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Thame

Neighbourhood Plan Design Code

Final Report
March 2023

Delivering a better world

Quality information

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Revision History

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1	09.11.2022	1st Draft document issue	Jessie Watson	Associate Director - Masterplanning

Contents

Introduction

01

1. Introduction

Through the department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Thame Town Council.

1.1 Purpose of the report

The government is placing significant importance on the quality of design through the development of design codes which aim to set standards for design upfront and provide firm guidance on how sites should be developed. The role of design guidelines and codes in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan is expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, paragraph 128 which states that:

'To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. However, their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.'

The South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) adopted their Local Plan in December 2020. There are various relevant policies in the Local Plan relating to Thame, which are covered in more detail in Section 2. SODC and Vale of White Horse District Council are preparing a Joint Local Plan (JLP). Preferred Options stage is expected in early 2023. The Neighbourhood Plan sets out the housing allocations for Thame.

Therefore, the design guidelines and codes set out in this report will provide a detailed framework that should be followed by any future design proposals that come forward within the town to ensure it meets a consistent, high-quality standard of design and positively contributes to the unique character of Thame.

It is intended that this report becomes an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan by informing policies that will influence the design of new development and have weight in the planning process.

1.2 How to use this guide

As a key Neighbourhood Plan supporting document, this document is intended to serve as an evidence base for the Thame Neighbourhood Plan and as a source of information and guidance for all those involved in the development planning process. It addresses the whole Neighbourhood Area, but it does not cover every detail and response across all situations within the Neighbourhood Area, nor does it provide fixed design solutions.

Rather, the document sets out a range of design guidance and codes, relating to character and quality that Thame Town Council (TTC), through consultation with local groups at various stages, consider fundamental to understand and apply when formulating design proposals.

The approach set out above is supported by the NPPF. The NPPF (2021, paragraph 127) states that:

"Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers."

1.3 Document structure

This Design Code document comprises the following seven chapters:

01 Introduction - the background, purpose, study area and document structure.

02 Policy review - Reviewing the national and local planning policy context.

03 NP Area context analysis - Provides an appreciation of physical influences which will be used to help inform the design code.

04 - Character study - Defines the characteristics of the character areas

05 - Design guidance and codes - Sets out the general, holistic design codes for future developments in the Neighbourhood Area.

06- Development proposal checklist - a number of questions based on established good practice against which the design proposals should be evaluated.

07 - Next steps

Figure 01: Thame High Street

1.4 Vision and objectives

This section outlines the vision and objectives for the future of Thame, which will be the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The vision is:

"Thame must maintain its character as a real market town."

The objectives are:

Objective 1
The compactness and walkability of Thame should be retained, with new homes within comfortable travel distance, by foot and by bike, from the town centre and other social and community facilities located around the town.

Objective 2

The sensitive environment around Thame should be respected, with areas of new growth avoiding areas of nature conservation and flood risk.

Objective 3

Growth should avoid impacting on the landscape setting of Thame, retaining proximity to the surrounding countryside.

Objective 4

The separate identity of Thame and outlying villages, including Moreton, to the south,and Towersey, to the east, should be retained.

Objective 5

New development should be well integrated with the existing built form, contributing to the achievement of integrated communities.

Objective 6

New development should respect the historic growth and evolution of Thame.

These objectives will ensure that new development is in line with local and national planning policy. The NPPF emphasises that:

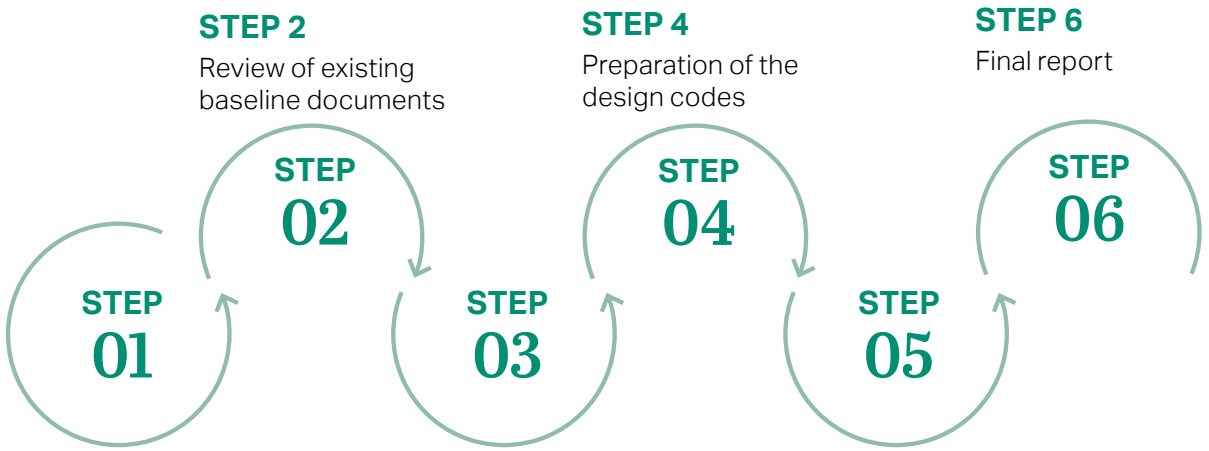
'the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities' (NPPF, 2021).

In line with this emphasis in the NPPF, the National Design Guide, published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) further reinforces the way in which the design process can be used to ensure the delivery of quality places, defining 'well-designed places' as having ten characteristics, shown right.

1.5 Preparing the report

The following steps were agreed with the Neighbourhood Plan Group to produce this report, which draws upon policy development and engagement work undertaken by the Group:

Figure 02: Well-designed place diagram extracted from The National Design Guide



STEP 1

Initial meeting between AECOM and the Thame Neighbourhood Planning Group followed by a site visit

STEP 2

Review of existing baseline documents

STEP 3

Urban design and local character analysis of the study area

STEP 4

Preparation of the design codes

STEP 5

Draft report

STEP 6

Final report

Figure 03: Stages of the process

1.6 Study area

South Oxfordshire

The Neighbourhood Area includes Thame and Moreton and is located in South Oxfordshire.

South Oxfordshire is an exceptionally beautiful area, rich in architecture of different periods, styles and materials with almost half of the district designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As well as respecting and enhancing the existing natural and built environment of South Oxfordshire, the Council expects the design of new development to be similarly outstanding for the benefit of local residents, visitors and future generations. South Oxfordshire has been named the best place to live in the UK countryside in 2016.

The district of South Oxfordshire covers nearly 670km². Its boundaries reach from the edge of the city of Oxford in the north west along the borders of Vale of White Horse, south to Berkshire and the outskirts of Reading and east along the border with Buckinghamshire. It has four main towns: Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford, with Didcot becoming increasingly dominant as the main urban centre.

Much of the district is rural in nature, with much of the land being in agricultural use. The main exception to this is the south east where the wooded Chiltern Hills rise sharply from the Thames Valley. Most of the southern end of the district sits in either of the Chilterns or North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The north east of the district forms part of the Oxford Green Belt. In total, around 70% of the district has a Green Belt or AONB designation.

Thame is a town located in the county of Oxfordshire and within the in the northeast of the district of South Oxfordshire.

Within the District, Thame is a key local centre for nearby settlements both in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire and significant growth in South Oxfordshire has been largely focused upon Thame, alongside Dicot, Wallingford and Henley-on-Thames.

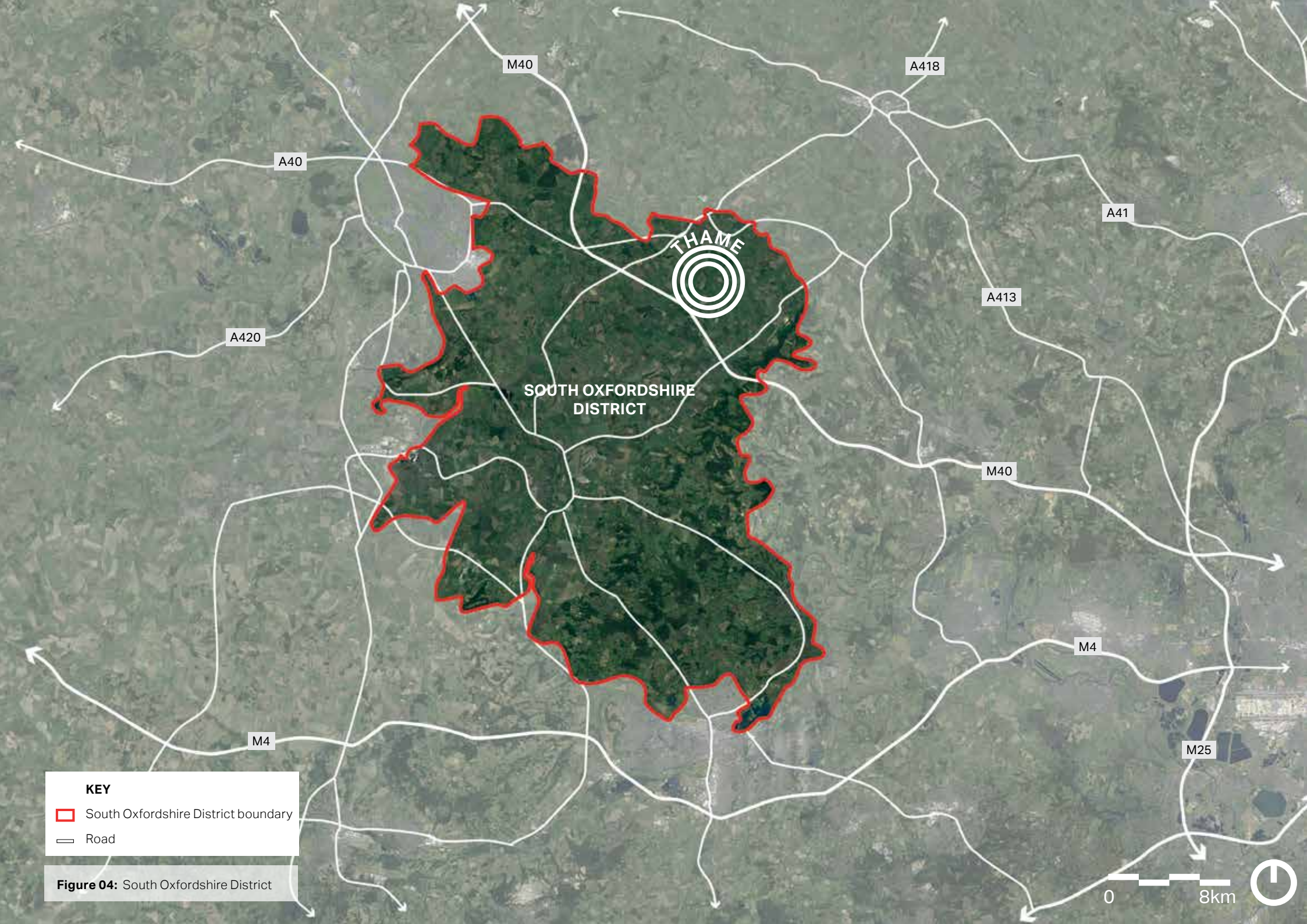


Figure 04: South Oxfordshire District

Thame and Moreton

The Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary includes the town of Thame and the hamlet of Moreton.

Thame is an historic market town with a population of around 12,747 and Moreton is a hamlet, located 1 mile (1.6 km) southwest of Thame.

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan categorises Thame as a Town and Moreton as an 'Other village' in the settlement hierarchy.

The settlements are conveniently located within the regional context, with the large town of Aylesbury being 10 miles to the north-east and the city of Oxford 14 miles to the west. Both settlements have good connections to the national motorway network, with junctions 6 and 7 of the M40 each approximately 6 miles away. The nearest railway connection is Haddenham and Thame Parkway, 2 ½ miles to the north-east, with trains half hourly to London or Birmingham via the Chiltern Line.

Figure 05: Neighbourhood Area boundary

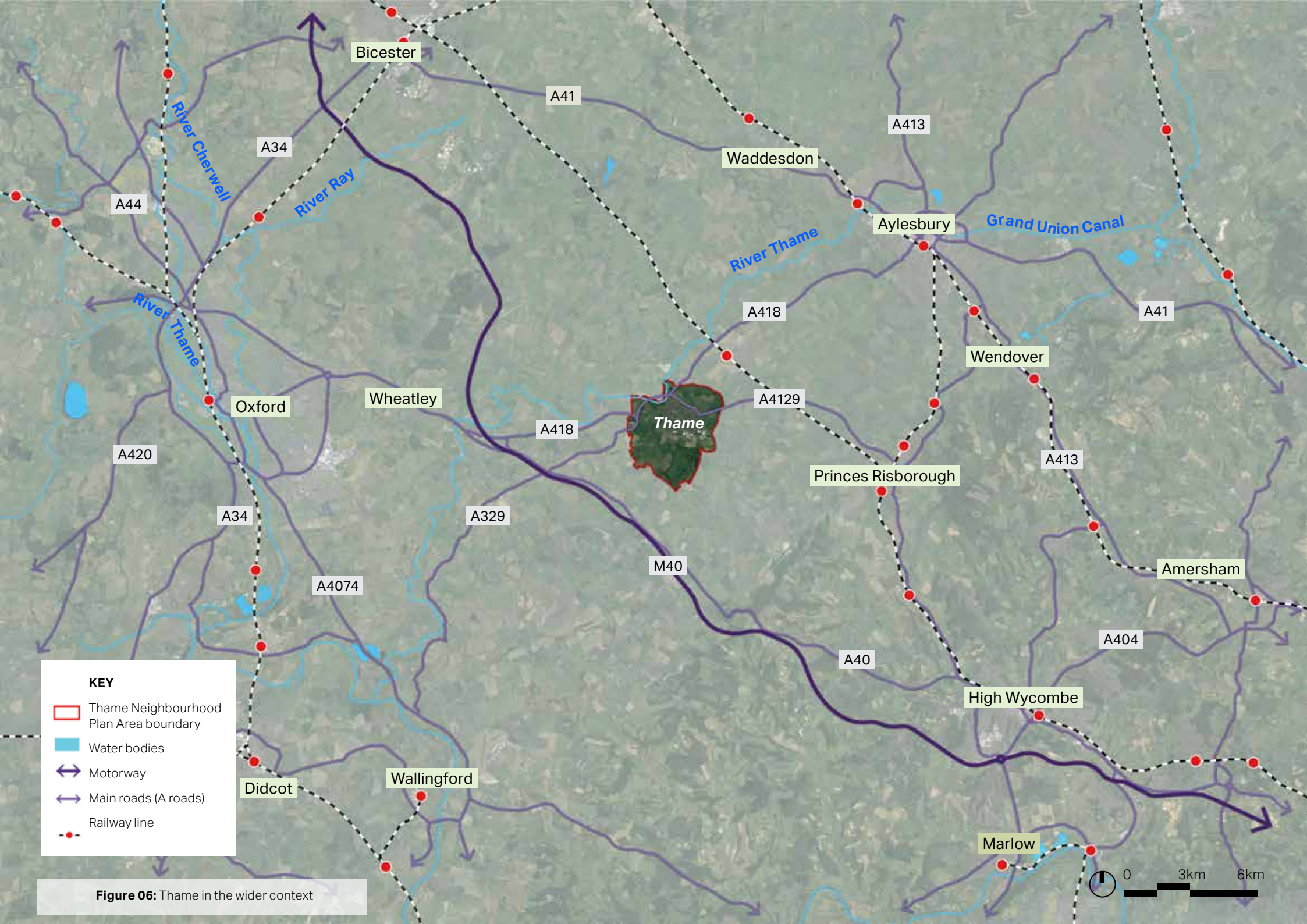


Figure 06: Thame in the wider context

Policy review

02

2. Policy review

2.1 Planning policy and guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 126) notes that:

"good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".

National and local policy documents can provide valuable guidance for bringing about good design and the benefits accompanying it. Some are there to ensure adequate planning regulations are in place so that development is both fit for purpose and able to build sustainable, thriving communities. Other documents are more technical and offer specific design guidance which can inform design codes and masterplanning activities.

Developers should refer to the key documents set out over the following pages when planning future development in Thame.

This section outlines some key policy and design guidance that should be considered in future development in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area. The following guidelines have been produced at national, district or town level and are presented in chronological order.

NATIONAL LEVEL

2021 - National Planning Policy Framework - DLUHC

Relevant national planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2021). The NPPF was updated in July 2021 to include reference to the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code and the use of area, neighbourhood and site-specific design guides. Paragraph 126 states that:

"the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and outlines that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."

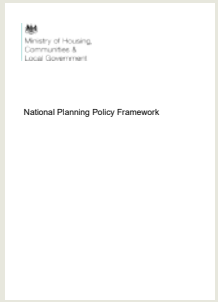
Householders have a wide range of permitted development rights to extend their homes, such as the ability to extend their homes up to 50% of the curtilage of the original house. Back garden land has been given added protection in the NPPF when it was reclassified from brownfield to formerly undeveloped land. However, the NPPF makes it clear that the key consideration should be whether back garden development would harm local character.

2021 - National Model Design Code - DLUHC

The draft National Model Design Code provides guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote well-designed places. It sets out the key design parameters that need to be considered when producing design guides and recommends methodology for capturing and reflecting views of the local community.

2020 - Planning for the Future - DLUHC

On 6 August 2020, Government launched the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper, proposing a desire to streamline and modernise the planning process, bring a new focus to design and sustainability, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed.



NATIONAL LEVEL

2019 - National Design Guide - DLUHC

The National Design Guide sets out the government's ten priorities for well designed places and illustrates how well-designed places can be achieved in practice. The ten characteristics identified includes: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan. The Guide also reinforces the National Planning Policy Framework's objective in creating high quality buildings and places. The document forms part of the government planning practice guidance.

2020 - Building for a Healthy Life - Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is a revision on Building for Life, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed (and completed) developments, but can also provide useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

Building Regulations 2010 - Homes England

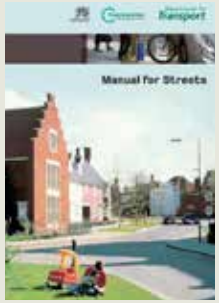
This approved document provides guidance on how to comply with requirement Q1 of the building regulations. The requirement Q1 applies to easily accessible doors and windows that provide access in various circumstances.

2007 - Manual for Streets - Department for Transport

Development is expected to respond positively to the Manual for Streets, the Government's guidance on how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets. It promotes streets and wider development that avoid car dominated layouts but that do place the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first.

Planning Portal on extensions/ modification

The Planning Portal defines infill development as 'The development of a relatively small gap between existing buildings.' (https://www.planningportal.co.uk/directory_record/305/infill_development)



DISTRICT LEVEL

2022 - Joint Local Plan
South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have come together to work on a new Joint Local Plan which will guide the kinds of new housing and jobs needed and where they should go, informing planning application decisions for the districts.

2022 - Joint Design Guide
South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District

South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils have prepared a Joint Design Guide, which was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in June 2022. As such, it replaced the South Oxfordshire Design Guide. The Guide provides guidance on how new development should be designed and constructed to the highest quality and includes a number of overarching key design objectives along with more specific design principles, covering place and setting; natural environment; movement and connectivity; space and layout; built form; climate and sustainability. The Design Guide provides valuable high level District guidance, which this local Design Code will complement.

2021 - Street Design Guide
South Oxfordshire District Council

The Street Design Guide was adopted in 2021 and replaces the Residential Road Design Guide. It focuses on the role of streets in creating social and connected places and in doing so, it provides guidance for developers and designers. It sets out guidance in relation to hierarchy of routes and detailed design elements.

2020 - South Oxfordshire Local Plan
South Oxfordshire District Council

South Oxfordshire District Council adopted their Local Plan (a blueprint for development up until 2035) in December 2020. There are various relevant policies in the Local Plan relating to Thame, covering housing (Chapter 4 Delivering New Homes), employment (Chapter 5 in 5 (Employment and Economy) and retail Chapter9 (Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres). The SOLP defines Thame as a 'Town and Moreton as an 'Other village' in the Settlement hierarchy. The Neighbourhood Plan sets out the housing allocations for Thame.

2022 - Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2
Thame Town Council

The revised TNP is currently being prepared in order that it correctly reflects recent changes to planning policy at a district, county and national level that have taken place since the NP was established in 2013. The policies in the previous NP now have limited impact and relevance to planning applications in Thame. As a part of this exercise, consultation on the revised NP began in August 2021, and this includes vision, objectives and site selection. The sites that were assessed were those submitted through the South Oxfordshire SHELAA and or the Call for Sites undertaken by Thame Town Council. The revised NP period starts in 2022 and extends to 2037, therefore comprising a planning period of 15 years.

LOCAL LEVEL

2022 - Thame Housing Needs Assessment

Thame Town Council

The Housing Needs Assessment was recently prepared (March 2022) and provides an indication of the likely need for different types and sizes of new homes in Thame, based on demographic change. It summarises that Thame has a relatively high proportion of ownership tenures when compared to the national and district average. The current housing type mix is well-balanced, with detached, semi-detached, and terrace all accounting for between 20% and 30% of the total mix, and the proportion of flats and bungalows are lower (at around 17% and 7%, respectively), so there is room to increase their proportions to the overall mix.

2021 Thame Character Area Study

Troy Planning

This document was prepared to support TNP2 and forms part of the evidence base. It outlines the growth and development of Thame over time and identifies several character areas within Thame and describes the features of each of them.

2020 - Thame Green Living Plan

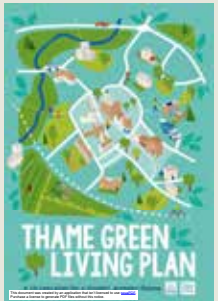
Thame Town Council

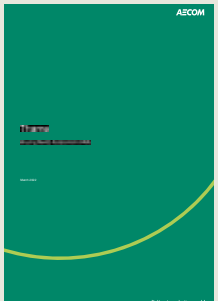
Adopted by the Town Council in July 2020, the Green Living Plan is a ten-year plan for a cleaner, greener Thame. The document forms a background document and indicates where actions might be incorporated within policy or which might comprise a wider project or aspiration for Thame. It covers five broad areas related to green living and recommends a series of actions that can be taken within each.

2013 - Thame Neighbourhood Plan

Thame Town Council

Alongside the Local Plan, the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (July 2013) forms part of the development plan for the area against which development decisions will be made.





2.2 Policy review

The following section sets out specific areas of policy that are relevant to this masterplanning exercise in more detail.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan

Policy TH1 sets out an overall strategy for Thame. The Council will support development proposals that:

- i) deliver homes in accordance with Policy H3;
- ii) strengthen the retail offer within Thame Town Centre;
- iii) improve the attraction of Thame for visitors and businesses;
- iv) improve accessibility, car and cycle parking, pedestrian and cycle links;
- v) support schemes that enhance the quality of the town's environment and conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets;
- vi) provide new employment opportunities and improve the stock of existing employment areas; and
- vii) provide new, or enhanced community facilities that meet an identified need.

Policy STRAT 5 deals with residential density and outlines that development should accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of uses. Density should be informed by criteria as follows:

- i) the capacity of the site and the need to use land efficiently in accordance with Policy DES7: Efficient use of resources;
- ii) the need to achieve high quality design that respects local character;
- iii) local circumstances and site constraints, including the required housing mix, and the need to protect or enhance the local environment, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, heritage assets, and important landscape, habitats and townscape;
- iv) the site's (or, on strategic allocations, the relevant part of the site's) current and future level of accessibility to local services and facilities by walking, cycling and public transport; and
- v) the need to minimise detrimental impacts on the amenity of future and/or adjoining occupiers.

The policy also stipulates that a net density of 45dh is appropriate when it is consistent with the settlement it relates to (in sites well related to existing towns and villages and served by public transport or with good accessibility by foot or bicycle to the town centres of Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford or a district centre within Oxford City.

And that the design of a site needs to pay careful attention to the existing character of a local area and any local circumstances, taking account of a range of social and environmental constraints, accessibility and amenity issues.

Policy DES7: Efficient Use of Resources states that new development is required to make provision for the effective use and protection of natural resources including the efficient use of land with densities in

accordance with STRAT5. Proposals which seek to deliver higher quality and higher density which minimises land take will be encouraged.

Policy H3 sets out future growth projections. It sets out a minimum target of 1,518 new homes to be built in Thame between 2011 and 2037. As of 1 April 2020, 1,179 houses have been marked as 'completions and commitments', leaving a minimum of 339 homes needing allocation.

Policy H9: Affordable Housing outlines that a 40% Affordable Housing policy will come into effect for all developments 'with a net gain of 10 or more dwellings'. For sites within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the 40% Affordable Housing policy will come into effect on sites of a 'net gain of five or more dwellings or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more'.

Policy H11: Housing Mix requires that future housing developments should deliver a mix of housing types and sizes.

Policy H13: Specialist Housing for Older People specifies that the construction of specialist housing for older people will be encouraged if the proposed locations have 'good access to public transport and local facilities. H13 also discusses that provision for specialist housing for older people should come from Thame's 1,518 housing development allocation.

Policy H16: Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment, provides some general guidance on infill development, as follows:

- Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location;
- Where a proposal encompasses residential development of land behind an existing frontage or placing of further dwelling/s behind existing dwelling/s within the existing site, the proposals should demonstrate that:

1. The privacy of existing and future residents will be protected;
2. Means of access can be appropriately secured; and
3. Development would not extend the built limits of the settlement.

The development of large back gardens or land behind an existing residential frontage may be acceptable in principle if it meets the criteria in the above policy. However, such development will not normally be permitted if it creates problems of privacy and access.

Oxfordshire Street Design Guide

The SDG includes the following vision:
"A place where streets, through integrated and quality design, lead to a greater economic and social well-being and improved health for its residents, creating an environment for healthy lifestyles, sustainable travel and a zero carbon economy."

It is broken down into four parts, as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Street hierachy
3. Detail design components
4. Further advice

It also sets out a number of specific objectives which are critical in delivering high quality streets and places. It stipulates that the street design within the context of a masterplan should:

- Prioritise sustainable and active travel to help reduce congestion;
- Design streets and places in a way that reduces car use while promoting sustainable active travel modes to help combat the climate emergency. This means creating streets that are linked, well connected, safe and attractive for walking and cycling;
- Provide a clear and permeable hierarchy of streets, routes and spaces which are inclusive and create safe and convenient ease of movement by all users;
- Ensure local services and facilities beyond the development are easily accessible by sustainable and active modes of travel;
- Be built to last and to meet the County Council's maintenance needs;
- Understand and addresses the needs of all potential users to ensure inclusive design;
- Ensure a sufficient level of well-integrated and imaginative solutions for car and bicycle parking and external storage including bins;
- Take into account all relevant County Council/District Council Design Guides - including County Council School Design and Process documents in a holistic manner, ensuring streets are designed through multidisciplinary collaboration;
- Be informed by a contextual analysis of the area.

It then goes on to set out a number of design principles, which are drawn from local and national planning policy such as the National Design Guide. These principles and qualities apply equally to the design of quality streets and are as shown in Table 01 overleaf:

Principles	What is high quality?
Movement and access	Ensuring movement corridors are safe and welcoming for all, including the elderly and disabled.
Ease of movement	Ensuring places can be easily understood including a legible street hierarchy.
Diversity	Providing variety, choice and sensory richness.
Sustainable travel	Ensuring places are easy to get to and move through for sustainable modes, and encourage physical activity.
Legibility	Masterplans should promote walking, cycling and public transport as the first choices for movement.
Adaptability	Anticipating the need for change as travel behaviour and technology change.
Sustainability	Minimise the impact on our environment and reduce carbon emissions.
Designing for future maintenance	Designing streets and spaces so that their quality can be maintained over time and will age well using robust materials.
Good streets and spaces	Creating streets which act as attractive outdoor spaces including high quality green and blue landscape infrastructure.
Well designed buildings	Constructing sustainable buildings appropriate to their function and context to help enhance streetscapes considering landforms, orientation and massing.
Innovation	Designed to be adaptable to future technologies and innovations.

Table 01: SDG Design Principles

Joint Design Guide

The Joint Design Guide was adopted in June 2022 as a Supplementary Planning Document and will assist landowners, developers, applicants, agents, designers and planners through all stages of the design and planning process to achieve high quality and sustainable development.

The guide was prepared by the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils' and provides valuable high level district guidance, which this local Design Code will complement. The guide is categorised into three parts, as follows:

Part 1: About the Guide
An overview of the guide including general guidance and overarching design objectives, which should be considered at the outset and throughout the design process.

Part 2: About the District
A contextual overview of South Oxfordshire and the Vale Districts including the settlements and designations; landscape character areas; and neighbourhood plan areas.

Part 3: Design principles

This sets out a number of broad design principles, within which there are a number of specific design related goals and steps, which explain how to achieve the design principles . These are as follows:

- Place and setting;
- Natural environment;
- Movement and connectivity;
- Space and layout;
- Built form; and
- Climate and sustainability.

Chilterns Design Guide

The Chilterns Buildings Design Guide contains practical advice for planners, architects and house owners on how to build or restore properties in keeping with the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB. It covers such topics as the setting of buildings, the design of vernacular features and the use of traditional local materials.

Thame Character Area Study (TCAS)

The TCAS identifies eight character areas within Thame. The areas reflect those in TNP, with some minor amendments to reflect the subdivision of certain sites, and to account for new housing and employment areas that has been constructed since the the TNP was made. The character areas are as follows:

1. Historic Core
2. Lea Park
3. Southern Thame
4. Chiltern Vale
5. Moreton Village
6. East Thame
7. Post 2013
8. Employment Area

Thame Green Living Plan (TGLP)

The TGLP explains that despite compelling scientific evidence, warnings and increasing levels of concern, most people remain uncertain as to what can and should be done about the climate emergency. As such, the TFLP covers a number of 'major themes', which explain the broad approach to the plan. These are:

- Street level pollution and air quality
- Travel and traffic
- Sustainable energy
- Water
- Green spaces and land use
- Towards a circular economy

It then goes on to set out a series of 'recommended actions' that individuals and community groups can enable, to reduce carbon emissions. Many of these are relevant to the Design Code and masterplanning documents, therefore the proposals in the TGLP are referred to throughout this document.

Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2 (TNP2)

The revised NP is currently being prepared and this report must be referred to alongside it. The vision and objectives of TNP2 are outlined below.

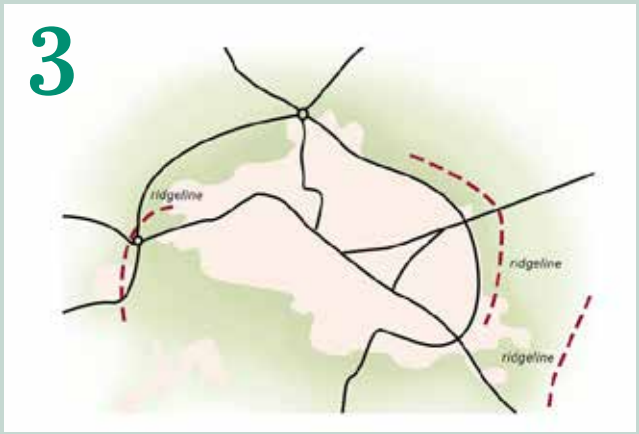
Vision

"Thame must maintain its character as a real market town."

