



Local Development Framework

**District Design Guide:**  
High Quality and Sustainable Development in  
South Cambridgeshire

Supplementary Planning Document

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 1.1 This South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) forms part of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 1.2 The SPD expands on district-wide policies in the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD), adopted in July 2007, and policies in individual Area Action Plans for major developments that may vary from the district-wide policies. It provides additional details on how they will be implemented. Policies seek to ensure that design is an integral part of the development process.
- 1.3 The SPD builds on national policy in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, and Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1. These promote sustainable, well-designed development to achieve a high quality built and natural environment. Achieving good design and sustainable development are the core principles underlying planning. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations.
- 1.4 “We cannot afford not to invest in good design. Good design is not just about aesthetic improvement of our environment, it is as much about improved quality of life, equality of opportunity and economic growth. If we want to be a successful and sustainable society we have to overcome our ignorance of design and depart from our culturally ingrained notion that a poor quality environment is the norm... Good design does not cost more when measured across the lifetime of the building or place.” (CABE, The Value of Good Design, 2002)

#### PURPOSE

- 1.5 The purpose of this District Design Guide is to ensure delivery of sensitively and appropriately designed, sustainable developments. This document sets out important design principles based on recognised good practice and explains key requirements of the District Council that will be taken into account when considering planning proposals. It is not a ‘recipe book’ of design solutions.
- 1.6 The Guide deals with different types of development including: creating new towns, extending Cambridge and adding to villages; large scale projects and extensions to existing buildings; mixed use schemes, large business

structures and infill housing. Many of the design principles are common to all but some apply particularly to one type of development.

- 1.7 The Guide covers and links to a range of subjects which are integral to good quality and sustainable design such as building regulations, environmental health and renewable energy.
- 1.8 The Supplementary Planning Document provides additional advice and guidance on design and achieving sustainable development and expands on the policies set out in the Local Development Framework, in particular Development Control Policies DPD Policies DP/1 and DP/2.
- 1.9 Specific objectives of this document are to:
  - Assist applicants in the achievement of an attractive, sustainable, well-designed, high quality environment that integrates housing, employment and community uses, together with infrastructure and green areas in conjunction with the surrounding landscape.
  - Assist applicants' understanding of the local context, help identify features of importance, and ensure that proposals are appropriately designed to be compatible with their surroundings.
  - Assist applicants gain planning permission quickly by informing them what information is required to accompany planning applications to justify their proposals and demonstrate what impact they would have.

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LDF POLICY**

- 1.10 Achieving sustainable development is at the heart of planning, and will be controlled by the following policy in the Development Control Policies DPD:

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

#### **POLICY DP/1 Sustainable Development**

- 1. Development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development, as appropriate to its location, scale and form. It should:**
  - a. Be consistent with the sequential approach to development, as set out in the Strategy chapter of the Core Strategy DPD;**
  - b. Minimise the need to travel and reduce car dependency;**



- c. Make efficient and effective use of land by giving priority to the use of brownfield sites and achieve adaptable, compact forms of development through the use of higher densities;**
- d. Include mixed-use development of compatible uses as appropriate to the scale and location of the development;**
- e. Where practicable, use sustainable building methods and verifiably sustainable, locally sourced materials, including recycled materials, and include a Travel Plan to address the travel needs of labour during construction;**
- f. Where practicable, minimise use of energy and resources;**
- g. Where practicable, maximise the use of renewable energy sources;**
- h. Incorporate water conservation measures;**
- i. Minimise flood risk;**
- j. Where practicable, use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);**
- k. Mitigate against the impacts of climate change on development through the location, form and design of buildings;**
- l. Ensure no unacceptable adverse impact on land, air and water;**
- m. Contribute to the creation of mixed and socially inclusive communities and provide for the health, education, recreation, community services and facilities, and social needs of all sections of the community;**
- n. Where practicable, include infrastructure for modern telecommunications and information technology to facilitate home working;**
- o. Conserve and wherever possible enhance biodiversity of both wildlife and the natural environment;**
- p. Conserve and wherever possible enhance local landscape character;**

q. **Involve community and providers of community services in the design process;**

r. **Conserve and wherever possible enhance cultural heritage.**

2. **In criteria e, f, g, j and n it will be for any applicant or developer proposing to compromise sustainability to demonstrate the impracticability of use of sustainable methods, systems, materials and energy sources and provision of sustainable infrastructure. Additional cost will not, on its own, amount to impracticability.**

3. **For major developments, applicants must submit a Sustainability Statement and a Health Impact Assessment, to demonstrate that principles of sustainable development have been applied.**

1.11 The design of new development will be controlled by the following policy in the Development Control Policies DPD:

## **DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT**

### **POLICY DP/2 Design of New Development**

#### **New Development Design**

1. **All new development must be of high quality design and, as appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, should:**
  - a. **Preserve or enhance the character of the local area;**
  - b. **Conserve or enhance important environmental assets of the site;**
  - c. **Include variety and interest within a coherent design, which is legible and provides a sense of place whilst also responding to the local context and respecting local distinctiveness;**
  - d. **Achieve a legible development, which includes streets, squares and other public spaces with a defined sense of enclosure and interesting vistas, skylines, focal points and landmarks, with good interrelationship between buildings, routes and spaces both within the development and with the surrounding area;**
  - e. **Achieve a permeable development for all sectors of the community and all modes of transport, including links to**

**existing footways, cycleways, bridleways, rights of way, green spaces and roads;**

- f. Be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area;**
- g. In the case of residential development, provide higher residential densities, and a mix of housing types including smaller homes;**
- h. Provide high quality public spaces;**
- i. Provide an inclusive environment that is created for people, that is and feels safe, and that has a strong community focus;**
- j. Include high quality landscaping compatible with the scale and character of the development and its surroundings.**

#### **Design and Access Statements**

- 2. Design and Access Statements submitted to accompany planning applications and applications for listed building consent should be compatible with the scale and complexity of the proposal and, as appropriate should include:**
  - k. A full site analysis of existing features and designations;**
  - l. An accurate site survey including landscape features and site levels;**
  - m. The relationship of the site to its surroundings;**
  - n. Existing accesses for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and vehicles;**
  - o. Any known historic importance;**
  - p. Opportunities for maximising energy efficiency and addressing water and drainage issues.**
- 3. The Access element of the Statement should demonstrate that the development will achieve an inclusive environment that can be used by everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability. It should also address how the development has taken account of the transport policies of the development plan.**

- 1.12 All new development will have an impact on its surroundings. The aim must be that any development, from a major urban extension to Cambridge to an extension to an existing home, takes all proper care to respond to its surroundings, including existing buildings, open spaces and village edges, and ensure an integrated scheme that does not harm local amenity and wherever possible, brings benefits to the area.
- 1.13 A fully integrated and responsive design-led approach to development is therefore needed. For all development, a design-led approach will ensure that every proposal, whatever its scale, responds positively to the particular characteristics of a site and its surroundings and reinforces local distinctiveness.
- 1.14 The location and design of development should contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change, through reducing energy use, reducing emissions, promote renewable energy resources, and take climate change impacts into account, according to Key Principle ii in PPS1.
- 1.15 There are a number of documents, covering sustainability and design issues, produced by the Council or its partners that form a material planning consideration when determining planning applications. These include other SPDs, for example on Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, Village Design Statements and Conservation Area Appraisals. Many of these set out particular local characteristics that should be protected or enhanced. Appendix 2 references useful sources of further information.
- 1.16 The SPD is divided into three sections:
- **Part I Local Context** - describes the characteristics of South Cambridgeshire and how these should influence the design of new development.
  - **Part II Design Principles and Criteria** – covers general approaches to design, appreciating and responding to context, different locations, types and scales of development, and the elements of design. It also outlines how design should deal with environmental sustainability, biodiversity and environmental health issues, and national legislation and standards.
  - **Part III Procedures and Applications** – describes the documentation, such as site appraisals, concept diagrams and design and access statements, that is likely to be needed to show the design process and explain and support proposals and planning applications.

The SPD includes a number of Appendices, including useful contacts, addresses, and reference material, as well as further detail on a number of issues covered within the SPD.



# PART I

## LOCAL CONTEXT







## CHAPTER 2

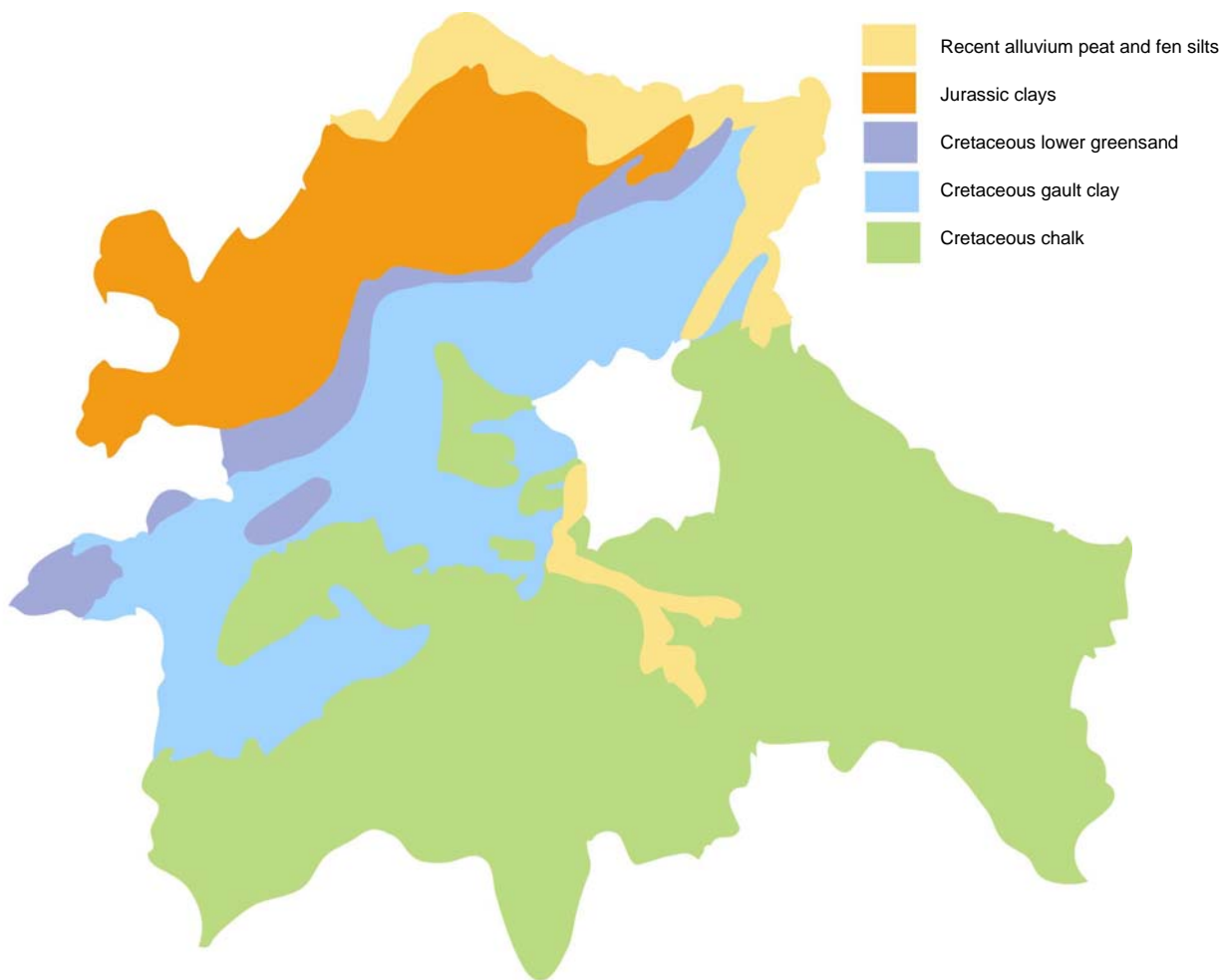
### THE DESIGN CONTEXT

#### THE GEOLOGY OF SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

- 2.1 The geological deposits that underlay South Cambridgeshire predominantly date from the Cretaceous Period of geological history (65 to 140 million years ago), which, by geological standards, are therefore relatively young. In the north-west of the district are a series of slightly older clay deposits from the Upper Jurassic Period. The geology is divided into a series of strata that outcrop in bands running roughly north-east to south-west across the district (see map in Figure 2.1). These formations were laid down as successive marine deposits that have since been raised and tilted to slope south-eastwards by earth movements in Tertiary times.
- 2.2 The south-eastern half of the district is underlain by Chalk, a soft white limestone of great purity and composed almost entirely of calcium carbonate derived from the shells of marine animals deposited in a warm, clear sea. Chalk is a relatively soft rock that makes a poor building stone, but in this region a more resistant formation from the Lower Chalk beds was sometimes used in traditional buildings, where it is referred to as clunch. The Lower Chalk beds also include a Chalk Marl that is particularly suitable for the manufacture of cement. In the south-east parishes of the district the chalk is overlain by glacial boulder clay, deposited by the retreating glaciers at the end of the last ice age.
- 2.3 Nodules of flint, a few centimetres or more in diameter, are a feature of Chalk deposits. Flint is very hard and composed of silica, chemically unrelated to chalk, but with its origins also in marine organisms, albeit ones with delicate skeletons of silica. The silica forming these skeletons was not particularly stable and, after the creatures' death, it was dissolved into the chalk where it re-deposited in a more stable form as nodules of flint. The hard nature of the flint nodules makes them difficult to shape for use in walling. Because of this, the traditional form of flint walling was to lay rough nodules of flint in beds with one side crudely faced, or knapped, and to use brickwork to frame rectangular openings for windows and doors, or to turn corners. This careful, selective use of brickwork reflected the relatively high cost of importing bricks from the adjacent clay areas, and has created a distinctive appearance in the region.
- 2.4 North-west of the chalk is a band of dark blue / grey clay, known as the Gault Clay. In the eighteenth century this band of clay began to be worked on a large scale for brick making, producing at first a 'white' brick that weathers grey, then later in the nineteenth century, the characteristic yellow 'Cambridge stock' brick. The same beds were worked for plain clay peg-

tiles for the fifteenth century onwards with clay pan-tiles becoming widespread from the eighteenth century.

- 2.5 Immediately north-west of the Gault Clay is a narrow band of sandstone, referred to as the Lower Greensand. This band is relatively insignificant in the northern parts of the district, but it produces a slightly raised rib of land above the adjacent clay fens that is the site for a number of settlements, most notably Cottenham and Oakington. Further north the city of Ely is sited on an 'island' of Greensand that outcrops within the fenland. To the west of the district the band of Greensand increases in width and around Gamlingay it becomes much more prominent in the landscape.



*Figure 2.1 Map showing the principal geological deposits of South Cambridgeshire*

## THE TOPOGRAPHY OF SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

- 2.6 While much of South Cambridgeshire is low lying, there are some significant variations to the topography across the district, with a strong correlation to the underlying geology outlined in the previous section.
- 2.7 The fenland lies at, or around, sea level with the 10-metre contour defining the fen-edge, and along which line a number of villages are sited. These fens broadly correspond to the clay deposits that lie to the north of Cambridge. As one moves onto the chalklands the land quickly rises into rolling downland that is generally between 20 and 40 metres above sea level, though slightly higher in the east. Further south and east the chalklands continue to rise into a range of low lying hills, which are around 100 metres above sea level. The highest ground in the district is in the south at Great Chishill, where the hills reach a height of just under 150 metres. In the west of the district is a second range of chalk hills, which correlate to a finger of chalk that projects into the Gault Clay, though these hills are not as high and only attain a height of 70 to 80 metres above sea level.
- 2.8 All of the chalklands, along with the eastern fens, drain to the River Cam and its associated tributaries, which in turn feeds into the River Great Ouse. The fens that lie to the north drain direct to the Great Ouse, where it also forms the northern boundary of the district, and eventually reaches the sea at the Wash.

