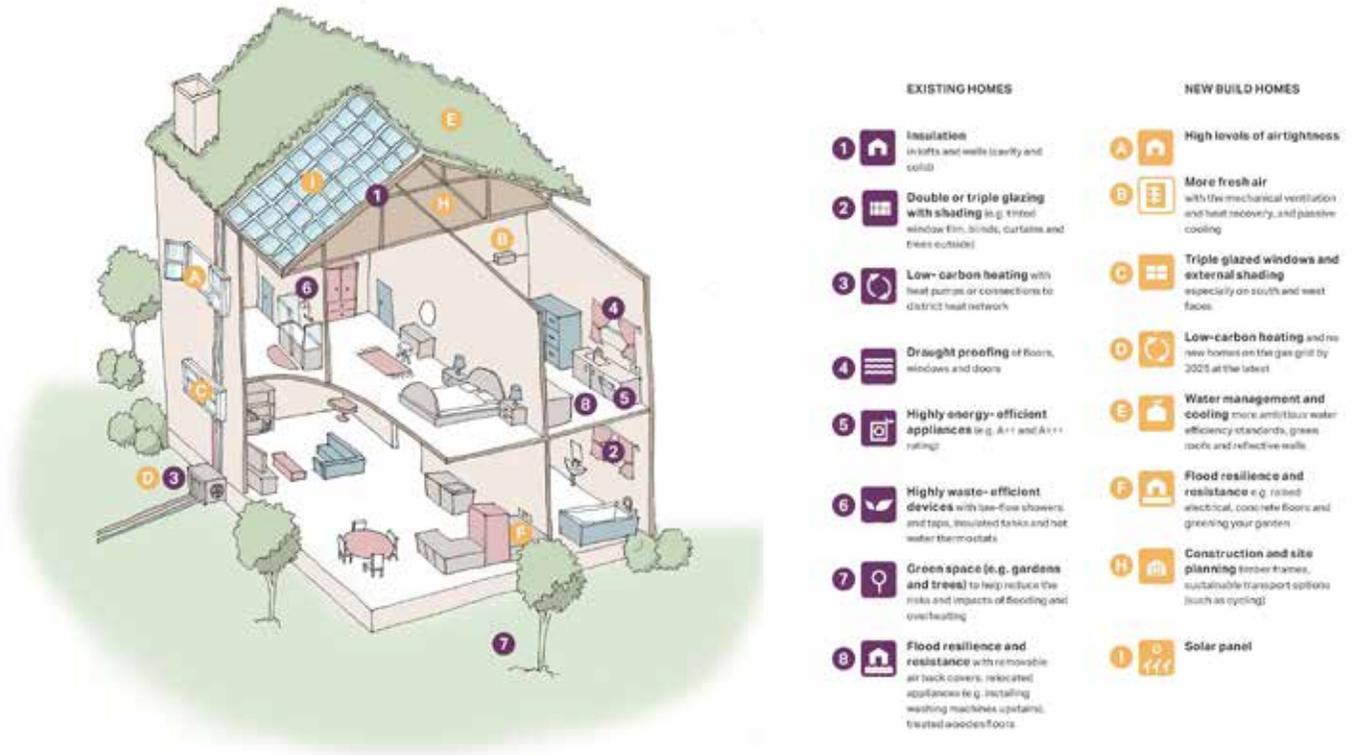


Figure 8: Diagram showing a low-carbon home in both existing and new build conditions (adapted from Committee for Climate Change)

Permeable paving

Permeable pavements should not only perform a primary function, which is to let water filter through but should also:

- Respect the material palette;
- Help to frame the building;
- Create an arrival statement;
- Be in harmony with the landscape treatment of the property;
- Help define the property boundary;



Designing out crime

- Most of the recommendations in this section will also help design out crime and antisocial behaviour. Specifically, opportunities to commit offences are reduced when:
- Compatible land uses are mixed, and streets are walkable, bringing activity throughout the day and the week;
- Places have strong sense of identity and ownership;
- Neighbourhoods are well connected but with minimal use of alleyways;
- Building frontages are 'active'- that is that doors and windows face the street; and
- Cars are parked securely or, at least, within sight of homes or other buildings.





Deliverability

05

5. Deliverability

5.1. Delivery agents

The design guidelines will be a valuable tool for securing context-driven, high quality development in Catshill and North Marlbrook. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table below:

Actor	How they will use the design guidelines
Applicants, developers and landowners	As a guide to the community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
	Where planning applications require a Design and Access Statement, the Statement should explain how the Design Guidelines have been followed.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications.
	The Design Guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are followed.
Community organisations	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

5.2. Deliverability

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 35) emphasises that a proportionate evidence base should inform plans. Based on a 'positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings' (see paragraph 15). Policies should be 'underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals' (paragraph 31). Crucially planning policies 'should not undermine the deliverability of the plan' (paragraph 34).

Neighbourhood Plans need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the corresponding Local Plan. Where new policy requirements are introduced (that carry costs to development) over and above Local Plan and national standards it is necessary to assess whether development will remain deliverable. The principles and guidance set out in this document and within the Neighbourhood Plan's policies are aligned with national policy and non-statutory best practice on design.

The values and costs of construction between new developments and within new developments will vary based on location, situation, product type, design (architecture, placemaking etc.) and finish; and the state of the market at the point of marketing the properties. The guidelines herein constitute place making principles and guidance to help interpret and apply the statutory policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. Good design is not an additional cost to development and good placemaking can result in uplifts in value.

References

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