

# Melksham

Design Guidelines and Codes

Draft Report

January 2023

## Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
Stela Kontogianni	Ben Castell	Jessie Watson
Senior Urban Designer	Director	Associate Director
Holly MacMahon	Niamh McDevitt	
Graduate Urban Designer	Planner	

## Revision History

Issue no.	Issue date	Details	Issued by	Position
2	12.01.23	Issue R2	Jessie Watson	Associate Director
1	19.12.22	Comments received from Group	Teresa Strange	Melksham Without Parish Council Clerk
1	10.11.22	Issue R1	Jessie Watson	Associate Director
1	10.11.22	Review	Ben Castell	Director
1	09.11.22	Review	Niamh McDevitt	Planner

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited ("AECOM") in accordance with its contract with Locality (the "Client") and in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. AECOM shall have no liability to any third party that makes use of or relies upon this document.

# Executive Summary

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited ('AECOM') in accordance with its contract with Locality (the 'Client').

Through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Melksham Parish Council.

As the National Planning Policy Framework (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; see, for example, The Value of Good Design<sup>1</sup>) 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 and reduce pollution.

---

1. <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/the-value-of-good-design.pdf>

Therefore, this document seeks to harness an understanding of how good design can make future development as endearingly popular as the best of what has been done before.

**Chapter 1** sets the scene by explaining the importance of good design and the purpose of the design guidelines and codes, followed by a brief summary of the scope and purpose of this report as well as the steps that were followed until its completion (Final report). The policy context is also set by presenting a series of policy documents that should be used as reference for this document and future development.

**Chapter 2** provides an analysis of the NPA regarding the movement networks, historic evolution and settlement pattern, followed by a review of the different character areas within Melksham.

**Chapter 3** presents a set of design guidelines and codes that have been informed and shaped by the local character and landscape of Melksham.

**Chapter 4** explains why this report is a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development in the parish and offers recommendations of various ways that this document could be used by each individual involved in the planning and development process.

It is intended that this report become an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan and be given weight in the planning process.

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3. General design guidelines and codes</b>	<b>44</b>
	1.1 The importance of good design	6		3.1 Place making	44
	1.2 What is a design code	6		3.2 Walkable places	44
	1.3 The purpose of this document	7		3.3 General principles and guidelines	45
	1.4 Preparing the design code	8		3.4 Melksham design guidelines and codes	47
	1.5 Planning policy and design guidance	9		3.2 Checklist	116
	1.6 Area of study	11			
<b>2</b>	<b>2. Neighbourhood Plan Area context analysis</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4. Delivery</b>	<b>123</b>
	2.1 Access and movement	14			
	2.2 History and heritage	17			
	2.3 Landscape designations and green and blue infrastructure	20			
	2.4 Community spirit and distinctiveness	24			
	2.5 Character areas	25			

**Introduction**

**01**

# 1. Introduction

**Through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council.**

## 1.1 The importance of good design

As the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) (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; see, for example, The Value of Good Design<sup>1</sup>) 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 and reduce pollution.

This document seeks to harness an understanding of how good design can make future development as endearingly popular as the best of what has been done before.

---

1. <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/the-value-of-good-design.pdf>

Following the analysis of the Neighbourhood Plan Area (NPA), a set of architectural and design qualities will be created. This set of qualities combined with good design practice will form the design principles that any development within the NPA should follow in order to comply with this Design Guidelines and Codes document.

## 1.2 What is a design code

The Government's Planning Policy Guidance defines design codes as:

*'... a set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should be proportionate and build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area. Their content should also be informed by the 10 characteristics of good places set out in the National Design Guide. They can be ...appended to a Neighbourhood Plan...'.<sup>2</sup>*

---

2. Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 26-008-20191001 - Revision date: 01 10 2019.

## 1.3 The purpose of this document

The NPPF 2021, paragraphs 127-128 states that:

*'Plans should... set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development...'*

*'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 Government is placing significant importance on the development of design codes in order to set standards for design upfront and provide firm guidance on how sites should be developed.

The Wiltshire Core Strategy (and saved policies from district local plans) is now under the 'Local Plan review' which will set out a positive vision for the future of Wiltshire for the period to 2036 and a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities.

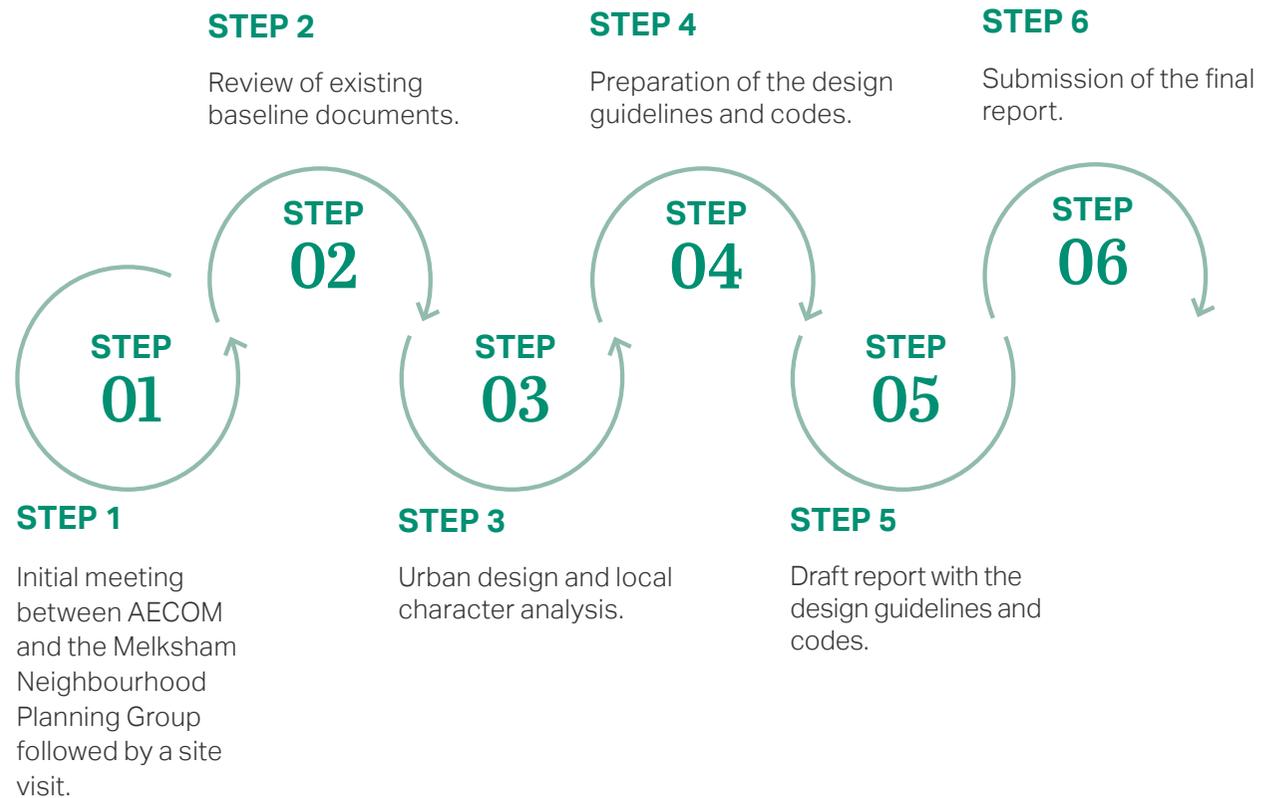
At the time of writing this report, the updated housing requirement is not yet known. However, the 2021 Local Plan consultation allocated approximately 2585 new homes for Melksham and Bowerhill by 2036, but it should be noted that this figure is liable to change. In addition to this,

Melksham and the Large Village of Shaw & Whitley is also experiencing some proposed extensions, as shown in [Figure 1](#), with major planning applications approved mainly to the east and south.

Thus, this design guidelines and codes report will aim to establish a set of design principles that reflect the local character of the area and ensure that any design proposal within the NPA contributes to a distinctive place with a consistent and high quality standard of design.

## 1.4 Preparing the design code

Following an inception meeting and a site visit with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, the following steps were agreed with the Group to produce this report.



## 1.5 Planning policy and design guidance

This section outlines some key policy and design guidance that should be considered in any future development within the NPA. The following guidelines have been produced at national, district and local level.

NATIONAL LEVEL

### 2021 - National Planning Policy Framework

#### Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

### 2021 National Model Design Code

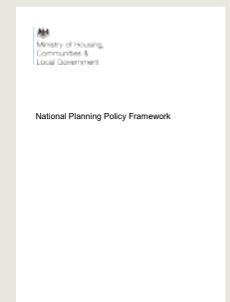
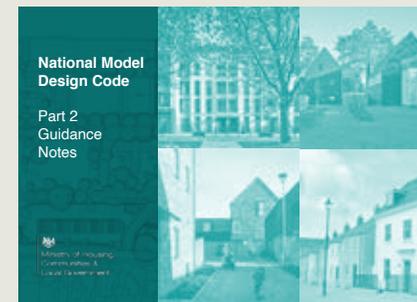
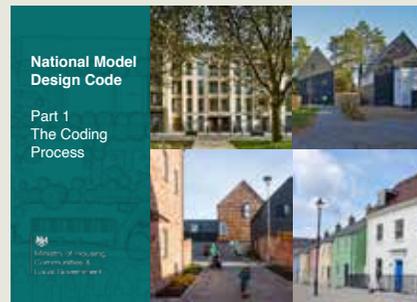
#### DLUHC

This report provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide.

### 2019 - National Design Guide

#### DLUHC

The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.



**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.

**2020 - Building for a Healthy Life Homes England**

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the new (2020) name for 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.



NATIONAL LEVEL

**2015 - Wiltshire Core Strategy**

Wiltshire Council

This document provides a broad policy framework and a long-term strategy to manage and support a more sustainable pattern of development in Wiltshire which incorporates jobs, services, facilities as well as housing. The strategy has been written for the period up to 2026 and outlines core policies for each of the identified settlement areas in Wiltshire.



DISTRICT LEVEL

**2006 - Melksham Urban Design Study**

Melksham 1st and Colin Davis Associates

This is not an adopted document, but rather provides analysis and design proposals to initiate thought and discussion on urban design in Melksham. The design suggestions concentrate on how the street scene of Melksham Town Centre could be improved.

LOCAL LEVEL

**2020 - Melksham Town 2020-2036**

Melksham Town Council

This document identifies the need for building and strengthening economic activity in Melksham. It sets out a broad range of facts and figures covering different topics including demography and economy intended to act as an evidence base and proposes the next steps in this process.

**2020 - Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan**

Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the vision and goals for Melksham and Melksham Without and is intended to help shape new development, by defining, for example, where new homes should be built and the key green spaces to be protected and enhanced.



LOCAL LEVEL

## 1.6 Area of study

The NPA is a combination of the parishes of Melksham Town and Melksham Without, as part of the joint Neighbourhood Plan.

The areas operate as a classic market town and surrounding catchment area with small villages and settlements which include Whitley, Shaw, Beanacre, Berryfield, Bowerhill, The Spa and Sandridge.

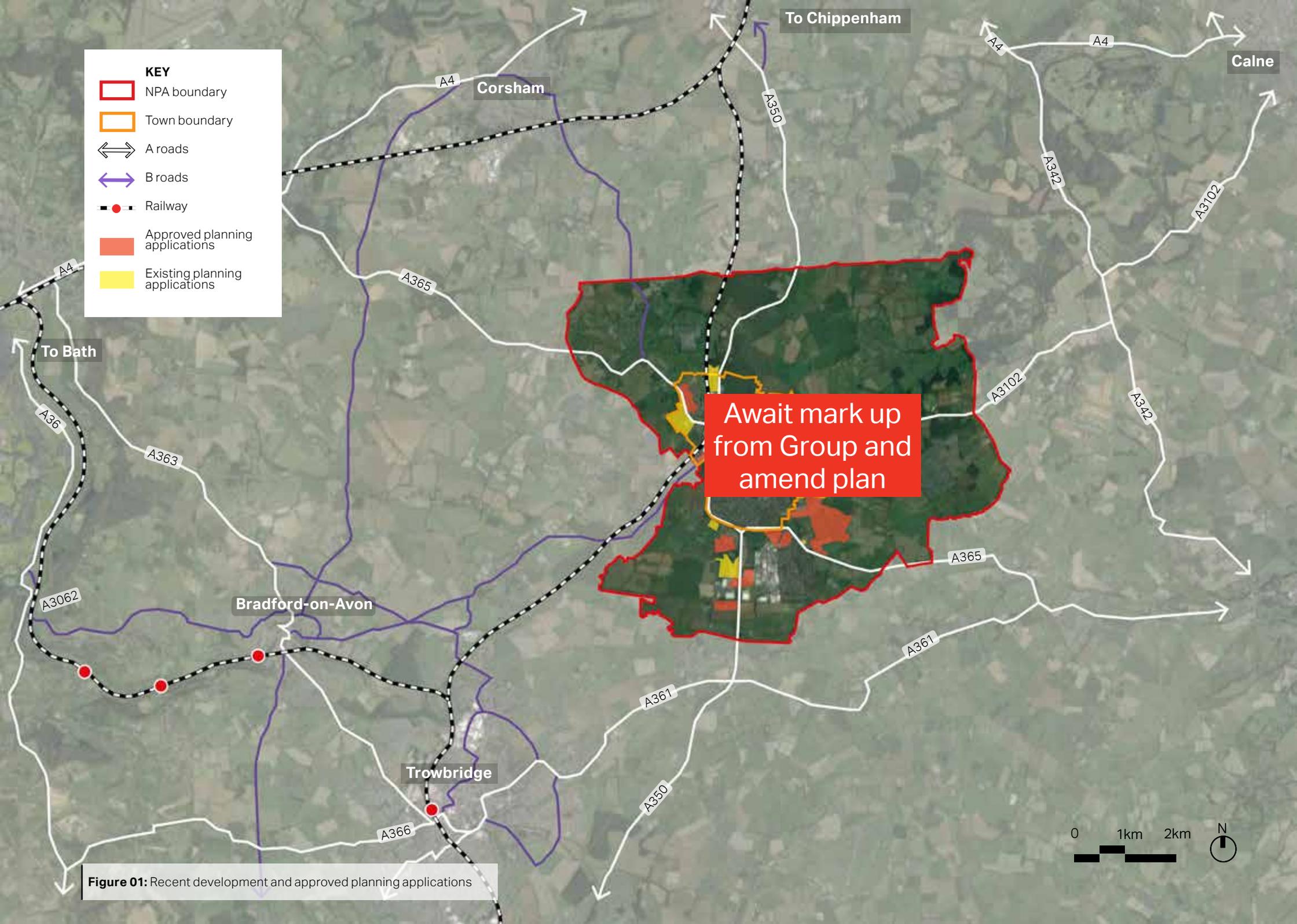
Melksham is Wiltshire's fifth-largest settlement after Swindon, Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge, located about 7km northeast of Trowbridge and 10km south of Chippenham. The main road in the area is the A350, which runs north south through the area from the M4 motorway junction 17. Beanacre sits directly on this primary A road, Melksham and Berryfield are located off to either side, while Shaw and Whitley are in the west of the NPA off the A365. Sandridge is in the east off the A3102 and Bowerhill and The Spa are south off the A365.

There is one railway station in the NPA, just north of the town centre which has direct links to Trowbridge & Westbury and Chippenham & Swindon, where connections to the rest of the rail network are possible.

The River Avon runs through the NPA and town and originally Melksham developed around a ford across the river. The market town has a long history, appearing in the Domesday Book as 'Melchesa', and grew through success in the agricultural and woollen cloth making industries.

Under the Local Government Act of 1894 the ancient parish of Melksham was divided into Melksham Within and Melksham Without. Whitley, Shaw and Beanacre are the historic villages of Melksham Without Parish and are ancient settlements dating to the Medieval period. Bowerhill and Berryfield developed from agricultural land during the 20th century, first serving as a military base and housing during World War II and then from the 1970s developing into two distinct villages.

Today, the demographics of the NPA are an ageing population, a well qualified workforce, though higher skilled resident workers, who tend to commute outside of the area for work and, according to the 2018 statistics, a population of approximately 24,000. There are varied land uses within the NPA including residential, retail, businesses, community services and industrial, agricultural and equestrian.

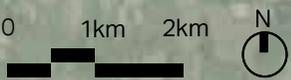


**KEY**

- NPA boundary
- Town boundary
- A roads
- B roads
- Railway
- Approved planning applications
- Existing planning applications

Await mark up  
from Group and  
amend plan

**Figure 01:** Recent development and approved planning applications



**NPA Context Analysis**

**02**

## 2. Neighbourhood Plan Area context analysis

This chapter describes the local context and key characteristics of Melksham related to heritage, built environment, streetscape, views, landscape and topography.

### 2.1 Access and movement

Vehicular and pedestrian movement within the NPA features a network of A and B-roads, secondary, tertiary and local roads, as well as a sustainable transport and active travel network. Within the NPA, there is a clear hierarchy of roads providing good accessibility across the town and surrounding settlements.

- **A roads.** The NPA is serviced by the A350 running from the north to the south and also acting as a border between Melksham Town and Melksham Without. It carries most of the traffic from north to south offering connections to nearby towns like Chippenham and Trowbridge, as well as strategic connections further afield towards the M4 in the north and Shaftesbury and

Poole in the south. The character of this road varies as it runs through the countryside and then the town adapting to the surrounding environment. For most of its length is a single carriageway road, with no pavements on either side, permitting two-way travel, however, where it branches out from Farmers Roundabout until it meets Bath Road, it widens up allowing for dual carriageway and four-way travel. The rest of the A-roads - the A365 to the north and the A3102 and A365 to the east - are all single carriageways, with similar characteristics, that permit two-way travel and are also equipped with pavements when they run through the town.



**Figure 02:** The A3102 road provides the north entrance into the town centre.

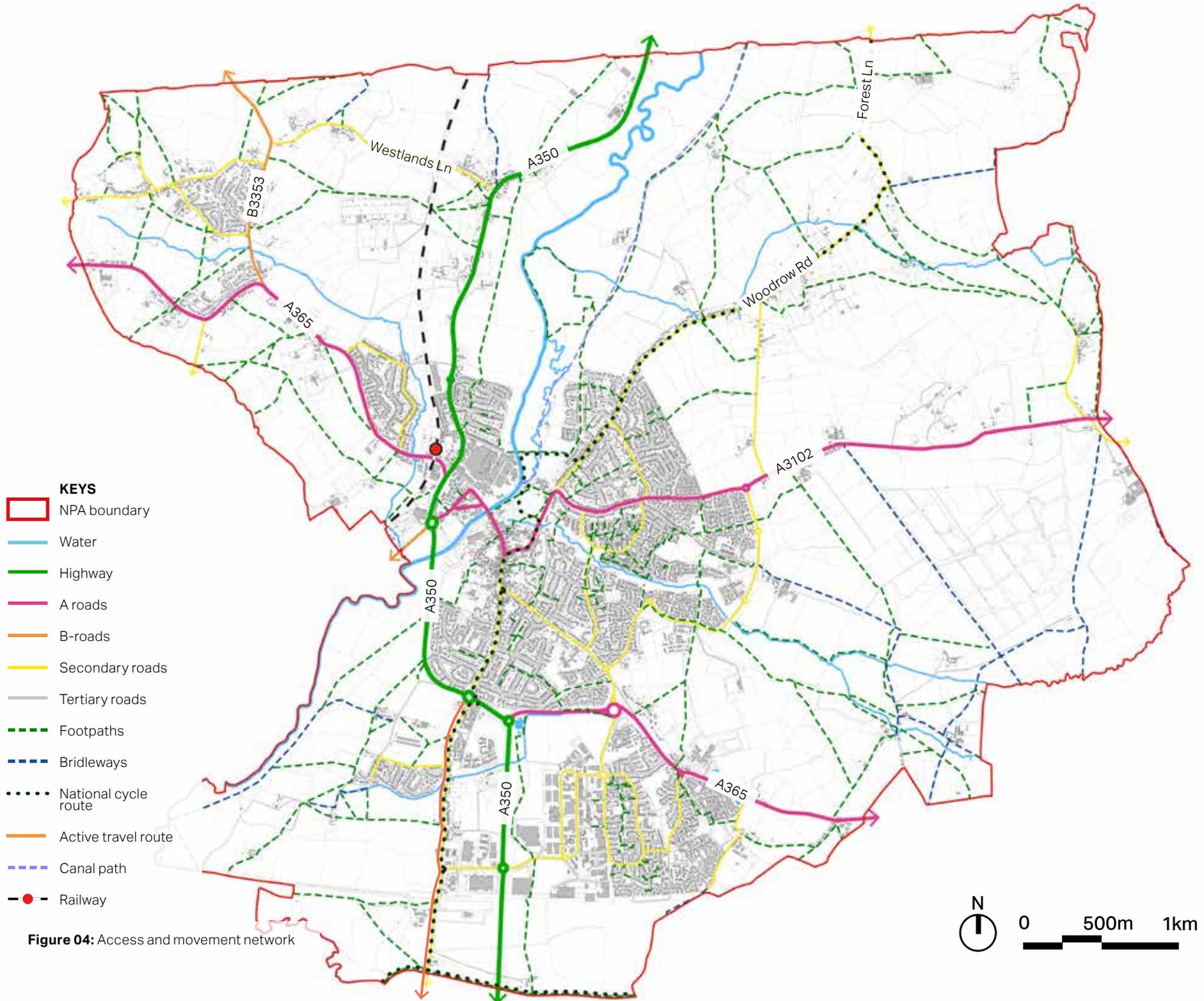


**Figure 03:** Church Walk, a footpath within the town centre which provides a walking link from Bank Street to the Church.

- **B-roads.** There are two B-roads running within the NPA; the B3107 that accesses it from the west and B3353 that runs from the north to the south. Both roads have the character of countryside lanes bordered with vegetation, whilst offering long-distance views towards the open fields.
- **Secondary roads.** There is a network of secondary roads running in Melksham, mainly within the town, offering immediate connections to the A-road network, the High Street and residential neighbourhoods. All roads are single carriageways, with pavements on either side or both sides, permitting two-way travel.
- **Local roads.** The rest of the road network consists of narrow, rural lanes within open fields and tertiary lanes within the town and surrounding settlements. Most of the local roads within the built environment are cul-de-sac streets, however, there are also perimeter blocks at places.
- **Sustainable and active travel network<sup>1</sup>.** The Melksham NPA enjoys good sustainable transport and active travel connections and routes that run through and around the area.
- **Cycle routes.** Part of National Cycle Route 403 runs through the NPA north-south, from the southern part Melksham Without, northwards through Melksham Town Centre and along part of the River Avon, and into the north of Melksham Without, via Melksham Forest and Woodrow. This strategic route crosses the North Wessex Downs and Severnake Forest, linking Chippenham to Marlborough and the Kennet and Avon Canal. Overall, the quality of this route is good, however, the riverside section of the route linking Halfpenny Bridge and King George V Playing Field is in poor condition. In addition to this, a new Active Travel route from Melksham to Hilperton has been put in with government funding.
- **Public Right of Way.** There is an extensive Public Right of Way (PRoW) network which links Melksham with the villages and surrounding landscape of Melksham Without. There is also a network of PRoWs within Melksham Town. These routes are important to promote active travel and pedestrian priority in the NPA.
- **Railway.** Melksham Railway Station, located in the north east of the town, is on the Trans-Wilts Line which runs between Swindon and Salisbury. Trains from the station run approximately every two hours each way to Trowbridge/ Westbury, Chippenham/Swindon. The railway station has car and cycle parking, and a cafe.
- **Bus services.** Melksham has two bus services; No.14 to Asda, Forest, Queensway and the town centre, and No.15 to Asda, town centre, occasionally Berryfield, and the east of Melksham. Neither service visits the station, although No. 14 goes fairly close. There is a less frequent joint service on Saturdays. The Fareserver 271/272/273 service links the Town, Forest and Bowerhill to Bath or Devizes. Shaw and Whitley are also served by this service.

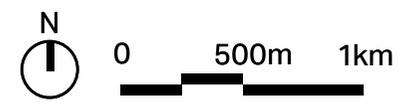
---

1. Information has been taken from the evidence base for Melksham Made NP.



- KEYS**
- NPA boundary
  - Water
  - Highway
  - A roads
  - B-roads
  - Secondary roads
  - Tertiary roads
  - Footpaths
  - Bridleways
  - National cycle route
  - Active travel route
  - Canal path
  - Railway

**Figure 04:** Access and movement network



## 2.2 History and heritage

Melksham NPA is home to a wealth of heritage assets. This includes a designated conservation area, a number of listed buildings and structures, as well as other buildings of local historical importance that are deemed valuable to local residents.

- **Conservation area and listed buildings.** There are over 70 listed buildings in the NPA; 19 in Whitley, 16 in Shaw, 19 in Beanacre and over 150 in the town. The majority of the latter are concentrated in the Melksham Town Conservation Area.
- **Buildings of local historical importance.** In addition to the buildings that are listed as being of national heritage or architectural importance, there are many buildings that are of local heritage importance, in particular those in the town centre built of local stone in a traditional style. Together, these make a

significant contribution to the character of the street and give the town centre a feeling of completeness.

- **The Spa.** The Spa is one of the two key areas of heritage importance. It is approximately 1 mile from the town centre on the A365 Devizes Road and its name originated from the discovery of saline springs in 1813. Shortly after this, the Melksham Spa Company was formed which led to the building of a pump room and a crescent of three pairs of grand, semi detached Georgian dwellings.
- **The City.** The City is the other key area of heritage importance. It includes an area of housing for industrial workers, which is likely to date from the 17th century when the town expanded to the north of the river for the first time. A few buildings still survive in this area,

including a Grade II listed former pub (The Red Lion), and a row of attached cottages built in early 18th century of rubblestone with a stone slate roof.

- **Heritage in Melksham Without.** The parish of Melksham Without is rich in archaeological remains. The northern parish boundary follows the route of the former Roman Road between Mildenhall and Bath, while a small Roman Town and substantial Iron Age settlement have recently been discovered to the north west of Beanacre. The parish has the remains of prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlements, with earthwork remains from former medieval and post-medieval field systems particularly prominent.