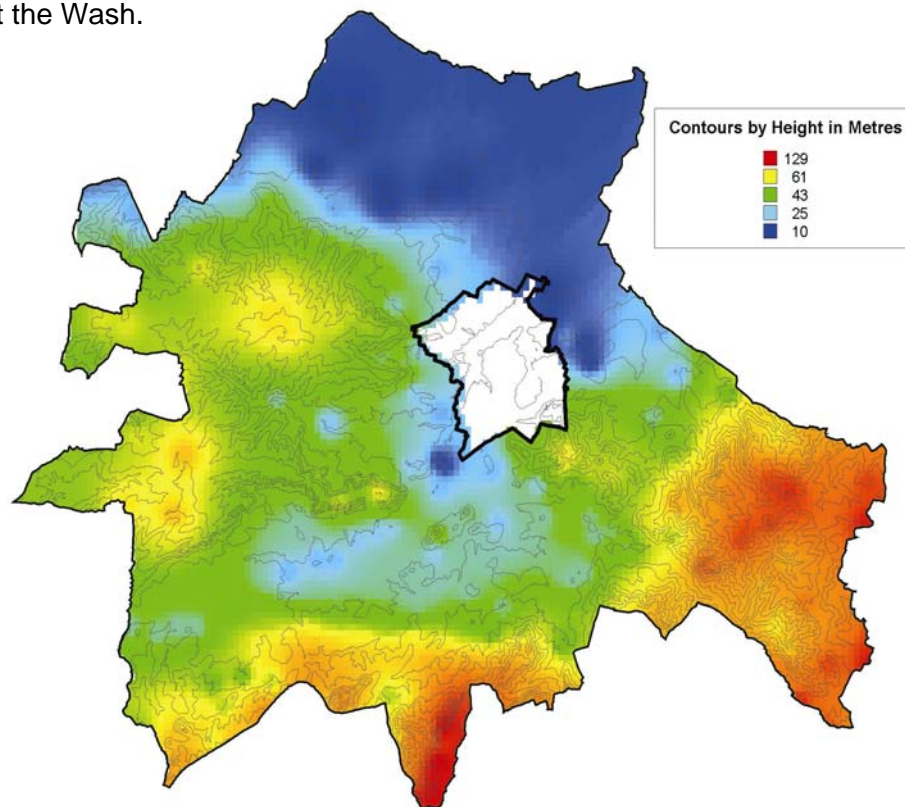


Figure 2.2 Map outlining the basic topography of South Cambridgeshire

## **THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

- 2.9 The siting and historical development of settlements within South Cambridgeshire is closely associated with the communication network (particularly at river crossings or road junctions), the avoidance of land liable to flooding and developments in agriculture. The spring-lines between the chalk and clay were favoured areas for settlement, and so, to an even greater extent, were the river valleys, with their light gravel and alluvial soils and good communications. The chalk areas to the south could only be settled where water supplies were available, but the open aspect of this countryside made it particularly suitable for trade routes from east to west across the region, using numerous parallel tracks that are collectively known as the Icknield Way.

### **Prehistoric**

- 2.10 In Palaeolithic and Mesolithic times the area was occupied by hunter-gatherers, when much of the area that was later to become fen was then above sea level, so could also support the more transient societies in a heavily wooded landscape. It was the rise in sea level that accompanied the melting ice-cap at the end of the last Ice Age that led to periodic flooding and the development of the fenland areas. In Neolithic times communities became more settled as an agrarian based society started to develop. These early communities especially established themselves on the chalk grasslands around the Icknield Way, along the river valleys and fenland edge, and on the lighter soils associated with the Greensand. The development of these communities continued through the Bronze Age and into the Iron Age, by when farming had become so well developed that huge tracts of land were covered by ditched fields and enclosed homesteads, especially in areas of gravel subsoil, but also in the heavier clay areas where developments in agricultural technology produced ploughs capable of working the heavier soils.

### **Roman**

- 2.11 The Roman towns of this region, Cambridge, Godmanchester, Sandy and Great Chesterford, are all located just outside the district, but their markets brought prosperity to the adjacent rural areas and the network of Roman roads have left a lasting legacy. The best preserved Roman settlement is at Bullock's Haste in Cottenham; a site so large that it appears more like a town than a village, while Romanisation of the countryside was established through a series of villas that were at the centre of agricultural estates. Those excavated at Litlington and Ickleton were particularly large and magnificent examples, while others are known at Babraham, Bartlow, Comberton, Guilden Morden, Horningsea, Horseheath, Linton, Shepreth, Teversham and Great Wilbraham. Another important feature of the Roman occupation were canals. Carr Dyke, visible today at Cottenham, Landbeach

and Waterbeach, was used to transport food-stuffs, leather goods and other products from the agricultural regions of southern Cambridgeshire to the army stationed in Northern Britain. It may also have served to drain neighbouring land.



*Carr Dyke, south of Waterbeach*

### **Anglo-Saxon**

- 2.12 Occupation of a number of Roman sites is believed to have continued on into Saxon times, along with use of the Roman roads, since many Saxon settlements and burial sites follow these routes. The best-known sites from the early Anglo-Saxon period are a series of cemeteries and defensive Dykes, though more recent excavations have now revealed evidence of huts, halls and other signs of human occupation at Hinxton, Linton, Cottenham, Waterbeach, Pampisford and Great Wilbraham. The four great Anglo-Saxon dykes in South Cambridgeshire (Miles Ditches, Bran Ditch, Brent Ditch and Fleam Dyke), together with the larger Devil's Dyke in East Cambridgeshire, all appear to have had the same function, namely to protect land in the east by preventing easy access along the Icknield Way, and all are built to a similar pattern, with wide, flat bases and straight-sided ditches on the western side.

### **Middle Ages**

- 2.13 By 1086, when the Domesday Book was written, all the current villages of South Cambridgeshire existed, with the exception of the modern communities of Bar Hill and Cambourne, though most have undergone a number of changes since their Saxon foundation. Medieval society reached

its peak in the latter years of the thirteenth century, before economic decline and a series of disastrously wet cold summers in the early years of the fourteenth century led to famines, followed in 1348 by the Black Death. Most villages in the area were not to regain the levels of their thirteenth century populations until the nineteenth century and the resulting labour shortage led to much of the land being converted to sheep pasture.

### **Post Medieval**

- 2.14 In the late seventeenth century work started to drain the fens by cutting a series of canals that would take excess water straight to the sea. The process was to be fraught with problems as the peat shrank, leaving much of the land below sea level and windmills (later replaced by steam, diesel and electric pumps) were then required to lift the water back up to sea level. However, the rich farmland that was created by this process was capable of supporting a large population and the villages along the fen-edge expanded as a result.
- 2.15 Until the middle of the eighteenth century the majority of parishes continued to farm in common, as they had since Saxon times, with the huge medieval open fields worked in narrow strips. Then, over a period of 100 years, these fields were enclosed by successive acts of Parliament as the Enclosure movement brought about major change to the countryside. At the same time many common rights to grazing and gathering fuel were also lost, and most of the countryside became private property. This radical change in land-ownership meant the end of the traditional peasant class in England and much of the population moved to urban areas, or emigrated to America or Australia. Populations fell in all but the commuter settlements immediately adjacent to Cambridge, and this pattern continued through the first half of the twentieth century, exacerbated by the impact of the First World War and the depression of the inter-war period. It was not until after the Second World War that the pattern was to change, and the villages once again started to expand to cope with the housing needs of a growing population.
- 2.16 The result of this continuous occupation of South Cambridgeshire is an extensive legacy of built and natural heritage. Collectively this creates a many layered, historic landscape of great beauty and diversity that helps establish local identity at the parish level. However, the pace of change since 1945 has been intense and is, arguably, accelerating. The resultant pressures on our inherited landscape have profound implications for the social and economic well being of the district, far beyond aesthetic and academic interests.

## CHAPTER 3

### VILLAGE LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT ANALYSIS

#### INTRODUCTION

3.1 This section outlines the importance of character and the crucial contribution good design can make to its conservation and enhancement. It aims to ensure that very careful consideration is given to the way new development relates to its surroundings. An overview of the landscape settlement character of South Cambridgeshire is provided. This is followed by the identification of five distinctive landscape character areas:

- A – South East Claylands,
- B – Chalklands,
- C – Western Claylands,
- D – Western Greensand, and
- E – Fen Edge (see Figure 3.1).

3.2 The parishes that occur within each area are listed (note some parishes straddle the boundaries and are therefore listed under both areas). For each defined area, a brief descriptive analysis explains in simple terms the essential design relationship between:

- i. **Landscape Character** - the patterns of the landscape, its geology and overall form, slope and climate, vegetation and the setting of buildings and villages within it.
- ii. **Settlement Character** – the shape of settlements, their built forms and their relationship with the wider countryside.
- iii. **Building Materials** – the nature of the buildings, their massing, materials, scale, colour, texture and characteristic detailing.
- iv. **Trees and Hedgerows** – plant species common to the area.

3.3 Based upon an analysis of the relationship between these elements, the design implications for new buildings are highlighted in the form of a ‘bullet point’ list of design principles that can be used to guide the form and appearances of new development in the countryside and in the villages.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER AND GOOD DESIGN

3.4 Character can be described as a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that make each place different and distinctive. It is influenced by visual, ecological, historical, settlement and building elements, together with less intangible aspects such as tranquillity and

sense of place. The distinctive character of our surroundings has a fundamental impact on our quality of life and therefore identifying, protecting and enhancing those elements that contribute to character is a key aspect of our sustainability.

- 3.5 The Council is concerned that poorly designed new development will erode the established character of the landscape and settlements through lack of respect for local diversity and distinctiveness. Common use of standardised building designs and layouts, and the suburbanisation of rural settlements through poorly designed village extensions will have particularly significant effects on character.

### **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OVERVIEW**

- 3.6 The South Cambridgeshire landscape as a whole has several distinctive and readily identified characters. Medium to large-scale arable farmland landscapes dominate. Woodland and small copses tend to be widely dispersed or absent, and the density of hedgerows is relatively low. As a result it is predominantly open, allowing long views. Contrasting patterns of hedgerowed pastures and parkland create variety, and a greater degree of enclosure in some parts, for instance associated with settlements. Early enclosures of 'ancient countryside' give a distinctive character to some villages which are surrounded by small fields with hedgerows.
- 3.7 The landform reflects the broad variations in the underlying geology and continuity of settlement in the area. The geology ranges from the 'upland' undulating chalklands and clay hills in the south, to the low lying flat Fen Edge with its scattered fen 'islands' north of Cambridge. Rivers and streams cut through the higher land creating gentle shallow valleys, whilst straight dykes and ditches are a feature of the drained fen edge. Both winding and straight narrow roads link the settlements. Surviving features from different eras are part of the rich historic character of the landscape, including visible archaeological features such as the Fleam Dyke and the Bartlow Hills, ancient field boundaries and medieval narrow strip fields, as well as many moated sites, windmills, historic parklands, farmsteads, and groups of cottages.

### **SETTLEMENT CHARACTER OVERVIEW**

- 3.8 Villages are particularly distinctive in the landscape. Small, medium and large villages occupy a variety of positions, hilltops, valley-sides and along spring lines. They often exhibit a complex mix of patterns, including linear, dispersed, nucleated, agglomerated and planned. A surprising number have been formed from amalgamation of initially separate and ancient hamlets. Villages that grow up along important communication links are often linear, with an area of green in front of buildings, as at Comberton, or at each end, as at Harston. While there are no complete planned medieval



villages in South Cambridgeshire, there are planned elements that survive in villages such as Swavesey. Development was also affected by phases in population growth or decline, visible at Bassingbourn where there are whole areas of house plots under grass. Finally, village pattern is often affected by the location and extent of open space, particularly greens and common land with settlements. Typically the villages have developed from historic cores that exhibit a varied mix of vernacular building materials, including brick, rendered plaster, weatherboarding, plain tiles, pantiles, and thatch. Some villages, particularly those closer to Cambridge, have experienced significant growth with modern estates visible at their edges. Nonetheless, most villages make a very positive contribution to local landscape character. Features such as attractive groupings of historic buildings, village greens, common land, mature trees and church towers are all important to this.

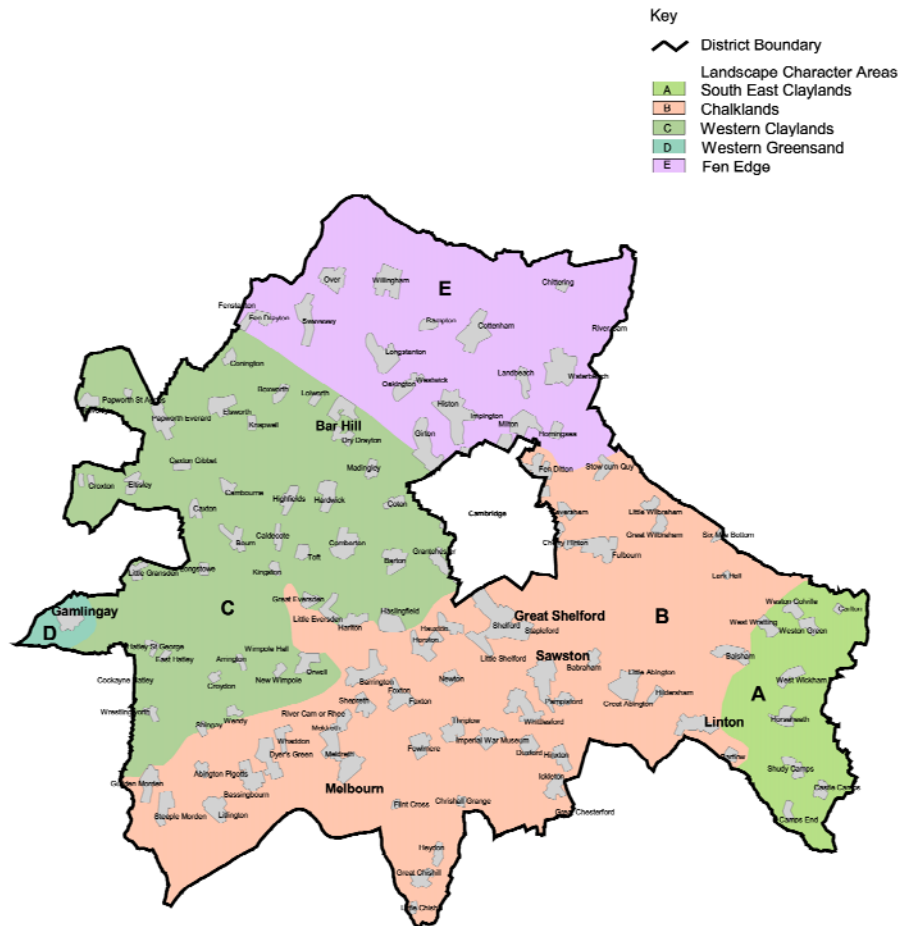


Figure 3.1 Map of South Cambridgeshire indicating broad landscape character assessment as set out in the Countryside Agency's Countryside Character for East of England

Note: the landscape character assessment (Figure 3.1) follows the Countryside Commission's assessment which was used in the 2005 Draft Design Guide. Natural England has subsequently identified new Joint

*Character Areas (see the Landscape in New Developments SPD), but the Countryside Commission areas have been retained here as they better reflect settlement character, particularly that of Fen Edge villages.*

### **A. The South-East Claylands**

**Parishes** – Balsham (eastern sector), Carlton (western sector), Castle Camps, Horseheath, Linton (north-east sector), Shudy Camps, West Wickham, West Wratting (eastern sector), Weston Colville (eastern sector).