Objectives

The compactness and walkability of Thame should be retained, with new homes within comfortable travel distance, by foot and by bike, from the town centre and other social and community facilities located around the town.

The sensitive environment around Thame should be respected, with areas of new growth avoiding areas of nature conservation and flood risk.



Growth should avoid impacting on the landscape setting of Thame, retaining proximity to the surrounding countryside.

Figure 07: TNP2 Objectives diagrams

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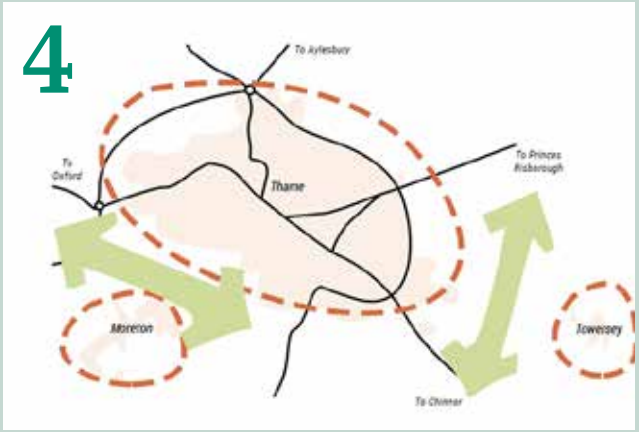

The separate identity of Thame and outlying villages, including Moreton, to the south, and Towersey, to the east, should be retained.

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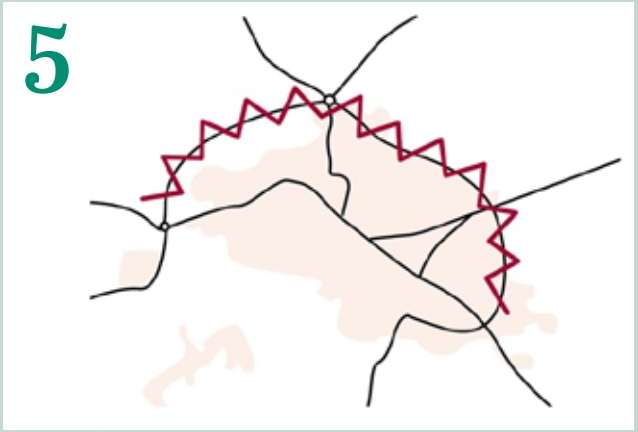


New development should be well integrated with the existing built form, contributing to the achievement of integrated communities.

6

New development should respect the historic growth and evolution of Thame.

Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2 (cont'd)

In August 2021, alongside the consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan's vision, objectives, and site selection, consultation on Thame's character areas was undertaken. The purpose of this was to help understand residents' views on the character area within which they live: what they considered to be positive features of the area, what concerns they had about new development, how this might be shaped and how character might be strengthened or enhanced. The consultation also sought to understand the views on the character areas which have town-wide significance, including the historic core (town centre) and employment areas. This consultation allowed for an evaluation of the effectiveness of policies in respect of design quality and character of the built environment, to identify those qualities that new development should be sensitive and respond positively to.

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments on the character of Thame as a whole, including any wider opportunities for change that might benefit the town as a whole.

The key themes that emerged from the responses were:

- The need to maintain Thame's identity as a market town / avoid losing its identity as a market town.
- Support for improving cycle and pedestrian connection both into Thame Town Centre and the surrounding countryside.
- Support for the above point was linked to the high number of concerns over increasing traffic in the town centre and the prioritisation that seems to be given to vehicles.
- The desire to introduce more pedestrianised and outdoor seating areas on the High Street.
- The importance of Thame's connection to the surrounding countryside, with many suggesting this connection should be reinforced, particularly through improvements to the Phoenix Trail.
- The need to be environmentally conscious and for the Neighbourhood Plan to respond to the Thame Green Living Plan.

Figure 08: Lloyds Bank, Cornmarket

Local character analysis

03

3. Local character analysis

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of the wider and local context of Thame. It then goes on to analyse the Thame Neighbourhood Area. Context refers to the current (and sometimes future) conditions within an area across a range of issues including town history and heritage, morphology, green space, movement and landscape setting.

Character assessment is used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a place. It is used to identify recognisable patterns of elements or characteristics that make one place different from another.

This report is focused on the character of the urban townscape and the rural landscape context. The features introduced in this section are later used to inform the Design Code.

Figure 09: Example of grand Victorian manor house, with typical red brick finish and stone window casing

Figure 10: Typical attractive run of Victorian terraces, with bay window and contrasting brick detailing

3.1 Historic evolution

Thame has its origins in Anglo Saxon England and as such, the original town developed around St. Mary's Church at the western end of today's High Street.

In the early thirteenth century 'New Thame' was planned by the Bishop of Lincoln and established the historic town centre as it is today, including the Buttermarket and Cornmarket and the wide High Street. By the mid 13th century, Thame was a growing market town on the main road between London and Oxford.

Over the following centuries, Thame generally maintained and enhanced its prosperity, with the town growing along either side of the High Street.

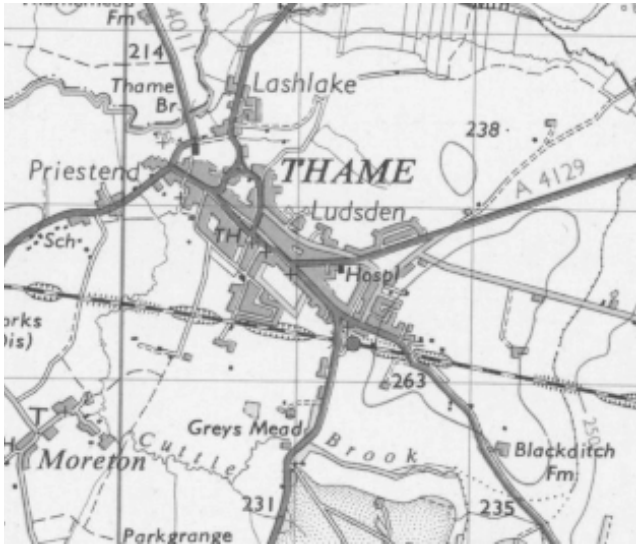
By the end of the 18th century the town had extended north along Aylesbury Road and east along Wellington Street.

Further development was minimal until the nineteenth century, when Thame witnessed the construction of East Street, with terraced houses used to accommodate agricultural workers moving to the town from the countryside. Grand buildings were erected along the high street, including the iconic Town Hall. When the railway came to Thame in the 1860s, a station was built in the expanding eastern part of the town.

During the 20th century, the railway line was closed in the 1960s as a result of the Beeching cuts (today the route of the railway line is used as a popular cycling and walking route, known as the Phoenix Trail). In the 1970s, the Lea Park housing estate was built, north of the town. Development also occurred to the south and east of Thame's historic centre.

The growth of Thame has continued over the last decade, with new areas of housing developed to the south along Wenman Road and to the north west along Oxford Road. Tythrop Way together with the A418 effectively define the extent of the current urban area of Thame. During this time, Thame has grown from a population of 3,000 in 1901 to around 12,747 today (according to the latest ONS figures), as shown on the adjacent figures.

1895

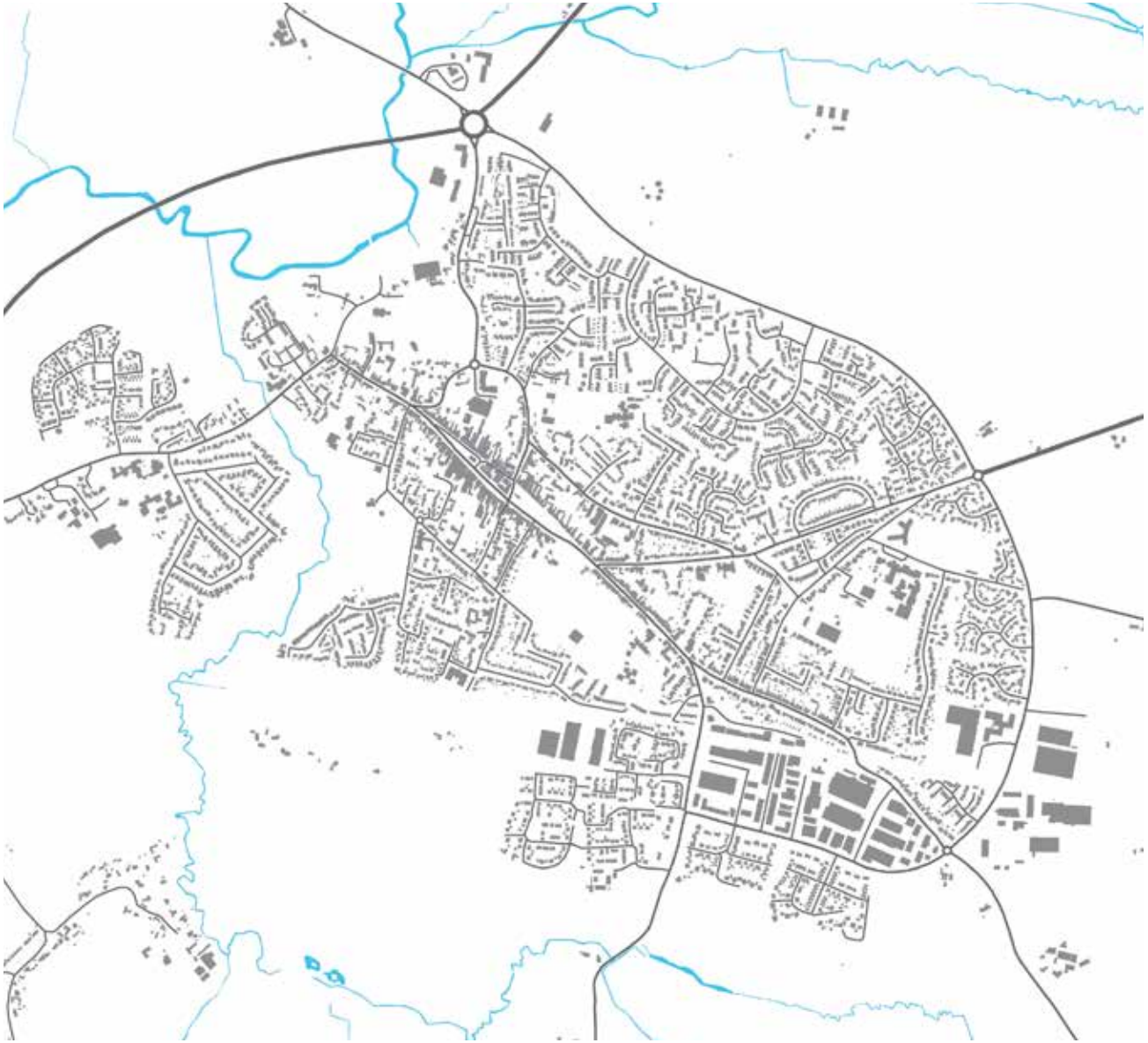


1955

Figure 11: Historic mapping of the town above and overleaf

1948

1980



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3.2 Route pattern and connectivity

Thame is a well connected town, owing to its well conserved historic layout.

Public transport

Thame is a well-connected town, having at least three bus operators - Arriva, Z&S, and Carousel - with routes running through the area, making it a convenient place to travel within and to nearby cities and towns.

The closest railway station is Haddenham and Thame Parkway, which lies just outside of the neighbourhood area boundary and provides trains half hourly to London or Birmingham via the Chiltern Line.

Active travel

Thame is walkable due to its compact nature – it is only 20 minutes from one side to the other. The Phoenix Trail provides an excellent walking and cycling route, with a direct link to Lord Williams Upper School and the leisure centre at the Oxford end of town. Cycling is also possible, as the topography is fairly flat, and the Phoenix Trail provides a cycle link to Princes Risborough (7 miles). There are few dedicated cycle routes and so most cyclists use streets to get around. It is possible to cycle to the station, 15min, but this is again, along the street network.

However, not all parts of the town connect well into the town centre. As identified in the LP, Lea Park is poorly connected, with indirect and sometimes unattractive pedestrian and cycle routes, and car access only from the ring road.

Street layout

Thame is enclosed by the bypass, (A418 and A4129), which encircles the northern side of the town. The bypass provides convenient access to nearby settlements such as Chinnor and Haddenham, as well as the M40. In theory, it also draws traffic away from the town centre, but this is not necessarily the case. The bypass has its issues, as it acts as a barrier between Thame and its built and natural surroundings, particularly for those on foot. It cuts the town off from the countryside setting and nearby settlements to the north and in this part of the town, has resulted in the settlement layout being particularly inward looking.

As highlighted in the TGLP: *"there is only one traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing (to the skateboard park) between the Oxford Road roundabout and the Phoenix Trail crossing. There is no safe crossing on the old Crendon Road and pedestrians and cyclists face a hazardous route to cross to Long Crendon or the Miller's Way route to Haddenham via Moorend Lane. It is little better by the Rugby Club and the potential health hub site."*

The streets in the Thame are mixed in character, comprising the historic routes within the Conservation Area, such as the High Street, which forms the backbone of the town, forming a long, linear route running from north-west to south-east. A number of secondary residential roads and cul-de-sac access streets and estates are encircled by the ring road, which forms an edge to the town.

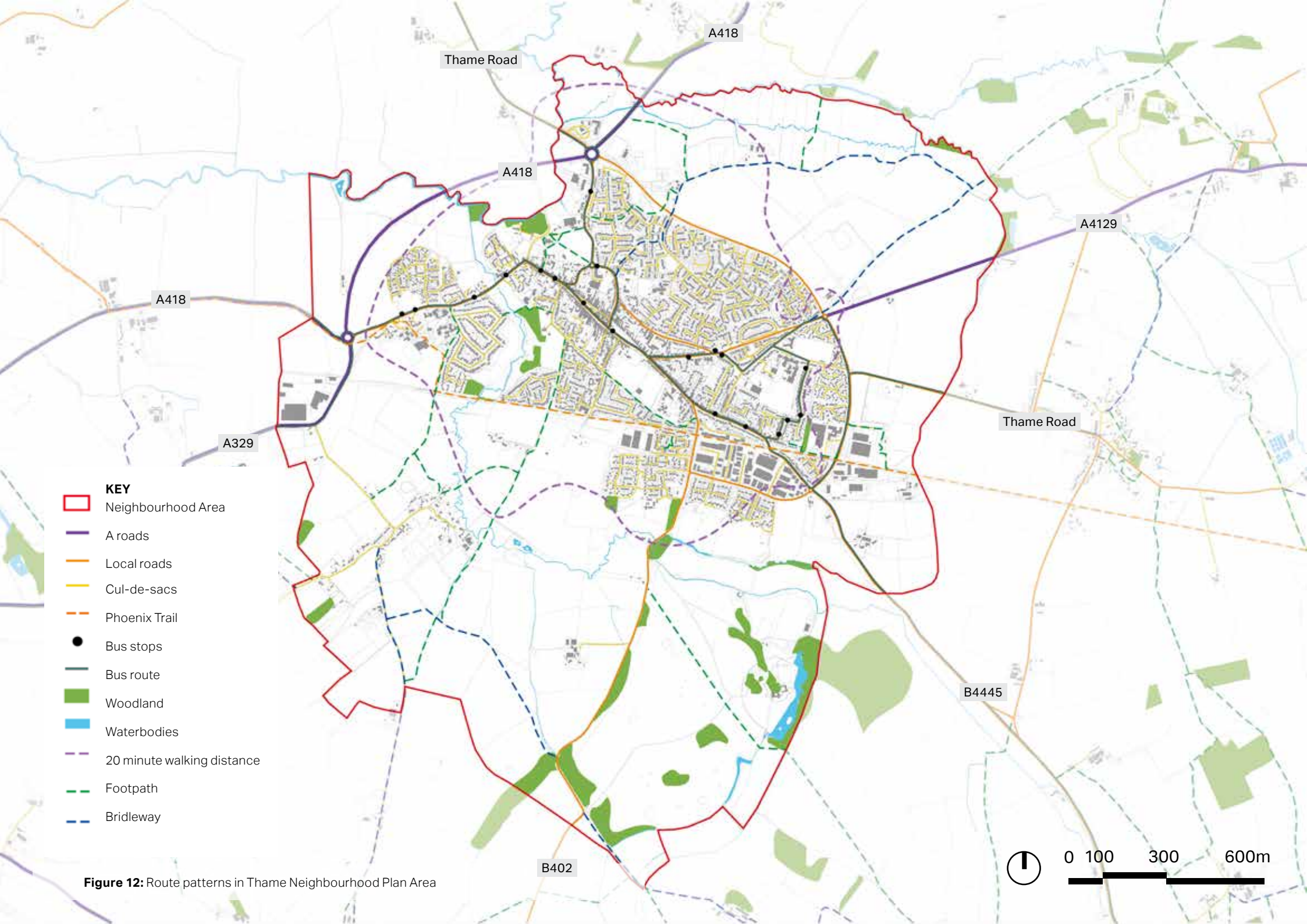

Figure 12: Route patterns in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area

3.3 Heritage

Thame has a rich heritage spread widely across the Neighbourhood Area. Some of those notable elements are:

Conservation Areas

The Thame Conservation Area still retains much of the original morphology which was established in the twelfth century. This is characterised by a linear high street, which widens out into a market place and is lined with long, narrow burgage plots.

Most of Moreton is designated as a Conservation Area.

Listed buildings

Thame has over 200 listed buildings, and most of them are within the Conservation Area, with almost all the buildings along the full extent of the High Street being Listed, or a 'Building of Local Note'. These classifications also feature on buildings spurring off the High Street, such as East Street and Nelson Street. Away from the High Street, there are a number of classified buildings to the north west of the conservation area, such as St Mary's Church and The Tithe Barn.

Moreton has 11 listed buildings.

Registered park and garden

Thame Park is an historically important landscape and as such is designated as a 'Registered Park and Garden'. It is also a County Wildlife Site due to the grasslands and woodland within it.

Scheduled monument

There is one scheduled monument in Thame, which is the 'Moated site east of Moorend Lane'. It is located in a small area of open space, off Cromwell Avenue.

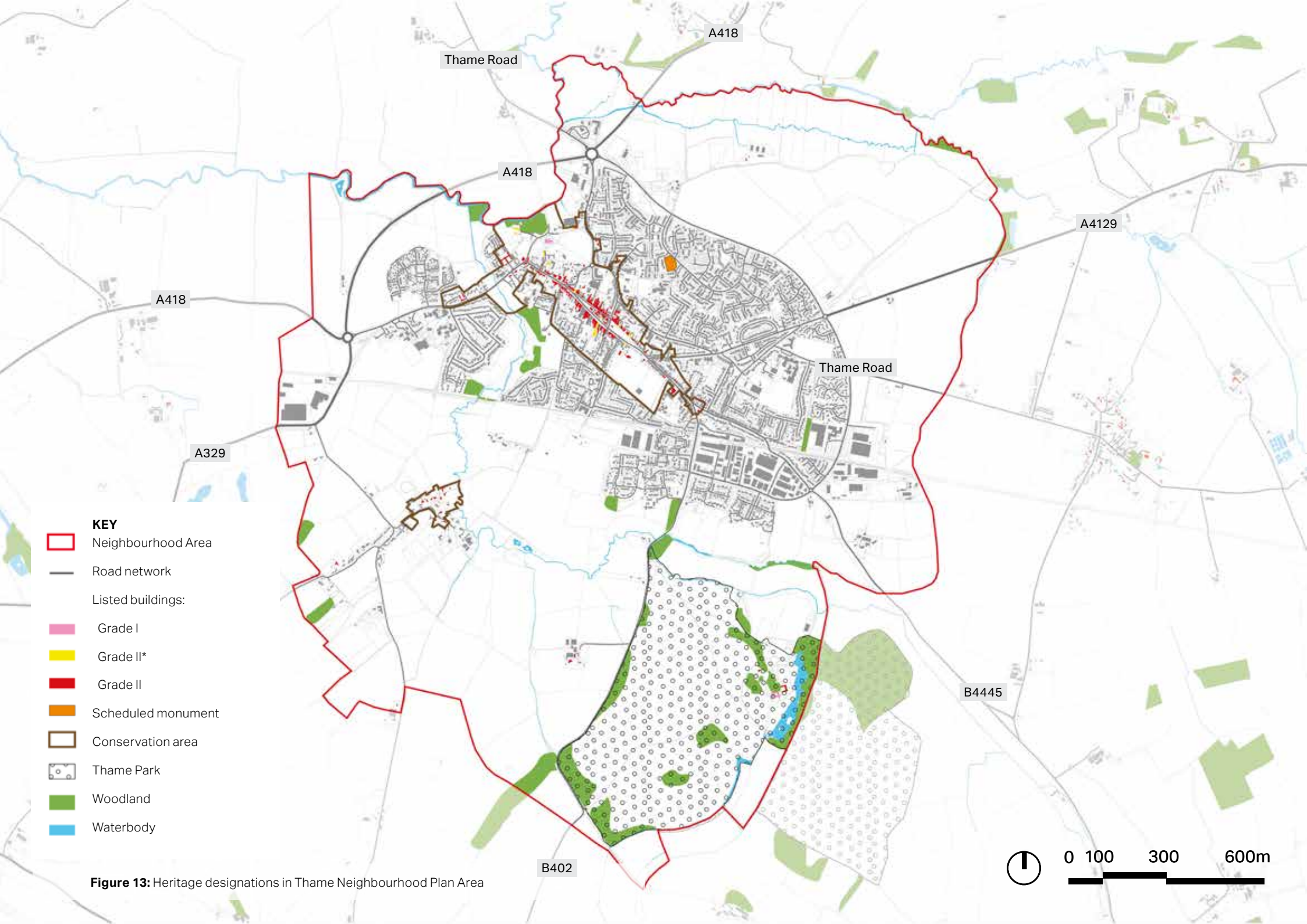

Figure 13: Heritage designations in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area

3.4 Land based designations

There are a number of land-based designations and some areas of green infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, which define its rural character. Despite this, Thame does have an acknowledged shortage of natural areas of green infrastructure, such as woods, grassland and wildflower meadows and orchards. As highlighted in the TGLP, this restricts access to a wide variety of green spaces and also places increasing pressure on the limited public open space that does exist.

Figure 14: War Memorial, Upper High St

Figure 15: Playground, Thame Park

Figure 16: Flat landscape to the south of the town

Landscape Character Areas

Within the Clay Valley, the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment defines more detailed character areas, as follows:

- Thame is within the 'Urban Area'
- The land to the east of Thame is within the 'Undulating Open Vale'
- Moreton is within the 'Undulating Semi Enclosed Vale'

Local green space

There is a wide range of local green spaces dispersed throughout the town, including the Kingsey Road and Windmill Road allotments, Thame showground, skatepark, ASM stadium / Meadow view park, Cricket academy, tennis club and bowls club.

Important open space

There are several areas of 'important open space' as classified by SODC in Thame. These comprise the three recreation areas (the Southern Road Recreation Area,

Queen Elizabeth Circle and Elms Park) and the various other spaces including the grounds of St Mary's Church, the Millennium Wood and a section of Cuttle Brook to the north of the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) area.

Figure 17: Land based designations in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area

Land based designations cont'd

Priority habitat
There are five areas of open space which are designated as priority habitat to the western side of Thame, all of which are located along the route of the Cuttle Brook. These comprise a range of semi-natural habitat types that are defined as being threatened requiring conservation action.

Woodland priority habitat
There are two main areas of woodland priority habitat within Thame, which are located along the River Thame and the Cuttle Brook. There are several additional areas to the south of Thame around Thame Park and Moreton.

Tree Preservation Orders
There are a range of TPOs throughout the town, but none in Moreton.

Local nature reserve (LNR)
Cuttle Brook is a 13 hectare LNR, which is located to the west of Thame, beside the Southern Road Recreation Ground. It features a diverse range of habitats, including the brook and its banks, scrub, woodland, meadows, reed beds, hedges and sedge beds.

Figure 18: Small pocket park, Pickenfield

Figure 19: Chinnor Road footpath (leading only to the County Council's Children's Assessment Centre).

Figure 20: Thame Bowls club

Figure 21: Thame Cricket Club Pavillion and St Mary's church

Figure 22: Small amenity space, Thame Meadows

Figure 23: Southern Road Recreation Ground

3.5 Topography, views and flooding

Flooding
The River Thame flows to the north of the town and is connected to Cuttle Brook. There is a flood plain associated with both waterways, which the Environment Agency Flood Zone mapping shows is Flood Zone 1; being an area of Low Probability of flooding, outside both the 1 in 100 (1% Annual Exceedence Probability, AEP) and 1 in 1,000 (0.1% AEP) year flood events. Thame Park is also located in the flood plain.

Topography
The lowest point of the landscape is along the valleys of the Cuttle Brook and River Thame, at around 65 AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). The town itself is relatively flat, lying between approximately 70m and 75m AOD. In the wider context, beyond the town the land rises again south of Cuttle Brook Valley, towards high points within Thame Park and Horsenden Hill and rises significantly to the north towards a high point at Long Crendon and Notley Abbey.

One of the defining characteristics of Thame is its setting in the landscape and its flat topography. As such, the town is contained within the surrounding landscape and the tower of St Mary's Church is a prominent, constant landmark.

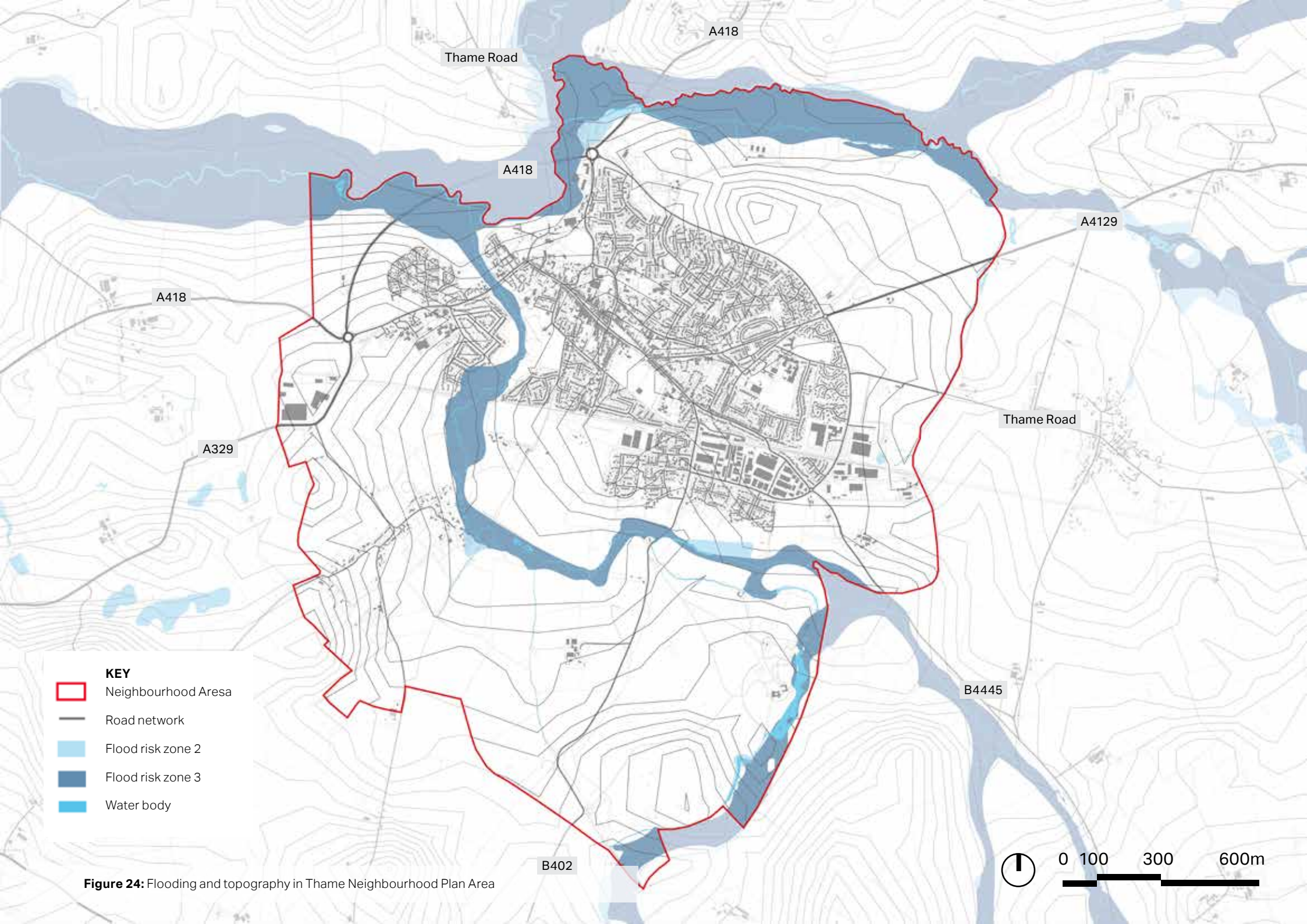

Figure 24: Flooding and topography in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area

3.6 Health and wellbeing

Facilities

Thame has a strong agricultural base with regular cattle and farmers' markets held in the town. The high street in Thame is where the majority of facilities are located, with Thame being well served by a range of supermarkets, cafes, restaurants, and pubs. This excellent range of independent shops, pubs and eateries and events such as the Thame Food Festival attract visitors to the town.

Thame is also well served by a good range of educational facilities, including nurseries, three primary schools, and one secondary school.

Thame has a significant amount of industrial (B2) and warehouse (B8) floorspace, much of this being located within the south-eastern part of the town. Office accommodation (B1) is more limited, but there are some converted buildings in the town centre providing local businesses with office space. This is reflected in the neigbourhood plan which outlines a need for modern office accommodation, with demand for small flexible units.

Sense of community

Thame has a very active community life, representing many different groups and organisations, including Thame Museum, Library, theatre, leisure centre and a number of churches and facilities for informal and formal sports, such as the football and rugby grounds.

There is a strong feeling of identity among the residents of Thame and Moreton. Both settlements have a heritage of community spirit and participation in local life, including having a voice on issues of new local development. This is in part, influenced by its rural setting and its convenient access to the many different areas of open space surrounding the settlements, which helps to create opportunities for residents to connect with each other, enhancing their physical and mental well-being.