**Figure 05:** A row of 18th century stone cottages and schoolroom in The City area.



**Figure 06:** View of Bank Street.



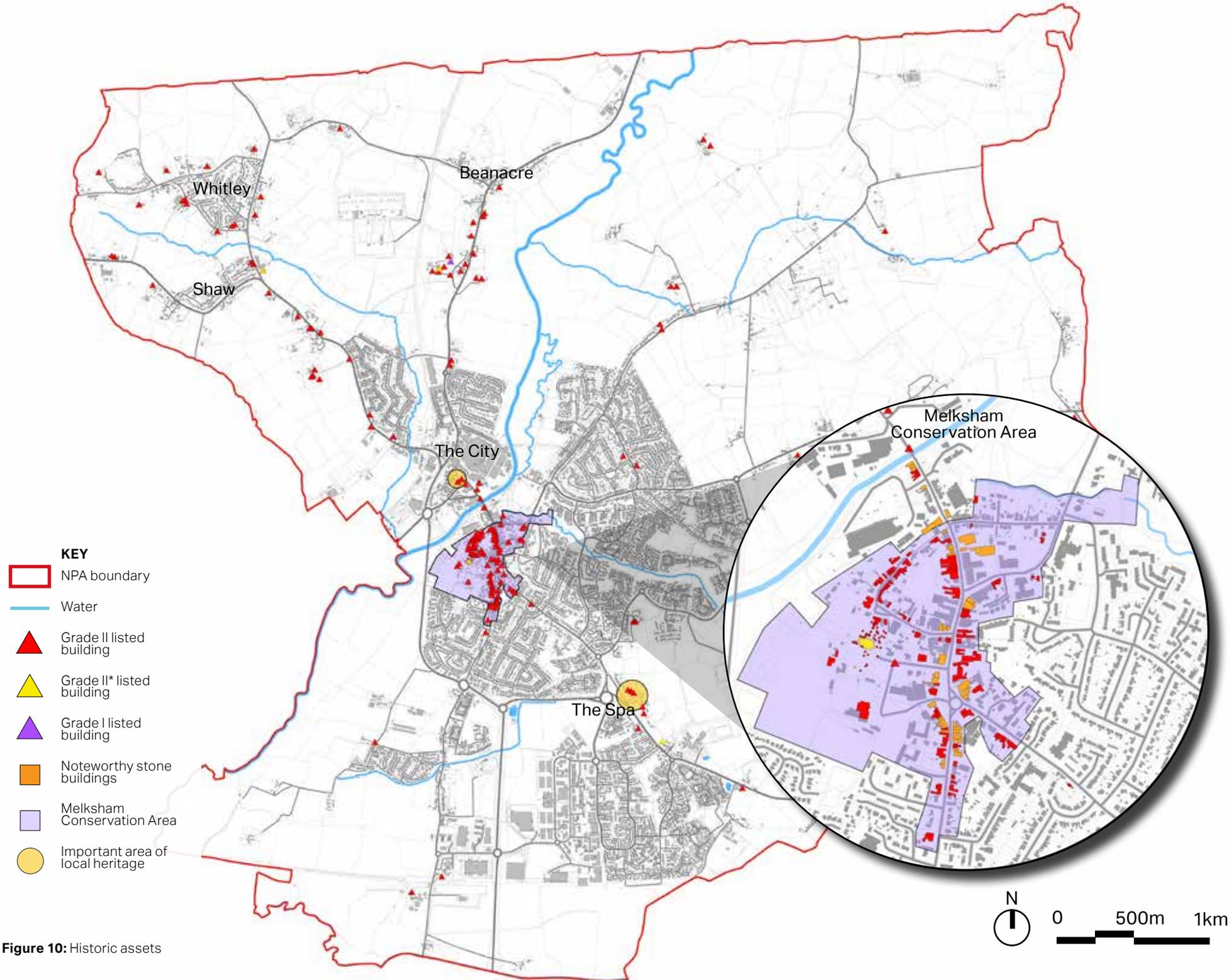
**Figure 07:** One of the three Georgian houses in the Spa area, Grade II listed.



**Figure 08:** Grade II\* listed Church of St Michael, Church Walk, Melksham town centre.



**Figure 09:** Grade II\* listed Christ Church, Corsham Road, Shaw which dates from the 1800s.



## 2.3 Landscape and open space

The NPA's Green Infrastructure network comprises various features including open spaces, private gardens, allotments and parks, together with the many public footpaths that span the area.

- **Open spaces.** There is a great number of open spaces within Melksham NPA including accessible natural green space, allotments, amenity green space, churchyards and cemeteries, education, natural green space (limited access), outdoor sport pitches, park and recreation ground and play areas.
- **Ancient and deciduous woodlands.** There are a number of ancient and deciduous woodlands within the NPA, to the north and north-east, including Daniel's Wood, Basin Covert and Morass Wood.
- **Local wildlife sites.** There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites within the NPA. These include areas of Ancient Woodland, as well as the River Avon

(which runs north-south through the NPA) and the Kennet and Avon Canal (which comprises part of the southern boundary of the Area).



**Figure 11:** The churchyard of Church of St Michael in Melksham town centre.



**Figure 12:** King George V park in Melksham town centre.



**Figure 13:** View over open green space and tree-lined South Brook in Whitley.

- **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).** There are two areas of nationally important designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the area. Upper Selves Wood and Lower Selves Wood, both located in the north east corner of Melksham NPA.
- **Significant trees and veteran trees.** There are 2 notable trees in the area, as well a veteran tree and an ancient oak tree. The Trust defines notable trees as mature trees which are large in comparison with other trees around them. In addition, there are also Veteran Trees and an ancient oak tree.
- **Water features and flood risk.** The main water feature within Melksham is the River Avon, which cuts through the town to the south of the town centre, from east to west. Minor tributaries spur off this, running to the east and north of the NPA. The flood zones 2 & 3 correspond with these natural watercourses. In addition, the Kennet and Avon Canal runs along the southern boundary of Melksham Without.



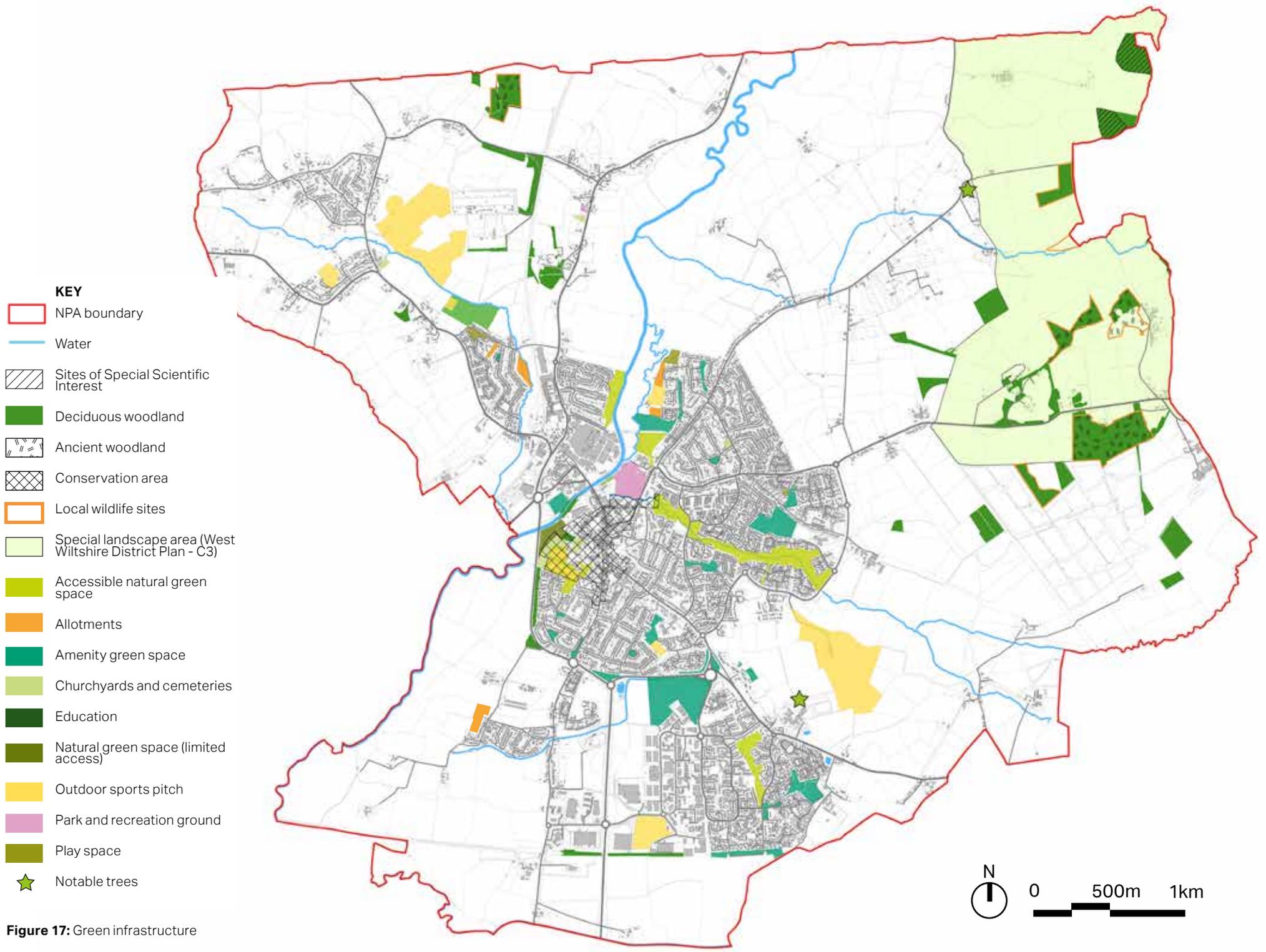
**Figure 14:** View of River Avon and green river banks from pedestrian bridge in King George IV Park



**Figure 15:** Green roundabout with planting and veteran tree, Market Place, Melksham town centre.

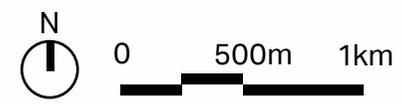


**Figure 16:** River Avon and green river banks as it passes through Melksham town centre.



**KEY**

- NPA boundary
- Water
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Deciduous woodland
- Ancient woodland
- Conservation area
- Local wildlife sites
- Special landscape area (West Wiltshire District Plan - C3)
- Accessible natural green space
- Allotments
- Amenity green space
- Churchyards and cemeteries
- Education
- Natural green space (limited access)
- Outdoor sports pitch
- Park and recreation ground
- Play space
- Notable trees



**Figure 17: Green infrastructure**

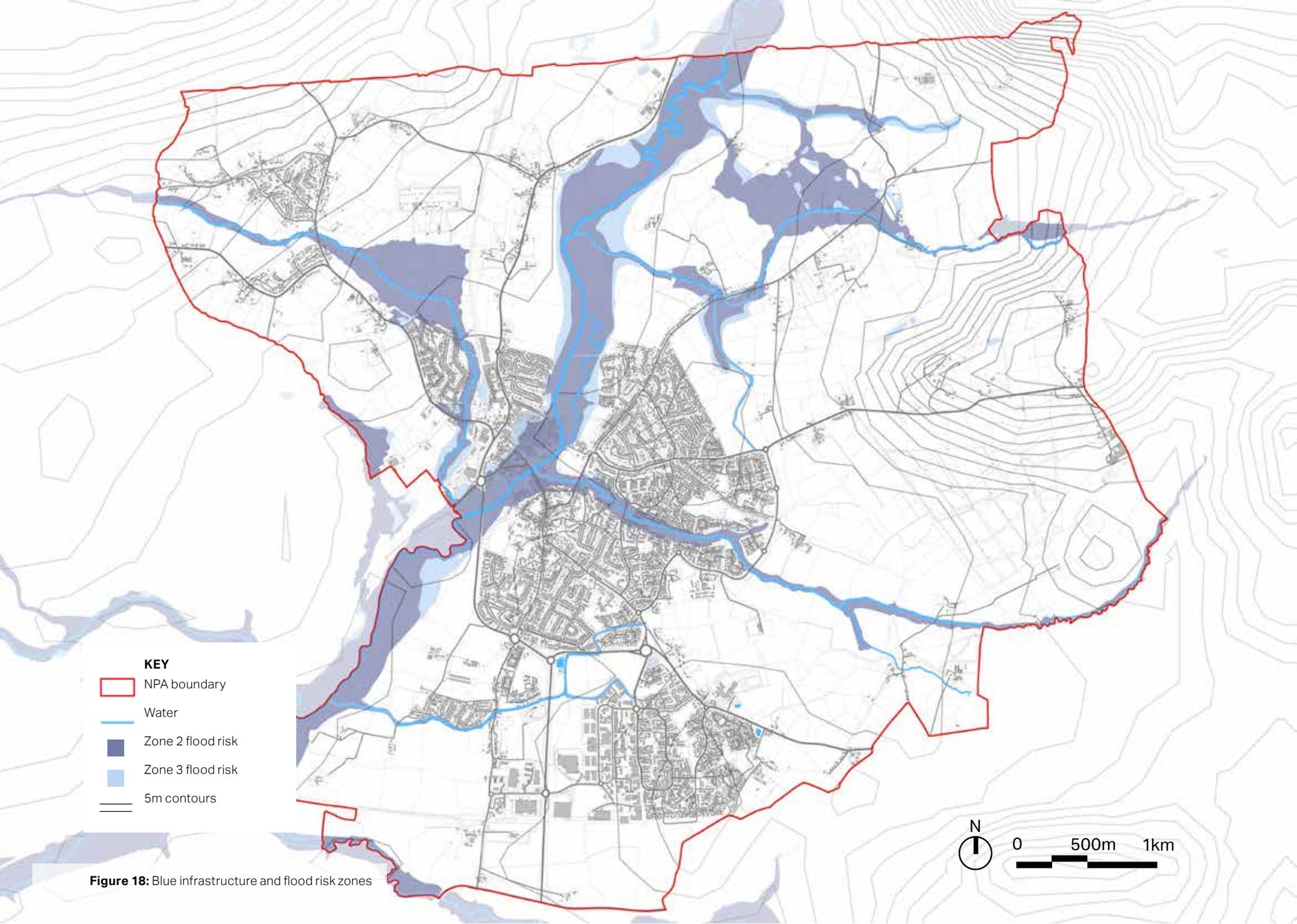


Figure 18: Blue infrastructure and flood risk zones

## 2.4 Character areas

Following on from the analysis, this section focuses on the different character areas within Melksham.

Melksham's character and identity is not defined by only one style. There are a mixture of architectural styles, details, settlement patterns and building layouts that together contribute to the unique character of the town.

The design guidelines and codes, presented in the next chapter, will highlight a variety of characteristics, and become a useful guide for any future development in the NPA.

The character areas identified within the NPA, and illustrated on the next page, are:

- Historic core and linear development;
- 20th century residential neighbourhoods;
- 21st century residential neighbourhoods; and
- Large scale, commercial/ industrial/ service development.

Future granted developments are also shown on the plan.

The character areas are defined by variations in land use, patterns of growth, the layout of buildings, street patterns, car arrangements, building heights, density, public realm and landscape setting.

The next pages will present an analysis for each character area accompanied by photos and maps.

An important note is that, while some of the character areas are clearly defined and have very fixed boundaries, there is always some elements that overlap.

Further information on the distinct character of the rural settlements in Melksham Without are explained in more detail on page 26.

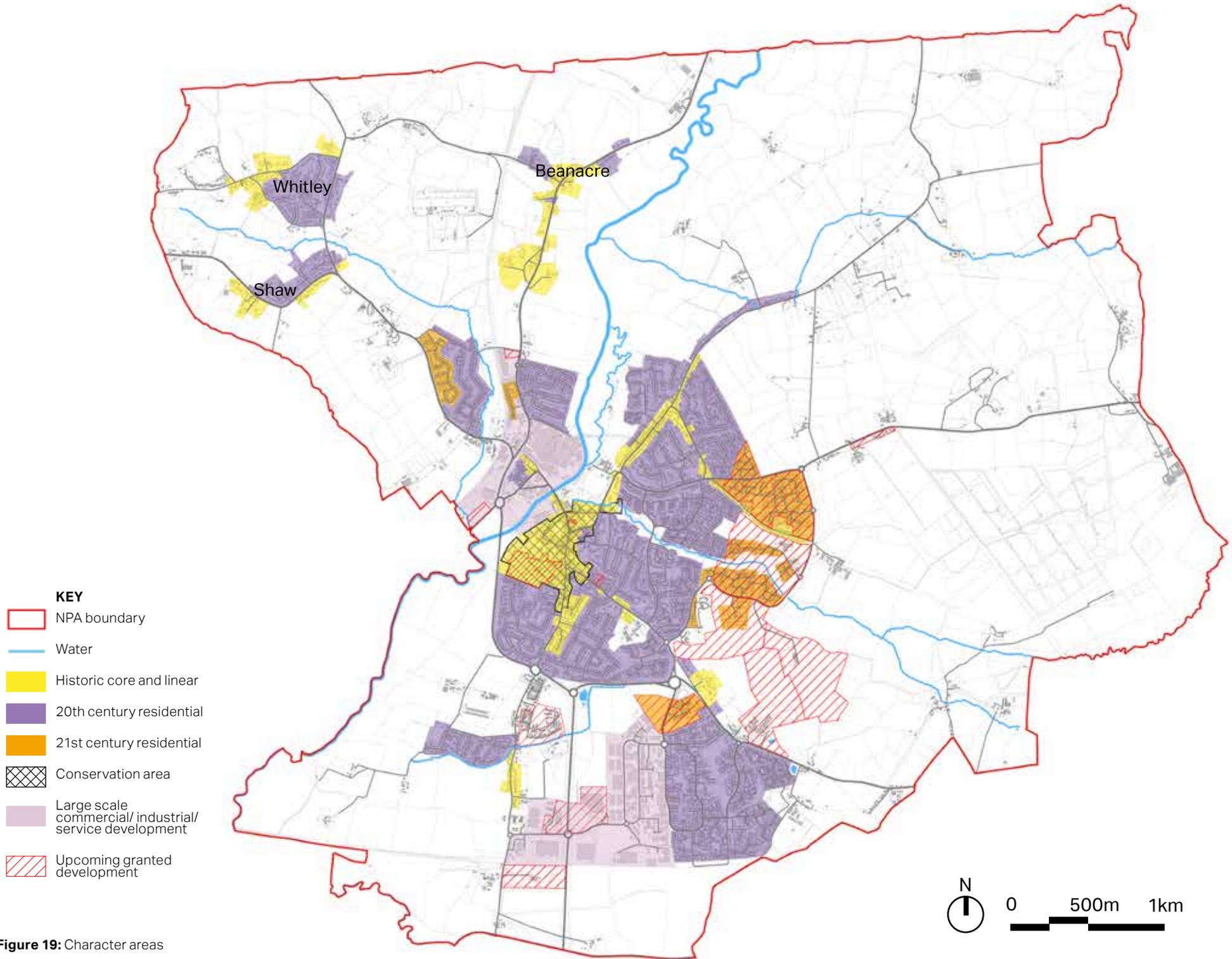


Figure 19: Character areas

### 2.4.0.1 Exceptions to the general character areas

The more rural parts of the NPA, such as the settlements in the parish of Melksham Without, have their own unique identity and whilst they are presented in this section within general character areas such as the 'Historic core' and the '20th century residential' areas, these villages have distinct development forms which should inform any future developments.

The villages of Whitley and Shaw are historic settlements, which were established around the same time in circa 16th century. Beanacre is older still, with an 'estate mentioned in the records of 1275.

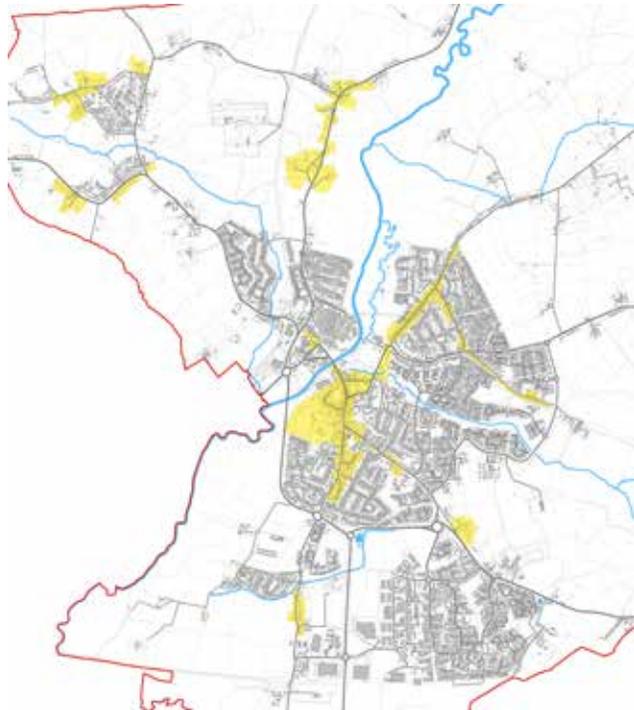
All the villages are set within the rural, wooded landscape, separating them from each other and Melksham town. This important quality is essential to conserving the distinctiveness and individuality of each village. The villages share common qualities of built form and landscape which unite them within their wider landscape and development character. These are features such as:

- Organic, meandering road network;
- Loose, informal building lines, particularly along the settlement edges, with gaps in between buildings affording views to the surrounding countryside (these landscape gaps between the villages and the town are also important for maintaining a distinct identity).;
- Varied building orientations;
- Generous garden and extensive plots with dense tree cover which reinforces the rural character and separates from Melksham;
- Boundary treatments are typically higher stone and brick walls with stone and hedging often featured on front garden boundaries;
- 1-2 storey building scales;
- Tile hung pitched and gable end rooflines;
- Materials such as rubble limestone, ashlar courses and details and tiled roofs, with some use of red brick and white / cream painted render on more recent development; and
- Varied architectural detailing, in keeping with the rural character.

## Historic core and linear development

### 2.4.0.2 Historic core and linear development

This character area includes the town's conservation area, as well as the historic linear cores of the surrounding settlements (West Hill, Whitley, Shaw, Beanacre, Forest, The Spa, Berryfield and Melksham East).



### Access and movement

Most of the historic core areas are located along A-roads, carrying the main traffic and acting as the gateway into each area. This prime setting allows for pleasant views along the streetscape towards the rich local vernacular of each area.

There is a good footpath network within the NPA offering multiple connections from the surrounding settlements to Melksham and the open countryside.

Bus services run along the main road network, offering connections from the surrounding settlements into the town.

### Land uses

Most of the historic cores in the rural settlements are residential, however there are two churches in Beanacre; one along Church Lane, a pub along Forest Road and a pub, a pre-school and a petrol station along Semington Road.

The conservation area in Melksham includes a variety of land uses (but not residential), as it offers services and facilities for the whole of the NPA. Land uses include

public open spaces, sports fields, retail, commercial, pubs, post office, school and the town hall.



Figure 20: Retail units along Bank Street



Figure 21: St Barnabas Church, Beanacre.

## Historic core and linear development

### Pattern of growth and layout of buildings

This character area includes the older parts of Melksham, which is laid out in an organic pattern.

The conservation area is dense and includes a variety of land uses and facilities set out along the gently meandering streets. Residential uses mainly occupy the upper floor, whilst the ground floor acts as an active facade accommodating shops, services and cafes. This typology does not include front or back gardens and thus, the plots are smaller compared to the ones in other neighbourhoods.

The building lines are relatively regular following the layout of the streets, whilst the building typologies and the compact layout creates a continuity along the facades with limited gaps between the buildings.

The roads which branch out from the conservation area, including Semington Road, Spa Road and Forest Road, follow a less dense pattern, in a linear form. Building lines are relatively regular and consistent with small variations in building setbacks. Where residential uses are mixed with

other uses (for instance the petrol station, veterinary centre and primary school along Semington Road), additional variety in the setbacks is added. Plot sizes and widths are relatively consistent with small variations. Church Road which branches out from Forest Road has similar characteristics.

Away from Melksham, the historic cores in present a different character, being more informal compared to the linear layouts within the town centre. In particular, building lines and plot rotations are relatively irregular, whilst plot sizes and widths vary adding visual interest along the streetscape.

Building setbacks vary, but the majority of them are a generous depth, creating a feeling of openness in the area, which is also reinforced by the close proximity to the open fields. Cul-de-sac layouts are also found in this character area, for instance in Shaw, Whitley and Beanacre, but they are very short in length. The Spa has a very characteristic setting with buildings laid out in a relatively linear form with very long front gardens and large plot sizes and widths.



**Figure 22:** Linear form and strong building line which comes right up to the pavement on King Street (viewed from the Market Place)



**Figure 23:** Residential property in Whitley with generous setback, high boundary treatment and informal plot layout and orientation.

## Historic core and linear development

### Boundary treatments & public realm

A typical characteristic in Melksham's most valued neighbourhoods is the relationship with a communal green space and network of linking green space and tree-lined roads.

The conservation area, whilst dominated by hard landscape due to the continued frontages and lack of front and rear gardens and tree-lined roads, is bordered King George V Park, the cemetery and the rich vegetation that borders the River Avon. There are also planters along the streetscape to break up the hard landscape and add some visual interest.

The rest of the linear developments within the town include Semington Road, Forest Road, Spa Road and Church Road, are tree-lined roads offering more soft surfaces, whilst the natural boundary treatments combined with low-height brick walls create visual interest along the streetscape.

Away from Melksham, the linear layouts of the rural settlements offer more soft surfaces as there is a prevalence of natural boundary treatments including hedgerows, hedges, bushes and large trees. However, there are also examples of low-height brick walls, which offer some variety along the streetscape.

Within the town centre, the prevailing parking typology is car parks and smaller parking courts, whilst outside Melksham town centre, the main car parking typology is on-plot parking. However, on-street parking is also found in the linear neighbourhoods within the town.



**Figure 25:** Tree lined street in Melksham town centre, Ruskin Avenue.



**Figure 24:** Hard landscaping in Church Street/Canon Square, with low masonry and stone walls, complimented with trees and vegetation.



**Figure 26:** Natural boundary treatments in Whitley, one of the rural settlements.

## Historic core and linear development

### Building heights and density

Within the town centre, building heights reach up to 3 storeys. Due to the compact layout of the blocks and higher average densities, the roofline is continuous. However, due to the variety of roof types, ranging between hipped, gabled, flat and cat-slided as well as features like dormers, the roofline is inconsistent and presents great variety.

The average height in the linear developments within the town is 2-2.5 storeys, whilst the roofline is either continuous or it gets interrupted with large trees or features like chimneys, pitches and dormers. Roof types vary between gabled, cross-gabled and hipped roofs, whilst there are some examples of mansard roofs.

The average roof height in the rural settlements is 2 storeys and the same variety of roof types is found. However, due to the lower average densities, the roofline is less continuous.

### Local vernacular

There are a mixture of housing typologies in the historic core including farms and rural cottages, Georgian town houses and terraces and Victorian villas and cottages.

The predominant material in Melksham is stone, which is seen on many of the older and more prestigious buildings in the NPA. The style of stone varies and includes coursed rubblestone, ashlar stone, blockwork and random rubble. Stone is also used in combination with red brick as window surrounds, lintels, quoins at building corners and boundary wall pillars. Red brick can be seen throughout the historic core character area and bricks follow either a stretcher or English bond pattern.

Other facade styles include white painted brick, white render and off-white/ cream render. There are a few examples of dark timber-framed gables.

Pitched, hipped and mansard roofs are the predominant roof types. There are two main roof materials: dark clay plain tile and grey slate tile and dormer windows are common. Most buildings in this character area have chimneys with either stone, red brick or rendered chimney stacks.

Windows are mainly sash, vertical in proportion and often have white or light coloured frames and panelling. Door styles vary and some have gabled or flat roofs.

