

5.0 Context & Identity

- ▶ Landscape Context
- ▶ Built Form
- ▶ Historic Context
- ▶ Heritage Assets
- ▶ Building Consent
- ▶ Conservation Areas
- ▶ Heritage Statements



5.0

Context & Identity

Enhances the surroundings. Attractive and distinctive.

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5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Central Bedfordshire is a large and diverse area characterised by distinctive landscapes, important heritage and wildlife assets, and a variety of market towns, small scale settlements and villages with their own individual characters. It is important that all new developments are designed to respect this diversity and respond to the historical, cultural and landscape context of the area.
- 5.1.2 Context and Identity are two of the ten characteristics of good design identified in the [National Design Guide](#) which calls for a well-designed development to understand and relate well to the site and its wider context and respond to local character and identity. This section of the Design Guide sets the content and identity of Central Bedfordshire in relation to landscape character, built form and the historic environment. It also includes a checklist for appraising a site and its setting.
- 5.1.3 This section should be read in conjunction with chapters 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16 of the [NPPF](#), the adopted [Local Plan](#) (policies SP4, SP5, SP7, HQ1, HQ8, HQ9, HQ10, EE1-EE12) and the [National Design Guide](#), in particular sections C1, C2 and I1, I2 and I3.
- 5.1.4 Other key documents and resources that should be referenced include:
 - ▶ [Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment](#)
 - ▶ [The Chilterns AONB Building Design Guide](#)
 - ▶ [The Chilterns AONB Management Plan](#)
 - ▶ [The Forest of Marston Vale: Design Guidance SPD](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Tranquillity Strategy](#)
 - ▶ [Electric Vehicle Charging Technical Guidance for New Development Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Parking Standards SPD](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Conservation Area Appraisals](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Neighbourhood Plans](#)
 - ▶ [Greensand Country](#)
 - ▶ [Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings \(Historic England\)](#)
 - ▶ [The Setting of Heritage Assets \(Historic England\)](#)
 - ▶ [National Heritage List for England \(Historic England\)](#)

