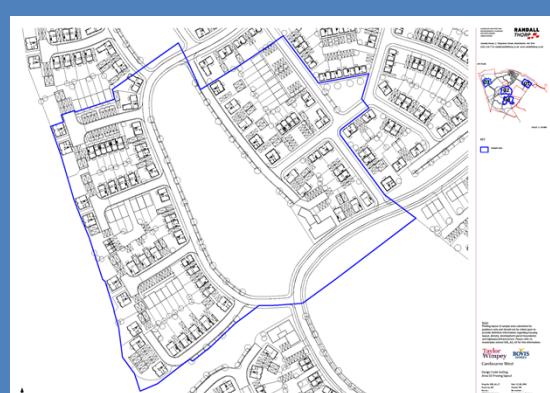
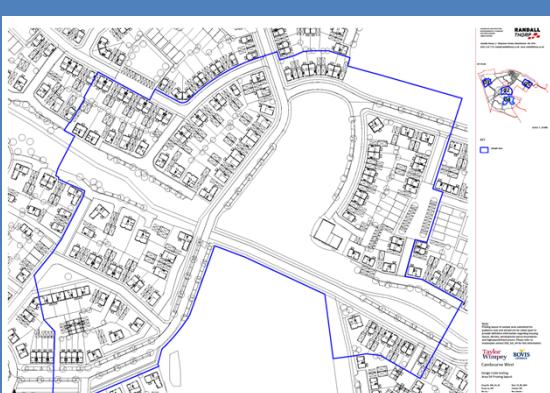
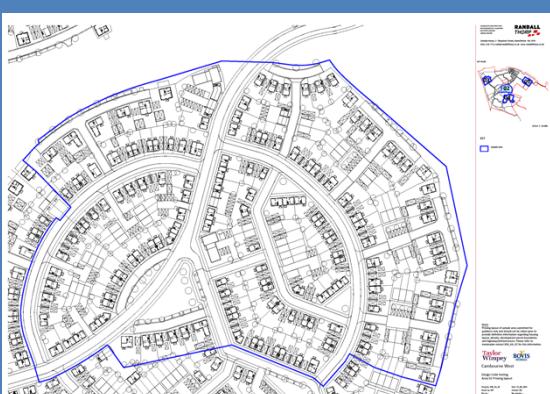
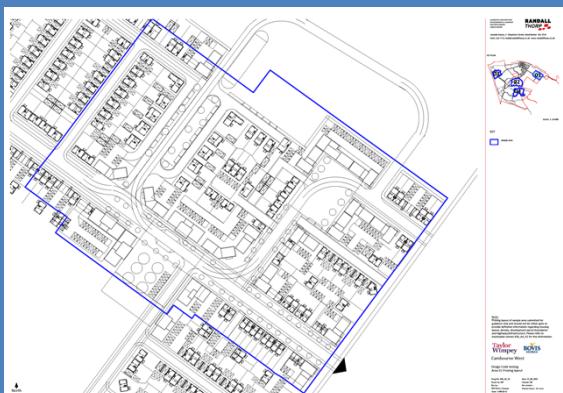


WEST CAMBOURNE CODE TESTING DAY NOTE

27th JUNE 2018



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A. Design Code Testing ‘Cambourne West’: Briefing Note

1. Background:

1.1. South Cambridgeshire gave outline planning consent ([planning reference S/2903/14/OL](#)) for land to the West of Cambourne (excluding Swansley Wood Farm) on 29th December 2017. Promoted by Taylor Wimpey and Bovis Homes the outline consent includes the following on a 147 ha site:

- Up to 2,350 homes.
- Retail.
- Offices / light industry.
- Two Primary schools.
- One secondary school.
- Three vehicular access points including the extension and modification of Sheepfold Lane, a four arm roundabout provided on A1198/Caxton Bypass and an access point off the A1198, south of Caxton Gibbet to serve the proposed employment uses.
- A network of segregated pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Associated earth works, parking, open space, including equipped play, playing fields and landscaping.

The planning permission requires the developer to submit a site wide Design Code prior to or concurrently with the first reserved matters application.

1.2. Randall Thorp and Gardner Stewart Architects are drafting a Design Code on behalf of their clients Taylor Wimpey and Bovis Homes with comments from South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), Cambourne Parish Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

1.3. The [Design Codes for strategic sites within the Cambridge Fringe Areas: informal Guidance Note](#) sets the council’s approach to design coding including the requirement for testing.