# Historic core and linear development



**Figure 32:** Coursed rubblestone with slate tiled conical roof.



**Figure 33:** Ashlar stone with mansard roof in Welsh slate.



**Figure 34:** White facade with exposed dark timber framing.



**Figure 35:** Stone quoin corner and brick detailing of building adjacent to stone boundary wall.



**Figure 27:** Ashlar stone with rusticated quoins and moulded cornice and parapet with flat roof.



**Figure 29:** Red brick with varying brick colours in English bond pattern.



**Figure 36:** Rubblestone with light coloured stone slate roof.



**Figure 37:** Rubblestone with dark clay pantile roof.



**Figure 30:** Light coloured rendered window frame and sash window with vertical panelling.



**Figure 31:** White render, white panelled sash window and door with flat roof.



**Figure 41:** Ashlar stone, Dutch gable roof and 2 storey canted bay windows.



**Figure 40:** Light-leaded window with red brick detailing above.



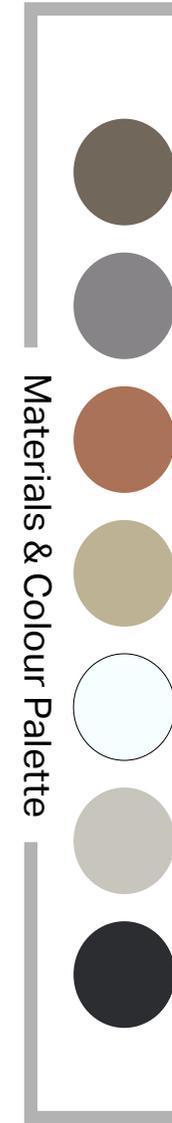
**Figure 38:** Off-white render and white panelled sash windows.



**Figure 39:** Ashlar stone quoins.

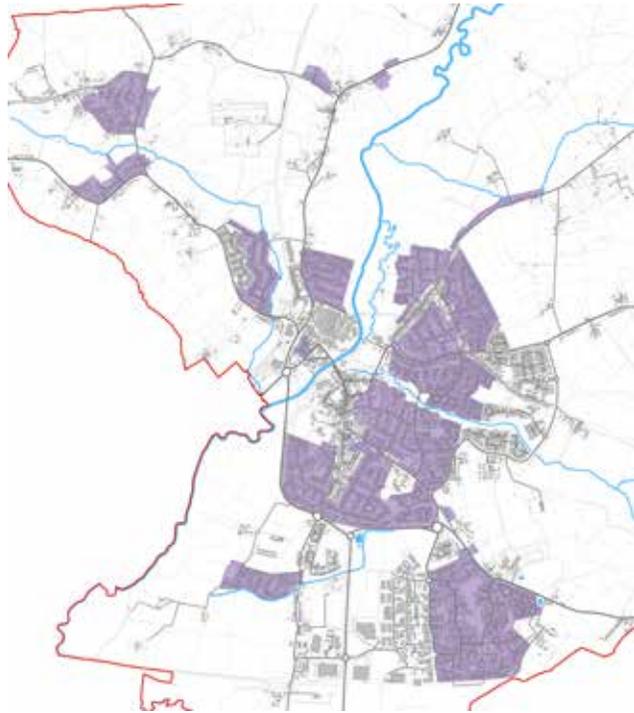


**Figure 28:** Attic dormers with white framed sash windows.



### 2.4.0.3 20th century residential neighbourhoods

This character area includes most of the residential neighbourhoods which were built in the 20th century within the Melksham NPA, such as Forest, Hazelwood, Longford, Bowerhill, Berryfield, Whitley, Shaw, Roundponds.



### Access and movement

Most parts of this character area are located along secondary and tertiary roads, carrying mainly local residential traffic. The streets are arranged in either permeable patterns or cul-de-sac layouts. The latter are often connected with the footpaths which offer connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods and the open countryside.

In addition to this, there are neighbourhoods that are set along main road networks, like the rural settlements around Melksham, which also carry traffic from passing vehicles. The street character of those main lanes is different from setting of the rest of the streets and it have similar qualities to the ones described in the previous character area.

Bus services run along the main road network in close walking distance from most parts of this character area, offering connections from all the surrounding settlements into the town.

### Land uses

This character area is mainly residential, however other land uses meet day to day local needs. These include the Village Hall, the primary school and pre-school in Shaw, a nursery, the community hospital and the community campus in Melksham, as well as the primary school, the community school and a Tesco express in Bowerhill.

### Pattern of growth and layout of buildings

During the 20th Century, and continuing into the 21st Century, Melksham experienced significant housing expansion, which was largely in the form of municipal and private housing developments.

There are three main patterns of growth found in this character area and each one offers a different feel along the streetscape due to variations in buildings lines, setbacks, density and boundary treatments.

## 20th century residential neighbourhoods

Within Melksham, permeable and cul-de-sac layouts are found, where properties are set along relatively linear streets with subtle setbacks and regular building lines.

However, in places, the character of the streets is slightly more meandering allowing for more irregularities in building lines and thus, interesting perspectives along the streetscape. For example, Hazelwood and Forest neighbourhoods offer more variety in building lines, rotations and setbacks compared to other neighbourhoods like Longford or Roundponds.

The patterns within the more rural settlements like Whitley, Shaw, Beanacre and Berryfield, offer more informal qualities along the slightly meandering streets enhancing the rural context. There are also examples of cul-de-sacs, but those are shorter compared to the ones found in the town centre.



**Figure 42:** Linear form and consistent building line with small set back from the road in the town centre, Milton Avenue.



**Figure 43:** Short cul-de-sac in Whitley on a meandering street with varied building set backs and orientation.

### Boundary treatments & public realm

In general, this character area is 'greener' compared to the historic core and linear development character area, due to the rich natural boundary treatments that decorate the properties. In addition to this, the close proximity to public green spaces and the surrounding countryside also contributes to the green feel of the area.

The natural boundary treatments range between hedges, hedgerows, trees and bushes and they are usually combined with harder surfaces like low-height brick walls adding visual variety. However, there are also neighbourhoods where a different feel, more 'communal', is created, as the boundaries between private and public space are less apparent, for instance along cul-de-sacs where front gardens are decorated only with grass and flowerbeds, trees or bushes.

Away from the town, the rural settlements offer a greener feel compared to the neighbourhoods within Melksham as the

## 20th century residential neighbourhoods

lanes are bordered with rich vegetation, grass verges at places, and large trees. The long-distance views along the streetscape are usually framed by backdrop vegetation. Natural boundary treatments mainly decorate the front and back gardens, however, there are some examples of low-height brick walls at places.

The prevailing car parking typology is on-plot parking, however, there are also instances of on-street parking along some main streets within the town.

### Building heights and density

The average building height in this character area is 2.5 storeys, with examples of 1-storey buildings too. This variety in building heights creates variations in the roofline as well and therefore, an interesting and unique streetscape.

In particular, the roofline within the neighbourhoods in the town is continuous with subtle variations, due to the linear layout of the streets. Roof types mainly range between gabled, cross gabled,



**Figure 45:** Cul-de-sac example in the town centre with bungalow typology and mainly natural boundary treatments.



**Figure 44:** Grass verge boundary treatment with very low brick wall, Whitley.

mansard and hipped roofs.

The average roof height in the rural settlements is 2 storeys and the same variety of roof types is found. However, due to the lower densities and the larger gaps between buildings, the roofline is less continuous as it is often interrupted.

### Local vernacular

The main building styles in the 20th century residential neighbourhoods are detached and semi-detached buildings with some terraced building typologies. The predominant building material is red brick in regular bonding pattern as well as white/cream render, gault brick, stone and upper storey tile hanging.

Roof styles are either gabled, cross-gabled roofs, hipped or mansard roofs and there also examples of dormer windows. Most windows are casement and often white framed and panelled. There are also examples of box windows. The main roof material is dark clay tiles.

## 20th century residential neighbourhoods



**Figure 50:** Mansard roof with dark clay tiles and rendered facade.



**Figure 51:** Red brick in stretcher bond pattern.



**Figure 52:** Dark clay pantile cross-gabled roof.



**Figure 53:** Red brick with cat-slided rear roof at the rear and dark clay pantiles.



**Figure 46:** Gault brick with dark clay pantiles and white casement windows.



**Figure 47:** Red brick and porch with glazing and sloped, dark clay pantiled roof.



**Figure 54:** Red brick with dark window frames and one box window on the upper floor.



**Figure 55:** Dark clay pantile roof with dormers and quoin detailing at the corner.



**Figure 48:** Red brick with cross-gabled, clay pantile roof and hedgerow boundary treatment.



**Figure 49:** One storey, stone render building with pitched roof.



**Figure 57:** Rooflight on gabled slate roof

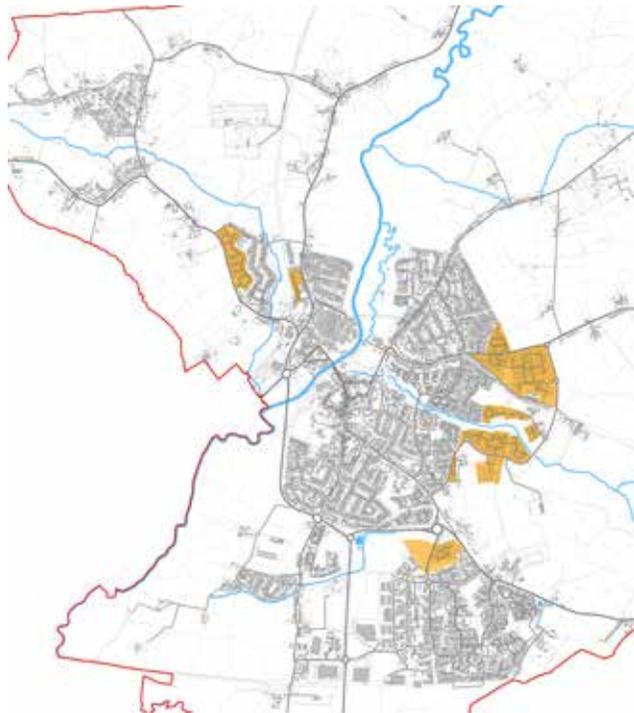


**Figure 56:** One storey, gault brick building with pitched clay roof.



#### 2.4.0.4 21st century residential neighbourhoods

This character area includes recent developments in Roundpounds, Melksham East, along Eastern Way, as well as development along Beanacre and Bath Road, to the north of the town centre.



#### Access and movement

Most parts of this character area are set out along secondary and tertiary roads carrying local residential traffic, however, there are also examples of neighbourhoods that are located along main streets.

The streets are mainly arranged in cul-de-sac layouts, however, there is a level of permeability connecting those recently built areas with the existing road network and surrounding neighbourhoods.

The eastern neighbourhoods, in Melksham East and along and south of Eastern Way, are also equipped with footpaths enhancing the connectivity with the surrounding neighbourhoods and open countryside. On the other hand, the area to the north along the A350 does not offer connections with its surroundings, as it backs onto the railway line.

Bus services run along the main road network and in close walking distance from most parts of this character area, offering connections from all the surrounding settlements into the town.

#### Land uses

This character area is mainly residential however, in some places there are public open spaces breaking up the built environment and offering visual interest.



**Figure 58:** Residential cul-de-sac development in Bowood View, Berryfield, to the south of the town.

## 21st century residential neighbourhoods

### Pattern of growth and layout of buildings

This character area features a variety of growth patterns which influences its relationship with the surrounding area.

The recent development along Bath Road (George Ward Gardens) utilises similar principles to the neighbouring areas with the streetscape, building layout, building lines and plot rotation. This makes the area feel like a natural addition rather than an awkward in-fill development. For the most part, the area backs onto the existing neighbourhood, however, to the north, where the play area is located, it opens up allowing vehicular and pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighbourhood.

The recent development along the A350 is located between the existing railway line and retail and commercial uses. This is an example of high density development and features terraced typologies and flats with a small-sized open space to the centre. Building lines are relatively consistent which is in keeping with the retail and

commercial uses to the north and south of the development. However, at street level, the density and massing is not in keeping and therefore detracts from the surrounding low-density development creating a less sensitive approach compared to the recent development along Bath Road.

The recent development to the east and south of the town is comprised of cul-de-sac layouts and slightly meandering streets reflecting the surrounding street typologies. The building density appears to be relatively higher than the surrounding neighbourhoods which is translated into more housing, smaller plots and small-sized front and back gardens. In addition, there is lack of connectivity between the recent developments and the neighbouring settlements, however, the abundance of open spaces and brooks allow for green and thus, pedestrian links at places.



**Figure 59:** Linear layout of buildings in Bowood View, Berryfield, to the south of the town.



**Figure 60:** Cul-de-sac development along Bath Road in George Ward Gardens.

## 21st century residential neighbourhoods

### Boundary treatments & public realm

This character area includes less green coverage compared to the historic core and linear development and the 20th century neighbourhoods. This area includes features a lack of natural boundary treatments and planting in front gardens.

However, in places (e.g. Bath Road) the recent development is set back and is bordered with trees and vegetation, mitigating visual impact. The same characteristic applies for the recent developments to the east of the town where large green verges, hedgerows and large trees border the sites along the A3102.

In addition to this, public green spaces and play areas help soften the hard landscape. Some examples include the play area to the north of the recent development along Bath Road, or open green spaces to Melksham East Neighbourhood, as well as the close proximity to the green fields of Forest & Sandridge Primary School and the green area along the brook.

Regarding the streetscape, soft surfaces are minimal in the form of street trees or small patches of grass, flowerbeds and bushes on the front gardens. The street is a shared lane for vehicles and cyclists, usually bordered with pavements on both sides.



**Figure 61:** Cul-de-sac development in Bowood View, Berryfield with adjacent open green space.

### Building heights and density

The average building heights and densities in this character area are higher compared to the other two character areas.

The average building height is 2.5 storeys, however steep roof pitches result in a dominant massing which is out of context. In addition, Turners Court features 4 storeys along Beanacre Road and 2-3 storey internally along Foundry Close, whilst the surrounding area features a consistent building scale of 2- 2.5 storeys.

Aside from this, there is little variety in building heights and roof types, which also results in more consistent rooflines with little or no variations and thus, less visual interest compared to the one generated along the streetscape in the older neighbourhoods. In addition to this, due to the high density and lack green features, the roofline is continuous and is not broken up by planting.

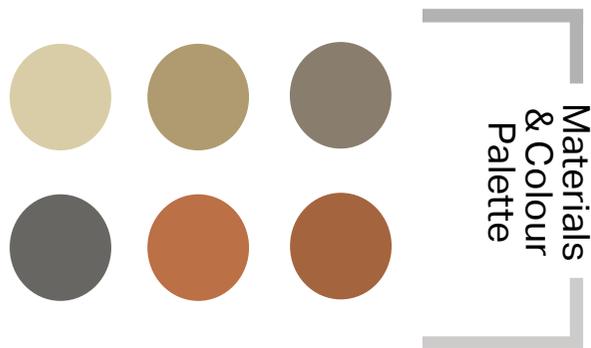
# 21st century residential neighbourhoods

## Local vernacular

Within the 21st century residential neighbourhoods there is a lack of variety in materials and building styles, which creates a less interesting character than other areas of the NPA.

Building types are detached or semi-detached, with gabled and cross-gabled roofs. The dominant materials are red and gault brick, with a few examples of stone render. The dominant roof material is clay pantiles and the roof colour palette is much lighter and more red than other character areas in Melksham. There are also moulded grey cement tiles.

Windows are casement with white frames and there are some dormer examples.



**Figure 62:** Red brick with gabled roof over the door and white casement windows.



**Figure 63:** Dormer windows.



**Figure 67:** Gault brick with red clay pantile roof and repeated architectural style



**Figure 64:** Pitched roof with moulded grey cement tiles.



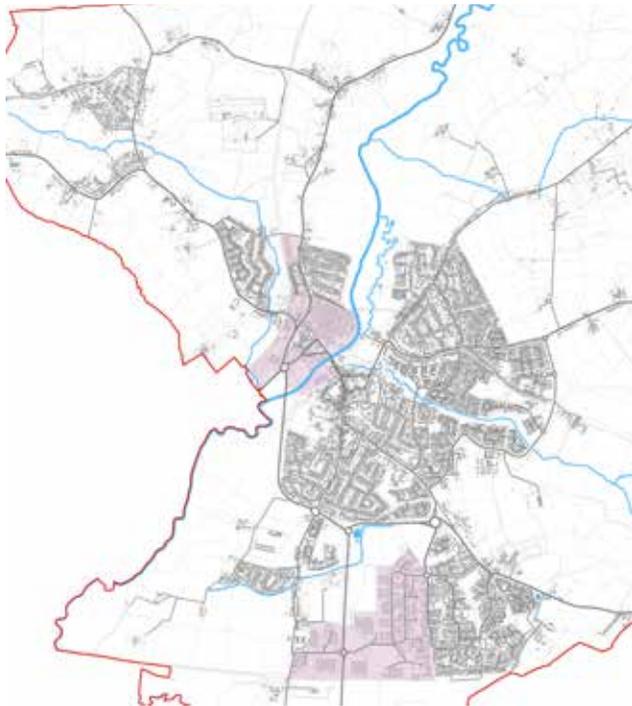
**Figure 65:** Stone render.



**Figure 66:** Muted yellow/ off-white render.

### 2.4.0.5 Large scale, commercial/ industrial/service development

This character area includes the large scale, commercial/industrial/service development to the north and south of the town.



#### Access and movement

This character area is located in close proximity to the main road network with two access points each into the area, whilst there are no other connections with the surrounding neighbourhoods. At the same time, there is good level of permeability within each area to service the daily operations. The industrial/service/commercial area to the north is located in close distance to the railway station.

#### Pattern of growth and layout of buildings

The pattern of buildings in those areas varies, creating different interactions with the surroundings. In particular, to the north of the railway, the commercial area includes low-height buildings similar to their surroundings which are setback from the A350 allowing space for car parking areas, verges and trees. Although the extent of this commercial area stretches along the A350, it sits sensitively around its surroundings respecting the average building heights, unlike the adjacent residential development which reaches up to 4 storeys.

The commercial/service area to the south of the town covers a larger area compared to the area to the north, however, its impact to the surroundings is relatively low, due to the sensitive setback of the buildings along the eastern side to respect the residential neighbourhoods to the east and the relatively low-height environment.

Lastly, the industrial area to the north of the town and east of the railway station is the most compact one of all including buildings that exceed 3 storeys.

# Large scale, commercial/industrial/service development

## Boundary treatments & public realm

This character area includes less green coverage compared to the other two character areas, however, in places, the use of natural boundary treatments around the sites mitigates visual impacts from the open spaces, the streetscape and surrounding neighbourhoods. In addition, there is a good amount of green verges and trees along the streets of the southern commercial/service area which improves the environment.

## Building heights and density

The average building height is relatively high compared to the residential neighbourhoods at around 3-4 storeys. However, there are also examples of lower heights, 2-2.5-storey buildings to the northern commercial area, that fit nicely within the surrounding residential context.

The majority of the roof types are gabled roofs which creates interesting visuals where this character areas borders the residential neighbourhoods, however, there are also examples of flat roofs.



**Figure 68:** Four storey industrial building facing onto Foundry Close / A350.



**Figure 70:** Gabled roofline of an industrial building.



**Figure 69:** View down the A3102 towards 3 storey industrial buildings which sit within the surrounding residential context.



**Figure 71:** Flat roofline of an industrial building.

# Large scale, commercial/industrial/service development

## Local vernacular

There is a variety of architectural styles and materials used in the industrial and commercial buildings in Melksham. Successful examples which are sympathetic to the surroundings and sit well within the context are located to the north of the area, with red brick with gabled roofs. Other materials include white render, corrugated steel cladding and stone. Roof types include gabled, hipped and flat roofs and roof materials include slate and clay tiles and corrugated metal.

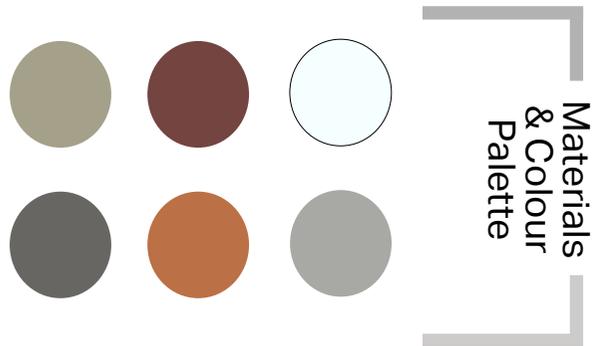


Figure 72: View of a variety of industrial building styles, including stone, red brick and green corrugated steel cladding.



Figure 73: Grade II listed Avon House in ashlar stone with Welsh slate roof.



Figure 74: Red brick with clay pantile roof and red brick tower.



Figure 75: White render with gabled roofline and repeated horizontal stretches of windows.

**Melksham Design  
Guidelines and Codes**

**03**

# 3. Melksham design guidelines and codes

**This chapter provides guidance on the design of development, setting out the expectations that applicants for planning permission in Melksham NPA will be expected to follow.**

## 3.1 Placemaking

Placemaking is about creating 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.

## 3.2 Walkable places

Creating new walking routes which are well connected to the existing network should be a prerequisite for any new development in the NPA.

The success of a place is influenced by how walkable it is. It is good practice to plan new homes within a 400 metres walking distance (5 minutes) of bus stops and within 800 metres (10 minutes) of convenience stores or community buildings.



**Figure 76:** The 10 characteristics of well-designed places. (Source: National Design Guide, page 8).

### 3.3 General principles and guidelines

The guidelines and codes set out in this document focus primarily on residential development and include new housing development, as well as in-fill or small scale development.

In any case, considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, considering not only the immediate neighbouring buildings, but also the landscape and local character of the wider town and surrounding rural settlements. The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and natural environment should all help to determine the character and identity of a development.

It is important that full account is taken of the local context and that the new design embodies the 'sense of place' and also meets the aspirations of people already living in that area. Therefore, some design principles that should be present in any design proposal are:

- Respect the existing pattern of the town and rural settlements to preserve the local character;
- Respect the heritage, landscape and key views within in the NPA;
- Aim for high quality design that reflects and respects the local vernacular;
- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and improve the established character of streets, greens and other spaces;
- Harmonise and enhance the built and landscape setting of the NPA;
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
- Preserve views towards the open countryside as well as views from the countryside towards the town and rural settlements;
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscape, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;

- 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
- Implement 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.



Figure 77: Melksham Market Place

### 3.4 Melksham design guidelines and codes

This section introduces a set of design guidelines and codes that are specific to Melksham NPA. These are based on:

- Baseline analysis of the area in Chapter 2;
- Understanding national design documents such as National Design Guide, National Model Design Code and Building for Healthy Life which informed the design guidelines and design codes; and
- Discussion with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The design guidelines and codes are divided into **5 sections**, each one with a different number of subsections. Each section and subsection is numbered (e.g. DC.01 or DC.01.1) to facilitate its reading and consultation.

Theme	Number	Title
<b>DC.01 Local identity &amp; character</b>	1	Character and distinctiveness
	2	Patterns of growth
	3	Views, landmarks and legibility
	4	Development affecting heritage assets
	5	Social and community infrastructure
<b>DC.02 Access and movement</b>	6	Prioritise walking and cycling & access to the countryside
	7	People friendly streets
	8	Parking and servicing
<b>DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure &amp; eco-design</b>	9	Create a green network
	10	Biodiversity and wildlife
	11	Water management
	12	Eco-design
<b>DC.04 Built form</b>	13	Boundary lines, boundary treatment & corner treatment
	14	Continuity and enclosure
	15	Building heights, density and housing mix
	16	Housing extensions and conversions
	17	New houses and infill development
	18	Materials and architectural details
	19	Design guidance for employment
<b>DC.05 Public realm</b>	20	Guidelines for shop frontages
	21	Public realm, materials and street furniture
	22	Street lighting

## DC.01 Local identity & character

### DC01.1 Character and distinctiveness

Melksham NPA boasts high quality natural areas. More specifically, water elements, Public Rights of Way, woodlands, Ancient Woodlands, Conservation Area and Listed Buildings are some characteristics of the landscape that need to be taken into consideration in the design process. Thus, some design guidelines for future development are:

- New development should have a good understanding of the existing character areas within the NPA, as analysed in [Section 2.5](#), and reference the particular built and landscape character in the new design, to ensure that it is rooted in the local context. Existing road layouts, development patterns, densities, boundary treatments, massing and materials within Melksham town and the villages of Whitley and Shaw should be carefully analysed to make sure that new developments, of any scale, sit sensitively within the local context and next to existing properties. Logically, there should be a different design response in the rural villages to that of Melksham, e.g. a suburban design response is not appropriate in Whitley or Shaw;
- New development should have a good understanding of the existing topography of the entire NPA and propose design that takes advantage of it to produce short or long-distance views and pleasant perspectives;
- New development, either large or small, should respect the existing heritage and make sure actions are taken to mitigate any impact. For example, should any new development takes place in close proximity to a heritage asset, then careful consideration needs to be taken in terms of views, landmarks, massing, density, enclosure and architectural details. Please see [DC01.3](#) and [DC01.4](#) for more details on how to protect heritage assets and views;
- New development should respect and retain the existing green assets of any form of Ancient Woodland, Deciduous Woodland, trees, hedges and hedgerows within the NPA, whilst also proposing new green links to enhance the existing network and improve biodiversity. For example, the existing river that goes through the town offers many opportunities for connections with the surrounding countryside and open fields. In general, all green assets should be integrated into the design process and shape the design outcome. See [DC03.10](#) and [DC03.11](#) for more details on proposals for green networks and their benefits within built environments;
- New development should enhance connections with the NPA by improving the existing links or creating new ones. In edge locations, it is important to connect all streets to the network of public footpaths. Please see [DC02.7](#) for more details on how to prioritise walking and improve access to the countryside; and

## DC.01 Local identity & character

- New development would benefit from a NPA drainage plan to mitigate against the risk of flooding along the river and brooks.
- In addition to this, new developments located in flood risk zones should incorporate green buffer zones or Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) as measures to protect against potential flood risks. Please see [DC03.12](#) for more details on water management.

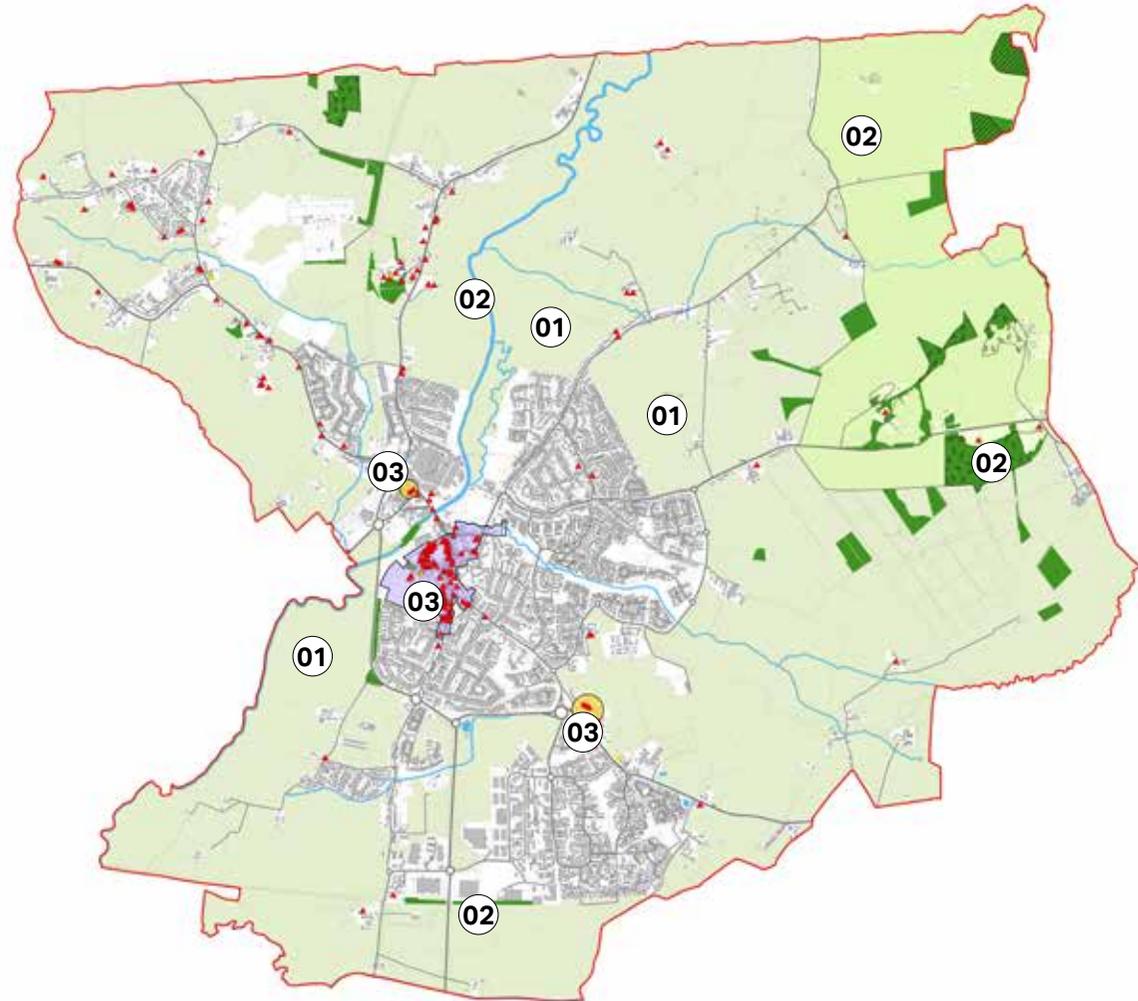


Figure 78: Melksham NPA

- 01 Melksham is surrounded by open fields and countryside.
- 02 There is a good amount of green and blue assets like woodlands, green wedges, trees, hedges, hedgerows, ponds and rivers within and around the town as well as designated areas of ancient woodland, sites of special scientific interest and the special landscape area in the north east of the NPA.
- 03 Melksham has a rich heritage which is concentrated within the conservation area boundary, whilst there are two scheduled monuments and unlisted buildings of historic importance within the town centre.
- 04 There are a number of non designated heritage assets in the town centre which will shortly be listed.