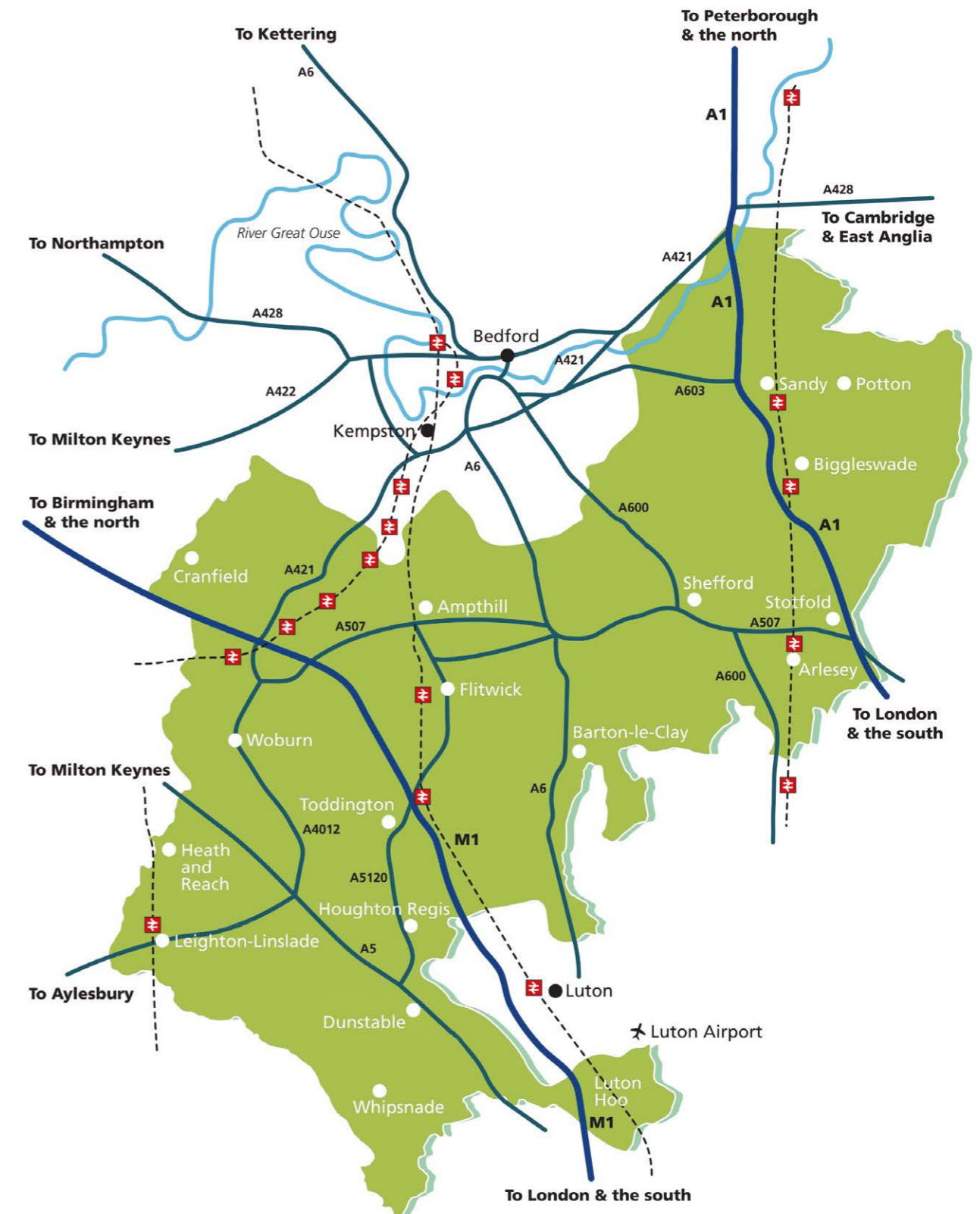


Figure 2: Central Bedfordshire Context Map

5.2 Landscape Context - the Landscape Character of Central Bedfordshire

- 5.2.1 Central Bedfordshire, has a rich and varied landscape, ranging from the chalk landscapes of the Chiltern Hills in the south of the area, forming distinct scarps, plateaux and dip slopes; contrasting with the lower lying clay hills and clay vales and the distinctive, elevated Greensand Ridge following a southwest to northeast alignments across the area.
- 5.2.2 The River Great Ouse follows the northern boundary of Central Bedfordshire with tributaries including the Rivers Ivel, Flit and Ouzel threading through clay vales and hills, and the Greensand Ridge. To the south the headwaters of the River Gade and Ver lie within seasonally wet valleys linked to Chiltern chalk hills aquifers, as does the River Lea as a permanent watercourse. All are classified as chalk streams and support globally rare habitats.
- 5.2.3 In terms of topography, the lowest point is 18 metres above sea level and lies at its northern tip, near Tempsford. The highest point, on the Dunstable Downs, is 223 metres above sea level.
- 5.2.4 Central Bedfordshire has two designated landscapes – part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and part of the Marston Vale Community Forest. There are also 13 Registered Parks and Gardens and many Conservation Areas within towns and villages.

The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- 5.2.5 An extensive proportion of the Chiltern Hills within Central Bedfordshire lie within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a nationally designated landscape which is afforded significant protection through the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#). The AONB was designated in 1965 to protect the scenic beauty of the area. The Chilterns Conservation Board have produced a [Management Plan](#) which contains a comprehensive summary of the key issues facing the AONB and the management policies and actions needed to conserve this special place.
- 5.2.6 The Board have also prepared the [Chilterns Building Design Guide](#), which provides specific guidance to ensure new development is in keeping with the special qualities of the AONB. It covers such topics as the setting of buildings, the design of vernacular features and the use of traditional local materials. All development proposals within the AONB and its setting will be expected to take into account the Chilterns Building Design Guide, in addition to the guidance contained within this overarching Design Guide.

Marston Vale Community Forest

- 5.2.7 The Forest of Marston Vale covers an area of 61 square miles between Bedford and Milton Keynes, located to the north-west of the Greensand Ridge. It was designated in 1992 as one of 12 Community Forests in England, each designated by Government as a national priority area for environmentally led regeneration of degraded land. From a base of around 3% tree cover in 1991, tree cover is now approximately 15%, with a target of 30% cover by 2030, which as well as creating a new landscape will bring with it extensive environmental, biodiversity, and quality of life benefits. [The Forest of Marston Vale: Design Guidance SPD](#) provides detailed guidance on how the aspirations for the area will be taken forward, and should be considered in addition to this overarching design guide

The Greensand Ridge and 'Greensand Country'

- 5.2.8 The Greensand Ridge is a band of higher ground stretching from Leighton Buzzard to Gamlingay, which rises out of the surrounding vales to create a locally unique environment. The area contains all of Bedfordshire's remaining heathland, more than half of its woodland and 29 parklands. It is a landscape rich in wildlife and cultural heritage, with its own special qualities and sense of place, and provides a 'green oasis' of peace and quiet, rolling countryside and breath-taking views.
- 5.2.9 In January 2013, a National Lottery Heritage Funded Programme was established to deliver more than 40 projects, helping to raise awareness of the heritage value of the landscape and to reverse the gradual decline in the distinct landscape character of this beautiful and loved place.
- 5.2.10 Led by The Greensand Trust and Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, the vision was for Greensand Country to be a living and working landscape that is cherished by present and future generations. Throughout the programme, a number of major milestones were achieved from creating new walking, cycling and horse-riding routes, to rebuilding sandstone structures, training apprentices in heritage and landscape skills and the inception of the ever-popular Greensand Country Festival.
- 5.2.11 A 4-year Heritage Lottery Funded initiative was established in 2017 – The Greensand Country Landscape Partnership works with businesses and the community to safeguard and manage natural and cultural resources. A key aim of the Partnership was to foster awareness of the rich heritage – and to encourage residents and visitors to participate and enjoy their precious local environment. Consideration should be given to the distinct character of the Greensand Ridge and the aspirations for [Greensand Country](#) when designing schemes within this area.
- 5.2.12 [Neighbourhood Plans](#) have been produced for a number of parishes across Greensand Country and some towns and villages may also have a village design statement, which will include useful guidance and information on how the settlement has changed and should be considered when designing schemes.