Figure 25: Montesson Square

Figure 26: One of many cafes along the High Street

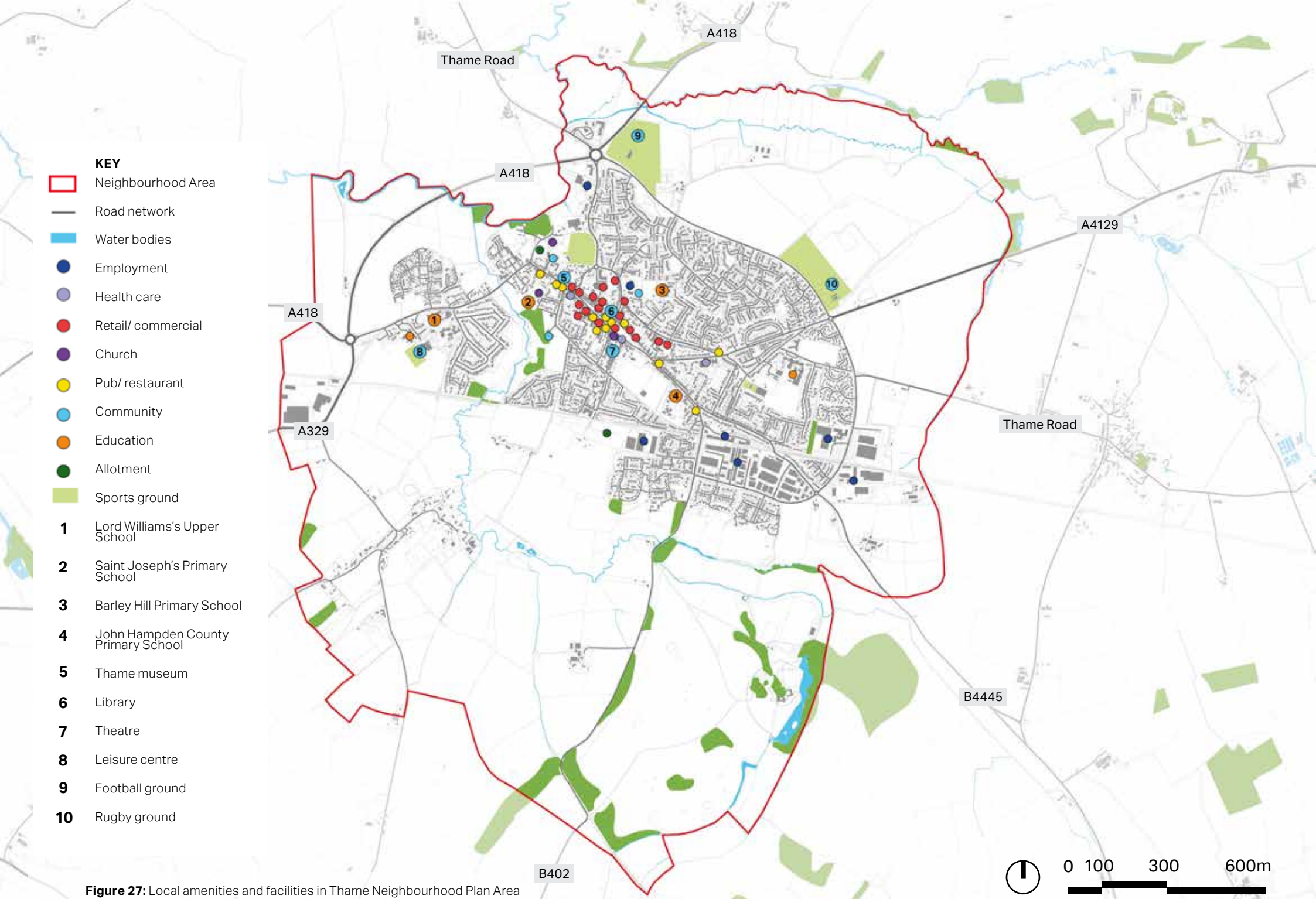

Figure 27: Local amenities and facilities in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area

3.7 Built and spatial character

The South Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016) states that new developments that share and reflect features and characteristics that give a place a special or unique identity will reinforce local identity (Part 2, Sections 1, 3 & 7).

Figure 28: Thame High Street

Figure 29: Butter Market

Figure 31: Thame High Street / Butter Market

Figure 30: The Thatch pub

Figure 32: High St parking

Thame is a market town, with a rich historic past, reflected in the well-preserved historic buildings in the central Conservation Area, which collectively form a strong identity.

Spatial character - streets and public realm

The street layout within the town centre is linear; the long medieval, boat shaped High Street and market place define the distinct morphology of the town. Streets run perpendicular to that, moving away from the high street in a linear pattern, to the north and south. Away from the town centre, the street pattern is looped and circuitous; generally being dominated by vehicular movement and car parking. This is representative of the pattern of development of the majority of northern Thame towards the end of the 20th century.

Spatial character - traffic and parking

As outlined in the TGLP, there are various pressure points that have resulted in heavy traffic and parking dominating the public realm within the town centre.

This includes recent growth of the town, which has resulted in a great increase in traffic and parking. Additionally, Thame

acts as a service centre for a large number of local settlements, including Haddenham, which has a population of around 7 - 8,000 but has very few facilities. There is little choice for residents, other than private vehicles.

The wide High Street, used for holding markets, is more regularly used for car parking, which is provided on street and as a series of car parks along the stretch of the road. Many side streets off the high street are also lined with parked cars, causing increasing aggravation in many areas.

Away from the town centre and within Moreton, car parking is generally provided on plot.

TNP2 aims to enable improvements of active travel routes into the Town Centre for its residents, to help alleviate the pressure of vehicle use.

Figure 33: Junction of Bell Lane and High Street

Built and spatial character cont'd

Built character - pattern and layout of buildings

The pattern of development in the centre is higher density and tight knit and reflects the town's original medieval structure, being characterised by a linear layout. Narrow individual frontages along the High Street run perpendicular to deep burgage plots. Residential properties in and around the High Street have regular, deep narrow plots.

Away from the centre, to the north and east (part of the significant expansion of Thame during the 1980s) the pattern of development is lower density and therefore comprises small to medium width, shallow plots set out in an organic and loose layout, with roads tending to be curved and plots generally being wide and spaced out.

More recent 21st century development to the south and west of the town displays a mix of structure, but generally tends to be more linear and tight knit, better reflecting the town's historic morphology.

Figure 34: Thame figure ground

Figure 35: Northern end of High Street

Figure 36: The Swan and car park, Upper High Street

Figure 37: Thame Town Hall

Built and spatial character cont'd

Built character - building lines
Residential properties in the conservation area tend to have no protruding features, due to continuous building lines, which also tend to be close to the pavement, creating an enclosed street scene.

Built character - building heights and rooflines
Building heights in Thame are without exception, low rise. The spire of St Mary's Church is a visible landmark from most places in the town. The town centre is generally two storeys, but occasionally rises to three stories, sometimes four. These buildings are most frequently Georgian properties located along the High Street and around the market square, providing enclosure.

Rooflines tend to be flat and gabled, but there are a number of unique rooflines on the high street which provide visual interest.

Away from the town centre building heights are consistently two stories, sometimes rising to three stories, with a small amount of 2.5 storey housing built in the last ten years.

Aside from the residential properties, there are some large commercial buildings site on Wenman Road, and across Thame Park Road behind housing. These tend to be two stories, but some rise to three. While large in footprint, these buildings do not tend to have a significant impact on the townscape, beyond their immediate location.

Built character - views
As previously mentioned, Thame is contained within the surrounding landscape and therefore views of the town from the surrounding rural edge are predominantly of the low lying roofline, through landscaping. Within the town, the tower of St Mary's Church is a prominent landmark in the townscape.

Figure 38: Shop and grand Georgian residence, junction of High Street and Southern Road

Figure 39: Thame Market, Cornmarket

Figure 40: Traffic on the High Street

Figure 41: Front facing gables, High St

Figure 42: Grade II listed Lloyds bank building, built in 1890 in the Dutch style, Cornmarket

Built and spatial character cont'd

Built character - typologies

The majority of typologies in the town centre are terraced houses, with the occasional detached or semi-detached dwelling.

Beyond the town centre, typologies are more uniform, being detached, linked and semi detached. Exceptions to this are the historic residential areas close to the High Street, such as North St, Nelson St and Park St, which feature mainly high density terraces.

Built character - materials and boundary treatments

The emphasis in any new development or alterations must always be on the need to provide a high quality of design.

Thame has a wide palate of materials. Buildings were traditionally timber framed, with brick frontages added in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The historic core displays a predominance of stone and brick in a variety of patterns and colours, thatch, render, tile and timber framing (both medieval and Edwardian). Slate has also been used since the 1800s on the roofs. Brick is the most prominent material used and is often detailed with the use of contrasting silver grey infill with red brick details. The use of stone and render provide contrast and variety.

As stated in Thame Conservation Area Management Plan (2006): '*the use of traditional materials and detailing can have considerable positive effect in enhancing the character of Thame conservation area.*'

Boundaries are varied throughout the town, but railings and stone walls are the most commonplace in the historic town centre. Hedges, either behind walls or on their own predominate towards the rural edge in the suburbs. Some stone walls, with brick or tile capping provide a distinct character.

Further guidance on appearance, materials and detailing can be found in the Thame Conservation Area Management Plan (2006).

Figure 43: Door colours add variety and interest

Figure 44: Use of contrasting brick to accentuate window openings

NB: All the photos in this section are taken in Thame.

Figure 45: Feature door, Upper High St

Figure 46: Victorian terraces

Figure 47: Typical medieval building, Church Road

Figure 48: Use of contrasting brick pattern to create decorative interest

Figure 49: Images showing various materials within Thame town centre

Character Areas

04

4. Thame character areas

4.1 Defining the character areas

Following on from the analysis set out in the previous section, this part of the report focuses on the different character areas within the town.

The different areas are characterised by variations in topography, movement, views and landmarks, green space and landscape cover, public realm and streetscape, built form and architectural details.

The character areas are those defiined in the 2021 Character Area Study, which forms part of the evidence base for the TNP2. The Character Areaa Study was prepared by Troy Planning and elements of that document is reproduced in this section of the Design Code. The identification of the character areas also reflects those presented in the made Thame Neighbourhood Plan, with some minor amendments to reflect development that has taken place since the Neighbourhood Plan was made (2013).

4.2 The character areas

The eight character areas are as follows, and are depicted on the plan on the right:

- CA1 - Historic Core
- CA2 - Lea Park
- CA3 - Southern Thame
- CA4 - Chiltern Vale
- CA5 - Moreton Village
- CA6 - East Thame
- CA7 - Post 2013
- CA8 - Employment Area

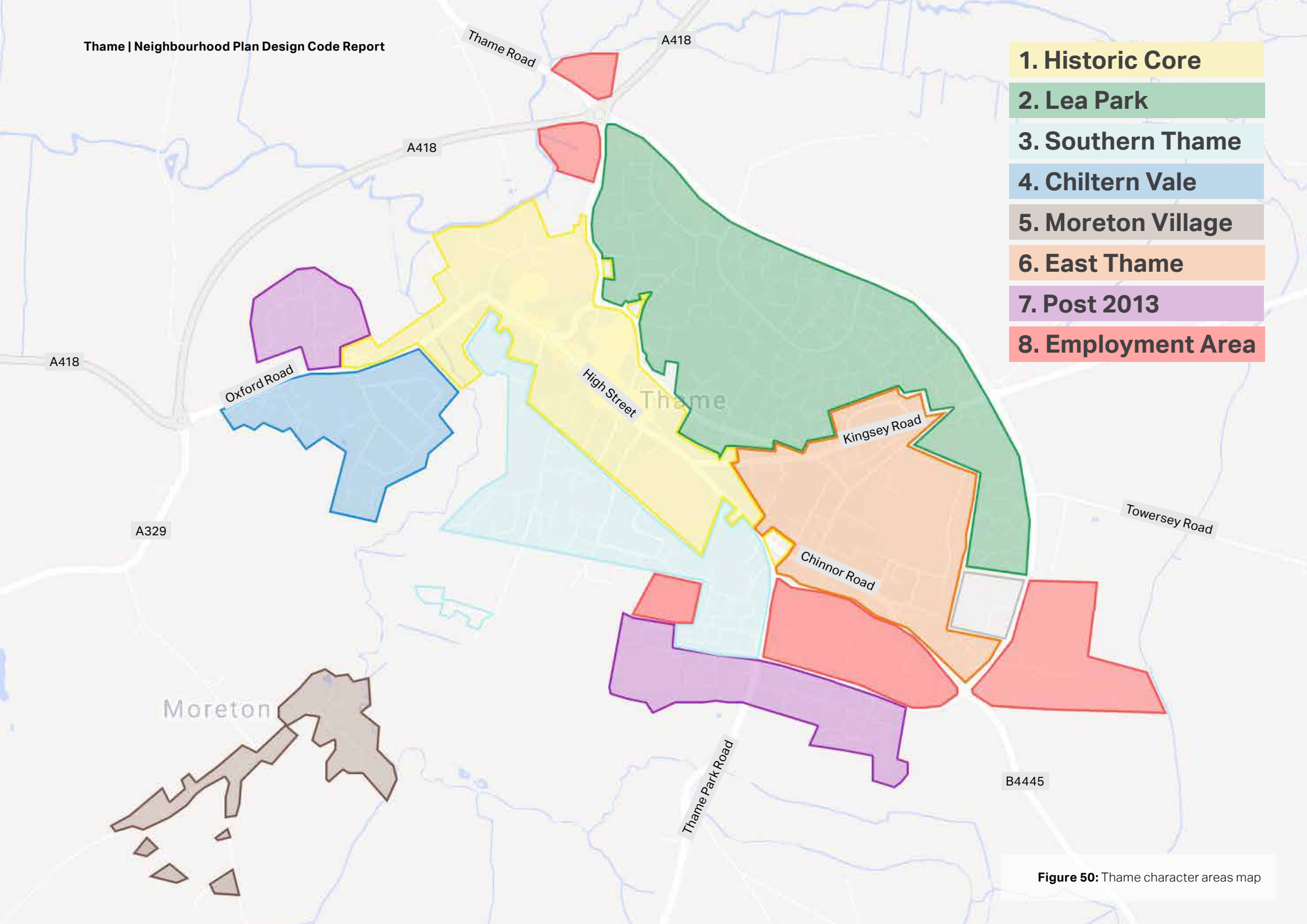

Figure 50: Thame character areas map

CA1 - Historic Core

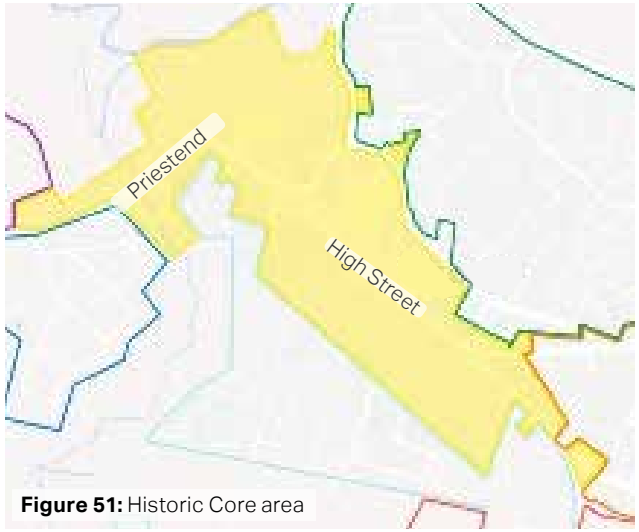

Figure 51: Historic Core area

This character area makes the most significant contribution to the character of Thame as a whole. It covers the Town Centre and retains much of the original twelfth century planned form, with a broad main street that widens out into a long marketplace and is lined with burgage plots. Thame has over 200 listed buildings, and most of them are within the Conservation Area.

Land use	This area has a variety of land uses, with the High Street including a variety of retail, commercial, and hospitality uses, while the wider area includes both residential and office use.
Pattern of development	The key parts of the Historic Core are the main High Street and the lower end of the High Street, as well as a more rural area to the west which includes the grounds of St. Mary's Church and parts of Cuttle Brook. The area around the church is Anglo Saxon and is the earliest part of the town. The High Street is a product of speculative development by the 13th Century Bishop of Lincoln. The Historic core also contains Elms Park, a large green space. Most shopfronts in the area date from the 19th century and although they have often been inserted into earlier buildings they have become part of the established character of the town. There are also some seventeenth century houses in the Upper High Street.
Building line / plot arrangement	The dominant character of the main High Street is its broad, open aspect with the facades of buildings forming an unbroken front uniformly on both sides. Throughout the area, buildings are set back against the pavement, with no front garden area.
Boundary treatment	Most boundaries in the Conservation Area are defined by brick or stone walls, with trees, hedging and timber fencing being more prevalent in the residential areas outside the Town Centre.
Heights, massing and roofline	While buildings do not exceed three storeys in height, there are several unique rooflines on the High Street (see Picture 1) which add to the special character of the area. More commonly found is a mixture of flat and gabled roofs.
Public realm	Cuttle Brook as well as St. Mary's Church grounds provide open space and make up a rural feel towards the west of the site. The cricket pitch forms the backdrop to and provides views across to the church. To the east Elms Park, tucked away behind a row of buildings, provides green space for the area. The wide High Street, used for holding markets, is more regularly used for car parking.

Figure 52: Parking along the High Street

Figure 53: View towards Butter Market from North Street

Figure 54: High Street

Figure 55: St Mary's Church

Figure 56: The Old Maltings

Positive Character Features

- The western edge of the area maintains a fairly rural feel due to St. Mary's Church and land surrounding Cuttle Brook;
- The principal building materials found in the area are stone, brick, thatch, tile and timber framing, lending the town centre a traditional feel. Buildings were traditionally timber framed, with brick frontages added in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries;
- There are a variety of heights and facades of buildings along the main High Street. Buildings consist of a mixture of flat and gabled roofs. Subtle changes in height and materials create visual interest;
- The dominant historic character of the lower part (western end) of the High Street is of two storey houses, singly or in small groups, built onto the pavement edge and with no front gardens;
- In the lower part of the High Street several thatch and timber framed buildings can be seen including no. 69, The Six Bells, The Old Trout and The Cruke, whilst the street frontage of no. 78 (The Brewer's House) is distinguished by the fine chequered brickwork;
- The dominant character of the main High Street is its broad, open aspect with the facades of buildings forming an unbroken front uniformly on both sides. The strong delineations of burgage plots, with trees / gardens are still notable;
- This area has a distinct character which sets it apart from the rest of the town;
- The area around the church and churchyard maintain a rural feel, helped by the cricket pitch and other historic properties and their curtilages;
- Paved courtyards, glimpsed through narrow openings in the street frontages are a characteristic feature of the town; and
- The roofscape is also particularly important, with handmade clay tiles, laid on steeply pitched roofs, being an important local feature characterised by a mixture of narrow and wide streets, with long terraces of varied brick or timber-frame properties on either side.

Risks to character

- There is a large amount of surface level parking, particularly along the High Street, which detracts from the historic character of the area. Traffic, and pollution, represent a risk to the quality and attractiveness of the High Street area;
- The offices along Oxford Road contrast with the character of rest of the area;
- Although there is green/open space in the area, it is tucked away behind buildings and entrances do not stand out. There is also a lack of greenery on the High Street;
- There is a lack of cycle/pedestrian friendly infrastructure, with the High Street in particular being car-dominated; and
- In Nelson Street, the forecourt of the fire station is especially noticeable as a hard-surfaced area; trees and shrubs planted on the adjacent roadside could help to soften this.

Opportunities

- Improved greenspace legibility (Elms Park);
- Potential to improve the quality of the public realm, walking and cycling infrastructure. Opportunities include:
  - The greening of public spaces.
  - Rationalising street furniture which creates visual clutter in places and can obstruct pedestrian movement.
  - Utilise a consistent palette of high quality materials along primary streets in the areas and at key junctions, creating uniformity across the area.
  - Creating new places for people to sit and relax.
  - Slowing traffic, potentially through implantation of a 20mph scheme.
  - Explore solutions to parking that help reduce queuing and idling.

CA2 - Lea Park

Figure 57: Lea Park area

This is a large residential area to the north of the historic core. It was developed rapidly, mainly in the 1970s, and is characterised by a cul-de-sac layout with pockets of green space. Dwellings are two storeys, and mainly semi-detached or terraced.

Land use	The area consists of residential properties in a cul-de-sac layout.
Pattern of development	There are a number of 1970s properties, featuring brick and white weatherboarding. Later housing is primarily of brick construction with some detailing in dark timber. Homes are a mix of detached, semi-detached, bungalows and terraced, and notably all feature gabled roofs. There are pockets of green spaces dotted amongst the estate, with a large open space located towards the northwest of the site, bordering Tythrop Way. Area includes the Barley Hill Primary school.
Building line / plot arrangement	Buildings are generally setback from the pavement with most properties benefitting from a generous front garden. A large number of gardens have been paved over and converted for use as car parking.
Boundary treatment	Often gardens are open to the street and do not normally benefit from any form of boundary walls or treatment. In many cases front gardens have been paved over to create hard standing for off-street parking. Back gardens are bordered by brick walls where they are adjacent to a street, and by fences to separate against other gardens.
Heights, massing and roofline	Homes in the area do not generally exceed two storeys in height. There are a mix of property types but most have pitched roofs.
Public realm	There are a number of alleyways connecting roads. The large greenspace towards the north of the site is the most significant open space in the area, but there are a number of other smaller, amenity spaces within the area. These generally comprise mown grass and present areas for informal play.

Positive Character Features

- Buildings are setback from the pavement, often behind front gardens or driveways. This lends the area a feeling of openness and, in places, creates pleasant, uninterrupted views; and
- Building design is consistent and helps confirm the character of the area. Materials include red and orange brick, often in combination with white weatherboarding. Dwellings are two storeys and a mixture of detached, semi-detached, bungalows and terraced, notably they all feature gabled roofs

Risks to character

- The nature of the cul-de-sac layout does not encourage movement by foot or by bike. Limited connectivity to the wider urban area can cause congestion at points of entry and exit on Cromwell Avenue;
- The area, like many residential estates from this era, includes of a network of narrow alleyways, often between homes and back gardens, and which are not overlooked. Coupled with limited maintenance such routes are often unattractive to use and associated with concerns about personal safety;
- The loss of front gardens and the conversion of these into hard surfaces for parking, resulting in a loss of greenery and biodiversity, and a potential an increase in the risk of flooding from surface water run-off; and
- The lack of a footpath along parts of the busy Tythrop Way is not conducive to pedestrian movement. However, evidence of desire lines and use by pedestrians through the park indicates that such provision is required.

Opportunities

- There are a number of green amenity spaces dotted about within the area, but there is potential for these to be improved and diversified, potentially providing semi-natural greenspaces;
- Increasing the verdancy of some of the areas, through "de-paving" of front gardens and introduction of tree planting and soft landscaping along streets, would strengthen the suburban character of the area;
- Any loss of natural open space through rear garden extensions and / or parking areas to the front, should be replaced with native trees and shrubs to reinstate the original landscape / biodiversity provision.
- Improve street lighting to increase the safety of alleyways in the area, particularly those that are not overlooked, and or encourage alleyways and development around these to be reconfigured to create shorter, more direct, overlooked and safer routes; and
- Consider how cycle and refuse storage might be integrated within the property, minimising visual impact on the street.

Figure 58: Terraced property with shared front garden

Figure 59: Linked detached with driveway

Figure 60: Colourful garage doors adds character

CA3 - Southern Thame

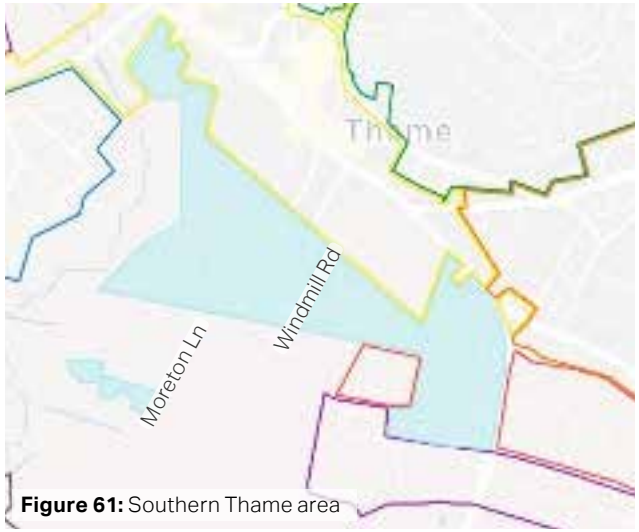

Figure 61: Southern Thame area

This is a residential area comprising homes that have been built over the last seventy years. The southern boundary of the area is formed by the Phoenix Trail: a footpath and cycle route that follows the alignment of the former railway.

Land use	Primarily residential, but also including the John Hampden County Primary School located on Park Street and The Falcon Pub on Thame Park Road . The Phoenix Trail and open countryside borders the character area to the south.
Pattern of development	There is a large variety in the type of development in the area, creating a varied character. The area is mainly made up of a series of culs-de-sac accessed from Southern Road/Elms Road. It also contains St. Joseph's Church and a large recreation ground. Houses are a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced, with some townhouses.
Building line / plot arrangement	There is some degree of variation in building setback throughout the area, with some properties benefitting from generous front gardens. Most gardens are deep enough to accommodate a car, as witnessed through the presence of driveways and conversion of gardens into hard-standing in the area.
Boundary treatment	Most properties have a good size front and back garden. In many instances front gardens are open to the street, with no boundary treatments, though some properties have low brick walls, fences or edges along their front boundary. Brick walls and wooden fences are used to separate back gardens.
Heights, massing and roofline	Houses are mainly two storeys in height, though older town houses and some new builds extend to three storeys in height. There are also a small number of bungalows in the culs-de-sac near Coombe Hill Crescent. Most properties have simple pitched roofs, though there is also evidence of cross-gabled roofs, creating variety.
Public realm	There is a large recreation ground bordering Moreton Lane/Southern Road. There is also a public garden on Corbetts Way, this appears to be well maintained.

Positive Character Features

- The Phoenix Trail, a 12km cycle route part of the National Cycle Network, runs alongside the area. Proximity to this allows access to the countryside and opportunities for travel by bike;
- Unifying character features of the built form include the colour palate, building materials and gabled roofs;
- Good quality greenspace in the form of the recreation ground. The area also benefits from its proximity to Cuttle Brook and Elms Park; and
- Allotments to the south of the area are a valued community resource.

Risks to character

- Number of culs-de-sac and dead ends create an unfriendly and confusing environment for pedestrians;
- The new build front gardens are dominated by impermeable surfaces;
- Along Van Dieman's Way the public and private realms are not clearly defined, with the backs of properties often facing onto the street; and
- Similar to other areas in Thame, a major issue is the loss of front gardens and the conversion of these into hard surfaces for parking.

Opportunities

- Better integrate the Phoenix Trail into the area and thus support a connected town-wide network of walking and cycling routes, including a network of safer crossings to better balance the needs of all users;
- Leftover greenspaces, which are particularly prominent in areas of newer build houses, could be better utilised e.g. pocket parks, more trees planted, flowerbeds; and
- The lack of greenery associated with hard surfacing of parking areas in front gardens promotes the need/opportunity for depaving and the introduction of more street greenery. Potential for integrating raingardens within the street could help manage the risk of surface water flooding and increase the biodiversity value of the area.

Figure 62: Three storey flats with little greenspace

Figure 63: Semi detached with generous front gardens and planting to soften

Figure 64: Semi-detached house with weatherboarding

CA4 - Chiltern Vale

Figure 65: Southern Thame area

This character area is a small post war residential area to the west of the town centre and Cuttlebrook. It features generous gardens and leafy streets, alongside wide street frontages, which provide a sedate, semi rural character .

Land use	The area mostly consists of residential properties, but also contains a leisure centre, nursery, and secondary school.
Pattern of development	Homes in the area were built between the 1960s and the 1990s. Properties are a mix between detached bungalows and two storey houses. There are also several smaller clusters of houses on Oxford Road, nestled between/adjacent to the leisure centre and school. The area is slightly separated from the rest of the town. Prominent building material is red brick, often in combination with white weatherboarding. Gabled roofs also feature heavily.
Building line / plot arrangement	Houses are setback from the pavement edge with generous front gardens that often include lawns, soft landscaping and driveways. Buildings are broadly aligned although not rigidly so.
Boundary treatment	For the majority of properties boundaries tend to consist of either low stone brick walls or hedges. In the areas of newer development on Maple Road, boundaries comprise a mix of low hedges and fences.
Heights, massing and roofline	Dwellings vary between one and two storeys across the area.
Public realm	The area includes access points to Cuttle Brook, albeit in the form of two narrow alleyways.

Positive Character Features

- Although the area contains a mixture of development types, it still has a distinct feel to it, almost semi-rural, perhaps due to the fact it is slightly separated from the main built-up area by the Cuttle Brook;
- Properties are set back from the pavement edge, most have large front gardens and buildings are broadly aligned;
- Although a lot of properties have converted space in their front gardens for parking, unlike in other character areas they still manage to retain a significant amount of greenery; and
- Close proximity to high quality greenspace (Cuttle Brook).

Risks to character

- Considering its proximity to Cuttle Brook, links to this are limited;
- Further residential development in the area may lead to traffic issues at the single entrance to the main housing estate in the area on Oxford Road; and
- If the conversion of gardens into parking is not controlled the verdant nature of the area could be at risk.

Opportunities

- The area is surrounded by high quality open space (Cuttle Brook), however it could benefit from improving pedestrian and cycling legibility; and
- Improved cycling infrastructure along Oxford Road would reduce reliance on car travel for residents as well as those using the leisure centre. It would also make active travel a safer option for students at Lord William's Upper School. It does appear there is already a cycle lane, but lines are faded and there is no physical barrier between the cars and cyclists.

Figure 66: Bungalow with paved driveway
Figure 67: Maple Road property, with planting to soften
Figure 68: Bungalow with dormer

CA5 - Moreton Village

Figure 69: Historic Core area

Moreton is located to the south west of Thame and comprises a dispersed collection of semi detached and detached dwellings set within extensive grounds at low densities. Dwellings have a close connection with the surrounding landscape.