#### Landscape Character

- 3.9 This is an undulating area reaching 100 – 120 meters in height on the hilltops. A scattering of farmsteads and small settlements interspersed with farm woodlands, contribute to landscape character. The field sizes are mostly large, but are united by the gently rolling landform and woodland. Smaller fields, landscape and woodlands closer to edges of settlements give a more intimate scale. An historic irregular field pattern remains; Earthbanks are a distinctive feature along with some roadsides, reflecting ancient hedge and bank field boundaries; a few still retain their hedges. Long open views extend to wooded skylines, and sometimes village rooftops and church towers. The area has a surprisingly remote, rural character.

3.10 The key characteristics are:

- An undulating boulder clay landform, dissected by small stream valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with a wooded appearance.
- Trees and woodlands appear to join together to create a wooded skyline, with some bare ridgelines.

#### Settlement Character

3.11 Villages and small hamlets in this area typically have strong linear forms, often with a wooded setting and mature hedgerows and trees that contribute to rural character. Small paddocks and long back gardens also help to soften village edges. Generally they include a mix of more substantial farmhouses arranged in a loose knit pattern, interspersed with open frontages. The slightly larger village of West Wrating includes some continuous frontages that historically provided enclosure to the streets. Any areas of modern infill are generally limited. Small village greens of irregular shape, including narrow 'strip' greens, are a feature in a few villages such as West Wrating and West Wickham.

3.12 The key characteristics are:

- Mostly small villages and hamlets (locally known as 'Ends') are sited on valleysides or on ridgetops, often having a linear form.
- Buildings are arranged in a low density, loose knit pattern along narrow winding or gently curving lanes.
- Mature trees and hedgerow are important features, mainly in private curtilages, giving a strongly rural character to settlements.
- Village edges are often softened by woodlands, copses, small fields, paddocks and long back gardens.
- A few isolated farmsteads are located along lanes or at track ends.

*Woodlands and small hedgerowed paddocks contribute to setting*



*Medium to large arable field*

*Mature trees are a feature of the main village street*

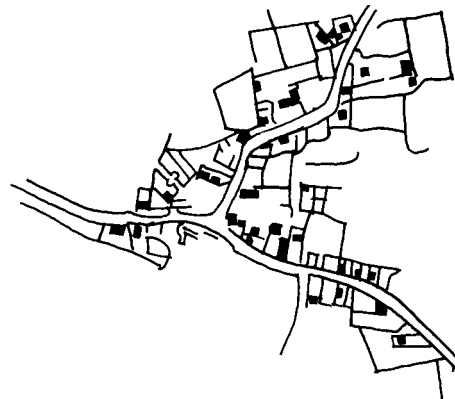
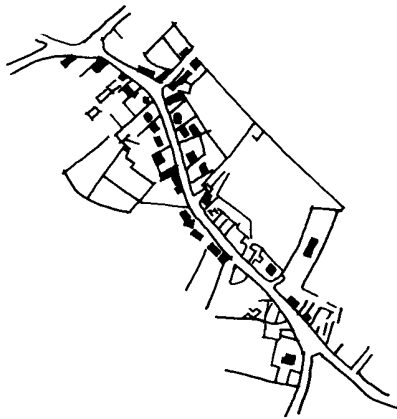
*Typical settlement landscape setting*

*West Wrattling*

*- mostly small cottages and houses with front gardens*

*Horseheath*

*- narrow winding lane  
- loose knit settlement pattern*



*Street pattern arrangement of buildings*

3.13 Building and Materials:

- Buildings are generally one and a half or two storeys, and predominantly detached or semi-detached, with spans of between four and six metres.

- The vernacular detailing of walls is mainly of plastered timber frame construction, often with distinctive decorative pargetting in a variety of patterns. A few flint and weatherboarded buildings occur. Gault brick occurs in some later buildings.
- Roofs are typically of longstraw thatch and plain clay tiles.
- Details of timber-framed buildings include steep roof pitches, four or five planked doors, casement and sash windows, and chimneys located laterally on the roof ridge, or at gable ends.



*(left) Typical plastered house with clay tile roofing  
(right) Typical gault brick and flint cottage*

### 3.14 Trees and Hedgerows:

- Mixed Woodland  
Oak, ash, wild cherry. Glades and near edges: field maple.
- Hedgerows, Woodland Edges and Scrub  
Hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose, crab apple, field maple and, occasional, dogwood.
- Trees in Hedgerows  
Oak, ash, field maple.
- Avenues  
Oak, lime, horse chestnut.
- Stream Sides  
Alder, white willow, crack willow, goat willow. Occasional: Guelder rose, dogwood. Occasional where not waterlogged: hazel, ash, oak.



*Rural street scene*

### Design Principles

3.15 Based on the above analysis of landscape settlement and built character, the following key design principles are set out:

- Maintain the distinctive, dispersed settlement pattern of small villages and hamlets and isolated farmsteads, within the context of their wooded landscape setting.
- Ensure any small extensions to villages on hilltops are located along ridgelines, and extensions to villages on valley sides are located parallel to the contours of the hillside.
- Maintain the strong linear form of villages and hamlets by limiting backland and cul-de-sac developments.
- Ensure density and pattern of new developments reflect that of existing villages and hamlets. Houses should normally be set back from the street with front gardens, except where enclosure of the street frontage is important to the historic character.
- Use a framework boundary of native woodland, tree and thick hedge planting that reflect the local mixes, to integrate new developments.
- Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings of the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, materials, colours and textures of the locality.

- Enclose boundaries facing roads by hedgerow or, in appropriate locations, low flint and brick walls.
- Avoid unnecessary widening or straightening of narrow hedge banked lanes.
- Ensure large barns are sited and designed to minimise their bulk and impact on the wider landscape, normally relating them to existing groupings of farm buildings. Prominent ridgeline sites should be avoided.
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate.

## B. The Chalklands

**Parishes** – Abington Piggotts, Balsham (western sector), Babraham, Barrington, Bartlow, Bassingbourn cum Kneesworth, Carlton (eastern sector), Duxford, Fen Ditton, Fowlmere, Foxton, Fulbourn, Great Abington, Great and Little Chishill, Great Shelford, Great Wilbraham, Guilden Morden, Harston, Hauxton, Heydon, Hildersham, Hinxton, Ickleton, Linton (west and south-east sectors), Litlington, Little Abington, Little Shelford, Little Wilbraham, Melbourn, Meldreth, Newton, Pampisford, Sawston, Shepreth, Stapleford, Steeple Morden, Stow cum Quy, Teversham, Thriplow, West Wrattling (western sector), Weston Colville (western sector), Whaddon, Whittlesford.



### Landscape Character

- 3.16 This character area is a broad scale landscape of large fields, low trimmed hedgerows and few trees. Certain high points have small beech copses which form strong focal points, and there are occasional shelterbelts around settlements. By way of contrast, the eastern part of the area is cut through by the valleys of the rivers Granta and Rhee, which have an intimate

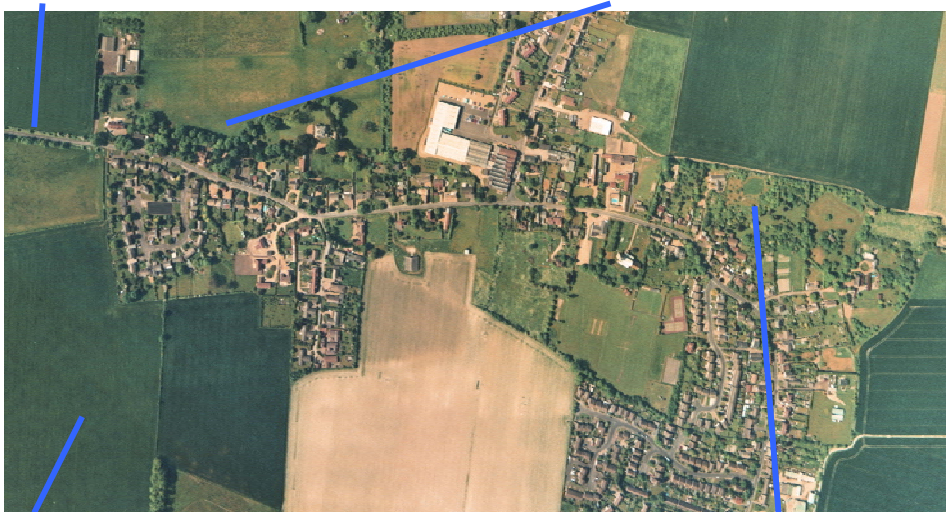
character of small grazing meadow and wet woodlands, with lines of willows along the rivers. Some historic parkland within these valleys also adds to their distinctive character.

3.17 The key characteristics are:

- A distinctive landform of smooth rolling chalk hills and gently undulating chalk plateau.
- A mostly large-scale arable landscape of arable fields, low hedges and few trees, giving it an open, spacious quality.
- Remnant of chalk grassland occurs on road verges and along tracks.
- Small beech copses on the brows of hills, and occasional shelterbelts, are important features.
- A wealth of historic and archaeological features, including; ancient trackways, earthworks, small chalk pits and pre-nineteenth century enclosures.
- Shallow valleys of the River Ganta and River Rhee have a rich mosaic of grazing meadows and parkland.
- Lanes are often straight, occasionally 'dog-legging'.
- Mostly strong rural character, though this is disrupted immediately adjacent to major roads such as the A505 and the M11.

*Avenue tree approach*

*Village edge enclosed by mature trees*



*Large arable fields with occasional shelterbelts*

*Rough grassland & hedgerow trees provide soft edge*

*Typical settlement landscape setting*

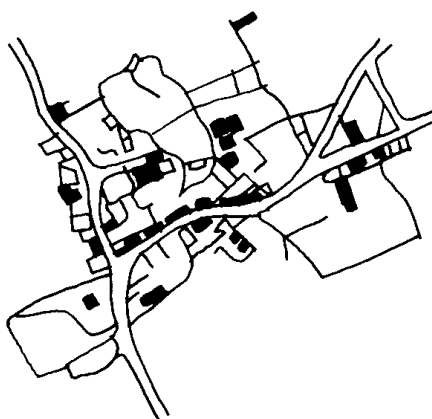


### Settlement Character

- 3.18 Both small and large villages generally have a strong historic, linear form, though extensive modern estate developments have occurred in some villages close to Cambridge. Others, such as Bassingbourn, are the result of amalgamation of older hamlets. These linear villages widen out in places to include village greens, such as the large, oval green at Barrington and the smaller, triangular one at Heydon. A few villages, such as Little Shelford, have a rectangular form of looser structure with a number of important open spaces included. The village edges are varied, typically abutted by a mix of open fields, woodland, or smaller fields. Long back gardens also help to form a transition to the surrounding countryside.

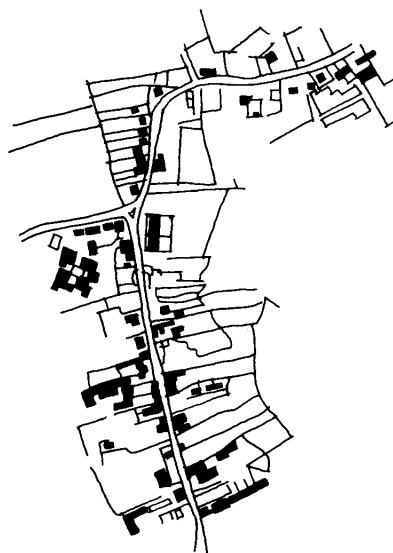
#### Fowlmere

- Some continuous frontages
- Gently curving lane
- Properties located close to back edge of the street



#### Meldreth

- Straight lanes
- Deep plots



#### *Street pattern arrangement of buildings*

- 3.19 The key characteristics are:
- Small villages, such as Thriplow and Litlington, are located on gentle slopes along spring lines, or on hilltops, such as Great Chishill.
  - Other villages, such as Hildersham and Little Shelford, are located within the river valleys on lower valley side slopes, sometimes related to crossing points and fords.
  - Mostly a well treed character to villages, which are often not visible in the wider landscape, despite adjoining open arable fields. Avenue

trees on wide road verges are characteristic of some approaches, such as Fowlmere.

- Enclosed meadows and parkland are important features of village setting in the river valleys.
- Village greens are frequent, both small and large.
- Mostly linear form to the settlements.
- Buildings are either arranged as continuous frontages facing streets, or have a much looser pattern with open land interspersed.
- Deep, narrow rear gardens.
- Many mature trees, both in front gardens and on the grass verges, together with streams and ponds, add to the rural character.
- A few isolated farm buildings are sited at track ends, often hidden by groups of mature trees or shelterbelts.



*Typical street scene*

### 3.20 Building and Materials:

- Buildings are traditionally two storey, simple and small in scale. A few, large, two and a half, or three storey eighteenth and nineteenth century houses occur in some villages.
- A wide variety of materials are used in walls, including; plastered timber-frame constructions (weatherboarded or rough-cast render on laths) clunch, clay bat, knapped flint, plain gault brick, red and yellow gault brick. Farm buildings are typically black-tarred weatherboarding.

Colours of buildings are generally light and warm, often pale cream, but some are painted pale pink or yellow and, occasionally, earthy red.

- Roofs of vernacular buildings are typically of longstraw, thatch and plain clay tiles and pan-tiles, with some more recent use of Welsh slate and reed thatch.
- Plastered timber-framed building details include; high-pitched roofs, drip-boards set in the gable ends and over windows, four or six panelled or planked doors, and with chimneys set laterally on the ridge to roofs.
- Eighteenth and nineteenth century house details include; low-pitched roofs, vertical sliding sash windows set in deep reveals over shallow stone sills, with gauged or segmental brick arched lintels and chimneystacks incorporated within the building at the gables.



*(left) Use of plaster and thatch*

*(right) Nineteenth century houses with slate, brick and render*

- Both low and high flint boundary walls are common, some with red brick detailing. Clipped hedges and simple picket fences also provide boundary features. Occasionally simple iron railings are associated with larger houses.
- Many of the twentieth century estates do not respond to the local vernacular.



F

*Flint and brick walls*

### 3.21 Trees and Hedgerows:

- Beech Hangers  
Beech, with occasional additional species from 'Mixed Woodland' below.
- Mixed Woodland  
Beech, ash. Less common: small-leaved lime, hornbeam, wild cherry, yew. Glades and near edges: field maple.
- Hedgerows, Woodland Edges and Scrub  
Hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, field maple, dog rose, and, occasional, wild privet and wayfaring tree.
- Trees in Hedgerows  
Ash, beech, field maple.
- Avenues  
Predominately Beech or ash.

#### Design Principles

### 3.22 Based on the above analysis of landscape settlement and built character, the following key design principles are set out:

- Maintain the distinctive, settlement pattern of the area and its local context.
- Ensure any extensions to springline villages are located along the bottom of steeper slopes and along lanes.