Figure 3: Downs in winter

5.3 Landscape Setting and Context for Development

- 5.3.1 Understanding and responding sensitively to local landscape character is fundamental to the delivery of a well-designed development. Development must respect, retain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape. The Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment provides guidance to inform the design of new developments and should be considered as part of the design process.
- 5.3.2 Central Bedfordshire is characterised by 10 landscape types, each with similar physical and cultural attributes, which are subdivided into 38 component landscape character areas which each have a distinct and recognisable local identity. The character areas form the basis for landscape assessment and each character area provides:
 - ▶ A description – key characteristics under the headings of landscape character, historic landscape, biodiversity and settlement and form; and
 - ▶ An evaluation – summarising past and present changes and assessing landscape and visual sensitivities; and setting out an overall landscape strategy and guidelines for new development and landscape management and conservation priorities.
- 5.3.3 This Design Guide (Nature chapter) provides detailed guidance on how to integrate new development within the landscape, and the types of species which may be appropriate within each landscape character area.

5.4 Landscape Connections

- 5.4.1 As with urban design, landscape design needs to ensure that development fits visually within and compliments the character of surrounding landscape. It should also be a functional component of the surrounding landscape and environment. Connecting landscape features such as water courses, ecological habitats, woodland blocks, hedgerows, historic boundaries, and recreational paths can strengthen the landscape framework and inform the layout and character of development.
- 5.4.2 Strategic green and blue infrastructure corridors extending into and through the development can create or preserve ecological connections and create walkable/cyclable neighbourhoods. Adequate space is required to ensure various uses and purposes can function properly. Consideration should be given to how landscape features can be linked to blue infrastructure, sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) and climate resilience as green infrastructure has an important role in cooling and urban heat island prevention. The Council have prepared a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the green and blue infrastructure network in Central Bedfordshire and identifies priorities for enhancement. Consideration should be given to this Strategy when developing the design of new schemes. The Nature chapter of this Design Guide provides specific guidance on green and blue infrastructure.