1.4. At the start of the process, SCDC facilitated a Design Code Inception Workshop with the promoters of Wing and Cambourne West. This workshop captured the joint experiences of the lessons learnt from previous codes and set a benchmark/joint aspiration for the site ([Appendix 1](#)).

1.5. The broad objective of the code was to focus on the key fixes or conditions that are essential to deliver the vision/masterplan and achieve a successful place, whilst recognising the need to leave flexibility for the future designers/architects to innovate within the parameters set. A page limit of less than 100 pages was set. It was also agreed that the two consultant teams for Wing and Cambourne West could test each other’s codes at the end of the process.

1.6. The purpose of the Design Code is to provide a benchmark for quality and co-ordination across all phases of the Cambourne West masterplan. The Design Code offers a greater level of detail on design than the outline planning application and Parameter Plans. The Design Code also brings together in one document information and guidance from various sources.

1.7. The Design Code has been drafted to assist the following:

- Local authority officers in assessing future reserved matters applications.
- Future phase developers and consultant teams in preparing reserved matters applications.

- The local community in understanding the expectations for design quality across the site.
 - Achieving buy-in from key statutory undertakers, including the County Council highways, refuse collection, utilities and the fire service.
- 1.8. The Cambourne West Design Code was assessed at the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel in September 2017 (**Appendix 2**). The latest draft will be going to the Quality Panel for its final review shortly.
- 2. Objective of code testing:**
- 2.1. The objective of the testing day is to ensure that the code is robust to deliver the character/vision whilst achieving the densities proposed incorporating the functions that the buildings streets and spaces need to perform.
 - 2.2. Four sample areas within the development have been chosen (**Appendix 3**), some of which straddle across character areas. Two architects will be asked to look at two areas and develop sketch housing layouts (in advance) to the density proposed and that meet the specification of the code. The layouts should have an understanding of access, massing, parking (car and cycles), refuse storage, private amenity and boundary thresholds. The testing would investigate whether
 - The code is clear enough in its vision and specification of the built form solutions at the key locations in the plan or if there is a danger that the code can be misinterpreted and would fail to deliver the quality and character of place that is envisaged?
 - The code is flexible enough to deliver alternative design solutions that are equally valid in creating a successful place on the west of Cambourne.
 - The code could be cost/value engineered to use cheap products negatively impacting on the quality of the place and yet be compliant with the Code. However, this may not be applicable to certain land uses such as public squares.
 - 2.3. The sketch layouts will be used on the testing day to generate discussions on the robustness of the Code. A summary note of the meeting will be provided by SCDC to help inform any potential revisions to the Code.
 - 2.4. The testing architects will be provided with the design code document, proving layout that the design team have prepared and a site plans at 1:500 scale @A1. Each testing architect would present their sketch layout to a group, lead open discussion; capture issues on a flip chart and feedback their finding to all the participants.

2.5. The sites that need to be tested are as follows

Site	Description	Character Area
1	Area around education complex	Sheepfold
2	Central spine road as it enters Swansley Park	Central Green and Wetlands and Swansley Park
3	Area around local green next to orchard	Woodfields
4	Area around the primary school	Swansley Park

- For densities, please refer to page 35 of the Cambourne West Design Code document (draft F, May 2018).
- 2.6. The discussion on the layout and in turn the code should focus on
- Movement and street structure
 - Block structure
 - House typology
 - Activated frontages / uses

- Quantum, scale and height
- Parking, bins and cycle provision
- Private amenity - gardens/communal space/balconies
- Incidental open spaces / landscaping
- Materials and detailing

3. Who will be involved

3.1. Testing Architects

Architects Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects (Wing team) will test sites 1 and 4 - 2 people
 McBains Cooper (London) architects will test sites 2 and 3 - 2 people

3.2. Scheme Promoters

Bovis homes, Taylor Wimpey, Randall Thorp (masterplanning and landscape for the Design Code) and Gardner Stewart (Architects for the Design Code) Team (6 people max)

3.3. South Cambridgeshire District Council (6 people)

County Council Highways (1 person)

4. Venue: Swansley Room A and B, SCDC Council Offices, Cambourne

5. Workshop Agenda :

• Teas/Coffees	9.45
• Welcome, Introduction and structure of the day: SCDC	10.00
• Cambourne West Design Team provide an overview of the Code	10.10

Break into 2 groups to test sites 1 & 3

Each group should comprise of Promoter/ Layout testing Architect/Housebuilder/Local Authority/County Council