- Ensure any extensions to river valley villages are located along the line of the river, or at right angles to it, depending on the direction of the main transport route.
- Maintain the linear, or rectilinear form of the settlements.
- Ensure density and pattern of new developments reflect that of existing villages and hamlets. Avoid backland and cul-de-sac developments where possible.
- Ensure buildings are arranged in continuous frontages within village cores and are arranged in loose knit patterns facing the street on more peripheral sites.
- Ensure new developments are integrated with sufficient space for garden and street tree planting where applicable.
- Enhance village gateways and, where appropriate, consider provision of avenue planting on village approaches.
- Take opportunities to create new village greens and/or wildlife areas within new developments.
- Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings of the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, materials, colours and textures of the locality.
- Enclose boundaries facing the street in village cores by low, or high, flint walls with brick detailing, simple decorative railings, picket fencing or hedging.
- Retain hedges along roads.
- Enclose boundaries facing the street on village peripheries with hedge and tree planting.
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate.
- Ensure new agricultural buildings, such as large storage sheds, are sited and designed to reduce their apparent mass, minimising their impact on the wider landscape by the appropriate use of texture, colour and planting.

## C. The Western Claylands

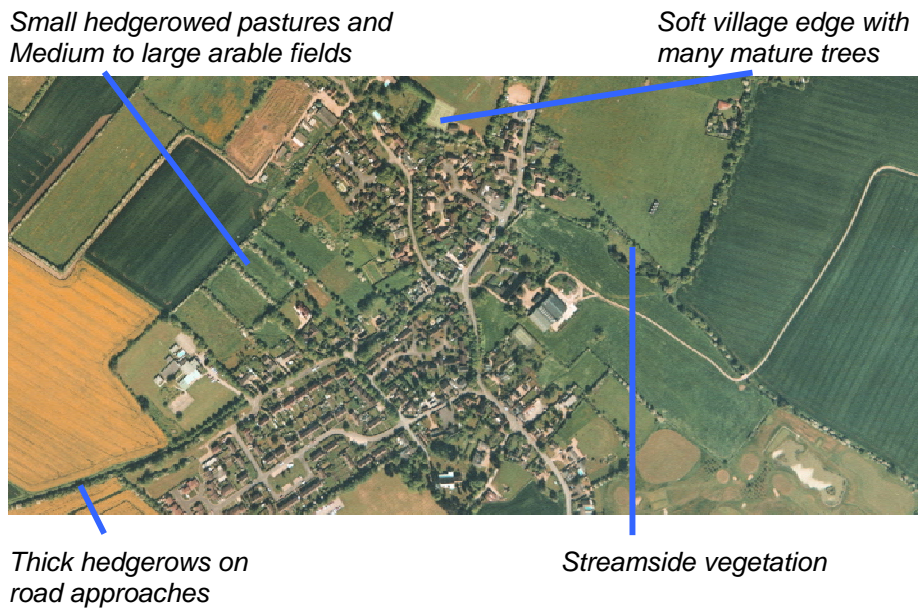
**Parishes** – Arrington, Bar Hill, Barton, Bourn, Boxworth, Caldecote, Caxton, Childerley, Comberton, Conington, Coton, Croxton, Croydon, Dry Drayton, Elsworth, Eltisley, Grantchester, Graveley, Great Eversden, Hardwick, Harlton, Haslingfield, Hatley, Kingston, Knapwell, Little Eversden, Little Gransden, Lolworth, Longstowe, Madingley, Orwell, Papworth Everard, Papworth St Agnes, Shingay cum Wendy, Tadlow, Toft, Wimpole.



### Landscape Character

- 3.23 This character area comprises gently undulating arable farmland with, mostly, large fields and low trimmed hedgerows. Occasional medium to large sized ancient woodlands provide a distinctive feature and church towers and spires are key landmarks. Despite the presence of some major roads, much of the area has a relatively tranquil, rural character.
- 3.24 The key characteristics are:
- The gently undulating topography is divided by broad, shallow valleys.
  - It is a predominantly open and intensive arable landscape. Fields are either bounded by open ditches, or closely trimmed hedgerows, both with a variable number of hedgerow trees.
  - Woodlands are scattered. Large, ancient woodlands are particularly concentrated in the north and west of the area.
  - Occasional parklands and orchards add interest and variety in the landscape.

- Small pasture fields with origins in ‘ancient countryside’ provide a buffer between settlements and medium size fields enclosed in the nineteenth century.
- Many nineteenth century enclosure fields have been amalgamated to produce very large arable fields.
- Each village is identified by a church spire, or tower, which enliven the skyline.



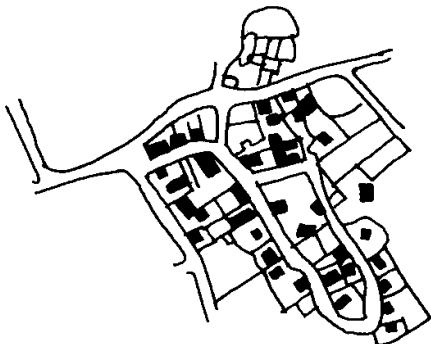
*Typical settlement landscape setting*

### Settlement Character

- 3.25 The mostly small, scattered villages of this area often have well defined edges provided by mature trees, thick hedgerows, copses or parkland. Small fields and paddocks also contribute to their landscape setting, providing a transition to the surrounding countryside. Many of the villages have a strong, linear form with rows of cottages and a few, larger farmsteads facing roads and paths. Highfields Caldecote (which has a planned rectilinear street pattern) and Bar Hill (which is a C20<sup>th</sup> new community) are not typical of the area.

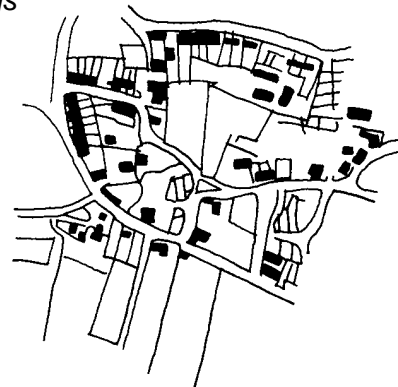
Elsworth

- Winding lane
- Houses at back edge or close to lanes



Haslingfield

- Fields in the heart of the village
- Loose-knit arrangement of buildings



3.26 The key characteristics are:

- Villages are either located on the sides of small valleys (such as Bourn and Little Gransden), along spring lines (such as Haslingfield) or on slightly elevated ground within broad valleys (such as Comberton and Grantchester).
- Woodlands, copses, paddocks and, occasionally, parklands contribute to the distinctive landscape setting of villages, creating a wooded character and providing a link to the surrounding countryside.
- The historic villages are mostly linear in form, despite modern infilling in some villages.
- Buildings are typically arranged in loose knit patterns, sited close to roads or paths. Frontages include open spaces which allow visual unity with surrounding fields and woodlands.
- Mature trees, hedges, picket fences and walls contribute to the informal rural character.
- Small irregularly shaped village greens are sometimes a feature, such as at Madingley.
- Outside the village core areas there are often scattered isolated farms, with some intrusive modern farm buildings.





*(left) View to church tower on skyline  
(right) Irregular shaped village green*

### 3.27 Building and Materials:

- Buildings are generally one and a half or two storeys in height and domestic in scale.
- A variety of wall materials are used, including; plastered timber-frame construction (mostly cream in colour), warm red brickwork and occasional yellow brick. Farm buildings are typically of brick, weatherboarding and flint.
- Roof materials include plain clay tiles, pantiles longstraw thatch and Welsh slate.
- Details which characterise timber-frame buildings include; high pitched roofs, casement windows or horizontal sliding sashes (Yorkshire sashes) set flush with the outside face of the wall, drip boards set in the gable ends and over windows, four or six panelled or planked doors and chimneys set laterally on the roof ridge.
- Eighteenth century houses, which occur in a few villages such as Grantchester, have details that include four and six panelled front doors, gauged brick arches over windows and distinctive cornices.
- Nineteenth century houses, which occur in a few villages such as Grantchester and Comberton, have details which may include; sawtooth dentil courses under the eaves, four or twelve pane vertical sliding sash windows, four panelled doors, contrasting brick dressing or decorative polychromatic brick banding and chimneys sited at the gables flush with the gable walls.
- Many modern estates in the larger villages, such as Comberton, do not respond to the local vernacular.



*(left) Typical street scene with thatch, brick and plaster  
(right) Use of warm red bricks with plain clay tiles*



*(left) Farm building with brick banding  
(right) Hitch brick boundary wall*

### 3.28 Trees and Hedgerows:

- Ancient woodlands and later mixed Woodland  
Oak, ash. Less common: wild cherry. Glades and near edges: field maple.
- Hedgerows, Woodland Edges and Scrub  
Hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose, crab apple, field maple and, occasional, dogwood.
- Trees in Hedgerows  
Oak, ash, field maple.
- Avenues (all one species, not mixed)  
Oak, lime, horse chestnut.
- Stream Sides  
Alder, white willow, crack willow, goat willow. Occasional: Guelder rose, dogwood. Occasional where not waterlogged: hazel, ash, oak.



*Village character enriched by mature trees*

### Design Principles

3.29 Based on the above analysis of landscape settlement and built character, the following key design principles are set out:

- Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern of mostly small, scattered villages and isolated farmsteads.
- Ensure any extensions to valleyside villages are located parallel to contours or at right angles to them along lanes reflecting the historic settlement form.
- Ensure the linear or rectilinear form of settlements is maintained, avoiding backland and cul-de-sac development where possible.
- Ensure buildings are arranged in a loose knit form, generally facing and close to, or set a little back from, the streets.
- Ensure developments are well integrated with the local patterns of tree planting and hedgerows.
- Ensure new developments respond to the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings in the area, for example, reflecting the traditional building styles, materials, colours and textures of the locality.

- Mark street boundaries by the use of simple picket or trellis fencing, hedges, or low brick walls as appropriate.
- Retain hedges and introduce them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores.
- Avoid unnecessary straightening and widening of narrow country lanes and the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate.
- Ensure new, large agricultural buildings, such as barns, are sited and designed to reduce their apparent mass, and minimise their impact on the wider landscape by the appropriate use of texture, colour and planting.
- Conserve small pre-nineteenth century paddocks.

#### **D. The Western Greensand**

##### **Parishes – Gamlingay**



##### Landscape Character

- 3.30 This is a very small character area associated with the undulating dip slope of the Lower Greensand ridge. It is drained by small streams and there are some locally steep slopes. The fairly wooded landscape is interspersed with medium sized arable fields, small areas of pasture and market gardening. There are also small areas or remnant parkland and heath. Despite the presence of some worked out gravel pits, the area retains a predominantly rural character.

3.31 The key characteristics are:

- Undulating dip slope of the Lower Greensand ridge, drained by small streams creating a relatively small scale, varied landform.
- The area has a mixed land use pattern of arable farmland, pasture and market gardening, and deciduous and coniferous woodland.
- Remnant patches of heathland and parkland tree belts add interest and variety.

### Settlement Character

3.32 Within the area there is a dispersed pattern of farmsteads and cottages along lanes and one large village of Gamlingay. This has radiated out from a crossroads along five routes. The eastern half of the village is dominated by the historic core, which is of a linear development along Church Street, and the openness created by the village college playing fields. In the western half modern residential and industrial infill has occurred. The historic core comprises a wide range of buildings, many fronting directly onto the street, creating a sense of narrowness and enclosure.

### Gamlingay

- *Crossroads location*

- *Continuous building frontages mostly on back edge of pavement – found especially on Church Street and parts of Mill Street*



*Street pattern*



3.33 The key characteristics are:

- Farmsteads, cottages and small, detached houses associated with smallholdings are dispersed along lanes.
- Historic core of Gamlingay retains a strong linear form with mostly continuous frontages radiating out along roads.
- Narrow, gently curving streets, with houses generally sited on the back edge of the pavement.
- Open fields, hedgerowed paddocks, woodland and stream valleys contribute to the distinctive landscape setting, despite a harsh urban edge in parts.

3.34 Building and Materials:

- Buildings are generally one and a half or two storeys, with spans of between four and six metres.
- The range of building styles within the village includes small vernacular cottages, medieval farmhouses and buildings, eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century villas together with many nineteenth century terraces.
- Walls are constructed of timber-frame with plastered finish (coloured cream, yellow and pale pink) carstone (sandstone) and red and yellow brick. Farm buildings are of weatherboarding and brick.
- Vernacular roofs are of plain clay tiles, pantiles, longstraw thatch and Welsh slate.
- Timber-framed building details include; high pitched roofs, casement or sash windows set flush with the outside face of the walls, drip boards set in the gable ends and over windows and chimneys sited laterally on the roof ridges.



*(left) Brick with plain tile roof*

*(right) Nineteenth century gault brick with render mouldings*

### 3.35 Trees and Hedgerows:

- Mixed Woodland  
Oak, ash. Less common: wild cherry. Glades and near edges: field maple.
- Hedgerows, Woodland Edges and Scrub  
Hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose, crab apple, field maple and, occasional, dogwood.
- Trees in Hedgerows  
Oak, ash, field maple.
- Avenues  
Oak, lime, horse chestnut.
- Stream Sides  
Alder, white willow, crack willow, goat willow. Occasional: Guelder rose, dogwood. Occasional where not waterlogged: hazel, ash, oak.

### Design Principles

### 3.36 Based on the above analysis of landscape settlement and built character, the following key design principles are set out:

- Maintain the distinctive, dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads, cottages and small, detached houses along lanes, seeking to avoid infill.

- Maintain the distinctive settlement setting of Gamlingay, including; small stream valleys, woodlands, mature hedgerows and trees. Ensure new developments improve any existing harsh edges with a framework of new hedges, trees and woodland planting relating to local mixes.
- Maintain the traditional linear form of Gamlingay by limiting backland and cul-de-sac developments.
- Ensure buildings are positioned to reflect local patterns such as mostly continuous frontages running along the back edge of pavements, with only occasional gaps, giving glimpses of countryside beyond.
- Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings of the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, materials, colours and textures of the locality.
- Enclose boundaries facing onto roads by brick walls in the village core.
- Retain hedges and introduce them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores.
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate.
- Ensure large barns are sited and designed to minimise their bulk and impact on the wider landscape, normally relating them to existing groupings of farm buildings.

## **E. The Fen Edge**

**Parishes** – Cottenham, Fen Drayton, Girton, Histon, Horningsea, Impington, Landbeach, Longstanton, Milton, Oakington, Over, Willingham, Rampton, Swavesey, Waterbeach, Westwick.





Landscape Character

3.37 This character area has a mostly flat, low-lying landscape with open views. However, scatterings of clumps of trees, poplar shelterbelts and occasional hedgerows sometimes merge together to give the sense of a more densely treed horizon. Straight running 'lodes', drains and north-south droves are distinctive features. The Great Ouse river and the 'lodes' are enclosed by raised banks, which sometimes provide valuable grassland habitats, or are marked by lines of willows. Low sand and gravel fen 'islands' rise above the flat landscape and have provided an historic focus for settlements. Smallholdings for market gardens, flower growing nurseries and orchards introduce additional local variety and interest in the landscape.