Land use	Land use is mostly residential. It also includes three working farms, a campsite, and a number of holiday cottages (Meadowbrook Cottages).
Pattern of development	The area is mostly located in a conservation area and its buildings reflect this. There are a number of high-quality converted barns as well as several maintained historic buildings. There are eleven listed buildings in the area. Buildings are generally a mix of two storey houses and bungalows. The area has a very rural feel about it, surrounded by farmland and countryside, and is accessed via a narrow country lane. There are several barn conversions and a limited number of twentieth century dwelling scattered throughout the village.
Building line / plot arrangement	Most properties in the area feature large front gardens with driveways and extensive amounts of greenery. Houses are therefore usually well setback from the road and, in some cases, not visible from the street. The majority of properties feature large back gardens. Properties towards the east of the area feature large trees at the rear of their gardens.
Boundary treatment	Boundaries are bordered with hedgerows, traditional stone brick walls, and post and rail fences. Some back gardens do feature more conventional wooden fencing to separate them, but these are not usually visible from the road. Generally, there are no formal boundaries with the road i.e. no pavement, instead there tends to be a grass verge in between properties and the road.
Heights, massing and roofline	Buildings are one or two storeys, but the roofline and heights are varied and a lot of buildings are completely unique in style. Most houses feature a gabled roof.
Public realm	The area features a handful of grass verges/ small greens. Of particular note is the small green on the junction towards the east of the area, this currently has a bench located on it and is the largest in the area. There is a well-used tarmac path to Thame that starts between Brook Cottage and Moreton Thatch, through to Bates Leys and Moreton Lane in Thame. This is generally well used by residents from both Moreton and Thame.

Figure 70: Converted barn

Figure 71: Detached cottage with decorative brick work and leaded windows
Figure 72: Deep set back and front gardens
Figure 73: Rendered stone detached cottage
Figure 74: Cottage with contrasting brickwork

Positive Character Features

- The area benefits from a distinct rural and agricultural feel, in no small part due to the operating farm within the site boundary, as well as the existence of a number of converted barn houses;
- Moreton was, and is, naturally constrained by the Cuttlebrook and agriculture. As a result, Moreton is clearly distinct and separate from Thame, and an identifiable place in its own right;
- Several unique/older buildings give a sense of historic development to the area;
- Plots are larger here than anywhere else in Thame, with many featuring expansive front and back gardens. Properties north east of the War Memorial benefit from pre-enclosure act long gardens. Many include large, mature trees. Similarly, the cluster of twelve post-WW1 buildings southwest of the War Memorial are notable for long gardens but lack back gardens; and
- The area appears to be generally well maintained; and
- Drainage ditches, ponds and country lane / shared road surface emphasise the rural nature of the area.

Risks to character

- No opportunities for active travel – no cycle infrastructure as well as no pavements for pedestrians
- The area is extremely reliant on the use of car travel

Opportunities

- The designation of the area as a Conservation Area means that development must respond sensitively to this. This might provide the opportunity for innovative architectural design.

CA6 - East Thame

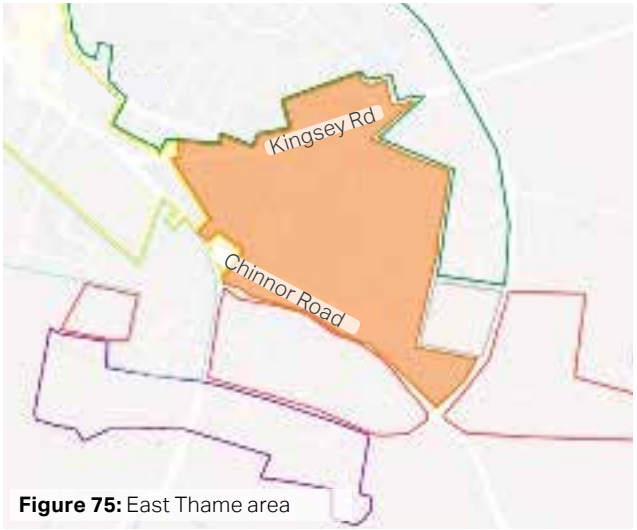

Figure 75: East Thame area

A largely residential area located to the east of the town centre. The area is bordered by East Street and Chinnor Road, with a network of streets forming a thoroughfare between them. Plots here a larger than most in Thame, with several properties featuring extensive back gardens. Notably, the area also features a secondary school, tennis club, and community hospital.

Land use	Primarily a residential area, but also containing a school, bowls club, petrol station, tennis club, service garage, community hospital as well as retail outlets Area includes Lord Williams's Lower School and playing fields, which are prominent in terms of area and importance to the community.
Pattern of development	This area appears to have been developed gradually. It features housing developed between the Victorian era and the early 2000s. Properties are a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced. Towards the east of the site we see a series of cul-de-sacs coming off of B4012. The other areas feature interconnected roads between Kingsey Road and Chinnor Road.
Building line / plot arrangement	Houses in the area are generally not set back against the pavement, most have them some form of front garden/driveway. However, due to the variation in development time the extent of this can vary greatly, with some plots having long grassy front gardens with no physical boundary, while others have small, walled off front gardens.
Boundary treatment	Boundaries again vary depending on type/time of development, can include brick walls, hedges, and fences.
Heights, massing and roofline	Dwellings vary between one and three-storeys across the area. In general, heights and roofline match their immediate surroundings, but throughout the area a lot of variety can be seen. All houses feature gabled roofs.
Public realm	The area features a few small amenity green spaces, although these are not landscaped in any significant way. Pavements in places are narrow or only exist on one side of the street.

Positive Character Features

- Buildings tend to be set back behind gardens/ driveways;
- There are interesting and distinct variations in building design and roofline, but these still manage to maintain a strong sense of coherent character throughout the area, in part due to similar buildings materials of brick, stone and weatherboarding; and
- A number of front gardens feature large trees that extend over the street. This adds to the suburban verdancy of the area.

Risks to character

- The area seems somewhat enclosed by the two roads surrounding it, potentially producing a sense of severance for those within it, or at least a sense of pedestrian severance.

Opportunities

- The road network is well connected, particularly from Chinnor Road to Kingsey Road, but cycle infrastructure could be introduced to the area;
- Any loss of natural open space through rear garden extensions and / or parking areas to the front, should be replaced with native trees and shrubs to reinstate the original landscape / biodiversity provision.
- Street greening could be introduced to implement the already existing green spaces and street trees growing from private gardens; and
- There is room for improvement on existing green spaces, for example they could play benefit from the introduction of benches or play equipment, and could potentially be diversified, providing more natural space.


F76


F77


F78

Figure 76: Victorian semi detached houses
Figure 77: Lack of overlooking and enclosure
Figure 78: Victorian terraces with white brick detailing to add emphasis

CA7 - Post 2013

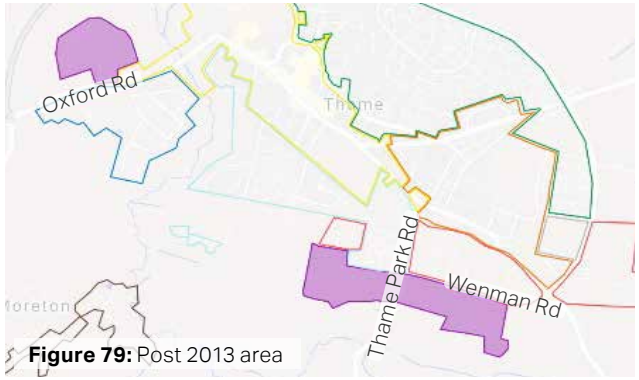

Figure 79: Post 2013 area

There are two 'post 2013' development areas in Thame, reflecting recent development on sites allocated in the made Thame Neighbourhood Plan. One site extends southwards from the existing town, bordering employment areas and Southern Thame. The other extends North West, bordering the Historic Core and Chiltern Vale. They share common characteristics.

Land use	The area features residential land uses and adjoins areas of open space / countryside.
Pattern of development	The area includes two parts; the development along Wenman Road and the development along Oxford Road. Both areas broadly follow the same pattern of development. Most houses are detached or semi-detached. The areas include a mix of housing sizes, including some large family homes, and all are generally two – three storeys in height. Most properties feature driveways or some form of off-street parking.
Building line / plot arrangement	There are few variations in building setbacks and plot arrangement. There is a sense of coherence and consistency in the built form. All properties follow the same pattern even where size/style varies. Gardens are a modest size.
Boundary treatment	The area features red brick walls and fences to separate gardens. Brick walls tend to be used where gardens are adjacent to the street. Usually no physical boundary at the front of properties, most common is just a grass verge on either side of the path leading to the door.
Heights, massing and roofline	Buildings in the area are two – three storeys tall and feature gabled roofs.
Public realm	They both border rural areas, and the development on Wenman Road features trails to a public footpath.

Positive Character Features

- The areas both have a distinct suburban character that sets them apart from the older developments;
- Both areas are surrounded by large areas of countryside, this provides interesting views from houses bordering the area;
- Green fingers incorporated with the layout of development provide a connection with and routes through to the surrounding countryside; and
- Within the sites different street types help define different areas of development.

Risks to character

- Limited variety in use of building materials, meaning the area lacks distinctiveness;
- Lack of facilities integrated within the areas at present beyond housing; and
- Some of the green fingers running through the areas lack vegetation beyond mown grass, and some spaces are not addressed by homes, fronted by garden walls and the gable ends of properties.

Opportunities

- There is opportunity to expand the designated cycle lane alongside the Southern Growth area, improving connectivity deeper into Thame. These are currently poorly connected with the wider network and could be actively maintained to encourage use;
- Introduce a greater diversity of landscaping within green fingers, including planting of mature trees, and, over time, explore opportunities that create more active and ownership of these spaces, which might include, for example, opportunities for community gardens and allotment space.


F80


F81

Figure 80: Large detached house with contrasting brickwork
Figure 81: Semi-detached properties featuring a partially gabled roof design

CA8 - Employment Areas

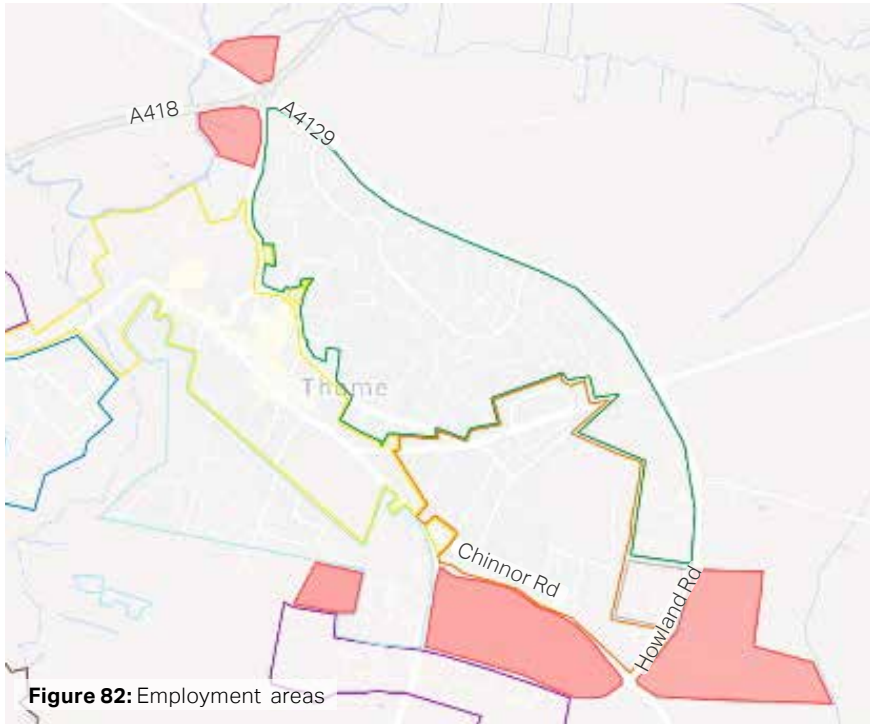

Figure 82: Employment areas

An industrial area containing a variety of units of different sizes and types including some office and light industrial use. Principally characterised by large format buildings with few windows and inactive frontages.

Land use	The area includes industrial, office, retail and hospitality uses, and some recent residential development
Pattern of development	The Employment Area consists of five separate clusters though sharing similar characteristics: the exception being a service station to the north west of Thame. Much of the character area comprises traditional employment development and activity, featuring a mix of light industrial buildings and offices. Development to the east of B4012 features larger industrial units. Some recent development has taken places which has resulted in a loss of employment land and new residential development.
Building line / plot arrangement	Buildings in the employment area follow a uniform pattern. There is generally a lot of space in front of buildings, for access, parking, loading and unloading. Plots are generally large, although including some smaller office units.
Boundary treatment	Boundaries tend be made up of low walls, metal gates and some hedges.
Heights, massing and roofline	Buildings tend to be two storeys in height, although a handful are single storey warehouses with high ceilings. The new residential development is an exception, being three storeys in height. Buildings are usually flat roofed, except for those located in the service station where gabled roofs can be found on the fast-food restaurant and hotel.
Public realm	The area is vehicle dominated and lacks any distinguishable public or green/open space.

Positive Character Features

- The employment areas are generally well integrated with surrounding development, with landscaping around them responding to the amenity of residential properties;
- The areas are generally well connected to the main road network; and
- The areas seem legible and easy to navigate, with a sufficient amount of parking surrounding buildings, particularly useful for warehouses receiving/ sending deliveries.

Risks to character

- Although obviously not the intended 'target audience', the area is extremely unfriendly towards pedestrians and cyclists;
- Although the area does well to not impact nearby residential areas, the built form and materials do not cohere with the surrounding areas; and
- A lack of street greening and impermeable surfaces dominate the area, with limited green areas for employees or visitors to enjoy.

Opportunities

- Opportunities could be explored that provide defined public space and or very local retail opportunities for employees;
- Walking and cycling connections to the other parts of the town may help to reduce the dominance of vehicles in this area; and
- Potential to explore how building form might be used to better capture green, renewable energy, potentially through installation of roof-based solar panels.


F83


F84

F85

Figure 83: Large format business unit
Figure 84: Warehousing / small business units
Figure 85: Warehousing / small business units

Design guidance and codes

05

5. Design guidance and codes

This section sets out the principles that will influence the design of potential new development and inform the retrofit of existing properties within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. A combination of local images and best practice examples have been used to exemplify the design guidelines and codes.

5.1 Introduction

The following section describes a set of design codes that have been put together based on the existing context of Thame.

These codes will aim to guide any changes or development within the town to ensure the local character is respected whilst still allowing space for innovation within the built environment.

5.2 The importance of good design

As the NPPF (paragraph 126) notes: *"good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".*

Research, such as for the Government's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (now part of the Design Council) has shown that good design of buildings and places can:

- Improve health and well-being
- Increase civic pride and cultural activity
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce pollution.

Building on the recognition of this regionally via the Joint Design Guide and the Streets Design Guide, this section of the document seeks to harness an understanding of how good design can make future development as endearingly popular as the best of what has gone before.

5.3 Placemaking

The design codes are underpinned by a set of placemaking principles that should influence the design of future development areas, the public realm, homes and the interfaces between them.

Placemaking is about creating the physical conditions that residents and users find attractive and safe, with good levels of social interaction and layouts that are easily understood.

The placemaking principles set out in the following pages should be used to assess the design quality of future development or regeneration proposals. These key principles should be considered in all cases of future development as they reflect positive place-making and draw on the principles set out in many national urban design best practice documents including the National Design Guide, Building for a Healthy Life and the Urban Design Compendium.

The guidelines developed in this part focus on residential environments. However, new housing development should not be viewed in isolation, but considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context.

The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural environment should all help to determine the character and identity of a development.

It is important with any proposal that full account is taken of the local context and that the new design embodies the 'sense of place'.

Reference to context means using what is around, shown in the first three chapters, as inspiration and influence and it could be a contemporary solution that is in harmony with the surroundings.

5.4 Structure

Based on the understanding gained in the previous chapters, this section will identify design codes for future development to adhere to. As identified in the diagnostic report and following the meeting with the group, the design guidelines and codes have been created to apply to the whole neighbourhood plan area.

The design guidelines and codes have been split into two, as set out overleaf. There are general guidelines and codes, which cover holistic issues such as 'settlement layout' and 'character', which should apply to all housing regardless of tenure. Specific guidelines and codes tackle more focused design issues such as 'block principles' and 'building principles'.

Figure 86: Junction of High St and Bell Lane

Cont'd

5.5 How do the design principles relate to each character area?

This table links the design principles to the different character areas in the Town, which are introduced in the next section. The aim of the design codes is to specify the design actions that explain how to achieve the design principles.

Key:

x This design principle does relate to this character area

\- This design principle does not relate to this character area

General Design Guidance and Codes		Related character area							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
WB	**Wellbeing**								
WE 01	Compact, walkable and complete neighbourhoods	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
WE 02	Accessibility, safety and inclusivity	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
WE 03	Legibility and wayfinding	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
WE 04	Access to nature and greenspace	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
WE 05	Food production	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
WE 06	Multifunctional, creative & playful spaces	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
SL	**Settlement layout**								
SL 01	Edge	-	x	x	x	x	x	-	-
SL 02	Gateway	-	-	-	x	-	-	x	x
SL 03	Infill	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-
SL 04	Layout of buildings	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
SL 05	Parking	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
SC	**Setting and character**								
SC 01	Setting and character	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
SC 02	Views and landmarks	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
SC 03	Trees and landscaping	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
SC 04	Proportion and scale	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
SC 05	Enclosure	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
SC 06	Boundary treatment	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
SC 07	Building line and setbacks	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
SC 08	Public and private spaces	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	-
SC 09	Street lighting and dark skies	-	x	x	x	x	-	x	-

Table 02: Character Area table

BU	**Buildings**								
BU 01	LIfetime homes and flexibility of uses	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
BU 02	Extensions, alterations and conversions	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
SE	**Sustainable energy**								
SE 01	Aspect and orientation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
SE 02	Features in dwellings	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
SE 03	Building fabric	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
SE 04	Recycling materials and buildings	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
SE 05	Water management	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
SE 06	Waste storage and servicing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
SE 07	Wildlife friendly features	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
SE 08	Electric charging points	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

WE. Wellbeing

Wellbeing relates to our physical and mental state. There are a number of factors that can influence our wellbeing. The Town Council believe that the wellbeing of Thames residents is of upmost importance and that fundamentally, Thame should be safe and friendly, which is reflected in their vision and objectives.

WE 01 - Compact, walkable and complete neighbourhoods

The first objective of TNP2 is for 'Compact, Walkable and Complete Communities', which is fundamental to wellbeing.

Historically, pre car, walking and cycling (alongside horse and cart / canal tow path and river boats for goods and services) were essential to meet your daily needs. In contrast, the design of car focused homes and neighbourhoods in the latter C20 meant that out of town retail parks and commercial uses flourished and settlements across the UK became carved up and dominated by cars. During this time, there was little consideration of the impact that this has on the public realm, and also on people's day to day lives. This can be seen in some parts of Thame, particularly the edges, which are designed around the car and feature a range of commercial uses.

More recently, and particularly since the pandemic, people's day to day lives have contracted and there is much more awareness of the importance of walking, cycling to access local facilities and green and natural space.

A holistic approach to wellbeing is the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, which is defined by the TCPA in their recent guide "Creating Healthier, Active, Prosperous Communities" as a place in which most of people's daily needs can be met within short walk or cycle. The guide defines 20 minutes as the maximum time that people are willing to walk to meet their daily needs and that the 20 min journey represents an 800m walk from home to a destination and back again (10 minutes each way).

Thame is well set up for the 20-minute neighbourhood, given its compact size and good provision of walking routes. Other factors which influence wellbeing are listed on the following pages.

The impact of Covid has made the 20-minute neighbourhood even more pertinent, with access to local facilities and green and natural space being so important for wellbeing. The benefits include:

- People chose to stay in the neighbourhood for longer as they are diverse and cater for a wide range of needs/lifestyles;
- People become more active which improves mental and physical health;
- Traffic is reduced, and air quality improved;
- Local shops facilities benefit from increased patronage;
- People connect with nature;
- People see more of their neighbours, strengthening community bonds; and
- Neighbourhoods become generally safer for all, but particularly children, due to the points above.

The Place Alliance Guide 'Home Comforts' (2020) states that these sorts of walkable and well-rounded neighbourhoods must be 'the new normal', so that they are available and affordable to anyone who wants to live in one. And that newer neighbourhoods (post 2000) with fewer facilities were the least satisfying for residents during lockdown.

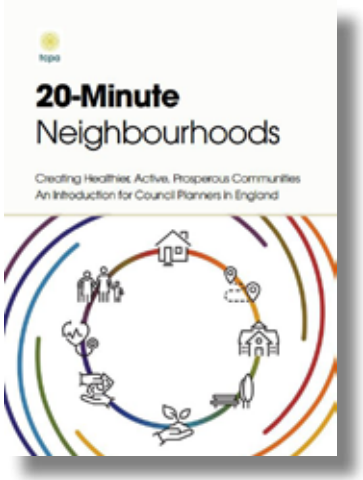

Figure 87: TCPA 20-minute neighbourhoods

The following principles therefore should be adhered to:

- New streets must be designed as a 'space' to be used by all. Existing streets should be retrofitted for the same purpose and to discourage speeding;
- New footpath links should be provided wherever possible, and these must connect up with the existing walking network, placing the priority on the pedestrian, thereby encouraging people to favour active travel over the car;
- Streets and footpaths should be laid out in a permeable pattern, allowing for multiple connections and choice of routes, particularly on foot. Any cul-de-sac should be relatively short and provide onward pedestrian links;

WE 02 - Accessibility, safety and inclusivity

New developments in the NA should provide a coherent movement network for road users, cyclists and pedestrians of all ages. Developments should be designed to enable direct and convenient walking and cycling routes into and throughout Thame. There should be a clear hierarchy of movement in the order of pedestrians, cyclists and cars. New developments should calm traffic and reduce the speed of motor vehicles by incorporating a variety of traffic calming measures, as follows:

- Design out crime by considering the safety and comfort of pedestrians;
- Ensure that road and pavement surfaces encourage easy access to developments, especially for elderly and disabled pedestrians and wheelchair users whose needs must be considered;
- All schemes should consider how they will incorporate traffic calming measures to reduce car speeds and make residential developments tranquil and safe for pedestrians. Traffic calming measures can include attractive tree and shrub planting, raised pedestrian crossings and painted verges for pedestrians and cyclists where a pavement is not possible; and
- Avoid road dominated visual scenes in new developments by incorporating attractive and varied road surfaces and beautifying developments with trees and planting.

Figure 88: An example of raised pedestrian crossing with a plateau in Hemel Hampstead

WE 03 -Legibility and wayfinding

A legible and well signposted place is easier for the public to understand as people can orientate themselves with visual landmarks and direct routes. Being able to navigate around a place makes people feel safer and creates a more pleasant living environment.

- Use opportunities such as corners and junctions to incorporate landmark buildings, gateways and focal points so that each part of the development is visually distinct and recognisable;
- These gateways and nodes should incorporate distinctive and characterful architectural elements which nod to Thame's built heritage;
- New developments should closely consider their relationship with each of the designated character areas and foster a contiguous sense of place for each respective character area;
- Signs should avoid cluttering the public spaces and can be an opportunity for attractive and distinct features which complement the neighbouring properties rather than detract from the visual scene; and
- Street and development names should seek to reflect relevant local history.

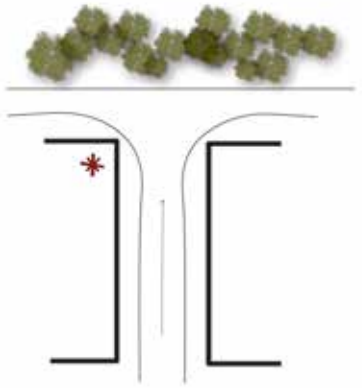

Figure 89: A view terminating at a wooded area with a landmark buildings located on the left

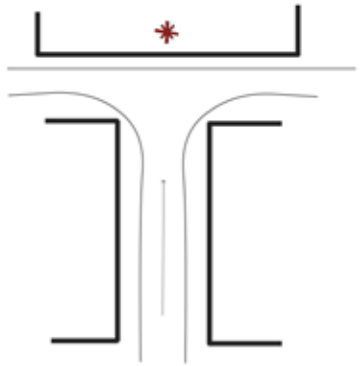

Figure 90: A landmark building located at the termination of the view

WE 04 - Access to nature and greenspace

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

"Development should enhance the natural as well as the built environment. Nature is good for health and wellbeing, for biodiversity, shading and cooling, noise mitigation, air quality and mitigating flood risk as well as contributing to tackling the climate emergency. Nature is also central to the creation of beautiful places."

Thame has many different types of green space, as described in Section 3.4. It benefits from a green setting with many trees throughout the town as well as the Cuttle Brook corridor. It also benefits from having a wide range of natural areas of woodlands and parkland, which provide valuable habitat for wildlife.

The National Design Guide recognises the benefits of this in paragraph 82 :

"All new development needs to use, retain and improve existing habitats or create new habitats to achieve measurable gains for biodiversity. This includes landscaping and tree planting."

Specific opportunities to integrate street greening, public green space and improve green infrastructure network connectivity should be design drivers for all new development. As set out in paragraph 131 of the NPPF, trees make an important contribution to the character of a place, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The following principles should be considered with new developments:

- Hedgerows are not only a traditional feature of the landscape, but an important habitat forming a green infrastructure network across the county and should be preserved;
- Tree and plant species specification should be appropriate for the microclimate of the town, should be native and should include management requirements and seasonal colour variation. Ornamental single species planting should be avoided, a diverse planting preference provides improved habitat and better disease resistance;
- Gardens should be planted and designed with nature in mind, incorporating bolt-on products for habitat protection such as bat bricks, bird boxes and hedgehog gravel boards.

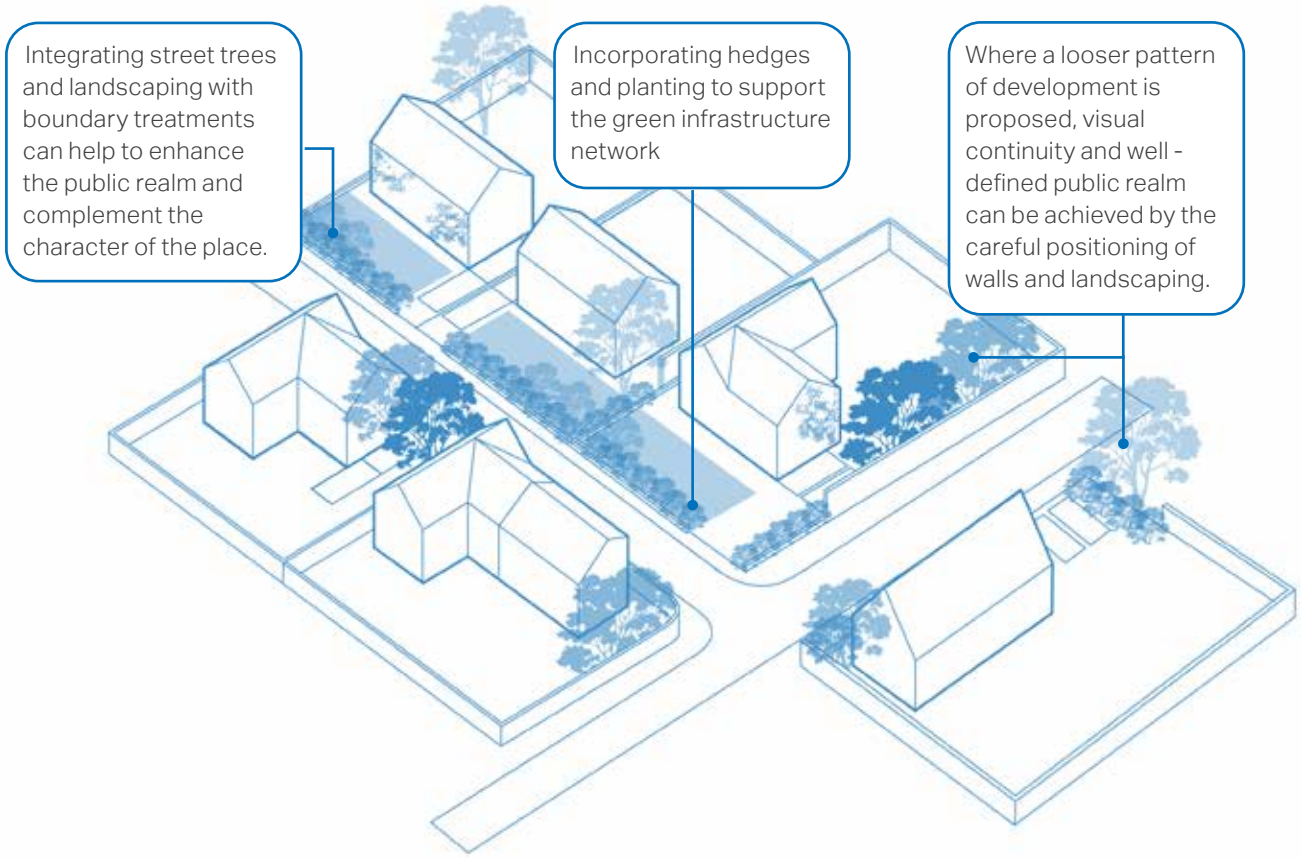

Figure 91: Diagram showing trees and landscaping that complement the public realm and create a sense of enclosure

Figure 92: Examples of a bughouse, West Byfleet allotments

Figure 93: Examples of a frog habitat (source: Adobe Stock)

WE 05 - Food production

Space for food production is also important for wellbeing, as it increases access to a range of food, provides educational opportunities and reconnects residents to their surroundings, and each other. It also boosts self-esteem, by providing a sense of purpose.

Therefore, new development in the town should:

- Provide access to a wide range of multifunctional, semi natural green open space for the benefit to people and wildlife;
- Provide growing space;
- Prioritise tree planting to maintain the green setting of the town;
- Retain any natural features, such as trees and hedgerows, for the benefit of local wildlife;
- It should provide excellent walking and cycling links, focusing on active travel over and above the car; and
- Provide facilities where residents can socialise and interact.

Figure 94: Allotments, Wheatley

Figure 96: Story Garden, Kings Cross London (Source: https://www.kingscross.co.uk/skip-garden)

Figure 95: Example of raised seating with incorporated planting in small parklet, Hammersmith (source: https://www.meristemdesign.co.uk/hf-parklets)

Figure 97: Growing gardens incorporating flowers, Marmalade Lane, Cambridge

WE 06 -Multifunctional, creative and playful spaces

The layering of uses within the public realm has become particularly relevant since the Pandemic. It can be approached by treating streets and spaces as public outdoor rooms, where people can interact safely and by designing these spaces as multi-functional, which serve a variety of purposes and therefore appeal to wide range of people. Uses do not have to be permanent; temporary activation of public spaces has become extremely positive for local communities in many settlements throughout the UK, helping bring residents together.

Arts and cultural activities can play important roles in sustaining the spirit of and can positively engage local communities and improve their neighbourhoods. This in turn builds stronger and cohesive communities that support a sense of civic pride and place identity. Art in the public realm can contribute to distinctive landmarks, streetscapes and way-finding and also bring economic and educational benefits to the area. A thriving cultural scene is an important local asset that can support economic growth.