• Lead Testing Architects discuss their layout	10.30
• Discussion and comment on the code	10.45

Groups come together for feedback to the whole room

• Group 1 Feedback by the Testing Architect followed by general discussion	11.30
• Group 2 Feedback by the Testing Architect followed by general discussion	12.00

Lunch Break

12:30

Break into 2 groups to test site 2 & 4 (same as the morning)

Each group should comprise of Promoter/ Layout testing Architect/Housebuilder/Local Authority/County Council

• Lead Testing Architects discuss their layout and open discussions	13:30
• Discussion and comment on the code	13.45

Groups come together for feedback to the whole room

• Group 1 Feedback by the Testing Architect followed by general discussion	14.30
• Group 2 Feedback by the Testing Architect followed by general discussion	15.00
• General observations on the code (structure, presentation, content)	15:30
• Closing comments and Next Steps: SCDC & Design Team	16.00
• Finish	16.15

B. Testing Day Notes: 27th June 2018

The following points cover issues raised as part of the discussion on specific areas of the masterplan and may be applicable across the code.

Area 1 : Sheepfold Character Area

1. **Parameter plans:** Parameter plans should be included in the code to give a comprehensive understanding of the proposal. (Post meeting note: There will need to be a separate non-material amendment application to ensure that the parameter plans in the design code reference the amended parameter plans and not those of the outline application.)
2. **Layout:** It is not clear which elements of the diagrams within the Sheepfold Character Area 5.3 pg 69 are fixed or flexible, for example the block north of the square is too large and would benefit from subdivision. Main access/entrance arrangements to the business park are also not clear.
3. **Connections:**
 - A direct connection between the main entrance square and the school square is welcomed, but should be consistently represented in all the diagrams.
 - The future link to the Cambourne Business Park should also be shown consistently on all plans (i.e Fig 16).
 - The need for a large setback along the spine road typology within Sheepfold CA that linked the residential development to the business park was considered inappropriate as it did not have a public realm/townscape function. The understanding was that this route was where the future rapid bus link would be located. This route is not incorporated into the neighbourhood area as indicated on pg 25 & 3.11 public transport chapter of the code.
4. **Grid Character:** Sheepfold Character Area diagram should reinforce the grid structure by providing east west connection which will provide a legible and coherent character and should be included as a principle within the code.
5. **Relationship to Proposed Employment Site:** Whist it is acknowledged that the type of business units remains unknown at this stage, it is important that the code suggests a positive relationship to the residential parcels which could be residential/office buildings facing each other or separated by a landscaped tree buffer. The code should clarify the relationship between the residential and business component which isn't successful in its current form.
6. **Key Corners/Frontages/Key frontages/Soft edges :** The large number of key corners/frontages dilutes the importance of these terms. Whilst reducing the instances they are identified, it would be useful to clarify the differences between each terms and the implications in terms of built form.
7. **Educational Campus Square:** The Code should show how the main square could have a variety of non-residential /residential uses surrounding it and how these uses would relate to the Square. It should provide some parameters on how the school should respond to the square in terms of pedestrian/cycle/vehicular entrance and built form. It should provide guidance on how parking would be incorporated within/adjacent to the

square. In order to avoid the dilution of a small quantum of uses, it may be beneficial to prioritise the location of commercial/retail uses. It is critical that the school campus is designed in accordance with the code to create a successful place. Appropriate precedent examples should be provided.

8. **Architecture/Built Form:**

- The architectural response to Sheepfold Character Area would be different to the rest of the development and would respond to the built form character established within Camborne Business Park. It is acknowledged that, as these are office buildings, the proportion and scale of glazing/ windows would not translate. Vernacular/traditional designs with chimneys are not appropriate.
- The images in the Design Code give mixed messages between traditional and contemporary architecture. The precedents provided in the Code need to be given annotated captions to understand what the photographs are demonstrating
- The use of the term contemporary/traditional is too blunt a word to describe architectural response. There is ambiguity about the type of architecture proposed in the Code. It would be better to avoid descriptive shorthand terms such as contemporary or traditional which are subject to wide interpretation and instead focus on particular architectural characteristics.
- The text should articulate what elements/features/language of buildings would be expected within this CA and find suitable examples to represent them. The Design Code should identify any elements of quality in the language of the architecture that could be transferable to the design of the employment site. Flat roofs, Orthogonal buildings, larger windows, formal repetition, parapets, apartment typologies, balconies would be expected.
- Taylor Wimpey/Bovis are advised to provide precedent examples of good architecture /detailing in their homes and buildings rather than identifying specific contemporary styles in the Code. There is a need to link the narrative for the site to an architectural response.