*Open fen landscape  
Evidence of medieval long fields*

*Enclosed farmland and long gardens  
provide soft edge*



*Mature trees and hedgerows contribute  
to landscape setting  
Typical settlement landscape setting*

*Village green*

3.38 The key characteristics are:

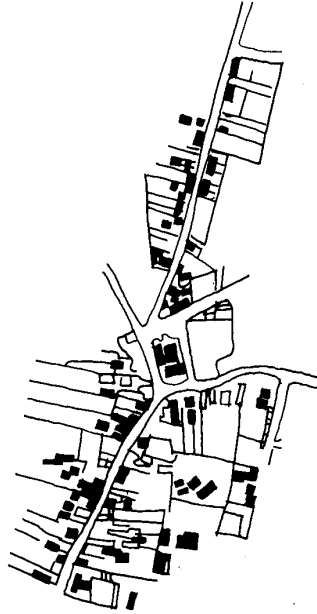
- A low-lying, flat open landscape with extensive vistas.
- Large skies create drama.
- A hierarchy of streams, 'lodes', drains and ditches dissect the landscape.
- The rich and varied intensive agricultural land use includes a wide range of arable and horticultural crops and livestock.
- Orchards are a distinctive feature.
- Slightly elevated fen 'islands' have a higher proportion of grassland cover, trees and hedgerows.
- Small scale, irregular medieval field patterns are still visible around the edge of settlements.
- Church towers and spires create landmarks.

#### Settlement Character

3.39 The villages on the low fen islands are characterised by their strong linear form, often having developed outwards from crossroads along approach roads. The historic linear form is retained despite the modern estate developments that have occurred in many of the villages. Some village edges, such as at Cottenham, have a well wooded character, with hedgerows and mature trees concealing buildings, while others, such as Fen Drayton, have more open edges. Within the historic cores narrow lanes with continuous street frontages are typical, but on village edges buildings are more often setback with low walls and hedges fronting the streets. Long back gardens are also a common feature.

Willingham

- Groups of buildings on or close to the back of the pavement in the village core
- Discontinuous frontages on edge of settlement



Fen Drayton

- Narrow lanes
- Intimate character



3.40 The key characteristics are:

- Historic cores of villages are located on the fen islands, although some modern development has spread onto low-lying land.
- Settlements sit low in the landscape, often screened by thick hedgerows to paddocks, copses, groups of mature trees and orchards.
- Strong linear form and street pattern.
- Narrow lanes with continuous street frontages create an intimate character.
- More loose knit arrangement of buildings facing the roads on some village approaches, with open areas and mature hedges interspersed.
- Occasional central medieval village greens formed from infilled historic docks and wharves.
- Clusters of glasshouses, farms, cottages and some modern detached houses are located along lanes.



*(left) Typical street scene*



*(right) Central village green*

#### 3.41 Building and Materials:

- Vernacular buildings are typically small scale, one and a half or two storeys in height. A few larger villas occur in some village core areas.
- Wall materials vary; yellow Gault clay brickwork predominates, but plastered timber-frame, dark stained weatherboarding and red brick are also present.
- Roofs are historically of thatch and plain clay tiles, with pantiles and Welsh slate being later introductions.
- Timber-frame building details include; steeply pitched roofs, side hung timber casements set flush to the outside face of the wall, drip boards set on gable ends and over the windows, with four or six panelled or planked doors.
- Eighteenth and nineteenth century house details include; vertically sliding sash windows set in reveals over shallow stone cills and with gauged or segmental arched brick lintels over, four or six panelled doors in simple classical door cases incorporating fan lights and chimneys incorporated within the buildings or at gable ends.
- Some brick buildings in the village cores have Dutch gables, reflecting the eighteenth and nineteenth century's links with the Low Countries.



*(left) Typical eighteenth century house details*  
*(right) Typical nineteenth century house details*



*(left) Dutch gable*  
*(right) Brick and clay pantile*

### 3.42 Trees and Hedgerows:

- Peat and Silt Fenland  
Ash, white willow, oak, field maple, birch, white poplar, hybrid black poplar, goat willow, grey willow, hawthorn, guelder rose, dogwood, horse chestnut, sycamore.

- Fen Islands  
Ash, oak, field maple, crab apple, wild cherry, white willow, goat willow, hawthorn, hazel, dogwood, blackthorn, wild privet.



*(left) Simple brick bridge*  
*(right) Orchards on settlement edges*

### Design Principles

3.43 Based on the above analysis of landscape settlement and built character, the following key design principles are set out:

- Ensure any village extensions are located on the high ground of the Fen Islands, avoiding incremental development on the flat, low-lying fen.
- Ensure new developments on the edges of villages are integrated by thick hedgerows, copses and shelterbelt planting reflecting the local mixes. Ensure a transition between Fen and Fen Island by retention and creation of small hedgerowed paddocks.
- Conserve and enhance existing orchard and hedgerowed paddocks.
- Maintain linear or rectilinear form of the settlements and avoid closes and cul-de-sacs where possible.
- Ensure buildings are mostly set on the back edge of pavements, or face the street with small front gardens in the village cores.
- Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings of the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, materials, colours and textures of the locality.

- Enclose boundaries facing onto roads by low brick walls and/or simple iron railings, timber picket fences and hedges as appropriate in the village cores.
- Retain hedges and introduce them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores.
- Integrate water features, such as ditches dykes and ponds, into new developments as part of open spaces.
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate.

## **OUTLINE OF TRADITIONAL BUILDING FORMS AND ELEMENTS OF THE AREA**

- 3.44 The vernacular architecture of a region is heavily influenced by the building materials available in that area, which in turn are related to the geology. The geology of South Cambridgeshire is outlined in Chapter 2, and basically comprises chalk in the southern parts of the district with clay further north.
- 3.45 This limited palette of materials gives traditional buildings a consistency of appearance despite their many periods and designs. This helps to identify and characterise the locality and our towns and villages.

### **Walling materials**

#### Timber Frame



*Close studded timber frame*

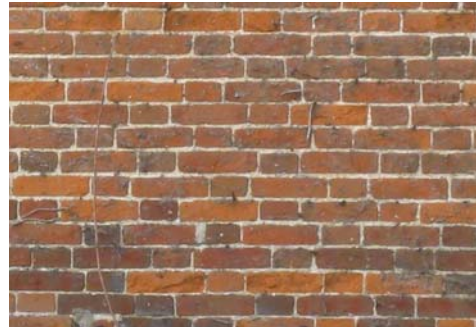
- 3.46 In South Cambridgeshire there is a distinct lack of good building stone and, therefore, the majority of early traditional buildings were constructed of timber-frame; the area once boasted a plentiful supply of good timber. The

timber-frame construction in Eastern England was generally box framed in oak, with the timber studs set at close centres to produce vertical panels, as opposed to the square panels found in the Midlands. There is no tradition of cruck frames within this area.

- 3.47 Where the oak frame was of sufficient quality to be exposed externally, the intervening panels were infilled using wattle and daub. In South Cambridgeshire, this involved wattles of hazel being woven, basket fashion, around light oak staves fitted between the frames. The whole was then daubed on both sides with a mixture of clay, dung and chopped straw, and protected from the weather by a coat of limewash.
- 3.48 An unbroken weather protective cladding had several potential advantages over wattle and daub infill, and this led to the widespread use of lime plaster on riven wooden laths nailed to the outside face of the studs. The render finish could be plain, decorated with a white or colour wash, or moulded into one of a number of patterns, known as pargetting. Decorative pargetting first appeared at the end of the sixteenth century, though the technique reached its height of popularity in the latter half of the seventeenth century and eventually fell out of favour in by the middle of the eighteenth century. The patterns are often distinct from modern pargetting patterns. Historically pargetting was confined to the east of Cambridgeshire, along the Suffolk/Essex borders. Colours on rendered buildings are generally light and warm, often pale cream, but some buildings are painted pale pink or yellow and, occasionally, earthy red.
- 3.49 Weatherboard is typical of outbuildings and minor domestic buildings and extensions. Historically it was limewashed on houses and black tarred or left as natural oak or elm on outbuildings. The hierarchy of use on new buildings would be in accordance with this local tradition.
- 3.50 On lesser structures, such as cottages and agricultural buildings, timber weatherboarding provided an alternative cladding material to lime plaster. Weatherboarding is known to have been in use from around 1600, when oak or elm boards were pegged to the timber-frame. The use of deal (softwood) boards nailed to the studs dates from the latter part of the eighteenth century. Deal needed protection from the elements unlike oak and elm, which could be left un-painted. More recently, imported cedar has been used and weathers to a darker colour than the silver-grey characteristic of oak or elm.



## Brickwork



*(left) Early gault brick in garden wall bond  
(right) Red brick in Flemish bond*

- 3.51 The Romans first introduced the art of brick making into Britain, but this knowledge was lost in the Dark Ages. Following the introduction of brick making from the continent, bricks began to be used again in Britain during the seventeenth century. Initially there were isolated examples of narrow red bricks imported to Cambridgeshire to be used on high status buildings. This was followed by the use of local Gault clay for the manufacture of bricks, originally using narrow dimensions similar to the imported bricks. From the eighteenth century onwards there is an increasing use of brickwork in the region.
- 3.52 The early local bricks were generally red or a 'white' brick that weathered grey. In the nineteenth century, manufacture of the characteristic yellow 'Cambridge stock' brick commenced.
- 3.53 Traditional brick walls were constructed using Flemish bond, English bond or, sometimes, English Garden Wall bond (all of which incorporate headers into the visible pattern). The use of stretcher bond only developed in the twentieth century, in parallel with the development of the cavity wall. Other traditional details include the use of cut arches or oak lintels over openings and a traditional flexible lime mortar avoiding the need for movement joints.

## Unfired Brickwork



- 3.54 The glacial boulder clay that overlies the chalk in the south-east area of the district was used predominately during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to produce a form of unfired brickwork used in walling, known as clay-bat or clay lump. The process involved digging out the clay, removing the flints and other large stones, mixing it with chopped straw, then compressing the mixture into wooden moulds before leaving it for several weeks to dry out. Clay bats were time-consuming but cheap to produce, and a good insulant. The 'bricks' were much larger than a fired brick, at around 450mm long, by between 125 and 225mm high and 150mm thick. The external face of a clay-bat wall needed protection from the elements; on agricultural buildings this was often by a coat of tar. Tar could also be used on cottages, in which case it was generally sanded and colour-washed, but it was equally as common for cottages to be rendered in a lime plaster.

### Stone



*(left) Clunch wall*  
*(right) flint wall*



- 3.55 The chalk that underlies much of the district does not make a particularly good, or durable walling material. Chalk is a form of particularly pure limestone, it is very soft, which means it is easy to work, but is vulnerable to rapid weathering, especially in a polluted atmosphere. Within the lower Chalk beds of Cambridgeshire the chalk is more compacted than that found elsewhere in south-east England and this has enabled it to be used as a building stone, known as clunch. The qualities of the stone made it possible for the chalk to be cut into squared, ashlar blocks, and it was widely used for internal walls, arcades and capitals in churches, but equally, if carefully detailed and protected by render or limewash, or under good roof overhangs, it could be used externally.

- 3.56 The flints which occur naturally within the local chalk are much more durable than clunch, but are extremely difficult to work. The rounded nodules of flint are also difficult to bond and to terminate at window and door openings. Therefore, when flint is used for walling, the nodules of flint are often set in relatively thick mortar beds and combined with brickwork or ashlar stonework to frame rectangular openings for windows and doorways, and to turn corners. Where a truer face is required to the wall, one side of the flint nodule may be crudely faced or knapped. Flint is usually laid in courses, sometimes only noticeable when viewed close to along the wall. In South Cambridgeshire flint is frequently used in the construction of churches, but is not so widely used for secular buildings as in other chalk areas. It is more generally confined to boundary walls and the occasional cottage, and then often dates from the nineteenth century.
- 3.57 The outcrop of Greensand hardly makes an impression on South Cambridgeshire and it is only significant in the west of the district around the village of Gamlingay. Here the parish church is built of Greensand, but otherwise it is not used as a building stone.
- 3.58 Stones such as Bath and Ketton stone were imported to the area primarily during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for weathering and architectural detailing on brick-built higher status buildings, such as schools, chapels and larger houses. Combinations of stone detailing and render walls are not traditional as the render generally signifies a timber frame.

### **Roofing materials**

#### Thatch

- 3.59 Thatch has been widely used throughout South Cambridgeshire. Long straw is the traditional material used throughout most of the district, although some water reed has always been used on the fen-edge. In more recent times there has been an increase in the use of reed over long straw, due to the greater longevity and availability of imported reed. It is important that the long straw tradition is maintained within the district since it has a distinctive character and produces a roof that is visually different to one covered in reed. One very obvious difference between the two materials is in the detailing of the ridge. Reed is stiff and brittle, and cannot be bent over a ridge. Therefore, on a reed thatch roof the ridge is formed with an additional layer of thatch, using sedge, tough grass or straw (that may incorporate decorative embellishments to its lower edge). A true long straw thatch roof on the other hand has a simple, unadorned ridge. All thatch roofs in South Cambridgeshire are steeply pitched, at 50 degrees and over.

## Tile

- 3.60 Roofing tiles used within the region are produced in two forms; Plain tile (peg tile), which are relatively small and are laid with double lap on moderately steep pitches (40 to 50 degrees), and pan-tiles, which are larger and are laid with a single lap at shallower pitches (35 to 45 degrees). Production of roofing tiles from the Gault Clay of the district dates back to the fifteenth century for peg-tiles, with clay pan-tiles becoming widespread from the eighteenth century. Plain tile was the most expensive local roofing material and therefore used for higher status buildings. Pantile was used traditionally for outbuildings and smaller houses. Machine-made plain tiles were introduced during the mid nineteenth century and have a flatter appearance and noticeably more mechanical character than hand made tiles.



*Local plain tile and pantile*

## Slate

- 3.61 The continued use of thatch perpetuated the risk from fire, especially within the densely built up village centres, and there remained a need for a readily available source of cheap, durable and non-flammable roofing material, as well as a desire to roof over shallow pitches. After the introduction of the railways in the middle of the nineteenth century, Welsh slate was able to fulfil this need and became widely used throughout the district (where it is laid at pitches as low as 25 degrees). The resulting low-pitched roofs are characteristic of Georgian and Victorian buildings. Slate used in South Cambridgeshire is therefore a distinctive Welsh mid grey or grey-pink colour rather than the dark grey and black seen on foreign imported slates.



*Mid blue-grey Welsh slate*

#### Timber

- 3.62 Timber shingles are used for outbuildings and garden buildings and can be used at very low pitches. Imported materials like cedar weather differently to traditional local materials such as oak and can be more vulnerable to attack by woodpeckers. Hand-cut shingles have more texture and stability and can be used at lower pitches than machine-cut.

#### Metal

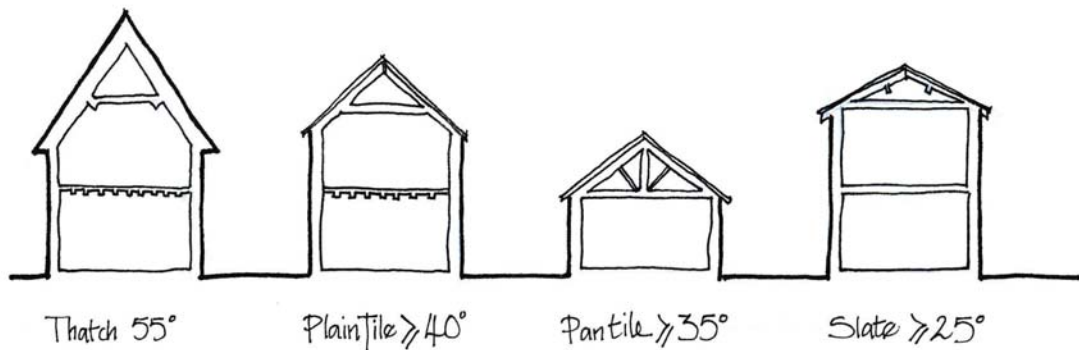
- 3.63 Corrugated iron is often found as a temporary material on roofs that have failed. It is characteristically cheap but sometimes appropriate at very shallow pitches or to provide an industrial or agricultural character.
- 3.64 Lead was rarely used prior to the eighteenth century other than on churches. It is characteristic of high status buildings, usually laid to an almost-flat slope. Early lead was cast, but during the nineteenth century milled lead was developed which was thinner and cheaper. Terne-coated stainless steel has a similar colour, and is sometimes a modern alternative where there is a problem with theft of lead, although it is thinner and therefore care is needed to match lead details convincingly.
- 3.65 Copper was rarely used prior to the nineteenth century and is not characteristic of traditional buildings of the area. It was popular during the Arts and Crafts period and weathers to a distinctive bright green.