## DC.01 Local identity & character

### DC01.2 Patterns of growth

The NPA owes much of its identity to the variety in development patterns, plot sizes and block layouts with the various character areas. Thus, new development needs to have a good understanding of the local context to ensure that they are in-keeping with Melksham's local character. Design guidelines for new development in relation to patterns of growth are:

- There is a mixture of linear developments, perimeter blocks and cul-de-sac layouts, as shown in [Figures 43-48](#). Therefore, new development should offer a mixture of those development patterns, always subject to the location and its surroundings. Perimeter blocks can vary in sizes and shapes to respond to the uses, existing landscape features, topography and residential density. Courtyards should also be used within large blocks to create interesting and efficient arrangements. In the case of cul-de-sacs, those should be kept to a minimum and always connected with a footpath network to allow for pedestrian permeability. In general, new developments should avoid car-dependent layouts based on monotonous repetition of a uniform building typology arranged along cul-de-sacs;
- New development must demonstrate a good understanding of the variety of styles for building setbacks, lines, plot sizes, building orientations and enclosure that can be found in each character area, as analysed in [Section 2.5](#), and propose layouts that sit sensitively next to the existing ones;
- New developmen should feature streets with a subtle meandering character to introduce a level of informality and match the surrounding context, see [DC02.8](#) for more details;
- The layout of new development should optimise the benefits of daylight, through the use of solar panels, passive solar gain and building orientation, which can significantly reduce energy consumption;
- New properties should provide a variety of house types. The use of a repeating type of dwelling along the entirety of the street, as seen in some 21st century residential development in Melksham, should be avoided to create variety within the streetscape;
- Boundary treatments, both soft and hard, should border property lines to match the style of the surrounding properties in the NPA. Examples like hedges, trees and low height stone walls are recommended; and
- Existing hedges, hedgerows and trees should be integrated into the design, whilst more planting and vegetation is encouraged to provide buffer and improve biodiversity.

## DC.01 Local identity & character



**Figure 79:** Example of a perimeter block surrounded with streets of subtle meandering character, green verges, street trees, hedgerow boundary treatment, pavements on both sides and buildings with slightly different setbacks creating a sense of informality, Milton Avenue.



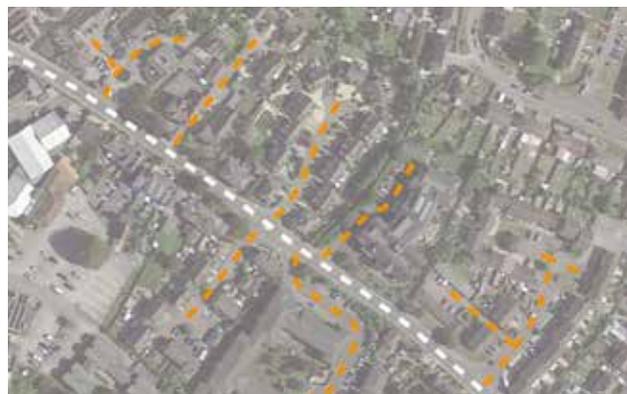
**Figure 81:** Example of a short cul-de-sac street with subtle meandering character, appropriate boundary treatments of hedgerows and stone walls and small gardens fronting the buildings, New Lawns.



**Figure 83:** Example of a linear development pattern with low stone wall and green boundary treatments, small front gardens, consistent building line and orientation with varying gaps between buildings, Spa Road.



**Figure 80:** Aerial view of Milton Avenue to show the perimeter block (purple dotted line) which connects to the linear road (white dotted line).



**Figure 82:** Aerial view of short cul-de-sac developments (orange dotted line) off the main linear road (white dotted line) which is the characteristic pattern of development in this part of Melksham.



**Figure 84:** Local example of a linear layout along Spa Road (white dotted line), with consistent and set back building line (red line).

## DC.01 Local identity & character



**Figure 85:** Example of the building line set well back from the road and screened from high stone walls and hedge planting, Whitley



**Figure 87:** Example of building line set back behind dense tree planting, providing a rural character, in Beanacre



**Figure 89:** Example of new development in Shaw screened by tall hedgerows.



**Figure 86:** Aerial view of linear form of development along the main road (white dotted line) with building line (red line) fairly regular and set back from the road, Whitley



**Figure 88:** Aerial view of meandering street pattern, with irregular building lines (red line) and plot position, which is a characteristic pattern of development in Beanacre



**Figure 90:** Aerial view of pattern of private drives and cul-de-sacs (orange dotted line) with irregular building lines (red line), set back from the main road (white dotted line) in Shaw

## DC.01 Local identity & character

### DC01.3 Views, landmarks and legibility

Both the surrounding natural landscape of Melksham as well as the town itself offer a range of views. These include long distance views over the prevailing flat, open, clay vale landscape and the more undulating landscape to the east, towards woodland and nearby settlements and short distance views of particular landmarks within the town centre. As well as being important to the character of the NPA these varying views help with legibility and visual landmarks can serve as wayfinding devices and emphasise the hierarchy of the place.

In general when places are legible and well signposted, they are easier for the public to understand and therefore, likely to both function well and be pleasant to live in or visit. Thus, some design guidelines on new development are:

- Scenic values and tranquillity of the countryside views should be retained and enhanced in future development. In particular, there are many important long

distance views from the rural villages in Melksham Without Parish owing to the gently undulating landscape and strong sense of openness. For instance, to the east of the parish, there are long distance views to landscape features such as Sandridge Hill and historical landscape features including to Roundway Down - an iron age hill fort. Additionally there are views west over the flat Clay Vale, for instance from the end of Semington Road (south of Melksham Town) over open fields to the heights around the city of Bath;

- Development density should allow for spaces between buildings to preserve the views towards the countryside setting and maintain the perceived openness of the settlements. Any proposal that is visually intrusive and out of scale compared with the surrounding context must be avoided;

- New development should aim to create both short and long-distance views. Short-distance views, often found in the town and village centres, broken by buildings, trees or landmarks create memorable routes and help people navigate around, whilst long-distance views and vistas allows to visually link places and admire the surrounding landscape; and
- Gaps between buildings, open views and vistas could also help to demonstrate the significance of a landmark asset, for example the short distance views of Church of St Michael in Melksham. Public art, historic signage totems or an old and sizeable tree can also act as landmarks, for example the large tree in the centre of the Market Place in Melksham.

## DC.01 Local identity & character

### Legibility and signage

- Buildings that are located at corners, crossroads or along a main road could play a significant role in navigation. For that reason, the architectural style of those buildings could be slightly differentiated from the rest to help them stand out;
- New signage design should be easy to read. Elements like languages, fonts, text sizes, colours and symbols should be clear and concise, and avoid confusion;
- Signage could be strategically located along walking and cycling routes within the NPA to signalise the location of local assets or other important destinations. For instance, local amenities such as schools, doctors surgeries, the hospital and green spaces like King George V Park, as well as the locations of the villages in Melksham Without Parish could be highlighted on sign posts to show the walking and cycling distances, improving awareness and navigation;



**Figure 91:** Example of a well- designed sign providing information about Diss, whilst improving the aesthetics of the environment.



**Figure 92:** Example of a cost effective signage technique using QR codes that could enclose information about upcoming events and important destinations.



**Figure 93:** Example of an interactive signage totem that offers information about upcoming events and important destinations in the area.

## DC.01 Local identity & character

- Signage within the town could be of the form of signposts, as well as interactive signage and QR codes that would provide information about important destinations, nearby car parking, the weather forecast, weekly events and festivals. [Figures 49-50](#) are indicative examples of signage that could be used within the town;
- Signage should be also placed, strategically, along walking and cycling routes within the rural environments to signalise the location of local assets or other important destinations, for instance, the distance to surrounding villages and hamlets, The Spa, Whitley, Beanacre, the town centre. [Figures 53-55](#) are indicative examples of signage that could be used within the rural environments; and
- Applicants are encouraged to use wooden, hand painted and non illuminated signage, avoiding the use of garish or day-glow colours. Overall, the signage must be sensitive to the rural environment and blend nicely with the existing rich vegetation.



**Figure 94:** Example of signage that could be implemented along footpaths within the open countryside to navigate people towards important destinations.



**Figure 95:** Example of a wooden sign post which would be well suited to the surrounding rural environment of Melksham.



**Figure 96:** Example of a sign post indicating the location of public footpaths, whilst the wooden material fits perfectly into the surrounding rural context.

## DC.01 Local identity & character

### DC01.4 Development affecting heritage assets

There are several elements of historic significance in the NPA which make a positive contribution to the character of the area. In particular, the grade I, II and II\* Listed Buildings, of which there are over 70 scattered in Melksham Without Parish and 150 within the town, mainly concentrated in the Conservation Area. Additionally there are buildings of local heritage importance, due to their traditional building style and use of stone, which are valuable assets to the town and integral to its character.

Additionally the NPA has a rich archaeological heritage and is covered with remains of prehistoric, Roman and Medieval settlements. Within the rural landscape of the NPA there are areas of Ancient Woodland, rural lanes, veteran trees and historic farmsteads. Therefore, design guidelines should be in place to guide development in close proximity to the above assets. These guidelines are:

- New development in close proximity to designated and non-designated heritage assets must acknowledge the nature of those assets, their setting in relationship to the street and vegetation and draw the qualities that could inform new development;
- New development proposals should not be visually intrusive or block key views to and from heritage assets. This should be achieved through proposing appropriate scale and setback;
- New development should retain the existing open spaces, vegetation and trees, where possible, to preserve the historic form and pattern of development in the NPA. New development should be sensitively designed to avoid negative impact upon the existing network of rural lanes. [Figure 58](#) is a positive example, from rural UK, where the existing green assets were preserved (photo on the next page), whilst the new infill development was set back from the main street to respectfully sit next to listed buildings (photo above) minimising any visual impact;
- The scale and massing of new development should be sensitive to the surrounding heritage assets;
- New developments should suggest density that respects the surrounding context and allows for general gaps between buildings to preserve open views and vistas and aim to demonstrate the significance of the asset; and
- New development should propose architectural details and materials that are sensitive to the ones used in the surrounding heritage assets to preserve and respect the local vernacular.

## DC.01 Local identity & character



**Figure 97:** Gaps between buildings and low building heights afford short-distance views of Church of St Michael in Melksham. Any new development in close proximity to the Church should not impact on these views, propose design of smaller scale and add vegetation to act as screening



**Figure 98:** Row of stone buildings in Canon Square. Stone buildings throughout the town are designated and non-designated heritage assets integral to the character of the town. Any new development near these assets should propose architectural details and materials which respect the local vernacular.



**Figure 99:** Positive example of edge treatment of a recent infill development (bottom photo) next to the historic asset (top above), elsewhere in rural UK. The infill property is setback from the main street allowing for a generous gap between itself and the neighbouring listed building which faces directly onto the pavement. As a result, the recent addition is discrete and not visually intrusive, as it is also surrounded with rich vegetation and large trees, respecting the scale and massing of the listed building.



**Figure 100:** Any new development in close proximity to heritage assets such as Christ's Church in Shaw as shown above should propose design of smaller scale and add vegetation to act as screening.

## DC.01 Local identity & character

### DC01.5 Social and community infrastructure

Although there are a number of local amenities mainly located within the town centre, there is an aspiration from the local community to protect, improve and expand the existing services to promote health, education and social needs.

It is consensus that more local amenities are needed to cover both rural and town areas and make the area a place to stop and stay, offering a high level of engagement. Guidelines related to social and community infrastructure are:

- Existing and proposed social and community infrastructure should be sympathetic with the existing architectural style of the surrounding buildings. In addition, the possibility of retaining existing buildings should be considered, if viable;
- Any new social and community infrastructure should be designed in high standards to act as a focal point

and landmark for the area and improve the civic pride and the character of the NPA. For example, at the time of writing, the Community Campus has been built and includes a new-relocated- library, swimming pool, sports hall, gym, dance studio and meeting rooms. In addition to this, a new village hall is currently being built in Berryfield;

- New social and community facilities should be well connected with the existing and proposed network of footpaths to encourage walking and cycling within the area;
- In terms of parking provision, new facilities should not create additional congestion in the area and parking dominance should be avoided. Ideas like sharing parking areas with existing facilities in the local centre, like Sainsbury's Local, should be considered; and
- Signage and wayfinding should be used to highlight options for sustainable transport modes and promote walking

and cycling. This could potentially increase movement and activity in the streets enhancing natural surveillance and therefore, minimising any possibility of antisocial behaviour.



**Figure 102:** Example of an existing local facility, the post office, Church Street.

## DC.02 Access and movement

### DC02.6 Prioritise walking and cycling and access to the countryside

There is an extensive network of Public Rights of Way and footpaths in the NPA which links Melksham with the villages and surrounding landscape of Melksham Without.

Part of the National Cycle Route 403 runs through the NPA providing good cycling connections through the town centre, along part of the River Avon and into the north of Melksham Without. However there are accessibility issues, for example the riverside section of the cycle route linking Halfpenny Bridge and King George V playing field in Melksham Town is in poor condition and not safe for winter cycling. There are also further links which could be made between footpaths and cycleways to create a more cohesive walking and cycling network throughout Melksham.

Delivering and supporting sustainable transport, and reducing reliance on the

private car, is a key aim of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (see Core Policy 61: Transport and New Development for more details on the transport hierarchy that new development will be addressed against). Therefore new developments should be designed to prioritise walking and cycling, some guidelines are:

- Where possible, newly developed areas must retain or provide direct and attractive footpaths between neighbouring streets and local facilities and amenities. Establishing a robust pedestrian network across new developments and among new and existing development is key in achieving good levels of connectivity and promoting walking and cycling;
- Footpath networks need to be in place before first occupation of houses on the sites and walking/ cycle routes within new communities should be the primary network and first consideration, whilst roads should be secondary;

- Pedestrian and cycle links within residential communities should always be overlooked by properties to create natural surveillance and offer good sightlines and unrestricted views to make people feel safer;
- In case of cul-de-sac layouts, those should always be connected to footpaths to avoid blocking pedestrian and cycle flow;
- Opportunities for active travel and sustainable transport in the NPA should be protected, enhanced and promoted as part of development in the area as well as through local route improvement projects. Key routes are shown on [Figure 06](#);
- Design features such as barriers to vehicle movement, gates to new developments, or footpaths between high fences must be avoided;

## DC.02 Access and movement

- Cycle parking should be implemented in both private or public spaces, next to amenities or even along cycle lanes within the countryside, to encourage cycling, as shown in [Figure 63](#);
- Paving used along the pedestrian and cycle links should, in principle, be permeable to help absorb surface water and mitigate flooding. Thus, any kind of impermeable paving, as shown in [Figure 62](#), should be avoided. In addition, in terms of materials, those can vary depending on the context. For the rural landscape of Melksham an overall earthy palette is recommended to fit the rural surroundings, [Figure 61](#) (photo below). For the urban context of Melksham Town different colours and shapes of stones can be used within the built environment, [Figure 61](#) (photo above and middle);
- A robust green network should be created, as shown in [Figure 64](#), from new and existing pedestrian and cycle links aiming to encourage people using it on a daily basis. To this signage, can play a significant role in informing people



**Figure 103:** Above, positive examples of permeable paving. The top and middle photo show examples of paving that could be used within the built environment, whilst the photo to the bottom shows an example of edge lane that uses gravel, in earthy palette, which could also be used in footpaths within the countryside.



**Figure 104:** Example of footpath that uses impermeable paving which should be avoided.

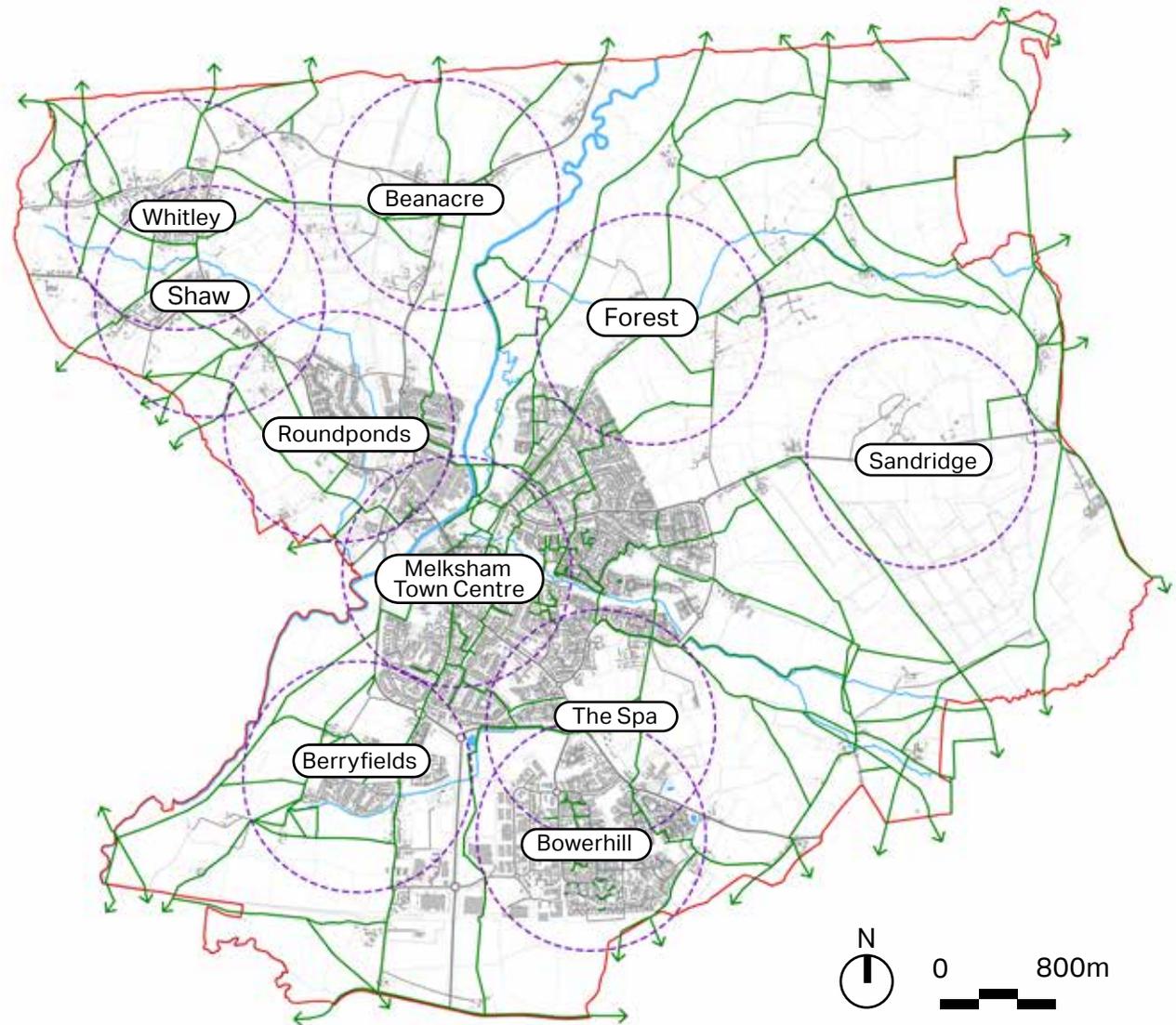


**Figure 105:** Local example of cycle parking facilities provided near an amenity, Waitrose supermarket, in Melksham town centre.

## DC.02 Access and movement

about important destinations, nearby settlements, including the different villages in Melksham Without Parish, local facilities and natural features like the River Avon and woodland areas in the NPA. New signposts must respect the character of the surroundings and avoid creating visual clutter. Details on signage can be found in [DC01.3](#); and

- Widths for the green links can vary depending on the context, they should be a minimum of 2m if located within residential developments, whilst they can go over 2m if located in open countryside or if they are integrated into the road in the form of a shared lane. Shared lanes are recommended within the residential developments, however, for wider networks and connections dedicated cycleways are preferred, in their own right, to encourage people to use them as they have a safer feel.



**Figure 106:** Network of green links through the NPA through linking footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes to show the opportunities for pedestrian and cyclist connections between settlements, surrounding rural landscape and beyond the NPA. The circles indicate an 800m distance (radius) which is an approximate 10 minute walk.

## DC.02 Access and movement

### DC02.7 People friendly streets

It is essential that the design of new development includes streets that incorporate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, as well as public transport users. Some design guidelines and codes for future development are:

- Streets must meet the technical highways requirements incorporating the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and if applicable, public transport users;
- Streets should be considered a 'place' to be and contribute to the local character of the NPA. Thus, a good understanding of the existing street typologies and characteristics, widths and enclosure, is needed so that any new design reflects the existing character of Melksham;
- A gentle meandering character, where appropriate, is welcome to offer evolving views either along the streetscape, built environment or surrounding countryside. However, as this is a characteristic of historic growth in the NPA, it should not be done in an artificial way in new developments, but more naturally,

following an appropriate pattern of development as outlined in [DC01.2](#):

- Within the development boundaries, streets should have a secondary role, giving priority to the pedestrian and cycle network. They should not be built to maximise vehicle speed or capacity and should discourage rat-running which is an issue within the NPA. For that reason, traffic calming measures, shown in [Figures 65 and 66](#), like speed cushions and bumps, speed tables or appropriate signage to indicate the speed limits, should be implemented;
- Although the prevailing parking typology is on-plot parking, it is important that where on-street parking is introduced, it does not impede the access for pedestrians and other vehicles and it is well-vegetated to create an attractive street scene; and
- Routes should be laid out in a permeable pattern, allowing for multiple choices of routes, particularly on foot and bike. Any cul-de-sacs should be relatively short and provide onward pedestrian links.



**Figure 107:** Example of an interactive signage to indicate speed limits within a residential area, elsewhere in UK.



**Figure 108:** Example of a speed cushion.

## DC.02 Access and movement

A hierarchy of streets within a new development helps create well-connected streets of varied character that filter traffic and speed.

The suggested street hierarchy is based on the existing street typologies in the NPA. This and next pages present illustration examples of these street typologies.

### Residential street 1 (Primary & secondary roads)

- The width of the carriageway should reflect the context of the street. For instance, it should be approximately 4.8m if it serves only a cluster of houses, whilst if it connects neighbourhoods or carries public transport traffic it should be approximately 5.5m. On-street parking may be on-plot or accommodated on the street or inset into green verges;
- Carriageways should be designed to be shared between motor vehicles and cyclists. Vertical traffic calming features such as raised tables may be introduced;

- Where possible, those streets should be tree-lined on both sides to create enclosure. The level of enclosure should be decided depending on the surrounding context; and
- Solutions on sustainable drainage for this street typology is provided in [Appendix A](#).

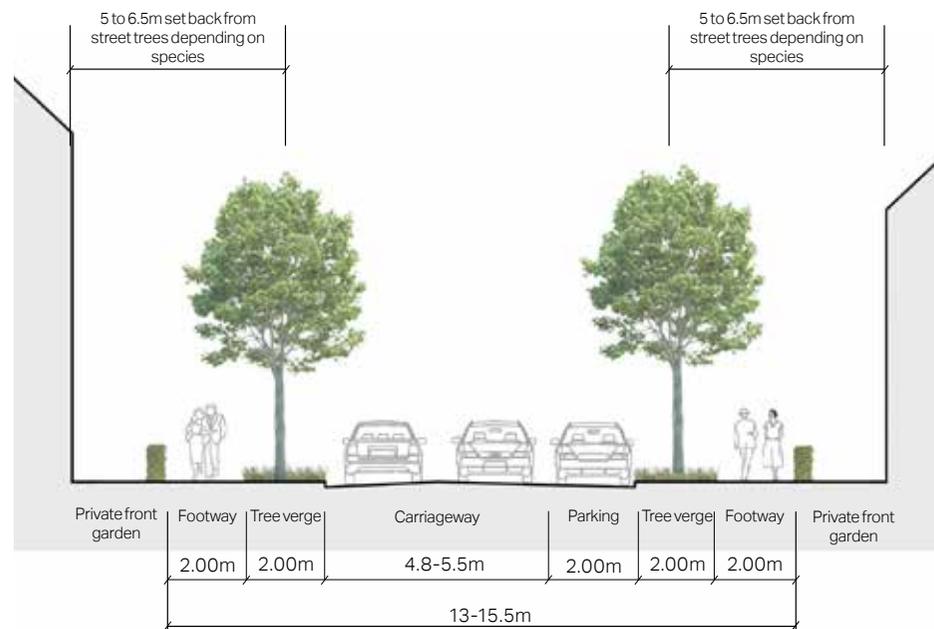
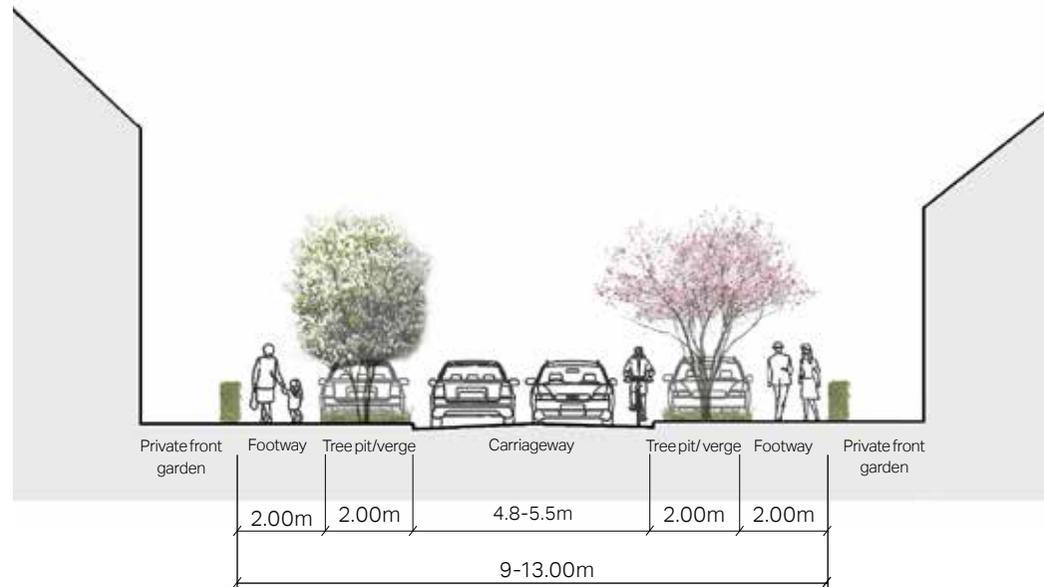


Figure 109: Cross-section to illustrate some dimensions for residential streets 1.