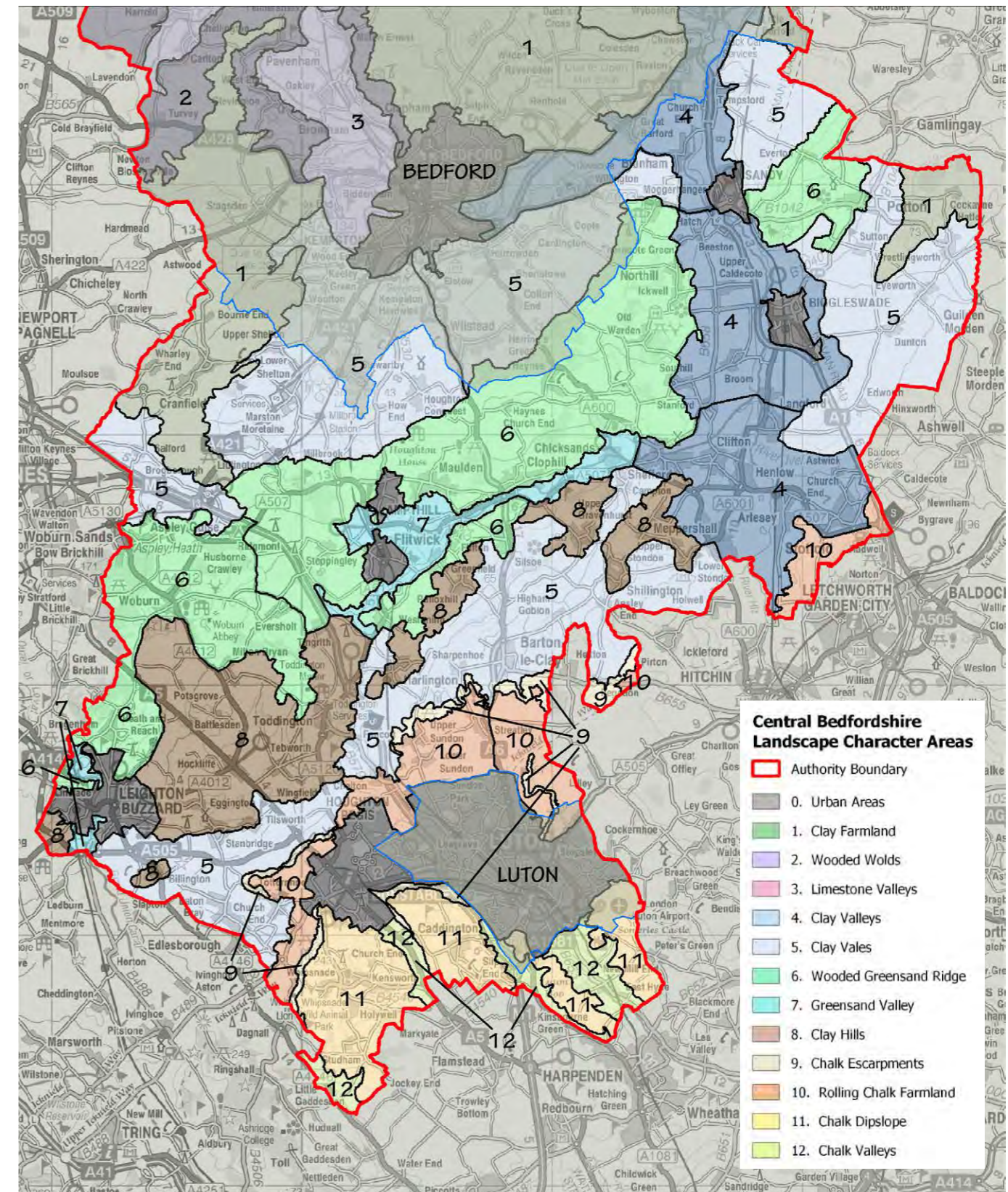


Figure 4: Landscape Character Areas

5.5 Tranquillity

- 5.5.1 Visual and audible tranquillity is an important asset in both rural and urban areas. Tranquillity can support health and wellbeing for all and be a key contributor to quality of life, alongside the enjoyment of wildlife, landscapes and heritage assets. The adopted Local Plan defines tranquillity in Central Bedfordshire and includes references in the supporting text and landscape policies to ensure that it is taken into consideration.
- 5.5.2 The [Tranquillity Strategy](#) assesses and maps relative tranquillity across Central Bedfordshire and provides design guidance on mitigation measures to reduce the impact of future development on tranquillity. It also confirms how proposals will be considered in relation to potential impacts on tranquillity. This Strategy should be considered as part of the design process.

5.6 Skylines and Roofscapes

- 5.6.1 The wooded skylines of the Greensand Ridge and the open, expansive escarpments and elevated plateau of the Chilterns AONB strongly define the setting of the adjacent vales, but other more locally important skylines can also be significant, for example the Clay Hills and the Cranfield Ridge. Although these areas are largely undeveloped, features such as church towers, water towers and roof lines form important landmarks.
- 5.6.2 The skylines, established landmarks, wooded ridgelines and other positive long views should be taken into account when considering the massing and layout of development. The skyline of new development should aim to enhance or respond to the character of its setting – a key design principle being whether it becomes a strongly visible feature or remains below the skyline.
- 5.6.3 Consideration should also be given to the use of existing landscape features, and the colour and glare from any new development, which can assist in integrating new development within the landscape.

5.7 Built Form in Central Bedfordshire

- 5.7.1 The location of settlements in Central Bedfordshire is based on geography, landscape and arrangement of routes, and has been added to in an organic piecemeal way over the centuries. Many of the settlements in Central Bedfordshire are formed where key routes join together and/or where they meet a river, and these still form the centre of most towns and villages for example:
- ▶ Dunstable Town Centre is historically focused upon the intersection of two routes, the Neolithic Icknield Way running from east to west and the Roman Watling Street running from north to south. The crossroads remains a dominant feature in the character and topography of the Dunstable and has served to divide the town into 4-character areas.
 - ▶ Clophill has linear form running alongside the river Flit.
- 5.7.2 Settlements elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire often have a distinct contrast between their compact nature and the open landscape. For example, the northern entrance to Ampthill from the Greensand Ridge offers a distinctive view of the town within the wider landscape.



Figure 5: Dunstable Town Centre



Figure 6: Ampthill Centre

5.7.3 The larger market towns in Central Bedfordshire generally have a central marketplace, featuring a clock tower and a church set in its own grounds. Edwardian buildings surround the centre, and 19th and 20th century buildings are generally found on the outskirts. For example, the Market Square at Biggleswade is still the principal civic space and together with the High Street and Shortmead Street, form a recognisable historic centre.



Figure 7: Biggleswade Market Square

5.7.4 Market squares are one example of a strong urban form found in Central Bedfordshire, that of the public square, which:

- ▶ Are generally located at a joining of routes in the centre of settlements,
- ▶ Include a strong definition of the edge of public spaces with a consistent line of built form, and
- ▶ Include higher buildings in relation to the size of the square so that the sense of enclosure within the space (enclosure ratio) is comfortable.

5.7.5 High Streets are an example of another positive urban form found locally. These are found in the centre of settlements, also generally at the location where different routes meet, and often leading to public squares. They are characterised by taller buildings with consistent lines and a tighter enclosure ratio and were traditionally designed to have a mix of uses, including leisure and retail on the ground floor, and the potential for office and residential above. Twentieth century policy has resulted in the loss of these mixed uses, although recent planning policy has once again encouraged more mixed use to add vitality to these streets.

5.7.6 Other settlements such as Toddington are located on plateaus. Toddington has a central village green, which is overlooked by a dense pattern of development, a town hall and the church of St. George which collectively provides a strong sense of identity. Although it has a strongly defined, high density historic core, which to the south is defined by 19th century terraces set forward to the pavement edges, like many settlements in Central Bedfordshire much of Toddington's historic boundaries have twentieth century development which stretches to the outskirts.

5.7.7 Some individual settlements, often estate villages such as Woburn, have also developed their own particular design styles based on the use of certain materials and features which give a special and often unique identity.