#### Felt and asphalt

- 3.66 Typical of lower status twentieth and twenty-first century flat roofs, they require much higher maintenance than traditional materials.

## Glass

- 3.67 Glass roofs are typical of greenhouses of the late nineteenth century and later, when glass could be manufactured more reliably and in larger sizes. Less traditional glass roofs are characteristic of the late twentieth century onwards. Glass pantiles were used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to light outbuildings and agricultural buildings.



*Diagram illustrating different roof pitches for different materials*

## **Details**

### Windows



*(left) Horizontal sliding (Yorkshire) sash window  
(middle) Side opening casement window  
(right) Vertical sliding sash window (with circa 1800 marginal light design)*

- 3.68 Windows were generally of timber and their design was closely associated with developments in the techniques of glass making. Up until the end of sixteenth century glass was too expensive for use in all but the grandest of houses, so windows in smaller houses were frequently left un-glazed, with wooden shutters introduced during the latter half of the seventeenth century. Early glass could only be produced in very small panes and early

windows comprised pieces of glass in lead comes set in wrought iron frames and fitted into an outer timber frame. This timber frame was in oak, elm or chestnut and was often left untreated. As the use of glass became more common, leaded lights were frequently retrofitted into older buildings.

- 3.69 From the mid seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries onwards, the design of windows began to reflect classical styles. Good quality softwood became the predominant material, decorated with paint or (occasionally) graining.
- 3.70 Square openings in vernacular buildings were generally fitted with side-hung or horizontal sliding ('Yorkshire') timber casements which had wooden glazing bars used to subdivide each casement. The casements were set level with or behind their frame, unlike the modern 'storm casement'.
- 3.71 Vertical sliding sash windows were first introduced at the end of the seventeenth century. The earliest sash windows were in painted oak rather than softwood with wide ovolo glazing bars and generally had their top casement fixed shut. The section of the glazing bars became more refined over time and varieties such as lamb tongue mouldings were introduced.
- 3.72 Throughout the eighteenth century the pattern of sash windows generally remained that of 6 panes to each sash (6 over 6). Around the middle of the nineteenth century advances in glass production enabled the pane size to be increased and the subdivision of sash windows simplified; initially to 3 over 3, then later to 2 over 2 and, finally, to a single, large pane in each sash. These larger panes were of thicker glass, and therefore heavier. In order to carry this additional weight the frames needed to be strengthened, and this led to the use of horns on the sashes from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards.
- 3.73 Often a mix of window types is found. This often shows the hierarchy of the building; with newer styles of windows in the main reception and higher status rooms and earlier styles of windows in ancillary and subservient lower status spaces.
- 3.74 During the Tudor Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a short-lived re-introduction of iron frames in untreated oak frames, to reflect the period style of the building.
- 3.75 Cast iron windows in distinctive decorative patterns were also introduced in the late nineteenth century. Where found, it is important they are retained, but they are difficult to reproduce.
- 3.76 Steel windows and doors date from the early twentieth century onwards and are characteristic of modernist and minimalist designs.

- 3.77 Early glass has distinctive manufacturing marks and reflective patterns giving interest and liveliness to a façade and should be retained where found.

### Doors

- 3.78 The entrance door evolved with two functions in mind; defence - whether it be against human invaders or the wind and rain, and display - emphasising the house owner's position in the world. Because doors have been, to some extent, a symbol of prestige, they have also been influenced by the prevailing fashion of the time.



*(left) An internal boarded (planked) door  
(middle) Late eighteenth century door  
(right) Nineteenth century door*

- 3.79 Early doors were often defensive in character, constructed of heavy oak planks, smoothed with an adze, and fastened onto horizontal boards. The two faces were secured with wooden pegs or iron studs and the doors were hung on strap hinges, with iron pins seated directly in the timber surround to the door and no intervening doorframe. Security was achieved through the use of an internal draw-bar, with no handle or knob on the outside.
- 3.80 In the seventeenth century the basic construction did not change, but the number of vertical planks to each door increased and the edges were sometimes moulded as the planks themselves became narrower and defence gave way to decoration. External fastenings were introduced, normally a heavy iron ring-pull. Whilst in some buildings there was still no separate doorframe, in others the door closed flush against a heavy timber frame.
- 3.81 Towards the end of the seventeenth century, these boarded doors evolved into ledged doors where, instead of a double layer of timber, the vertical boards were supported by three horizontal ledges on the internal face. The



earliest ledges were relatively thin. Later doors had thicker ledges and became the ledged and braced door that remained in widespread use right up to the middle of the twentieth century, especially for subservient rooms and rural and less fashionable buildings. The diagonal braces provided additional strength and rigidity. Simple strap hinges connected the flush face to a rebated timber doorframe with metal 'Suffolk' type latches as the most common type of fastening. Strap hinge details varied over the centuries and their position moved from outside to the inside of the door. Likewise the planks were originally butt-jointed, often with a small bead moulding on the joint. This gradually evolved during the twentieth century to tongue and groove.

- 3.82 In the eighteenth century the revival of interest in the architecture of Greece and Rome resulted in a sophisticated and elegant architectural style within which the panelled doors became the norm. Details of the panels varied widely, but the six-panelled version became the most common. Some panels were flush with the stiles and rails others were raised and fielded. Hinges had to be unobtrusive, so as not to spoil the effect, and often H or L type hinges were used. Internally, the door no longer opened into a main room but into a smaller hallway and fanlights over the door allowed light to reach this internal space. The classical doorcase, with pilaster and pediment (triangular or segmental), emphasised the social significance of the door. Door 'furniture' became more elaborate with knockers, door knobs and eventually letter-boxes, all normally made of brass. Boot scrapers outside the door protected the polished floors and rugs inside. In the nineteenth century the number of panels gradually diminished until four-panelled doors became the most usual type. One large raised and fielded panel at the bottom was not, however, uncommon, particularly in the latter part of the century. Overall the effect was chunkier and more 'solid' than the elegance of the eighteenth century. Fanlights too became simpler, with plain rectangles or arches replacing the delicate tracery of the earlier doors. A greater variety of door furniture was used, with iron and, on occasion, glass or porcelain, added to the familiar brass. The door was hung from butt hinges, familiar to those still used today.

#### Lintels and Cills

- 3.83 The detailing of the lintels and cills was an integral part of window and door design. On the more humble vernacular buildings lintels were generally formed from timber, though on brick structures a simple, segmental ('curved') brick arch was also frequently used externally, in combination with a timber internal lintel. On grander brick buildings rubbed bricks (specially shaped soft bricks with very fine joints) were sometimes used to form flat arches over the window heads. Alternatively in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, imported dressed stone could be used for both the lintels and cills of masonry buildings. In brick or stone walls, windows and doors are set back from the outer face of the wall for protection against

weather, with the exception of the late seventeenth century and earlier when doors and windows were set level with the outer face of brickwork. In rendered and weatherboarded walls, windows and doors were set level with the outside face, using a timber pentice board over the head to shed water and occasionally also with an architrave. The main door sometimes had a hoodmould or canopy instead of a simpler pentice board.

### Dormers and Rooflights

- 3.84 Dormers are traditionally modest, forming only minor incidents in the roof slope. The exceptions are classically designed grand houses of the early eighteenth century where they were used to emphasise the verticality, proportions and height of the building, and late nineteenth century 'Arts and Crafts' buildings where they emphasise the designed articulation of a roof.
- 3.85 A number of traditional buildings in the district are either 1½ or 2½ storeys, with gable end windows and a limited number of dormer windows used to light the rooms that extend into the roof space. Most dormers are relatively narrow (i.e. two casements wide) and have simple gabled roofs, though on steeply pitched roofs (and particularly on the fen margins) catslide dormers are also not uncommon. Dormers introduced into thatched roofs are generally 'eyebrow' type, though sometimes they may be gabled and roofed in plain tile or slate.
- 3.86 On grander houses the dormers may have flat, or gently arched, roofs covered in lead, which on later 'Arts and Crafts' houses could also have a significant horizontal emphasis.



*(left) Eyebrow dormer in thatch  
(middle) Nineteenth century decorative dormer  
(right) Catslide dormer*

- 3.87 Rooflights were generally not used to light habitable rooms, but could be used to light roof spaces used for storage. These rooflights are traditionally relatively small, made of wrought iron or cast iron, with a central vertical iron glazing bar, and are unobtrusively located on the rear slopes, or behind parapets.

#### Eaves and Verges

- 3.88 Traditionally, eaves and verges in South Cambridgeshire are kept very simple and are cut back tight to the building without fascias, soffits or bargeboards. Where the eaves extend beyond the line of the wall (more commonly found on timber-framed structures), this is normally detailed as an 'open eaves' with exposed sprockets to the rafter feet. Brick buildings often incorporate decorative dentil courses under the eaves and, sometimes, 'tumbled' brickwork to the verges or chimneystacks. Later Victorian structures may also incorporate verges that project beyond the line of the wall below and these often include decoratively shaped bargeboards.

#### Chimneys

- 3.89 The introduction of chimneys dates from the medieval period, when flues and chimneystacks were first used to funnel smoke from fires. They only became widely used during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the stack was substantial and often surmounted by freestanding shafts, usually circular in plan or set diagonally. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the number of rooms with fireplaces increased resulting in more and larger combined stacks; classical details such as cornices, stringcourses and plinths were also widely used. Chimney pots were introduced on top of the stack in the eighteenth century. These early pots were plain and of modest proportions. In the nineteenth century pots became taller, with more elaborate profiles and decorative features.
- 3.90 Chimneystacks were generally located on gable ends or centrally on the ridge, especially on more modest dwellings. Where stacks were located on gables, it was normal for them to again be placed centrally, such that the flue terminated inline with the ridge, and with the stack flush to the outside face of the gable. Subserving stacks such as for ancillary spaces and service areas such as wash rooms were smaller and less decorative.

#### Rainwater Goods

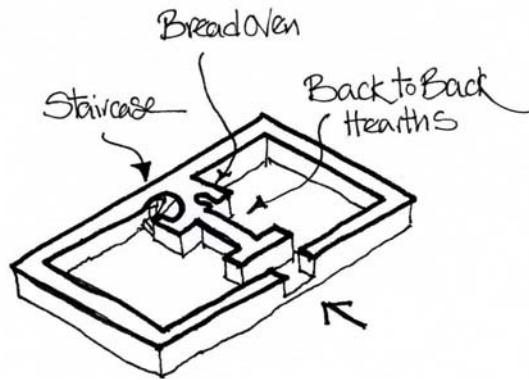
- 3.91 Rainwater goods include; gutters, downpipes, rainwater heads, spouts, and gulleys. They not only protect walls from water penetration, but also contribute to a building's design, giving vertical emphasis, horizontal definition and decoration. The earliest surviving examples of rainwater goods are stone gargoyles and spouts found on medieval buildings,

especially churches. Gutters and downpipes were not generally applied to secular buildings until the mid eighteenth century. Before then, wide overhanging eaves of thatched and clay tile roofs provided protection by shedding water away from walls. During the eighteenth century it became fashionable to incorporate gutters either in classical cornices, or concealed behind a parapet wall. These gutters were then connected to lead downpipes via lead rainwater heads, which were often elaborately decorated with mouldings, heraldic devices, initials and dates.

- 3.92 Early guttering was generally made from wood, of simple, square, or ogee box section with minimal decoration and attached to walls beneath the eaves, supported by either wrought iron or steel brackets, or set on brick or stone corbels, or occasionally partly recessed into the wall. Cast iron became available from about 1750, from when cast iron rainwater heads similar to decorative lead goods bearing dates and initials, can be found. The mass production of cast iron gutters and downpipes dates from the early years of the nineteenth century and it became the most common material for rainwater goods from the mid nineteenth century until the 1950s. More recently cast aluminium has been available as a lighter alternative with a similar appearance to cast iron.

### **Plan Form**

- 3.93 The traditional plan form of the area was for wide frontage cottages of shallow depth (i.e. single room deep and a maximum of 6 metres). These spans are limited historically by the sizes of timber. A span of 5 to 6 metres is common and larger buildings are made from multiples of this. These multiples of the traditional span are clearly identifiable in the external appearance of the building, such as by using a double pile roof or aisled form.
- 3.94 The earliest buildings have simple rectangular forms with single room depth plans. A few high status buildings have aisles to increase the internal volume and later more commonly cross-wings are incorporated. The simple rectangular single storey to one-and-a-half storey form continues as the most common form of building in later centuries.
- 3.95 Many traditional cottages follow a 'baffle entry' form, in which there is central chimney stack (usually with two fireplaces back to back) and the main entry door sited on the side of the stack, creating a lobby between the two rooms. Access to first floor was generally via a staircase sited on the opposite side of the stack, but the stairs could also be contained within an outshut to the rear.



*Baffle entry house*

- 3.96 Larger houses from the eighteenth century onwards frequently made use of the 'double pile' plan form, in which there are two parallel ranges, resulting in four rooms being provided on each floor, together with a centrally placed front door and a staircase located between the two rooms on the rear elevation. These double pile arrangements are characteristic of higher and mid-status buildings such as manor houses, vicarages, farmhouses and villas.
- 3.97 This house type was later to be used as the model for the narrow fronted, Victorian terraced cottages that are also two rooms deep but only one room wide, with further accommodation contained in outshuts to the rear. Examples of these are generally to be found within the larger villages, especially those that experienced rapid growth during the nineteenth century.
- 3.98 Extensions to buildings follow simple traditional additive forms; as attached cross-wings, lower parallel ranges, gables and lean-tos. Double pile roofs to reduce the apparent depth of a deep-span building are too complex for simple vernacular buildings and domestic outbuildings. The additions are clearly identifiable on the elevations and have subservient forms, being lower and narrower than the original building.



## PART II

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

South Cambridgeshire consists of villages within open countryside, rather than towns and large urban contexts. This modest scale and rural setting is the basis of the local distinctiveness, which shows in the type, scale, density, details, materials and spaces characteristic of the existing settlements.

The district has a demand for major new development. Much of this is focused on extensions to Cambridge and a new town at Northstowe, but development will also take place, to different degrees, in villages set out open countryside.

The design of new development needs to create viable and vibrant spaces and buildings that also respect, preserve and enhance the special character of South Cambridgeshire.

The aim of this section is therefore to identify important design criteria for this new development in urban and rural contexts.

Many of the principles will apply to all types of development but some will apply to just one, for example creating a new town or adding to villages. The guide therefore should be used with discretion.