## DC.02 Access and movement

### Residential streets 2 (tertiary & cul-de-sacs)

- Residential streets should be designed for low traffic volumes and low speeds, ideally 20 mph;
- These streets must be designed for cyclists to mix with motor vehicles. Traffic calming features such as raised tables can be used to prevent speeding;
- Residential streets should be formed with a high degree of built form enclosure, with consistent building lines and setbacks;
- Street trees should be provided with suitable gaps, wherever possible; and
- Solutions on sustainable drainage for this street typology is provided in [Appendix A](#).



**Figure 110:** Cross-section to illustrate some guidelines for residential streets 2.

## Edge lanes

- All the edges of new development areas should be served by continuous edge lanes to provide high level of connectivity;
- Edge lanes are low-speed streets that front houses with gardens on one side and a green space on the other. Carriageways typically consist of a single lane of traffic in either direction, and are shared with cyclists. For wider connections within the NPA, the cycle lanes will be segregated; and
- Variations in paving materials and textures can be used instead of kerbs or road markings, which need to follow specific standards as mention in [DC02.7](#).

## Green links

- Green links should be located within minimum 7.5m wide corridor adjacent to retained green assets;
- Shared or segregated footpath and cycleway, depending on the context, to be provided within corridor and to be minimum of 3.0m; and
- Where required, SuDS features to be incorporated into corridor beside the surface of shared footpath and cycleway. Additional solutions on sustainable drainage for this street typology is provided in [Appendix A](#).



Figure 111: Cross-section to illustrate some dimensions for edge lanes.

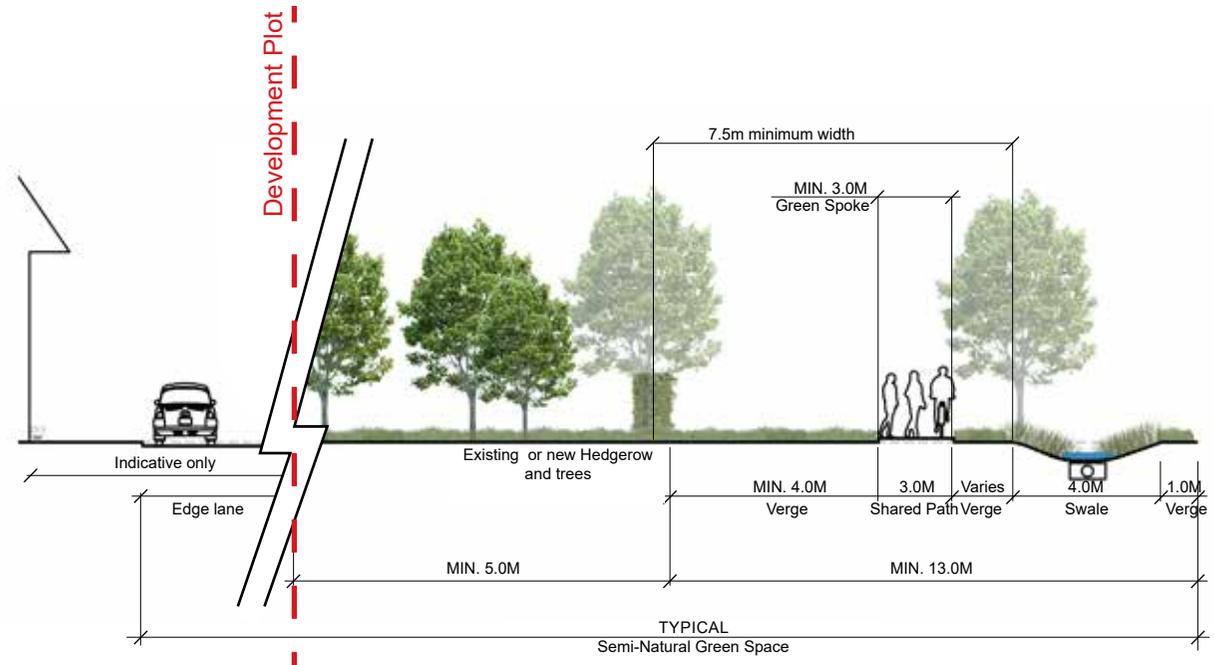


Figure 112: Section to illustrate some dimensions for green links.

## DC.02 Access and movement

### DC02.8 Parking and servicing

Although, the aim to create a good network of walking and cycling routes within the NPA is a priority, the demand for private cars still remains high. Therefore car parking has to be carefully integrated into the design of developments. In addition, energy efficiency is also an important consideration and the need for more electric cars is rising.

The dominant car parking typology found in Melksham is on-plot parking; however, there are also cases of on-plot garage parking, on-street parking and parking courts. Therefore, the design guidelines on the next pages will focus on the typologies mentioned above.

#### Guidelines for on-plot or on front car parking

- There is an issue in the NPA with front gardens given over to car parking. Parking should instead be well integrated into design so as not to dominate the front of the building plot;
- High-quality and well-designed soft landscaping, hedges, hedgerows, and trees, should be used to increase the visual attractiveness of the parking and enhance the rural character of the NPA;
- Hard standing and driveways must be constructed from porous materials, to minimise surface water run-off and therefore, help mitigate potential flooding; and
- Electric vehicles charging points, mounted charging points and associated services must be integrated into the design of new developments, if possible with each house that provides off-street parking, whilst cluttering elevations, especially main façades and front elevations, should be avoided.



**Figure 113:** Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plot side parking.

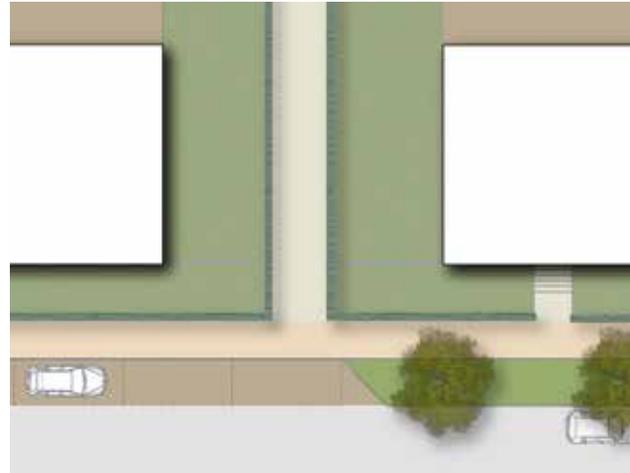


**Figure 114:** Local example of on-plot front parking with vegetation to provide screening. This parking solution avoids cluttering the front façade of the house.

## DC.02 Access and movement

### Guidelines for on-street car parking

- The streetscape should not be dominated by continuous on-street parking spaces. Where possible, tree planting and grass areas can be incorporated between parking bays to improve aesthetics;
- On-street parking must be designed to avoid impeding the flow of pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles;
- On-street parking should be widened to allow each bay to be able to charge electric vehicles;
- Car charging points should always be provided adjacent public open spaces. Street trees and vegetation is also supported to minimise any visual contact with the charging points; and
- Where charging points are located on the footpath, a clear footway width of 1.5m is required next to the charging point to avoid obstructing pedestrian flow.



**Figure 115:** Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-street inset parking.



**Figure 116:** Example of on-street parking with parking bays and street trees to mitigate the impact of the cars on the streetscape, Poundbury.



**Figure 117:** Example of on-street electric vehicle charging points.

## DC.02 Access and movement

### Guidelines for parking courts

- Parking courts should be acceptable for small building clusters and permeable paving should be used where possible;
- Parking courts must be overlooked by properties to increase natural surveillance;
- Planting and vegetation should be integrated into design to soften the presence of cars and preserve the rural character of the area; and
- Car charging points within parking courts are highly supported, since they can serve more than one vehicles.



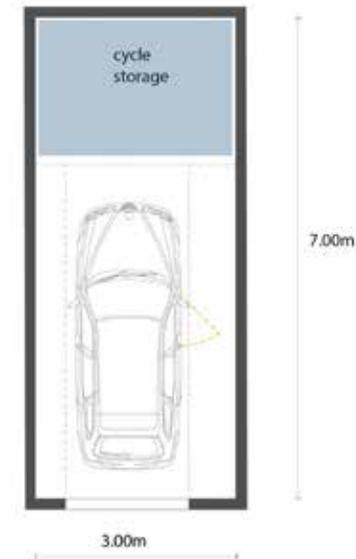
**Figure 118:** Local example of a small parking court in a cul-de-sac in Melksham which uses permeable material.

### Guidelines for garages

- Garages must not dominate the appearance of dwellings and must not reduce the amount of active frontage to the street; and
- Garages should provide minimum 3m x 7m internal space to park a car and provide space for storage to avoid the garage to be used for storage purposes only.



**Figure 119:** Example of an on-plot garage parking within a rural environment which is 'hidden' behind the rich vegetation along the building frontage mitigating any visual impact, elsewhere in UK.



**Figure 121:** Indicative layout of a garage with a cycle storage area.



**Figure 120:** Example of a cul-de-sac street which includes only on-plot garage parking typologies, however, the strong presence of vegetation enhances the softness and rurality of the area mitigating any feeling of a car-dominated environment, elsewhere in UK.

## DC.02 Access and movement

### Servicing

With modern requirements for waste separation and recycling, the number and size of household bins has increased posing a problem with the aesthetics of the property and the management of the bins. Therefore, some guidelines for new development are:

- When dealing with waste storage, servicing arrangements and site conditions should be taken into account; in some cases waste management should be from the front of the building and in others, from the rear. It is recommended that bins are located away from areas used as amenity space;
- A specific enclosure of sufficient size should be created for all the necessary bins;
- Bins should be placed as close to the dwelling's boundary and the public highway, such as against a wall, fence, hedge but not in a way as to obstruct the shared surface for pedestrian and vehicle movements;

- Bins should be placed within easy access from the street and, where possible, with the ability to open on the pavement side to ease retrieval;
- Wheelie bin storages are recommended to improve the aesthetics of the environment; and
- Bin storage could be combined with cycle storage.



**Figure 122:** Example of wheelie bin storage for front gardens that include a green element to improve the aesthetics.



**Figure 123:** Example of bin storage surrounded by flowers and plants improving the surroundings and enhancing biodiversity.



**Figure 124:** Example where the bins are stored under the shed, whilst the side wall is decorated with flowers and plants to improve the environment, elsewhere in the UK. This arrangement combined with the particular permeable paving would be particularly suitable for smaller, more rural villages in Melksham Without parish.

## DC.02 Access and movement

### Cycle parking

Cycling, either for commuting or recreation, is encouraged as a form of active transport across the NPA. Therefore, provision for cycle parking should be an integrated part in the design for new developments.

### Houses without garages

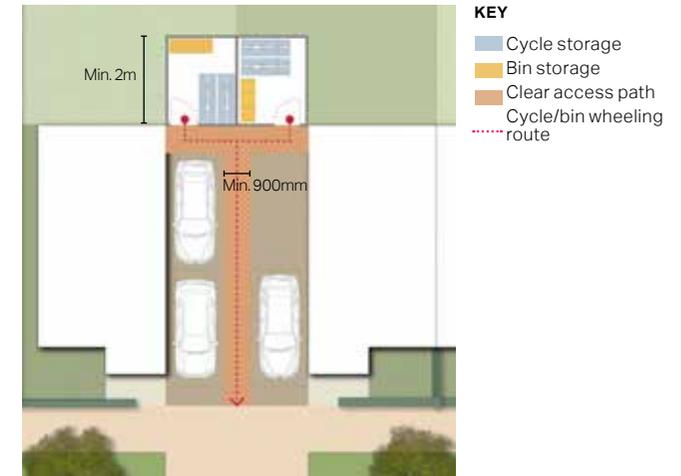
- For residential units, where there is no on-plot garage, covered and secured cycle parking should be provided within the domestic curtilage;
- Cycle storage must be provided at a convenient location with an easy access;
- When provided within the footprint of the dwelling or as a free standing shed, cycle parking should be accessed by means of a door at least 900mm and the structure should be at least 2m deep;
- The use of planting and smaller trees alongside cycle parking can be used.

### Houses with garages

- The minimum garage size should be 7m x 3m to allow space for cycle storage;
- Where possible, cycle parking should be accessed from the front of the building either in a specially constructed enclosure or easily accessible garage;
- The design of any enclosure should integrate well with the surroundings; and
- The bicycle must be removed easily without having to move the vehicle.



**Figure 125:** Example of cycle parking for houses without garages, Cambridge.



**Figure 126:** Indicative layout of a bicycle and bin storage area at the back of semi-detached properties.



**Figure 127:** Example of cycle parking storage that fits sensitively within a rural environment, elsewhere in UK.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### DC03.9 Create a green network

A green infrastructure network has many and varied benefits for the environment, biodiversity and for people; it can help contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities and it can inform a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, and can inform where priorities should be for protection and enhancement.

The term green and blue infrastructure includes a variety of elements ranging between trees, green verges, bushes, flower beds, hedgerows, front and rear gardens, open green spaces, open fields, woodland blocks, countryside and river and streams. Those elements define the green network and the more connected they are, the better for the environment.

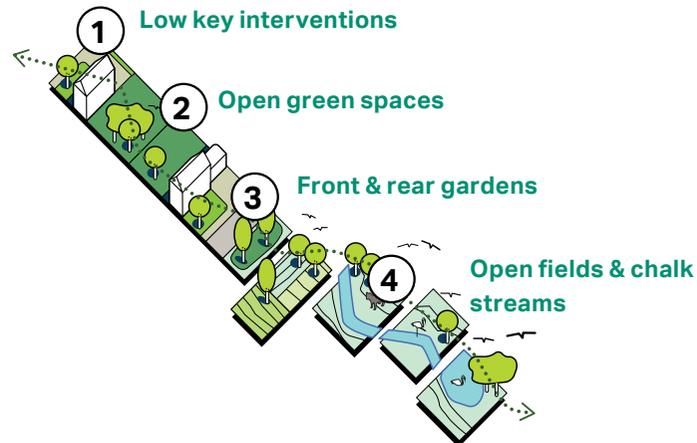
Thus, new developments should aim to strengthen the existing green network and avoid proposing design that limits vegetation and impedes the movement of species. Opportunities should be sought to introduce green assets into design and contribute to biodiversity.

Some design guidelines on green networks are:

- New design proposals, of any scale, should be aligned with the high level strategy for creating a robust green network of new or improved green corridors, shown in [Figure 86](#). New developments should link existing and newly proposed street trees, green verges, front and rear gardens, open spaces, habitat sites, rivers and the countryside and chalk streams together through those green corridors;
- New development should ensure that small and isolated woodlands in the NPA are linked to larger green areas nearby to protect connectivity of habitats and biodiversity. Some examples of small areas of ancient woodland throughout the NPA are the Morass Wood, Hanging Wood and Basin Covert (north east of the town) and Daniel's Wood (north of the town). These areas could be integrated into the new design from the outset of the project;
- New development should avoid threatening existing ecological assets, for instance, the Special landscape area (West Wiltshire District Plan -C3) in the north east of the NPA;
- The multi functionality of the green network, and how different typologies might work together, should be incorporated into new developments and these developments should take any opportunity to maximise its gains. Green networks, apart from enabling walking and access to the countryside, enhance the movement of a variety of species, improve people's mental health, retain the local rural character of Melksham's surrounding landscape, and can accommodate SuDS solutions to mitigate surface water and flooding. Regarding the latter, surface features are widely preferred over underground ones, for instance proposing ponds, rain gardens, bioretention trees or aligning drainage routes with pedestrian/cycle paths;

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

- New development should facilitate the access, for all groups of people, to the public parts of the green network, for instance footpaths, cycle paths, open green spaces, open fields and river and streams. For instance, footpaths and cycle paths should be well-integrated into the existing footpath network to encourage people using them, whilst strategic signage, as mentioned in [DC01.3](#) should improve legibility and inform people about the possible entrances to the footpath network and important destinations within the NPA or nearby towns. In addition, paving materials should be appropriate, as mentioned in [DC02.6](#), to facilitate walking for all age groups. Currently, the cycle and walking paths beside the River Avon become tricky to walk along during the winter; and
- Where new development is adjacent to any green corridor, either green or blue assets, it is important it fronts onto it to maximise open views.



**Figure 128:** Diagram to illustrate the green assets that can play an important role as wildlife corridors.



**Figure 130:** Rain garden along the building edge (source: © DASonnenfeld commons.wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 4.0)).



**Figure 129:** Example of a bioretention tree along a residential street. Those trees could also be retrofitted into existing roads.



**Figure 131:** Green space overlooked by properties improving the environment, whilst also acting as a SuDS corridor.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### Additional design guidelines for open spaces

Public open spaces play a vital role in the success of the green network, whilst creating a positive environment and preserving the feel of openness. In addition, open spaces reinforce civic pride in a place, as they encourage communities to gather and engage - creating lively, harmonious and diverse neighbourhoods. Some local examples are King George V Park, churchyards, village greens and play areas. Thus, new development should prioritise the design of open spaces to maximise those gains and some key design guidelines are:

- The location of new open spaces within new development should be decided based on the location of the existing ones considering the needs of the existing and new population;
- Landscape should not be used as a divisive measure between new and existing development, however, green buffer zones between older and new

development are acceptable. This can be achieved by procuring a landscape consultant early on in the design process;

- Recreational space should be provided to include woodland walks and play areas to cater for the needs of the existing and new population. In addition, all recreational spaces should be designed to link up with each other and also link up with existing adjoining sites taking particular note of enhancing the green network;
- Surrounding buildings should overlook play areas and public green spaces to encourage movement, activity and natural surveillance;
- Open spaces should be equipped with good quality of street furniture to create pleasant seating areas, shaded spaces avoiding hidden spots; and
- The materials and style of any street furniture in the open spaces should be consistent throughout the NPA and aim to proudly represent the local character.



**Figure 132:** Example of an open space in Melksham, which has neat planting areas, trees and seating and is overlooked by houses.



**Figure 133:** King George V Park, Melksham is a large green open space with a play area, skate park, trees and seating.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### Design guidelines and codes for street planting

New street planting helps maintain visual consistency along the public realm. It is associated with better mental health and well-being by reducing stress, lessening heat islands, and providing protection from natural elements such as wind and rain.

Tree-lined roads can be seen in the town of Melksham and in several of the villages of Melksham Without Parish and considered a characteristic of the area. However some newer developments and neighbourhoods lack street trees.

Therefore existing trees must be preserved in new development, whilst new ones need to also be proposed. Some guidelines are:

- New development should aim to preserve existing mature trees and hedges by incorporating them in the new landscape design, particularly trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) across the NPA. Bowerhill especially has a significant number of trees, many

of which have Tree Protection Orders (TPOs). There is a range of notable and veteran trees in the NPA which should also be preserved in new development, for example the tree at the centre of Market Place in Melksham Town Centre which serves as a landmark feature;

- Tree planting must be a primary consideration in the new design and not an afterthought. More specifically, tree planting must be carefully planned in conjunction with parking, buildings and street lighting. For example, the suggested deepening for green verges and front gardens should be decided based on the size of the tree. Adequate space should be provided to ensure there is enough space for medium and large growing species;
- The size of the tree can also play an important role in wayfinding, marking reference points and signifying edges

of development, since it can act as a landmark for an area that can be seen from distance. Thus, any decision on the size of the tree should be also made in conjunction with the overall design proposal;



**Figure 134:** Local example of landmark tree at the centre of Market Place in Melksham.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

- To ensure resilience and increase visual interest, a variety of native tree species is preferred over a single one. This variety should be decided based on the existing tree species in the NPA;
- Flower beds, bushes and shrubs should be welcomed in new developments, since they contribute to the livelihood of the streetscape and create visual interest and colour to their surroundings; and
- Hedgerows can be planted in front of bare boundary walls to ease their visual presence or they can be used to conceal on-plot car parking and driveways within curtilages.



**Figure 135:** Planters along Melksham High Street.



**Figure 136:** Street trees along Thornbank, Melksham.



**Figure 137:** Street trees along Halifax Road, Bowerhill.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### DC03.10 Biodiversity and wildlife

Under the wider backdrop of climate change and global warming, protection of biodiversity is becoming an important priority and should start at the local level. Biodiversity has multiple benefits as it can protect the natural environment, educate and increase scientific knowledge, increase community involvement and boost local economy.

The objectives set by the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan are:

- To prioritise action required to conserve Wiltshire's biodiversity;
- To provide baseline information on current knowledge;
- To coordinate and focus action for biodiversity by creating a cohesive local partnership;
- To raise awareness among all sectors in Wiltshire - conservation, public, private and local communities;

- To provide a framework for monitoring; and
- To identify current issues and set out targets to work towards.

Melksham NPA has set a target of 10% biodiversity gain. Biodiversity net gain is an approach which aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand.

Thus, any new development within Melksham NPA needs to do its part and aim to promote biodiversity, through, to contribute to the overall target. Some design guidelines are:

- Any new development, of any scale, in close proximity or within the designated Special Landscape Area to the north of the NPA (see [Figure 19](#)) should not be detrimental to the high quality of the landscape and the character of the area should be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals which are considered essential or

desirable for the rural community's social and economic well-being will be permitted if all appropriate environmental considerations are addressed;

- Development proposals should not result in the loss or harm of woodland habitat and special attention should be paid to retaining Ancient Semi-natural Woodland as a nature conservation resource;
- New development should protect the identified priority habitats in the borough, like ponds, hedges, water courses, chalk grasslands, TPOs and woodland blocks. Additional actions to protect the specific habitats are set out in Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan;
- New development should help increase movement of species between isolated wildlife populations. This strategy could also inform any high level green network strategy, as the one shown in [Figure 64](#), in order to create a sustainable approach with multiple benefits towards people,

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

- species and habitats. For example, the movement of amphibians and small mammals should be maintained through culverts under roads and cycle tracks or arboreal connections with proposals for retention and planting of mature trees close to routes in key locations. Planting should make provision for target species such as dormice and turtle doves as appropriate;
- New development can propose small interventions into the built environment to provide species with cover from predators and shelter during bad weather. Some examples, shown in [Figure 96-101](#), are, bat boxes, bug hotels and frog houses. Those interventions can also help create new habitats and wildlife corridors;
  - Biodiversity, woodlands, hedgerows, ditches should be protected and enhanced where possible and be an integrated part of the design process rather than an afterthought. For examples, existing green assets should be integrated into the new proposals and help define the location of green spaces, green buffers, aligned back and front gardens or development edges;
  - Gardens and boundary treatments should be designed to allow the movement of wildlife and provide habitat for local species, as well as to retain the rural character of the NPA. For that reason, rich vegetation and plantation is suggested, whilst less permeable boundaries like brick walls and timber fencing should be used less and allow for regular gaps to facilitate movement for species. Timber fencing with no gaps between panels should not be accepted;
  - Biodiversity interventions in the public space could help improve the environment as well as inform and educate the community about the existing species and habitats. For instance, having hedgehog streets, wildlife friendly show gardens or designated areas within green space for wildlife could raise awareness about biodiversity. In addition, interactive signage, could be placed next to those interventions to offer more information and photos about the available species and habitats in the area;
  - Blue assets can also contribute to biodiversity connectivity. Therefore, the existing ditches and streams should be considered in design proposals, in the form of ponds or pollinator gardens, as the one shown in [Figure 101](#), when planning for wildlife corridors; and

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design



**Figure 138:** Example of a structure used as a frog habitat corridor located in an outdoor green space.



**Figure 140:** Example of a bat box placed in the front or rear garden of a property,



**Figure 142:** Example of a bird feeder located on a grass area opposite a public footpath.



**Figure 139:** Example of a bug hotel that could be placed in the front or rear garden of a property.



**Figure 141:** An example of a hedgehog tunnel within a garden fence.



**Figure 143:** Example of a pollinator garden that could be placed in a communal green space within the built environment.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### DC03.11 Water management

#### Sustainable drainage solutions (SuDS)

With the River Avon and its smaller tributaries, such as South Brook, running through Melksham NPA some parts of the area are more prone to high to medium levels of flooding than others. Particularly the Avon Clay River floodplain as shown in [Figure 20](#). Therefore, the introduction of sustainable drainage systems, known as SuDS, could be beneficial in mitigating against flood risk. 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. However, a number of overarching principles that could be applied in new development are:

- Manage surface water as close to where it originates as possible;
- Improve water quality by filtering pollutants to help avoid environmental contamination;

- 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 also 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 should be designed sensitively to augment the landscape and provide biodiversity and amenity benefits.



**Figure 144:** Example of swales check dam integrated with a crossing point, elsewhere in UK.



**Figure 145:** Example of SuD designed as a public amenity and fully integrated into the design of the public realm, Stockholm.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### Storage and slow release

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. However, other solutions can also include underground tanks or alternatively overground gravity fed rainwater systems that can have multiple application areas like toilets, washing, irrigation. In general, some design guidelines to well integrate water storage systems are:

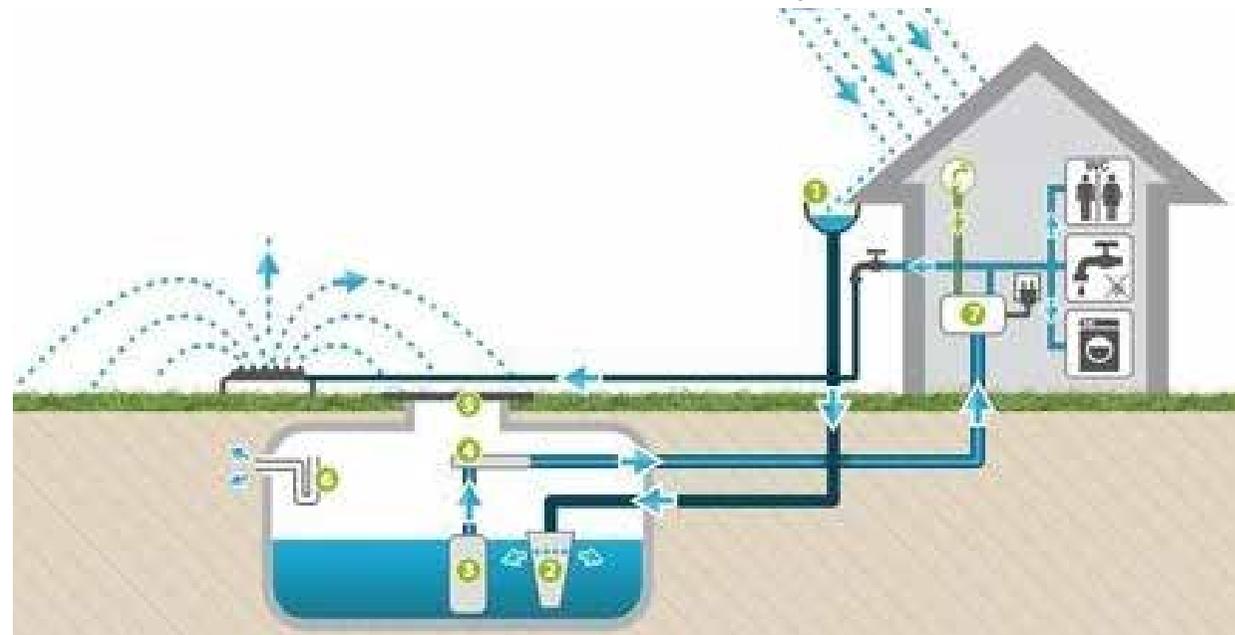
- Consider any solution prior to design to appropriately integrate them into the vision;
- Conceal tanks by cladding them in complementary materials;
- Use attractive materials or finishing for pipes; and
- Combine landscape/planters with water capture systems.