An emphasis on arts and culture in Thame could help address the challenges faced by its High Street such as declining retail and contribute to revitalise the town in an entrepreneurial and innovative manner (e.g. re-purposing vacant units) as a way of aiding ongoing recovery from the pandemic. Public art could also be used to assist wayfinding – potentially a new landmark sign/ sculpture to mark the gateway into the town.

The activation of redundant areas of the public realm or layering of uses, so that green open space becomes multifunctional, can be achieved via various elements, such as:

- Trim trails;
- Community events such as farmers markets or book sales;
- Public art, whether temporary or permanent;
- Small growing gardens; and
- Café spill out areas.

Figure 98: Temporary cafe, Greenwich, London (Source: https://www.we-heart.com/2012/09/13/the-movement-cafe-greenwich/)

Figure 99: Local artist murial, West Byfleet

Figure 102: Camille Walala pedestrian crossing, London

Figure 100: A place to linger and connect, Bath

Figure 101: Pop up playground, Dalston, London

SL Settlement Layout

SL 01 - Edge

The following principles should be considered with new developments:

- Integrate well into the existing built form, taking opportunities to connect pedestrian routes and green spaces where possible;
- Edge of settlement development should gradually transition to the surrounding landscape context, with a soft, low density edge and generous green spaces to soften and integrate. Building elevations along the existing town edge should connect into it and should provide an attractive and positive frontage;
- Developments shoud promote active travel at all times, connecting into the existing footpath network and discouraging car use; and
- Developments should respond to micro-climates and sun paths and use these as key design drivers to increase the environmental comfort.

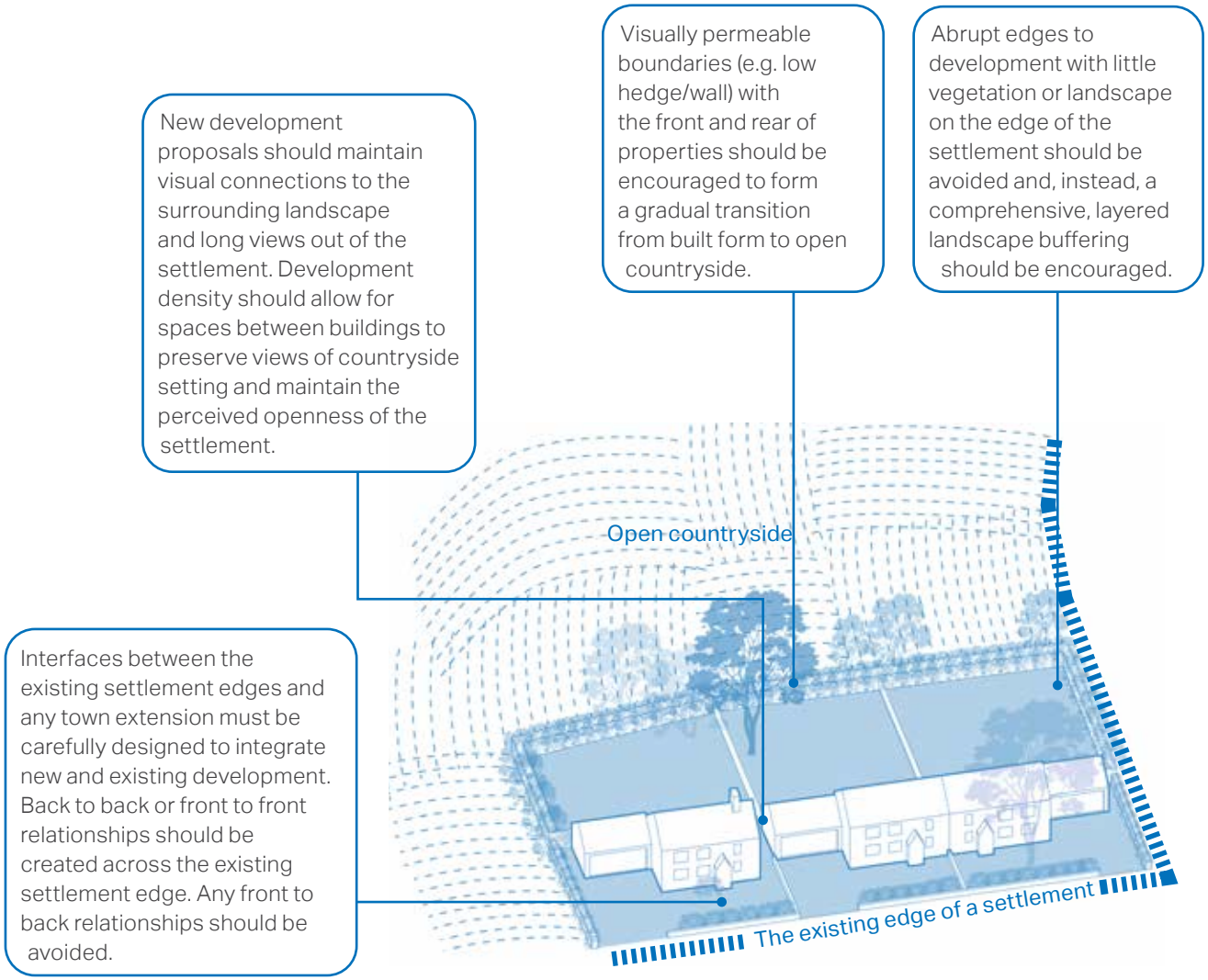

Figure 103:
Indicative sketch highlighting elements of design codes for an edge site

SL 02 - Gateway

A gateway site is normally situated at the edge of a settlement, near to a main route or gateway. The employment allocations of Rycote Lane and Howland Road could be defined as Gateway sites.

A Gateway site marks the transition from one space to another, and is a point of arrival into (and departure from) a settlement, usually from the surrounding landscape setting.

The sense of departure and arrival can often be achieved by a noticeable change in scale, enclosure, or road configuration. The gateway buildings or features should, however, reflect local character.

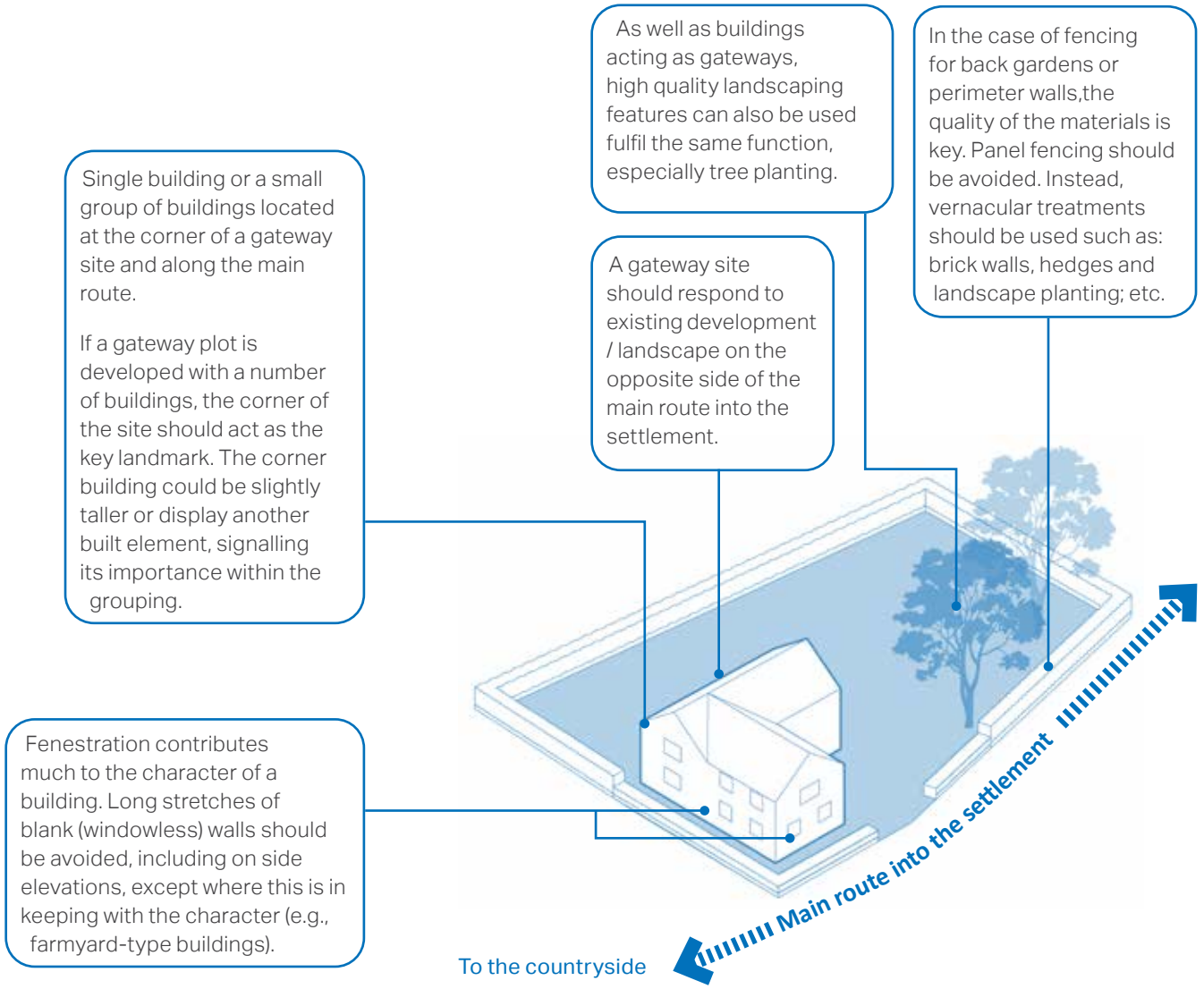

Figure 104:
Indicative sketch highlighting elements of design codes for a gateway site

Whilst it could be argued that some development patterns are more successful than others, the development patterns summarised on the previous two pages are integral to Thame's sense of place. New development in the town should respond to these development patterns and the following specific principles should be considered with new developments:

- Consider the settlement extent holistically, paying close attention to the role of the settlement as a compact town;
- Respect the morphology of the town within the specific character area, by adopting any positive characteristics (as identified in the previous section). In doing so, consider how the orientation of development blocks, streets and groupings of buildings help to respond and relate to its setting. Look out for points of overlap between any development patterns and character areas;
- The town centre should reflect higher densities whilst the edge of the town can remain lower density. Densities should reflect the overall rural character, of the town, with regular breaks designed into new development to increase visual permeability;
- Development on the edge of the town should gradually transition to the surrounding landscape context, with a soft, lower density edge and appropriate planting, such as the newly developed sites to the south of Wenman Road. Building forms along the existing town edge should provide an attractive and positive frontage to the landscape;
- Layout, clustering and massing should take precedent from the best examples of development within the town and the surrounding area; and
- Respond to micro-climates and sun paths and use these as key design drivers to increase the environmental comfort.

SL 03 - Infill

Infill sites will vary in scale, context and location within a settlement. An infill can have significant impact on the character and appearance of the built environment. Infill design codes are set out later in this document in the Building (BU) section, but the following general principles should be applied to any future infill site:

- Infill development should complement the street scene into which it will be inserted, but do not need to mimic. Pastiche should be avoided. Points of continuity in the streetscape can be created by scale, massing and layout (i.e. ridge/eave heights, especially for terraced or dense groupings of buildings, or architectural detailing / colour scheme);
- The building line of new development should generally be in keeping with the existing. Building set backs should provide some defensible space and should not front straight onto the pavement edge. Very often, with terraced or dense groupings, the building line will be exactly the same, but in other cases it might be acceptable that it closely aligns with the existing arrangement of buildings where there is an irregular, meandering building line; and
- The density of any new infill development should reflect its context and its location in the town (centre or edge), or in a smaller settlement nestled in a wider landscape, such as Moreton, Policy STRAT5: Residential Densities of the Local Plan. The optimum density will respond to surrounding densities, whilst making efficient use of land.

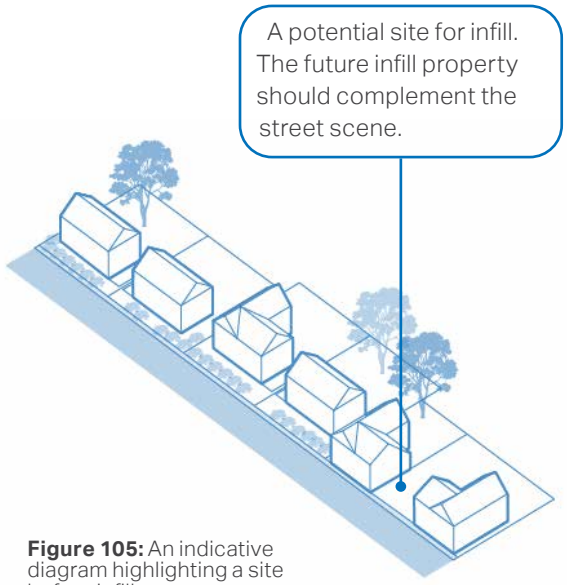

Figure 105: An indicative diagram highlighting a site before infill

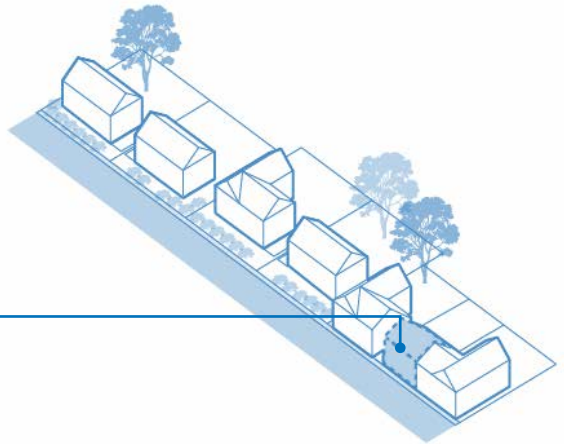

Figure 106: An indicative diagram highlighting a site after infill

SL 04 - Layout of buildings

The Neighbourhood Area owes its character, in part, to the layout of buildings.

New developments should respect the particular building patterns of each part of the Neighbourhood Area in order to contribute positively to their character on the whole (there will be some exceptions to this). In particular:

- Any new development in the countryside (eg. Moreton) should be carefully sited to minimise negative impacts on the surrounding landscape;
- New developments must demonstrate an understanding of the scale, building orientation, enclosure and rhythm of the surrounding built environment;
- New development proposals should comprise a variety of dwelling types to cater for all needs and demographics;

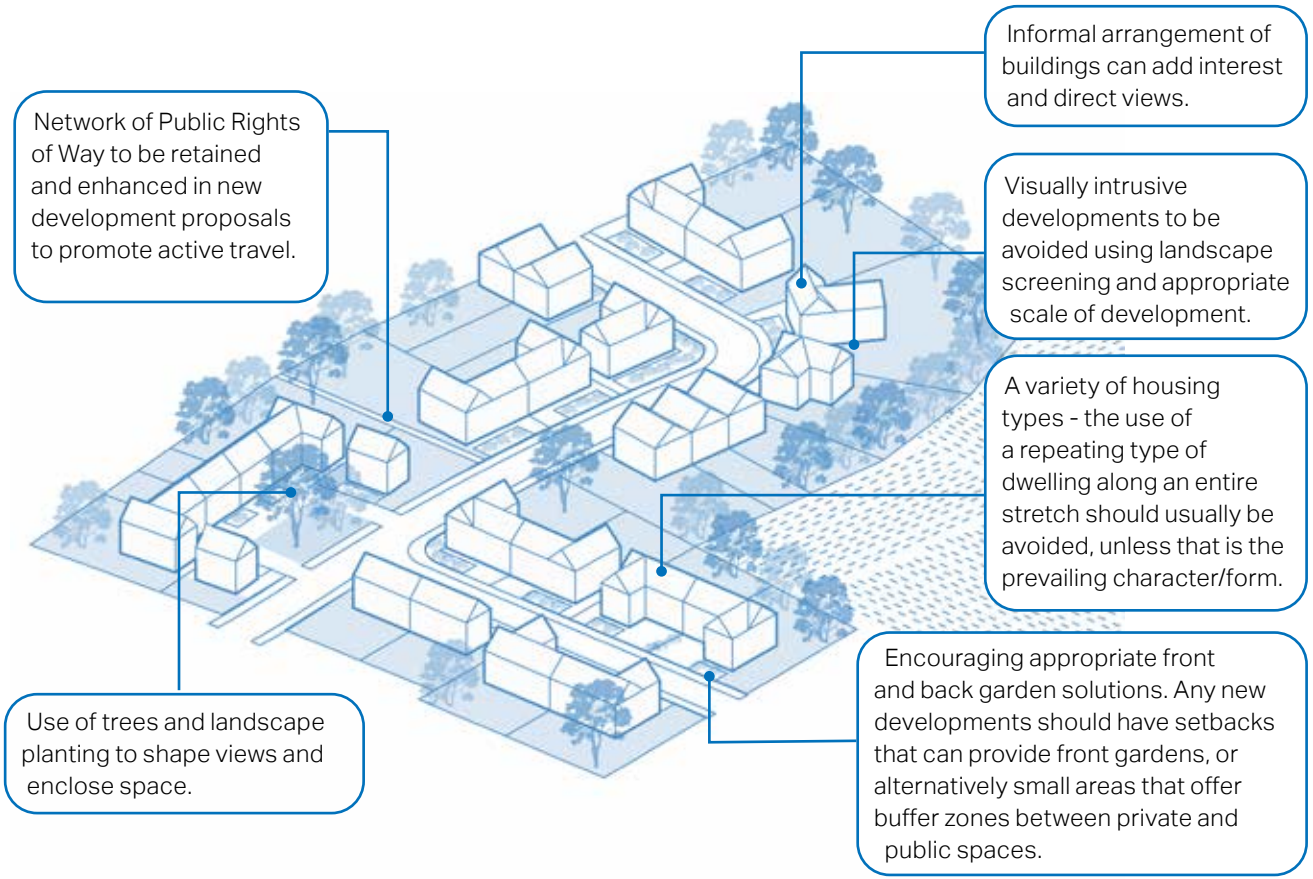

Figure 107: Diagram showing layout of building elements

- The size and layout of the plot should contribute positively to the surrounding development;
- Positioning of the building on the plot (set backs) should generally reflect the prevailing pattern, with front gardens providing defensible space. Where the provision of a front garden is not possible, small buffers to the public realm, such as planting strips should be used;
- New development should create a building line which is used to shape views and enclosures, such as those fronting onto the town green;
- The layout of new development should optimise the benefits of daylight and passive solar gain, as this can significantly reduce energy consumption; and
- Any proposal that would give rise to an unacceptable increase in the amount of traffic and noise would be inappropriate.


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Figure 108: A strong, continuous building line with continuity of building material and architectural features

Figure 109: Defensible boundary and planting in the frront garden softens the appearance of the streetscape

Figure 110: Strong definition of defensible space, despite the building being close to the pavement edge

SL 05 - Parking

Adequate parking solutions must be integrated into new developments in line with Oxford County Council parking requirements. Parking is also addressed in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, South Oxfordshire Design Guide and Street Design Guide.

Parking is a necessary fact of life in rural areas. However parking can contribute negatively to the development of settlements, and in doing so presents problems for all types of non vehicular users. This is the message in the 'Streets for all' section of Building for a Healthy Life, which **discourages** the following parking features:

- Providing all cycle storage in garages and sheds.
- Over reliance on integral garages with frontage driveways.
- Frontage car parking with little or no softening landscaping.
- Parking courtyards enclosed by fencing; poorly overlooked, poorly lit and poorly detailed.
- Failing to anticipate and respond to displaced and other anti-social parking.
- Over-reliance on tandem parking arrangements.
- Views along streets that are dominated by parked cars, driveways or garages.
- Car parking spaces that are too narrow making it difficult for people to use them.
- Cycle parking that is located further away to the entrances to shops, schools and other facilities than car parking spaces and car drop off bays.
- Relying on garages being used for everyday car parking.

As outlined in the Thame Masterplan report, there are various factors in Thame that have resulted in heavy traffic and parking dominating the public realm within the town centre. TNP2 aims to enable improvements of active travel routes into the Town Centre for its residents, to help alleviate the pressure of vehicle use.

Alongside this, the following parking principles are recommended in Thame:

- New development should anticipate realistic levels of car parking demand, guarding against displaced and anti-social parking; thinking about the availability and frequency of public transport.
- Most homes should have on-plot parking wherever possible and cars should be located at the front or the side of the property;
- Car parking should be designed to avoid being visually intrusive, such as by screening these areas with planting and high quality landscaping. Boundary treatment is key to ensuring this and can be achieved by using elements such as hedges, trees, flower beds, low walls and high quality paving materials;

- Driveways must be constructed from porous materials to minimise surface water run-off. These materials such as cobbles or flagstones are also much more attractive than the use of tarmac;
- Garages should be designed either as a free standing structure or an additive form to the main building. In both cases, garages should reflect the architectural style of the building and look an integral part of it rather than a mismatched unit. Garages should be behind or in line with the building, never positioned ahead of the building line;

Type	Maximum allocated	Maximum unallocated
1 bed	1	0.0
2 bed	2	0.3
3 bed	2	0.4
4 bed	2	0.5

Table 03: OCC Parking requirements

Figure 111: A positive example of on-street parking, North Street

Figure 112: Diagram showing on-plot parking

- Where on-street parking is the only option, it must avoid blocking the way of pedestrians, wheelchair user and cyclists, in particular by discouraging pavement parking. Recessed parking bays with trees and planting can reduce the negative visual impacts of on-street parking which can have an urbanising effect on towns and villages;
- Parking courtyards may be of practical use in some circumstances and these must benefit from natural surveillance and be overlooked. These courts should have a high-quality design incorporating attractive materials and landscaping to avoid detracting from the built environment. Surfaces must be water permeable to avoid drainage issues;

Figure 113: On-plot parking with garage

Figure 114: On plot parking, East Street

Figure 115: Diagram showing rear parking courtyard

Figure 116: Tree helps to soften on street parking in a residential setting, Wykeham Park

- New developments should incorporate cycle parking, which occupies minimal space and can be incorporated into the domestic curtilage, either with a secure cycle store at the front, or space for bicycles behind a secure side gate to a back garden. Cycle parking should be incorporated into new housing and commercial developments (See Figure 119);
- Developments should incorporate electric car charging facilities as these are likely to substantially increase in model share with HM Government's commitment to Net Zero;
- Adequate visitor parking should be incorporated into development following the principles above; and
- Non-residential development should provide adequate car parking for users including employees and customers to avoid parking on pavements or green verges.

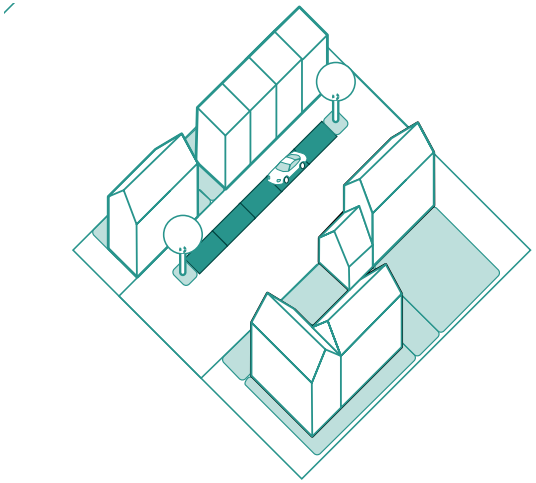

Figure 117: Diagram showing on-street car parking

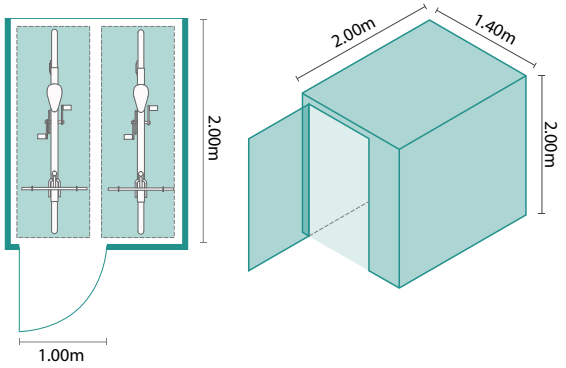

Figure 119: Secure cycle storage for two bicycles

Figure 118: A positive example of on-street parking in dedicated bays, Towersey Road

Figure 120: Insufficient lack of parking leads to parking that is obstructive to pedestrians, North Street

SC Setting and Character

SC 01 - Setting and character

Development proposals need to take a proactive approach to mitigate and adapt to the landscape within and surrounding Thame.

This chapter covers a plethora of factors that contribute towards Thame's character and setting.

A place's character and setting can be made up of many different elements which come together to create a unique sense of place. The character and setting of Thame is influenced by its position within the landscape and its built character.

The design principles in this section describe the elements that contribute to Thame's character and setting.

Thame has a mixed character, owing to its varied development pattern, with both traditional and modern development. The overall approach to new development within the NA is that this pattern should be respected, with variety and originality being encouraged.

The setting of the Conservation Area should be one of protecting and enhancing its built and landscape assets (e.g. listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, statutory and local designations).

Thame should evolve positively and confidently, whilst referencing built characteristics such as scale, materials and arrangement.

Therefore, future development proposals should:

- Set out a clear response to the character area/s in which their development is sited or adjacent to (see character area plan). New development should generally respect the scale, mass and form of the existing buildings within the character area. This does not mean mimicking the existing design period of an identified character area in the form of pastiche - contemporary design is encouraged, where appropriate;
- Clearly outline the response to character relating to access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping;
- Respect the overall setting of the town by retaining, conserving and enhancing the setting and views of the range of notable and listed buildings within and surrounding the town; and
- Respect the landscape setting of the town by retaining, conserving and enhancing views to the countryside beyond, around the edges of the town.

In order for these principles to be achieved, it is suggested that design proposals should respond to the character area within which the development site is located, with one of the three approaches, as follows:

SC 01.01 Respect and reflect local character

Respond to existing built characteristics found within the character area, street or site, in relation to scale, form, massing, setback, materials and colour palette.

Where relevant: This is most relevant in the Conservation Areas of the NA, where there is a well established and preserved historic character and setting.

SC 01.02 - Complement character

Introduce compatible and complementary built characteristics that generally fit within the character area, street or site. This should add to the character of the area, but could provide some variety (e.g., match in design aspects of form, setback and scale but also introduce additional materials or architectural elements).

Where relevant: This is relevant throughout most of the NA, where there is some variety in the character area or street, with no predominant style. Here it would be apt to maintain the character of the street and plot series but there may be more scope to vary the buildings appearance by choosing contemporary materials and details that complement the existing.

SC 01.03 - Distinctive style

Designing something that is markedly different in character than the existing street, with exceptional design quality and innovation. Non-local architecture, details and materials are common-place across the country. As such imported ideas cannot be forbidden entirely but where proposed should have a story behind them that adds to local interest and variety. This must not detract from any existing coherent character of the street / area.

Where relevant: On a street where there is an eclectic building character presented to the street, an unexceptional character, or within the edges or remote areas of the NA, where buildings are set further back on plot and much less visible due to boundary walls or landscaping so they co-exist easily.

SC 02 - Views and landmarks

The visual connection of views out of and within Thame towards the landscape and certain landmarks is fundamental to its setting.

- New development proposals should not be visually intrusive. This should be achieved through appropriate scaling and design, including landscape screening, where appropriate;
- Where appropriate, future development proposals should incorporate landscape and built features to create landmarks, helping with legibility;
- New development proposals should maintain visual connections to the surrounding landscape and long views out of the settlement. Development density should allow for spaces between buildings to preserve views of countryside beyond and maintain the perceived openness of the settlement.

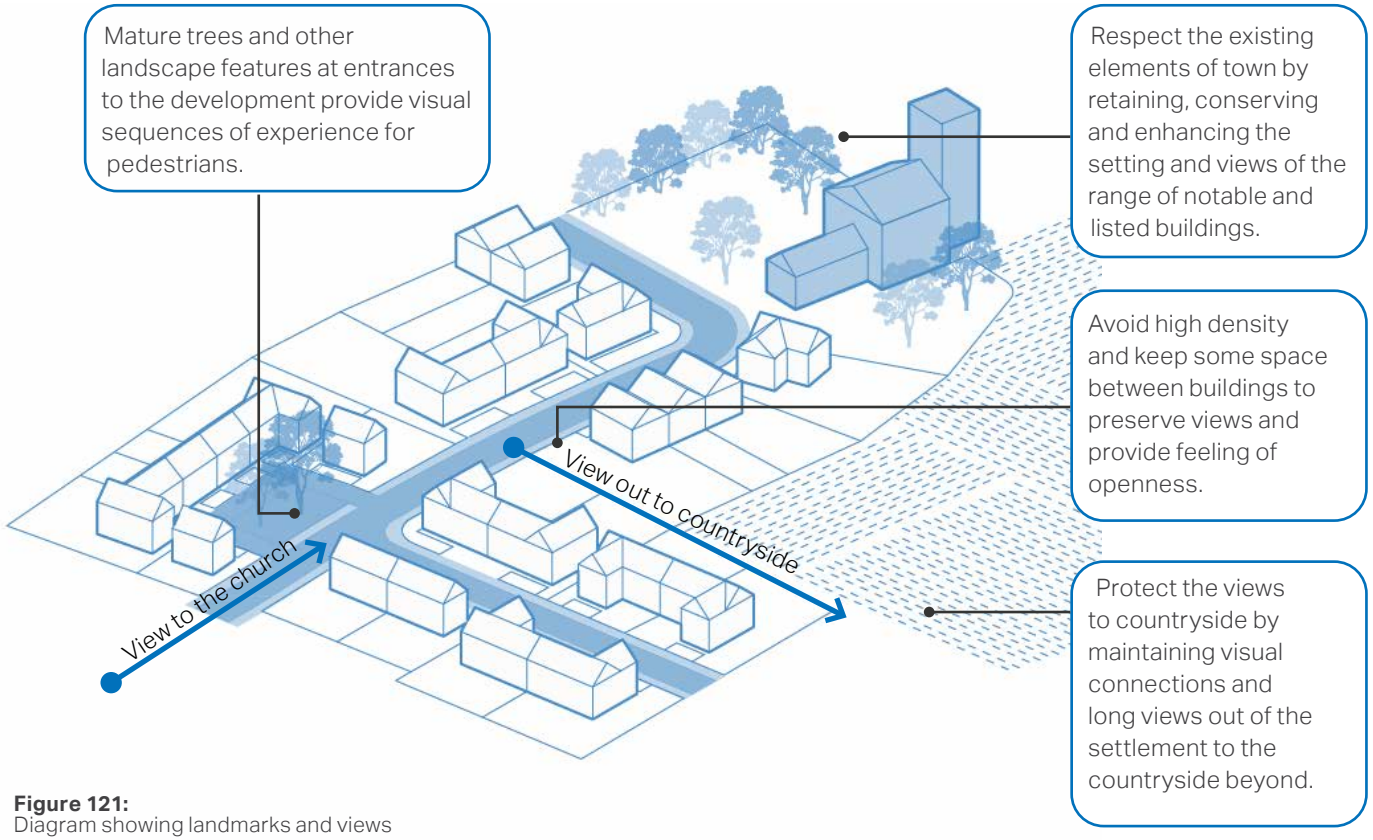

Figure 121:
Diagram showing landmarks and views

- Creating short-distance views broken by buildings, trees, street direction or landmarks helps to create memorable routes and places, and easily intelligible links between places. New developments should be oriented to maximise the opportunities for memorable views and visual connectivity.