## CHAPTER 4

### URBAN DESIGN

#### INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 Good urban design addresses the interface between all the issues that influence the form and use of urban settlements, in order to create successful places where people want to live, work and visit, and which supports their needs. The purpose of urban design is to create good quality places, rather than just the provision of developments.
- 4.2 Urban design principles apply to all forms and sizes of development. For even one single house to be provided in an existing street, it will be best designed to integrate into its surroundings if urban design principles are followed. This chapter focuses on the full range of urban design principles that apply, in full or part, to all development proposals and addresses larger development proposals. Chapter 7 focuses specifically on the issues that are encountered with smaller scale developments.
- 4.3 Prior to any design work being undertaken, it is essential that the site is fully understood in its context. It must be fully understood how the proposed development will be integrated with the existing communities and their supporting facilities and services, from the sub-regional level down to the neighbourhood and block level; dependant upon the location of the site and the intended scale and nature of the proposed development. The residents and workers of, and visitors to, the new development must have ready and convenient access to existing facilities and services; with any new facilities and services, provided as part of the development supporting and integrating with those already existing. Provision for the community must go beyond a consideration of the provision of housing and facilities and must address how the whole and its component parts are designed to promote the integration of a healthy community, who will live, work and play there for at least one hundred years. This will require the integration of new developments into the existing social structure, movement patterns and public transport services and the wider landscape and/or townscape as appropriate. (Townscape is a generic term relating to the urban scene i.e. the appearance of a built environment, whether a hamlet or a city.)
- 4.4 Society and its requirements are constantly changing, therefore, development proposals should be designed in a manner that will allow future adaptation and alteration, to prevent developments becoming potentially unused or undesirable if they cannot accommodate future needs. The known changes that are likely to be encountered are, in household size and composition, lifestyle, work patterns, transportation patterns and climate.

- 4.5 The purpose for developers of properly understanding context is to enable them to promote development, which will integrate with its surroundings. Development proposals that are an imposition on a location and do not address the social, sustainable, economic, transport and ecological structure of the context will not be accepted.

## **QUALITY**

- 4.6 Quality is not a matter of luxury, i.e. of expensive design details and construction materials. Quality is concerned with the whole approach to the planning and design of new developments, not just by the developer and the Local Planning Authority, but by all the partners involved, to ensure that new developments conveniently and efficiently provide the facilities, services and conditions that the people living and working in, or visiting them, require, within the capacity of the environment to sustain them and protect local distinctiveness.

- 4.7 “Bad planning and design and careless maintenance encourages crime, contributes to poor health, undermines community cohesion, deters investment, spoils the environment and, over the long term, incurs significant costs.” (p6)

“The places where people live have a profound effect on their quality of life and life chances. Places exercise this effect in a range of ways – through, for instance, crime levels, pollution levels, employment opportunities, social ties and opportunities for community engagement, and the range and quality of local services, transport links and green space. Quality of place can then be understood as that subset of factors that affect people’s quality of life and life chances through the way the environment is planned, designed, developed and maintained.” (p11)

(World Class Places – the Government’s strategy for improving quality of place, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009)

- 4.8 It is important that new developments are designed and constructed in a manner that minimises the demand on natural resources:
- By minimising travelling, through the provision of mixed use developments and the provision of good and efficient public transport facilities, footpath and cycle networks;
  - By designing developments that respect the existing landscape and existing biodiversity and enhances them through the implementation of the proposals;

- By designing to avoid putting development at risk from flooding and ensuring the discharge of surface and rain water is by means of sustainable drainage systems to prevent creating flood risk for others;
- By constructing with robust materials, to ensure the long term durability of the development;
- By designing buildings in a manner that readily allows for their future conversion or adaptation;
- Designing and constructing buildings in a manner that minimises their energy consumption for heating, cooling and lighting; minimises the demand for potable water; and does not result in air, noise and light pollution; and designing developments that are not only valid today but remain so, in the face of changing climatic conditions, for at least 60 years for commercial buildings and 100 years for all other buildings.

4.9 Achieving high quality development requires the co-operation of all partners involved in the planning, design and ongoing maintenance of new development. This requires all parties to adopt a flexible approach in securing their interests to ensure that the development, as built, is fully integrated. With such an approach high quality development should remain the goal and be achievable irrespective of the fluctuations of the economic cycle.

4.10 Quality is dependent upon design rigour, the quality and durability of the materials selected and the quality of the workmanship during construction, to ensure robust high quality designs appropriate to the intended uses are attained.

4.11 The following is a list of considerations that impact on design quality and should be considered in the design process:

- Develop a clear design concept.
- Set a realistic budget for design, implementation and management of the works.
- Select design components and apply the principles of design theory and composition in a manner appropriate to the concept.
- Select materials that are long lasting, good looking and durable.
- Portray the scheme in clear and comprehensive plans.
- Choose contractors carefully, give them clear instructions and ensure thorough supervision of them on site.

- Devise conveyance and management regimes at an early stage.
- Designs should be appropriate and affordable for Parish Councils or others to manage.

## **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

- 4.12 Green Infrastructure describes a network of public open spaces, routes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and historic sites. It includes a wide range of different types of element such as rivers and watercourses, country parks, historic landscapes, archaeological sites and rights of way, and combines a range of functions.
- 4.13 Green Infrastructure provides an essential environmental foundation and support system and is set within and contributes to a high quality natural, historic and built environment. It is key to creating places that are attractive, healthy and give a good quality of life, and delivers a range of other social, economic and environmental benefits. Green infrastructure is needed to meet the needs of existing and new communities and is a crucial part of successful new development.
- 4.14 The aim is to plan, deliver and manage green infrastructure at county, district and community or neighbourhood scales. Green infrastructure should be an integral part of new development and its surroundings and link with the wider network. Existing green infrastructure should be protected and well managed.
- 4.15 The Green Infrastructure approach is supported at national, regional and local levels. It is included in PPS12: *Creating strong, safe and prosperous new communities through spatial planning* and is promoted in Natural England's *Green Infrastructure Guidance* (2009) and CABI's *Grey to Green* (2009). Green infrastructure is also included in the *East of England Plan* (May 2008).
- 4.16 Green infrastructure elements and approaches are supported and described in Local Development Documents such as Area Action Plans, the Development Control Policies DPD and Site Specific Policies DPD, as well as a number of Supplementary Planning Documents e.g., Landscape, Biodiversity.
- 4.17 In 2006 Cambridgeshire Horizons and partners (including South Cambridgeshire District Council) produced the first Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region. This Strategy and its results have been reviewed and a new strategy is currently being prepared which will cover the whole of Cambridgeshire. Other planned work will identify the costs of green infrastructure and mechanisms for funding including through development.

- 4.18 Cambourne and Trumpington Meadows are examples of the successful provision of green infrastructure as part of new developments and their settings. They show how it can deliver a number of specific objectives including sustainable drainage and flood management as well as creating attractive places and encouraging people to walk, cycle and enjoy their surroundings.
- 4.19 The District Council strongly supports the planning, delivery and management of green infrastructure as an essential part of new development and crucial to its success. Green infrastructure should be fully integrated with development and its setting, and link to wider green infrastructure networks. It should also contribute to existing communities and environmental and other resources. Green infrastructure should be a fundamental part of development, design and planning processes from the start.

#### **CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE**

- 4.20 Everywhere is somewhere, irrespective of it having a strong, a weak, a unique, or a pattern-book identity and irrespective of it having desirable or undesirable associations.
- 4.21 The starting point for development proposals should be what is “the spirit of the place” (the genius loci); what is good, strong and desirable to harness and what is poor, weak and undesirable that presents the opportunity for change and improvement. In relation to new development the aim should be to create somewhere that is recognisably distinct, whilst simultaneously strengthening the larger local identity.
- 4.22 The development must create and enhance an effective network of streets and buildings that achieve a permeable network and encourage cycling and walking. A permeable network is one that is easy to navigate and easily accessible by means of interconnected routes. It will not contain culs-de-sac or no-through routes as these result in poor integration and tortuous routes between places. A key structuring principle should be the provision of a direct, safe and convenient movement pattern on foot, bicycle or public transport. Movement patterns for private motorcars may be less direct to discourage their use; therefore some routes may not allow a through movement for motorcars. It should be noted that not all villages have a form and structure that is conducive to the application of this principle.
- 4.23 Any new development designed as one and constructed in a short period of time, compared to the lifetime of the settlement, runs the risk of appearing uniform. The design of large new developments should be undertaken in a manner that reflects the incremental growth of the settlement the development, lies within, is attached to, or is nearby, in the case of a new

settlement. To assist this the design of new developments should be split into smaller parcels, with each parcel designed by a different architect; appropriate parcel sizes are relative to the location of the development, with parcels for separate architects not exceeding 70 homes in Northstowe or urban extensions, reducing to less than 5 homes in some villages. House sizes and tenures create a more effective community character when they are intermixed throughout the development.

- 4.24 Any new large-scale development should be designed around a pattern of connected streets and public spaces that can be easily understood, so that people know where they are. The street network should focus on busy pedestrian places which have an identifiable and accessible heart, the location of which is marked by a concentration of facilities (e.g. shops, offices, small-scale workspaces, civic functions, schools, clinic, a public square or park) and by an increasing building height, providing greater enclosure. The heart of the development, and other important spaces, should also include features and landmarks that define them as special places.

## CHAPTER 5

### APPRECIATING CONTEXT

#### LANDSCAPE SETTING

- 5.1 The landform in the Cambridge Sub-Region is not highly pronounced. Therefore wherever possible variations in landform within development areas should be harnessed to accentuate the local landscape character, and care must be taken not to obscure distinctive landform characteristics with development. Road alignments and drainage corridors should also respect local landscape character. Generally development should be aligned parallel to the contours not up and down slopes, accentuating slope profiles and preventing their loss beneath staggered or irregular development. See Chapter 3 for further details of Landscape Character.
- 5.2 Any new development must sit comfortably in its landscape, taking account of the topography and natural or man-made features. New development should not intrude upon the skyline, with the exception of specifically agreed features selected as landmarks, in the tradition of church spires or towers. If, for the general development, this is unavoidable, careful consideration must be given to the height and form of buildings, with the built form broken down to appear as a composition of forms, rather than one large form and utilising trees and other planting to soften the impact on long distance views. In some specific cases there may be an argument in favour of retaining a hard built edge to a development.
- 5.3 **Developers are required to undertake a design-led approach that demonstrates and justifies its appropriateness for the development and its location.**












AREAS		CITY	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL
					
EXISTING	Cambridge				
	Market Towns				
GROWTH AREAS	Northern Fringe				
	Cambridge East				
	Southern Fringe				
	North West Cambridge				
	Northstowe				

Table identifying how new development areas fit into the varied character of Cambridgeshire, from the Cambridgeshire Design Guide.

### THE LANGUAGE OF BUILDINGS

- 5.4 Chapter 3 described the particular characteristics of settlements, buildings and materials found in different areas of South Cambridgeshire; and described materials and details that are traditional and distinctive to the district.
- 5.5 The Listed Buildings SPD (Chapter 15, pages 123-130) highlights specific types of buildings and structures within South Cambridgeshire. These include farm buildings including barns, granaries, stables, dovecotes, and cart and stock sheds. The importance of food processing, as well as agriculture, to the district is reflected by mills and maltings. Traditional crafts and industries are represented by smithies and tanneries. Bake houses and wash houses, schools and war memorials are also included.
- 5.6 Alongside the details and building types that are typical of an area, buildings reflect the relationship between their type, form, function, status and other aspects. The pattern or arrangement of buildings also helps create the character of places.



## The Relationship Between a Building's Form, Function, Date, Status and Other Aspects

- 5.7 In this section relationships between different aspects are considered separately. In reality, all the aspects work together in the design of buildings and contribute to the meanings they convey.
- 5.8 Schools are examples of how buildings' functions and details are reflected in their forms. Parts of Victorian and Edwardian schools are often divided equally between girls and boys. Tall windows and high ceilings give good light for reading and writing.
- 5.9 Industrial buildings can have limited numbers of small windows or, where illumination is important, long runs or areas of glazing.
- 5.10 Other examples of the relationship between function and details are: the louvred panels of drying sheds which encourage the passage of air; granaries lifted up on staddle stones to keep the rats at bay; and the snout and trotter resistant brick walls of pig sties. Some farm building types including barns and stores have no windows. When work is carried out, barn doors could be opened to give ventilation and light. Vents or slats in a farm building indicate that it housed animals or stored produce.



*(left) Granary on staddle stones  
(right) Slatted vent for livestock*

- 5.11 Details also reflect the properties of the materials used to keep a building weathertight and relatively warm and light. For example, thatch roofs have wide eaves to throw rain water away from the building. Clay bat walls need a 'good hat and boots' to protect the bats from the weather and keep them above the ground.
- 5.12 The different use and status of buildings is reflected in their construction and materials. For example, a house built with tiles and bricks may have outbuildings with humbler and cheaper pantile roofs and timber-framed walls.

- 5.13 Differences in wealth and status are reflected in the houses of the district. (What we have inherited gives just part of the story of the past as poorer cottages and workshops are less likely to have survived.)



*Mid / late nineteenth century Cottenham houses reflecting differences in social status.*

- 5.14 Parish churches were centres of the village and historically the building and churchyard could be used for a range of community and other activities. They could be well supported by the local landowner and receive other donations and funds. The status of churches is reflected in their positions in the village and the settings they enjoy, their ambition and impact, and the quality of materials and craftsmanship. In many cases, the church is the focus of the settlement – other buildings are grouped around it; its tower is the tallest structure in the group; and it is prominent in views.
- 5.15 Chapels, by contrast, are normally less prominent and tended to be built amongst the houses of the working class. Their often modest designs and materials reflected nonconformist beliefs as well the limited resources of chapel communities.
- 5.16 Ownership and influence is reflected in the design of buildings. Landowner controlled villages were generally smaller and neater than the more haphazard ‘open villages’ and often feature characteristic estate cottages. Landowners sometimes demolished villages to make way for new landscaped parks and planned villages could be built to replace them. Wimpole is an example of a planned village.

- 5.17 Different types of shared purpose and community action are reflected in almshouses, buildings associated with land settlement movements, and the village halls built as part of the self-help movement in the 1930s. Public and private ownership and influence are reflected in the designs of council and social housing, and those built by builders and private developers.
- 5.18 Finally, buildings reflect the period they were built, and architectural fashion, developments in design, the materials available locally and from further afield, prosperity and depression, and changing needs and solutions.

### **Patterns of Buildings**

- 5.19 This section looks at how buildings relate to each other and to the layouts of our villages.
- 5.20 Much of the character of villages is given by the patterns of streets, plots and buildings. The streets and open spaces create the 'skeleton' of a village and can remain little changed for centuries. The division of the land next to historic streets into plots is often long lived but is likely to change more frequently than the streets. At a smaller level of scale are the buildings that occupy the plots. These are more likely to be replaced or changed than the plots though some buildings outlive them. Extensive redevelopment can sweep away this historic pattern.
- 5.21 Villages can be dispersed (for example, made up of a number of 'ends' or small collections of buildings) or focused on one or more centres. Two of the standard models are buildings grouped around a village green and buildings running along a main street. Most settlements do not follow a simple pattern, however, and can combine features from different models in a complex whole. Villages reflect centuries of dynamic change in response to wide range of factors. As each settlement has its own set of circumstances, so each village is unique and special.
- 5.22 Different sizes and shapes of plots give places a very different feel. Medieval plots were typically long and relatively thin, and could lead on to a back lane and common fields beyond. The social hierarchy of a village was reflected in land divisions, with manor houses and vicarages sitting in larger plots.
- 5.23 Plot divisions in at least the same street were often reasonably regular. In many places more variety is given by the buildings which fill them. Unlike modern estates, it was unusual in rural villages for whole streets or areas to be built by the same people and at the same time. Individual houses or short terraces were constructed by different people at different times. The variety of building forms, types and uses found in most traditional villages is a key part of their character and appeal.