**Figure 146:** Examples of water butts used for rainwater harvesting in Reach, Cambridgeshire.



**Figure 147:** Example of a gravity fed rainwater system for flushing a downstairs toilet or for irrigation.



**Figure 148:** Diagram illustrating rainwater harvesting systems that could be integrated into open space and residential developments.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### Permeable paving

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 paving offers a solution to maintain soil permeability while performing the function of conventional paving. Therefore, some design guidelines for new development are:

- 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; and
- Permeable paving can be used where appropriate on footpaths, private access roads, driveways, car parking spaces (including on-street parking) and private areas within the individual development boundaries.

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

- Sustainable Drainage Systems - non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems<sup>1</sup>.
- The SuDS Manual (C753)<sup>2</sup>.
- Guidance on the Permeable Surfacing of Front Gardens<sup>3</sup>.

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](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. 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](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf)

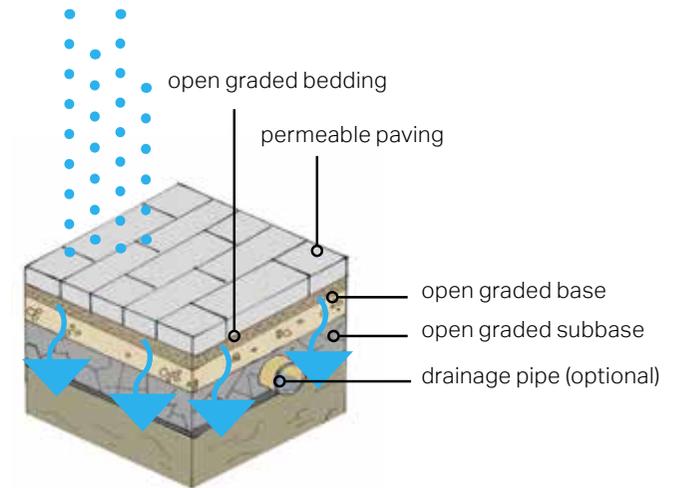


Figure 149: Diagram illustrating the function of a soak away.



Figure 150: Example of a permeable paving that could be used from driveways.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

In the event of a declaration of climate emergency a universal commitment needs to be made by communities and developers to achieve carbon net zero by designing houses and environments that would be adaptable to the climate.

Melksham Neighbourhood Plan aspires to have a positive impact to the environment and thus, any future development should aim to be eco-friendly.

In general, sustainability principles should accord with the latest national and local guidances.

### DC03.12 Eco-design

Buildings contribute almost half (46%) of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in the UK. The government has set rigorous targets for the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and minimising fossil fuel energy use.

There is a good number of energy efficient technologies that could be incorporated in buildings. The use of such principles and design tools is strongly encouraged to future proof buildings and avoid the necessity of retrofitting.

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.

Figure 109 features an array of sustainable design features. Those on the top show the features that should be strongly encouraged in existing homes, while those on the bottom show additional features that new build homes should be encouraged to incorporate from the onset.

### Lifetime and adaptability

The fastest route to building a functional, supportive, neighbourly community is to build homes that people can and want to live in for most of their lives instead of having to move every time domestic circumstances change.

'Lifetime' homes means designing in the flexibility and adaptability needed to allow for easy incorporation of wheelchair accessibility, addition/removal of internal walls, and ease of extension - both vertically and horizontally. This is particularly important for the aged, infirm or expanding/contracting families who may be dependent on nearby friends and family for emotional and physical support.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### 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 gain, 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.

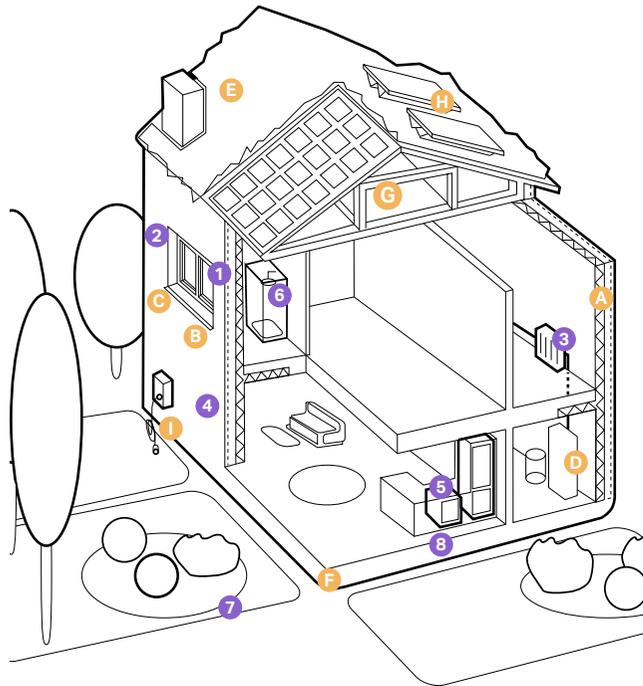
Thermal storage in construction elements can be provided, such as a trombe wall placed in front of a south facing window or concrete floor slabs that will absorb solar radiation and then slowly re-release it into the enclosed space. Mass can be combined with suitable ventilation strategies.

### 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.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design



### Existing homes

- 1  **Insulation**  
in lofts and walls (cavity and solid)
- 2  **Double or triple glazing with shading**  
(e.g. tinted window film, blinds, curtains and trees outside)
- 3  **Low-carbon heating**  
with heat pumps or connections to district heat network
- 4  **Draught proofing**  
of floors, windows and doors
- 5  **Highly energy-efficient appliances**  
(e.g. A++ and A+++ rating)
- 6  **Highly waste-efficient devices**  
with low-flow showers and taps, insulated tanks and hot water thermostats
- 7  **Green space (e.g. gardens and trees)**  
to help reduce the risks and impacts of flooding and overheating
- 8  **Flood resilience and resistance**  
with removable air back covers, relocated appliances (e.g. installing washing machines upstairs), treated wooden floors

### Additional features for new build homes

- A  **High levels of airtightness**
- B  **Triple glazed windows and external shading**  
especially on south and west faces
- C  **Low-carbon heating**  
and no new homes on the gas grid by 2025 at the latest
- D  **More fresh air**  
with mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, and passive cooling
- E  **Water management and cooling**  
more ambitious water efficiency standards, green roofs, rainwater harvesting and reflective walls
- F  **Flood resilience and resistance**  
e.g. raised electrical, concrete floors and greening your garden
- G  **Construction and site planning**  
timber frames, sustainable transport options (such as cycling)
- H  **Solar panel**
- I  **Electric car charging point**

**Figure 151:** Diagram showing low-carbon homes in both existing and new build conditions.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### Building orientation

The orientation of buildings within the plot, along with the site topography, must be considered to maximise solar gain, while keeping a consistent frontage to the street.

In addition, living spaces within each typology should be oriented according to the expected use of each room, e.g. sun in the morning for kitchens, during the day for living areas, and in the evening for bedrooms;

In general, the design of new developments must maximise the use of energy efficiency and energy conservation fixtures, fittings and technology. Passive methods of heating and cooling and the use of renewable energy technologies such as ground source and air source heat pumps, biomass heating, photovoltaics and solar panels must be considered for new developments. Opportunities for the use of the same technologies in existing buildings, when undergoing refurbishment, will also be expected.

Appropriate materials and detailing should also be considered to minimise heat loss, whilst direct entry from the street to an interior living space should be avoided where possible.

Solar access along the south façade should be maximised and openings on the north one minimised. Appropriate shading elements and cross ventilation should be employed in new and existing buildings.

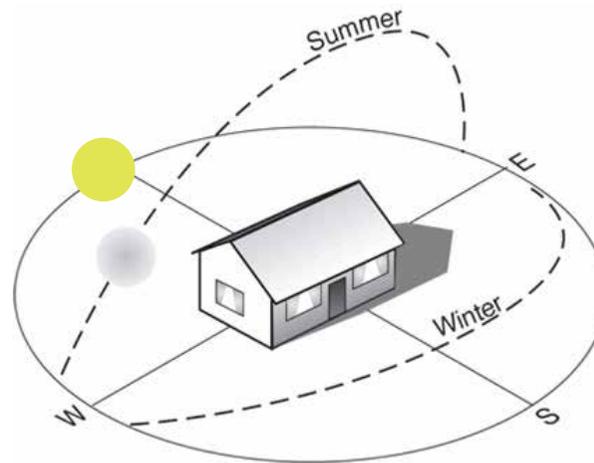


Figure 152: Illustration to show the appropriate building orientation so as to maximise solar gain. Windows should be placed mainly on the southern side whilst fewer openings should be located on the northern. A deep roof overhang can offer some shading. This can also be improved with some trees and vegetation around the house. (Source: <https://nextdayinspect.com/building-orientation-for-optimum-energy/>).

### Heating

Heading towards a more ecological agenda, it is expected that the use of fossil fuels will be deprecated and other techniques, for instance air/ground source heat pumps will be preferred over gas boilers. Those draw in heat from the air or the ground around the houses and use that to warm the inside of the house, whilst they cool by pulling the warm air out of the house, rather than using energy to cool air from outside. Electric heat pumps are not only used during winter, but also during summer for cooling.



Figure 153: Example of an electric heat pump that is placed to the back of the house, whilst its grey colour fits nicely with the black weatherboarding of the property.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### Roof solar panels

Solar panels over a rooftop can have a positive environmental impact, however their design and installation should be done carefully considering potential implications, especially within Melksham's Conservation Area. Preserving the character of the town and the villages in Melksham Without should be a priority.

Some solutions of sensitive implementation of solar roof panels are suggested as follows:

#### On new builds

- Design solar panel features from the start, forming part of the design concept. Some attractive options are solar shingles and photovoltaic slates; and
- Use the solar panels as a material in their own right.

#### On retrofits

- Analyse the proportions of the building and roof surface in order to identify the best location and sizing of panels;
- Consider introducing other tile or slate colours to create a composition with the solar panel materials;
- Conversely, aim to introduce contrast and boldness with proportion. There has been increased interest in black panels due to their more attractive appearance. Black solar panels with black mounting systems and frames can be an appealing alternative to blue panels;
- Carefully consider the location of solar panels on buildings within the Conservation Area. It might be appropriate to introduce solar panels to areas of the building that are more concealed in order to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area; and
- Solar panels can be added to listed buildings, but they need to be carefully sited and consent will be required.



**Figure 154:** Use of shingle-like solar panels on a slate roof, with the design and colour of the solar panels matching those of the adjacent slate tiles, elsewhere in the UK.



**Figure 155:** Positive example of implementing solar panels since the design stage, elsewhere in the UK.

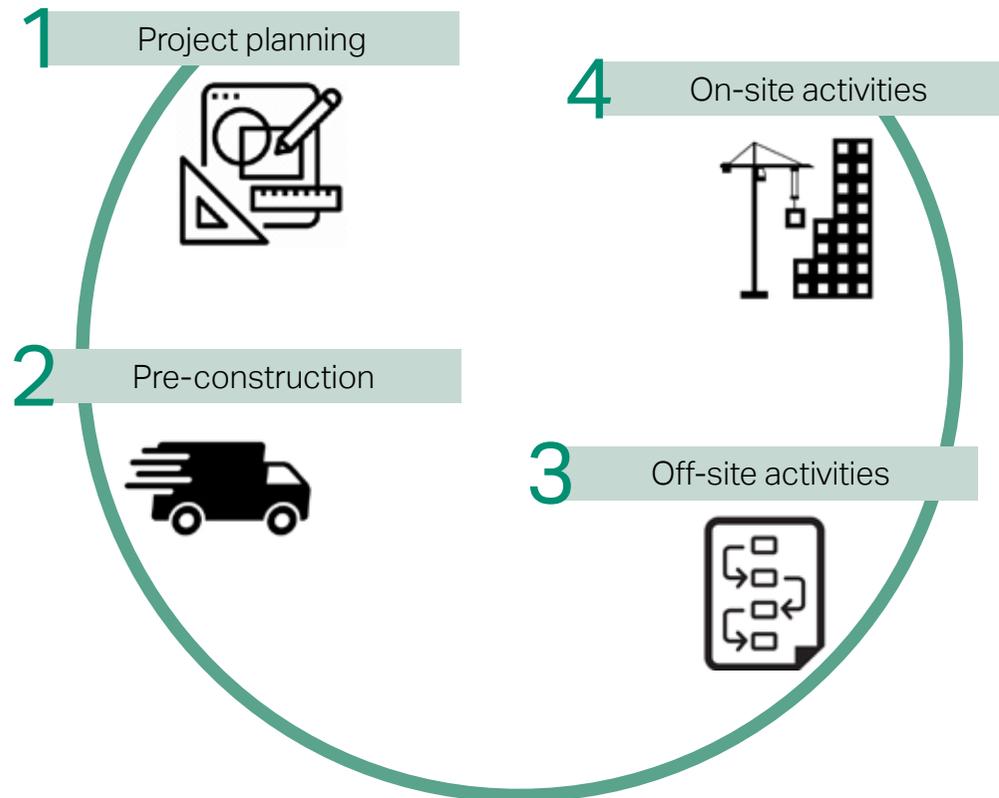
## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### 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.



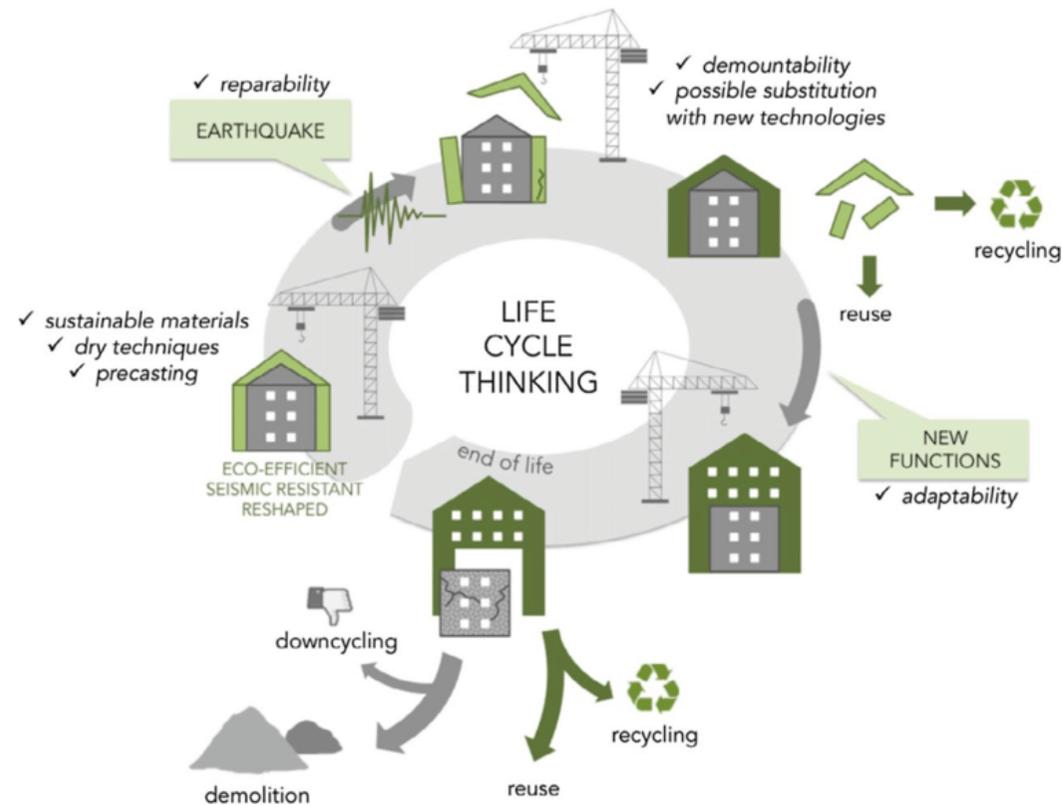
**Figure 156:** Diagram to illustrate the 4 main stages where waste management practices can be implemented.

## DC.03 Green and blue infrastructure & eco-design

### 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. Some actions for new development are:

- Reusing buildings, parts of buildings or elements of buildings such as bricks, tiles, slates or large timbers all help achieve a more sustainable approach to design and construction;
- 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
- Development should also maximise the re-use of existing buildings (which often supports social, environmental and economic objectives as well).



**Figure 157:** Diagram to illustrate the life cycle thinking for recycling materials and buildings. (Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319464500\\_Combining\\_seismic\\_retrofit\\_with\\_energy\\_refurbishment\\_for\\_the\\_sustainable\\_renovation\\_of\\_RC\\_buildings\\_a\\_proof\\_of\\_concept](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319464500_Combining_seismic_retrofit_with_energy_refurbishment_for_the_sustainable_renovation_of_RC_buildings_a_proof_of_concept))

## DC.04 Built form

### DC04.13 Building lines, boundary treatments and corner treatment

Together with the creation of potential local landmarks, three more crucial aspects of a successful streetscape and urban form is the issue of corners, boundary lines and boundary treatments. Therefore, the following guidelines should be applied to new development.

#### Building lines and boundary treatments

- Buildings should front onto streets. The building line should reflect the character of the area, for instance for developments in the more rural Melksham Without Parish there should be subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions to enhance the rural context;
- Buildings should be designed to ensure that streets and/or public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings. This can be ensured 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 the area. They should be mainly continuous hedges and low height walls, as appropriate, made of traditional materials found elsewhere in the town and villages such as local stone. Natural boundary treatments should still enable adequate natural surveillance;
- In the case of edge lanes, natural boundary treatments can act as buffer zones between the site and the countryside and offer a level of protection to the natural environment;
- All the façades overlooking the street or public space should be treated as primary façades. They should have some form of street contact in the form of windows, balconies, or outdoor private space; and
- Road layouts should be designed to slow traffic and advantage pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles. For the smaller,

more rural villages in Melksham Without roads should also reinforce rurality and have a meandering character.

#### Corner treatment

- Buildings should be designed to turn corners and terminate views. Corner buildings should have both side façades animated with doors and/or windows. Exposed, blank gable end buildings with no windows fronting the public realm should be avoided;
- The form of corner buildings should respect the local architectural character. Doing so improves the street scene and generates local pride. Also, given their prominence, decorative architectural elements should also be considered. Please see [DC04.18](#) for more details on materials for new development; and
- If placed at important intersections the building could be treated as a landmark and thus be slightly taller or display another built element, signalling its importance as a wayfinding cue.

## DC.04 Built form



**Figure 158:** Local example of low height stone wall and hedgerow boundary treatment, Shaw.



**Figure 159:** Melksham Town Hall which sits on a corner junction and also faces across Market Place roundabout to Spa road is a landmark building in the town and has a large scale and distinct architectural features.



**Figure 160:** The linear pattern of Melksham High Street where there is a consistent, strong building line and building orientation is closely aligned with the street as it curves round at junctions.



**Figure 161:** Example of a corner building where both façades have windows to allow for natural surveillance, King Street.



**Figure 162:** Local example of buildings that overlook the open space creating active frontages and improving natural surveillance, King George V Park, Melksham town.



**Figure 163:** Local example of buildings that overlook a pedestrian path which creates high enclosure and good levels of natural surveillance, Church Walk, Melksham.

## DC.04 Built form

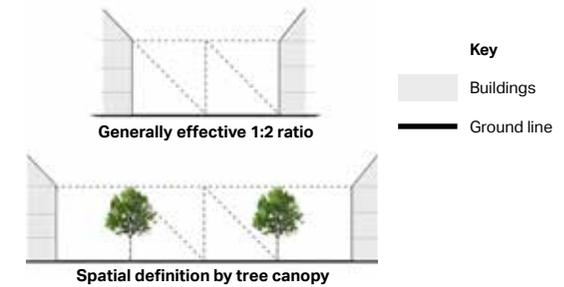
### DC04.14 Continuity and enclosure

Focal points and public spaces in new development should be designed in proportion and delineated clearly. Well defined spaces help create an appropriate sense of enclosure - the relationship between a given space (lane, street, square) and the vertical boundary elements at its edges (buildings, walls, trees). Some design guidelines for achieving a good sense of enclosure are:

- When designing building setbacks, there must be an appropriate ratio between the width of the street and the building height. Ratios between 1:2 and 1:3 (building height/street width) will generally create spaces with a strong sense of enclosure, especially appropriate for more built-up areas in the town. However, lower levels of enclosure are also acceptable within the more rural and open areas of Melksham Without,

in particular locations where the feel of openness must be preserved such as in the smaller settlements where housing density is lower;

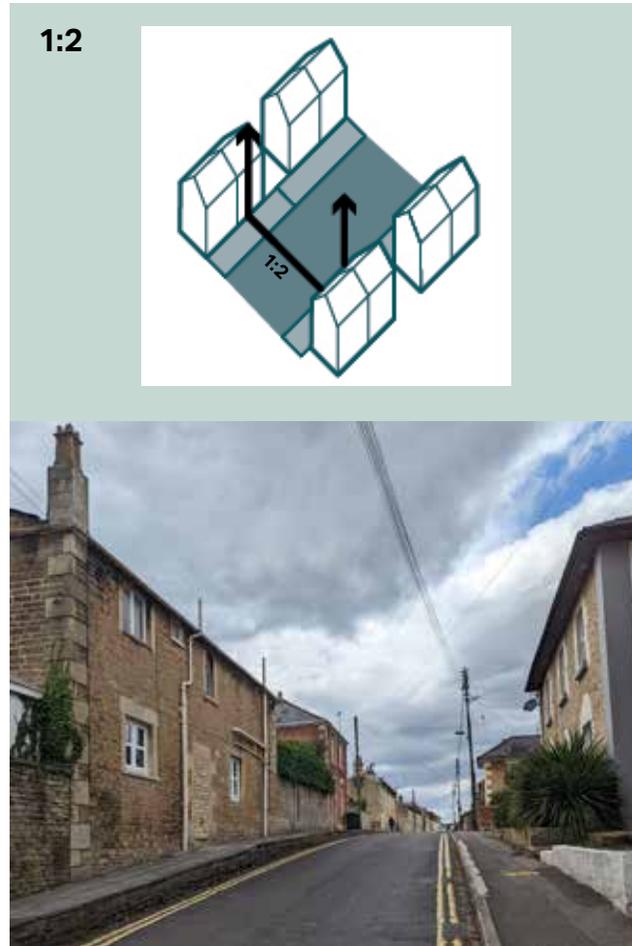
- Careful positioning of walls, landscaping and paving can achieve visual continuity and well-defined open spaces to link buildings together and define public and private spaces;
- Trees, hedges, and other landscaping features can help create a more enclosed streetscape in addition to providing shading and protection from heat, wind, and rain; and
- In the case of terraced and adjoining buildings, it is recommended that a variety of plot widths, land use, building heights, and façade depths should be considered during the design process to create an attractive streetscape and break the monotony.



**Figure 164:** A ratio of 1:2 (top) - found in some residential streets in Melksham town centre within the historic core and linear development character area, or 1:3 (bottom) - found in residential developments further out from the town centre, are generally appropriate for residential streets. In addition, enclosure can be defined by trees instead of buildings.

## DC.04 Built form

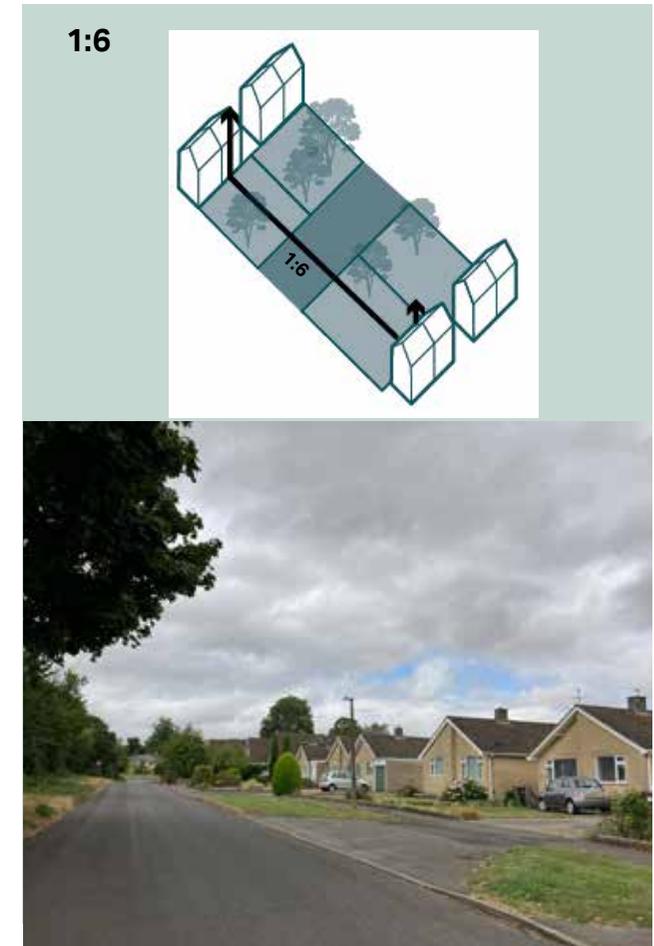
### Local examples of enclosure



**Figure 165:** Local example of 1:2 enclosure, which is created by the narrow 1 lane road and pavement, strong building line with little to no set back and 2-storey building heights, Union Street.



**Figure 166:** Local example of 1:3 enclosure, which is created by the narrow 2 lane road in combination with varied building setbacks, small front gardens, small green verge on one side of the road and 2-storey building heights, Milton Avenue.



**Figure 167:** Local example of 1:6 enclosure, which is created by the use of green verges between the pavement and the road in combination with front gardens, the road, low building height and the dense tree and hedge line opposite, Whitley.

## DC.04 Built form

### DC04.15 Building heights, density and housing mix

Building heights, density and housing mix are three important parameters that should be designed and decided with careful consideration of the local context.

#### Buildings heights

The average building height varies between the more built-up areas of the town, the surrounding residential neighbourhoods and villages and the industrial areas. Along the High Street the average building height is 2-3 storeys. Residential buildings close to the High Street are also mostly 2-3 storeys in height. Residential neighbourhoods further out from the High Street and also in the villages of Melksham Without have an average building height of 1-2 storeys. Industrial buildings range in height from 2-4 storeys.

The rooflines are irregular and they often get interrupted with nature or chimneys, particularly in Melksham Without and the areas further from the town centre where there is a more open character.