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Figure 122: The church roofline, which is slightly set back from the main building line, provides a landmark within the streetscene

Figure 123: The detached building at the end of the street terminates the view and provides a landmark

SC 03 - Trees and landscaping

Whilst trees are not commonplace throughout Thame, there are two major areas of woodland corridors, along the River Thame and the Cuttle Brook.

Trees provide shading and cooling, absorb carbon dioxide, act as habitats and green links for species, reduce air pollution and assist water attenuation and humidity regulation. For people, they help alleviate stress and anxiety, help with recovery from ill-health and create a sense of positive mental health and well-being. In addition, they add life to the landscape and help shape and add character to open spaces.

The following guidelines focus on the design aspects and appearance of planting and trees in private gardens as well as public open spaces and streets.

Figure 124:
Diagram showing green spaces and landscape planting

SC 03.01. Planting standard

- Aim to preserve existing mature trees, incorporating them into the new landscape design and using them as accents and landmarks, where appropriate;
- Consider canopy size when locating trees; reducing the overall number of trees but increasing the size of trees is likely to have the greatest positive long-term impact;
- Size of tree pits should allow sufficient soil around the tree. Ensure tree stems are in the centre of the verge to provide a 1m clearance of the footway or carriageway;
- Tree root zones should be protected to ensure that trees can grow to their mature size. Root barriers must be installed where there is a risk of damaging foundations, walls and underground utilities;

- New trees should be added to strengthen vistas, focal points and movement corridors, while retaining clear visibility into and out of amenity spaces. They should not, however, block key view corridors and vehicular circulation sight lines;
- New trees should be integrated into the design of new developments from the outset rather than left as an afterthought to avoid conflicts with above- and below-ground utilities;
- To ensure resilience and increase visual interest, a variety of tree species is preferred over a single one;
- Regulations, standards, and guidelines relevant to the planting and maintenance of trees are listed, right:
  - Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery;[1]
  - Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers;[2]
  - Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure;[3]
  - BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations;[4] and
  - BS 5837:1991 Guide for trees in relation to construction.[5]

[1] Trees & Design Action Group (2012). *Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery.* Available at: http://www.tdag.org.uk/uploads/4/2/8/0/4280686/tdag_trees-in-hard-landscapes_september_2014_colour.pdf

[2] Trees & Design Action Group (2012). *Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers.* Available at: http://www.tdag.org.uk/uploads/4/2/8/0/4280686/tdag_treesin-thetownscape.pdf

[3] Trees & Design Action Group (2019). *Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure.* Available at: http://www.tdag.org.uk/uploads/4/2/8/0/4280686/tdag_treespeciesguidev1.3.pdf

[4] British Standards Institution (2014). *BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations.* Available at: https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030219672

[5] British Standards Institution (1991). *BS 5837:1991 Guide for trees in relation to construction.* Available at: https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000000258384

SC 03.02. Give spatial enclosure, provide screens and create privacy

The use of hedges, hedgerows, trees and walls contribute to the character of the NA and provide a sense of enclosure and privacy.

- Set backs and boundary features should be consistent with the prevailing character, although there should be some allowance for and some of variation to provide added visual interest;
- Existing hedges, hedgerows, trees and walls should, wherever appropriate, be retained to contribute to this sense of enclosure. Additional or replacement hedges and trees should be planted to maintain the continuity of existing hedges, provide continuity of hedge and hedgerow tree cover; and
- Where appropriate and feasible, any new developments should have setbacks that allow for front gardens or else a small area to provide a planted buffer zone between the private space and public space.

Figure 125: Planting on various levels - low and high - provides enclosure and visual variety

SC 03.03 Complement streets, built environment and local identity

- New development should use boundary features such as black metal railings, or hedges, which are complementary to the street and enhance the character of the NA;
- The use of trees, hedges and planting in publicly visible areas should be encouraged; and
- Climbing plants are good at screening features such as garages, blank walls and fences.


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Figure 126: Hedgerows and street trees soften the appearance of the built form

Figure 127: Planting in front of the building line creates privacy and also softens the built form

Figure 128: A combination hedging and planting on the front elevation creates interest and valuable wildlife habitat

Figure 129: Street trees provide enclosure and define the edge of the public realm

SC 04 - Proportion and scale

The relationship between buildings and its elements can provide visual interest and enhance the local character of the NA. The following principles should be adhered to:

- The proportions of a building's elements should be related to each other as well as the scale and proportion of the building;
- The proportions should be dictated by and respond to the type of activity proposed as well as the composition of the existing streetscape;
- The front elevation of the buildings must be arranged in an orderly way to avoid creating cluttered facades; and
- Features such as windows, doors and solid walls should create vertical and horizontal rhythms along the façade providing variety.

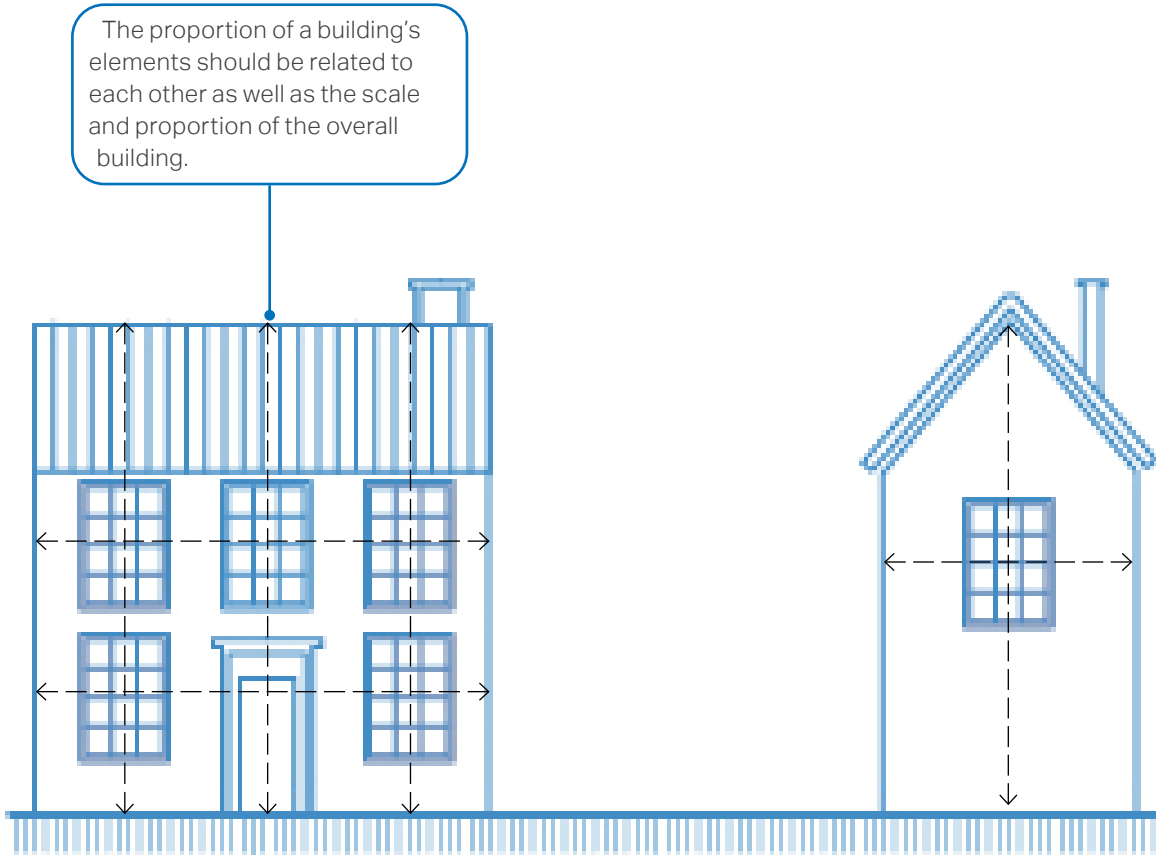

Figure 130:
Elevation showing typical building proportion in a detached house

Figure 131: Gentle changes in scale adds interest within the overall coherent proportions of Victorian architecture

Figure 132: Repeated rhythm on Georgian facade creates regular proportions

SC 05 - Enclosure

Enclosure is the relationship between public spaces and the buildings or other features that surround them. A more cohesive and attractive urban form is achieved where this relationship is in proportion.

As described previously, Thame's historic core has a consistent pattern of enclosure created by its built form.

The following principles serve as general guidelines that should be considered to achieve a satisfactory sense of enclosure:

- Façades should have an appropriate ratio between the width of the street and the building height;
- Buildings should be designed to turn corners; side facing properties are commonplace in the town;
- Narrow gaps between buildings must be avoided, they should be either detached/semi-detached or properly linked;
- Building lines should run parallel to the back of the pavement in the town centre;
- In places with lower density, the sense of enclosure is provided from the use of natural elements such as trees and hedges; and
- Plot widths and facade alignments should be considered during the design process to create an attractive setting.

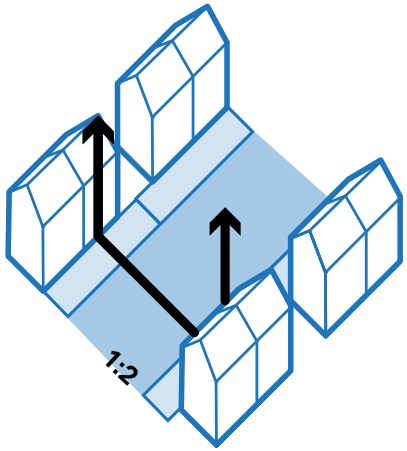

Figure 133: Enclosure ratio 1:2

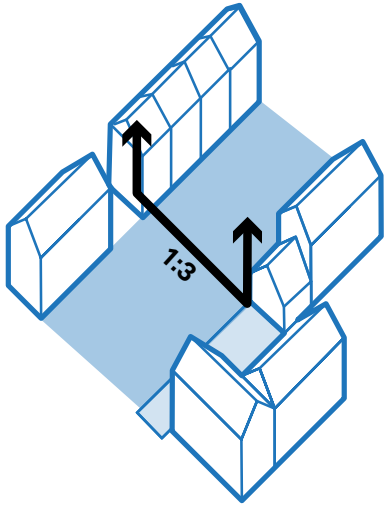

Figure 135: Enclosure ratio 1:3

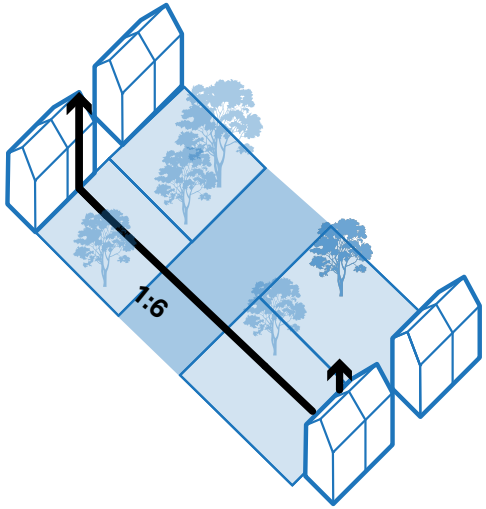

Figure 137: Enclosure ratio 1:6

Figure 134: Tight enclosure with 1:2 ratio, Butter Market

Figure 136: 1:3 enclosure along East Street

Figure 138: 1:4-6 enclosure along North Street

SC 06 - Boundary treatment

- Buildings should ordinarily front onto streets. The building line can have subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions, but will generally follow a consistent line;
- Buildings should be designed to ensure that streets and/or public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from adjacent buildings. This can be achieved by placing ground floor habitable rooms and upper floor windows facing the street;
- Natural boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity of the building line and help define the street, appropriate to the character of Thame. They should be mainly continuous hedges and low walls, as appropriate, made of traditional materials found elsewhere in Thame;

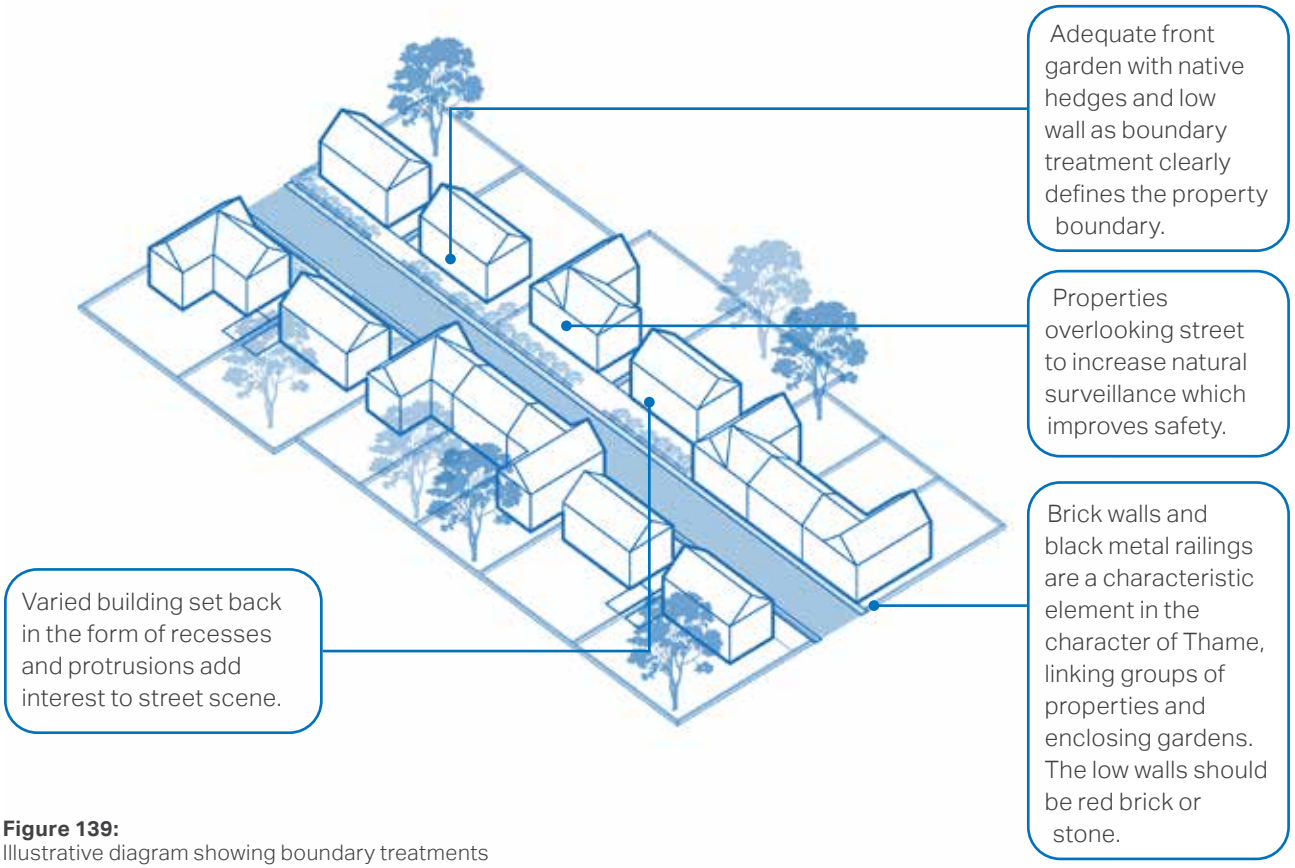

Figure 139:
Illustrative diagram showing boundary treatments

- Front gardens/soft planted shallow setbacks should be provided in most instances;
- If placed on the property boundary, waste storage should be integrated as part of the overall design of the property. Landscaping could also be used to minimise the visual impact of bins and recycling containers; and
- Locally distinctive landscape features and planting, such as low wall boundary and hedges of native species should be used in new development to define boundaries.

Figure 140: Brick walls with planting above alongside black railings, Thame

Figure 141: A combination of low brick wall and black railings are typical in the centre of Thame

SC 07 - Building line and setbacks

The building line is created by the primary front face of buildings along a street and is a key element of design codes. Building lines are influenced by variation, projections and set backs. Consistent building lines create a strong distinction between public and private spaces, and provide definition to the street.

Thame has a consistent building line in the town centre but it is inconsistent within the overall NA. Residential properties in the conservation area tend to have no protruding features, due to continuous building lines, which also tend to be close to the pavement, creating an enclosed street scene.

The following principles on building line and set backs should be adhered to:

- Development fronting an existing street should comply with the existing building line – if at the front of the plot - and should have its primary aspect and windows facing the street, particularly if aspects in all other directions is constrained due to overlooking of neighbouring properties. If infill development is at the rear of the plot, this is less relevant.
- To ensure sufficient street enclosure, private front thresholds should have a modest depth and accommodate a small garden or area for plantation; and
- Low to medium density developments in residential areas can vary setbacks in order to respond to the landscape context and the more open character of the area.

Figure 142: Generous set back, Moreton Lane - CA5

Figure 143: Consistent building line with no set back or protruding features in the town centre - CA1

Character Area specific guidance - building line / set backs

CA 1 - Historic Core	New development should maintain the open aspect of the streetscape, maintaining a linear and consistent, unbroken building line. There should be infrequent set backs with modest front gardens or buildings should fronting onto the pavement.
CA 2 - Lea Park	Buildings should be setback from the pavement with generous front gardens and building lines should generally follow the prevailing line on the street, although this can differ in this CA.
CA 3 - Southern Thame	There should be some localised consistency in the building line, but variety can be created in the building line via building setbacks, with generous front gardens.
CA 4 - Chiltern Vale	Building lines should be broadly aligned although not rigidly so. Again, houses should be setback from the pavement edge with generous front gardens.
CA 5 - Moreton Village	Building lines are informal and should be well setback from the road and, in some cases, can be screened from the street via boundary treatments and planting.
CA 6 - East Thame	New houses should be set back from the pavement, and the building line can vary, with modest front gardens/driveways.
CA 7 - Post 2013	Building setbacks and plot arrangements should be fairly consistent, with modest garden sizes. The impact of cars on the streetscape should be minimised through use of landscaping and soft boundary treatments.
CA 8 - Employment Areas	Buildings in the employment area should follow a uniform pattern, with spaces in front of buildings for access, parking, loading and unloading.

SC 08 - Roofline

Creating variety and interest in the roofscape is an important element in the design of attractive buildings and places.

Rooflines in Thame tend to be flat and gabled, but there are a number of unique rooflines on the high street which provide visual interest, with staggered ridge heights and a mix of gable and hipped roofs.

Chimneys create a consistent feature of the skyline, but they are simple in form. These elements make an important contribution to defining the character of the area.

There are certain elements that serve as guidelines in achieving a well-designed roofscape:

- Interesting local traditions should be considered, such as slate and clay plain tiles and pantiles;
- The scale and pitch of the roof should always be in proportion with the dimensions of the building itself;
- Innovation which explores the integration of green/brown roofs or standing seam roofs should be encouraged. Low quality concrete tiles should be avoided;
- Monotonous building elevations should be avoided, therefore, subtle changes in roofline can be achieved during the design process. Roof shapes and pitches must, however, employ a restrained palette on a given building; overly complex roofs must be avoided.
- Rooflines should respect view corridors and not obstruct them. They should also be considerate of topography and existing landmarks; and
- The scale of the roof should always be in proportion to the dimensions of the building itself; Flat roofs for buildings, extensions, garages and dormer windows should be avoided; and Chimney type and height should be congruent with the typical examples.

Figure 144: Changes in height offer variety and interest

Figure 145: Repetition of chimneys add rhythm

SC 09 - Public and private spaces

The ratio of garden space to built form within the overall plot is exceptionally important to ensure that the sense of openness and green space within the town is maintained.

There are different garden dimensions in each of the character areas. In CA1, front garden proportions are generally narrow, ranging from 0 to 2m with many properties with no front garden and the back gardens; whereas in CA5 and CA6. there are generous back gardens, with varied front gardens.

New development should adhere to the following principles:

- Back gardens should be a minimum depth of 10m and provide a minimum area of 50 m^2 of usable amenity space[1].
- North facing back gardens should exceed 10m in length to ensure sunlight is maximised.
- Setbacks from the street and front garden landscaping, together with more detailed architectural design should seek to balance privacy for front living rooms with natural surveillance of the streets, and the need for street enclosure.
- The privacy distance between the backs of the properties should be a minimum of 20m. When this is not possible, the layout should be a back to-side arrangement, or use single-aspect buildings (north facing single aspect units should be avoided) to avoid creating overlooking issues.
- Appropriate boundary treatments including low walls, hedges and railings must be incorporated into design proposals to clearly distinguish public and private space.

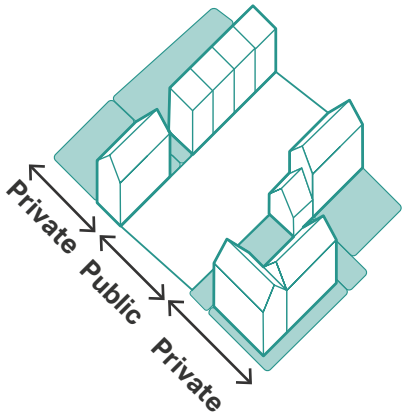

Figure 146: Typical mews street with no or narrow front garden

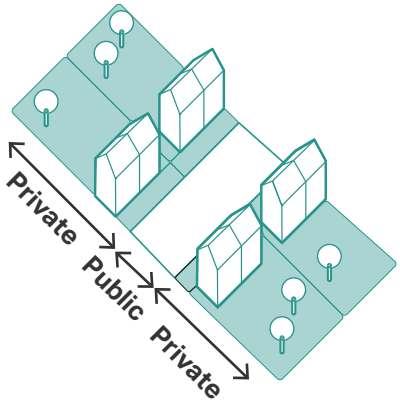

Figure 147: Typical terraced street with small front garden

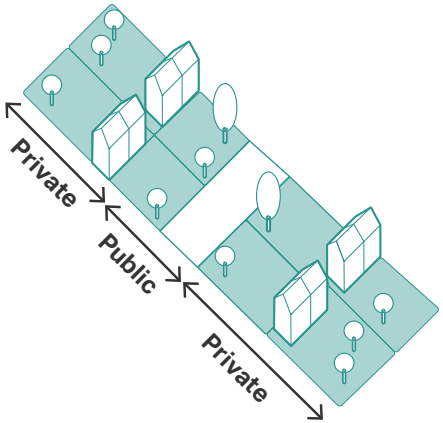

Figure 148: Typical street with deep front garden

Figure 149: Well defined private space in front garden

Figure 150: Well defined private space to front

Figure 151: Well defined shared space

SC 10 - Street lighting and dark skies

The ‘dark skies’ character of the countryside should be protected. Dark skies benefit both people and wildlife.

Any new development should minimise impact on the existing ‘dark skies’ within the settlements and reduce light pollution that disrupts the natural habitat and human health.

The following guidelines aim to ensure there is enough consideration given at the design stage:

- Street lighting should be avoided within areas of public realm, in line with existing settlement character;
- Ensure that lighting schemes such as LED streetlights will not cause unacceptable levels of light pollution, particularly in intrinsically dark areas. These can be areas very close to the countryside or where dark skies are enjoyed;

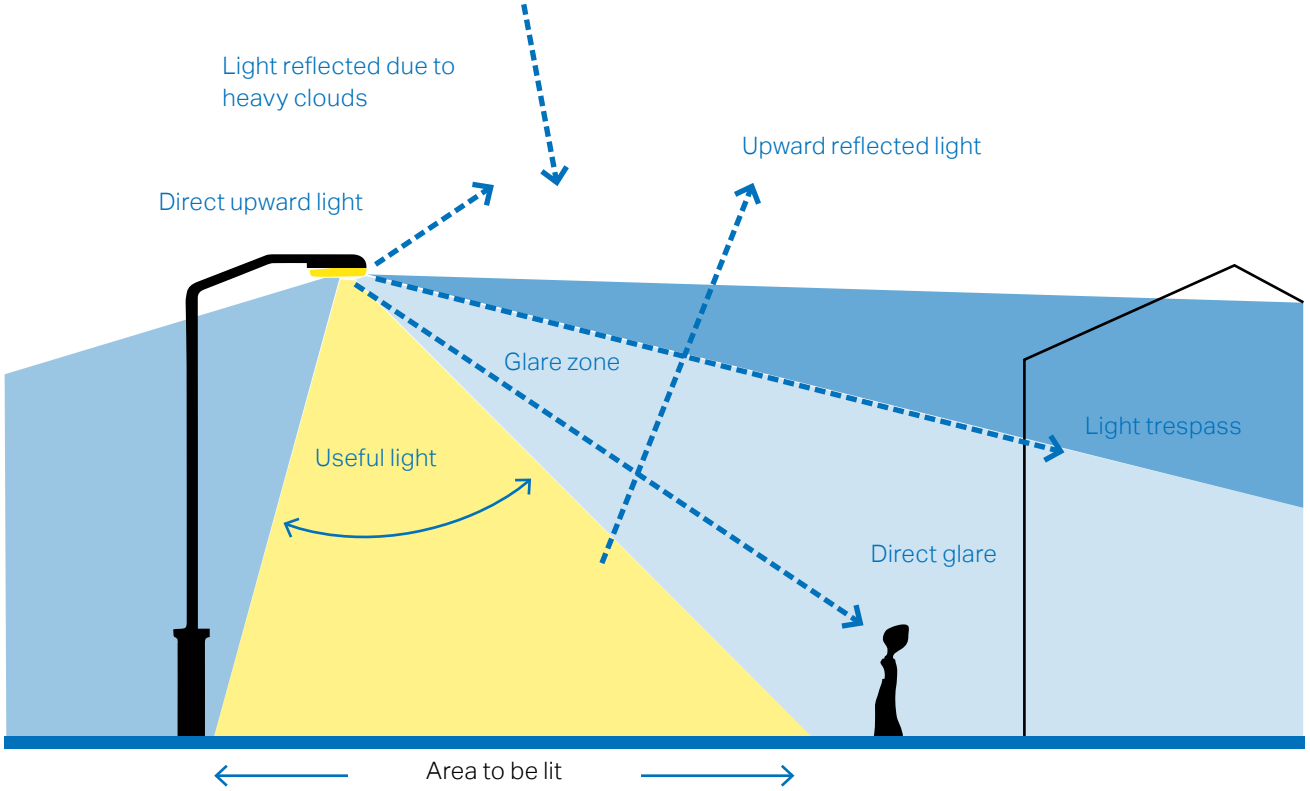

Figure 152:
Indicative diagram to illustrate the different components of light pollution and what ‘good’ lighting means

- Residential lighting i.e. on or around a property; is to be sympathetic with the location and be of low light levels so as to avoid excessive light pollution;
- Consider lighting schemes that could be turned off when not needed ('part-night lighting') to reduce any potential adverse effects; i.e. when a business is closed or, in outdoor areas, switching off at quiet times between midnight and 5am or 6am. Planning conditions could potentially be used to enforce this. External lighting schemes should be PIR controlled and unnecessary lighting avoided;
- Impact on sensitive wildlife receptors throughout the year, or at particular times (e.g. on migration routes), may be mitigated by the design of the lighting or by turning it off or down at sensitive times;
- Glare should be avoided, particularly for safety reasons. This is the uncomfortable brightness of a light source due to the excessive contrast between bright and dark areas in the field of view. Consequently, the perceived glare depends on the brightness of the background against which it is viewed. Glare is affected by the quantity and directional attributes of the source. Where appropriate, lighting schemes could include 'dimming' to lower the level of lighting (e.g. during periods of reduced use of an area, when higher lighting levels are not needed);
- The needs of particular individuals or groups should be considered, where appropriate (e.g. the safety of pedestrians and cyclists); and
- Any new developments and house extensions designs should encourage the use of natural light sources.

BU Buildings

BU 01 - Lifetime homes and flexibility of uses

Thame has an ageing population, which must be reflected in new housing stock. New homes and conversions should be designed to meet the differing and changing needs of households and people's physical abilities over their entire lifetime.

One way to achieve this is to incorporate Building Regulations Part M criteria in the design of new homes and to assess whether they can be retrofitted in existing properties.

The figure, right illustrates the main principles of inclusivity, accessibility, adaptability and sustainability. It shows a number of measures that, wherever possible, should be included in new homes to make them suitable for all.

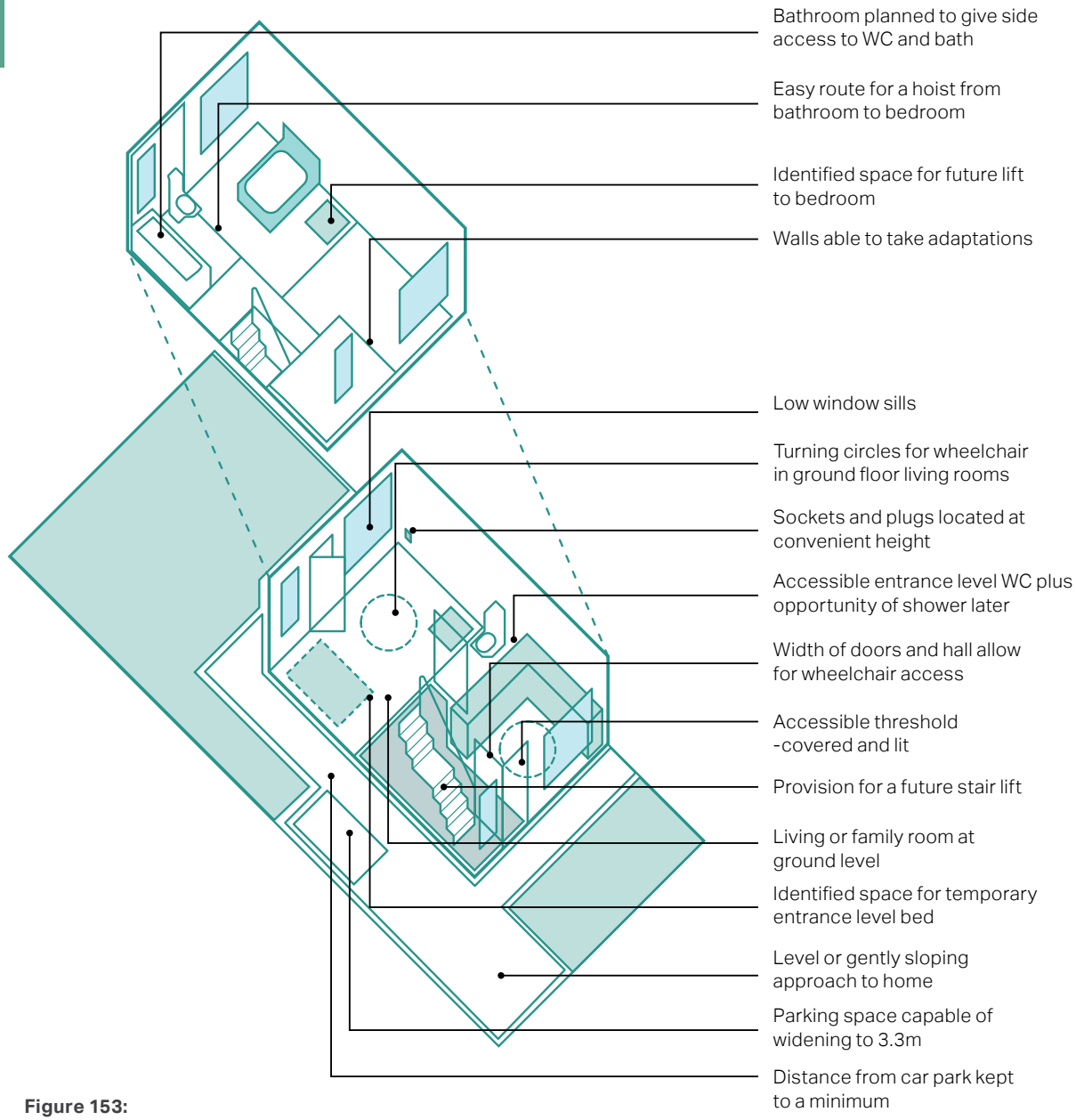

Figure 153:
Flexible and adaptable housing

BU 02 - Extensions, alterations and conversions

The design of extensions should be used as an opportunity to enhance dwellings, and therefore extension type, position and materials should be carefully considered.