- 5.24 The way buildings are positioned on plots makes a significant difference to their settings and the way they are perceived and to sense of space and character of streets and villages. Many historic buildings were on or close to the street. Detached houses often had generous space either side. Where plots were less wide, then houses would be more likely to be joined together. This contrasts with modern suburban developments where houses are set back and individual or semi-detached houses can have relatively small gaps between them. Whether traditional houses form terraces or are individual buildings obviously affects their design and ability to change and extend over time.
- 5.25 In many village centres, buildings or substantial walls characteristically define the boundary of the public realm, usually the edge of a road or green. Typically, the front elevation and line of the main roof follow the direction of the street. Within some villages, such as Cottenham, occasional buildings are located perpendicular to the road with a prominent gable in the streetscape. Historically, the most important buildings were usually on the frontage, though farmhouses were often set back beyond a courtyard of farm buildings.
- 5.26 Beyond the main frontage buildings, the outbuildings are subservient and often orientated to follow the site boundaries at 90 degrees to the main building, becoming smaller as they become further from the main building. Farmsteads within villages often extend further to the rear of the street frontage than other development and this distinction should be retained rather than used as a general building line.
- 5.27 Towards the edges of villages, development is generally more open and the building line of development is often set back further from the road edge. It usually still follows the direction of the street but provides less enclosure. The front garden and the front boundary are more prominent and important in the streetscape. The front boundary changes character, often from walls and picket fences typically closer to the village centre to hedges leading towards the open countryside.
- 5.28 The size, shape, position and orientation of buildings in the streetscape will define the 'weave' of the built fabric. For example, detached buildings which are placed in the centre of larger width plots define a looser-knit settlement pattern than lines of terraced houses. Also, buildings that directly front on to the pavement generally define a narrower street and more enclosure than buildings set back with front gardens and garden walls.
- 5.29 Along with the variety of buildings already mentioned, their grouping, for example along a street or around a green, creates distinctive and attractive places. Farmsteads are an example of buildings and structures of different

but related functions found on the same large plot. A variety of different forms come together with buildings arranged to reflect the hierarchy of uses and the way the buildings and the whole farmstead works. This included the relative importance of easy access to the fields.

- 5.30 The relationship of the farmstead and its buildings to the countryside can be that of enclosure with a courtyard, or of openness to the fields, or its relationship can be within a larger settlement.
- 5.31 Individual and groups of buildings in the countryside or close to the edge of villages have specific characters and landscape qualities in which fields and trees predominate. Views can be more open and far-reaching with softer and less solid boundaries such as traditional hedges and simple open fencing such as post and rail.
- 5.32 Villages should always be seen within their wider landscape setting with its pattern of fields, woodlands, boundaries and routes. Dividing villages from the countryside that surrounds them ignores history and context. Rural communities were supported by agriculture with most people working on the land or in related trades. The countryside needed to be easily accessible from the village and the fields, common land, meadows and woods all supplied different needs. Villages should always be seen as part of and indivisible from the countryside.

## **VILLAGES**

### **Character, Significance and Models**

- 5.33 South Cambridgeshire is a particularly rural area. Agriculture was the main employer well into the last century and despite significant growth its population density is currently little more than a third that of the country as a whole.
- 5.34 The district almost entirely consists of villages (over 100) and countryside, and it is the rural settlements and landscapes, and their relationships, which gives it its special character.
- 5.35 Historically, each village was supported by an area containing agriculture and other natural resources. The boundaries of many of these areas were set by prehistoric times. Most of our rural settlements existed in some form by Domesday and the pattern of villages was more or less fixed by the fourteenth century. Our settlements and landscapes are a rich mix of survivals from the past, continuity, loss and change.
- 5.36 The relationship between villages and the surrounding countryside is crucial. For example, routes through and to the countryside often helped shape the forms of settlements. Some villages, for example in the Bourn

valley, were laid out over earlier medieval field systems and their origins are reflected in grid plans and the shape and size of fields and tofts. Tofts were generally developed as individual plots with a detached house in each. Medieval boundaries and long fields can be still identified in parts of the district such as the fen edge.

- 5.37 Medieval villages provided shelter and sustenance, but also reflected people's ideas of what a village should look like, including those of the community. Many villages were entirely planned and evidence of the earliest medieval planning still shows in the street patterns and narrow burgage plots of many of the district's villages.
- 5.38 The historic development of villages and landscape is complex but it can often be interpreted with sufficient attention and expertise. Such an understanding is an essential starting point for the design of new development.
- 5.39 The district's villages give historic models which should influence modern development. For example, these aspects of historic layouts could usefully be repeated:
- Grid plans and structures of roads and lanes and single and double rows.
  - Development along interconnected routes (including tracks and paths leading into the countryside).
- 5.40 Small fields surrounding and within villages (usually early enclosures) which give have an appropriate scale and provide screening trees and hedgerows. Villages and landscapes are therefore important and interesting because of their long and complex histories and relationships. They are valuable culturally as well as physically and visually, and the survival of villages shows that they have been a successful and flexible type of settlement. Villages need to be understood to inform the design process. Finally, their historic development provides useful models for future development.
- 5.41 Villages need to be given the attention and importance they deserve. This will help generate imaginative designs which come out of individual places and avoid standard village pastiches.

### **Challenges for Modern Development in Villages**

- 5.42 Development of any site must be understood and planned in terms of the history and future of the entire village. Developing individual sites in a piecemeal way is likely to detract from the village as a whole and its sense of place. The widespread use of culs-de-sac encouraged by such a piecemeal approach, often but not in all village locations, conflicts with

historic structures and character and urban design principles. Piecemeal development in villages should also be careful to retain existing visual links through to the countryside.



*Glimpses of the surrounding rural area between buildings in Cottenham.*



*Views of the surrounding rural area down side streets in Oakington.*

- 5.43 Many villages include areas of countryside and open spaces. The more built-up parts generally had low densities, for example, a row of detached historic houses could have a density of ten dwellings per hectare. Making successful responses to the historic patterns and densities of villages, which are important parts of their character, is a key challenge.



*A paddock in the heart of Little Shelford provides views of the church across open space within the heart of the village.*

- 5.44 The context of any new design will be informed by the established character of the area. This will include views, roads and paths, trees and landscapes and the scale, proportions, orientation, positions, building lines, styles, and materials of existing buildings.
- 5.45 The uniformity of much modern development – such as much criticized ‘anywhere housing’ – often contrasts with local character. Some accommodation for home and shared work use, and for local services, could increase the variety of building types.
- 5.46 Responding to existing variety in building design is a key challenge for new development as is the need to reflect the distinctive character and identity of each village.
- 5.47 Proposals should identify the focus of the context, whether countryside or settlement. Within the countryside it may be the long views and clumps of trees, and within the village it may be more intimate views or glimpses of countryside, and of the church, that is generally the focus of the settlement. The character of each part of the settlement or context is distinctive and careful consideration should be taken to preserve or enhance it.



*Cottenham approaching from the east; the village development is subservient to the church and the village tree line.*

- 5.48 The layout of each settlement also defines the positions, forms and footprints of new urban structure. The development within a nucleated settlement is contained within a roughly rounded perimeter, and in rolling landscapes such as the west, south and east of the district the settlement is often located on higher or lower ground than the land around it. In nucleated settlements new development is often limited to small or infill sites as it would risk being in competition with the original settlement if it extended significantly from one edge of the original group or overflowed onto the next ridgeline. A linear settlement follows the line of a road and does not extend significantly beyond the roadside buildings. Small lanes may extend outwards but they are characteristically short, often leading to a church, manor house group, farmstead or small farm cottages. New development therefore is generally restricted to the road edge.



- 5.49 Each village has a defined village framework shown on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map, outside of which there is a presumption against development. Certain villages have also prepared their own Village Design Statements and, where available, these should always be consulted. The Local Development Framework also outlines Conservation Areas, and a number of these are described in full detail in Conservation Area Appraisals. These Appraisals also contain summaries of Listed Buildings. The Council keeps a register of Listed Buildings and lists and descriptions are available at English Heritage's Images of England website ([www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk)). The grade of listing defines the special attributes of the building and setting, and a full analysis of the special characteristics of the Listed Building and its setting will inform the extent and type of new development possible.
- 5.50 Villages need to respond to the implications of climate change and scarce resources by reducing vulnerability and increasing the opportunities for sustainable action. Traditionally houses in the countryside had plots that allowed people to grow fruit and vegetables, and large gardens should be encouraged. (Many modern developments have small gardens.) Local food production, community orchards and community farms should also be supported and preserved. Existing and new small fields next to settlements provide opportunities for these along with accessible wildlife and other beneficial uses.
- 5.51 The movement of people living in villages can be severely restricted by the lack of safe, and suitably surfaced and connected, routes within and between settlements, and into and across the countryside. New development should allow and support these rather than act as barriers.
- 5.52 It is a challenge to combine some sustainable forms of construction and other approaches with local character, but this could provide a spur to imaginative design.
- 5.53 New development in villages should reflect the settlement's position in the spatial, historical and physical hierarchy of villages. Such an approach will help ensure the development's design is appropriate to its context and reflects the differences between villages.

### **URBAN EXTENSIONS**

- 5.54 Urban extensions are the addition to the outer edge of an existing settlement, of a new neighbourhood, district or township. All major urban extensions identified are for extensions to Cambridge.
- 5.55 Urban extensions will be of sufficient size to be able to establish their own identity and character and provide a focus for the building group. The extensions should, however, relate to the existing urban areas with which

they share a common boundary. It is also essential that urban extensions present an urban edge that is sympathetic to the character of Cambridge, or any other settlement extensions they are proposed for, as well as relating to the rural context they abut.

- 5.56 Urban extensions will often be of sufficient scale to enable the incorporation, from the outset, of high levels of sustainable technology to minimise the environmental impact of the development. Such considerations should include local heat and power generation, sustainable drainage systems, direct and convenient footpath and cycle routes to access the settlements primary facilities, direct and frequent public transport routes to access other facilities.

### **NEW SETTLEMENTS**

- 5.57 The focus of new development is on brownfield sites within existing urban areas; however in the Cambridge Sub-Region it is recognised that there is a need for a new settlement, at Northstowe, to provide the number of new homes required, without damaging the character and integrity of Cambridge, its surrounding settlements and their rural and green belt setting. New settlements require careful integration into the community structure of the Cambridge Sub-Region and should not undermine or compete with the existing settlements and their facilities, but rather be complementary to them to support both the existing and proposed population. They should form settlements that are connected to Cambridge and other local settlements via efficient public transport links.
- 5.58 South Cambridgeshire is a rural area with Cambridge being the only large urban area and the other settlements being mainly villages. New settlements should harness the characteristics of the setting and form of the existing settlements in the sub-regional landscape, see Chapter 3 for information on the varied local characteristics. Innovative design solutions that sympathetically address the requirements of modern development in historical contexts are encouraged, whilst pastiche design solutions that inappropriately attempt to mimic historical design styles on modern buildings are discouraged.
- 5.59 New settlements should be designed from the outset to incorporate high levels of sustainable technology to minimise the environmental impact of the development. Such considerations should include local heat and power generation, sustainable drainage systems, direct and convenient footpath and cycle routes to access the settlement's primary facilities, direct and frequent public transport routes to access other facilities, both within and outside the new settlement. Further detail is contained in Chapter 8.

## INFILL DEVELOPMENT

- 5.60 Infill plots are small-scale plots within existing developed areas and will always have a significant impact on the character of the established streetscape and on neighbouring properties, therefore good design is essential to ensure a positive impact is achieved. Infill sites will be expected to complement the street pattern by continuity of form and design, or by an appropriate contemporary contrast. They will be expected to make best use of the site while enhancing the rhythm of the established street pattern. To retain the character of villages it is appropriate to retain some vacant plots.



*Infill development in Madingley designed to be sympathetic to the scale and form of its village setting.*

- 5.61 A detailed analysis of the adjacent built environment should form the foundation of any design, in order to understand how the proposal will relate to its surroundings. Considerations include: the distance of building fronts from the pavement edge; heights, positions and types of boundary treatment; storey-heights of buildings compared to their widths; depths and character of surrounding gardens; and typical building types: whether detached, semi-detached, terraced or courtyard developments.



*Large scale mixed use infill development, Papworth Everard. Buildings include townhouses and flats around a new public open green space and a new public library with retail development.*

## **DEVELOPMENT TYPES**

### **Mixed Use**

- 5.62 Traditionally many villages and towns in the Cambridge Sub-Region developed at the intersection of roads, or close to bridging points. Service facilities usually became established at or close to the intersections, with incremental growth spreading out from the historic core along the roads, with infill development following between the roads in the larger villages and towns.
- 5.63 Mixed-use areas maintain more even levels of activity throughout the day, preventing residential areas becoming inactive during the working day and preventing non-residential areas becoming inactive outside the working day.
- 5.64 Mixed-use development may not be acceptable in some villages. Proposals therefore must conform to what is acceptable in accordance with the Local Development Framework.
- 5.65 The benefits of mixed-use development include:
- More socially diverse communities.
  - Greater safety arising from more people being around at most times of the day.
  - Increased vitality and street life.
  - Potential for increased viability of urban facilities, arising from increased support for small businesses such as corner shops.
  - More convenient access to facilities.
  - Greater opportunities for social interaction.
  - Increased stimulation arising from an increase of different buildings within close proximity.
  - Some travel to work journeys are reduced, reducing traffic movements and congestion.
- 5.66 A successful and sustainable local neighbourhood is a product of:
- The distances people have to walk to access daily facilities.
  - The presence of a sufficient range of such facilities to support their needs.

- Places and spaces where a variety of activities are encouraged to take place.

### Providing Mixed-Use Centres

5.67 Mixed-use centres are not self sufficient therefore they need to be part of an integrated larger urban structure that has the population to support the facilities and services provided. They are best located therefore at the intersection of the main movement routes through both the neighbourhood and the larger urban structure. The mixed-use centre is the core of a neighbourhood within which the local shops, commercial uses and amenities will be located. Llewelyn-Davies (2000) states “to create a strong community focus, a shop, bus stop and primary school will usually be considered a bare minimum.” Other facilities that could be located there are nurseries, libraries, community centres, police stations, other business premises and other retail premises.

5.68 A diversity of uses can result in conflict if they are incompatible, but this is not an argument for avoiding the provision of mixed use. Careful consideration is required as to what is an acceptable mix of uses, both within the development and with its neighbours, supported by strong site planning to acceptably separate any potentially conflicting uses.



*Great Shelford library with residential development above.*

5.69 Opportunities should be taken to incorporate in the main urban areas, uses such as office and retail premises and industrial units that have become located in out-of-town locations. As such uses often have large building footprints out of scale with residential properties, they should not be located in the urban fabric as islands, but rather surrounded by other smaller development to help integrate the larger unit into the locality.



*Papworth Everard local centre, containing shops, café, library, Parish Council offices and business premises.*

- 5.70 The location of such premises in urban areas should not result in unacceptable traffic levels from people accessing and leaving the facility, nor create other unacceptable nuisance for residents, nor should it undermine the primary town and village centres. Travel Plans and Transport Assessments will be required to justify the development proposals.