It is important that new developments are sensitive to building heights of existing buildings to avoid the risk of looking out of place or overshadowing existing developments. Some design guidelines are:

- New development in the town centre should propose a maximum height of 3 storeys and should go lower around landmark and heritage assets to preserve views and character. New development in residential areas should propose a maximum height of 2 storeys to respond to the generally lower building heights;
- Monotonous building elevations should be avoided, therefore subtle changes in roofline should be ensured during the design process;
- Locally traditional roof detailing elements such as roofing materials, chimney stacks and edge treatments should be considered and implemented where possible in cases of new development; and
- In more rural areas roofline should be set lower than the vegetation backdrop, avoiding hard lines of the silhouette against the sky.



**Figure 168:** Local example of a higher density 3-storey apartment block in Melksham town centre.



**Figure 169:** Local example of a 2-storey houses in Whitley where housing density is lower and there are large gaps between buildings.

## DC.04 Built form

### Building density

The concept of density is important to planning and designing new developments as it affects the vitality and viability of the place. Overall the area has medium density, though it varies throughout the NPA. Higher density is found in the town centre and in the industrial character areas. Medium density is found in recent development and the 20th century residential character area. Lower density is found in the more rural parts of Melksham Without. Therefore, some guidelines for new development are needed to ensure that the existing housing density numbers are respected:

- Density should be appropriate to the location of any new development and its surroundings and enhance the character of the existing context. Thus, a good understanding of the local context should come prior to any design exercise;
- Housing densities should be reduced towards development edges and along rural edges in order to create a gradual transition towards the countryside;

- Areas with close proximity to the SSSI areas to the north east of the NPA must not allow any new development; and
- Small scale development and in-fills are encouraged because they follow the scale and pattern of existing grain and streets and therefore, retain the character of the area.



**Figure 170:** Melksham High Street, example of higher density in Melksham.



**Figure 171:** Local example of a residential area of mid-density within Melksham with some open green spaces.



**Figure 172:** Local example of a low density area in Shaw.

## DC.04 Built form

### Housing mix

There should be a mix of housing types and a supply of social and affordable housing to cater for the needs of a wider group of people and boost the local economy. Melksham has a wide variety of housing typologies across its various character areas. New developments should therefore reference these existing housing typologies in order to remain in-keeping with Melksham's unique character. Some design guidelines for new development are:

- New development should propose a mix of housing to include a range of house types and sizes, both developer and self built, to allow for a variety of options and bring balance to the population profile. The existing mix of housing including detached, semi-detached, bungalows and terraced housing, should be enhanced;
- New development should avoid using only one housing typology along the street, as this creates monotonous

elevations and no visual interest and variations along the streetscape; and

- Affordable housing should be a priority in new development and its quality and architectural design should be of high standards to complement the local vernacular. In addition, they should be integrated into the layout to create tenure blind developments.



Figure 173: Modern detached housing in George Ward Gardens.



Figure 174: Terrace housing in the conservation and historic core character area of Melksham town centre.



Figure 175: Semi-detached housing along Spa Road.

## DC.04 Built form

### DC04.16 Housing extensions

There are multiple ways to create extra space within a building using different types of extensions. Extensions must be designed to an appropriate scale to the original building.

The pitch and form of a building's roof forms part of its character; therefore, extensions should respond by enhancing the existing character. 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. There are exceptions, though, that will be relevant here, such as Conservation Areas. Check the latest guidance here: [https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common\\_projects/17/extensions](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/17/extensions).

- The character of the existing building, along with its scale, form, materials and details should be taken into consideration when preparing proposals for alterations and/or extensions;
- External extensions should respect or enhance the visual appearance of the original buildings and the character of the wider street scene;
- Extensions should be subordinate in terms of scale and form and shall not be visually dominant or taller than the existing building;
- Extensions should be designed using materials and details to match the existing building or alternately, use contrasting materials and details with a contemporary design approach. However, in either case, extensions should create a harmonious composition overall and a strong degree of unity with the original building;
- Extensions should safeguard the privacy and daylight amenity of neighbouring properties;
- Extensions should retain on-site parking capacity and a viable garden area to meet the needs of future occupiers; and
- Extensions of existing buildings should reduce carbon emissions by complying with high energy efficiency standards and utilising low energy design.

## DC.04 Built form

### Front extensions

- These extensions are generally not acceptable. If proposed, 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 a maximum of 2 metres beyond the front façade and should not cover more than 50% of the front elevation.

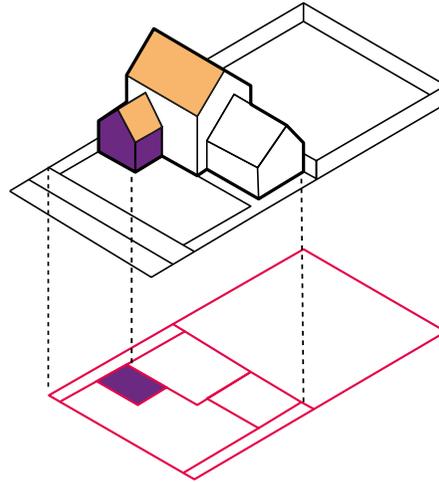


Figure 176: An example diagram of a front extension.

### Side extensions

- Side extensions should not detract from the appearance of the building, its surroundings and the wider rural setting;
- Single-storey and double storey side extensions should be set back from the main building and complement its materials and detailing, whilst the roof of the extension should harmonise with that of the original building; and
- Side windows should also be avoided unless it can be demonstrated that they would not result in overlooking of neighbouring properties.

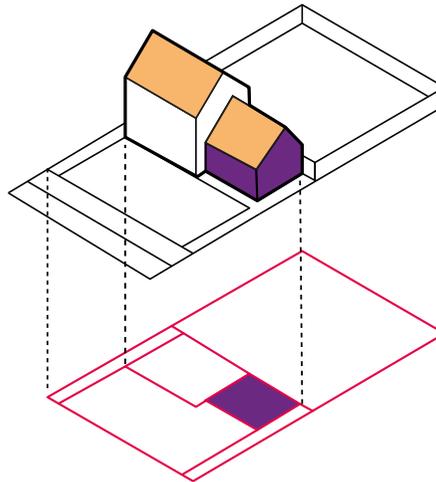


Figure 178: An example diagram of a side extension.



Figure 177: Positive example of front extension, elsewhere in the UK.

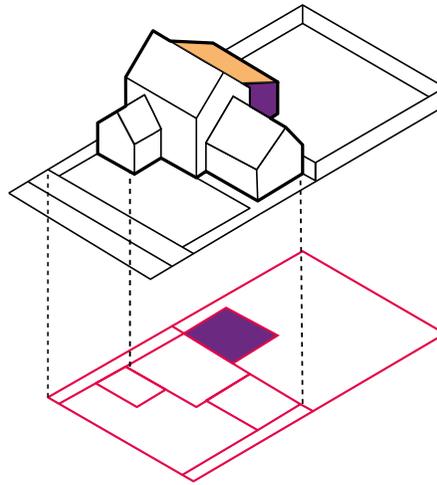


Figure 179: Positive example of a side extension that respects the existing building in terms of scale and building materials. In particular, the use of weatherboarding positively reflects back to the typical appearance of barns and outbuildings, elsewhere in rural UK.

## DC.04 Built form

### 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 of neighbouring properties, such as blocking day light. A flat roof is generally acceptable for a single storey rear extension; and
- Double storey rear extensions are becoming more common but they can 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.

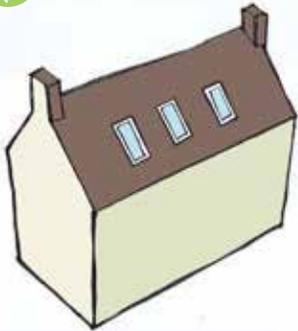


**Figure 180:** An example diagram of a rear extension.

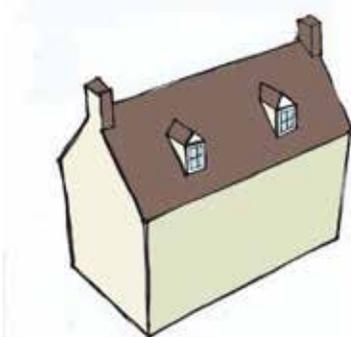
group to provide local examples, if available

## DC.04 Built form

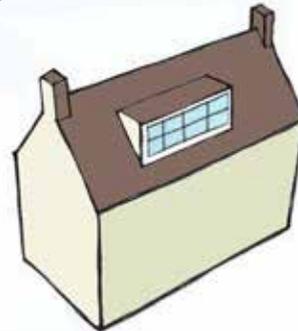
### Design treatment in case of loft conversion:



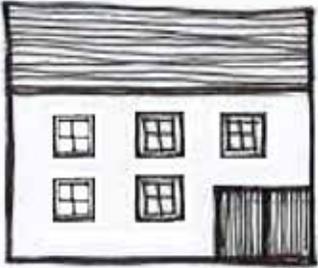
Loft conversion incorporating skylights.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.



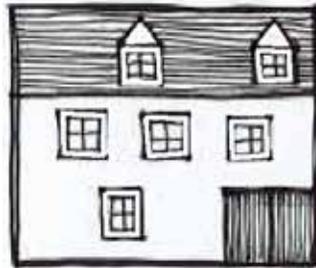
Loft conversion incorporating a long shed dormer which is out of scale with the original building.



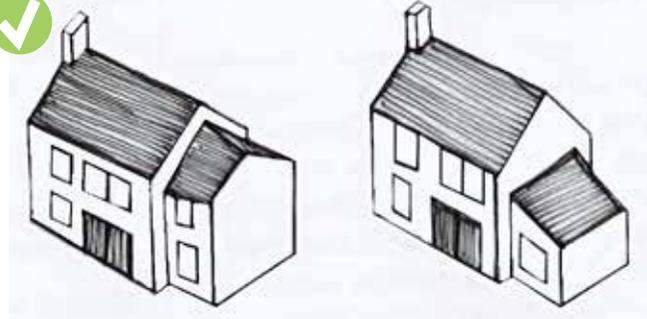
Original roofline of an existing building.



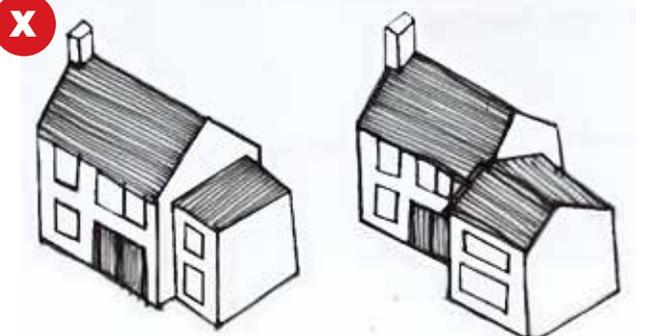
Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers which are out of scale and do not consider existing window rhythm nor frequency.



Good example for side extensions, respecting existing building scale, massing and building line.



Both extensions present a negative approach when considering how it fits to the existing building. Major issues regarding roofline and building line.

## DC.04 Built form

### DC04.17 New houses and infill development

Small scale and infill developments are encouraged if they follow the scale and pattern of the existing grain and therefore, maintain the character of the local context. Therefore, the relevant design guidelines are listed below:

- Infill development should complement the street scene into which it will be inserted, either the town or the rural settlements. Each character area presents differences in the building density, scale, massing, typology, as well as building setbacks and boundary treatments, as shown in [Section 2.5](#), and therefore, a good understanding of the surrounding context should come prior to any new design. The design principles of the surrounding properties need to be reflected into the new ones as well;
- Any infill development in close proximity or within the conservation area or any building of historic significance should protect the existing short-distance

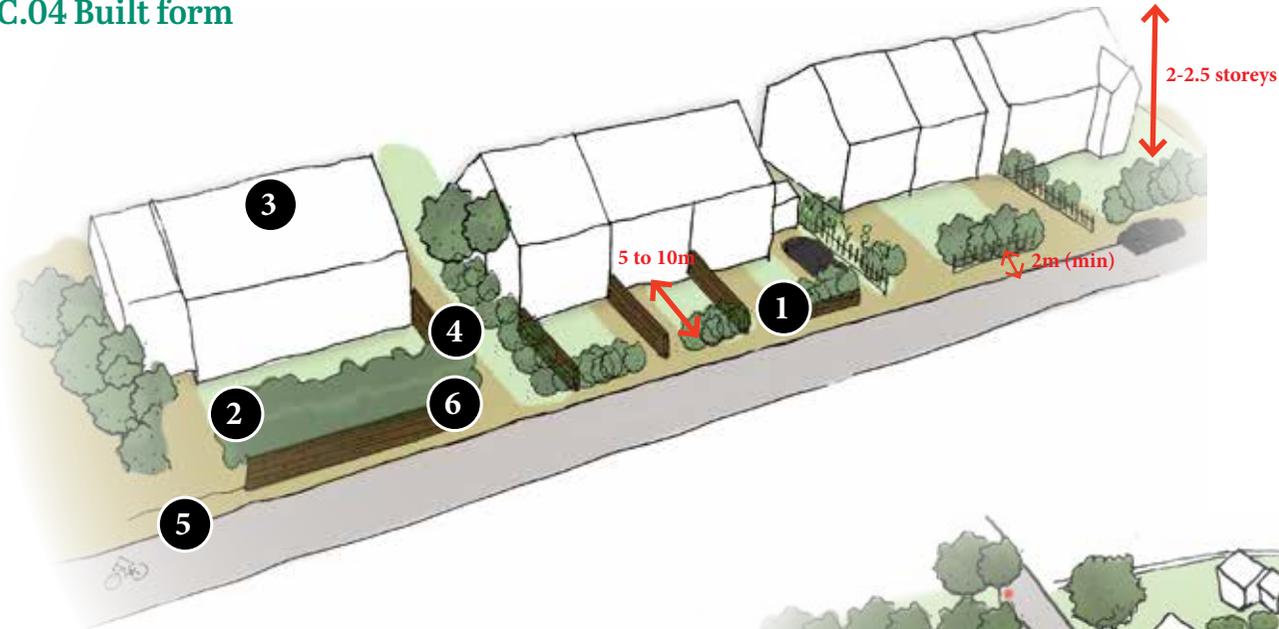
views towards any landmarks, whilst establishing a buffer between existing and new properties;

- Infill development needs to reflect the materials and architectural details of the surrounding character areas, as shown in [Section 2.5](#);
- Infill development needs to be considered in relation to topography, views, vistas and landmarks to ensure that none of those elements are blocked. In particular, short-distance views to listed buildings, unlisted buildings of historic significance or landmark buildings need to be preserved;
- Existing green features, if any, should be preserved and form part of the natural boundary treatments within the site; and
- In cul-de-sacs, pedestrian and cycle links should be proposed to allow for permeability for the users and offer connections with the existing footpath network.



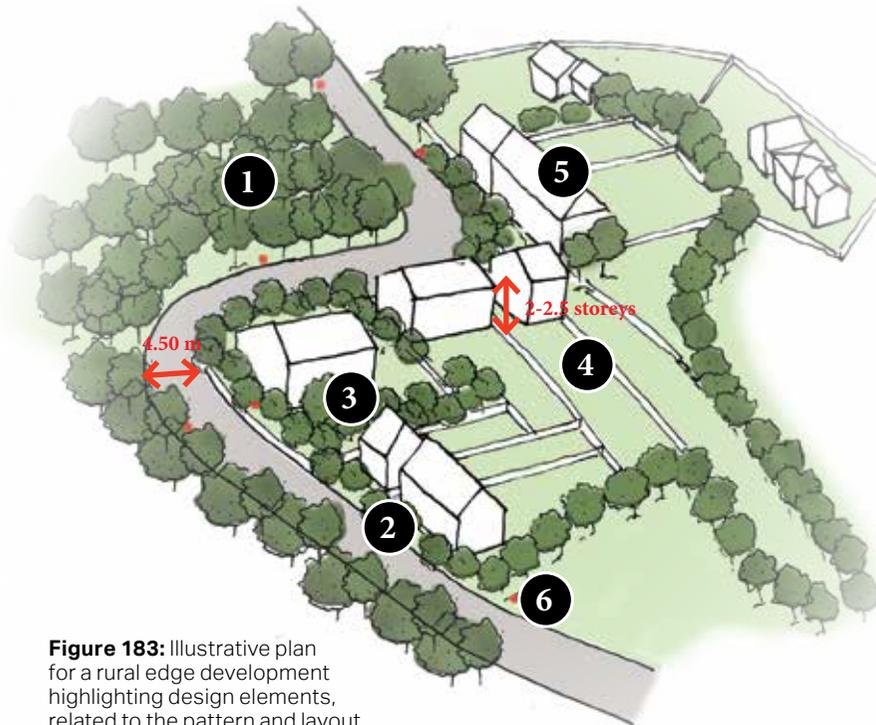
**Figure 181:** Positive example of a recent infill development (photo above) in a rural village elsewhere in UK that fits nicely into the local context (photo below) in terms of scale, massing, architectural styles and details.

## DC.04 Built form



1. Linear format of development along main roads with well-sized front gardens (suggested range would be from 5 to 10m).
2. Front gardens decorated with vegetation.
3. Dwelling height maximum 2-2.5 storeys.
4. Integration of footpaths where possible.
5. Wider pavement (minimum 2m) along main roads to accommodate movement.
6. Low brick walls with vegetation to give a good visual impact to pedestrians and ensure a level of privacy for the owners. Panel fencing should be avoided.

**Figure 182:** Illustration to show a linear development highlighting design elements, related to the pattern and layout of buildings.



1. Green infrastructure should be protected and enhanced where appropriate.
2. Front gardens should be decorated with soft landscape elements and vegetation.
3. Properties should be separated with green buffers while long brick walls should be avoided.
4. Well-sized front and back gardens.
5. Variety of building typologies and roof pitches.
6. Appropriate signage indicating speed limits.

**Figure 183:** Illustrative plan for a rural edge development highlighting design elements, related to the pattern and layout of buildings.

## DC.04 Built form



group to provide positive examples of infill development



group to provide less positive examples of infill development



Figure 184: xxxxx

Figure 185: xxxx

## DC.04 Built form

### DC04.18 Materials and architectural details

The NPA has a wide variety of architectural styles and details that can act as references for new developments. New developments should be respectful of architectural styles and use of materials of surrounding housing, whilst ensuring that a mix of styles are provided that is in keeping with the local palette. A summary table on the next page provides an overview of the commonly recurring materials seen across the character areas, whilst more details can be found in [Section 2.5](#).

Some design guidelines for new development are:

- Architectural design in new developments shall reflect the high quality local design references in both the natural and built environment and make a valuable contribution to the character of the NPA;
- Regarding the natural environment, all green assets, of any form, contribute to the character of both the town and

surrounding rural settlements and reinforce biodiversity. Therefore, any new development should make sure it proposes a similar level of greenery in the new design to create a consistent setting;

- Regarding the built environment, new development should use materials that contribute to the local vernacular. These materials may include; stone, red brick, timber-framing with rendered infill, dark clay tiles, grey slate tiles and white render. In addition to this, modern materials are also welcome as long as they are sensitive to the surrounding context and visually pleasing;
- New development can propose a combination of soft, natural, and hard boundaries to match the surrounding styles along the streetscape. In particular, there are stretches of stone walls bordering some properties in the village combined with either trees or hedges and bushes;



**Figure 186:** A positive local example of a house with dark clay tiled gabled roof and dormer windows, buffered by a mixture of vegetation, low wall and iron fencing, sash windows and stone construction with ashlar stone quoin detailing.



**Figure 187:** Positive local example of a clay tiled gabled roof terraced house with stone and off-white render, vertical sash windows and chimney stacks which interrupt the roofline.

## DC.04 Built form

- The choice of colour and finish of materials is an important design factor in reducing the impact of the buildings on the surrounding landscape. Generally the colour palette of Melksham includes dark roofs, muted colour facades and green from high levels of vegetation. More details can be found in [Section 2.5](#); and
- The use of traditional, natural and preferably locally sourced materials is generally more appropriate than man-made synthetic, pre-coloured materials, as there lack the variation on colour and texture found in natural materials.

The table opposite summarises some of the key materials and finishes found across the 4 character areas of Melksham NPA (where materials are seen recurring in a character area, cells are marked with “**x**”):

<b>Material</b>	<b>Historic core and linear development</b>	<b>20th century residential neighbourhoods</b>	<b>21st century residential neighbourhoods</b>	<b>Large scale, commercial/ industrial/ service development</b>
Ashlar stone	x	x		x
Rubblestone	x			
Red brick	x	x	x	x
Yellow brick		x	x	
Timber frame	x	x		
Off-white render	x	x	x	
White render	x	x		x
Dark clay tiles	x	x		x
Grey slate tiles	x	x	x	x
Stone render		x	x	x
Red clay tiles			x	x
Moulded grey cement tiles			x	
Corrugated metal				x

## DC.04 Built form

**Any future employment sites in the NPA should consider the following design principles. These sites should also adhere to the general principles previously outlined in the Design Code.**

### **DC04.19 Design guidance for employment**

#### **Place-making**

- New development should focus on the refurbishment or re-purpose of existing facilities before considering allocation of new sites.
- Where new development is planned, a range of open spaces should be provided to strengthen the connection between business sites and adjacent residential areas.
- New development should be sympathetic to its built and landscape setting - either town or rural related.

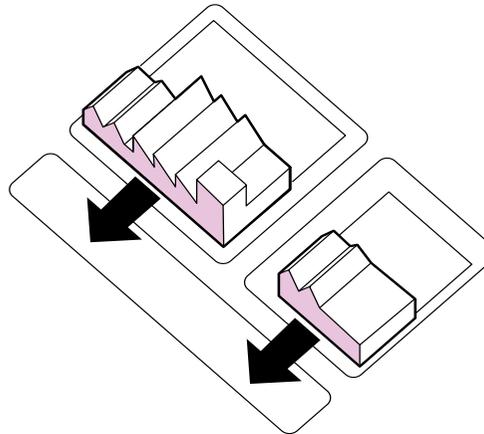
#### **Location**

- New development of employment sites should be located within the settlement boundary and / or on previously developed, brownfield land. As such, proposals outside the settlement boundary or greenfield sites should be avoided whenever possible.

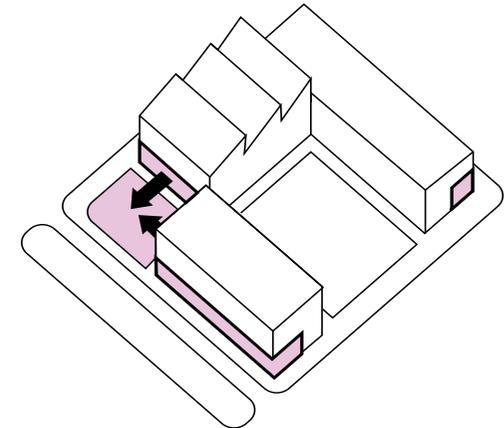
## Site layout and frontage

The design of future employment sites should consider:

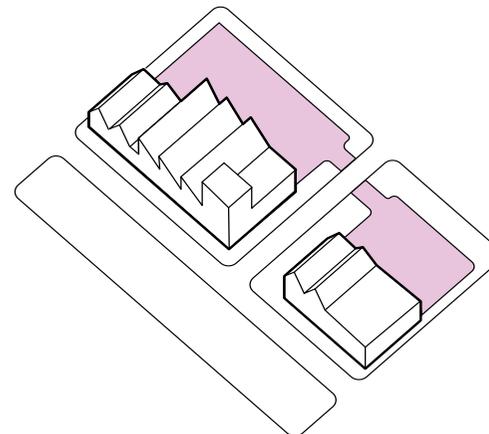
- Build with a consistent set back to neighbouring buildings to create a cohesive street character and remove the need for fences.
- Locating yard and loading spaces away from the street edge and towards the middle or rear of the site.
- Positioning active uses or operating main areas at ground floor, along the street.
- Ensure ground floor uses adjacent to the street have higher levels of visual permeability.
- Massing, heights and materials should be sympathetic and unobtrusive.



**Figure 188:** Diagram showing building to the edge of the plot.



**Figure 190:** Diagram showing active uses on the ground floor fronting the street and increasing visual permeability.



**Figure 189:** Diagram showing yard and loading space located to the rear.

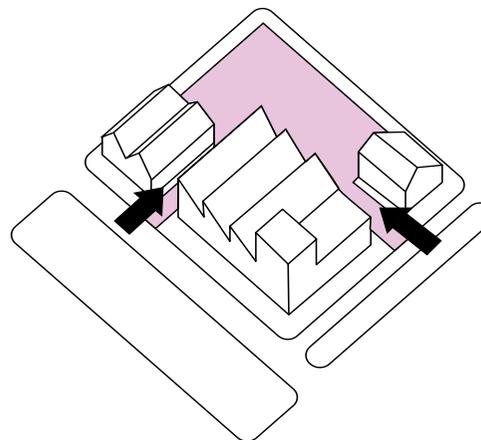
## Movement

- Ensure HGV routes connect to the strategic road network as efficiently as possible to reduce conflict between HGVs and other road users.
- The impact on traffic levels should be considered, as well as the need for separation of traffic.
- Consideration should be given to pedestrians and cyclists when designing employment both in terms of movement, but also access and parking (see adjacent column).
- Businesses should work together to consolidate deliveries where possible, to reduce HGV movements.

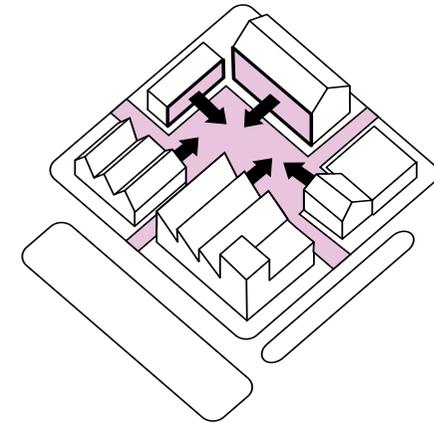
## Access, yards, servicing and parking

- Active travel should be promoted. Dedicated pedestrian entrances directly from the street should be provided, and servicing and pedestrian routes should be segregated.

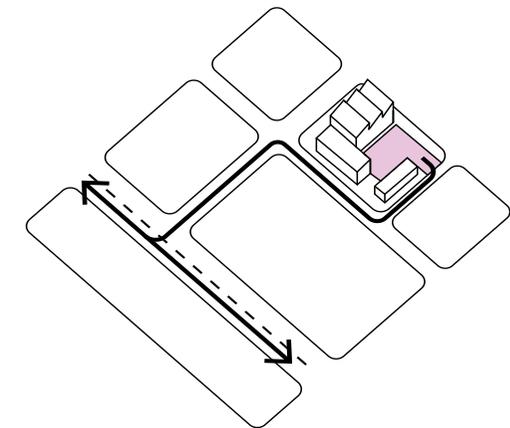
- Integrate parking within buildings away from the street edge and separate yard-space, employee parking and visitor parking.
- Consider a shared service yard to optimise space on smaller sites.
- Incorporate sufficient space for HGV turning circles within the site to prevent HGV manoeuvring.
- Consider the provision of shared HGV parking for units that only require occasional HGV access.



**Figure 191:** Diagram showing HGV routes connected to road network efficiently and promoting clusters of businesses to minimise impact of HGV movements.