There are multiple ways to create extra space within a building using different types of extensions. Extensions must be designed to an appropriate scale and be secondary to the original building. Extensions should consider the materials, architectural features and proportions of the original building and designed to complement these existing elements.

Many household extensions are covered by permitted development rights, meaning that they do not need planning permission. The latest guidance on that is here: https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/17/extensions.

All new development, including extensions, alterations and conversions, should be designed to enhance local character and legibility to help people find their way around Thame and to help maintain its strong sense of identity. It is important to emphasise that this can achieved by referencing local typologies, but with a contemporary interpretation. The following pages set out how this can be established.

Ultimately, the built character of the existing building and the prevalent character within the wider street and Character Area, should be taken into consideration when preparing proposals for alterations and/or extensions. This can be achieved by responding to the prevalent scale and massing, and utilising local materials and architectural detailing.

The SODC Joint Design Guide sets out some high level requirements for 'Householder extensions and outbuildings' in the Built Form section. In addition to this, the following overarching principles should be followed:

Scale, massing and building line

- Extensions should be subordinate in term of scale and form and should not be visually dominant or taller than the existing building;
- Extensions should be recessed or in line with the existing building façade and should use lower ridge and eaves levels to ensure that the length and width of the extension are less than the dimensions of the original building; and
- Extensions should safeguard the privacy and daylight amenity of neighbouring properties (check the 25 and 45 degree rule as per BRE guidance).

Appearance

- Extensions should enhance the visual appearance of the original building and the character of the wider street scene. As defined in the SODC Joint Design Guide, new development is expected to respect and incorporate the local character without being, pastiche or an overly simplified expression of the local character. This could mean, for example, using the same material colour as those in the original building, but a more contemporary material; or using a natrual building material such as lime finish or weatherbording. The dimensions and positioning of the windows and doors should reflect the existing building.
- Thame is a historic town and features many valued heritage dwellings. Therefore, in the case of extending a listed or heritage building of significance building, a sensitive and balanced approach should be taken. The following principles should be applied:
  - The proposed extension should be proportional to, complement and not detract from the original building;
  - In judging the suitability of an extension to a listed building it is essential that the elements of the building which contribute to its uniqueness are defined. This relates to built features such as fenestration, use of materials and decorative elements, but also the less obvious, such as plan form (layout) of the building. Any new extension must take these factors into consideration and be sympathetic to them.
  - Contemporary design with contrasting high-quality materials is sometimes appropriate, as it provides a clear definition between old and new. For more information see: https://www.spab.org.uk/advice/alterations-and-extensions-listed-buildings

Other pointers

- Extensions should retain on-site parking capacity and a viable garden area to meet the needs of existing and future occupiers; and
- Extensions of existing buildings should help to reduce carbon emission by complying with high energy efficiency standards and utilising low energy design.

More specific guidance on extension types is set out below.

Front extensions

Front extensions are generally not acceptable. If proposed, in all cases front extensions should take the form of the existing building, mirroring the roof pitch, replicate or have lower cornice height and their ridge should be below the existing ridge height. The extension can project maximum 2 metres beyond the front facade and will not cover more than 50% of the front elevation.

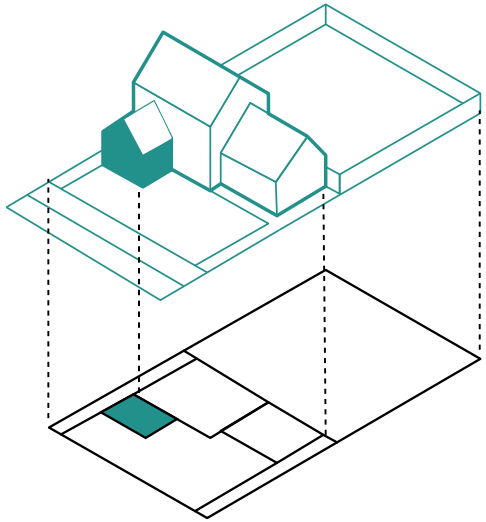

Figure 154: Drawing showing front extension

Rear extensions

Single-storey rear extensions are, generally, the easiest way to extend a house and provide extra living space. The extension should be set below any first-floor windows and designed to minimise any effects on neighbouring properties, such as blocking day light. A flat roof is generally acceptable for a single storey rear extension.

Double-storey rear extensions are not common as they usually affect neighbours' access to light and privacy, however, sometimes the size and style of the property allows for a two-storey extension. In these cases, the roof form and pitch should reflect the original building and sit slightly lower than the main ridge of the building.

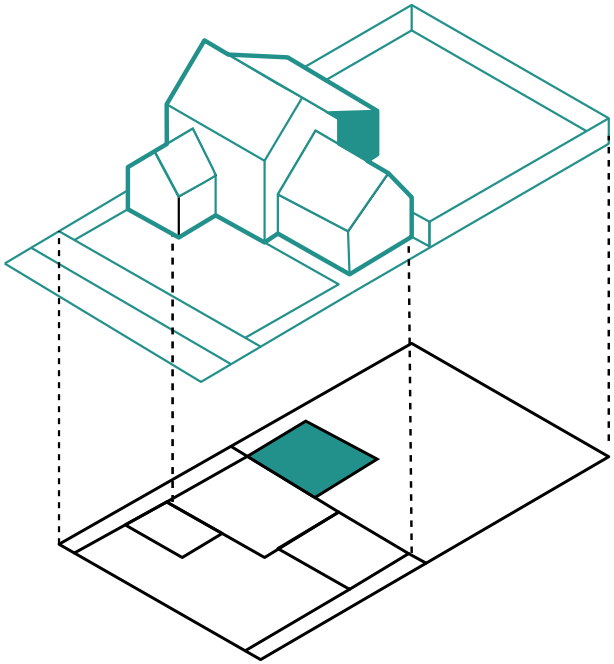

Figure 155: Drawing showing rear extension

Side extensions

Side extensions are a popular way to extend a building to create extra living space. However, if poorly designed, they can negatively affect the appearance of the street scene, disrupting the rhythm of spaces between buildings.

Single-storey and double-storey side extensions should be set back from the main building line to the front of the dwelling and complement the materials and detailing of the original building, particularly along the street elevation.

The roof of the extension should harmonise with that of the original building.

Side windows should also be avoided unless it can be demonstrated that they would not result in overlooking of neighbouring properties.

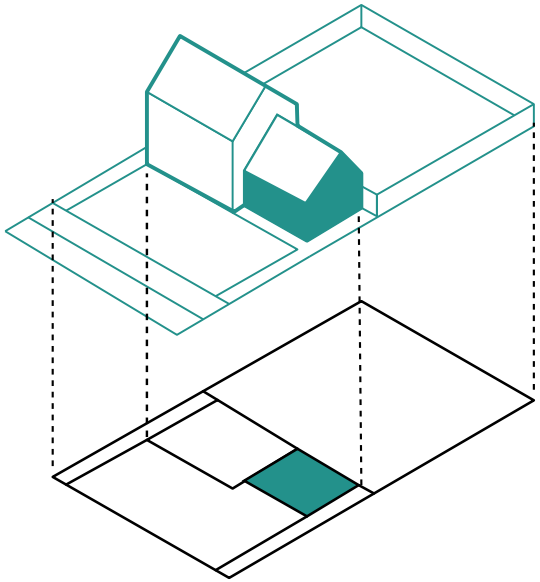

Figure 156: Drawing showing side extension

Figure 157: Unsympathetic side extension

Figure 158: Sympathetic side extension

Garages and outbuildings

Garages should be subservient to the main dwelling in terms of their scale, massing and height and should not include domestic features such as dormer windows (the standard size expected for garages to enable general storage are – internal dimensions of at least 6m x 3m for a single, 6m x 6m for a double);

Outbuildings, such as working from home office spaces, should be well designed, provide enough natural light, be thermally efficient and secure. They should be visually subservient to the main dwelling.

Pre-fabricated, pre cast concrete and plastic panels should be avoided.

Figure 159: Outbuilding with hipped roof and in consistent, contextually sensitive materials

Loft conversions

As an enclosed space the main challenge of loft conversions is the introduction of roof lights or dormer windows for natural light and ventilation. Some examples of what is and isn't acceptable is shown on the diagrams, right. More detailed requirements are set out in the SODC Joint Design Guide.

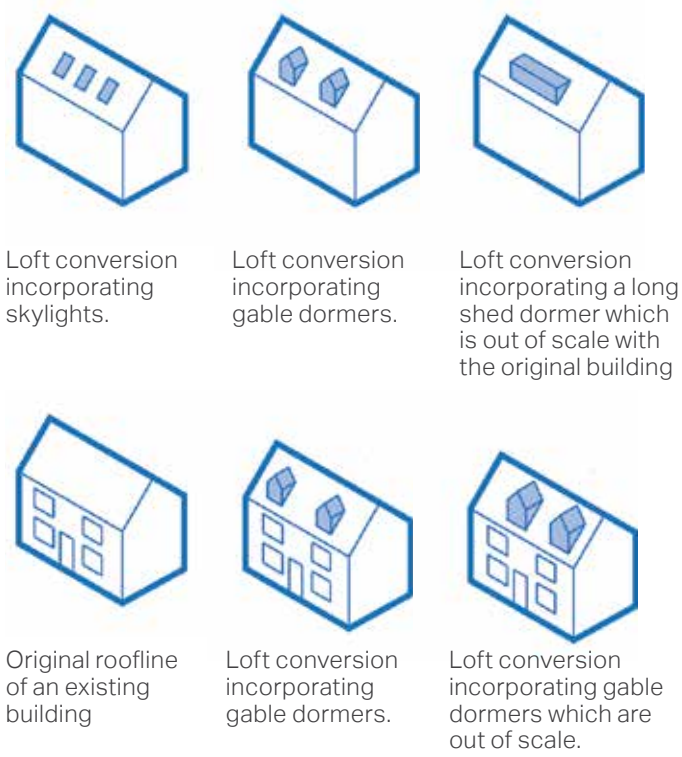

Figure 160: Examples of loft conversions

BU 03 - Backland and Infill development

Plot infill is covered generally under Code "SL 03- Infill" on page 97.

Infill development is not specifically covered in the SODC Joint Design Guide and therefore is explored in more detail here. Policy CPQ1: Design in Response to Local Character of the TNP2 only covers the access requirements of infill development.

As described earlier on in the Policy section, Policy H16: Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment of the SODC Local Plan defines infill development as:

'the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.'

Further, backland development can be defined as development on land that lies to the rear of an existing property that often, but not in all cases, fronts a road.

Specifically and in relation to Thame, the policy stipulates that:

1. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location; and

2. Where a proposal encompasses residential development of land behind an existing frontage or placing of further dwelling/s behind existing dwelling/s within the existing site, the proposals should demonstrate that:

    i) the privacy of existing and future residents will be protected;

    ii) means of access can be appropriately secured; and

    iii) development would not extend the built limits of the settlement.

This section describes how this can be achieved and sets out how infill development requirements may differ within specific character areas. There is inevitably some crossover with the previous section on BU 02 - Extensions, alterations and conversions. However, plot infill is distinct in that it has the potential to cause issues for existing residents in relation to various factors. In Thame, there is a risk that without robust design guidance, infill development will come forward in the town in a way that is out of context and scale.

Infill plot development should take precedent from good examples within the surrounding architectural context. Poor contextual precedent should not set the standard.

Therefore, the code stipulates that this type of development within Thame will be supported if it adheres to the principles set out over the folllowing few pages.

Setting and character
Infill development should complement the street scene and rural setting into which it will be inserted. This can be achieved by addressing the following built factors.

Building pattern
This refers to the sizes of plots and the position of houses within those plots. New infill development should align with the spatial layout and pattern of the typical development in that character area. This would mean, for example in CA5 Moreton Village, that infill development should be set well back from the main property and a barn type building style, but in CA1 Historic Core, infill development could reflect the denser building pattern and be positioned closer to the existing dwelling.

Scale and massing
The height of development should take into consideration the surrounding context. The scale of any infill or backland development should be informed by adjacent dwellings within the streetscene.

In general, new infill should adhere to a maximum height of two storeys. It is acceptable for a new dwelling to provide an additional storey within the roof space and use sky lights and/or gable end windows. Specifically, on the edges of Thame and in Moreton, infill building scale should generally be no more than 1-2 storeys, where as in parts of the town centre, building scale could be higher.

Building roofline
The scale of the roof should always be in proportion to the dimensions of the main dwelling. This can vary throughout the town and also within any given street within CA1 - the Town Centre.

Flat roofs should be avoided for all infill development buildings and backland development (this does not apply to outbuildings, such as home offices). Chimney type and height should be congruent with the surrounding area.

Privacy and space between buildings
Any proposed backland or infill development must not cause a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of adjacent residential properties.

Hedges and fences protect privacy at ground floor level, so any privacy issues tend to arise from upstairs windows either looking into neighbours' windows or down into their private garden space.

As covered in the SODC Joint Design Guide, the 25 degree rule is a useful tool to establish the effect a proposed building will have on the daylight and overlooking of existing properties.

Therefore, to avoid overlooking of habitable rooms and gardens, a minimum distance of 15m should be achieved between dwellings where a side elevation of one dwelling faces a rear elevation of another. Where a side elevation is windowless the separation distance can be reduced to 12m. A minimum separation distance of 21m should be achieved between facing windowed rear elevations.

Where dwellings with facing elevations are positioned on different levels, the above separation distances should be increased by 2m for every 1m difference in level. Where there is a level difference and distances are increased, the lower dwelling should have the longer garden to compensate for any slopes or retaining structures.

Future housing developments should design the spacing between dwellings to allow for retrospective introduction of garden and cycle storage as well sustainable measures such as air source heat pumps.

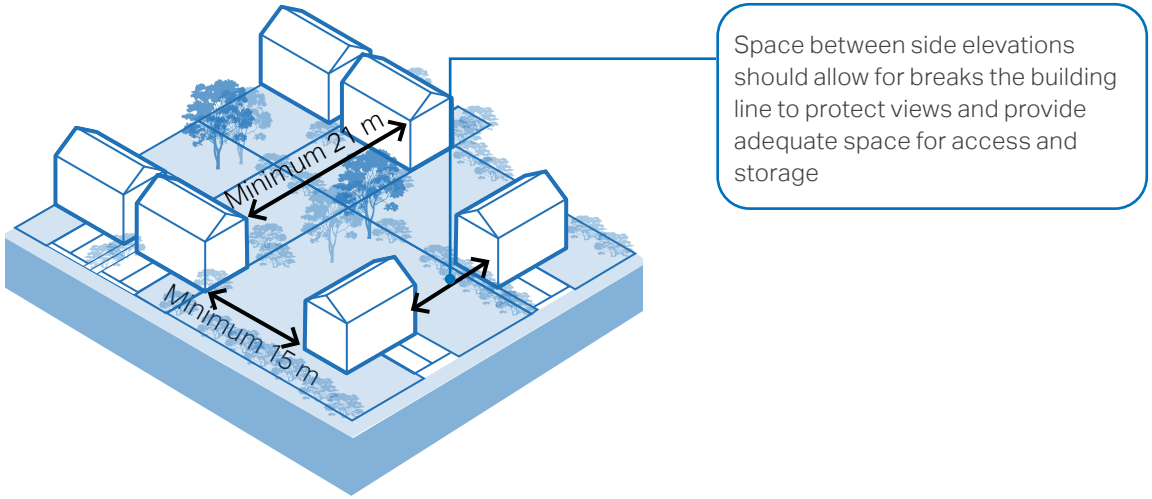

Figure 161: Diagram showing privacy and space between buildings

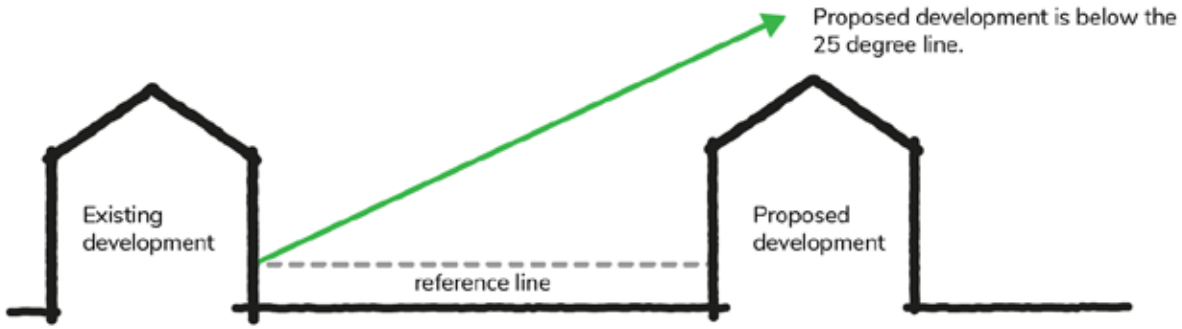

Figure 162: 25 degree rule for privacy between buildings. Ref: Figure 42b from SODC Joint Design Guide

Ratio of private green space

The ratio of garden space to built form within the overall plot is exceptionally important to ensure that the sense of openness and rural character within the town is maintained. This is particuarly pertinent around the settlement edge and in Moreton.

Thame has varied garden dimensions throughout the character areas. In CA1 - Town Centre, the front garden are generally compact, ranging from 0 to 5 m and the back garden are extremely varied due to the deep burgage plots interspersed with more recent development. CA6 - East Thame generally has generous front and back gardens, which in some parts (along Queens Road and Croft Road) extend up to 30m.

In any new infill development, back gardens should be a minimum depth of 10m and provide a minimum area of 50m2 of usable amenity space. North facing back gardens should exceed 10m in length to ensure sunlight is maximised.

Plot boundary line

For infill, front boundaries should respond to the boundaries used within adjacent dwellings to provide continuation of street character.

As covered in SC 06, boundary treatments vary within the town and so should reflect the prevalent use in the relavant character area.

Generally, natural boundary treatments reinforce the sense of continuity of the building line and help define the street, appropriate to the character of Thame. They should be mainly continuous hedges and low walls, as appropriate, made of traditional materials found within Thame.

When rear boundaries abut the settlement edge, surrounding landscape or open green spaces, soft planted boundaries of hedgerows and trees must be used to soften the transition into the natural environment and protect views.

Appearance

Please refer to section BU 02 - Extensions, alterations and conversions for guidance on the appearance of infill development, which covers fenestration and materials.

Green infrastructure

Where appropriate, green roofs should be considered to ensure no net loss of green space and to enhance surface water drainage and biodiversity.

Whether the roof is partially or completely covered with vegetation, the design should follow some design principles such as:

- Planned from the start.
- Easy to reach and maintain.
- To complement (where applicable) the surrounding landscape.
- To help integrate the building with the countryside.
- Design comprehensively with other eco designs such as water harvesting and porous pavements.

Figure 163: Living Wall, Southbank London

Access

Infill sites are often narrow, making it difficult to provide adequate access, on-site turning (where necessary) and parking.

Any new proposed infill or backland development should provide appropriate access, parking and turning arrangements.

An integral garage can save space, and sometimes it is possible to share a drive with a neighbour.

Tandem development

Tandem development is a form of back land development where a new dwelling is placed immediately behind an existing dwelling and served by the same vehicular access. Tandem developments will generally be unacceptable due to the impact on the amenity of the dwelling at the front of the site.

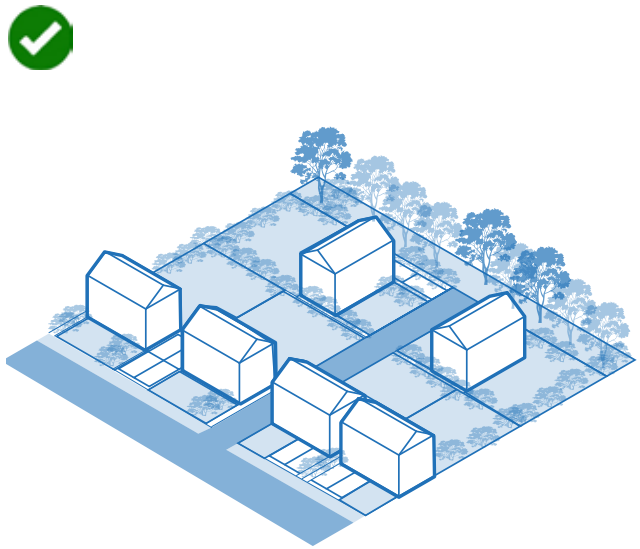

Figure 164: Access to infill development is key

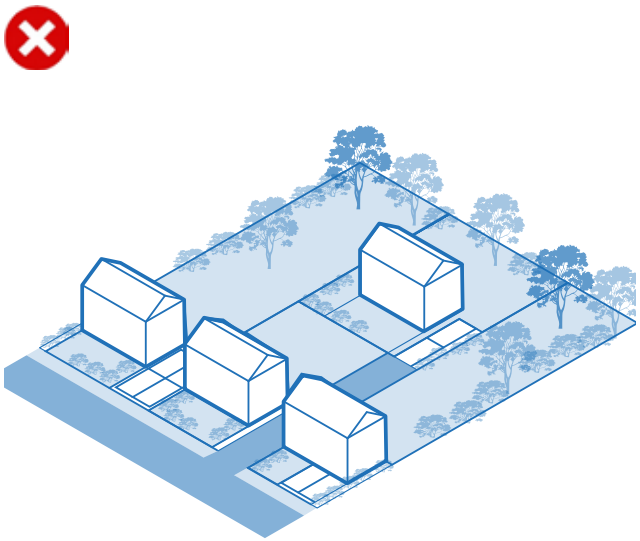

Figure 165: Tandem development is generally unacceptable due to unacceptable erosion of privacy and amenity

Character Area specific guidance (applied to BU 02 and BU 03 - extensions and infill)

CA 1 - Historic Core	Materials should pick up historic character defined by the prevailing colour scheme of stone, brick, thatch, tile and timber framing. Building heights can be up to three storeys and rooflines can vary to create subtle changes, but should generally be steeply pitched. The building line should be consistent, to maintain the long terraces, with narrow breaks in the building line to emulate the snickets in the town centre. Some examples of characterful details that should be referenced are Victorian bay windows and porches and contrasting brick detailing.
CA 2 - Lea Park	The building line should be set back to maintain its sense of openness and views. Building design is often restrained and so infill could demonstrate improved lineage with the architecture of the local vernacular, including the frontage relationship to street and fenestration pattern. Building scale should not exceed two storeys. Materials should be predominantly brick and white weatherboarding and contemporary design can be embraced. All roofs of the primary and subordinate parts of the dwelling should be gabled and pitched, unless a flat green/ brown roof is specified.
CA 3 - Southern Thame	Infill should echo the unifying character features of the built form which include the colour palate, building materials and gabled roofs. Building scale can be two storeys with some three storeys on key corner or landmark plots, to match the townhouses in this CA. The roofline should be simple and restrained roofline and match that of the adjacent property - either being pitched or cross-gabled.
CA 4 - Chiltern Vale	Infill should be set back and the building scale should be restricted to one to two storey with gabled roofline. The predominant material palette should be red brick and white weatherboarding. Boundaries to be defined with low stone brick walls and/or hedges and in some instances, fencing.
CA 5 - Moreton Village	Infill should reference the cottage and farmhouse vernacular character. Scale and massing of new development should be consistent with existing buildings (i.e. 1-2 storeys) to not overwhelm the heritage of the village. The trend for flat roof dormers on modern development should be avoided. Some examples of characterful details include eyebrow dormers, vertically proportioned framing of windows, pitched roof porches, brick chimney stacks, hedgerows and traditional stone brick walls.
CA 6 - East Thame	Due to the interesting and distinct variations in building design and roofline in this CA, contemporary design approaches are welcome. A coherent character should be created through the material / colour palette materials of brick, stone and weatherboarding and the gabled roofline. Building scale and building line can vary but should feature a front garden/driveway. Boundary treatments can include brick walls, hedges, and fences. Some examples of characterful details that could be referenced are boxed bay windows, decorative gable trim and half hipped roofs.
CA 7 - Post 2013	New development must specify materials of high quality design and sustainability performance. Contemporary as well as traditional design can be considered, with a refined material palette of red brick, stone and slate for buildings and boundary treatments to create coherance. Building scale should be two to three storeys with gabled rooflines.
CA 8 - Employment Areas	Infill here can be up to three storeys. Contemporary design is welcome, with consistency to be created through the material palette. All roofs should be gabled and pitched, unless a flat green/ brown roof is specified. Boundaries to be low brick/stone walls, metal gates orhedges.

SE Sustainable Energy

The design codes in the following section contain important policies that will help to reduce our collective impact on the planet while allowing the natural environment in and around Thame to flourish. These policies are in line with adopted national planning policy.

They include general guidance that apply to both new and existing development as some of the policies can be used to modify existing dwelling to become more environmentally sustainable.

Owing to Thame's rich green space character, it is hoped that more of these policies are adopted in the future to help preserve and sustain this distinct character.

SE 01 - Aspect and orientation

Buildings should be orientated to incorporate passive solar design principles.

- One of the main glazed elevations should be within 30° due south to benefit from solar heat gain. Any north- facing facades might have a similar proportion of window to wall area to minimise heat loss on this cooler side;
- If houses are not aligned east-west, rear elevations could be included so that some of the property benefits from solar passive gain;
- Homes should be designed to avoid overheating through optimisation of glazed areas, natural ventilation strategies including openings, longer roof overhangs, deep window reveals and external louvres/ shutters to provide shading in hotter summer months; and
- North facing single aspect units should be avoided or mitigated with the use of reflective light or roof windows.

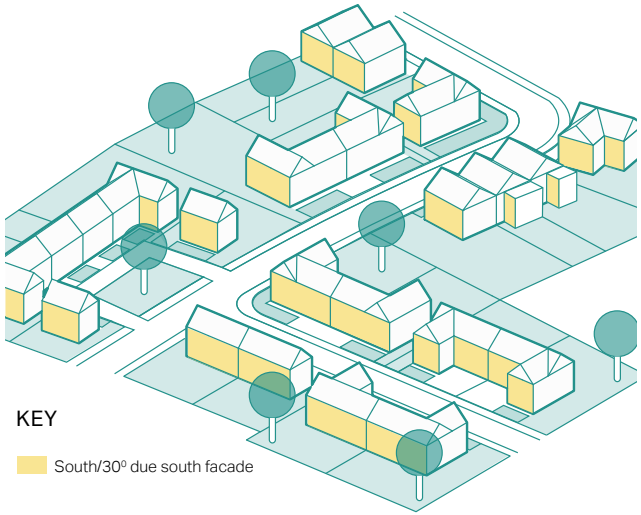

Figure 166: The active frontages with a well-supervised public realm

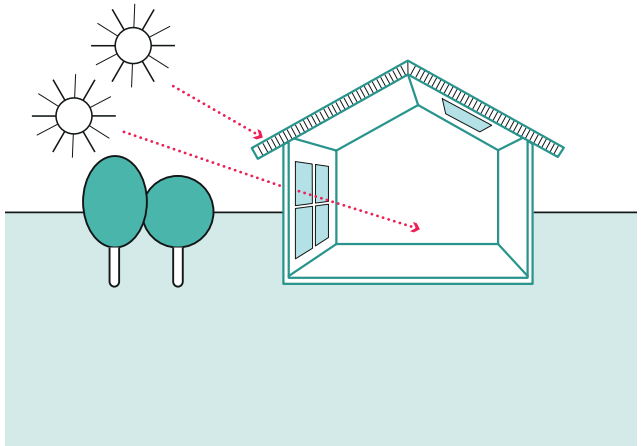

Figure 167: The use of roof window, pitch roof, location and size of windows in favour of maximising solar gain

SE 02 -Features in dwellings

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

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

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

Figure 157 shows a portfolio of possible measures for both existing and new homes. Please note that some of them, such as double/triple glazing, draught proofing and solar panels, can sometimes be problematic in Conservation Areas, older buildings and those used as second homes or holiday lets."

Figure 168: Diagram showing low-carbon homes in both existing and new build conditions.

Figure 169: Solar panels on existing home, Howlands Road

SE 03 - Building fabric

Thermal mass

Thermal mass describes the ability of a material to absorb, store and release heat energy. Thermal mass can be used to even out variations in internal and external conditions, absorbing heat as temperatures rise and releasing it as they fall. Thermal mass can be used to store high thermal loads by absorbing heat introduced by external conditions, such as solar radiation, or by internal sources such as appliances and lighting, to be released when conditions are cooler. This can be beneficial both during the summer and the winter.

Thermal storage in construction elements can be provided, such as a trombe wall placed in front of a south facing window or concrete floor slabs that will absorb solar radiation and then slowly re-release it into the enclosed space. Mass can be combined with suitable ventilation strategies.

Insulation

Thermal insulation can be provided for any wall or roof on the exterior of a building to prevent heat loss. Particular attention should be paid to heat bridges around corners and openings at the design stage.