Figure 8: Woburn Village centre

5.7.8 The traditional settlements and their forms may vary in density but have several positive characteristics in common which are supported by this Design Guide:

- ▶ A recognisable centre generally based where key routes join, driving footfall.
- ▶ The centre having denser, tighter knit buildings which more define the spaces within the centre, with higher enclosure ratios than the building forms and spaces further out in the settlements.
- ▶ Buildings defining public spaces such as streets, squares, and village greens with consistent building lines and an active frontage (where buildings overlook public spaces).
- ▶ Definition of semi-private space in the form of front gardens between housing and the street edge further out of the centre in larger settlements and lower density centres.
- ▶ Private amenity spaces such as private gardens or shared courtyard to the rear of buildings overlooked by more private spaces of dwellings and other uses.
- ▶ Landmarks consisting of taller buildings, older buildings with distinctive architectural features, churches, town halls, etc. These add to the sense of identity and ensure these settlements are more legible and easier to navigate.
- ▶ A recognisable street hierarchy including for example primary, secondary and tertiary routes, including more important routes which are larger in scale and mews courts which are more intimate in scale. The hierarchy is matched a hierarchy of enclosure ratios, by street widths and the form of the buildings which define them, resulting in a high level of legibility. For example, primary routes may be wider, with larger buildings defining the spaces, whereas tertiary routes may be narrower, with smaller buildings set back from the pavement edge by front gardens.
- ▶ A compact, efficient use of built form in the centre of larger settlements ensuring that these areas are easily walkable.
- ▶ Buildings with windows and doors that reduce in scale with building height.
- ▶ Vertical detailing in the design of buildings, with recognisable features such as chimneys, stepped building facades in line with topography and changes in height.
- ▶ Narrower plot widths to give the feeling of a more human scale.

5.8 Twentieth Century Development

- 5.8.1 Early Twentieth century development is characterised by semi-detached inter-war housing, which is less dense, more suburban in character and generally follows patterns of streets. Mid-twentieth century housing can often break this pattern, following a 'Radburn' layout which leaves rear gardens exposed, and concentrates on the separation of pedestrian and road traffic, creating insecure, poorly overlooked routes. Mid-twentieth century houses are generally also designed around the car with carports or garages.
- 5.8.2 The traditional tight urban grain of town centres has also been undermined by larger footprint buildings which reduce permeability and result in inactive frontage, with vehicle dominated carparks.
- 5.8.3 There have also been examples of pavilion style buildings surrounded by landscaping. Although this is not specifically precluded by this Design Guide, when poorly applied this type of building can result in poor definition of public spaces and be dominated by a sea of car parking and a lack of sense of ownership. An example of this is a retail park.
- 5.8.4 The mid-twentieth century preoccupation with zoning left many high streets concentrating on retail only at the expense of leisure and residential uses. This resulted in high streets lacking in activity and footfall outside of retail hours. The lack of other uses also made them vulnerable to the recent retail downturns as a result of moving to online shopping or lack of retail activity due to the movement of retail uses to out of town locations.
- 5.8.5 There are a number of good examples of modern architecture in Central Bedfordshire containing the following positive characteristics which are supported by this Guide:
- ▶ The form following the function of the building, where that form does not undermine the urban grain and identity of its location.
 - ▶ Concentration on light, open internal and external spaces, with large windows and doors which emphasise the connection between the inside and the outside.
 - ▶ Innovative use of structure and materials, such as steel, render and concrete, which does not undermine the human scale of the architecture.
 - ▶ Use of flat roofs as landscaped roof terraces.
- 5.8.6 The combination of the above principles produces landmark buildings which stand out positively from their context and/or create new positive context and character.
- 5.8.7 In the late twentieth century, new housing reassumed more traditional forms. These buildings were generally grouped around cul-de-sacs, resulting in poor permeability and the loss of active frontage and overlooking. This housing, although appearing to adopt more traditional forms, sometimes fails to properly define the spaces between buildings.
- 5.8.8 More recently, high streets have concentrated on reintroducing mixed use buildings including leisure uses and the concept of residential upper floor living, which has once again begun to encourage footfall and activity throughout the day. This has been driven by planning policy.

5.8.9 The concepts of street and squares, courtyards and perimeter blocks have also been rediscovered, largely driven by local and national guidance. Recent advances have concentrated on introducing building forms which attempt to define and link streets and public spaces together.

5.8.10 More guidance on positive forms of development, arrangement of perimeter block structures and urban grain are provided in the Built Form section. The concept of mixing uses, to encourage vitality, footfall and community cohesion is promoted in the Uses section.

5.9 Local Built Form Characteristics

- 5.9.1 A positive characteristic of many local buildings in Central Bedfordshire is the use of shallow building forms and steep roof pitches. The palette in Central Bedfordshire was traditionally red brick walls and clay tile roofs. Locally produced 'red' bricks ranged in colour, from those with orange tinges to nearly purple. Generally, they were handmade and a mellow red in colour, with rounded edges, rather than the sharp and hard edge of modern machine-made bricks. It was common to use bricks of slightly different colours to provide ornamental detail. Such combinations were subtle, and not based on dramatically contrasting colours. Glazed headers were often used to create decorative patterns.
- 5.9.2 The traditional plain red clay tile continues to be used widely. During the mid-nineteenth century slate was introduced as a roofing material and used extensively in villages which expanded rapidly from that time. A common feature is the use of clay ridge tiles on a slate roof.
- 5.9.3 Traditional cottages sometimes had dormers to make use of the roof space. They were usually gabled, small, restricted in number and sited low down on the roof, occasionally breaking the eaves line (less common nowadays). Cheeks and gables tended to be plain rendered, and occasionally lead was used for cheeks, and brick and flint for gables. Tile-hanging or wood on wood-effect cladding are not traditional.
- 5.9.4 Traditionally, windows were slightly taller than they were wide. If a wider opening was required, the glazing was divided into separate casements or sashes to give the same vertical emphasis. The use of vertically proportioned elements of fenestration is typical of more positive forms of contemporary development.
- 5.9.5 Brick walls (possibly incorporating flint and half round cappings), fences and hedges are the traditional forms of property boundary and remain a positive characteristic of contemporary development.
- 5.9.6 More recent twentieth century buildings have used other materials such as concrete and powder coated cladding, and larger wider windows concentrating on more horizontal emphasis that lacks a human scale. While the experimentation of contemporary architecture has added variety to settlements, this has often come at an expense of a lack of coordination with more traditional forms. However, more recent interventions have attempted to put this right, by retaining the variety, but ensuring connectivity, definition of public and private space and contextual typologies, rhythms and proportions.