9. **Materials:** In general, the palette of materials in the Code is limited in range and would not enable the spectrum of building uses which are proposed. The code should allow additional alternative materials to that prescribed for non residential/school/community buildings that compliment the pallet in the code.

10. **Height and Density:** It was suggested that the inclusion of density within the design code did not add much to the code and was not useful. However it would be useful to identify where buildings of 3 storeys may be appropriate.

11. **Boundary Treatment:** It wasn't clear whether the boundary treatment referred to each individual plot or the edge of a parcel/area. Considering that Cambourne Business Park does not have any boundary walls, the need for any boundary treatment in the Swansley Lane Character Area for residential was questioned. However it was important to state that any back garden walls facing the public realm should be of brick.

12. **Detailing:** Good and bad examples of detailing for meter boxes, boundary walls, sills/lintels, surrounds, balconies, eaves/verges, windows, doors etc should be provided.

13. **Strategic Areas:** 17 strategic areas seems overly excessive. If so many are considered appropriate it would be preferable to present information in a shorter, bullet point style.

Especially as many points such as materials, boundary treatment are repeated. The story of the place is considered to be useful and should be retained.

Area 2 - Swansley Park

14. **Edge Condition:** There is a lack of clarity within the code on the edge condition/character along the various green edges of the masterplan in terms of need for or nature of the street and response to built form.
- **Street Character:** The code should provide for a variety of edge conditions and not just allow for the use of private drive along the edge of green spaces. It should include an intimate relationship between home and the green space (without a road/private drive). It could prescribe where such a solution may be preferred/appropriate. Guidance could relate to access design, parking solution, public realm materials, refuse and boundary treatment. It was suggested that the Code should include a series of "standard" solutions that can be applied to create a varied edge which should then be simply be selected and agreed during the RM process.
- **Built form response:** The code should also provide clarity on the appropriate architectural/built form response along the various edges of green spaces within the neighbourhood chapters.

Post Meeting Note: The response to built form including that along the edges will be a combination of the following

- Continuity of frontage – either a continuous or looser enclosure
- formal/informal – taking account of the rhythm and repetition of units
- regular/irregular - units/plots positioned orthogonally or developed organically at odd angles
- setback – distance from the road having consistent or inconsistent setback along the street.

Vignettes that demonstrate a combination of these should be developed. Each strategic area could then refer to the appropriate solution along the various edges. The application of these principles could be applied across the strategic areas to provide clarity on the response to the built form.

15. **Corners:** The code should include guidance/key rules for buildings on corner plots and buildings that can link housing runs that meet at awkward angles. This should consider position on plot, frontages, typology scale, boundaries and deliverability. Examples of good quality and deliverable corner buildings should be included
16. **Heights:** It is acknowledged that the majority of the development will be 2 and 2.5 storeys in height. Whilst the code specifies areas of 3 storey it isn't easy to find/compare. Hence, through the introduction of a heights plan, the code should commit to 3 storeys or 2.5 storey with an articulated gable frontage in key locations. The Code should make it

clear that this is a minimum requirement and that other locations for taller buildings may also be brought forward to aid legibility / placemaking.

17. **Hard Landscaped Public Spaces:** The feedback session to the entire group referred to the lack of green public space after taking account of the roads, visitor parking, access to plots etc, as you enter into the Swansley Park character area along the spine road. This area could be treated as a raised table/hard public space with green planting and trees that provide more variety within the development. The code should provide guidance for hard public spaces within the neighbourhood areas.
18. **Junctions:** The feedback session also emphasised the need for principles around the design of junction/raised tables that focuses on managing transition, avoiding spaghetti of routes, the edge of raised table, relationship to secondary street etc. which will aid the design of the infrastructure for the primary routes. This has caused an issue on Wing despite the code emphasising a topic on junctions.