Provide acoustic insulation to prevent the transmission of sound between active (i.e. living room) and passive spaces (i.e. bedroom). Provide insulation and electrical insulation to prevent the passage of fire between spaces or components and to contain and separate electrical conductors.

Airtightness

Airtight constructions help reduce heat loss, improving comfort and protecting the building fabric. Airtightness is achieved by sealing a building to reduce infiltration- which is sometimes called uncontrolled ventilation. Simplicity is key for airtight design. The fewer junctions the simpler and more efficient the airtightness design will be.

An airtight layer should be formed in the floor, walls and roof. Doors, windows and roof lights to the adjacent walls or roof should be sealed. Interfaces between walls and floor and between walls and roof, including around the perimeter of any intermediate floor should be linked. Water pipes and soil pipes, ventilation ducts, incoming water, gas, oil, electricity, data and district heating, chimneys and flues, including air supplies to wood burning stoves, connections to external services, such as entry phones, outside lights, external taps and sockets, security cameras and satellite dishes should be considered.

The diagram, opposite illustrates some of these key considerations.

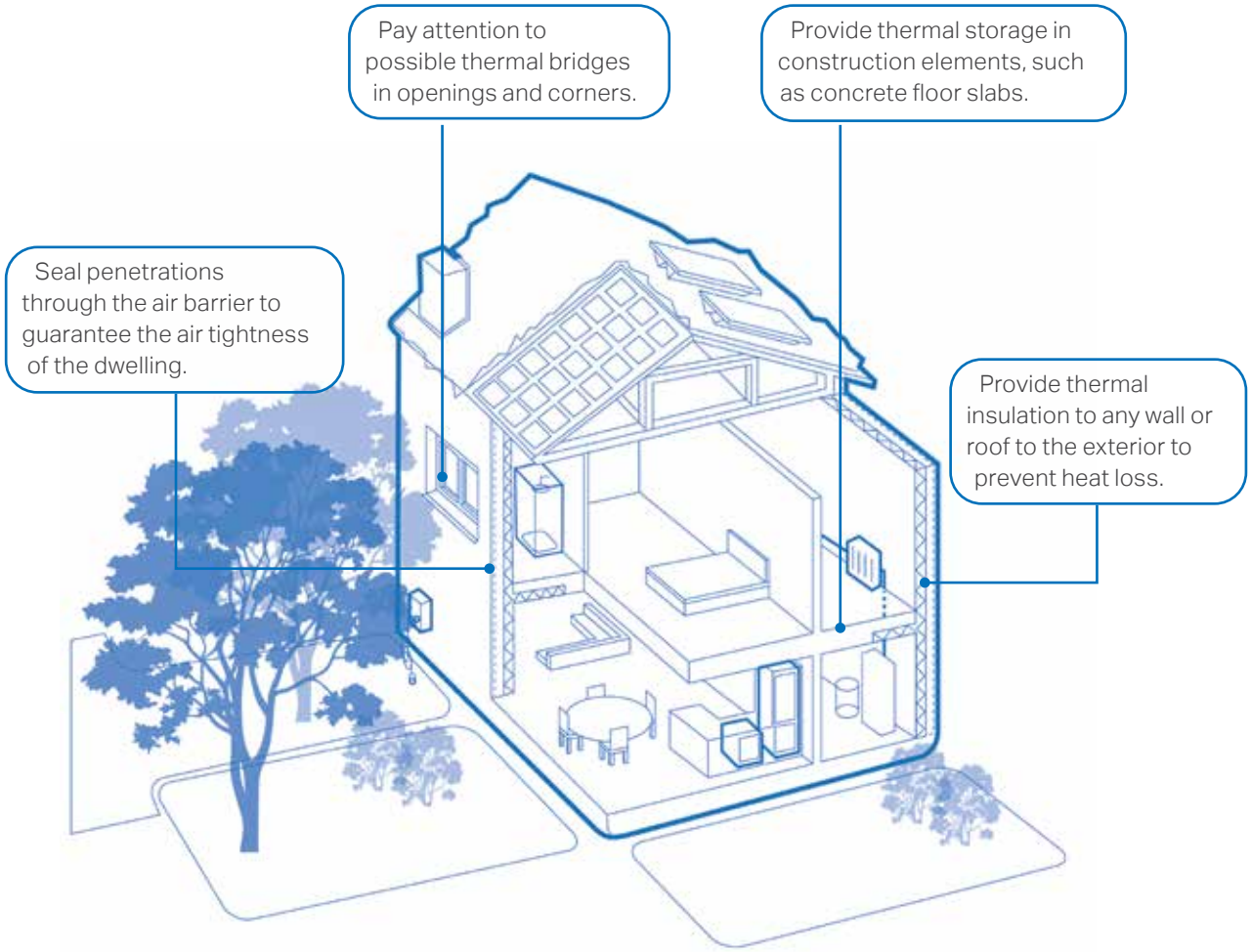

Figure 170: Diagram illustrating aspects of the building fabric to be considered

SE04 - Recycling materials and buildings

To meet the government's target of being carbon neutral by 2050, it is important to recycle and reuse materials and buildings. New development in Thame should look to reuse buildings, parts of buildings or elements of buildings such as bricks, tiles, slates or large timbers, which all help achieve a more sustainable approach to design and construction. The recycling and reuse of materials can help to minimise the extraction of raw materials and the use of energy in the production and transportation of materials, and can often supports social, environmental and economic objectives.

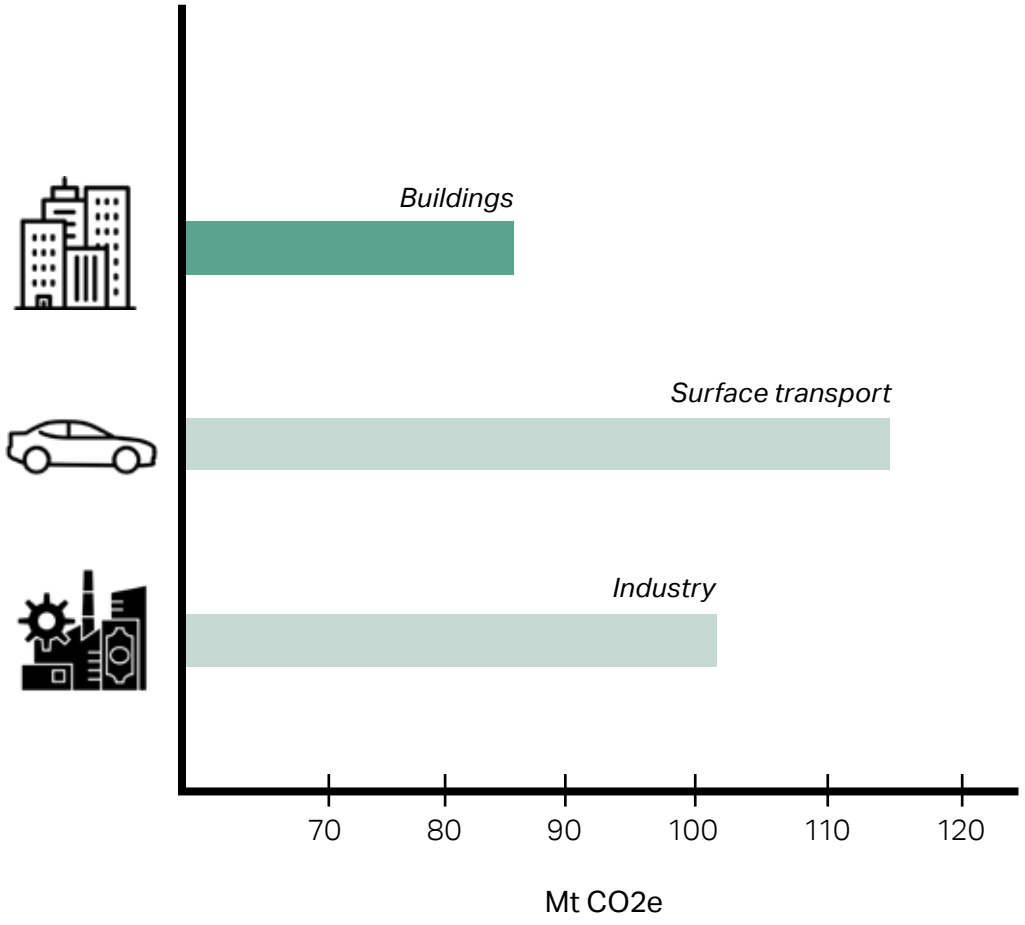

Figure 171: Diagram to illustrate that buildings are the UK's third biggest source of greenhouse gases (Source: Historic England. Link: https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/recycle-buildings-tackle-climate-change/).

SE.04.01 Minimising construction waste

As part of the environmental management system it is important that the waste generated during construction is minimised, reused within the site or recycled.

Developers should plan to re-use materials by detailing their intentions for waste minimisation and re-use in Site Waste Management Plans. The actions that this plan will include are:

- Before work commences, the waste volumes to be generated and the recycling and disposal of the materials will be described;
- On completion of the construction works, volumes of recycled content purchased, recycled and landfilled materials must be collated;
- Identify materials used in high volumes; and
- The workforce should be properly trained and competent to make sure storage and installation practices of the materials is done under high standards.

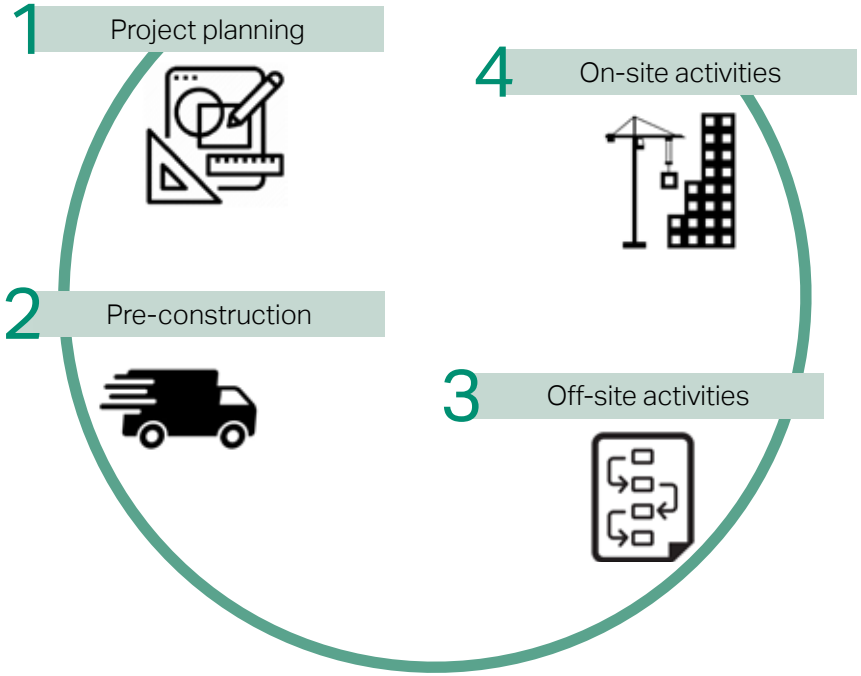

Figure 172: Diagram to illustrate the 4 main stages where waste management practices can be implemented.

SE 05 - Water management

There are various ways to mitigate flood risk such as Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), rainwater harvesting, and permeable pavements which are elaborated on the following pages.

SE 05.01 Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)

The term SuDS stands for Sustainable Drainage Systems. It covers a range of approaches to managing surface water in a more sustainable way to reduce flood risk and improve water quality whilst improving amenity benefits.

SuDS work by reducing the amount and rate at which surface water reaches a waterway or combined sewer system. Usually, the most sustainable option is collecting this water for reuse, for example in a water butt or rainwater harvesting system, as this has the added benefit of reducing pressure on important water sources.

Where reuse is not possible there are two alternative approaches using SuDS:

- Infiltration, which allows water to percolate into the ground and eventually restore groundwater; and
- Attenuation and controlled release, which holds back the water and slowly releases it into the sewer network. Although the overall volume entering the sewer system is the same, the peak flow is reduced. This reduces the risk of sewers overflowing. Attenuation and controlled release options are suitable when either infiltration is not possible (for example where the water table is high or soils are clay) or where infiltration could be polluting (such as on contaminated sites).

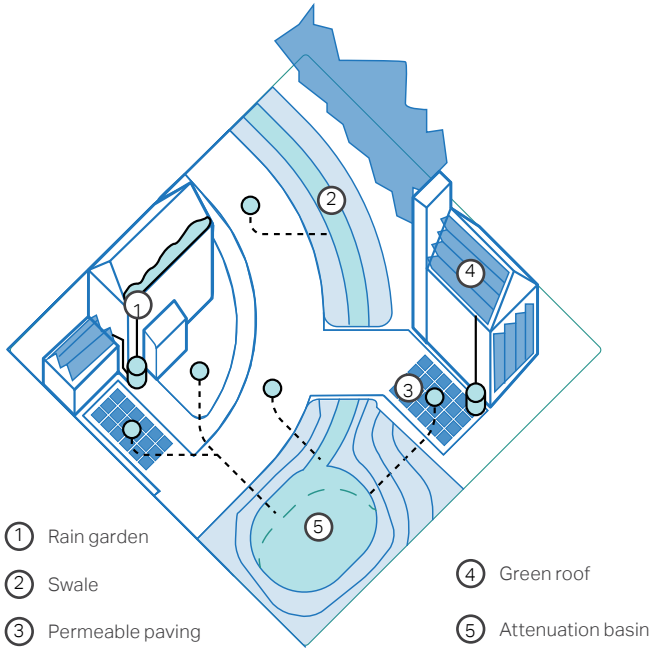

Figure 173: Diagram showing the best use of harvesting water systems rain garden, swales, permeable paving, green roofs

The most effective type or design of SuDS would depend on site-specific conditions such as underlying ground conditions, infiltration rate, slope, or presence of ground contamination. A number of overarching principles can however be applied:

- Reduce runoff rates by facilitating infiltration into the ground or by providing attenuation that stores water to help slow its flow down so that it does not overwhelm water courses or the sewer network;
- Integrate into development and improve amenity through early consideration in the development process and good design practices;
- SuDS are often as important in areas that are not directly in an area of flood risk themselves, as they can help reduce downstream flood risk by storing water upstream;
- Some of the most effective SuDS are vegetated, using natural processes to slow and clean the water whilst increasing the biodiversity value of the area;
- Best practice SuDS schemes link the water cycle to make the most efficient use of water resources by reusing surface water; and
- SuDS must be designed sensitively to augment the landscape and provide biodiversity and amenity benefits.

Figure 174: Examples of SuDS designed as a public amenity and fully integrated into the design of the public realm, Sweden

SE 05.02 Rainwater harvesting

Rainwater harvesting refers to the systems allowing the capture and storage of rainwater, as well as those enabling the reuse in-site of grey water. Simple storage solutions, such as water butts, can help provide significant attenuation. To be able to continue to provide benefits, there has to be some headroom within the storage solution. If water is not reused, a slow release valve allows water from the storage to trickle out, recreating capacity for future rainfall events.

New digital technologies that predict rainfall events can enable stored water to be released when the sewer has greatest capacity to accept it.

These systems involve pipes and storage devices that could be unsightly, if added without an integral vision for design

Therefore, some design recommendations would be to:

- Conceal tanks by cladding them in complementary materials;
- Use attractive materials or finishing for pipes;
- Combine landscape/planters with water capture systems;
- Underground tanks; and
- Utilise water bodies for storage.

Figure 175: Example of a rainwater harvesting tank in the shape of a bee hive (source: https://www.gardenplantsonline.co.uk/)

SE 05.03 Permeable pavements

Most built-up areas, including roads and driveways, increase impervious surfaces and reduce the capacity of the ground to absorb runoff water. This in turn increases the risks of surface water flooding. Permeable pavements offer a solution to maintain soil permeability while performing the function of conventional paving. The choice of permeable paving units must be made depending on the local context; the units may take the form of unbound gravel, clay pavers, or stone setts.

Permeable paving can be used where appropriate on footpaths, public squares, private access roads, driveways, and private areas within the individual development boundaries.

It is recommended that the majority of the unbuilt areas in the plot (i.e. gardens) are permeable by means of landscape such as grass or earth as well as permeable and filtrating pavements. As a rule of thumb the % of permeable area should be between 25% to 75% of the unbuilt part of a plot.

In addition, permeable pavement must also comply with:

- Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Schedule 3;[1]
- The Building Regulations Part H – Drainage and Waste Disposal;[2]
- Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015;[3]

Regulations, standards, and guidelines relevant to permeable paving and sustainable drainage are listed below:

[1] Great Britain (2010). *Flood and Water Management Act, Schedule 3*. Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/schedule/3

[2] Great Britain (2010). *The Building Regulations Part H – Drainage and Waste Disposal*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442889/BR_PDF_AD_H_2015.pdf

[3] Great Britain (2015). *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015*. Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/pdfs/uksi_20150596_en.pdf

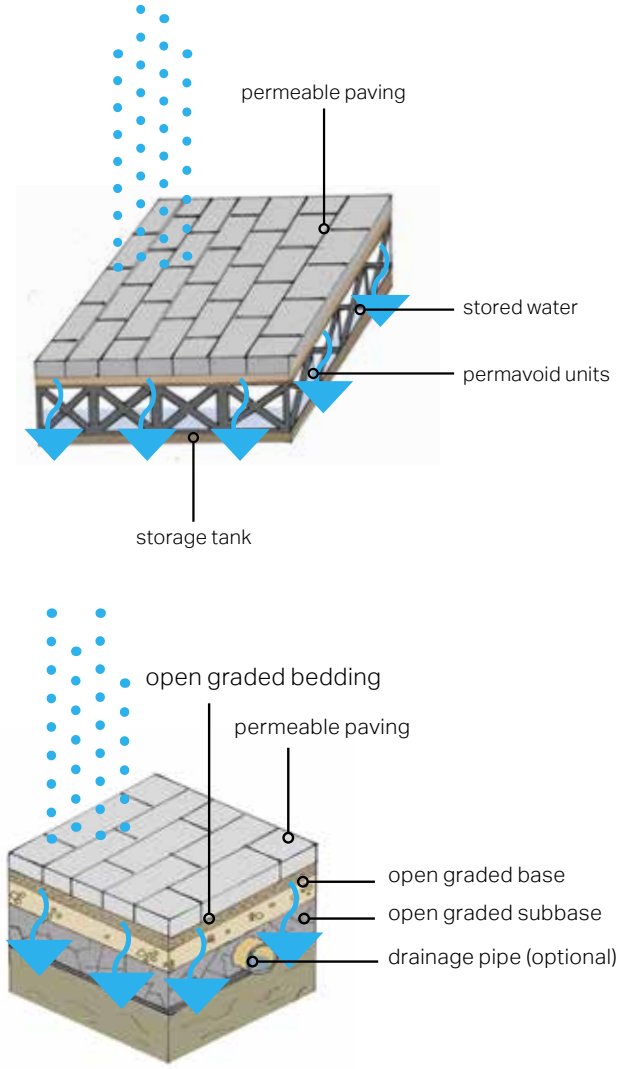

Figure 176: Diagrams illustrating the functioning of a soak away

- Sustainable Drainage Systems - non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems;[1]
- The SuDS Manual (C753);[2]
- BS 8582:2013 Code of practice for surface water management for development sites;[3]
- BS 7533-13:2009 Pavements constructed with clay, natural stone or concrete pavers;[4] and
- Guidance on the Permeable Surfacing of Front Gardens.[5]

[1] Great Britain. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2015). *Sustainable drainage systems – non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415773/sustainable-drainage-technical-standards.pdf

[2] CIRIA (2015). *The SuDS Manual (C753)*.

[3] British Standards Institution (2013). *BS 8582:2013 Code of practice for surface water management for development sites*. Available at: https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030253266

[4] British Standards Institution (2009). *BS 7533-13:2009 Pavements constructed with clay, natural stone or concrete pavers.* Available at: https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030159352

[5] Great Britain. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2008). *Guidance on the Permeable Surfacing of Front Gardens*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf

Figure 177: A good example of permeable paver (Source: https://www.paverconnection.com/testimonial/hedwig-village-permeable-driveway-and-patio-upgrade/)

Figure 178: A good example of clay paver (Source: https://www.londonstone.co.uk/brick-pavers/paving-bricks/)

SE 05.04 Bioretention systems

Bioretention systems, including soak away and rain gardens, can be used within each development, along verges, and in semi-natural green spaces. They must be designed to sit cohesively with the surrounding landscape, reflecting the natural character of the town. Vegetation must reflect that of the surrounding environment.

They can be used at varying scales, from small-scale rain gardens serving individual properties, to long green-blue corridors incorporating bioretention swales, tree pits and mini-wetlands, serving roads or extensive built-up areas.

These planted spaces are designed to enable water to infiltrate into the ground. Cutting of downpipes and enabling roof water to flow into rain gardens can significantly reduce the runoff into the sewer system. The UK Rain Garden Design Guidelines provides more detailed guidance on their feasibility and suggests planting to help improve water quality as well as attract biodiversity.[1]

1 UK Rain Gardens Guide. Available at: https://raingardens.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/UKRainGarden-Guide.pdf

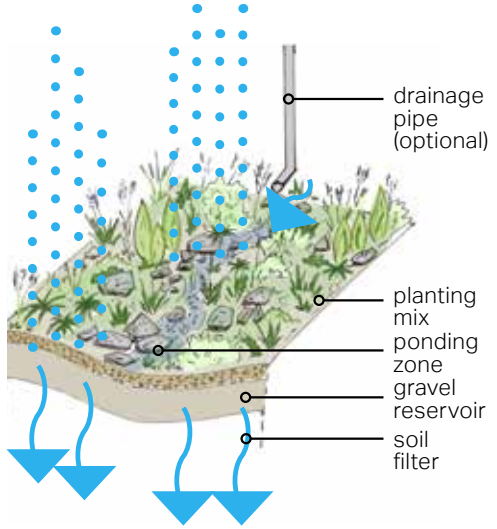

Figure 179: Diagram showing how a rain garden works.

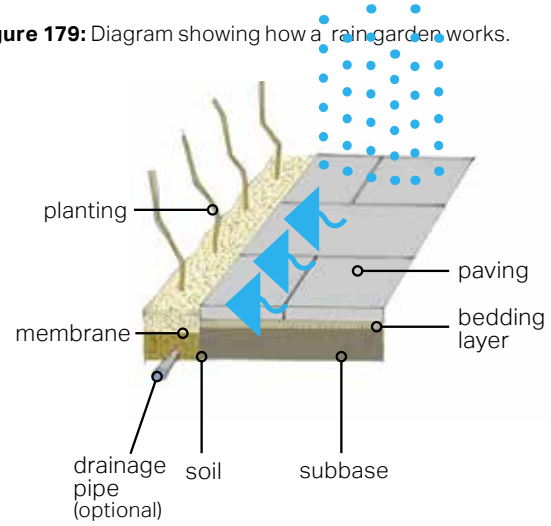

Figure 180: Diagram showing how a soak away garden works.

SE 06 - Waste storage and servicing

With modern requirements for waste separation and recycling, the number and size of household bins has increased. This poses a problem with the aesthetics of the property.

- Servicing arrangements should have a specific and attractive enclosure of sufficient size for all the necessary bins, this avoids the blocking of pavements with bins and makes the public realm more attractive. The storage solutions should be kept to the minimum dimensions in order to prevent the footprint being converted into an annexe at a later date;
- Create a specific enclosure of sufficient size for all the necessary bins;
- Bins should be placed as close to the dwelling's boundary and the public highway, such as against wall, fence or hedge;
- Refer to the materials palette to analyse what would be a complementary material;
- Create an environmentally sustainable enclosure to contain all bins; and
- The illustrations below show some successful design solutions for accommodating bins within the plot.

Figure 181: Examples of successful storage design solutions for accommodating bins at the front of buildings, Twickenham

Figure 182: As above, Twickenham

SE 07 - Wildlife friendly features

Biodiversity and woodlands should be protected and enhanced where possible.

- Roadside verges, hedges, and trees should act as natural buffers and should be protected when planning new developments;
- Abrupt edges to development with little vegetation or landscape on the edge of the settlement should be avoided and, instead, comprehensive landscape buffering should be encouraged;
- New developments and building extensions should aim to strengthen biodiversity and the natural environment;
- Ensure habitats are buffered. Widths of buffer zones should be wide enough and based on specific ecological function;

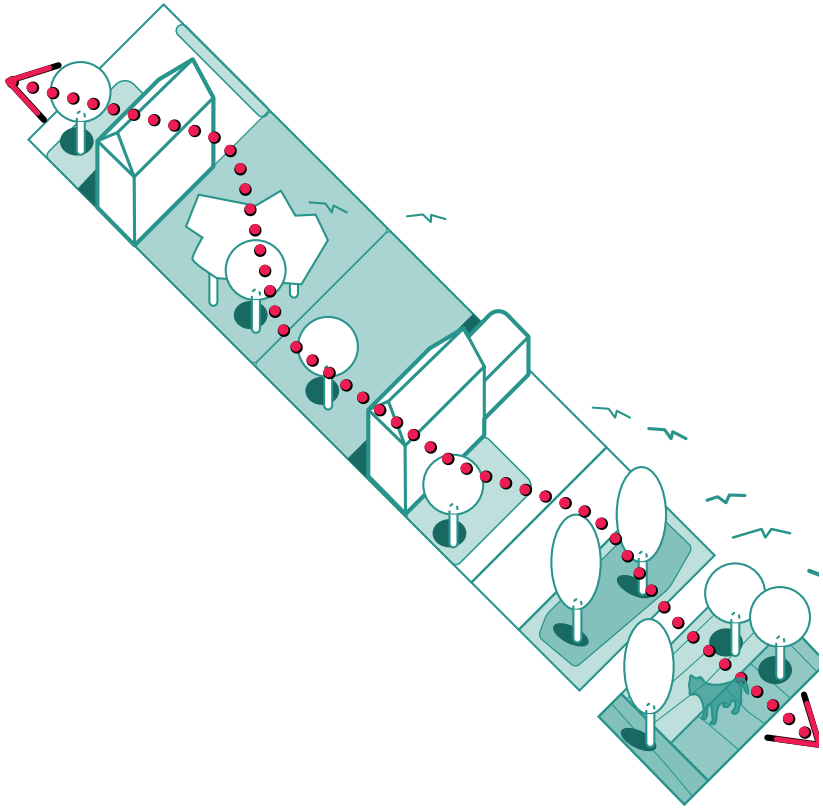

Figure 183: The importance of creating wildlife corridors.

- New development proposals should include the creation of new habitats and wildlife corridors such as planting wildflowers and bulbs on the town green. This could be by aligning back and front gardens or installing bird boxes or bricks in walls and improve habitat at ponds. Wildlife corridors should be included to enable local wildlife to travel to and from foraging areas and their dwelling area;
- Avoid low maintenance gardens which are harmful to wildlife by reducing hard landscaping; and
- Any loss of natural open space through rear garden extensions and / or parking areas to the front, should be replaced with native trees and shrubs to reinstate the original landscape / biodiversity provision.

Figure 184: Insect hotel, West Byfleet allotments

SE 08 - Electric charging points

On-street car parking

Car charging points should be provided when on-street parking is suggested, always adjacent with public open space;

- Where charging points are located on the footpath a clear footway width of 1.5m is required next to the charging point, for a wheelchair user and a pedestrian to pass side-by-side;
- Charging points should never be placed in such a way that forces drivers to park on the pavement or across spaces for cables to reach the charge point from the vehicle; and
- Charging points should be placed so they can serve as many vehicles as possible. While vehicles should leave once they are charged, user experience and access to the charge point will be improved if the layout is designed to be as flexible as possible.

Off-street car parking

- Generally, new development should integrate mounted charging points and associated services into the design from the start to avoid cluttering elevations, in particular main façades and front elevations.

Figure 186: Off-street mounted car charging points

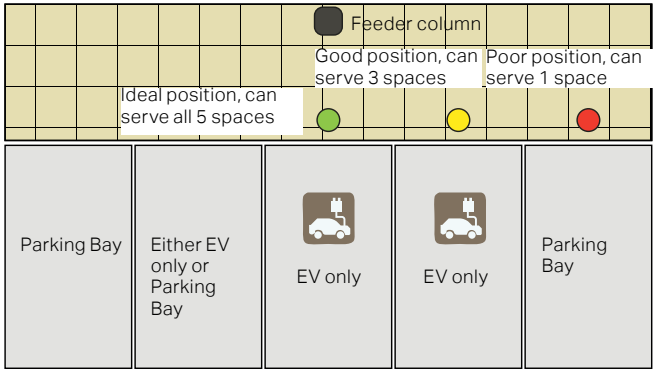

Figure 185: How the placing of on-street charge points and dedicated EV bays can restrict or maximise access

Development proposal checklist

06

6. Development proposal checklist

As the design guidance and codes in this chapter cannot cover all design eventualities, this section provides a number of questions based on established good practice against which the design proposals should be evaluated.

6.1 General questions to ask

The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has taken into account the context and provided an adequate design solution.

As a first step there are a number of ideas or principles that should be present in all proposals. These are listed under 'General design guidelines for development.' Following these ideas and principles, a number of questions are listed for more specific topics on the following pages.

1

General design guidelines for new development:

- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
- Reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;
- Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
- Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
- Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;
- Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;
- Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind; and
- Seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation), before specification of energy efficient building services and finally incorporate renewable energy sources.

2

Local green spaces, views & character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention e.g. permeable landscaping, swales etc.?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

3

Street grid and layout:

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

4

Buildings layout and grouping:

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

5

Gateway and access features:

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

6

Building materials & surface treatment:

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

7

Household extensions:

- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of side extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?
- Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?
- Can any materials be re-used in situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?

8

Building heights and roofline:

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

9

Building line and boundary treatment:

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

10

Car parking:

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

Next steps

07

7. Next steps

The Design Code and Masterplan will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development in Thame, especially on potential sites that might come forward in the future. They will give more certainty to both developers and the community in securing developments that are designed to the aspirations of the community and potentially speed up the planning process.

The report also proposes some conceptual masterplan frameworks for some particular sites which could be an important tool to enable discussions concerning future development and potential opportunities. Those frameworks should be considered in conjunction with the Design Guidelines and Codes.

The opposite table summarises the various ways that this document can be used by each actor in the planning and development process.

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

Table 04: delivery

About AECOM

AECOM is the world's trusted infrastructure consulting firm, delivering professional services throughout the project lifecycle — from planning, design and engineering to program and construction management. On projects spanning transportation, buildings, water, new energy and the environment, our public- and private-sector clients trust us to solve their most complex challenges. Our teams are driven by a common purpose to deliver a better world through our unrivaled technical expertise and innovation, a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to environmental, social and governance priorities. AECOM is a *Fortune 500* firm and its Professional Services business had revenue of $13.2 billion in fiscal year 2020. See how we are delivering sustainable legacies for generations to come at aecom.com and @AECOM.

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