5.10 Traditional Materials Typology

- 5.10.1 The following section provides a summary of the palette of traditional materials found in Central Bedfordshire. It is important to understand the subtleties of material changes throughout the area.
- 5.10.2 When designing new schemes, a decision will need to be taken on whether to attempt to match the original materials or whether a modern high-quality alternative may be more appropriate. In some cases, attempts to replicate the original material can often result in a poor match and this can diminish the overall quality of the extension/new building.
- 5.10.3 In all cases careful consideration should be given to the specification of materials and it is advised to speak to the Council's planning officers and conservation team (in the case of a listed building/ site in a conservation area) before finalising materials to be used for a development.

Figure 11: Someries Castle gatehouse (1464), one of the oldest brick buildings in the UK

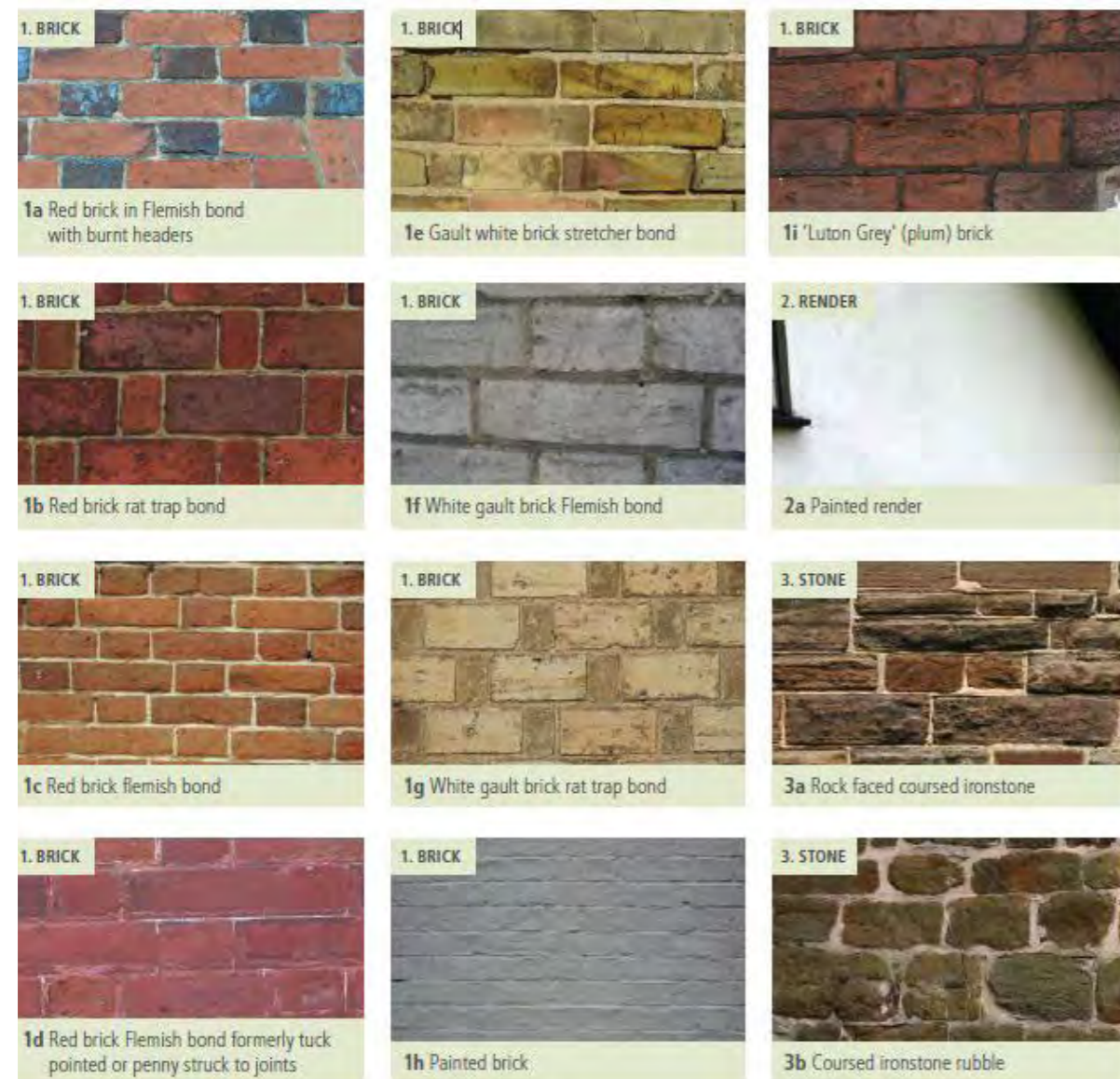


Figure 9: Building Materials used in Central Bedfordshire part 1

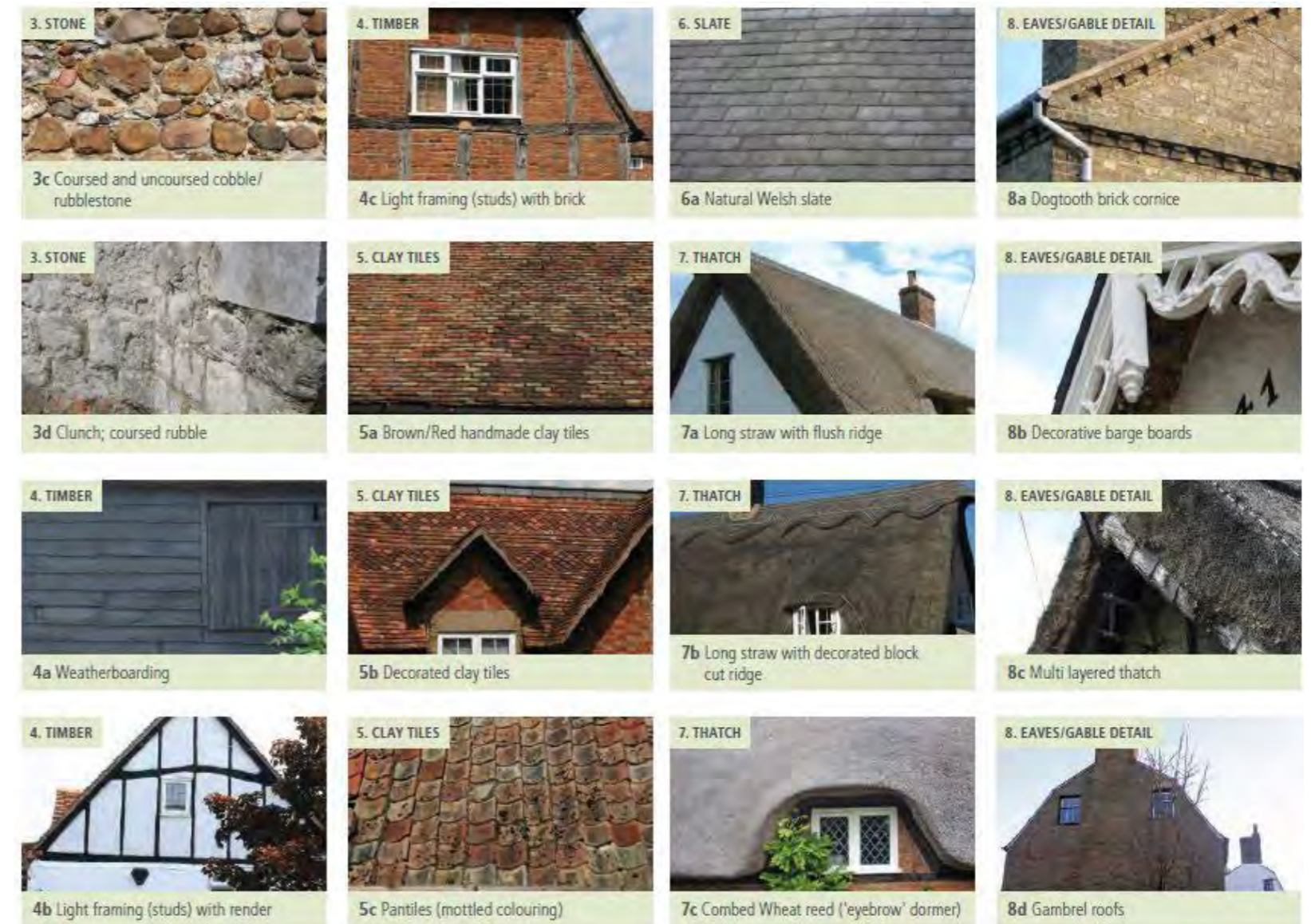


Figure 10: Building Materials used in Central Bedfordshire part 2

5.11 Historic Context of Central Bedfordshire

- 5.11.1 Central Bedfordshire has an especially rich and varied heritage of buildings, historic parklands and landscapes, archaeological sites, and monuments. The character and identity of Central Bedfordshire is to a large extent, defined by its historic environment. This includes approximately 1900 Listed Buildings (of which 163 are Grade I or Grade II* listed including most Parish churches, many fine country houses and a variety of other buildings and structures), 61 Conservation Areas and 15 Registered Parks and Gardens. There are also 87 Scheduled Monuments of national importance ranging from prehistoric and Roman settlements and ritual sites, through medieval settlements, castles, and moats to monuments of the industrial age. Central Bedfordshire also has as a wealth of archaeological sites, features, non-listed historic buildings, and landscapes.
- 5.11.2 The continuity of these heritage features adds to the quality of our lives and our understanding of the past. These are important features in creating a sense of local character and distinctiveness, through the enhancement of a familiar and cherished local scene.