Area 3 Woodfield - Area around local green next to orchard

19. **Edge Conditions:** Lack of clarity on the edge conditions / character sought along the woodland edge vs allotments / green with regard to the built form and street response. See comment 14
20. **Key dimensions:** The code could include a “facts and figures” sheet that sets out the Councils’ requirements with regard to back-to-back distances, back-to-side distances, junction spacing, traffic calming spacing, distance of private driveway from junction, refuse collection distances.
21. **Parking:**
 - The code should incorporate front parking typologies such as those suggested on opposite side of the street forming front courts and those in groups of 6 car spaces at right angles to homes. These should be designed as part of the public realm with space for appropriate tree planting & soft landscaping.
 - Other options discussed were parking along the side elevations of a short terrace/semi-detached properties to enable an edge condition where the front door of a property opens up directly onto a green space. The code should identify appropriate locations where these solutions may be appropriate.
 - Formal on-street visitor parking bays are not acceptable to Highways (won’t be adopted). Alternatively, roads could informally widen at some places to allow visitors to park informally on the street. The level and design of areas where on-street informal visitor parking could take place needs further discussion with County Highways.
 - At the previous meeting with officers, it was agreed that some of the parking typologies need to be redrawn to provide further clarity. The code needs to include, Mews parking that is designed as a permeable back street, with some frontages in the form of FOGs, corner units etc - not a parking court (i.e. example north of The Chase, Newhall, Harlow)
22. **Boundaries:**

- Diagram needs clarification as its not always clear whether this refers to plot boundaries or boundaries for an area.
- The code needs to state that the boundaries onto greenways have gaps that are positioned in line with the street/desire lines and that they must not be gated.
- Large areas of a single boundary treatment for a particular edge should be avoided.
- Without a clear understanding of the character of various edges, it would be difficult to prescribe the edge condition and hence the code should suggest alternative options which would also allow for variety.

23. **Co-ordination between parcels:** Lack of guidance in the code to guide split of parcels and interface of different developer. The Code should identify suitable boundaries for a split (back of plot, Tertiary streets etc) and should fix a common approach to window position and sizes / proportions, fenestration, roof pitches etc where they interface with the street scene.

Area 4 Area around the primary school within Swansley Park

24. **Connections:** The masterplan would benefit from providing more connections (pedestrian, cycle and vehicular) to the central green space to encourage its use and activity.
25. **Edge Condition:** The code needs to provide clarity on the nature of response towards the green spaces and edges. The code should identify key points within the masterplan where an intimate relationship to the green space, i.e. buildings directly fronting the green spaces is expected for example next to the school, spine entrance and edge to the wetlands etc. The architects successfully tested that all houses could have dedicated parking space on/adjacent the plot at 35-40 dph.
26. **Built form:** The code needs to provide clarity of the built form response on the edges of greenways v/s that along the local green. Formal, buildings with consistent set back, repetitive, taller (2.5-3 storeys) gable frontage buildings could form the response to the local green spaces.
27. **Architecture:** The code lacks detail on the architectural response to the buildings. Appropriate images relevant to specific contexts within the masterplan with text to articulate the focus of the image should be used. It was recognised that an urban extension of appx 2300 homes would inevitably have a differ in character to villages which are by nature small, varied, different. The development should therefore not artificially replicate this character. Rather, it should focus on providing enough differentiation and variety within the various areas. The photographs of architectural precedents in the Code should show built examples from Cambourne/ other appropriate Taylor Wimpey and Bovis homes sites of what has worked well and what hasn't and how this could be applied within the various character areas. See comment 8.
28. **Materials:** It is felt that the Swansley Park character areas should have predominant brick colour palette. It is not appropriate to have two separate brick colour (red and buff) that could both be used in large numbers and still accord with the design guidance for the character area.

**Consultancy Team/ Planning and New Communities
South Cambridgeshire District Council
16 July 2018**

Attendees List

Alexis Butterfield, Testing Architect, Lead Architect, PTE

Leo Hammond, Lead Urban Designer, PTE

Peter O'Rourke, Testing Architect, McBains

Jithin Dev, Testing Architect, McBains

John Vickery, Cambourne Parish Council

Sean Rushton, Randall Thorp

Danielle Bentley, Randall Thorp

Andrew Wright, Taylor Wimpey

Dick Longdin, Testing Landscape Architect, Randall Thorpe

Graham Kime, Testing Architect, Gardiner Stewarts Architects

Victoria Southern, Bovis Homes

Ed Durrant, Planning Officer, SCDC

Trovine Monteiro, Team Leader, Consultancy Team, SCDC

Annemarie de Boom , Urban Design Consultant (SCDC): deBOOM UD

Elizabeth Moon, Urban Design Consultant (SCDC)

David Hamilton, Landscape Officer SCDC

Tom Davies, Project Planning Officer, SCDC

John Finney, Cambridge County Highways