**Figure 192:** Diagram showing a site with access from multiple sides to separate access points.



**Figure 193:** Diagram showing shared yards to optimise operation space on smaller sites.

## Amenity space and adjacencies

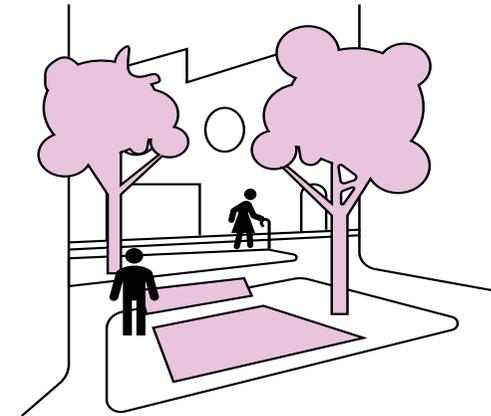
- Create well designed public spaces and meeting places, avoiding green space at the edge of a site.
- Orient units to minimise overlooking of yard space and maximise active frontages onto streets / footpaths.
- Incorporate acoustic mitigation measures such as winter gardens, ventilation and triple glazing.
- Utilise landscaping as a buffer between residential and employment and employment and parking.

## Lighting

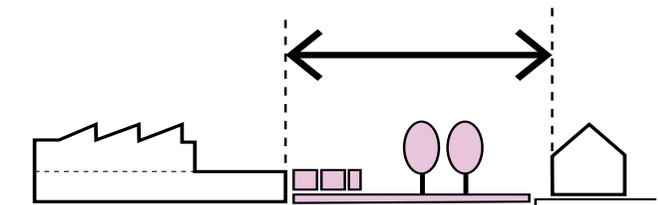
- The type and design of lighting should be appropriate to the individual building and be respectful of the existing context.
- Avoid using visually distinct sources of illumination that result in disproportionate signage and are intrusive to the countryside, such as internally-illuminated box signs and totem pole.

## Signage

- Maintain the signage within the established proportions and confines of the fascia board. Large box signs or additional flat boards should be avoided as they create disproportionate depth and height.
- Hanging signs should be appropriately sized in relation to the building and street. They should not dominate the pavement space. They should use an appropriate material, shape, and form avoiding large box signs.
- Hanging signs should be held by slender, well-designed brackets using a high quality material.
- In the case of corporate brands, those should be sensitive to the existing context, size and scale and use materials and textures from the local vernacular of the area.



**Figure 194:** Diagram showing public spaces integrated within the employment site.



**Figure 195:** Diagram showing the use of ancillary uses and landscaping to provide a buffer between residential and employment/ industrial uses.

## DC.05 Public realm

### DC05.19 Guidelines for shop frontages

The commercial core of Melksham is concentrated on the High Street, which also serves as a point of entry for the town from Bradford Road (A3102). Most shops and services are located here, hence, it is important to maintain an attractive and functional streetscape that is desirable for shoppers. Shop frontages play a vital role and can contribute positively to the streetscape of Melksham. It is therefore important to ensure that they are designed with consistency at the façades level - in terms of colours, scale, fenestration, and labelling. Some useful guidelines to reference include:

- Consider the overall proportion, form, and scale of the building's upper floors when designing new shop-fronts and alterations to shop fronts. Unnecessarily large shop-fronts or signage can detract from or even cover historically valuable architecture and, more generally, create a disjointed appearance;
- Reflect the street and historic styles. Melksham High Street is within the Conservation Area, therefore shopfronts of aesthetic or historic merit should be retained and only shop blinds of a traditional design which do not detract from the street scene will be permitted;
- Integrate the shop front with the established streetscape, introducing a sense of variety but responding to the overall character of the high street. This includes using the right materials, responding to a dominant scale and proportion, and following an established pattern;
- Respond to and enhance the existing conditions of the public realm. Street elements and furniture should be considered when designing shopfronts. This will help improve the overall user experience of Melksham High Street;
- Unnecessary visual clutter should be avoided. This includes reducing unnecessary advertisements, plastic foliage or other elements stuck onto the shopfront, and removing general detritus such as visible AC units, wires and intrusive roller shutter boxes;
- Incorporate traditional elements such as fascia boards, cornices, pilasters, appropriately sized uninterrupted stall risers and avoid large expanses of unbroken glazing. These elements create an appropriate architectural frame that results in a well proportioned shopfront;
- Whilst the exact proportion and detailing varies due to context, all shopfronts should incorporate an adequate architectural frame. Avoid the use of modern frame shapes and profiles; and
- Respond to the climate change by encouraging the use of canopies to provide shade for shoppers.

## DC.05 Public realm

### Signage

- The fascia is the most important area of a shopfront for advertising the business. Maintain the signage within the established proportions and confines of the fascia board. Large box signs or additional flat boards should be avoided as they create disproportionate depth and height;
- The most appropriate signage at fascia level is individual letters applied or painted directly onto the fascia board;
- Hanging signs must be appropriately sized in relation to the building and street. They should not dominate the pavement space. They should use an appropriate material, shape, and form avoiding large box signs;
- Hanging signs must be held by slender, well-designed brackets using a high quality material; and
- In the case of corporate brands, those must be sensitive to the existing context, size and scale and use materials and textures from the local vernacular of the area.

### Lightning

- Avoid using visually distinct sources of illumination that result in disproportionate signage, such as internally-illuminated box signs.

### Safety

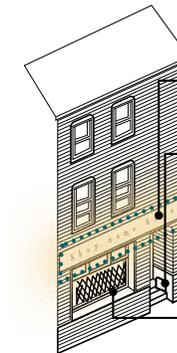
- Avoid using external roller shutters and grilles. Favour the use of internal open grilles which cover only the glazed part of the shop front; and
- Conceal alarms from the shop front facade and integrate them discretely within the shop front design or to the side of a building.



#### Character & Design

Integrate the shop front with the surrounding streetscape. Consider adjacent buildings and typical details in the area

Incorporate the overall proportion, form, and scale of the building's upper floors into the design of the shop front

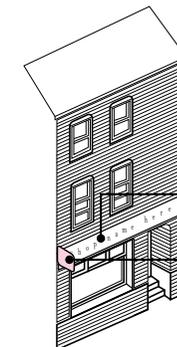


#### Lighting & Safety

Avoid using internally-illuminated box signs

Conceal alarms from the shop front facade and integrate them in the design

Avoid using external roller shutters and grilles. Favour the use of internal open grilles which cover only the glazed part of the shop front



#### Signage

Avoid unnecessary visual clutter

Signage should not be placed on upper floors

Use the fascia as the predominant position for signage

Hanging signs should be in proportion to the building and street and should not dominate pavements

## DC.05 Public realm

### Stall riser

- A stall riser should be incorporated into the design for the full width of the shopfront, except for the door opening; and
- The height of the stall riser should be between 0.3m and 1m.

### Materials

- Window frames, doors, pilasters and fascias must be of timber construction with a painted finish and not a stained finish.

### Panelling

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

### Fascia

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

### Lighting

- If lighting is incorporated into the design of the shop front, then it must comprise projecting light to create external illumination of the shop sign area.

### Shutters

- If shutters and shutter boxes are incorporated into the design, then they must be placed internally, behind the shop front. When in an open position, shutters must not block the shop window opening.



**Figure 196:** A local example of a well-laid out shopfront, with white painted timber finished window and door frames, and clear signage positioned on fascia, Bath Road.



**Figure 197:** A local example of a well-laid out shopfront, white front painted timber finished window and door frames and clear signage positioned on fascia, Bank Street

## DC.05 Public realm

### DC05.20 Public realm, materials and street furniture

Streets are the most important components of public space and these are referenced in [DC02.7](#). This is particularly important for places like Melksham High Street which serves as the town centre. Key design principles, such as maintaining frontages active and natural surveillance for streets, are fundamental to creating vibrant and attractive streetscapes.

The design of paved areas also has a significant impact on the overall appearance, quality and success of a scheme. Care must be taken when choosing appropriate materials and when detailing paved areas as part of the overall design.

High quality materials such as stone, gravel and brick can provide a durable and attractive hard surface, although there is an extensive range of modern materials that can contribute positively to the quality of outdoor spaces if chosen with care. The

laying pattern and materials used should make a significant contribution to the overall appearance, quality and success of a scheme. If laying patterns used random bond, broken bond, gauged width, and the European fan should be preferred. Some guidelines for new developments are:

- Active frontages should be encouraged to add to the vitality and vibrancy of the streets and public realm, whilst enhancing the user experience of the town centre;
- In-out spill out spaces are encouraged across the commercial centre to create activity on streets. Businesses like restaurants, cafés, shops etc. could have seating or display on the street within well-organised spaces that do not impede pedestrian movement. Those are recommended to be located on wider pavements. Street clutter shall be avoided at all times;



**Figure 198:** The King's Arms - a positive example of the use of spill-over space to add vitality to the street by encouraging more activity.



**Figure 199:** Seating area in Melksham town centre, which has good natural surveillance from the nearby shop front.

## DC.05 Public realm

- High levels of natural surveillance should be provided to create vibrancy and vitality along the High Street. Use of larger well-proportioned windows or floor to ceiling windows on the ground floors help achieve adequate overlooking;
- The public realm should provide high quality paving that is of a cohesive design using a palette of sustainable and durable materials. Permeable paving should be preferred to contribute to rain water infiltration;
- Materials should be robust, aesthetically attractive and with excellent weathering characteristics defining a sustainable and attractive place for residents and visitors;
- The laying pattern and materials used should make a significant contribution to the overall appearance, quality and success of a scheme;
- Large unbroken areas of a particular surface material should be avoided, especially tarmac. Areas can be made distinctive by using materials of a similar colour but with different textures;
- Larger development projects with more than one developer should employ the same consistent palette of materials and designs; and
- Traffic calming measures are highly important to improve pedestrian flow in Melksham's town centre and also the village centres in Melksham Without Parish. They aim to encourage safer, more responsible driving and potentially reduce traffic flow. Examples of traffic calming measures are speed bumps / humps and cushions, speed tables or raised pedestrian crossings.



**Figure 200:** Examples of quality materials and visually pleasing layout patterns that could be considered for public realm surfacing.



**Figure 201:** Example of speed cushion.

## DC.05 Public realm

### DC05.21 Street lighting

Artificial light provides valuable benefits and it makes areas feel more welcoming on a night-time. However, any new development needs to minimise light pollution, especially within the rural settlements, that disrupts the natural habitat and human health. In particular the 'dark skies' character of the countryside in Melksham should be protected since it benefits both people and wildlife.

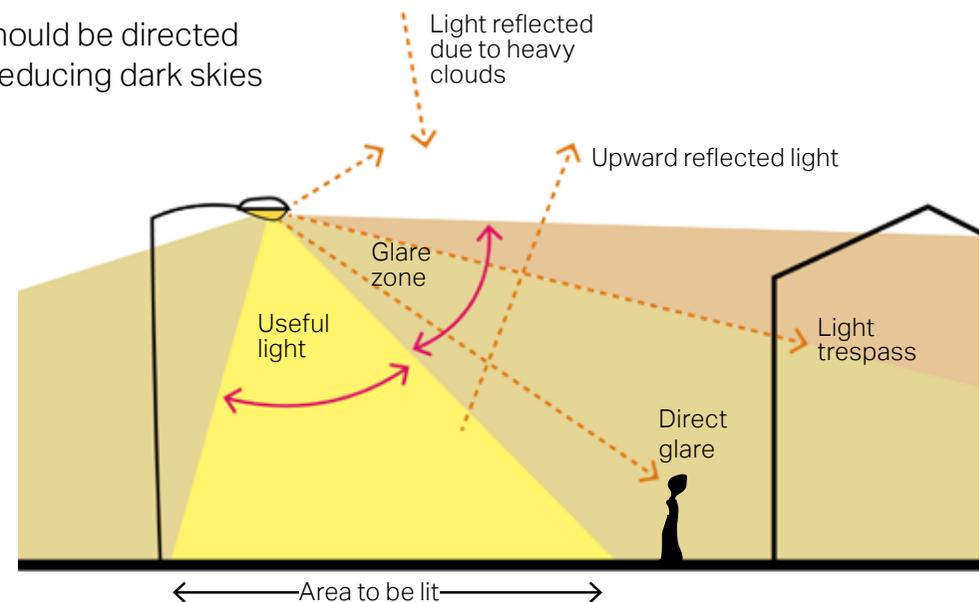
The following guidelines aim to ensure there is enough consideration given at the design stage of new developments, either within the town or the rural settlements:

- Lighting schemes should be part of a strategic approach where all light sources, including columns, bollards, switch off, PIR, porch lights, solar cat's eyes, up-lighting, path lighting, backlighting and downlighting, are put in an hierarchical order based on their use. This order will define the light levels and switch off times;

- Light sources should be less than 3000K to ensure appropriate levels of light spill and glare. Light shields can also be used at light sources for additional protection over glare and light spill and thus dark skies;
- Choice of lighting should be energy-efficient and sustainable. The installation of carefully directed motion sensors should be encouraged;
- Lighting schemes should be directed downward to avoid reducing dark skies

or disturb neighbours or passers by, as shown in [Figures 153-156](#); and

- Foot/cycle path light should be in harmony with surrounding rural landscape. Lighting such as solar cat's-eye lighting, reflective paint and ground-based lighting could be introduced, as shown in [Figure 157](#).



**Figure 202:** Diagram to illustrate the different components of light pollution and what 'good' lighting means.

## DC.05 Public realm

### Additional design guidelines and codes for street planting and lighting

Street planting should be considered in conjunction with, amongst other elements, street lighting. Street lighting can result to be harmful to adjacent trees, as it can alter a plant's normal growth pattern by exposing the tree to more light than it needs. In addition to this, if not done appropriately, the trees tend to grow and cover the street light requiring regular pruning which is not efficient. Thus, some design guidelines to help prevent those conflicts are:

- Trees, depending on their growing size, should be placed at a specific distance from the light source. For example:
  - If the light is less than 4.5m away from the tree and shorter than 6m, then large-maturing trees should be trained to grow over it, allowing the light to shine beneath the canopy. Long term management will be need to secure early pruning. Medium sized trees are

not recommended near low lights as they will block the light;

- If the light is less than 4.5m away from the tree and between 7-12m tall, then large or medium trees may not be suited for planting, as their branches will grow into and block the light;
- If the light is less than 4.5m away from the tree and more than 12m tall, small and medium-sized trees are well suited for planting, as their canopies will not grow into and block the light; and
- If the light is over 12m away from the tree, then almost any tree is suited for planting.
- Apart from the conventional light columns, there are other innovative ways to light up the outside space, with careful consideration to light pollution and preserving dark skies in the parish. Those include up-

lighting, downlighting, path lighting and backlighting. Those lighting techniques offer efficient direction in movement signalling access points and paths around the properties, security, usability allowing the outdoor spaces to be used at night as an extension of the inside as well as improving the aesthetics. Those lighting techniques should be part of the design process from early on, rather than an afterthought.

## DC.05 Public realm

**Up-lighting.** Focus light and attention on an object or tree from a low fixed location.



**Figure 203:** Example of up-lighting which is used to illuminate the trees within a property.

**Path lighting.** Use of low fixtures which direct illumination downward and outward.



**Figure 205:** Example of path lighting where all lights are directed downwards, whilst the light sources are obscured.

**Backlighting.** Fixtures placed at the back of an object to create a 'glowing' effect.



**Figure 206:** Example of backlighting used at the back of a bush to create a glowing effect.

**Downlighting.** Bullet type fixture placed well above eye level on an object or tree.



**Figure 204:** Example of down lighting which was used to illuminate the pathway.

**Cat's-eye lighting.** This technique can be used along footpaths and cycleways.



**Figure 207:** Example of a foot/cycle path which is lit by solar cat's-eye providing some light for pedestrian and cyclists without creating any disturbance to the nearby properties or unacceptable levels of light pollution.

## 3.2 Checklist

Because the design guidance and codes in this document cannot cover all design eventualities, this chapter provides a number of questions based on established good practice against which the design proposal should be evaluated. 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 considered the context and provided an adequate design solution. In particular, the checklist will be a helpful tool to use in pre-application engagement, in line with Policy 5 of the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

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 guidance for new development'. Following these ideas and principles, several questions are listed for more specific topics on the following pages.

# 1

## 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?

# 2 (continues)

## 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?
- 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?

## 2

### Local green spaces, views & character:

- 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

### Gateway and access features:

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

## 4 (continues)

### 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?

# 4

## Buildings layout and grouping:

- 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

## 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?

# 6

## 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?

# 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 (continues)

## 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?

# 8

## Building materials & surface treatment:

- 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?

# 9

## 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?

**Delivery**

**04**

## 4. Delivery

The Design Guidelines & Codes will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development in Melksham NPA, 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 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
<b>Applicants, developers, &amp; landowners</b>	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.
<b>Local Planning Authority</b>	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.
<b>Town and Parish Council</b>	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are complied with. The Town and Parish Council can also extract the key elements of this design guide and translate into design policies for the NP.
<b>Community organisations</b>	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
<b>Statutory consultees</b>	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

**Table 01:** Delivery

**Appendix A**

**05**

# 5. Appendix A

## Sustainable drainage into new residential streets Residential street 1

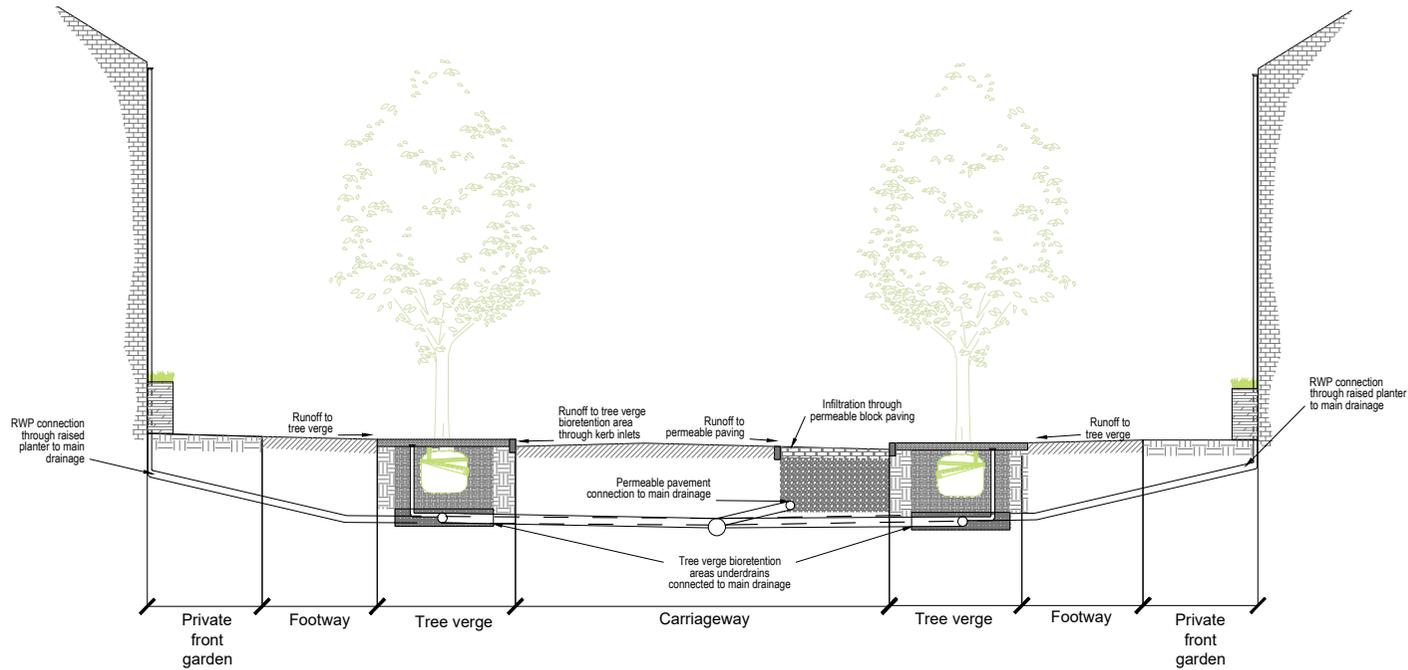


Figure 208: Residential street 1 typical drainage section.

## Sustainable drainage into new residential streets Residential street 2 (cul-de-sacs)

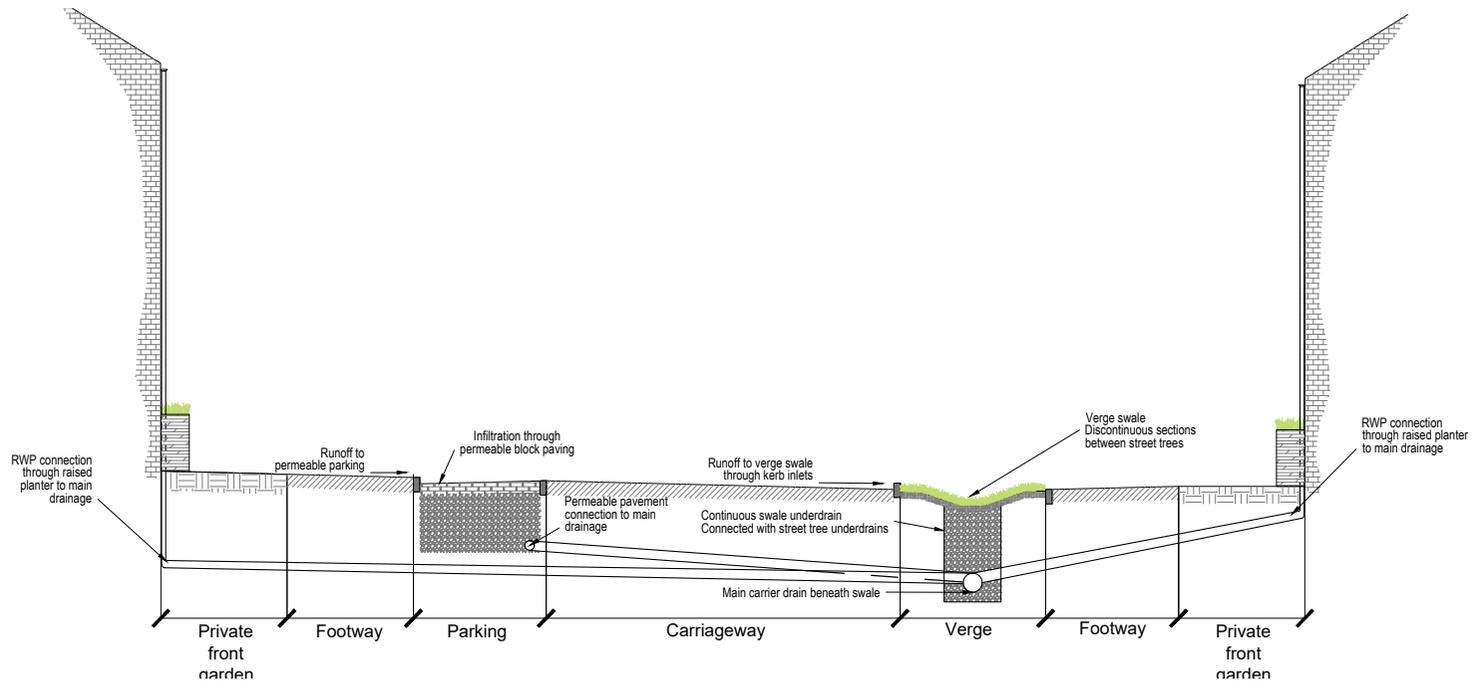


Figure 209: Residential street 2 typical drainage section.

## Sustainable drainage into new edge lanes

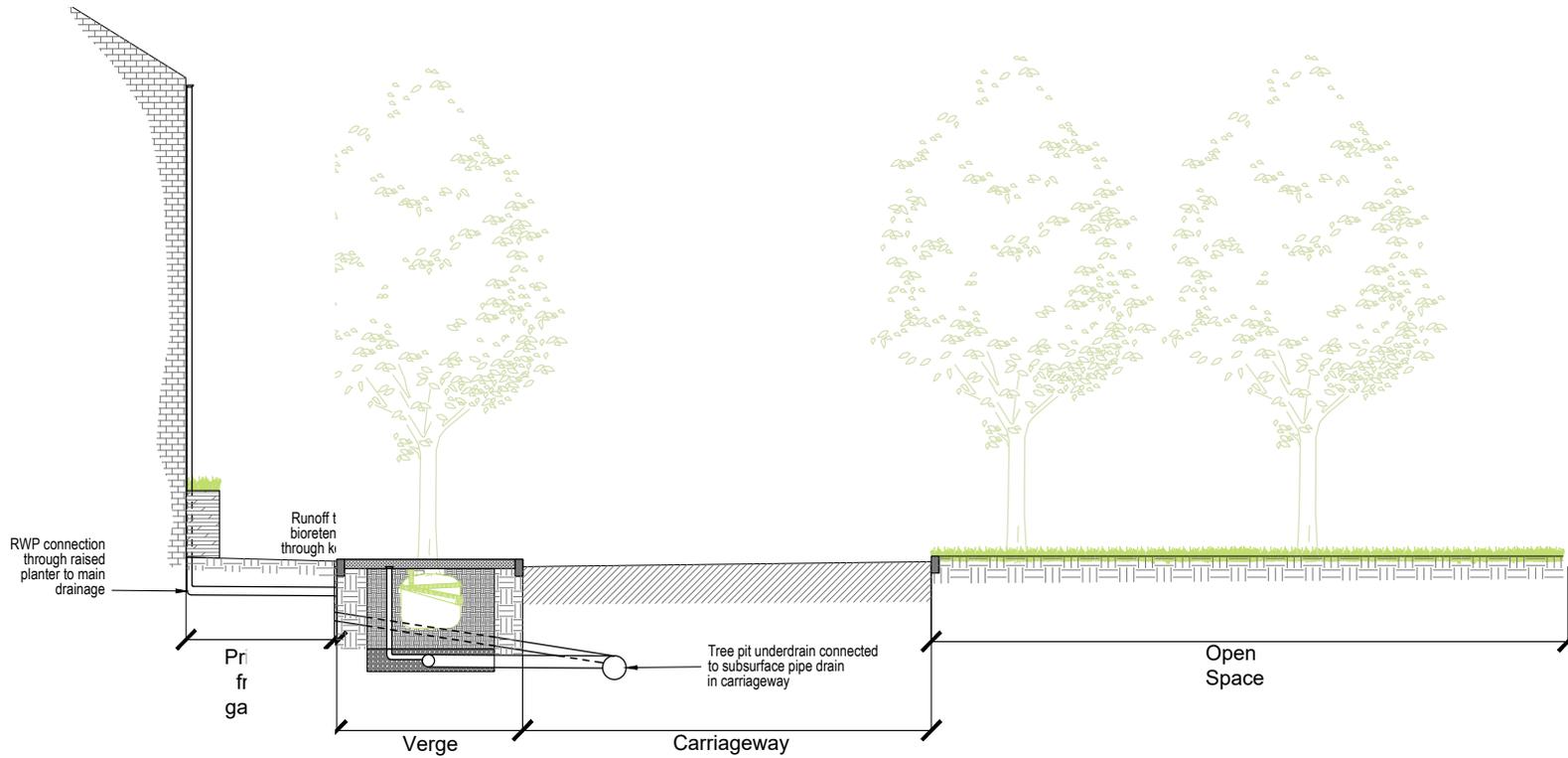


Figure 210: Edge lane typical drainage section

## 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](https://www.aecom.com) and [@AECOM](https://twitter.com/AECOM).