5.12 Policy Guiding Development Affecting the Historic Environment

- 5.12.1 Section 18 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 sets out the Council’s commitment to the historic environment and policies HE1 (Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments), HE2 (Historic Parks and Gardens) and HE3 (Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and Built Heritage) set the policy requirements for developments that affect all heritage assets.
- 5.12.2 Central Bedfordshire Council encourage applicants engage with the pre-application process to ensure all heritage considerations are discussed, considered, and addressed at an early stage of the planning process. The contact information for the Council’s heritage officers is as follows:
 - ▶ Archaeology: archaeology@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
 - ▶ Conservation: planning@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Figure 12: (left) Biggleswade Medieval Ringwork and Prehistoric Ring Ditches
 Figure 13: (right) Totternhoe Knolls Motte & Bailey Castle

5.13 The Historic Environment Record (HER)

- 5.13.1 Central Bedfordshire’s Historic Environment Record is a key source for every aspect of Central Bedfordshire’s historic environment containing details of all known archaeological sites, historic buildings, and historic landscape features within the area, from the earliest human activity around 125,000 years ago to World War II. All Designated Heritage Assets and known Non-Designated Heritage Assets are included on the HER.
- 5.13.2 In addition to a computer database and GIS, it consists of written and printed information, plans, illustrations, aerial and other photographs which are available for use by all. It is also the prime source for gathering data to inform Heritage Statements to accompany planning applications in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF and the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2015-2035).
- 5.13.3 The Council’s HER Officers can be contacted at:
 - ▶ HER@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
 - ▶ 0300 300 6038 or 0300 300 4589

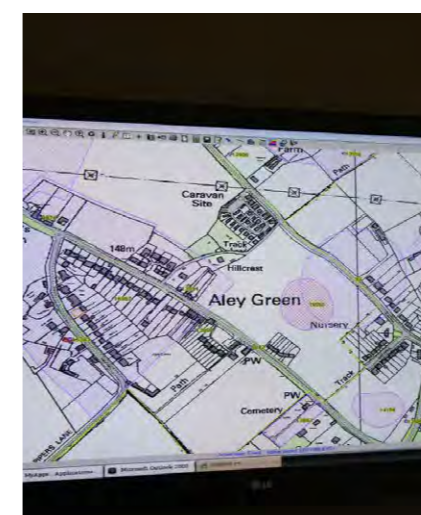


Figure 14: (top left) Historic Environment Record Resources
 Figure 15: (bottom left) Historic Environment Record GIS layers
 Figure 16: (right) Manor Farm onion shed Lower Caldecote

5.14 Designated Heritage Assets

- 5.14.1 Within Central Bedfordshire, Designated Heritage Assets are:
- ▶ Listed Buildings;
 - ▶ Scheduled Monuments;
 - ▶ Registered Parks and Gardens;
 - ▶ Conservation Areas.
- 5.14.2 There are no Registered Battlefields, Protected Wreck Sites or World Heritage Sites in Central Bedfordshire.
- 5.14.3 More information on Designated Heritage Assets, the consent regimes that relate to them and the information that needs to be supplied with planning applications that affect Designated Heritage Assets can be found in the sections below. All planning applications that affect Designated Heritage Assets in Central Bedfordshire will be assessed against paragraphs 194, 199-202 of the NPPF as well as the policies in the Local Plan. Planning applications that affect Conservation Areas will also be considered in relation to paragraphs 206 and 207 of the NPPF.



Figure 17: (top right) Park House, Toddington
 Figure 18: (top left) Listed Building, Woburn
 Figure 19: (bottom left) Church of St Mary, Harlington
 Figure 20: (bottom right) 85 Dunstable St, Ampthill

5.15 Designated Heritage Assets: Listed Buildings

- 5.15.1 A listed building is a building or structure of special architectural or historic interest and is included within a list called the 'List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest', drawn up by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 5.15.2 There are three grades of listed building reflecting their relative importance, Grade I is the highest and represents about 2.5% of the total number of listed buildings, followed by Grade II* and Grade II. The same statutory controls apply to all listed buildings regardless of grade. Listed buildings are each unique and irreplaceable, therefore great weight should be given to their conservation.
- 5.15.3 The listing of a building includes the exterior and interior as well as any object or structure fixed to the building. Furthermore, any objects or structures within the setting of the building, which, although not fixed to the building, form part of its land and have done so since before 1st July 1948 are also included within the listing.

5.16 Listed Building Consent

- 5.16.1 Listed Building consent is required for works to demolish, extend or alter a listed building (and/or a building and structure in its curtilage) in a manner which affects its special historic or architectural interest. It is a criminal offence to undertake works to a listed building without the necessary consents.
- 5.16.2 The interior of a listed building is often of special interest as well as the exterior, therefore any internal works which affect its special character will require listed building consent. Furthermore, the plan form (internal layout) of a building, particularly what is called a compartmentalised plan from the 18th and 19th century, is also of special interest and therefore any works to alter this will require consent.

5.17 What requires Listed Building Consent?

- 5.17.1 The following require listed building consent:
- ▶ Demolition of all or part of a listed building or building/structure within its curtilage.
 - ▶ Any extensions to a listed building.
 - ▶ Alterations (including internal works) which affect the special character of the building.
 - ▶ Repairs which involve the replacement of important parts of the building's fabric or the use of different materials or methods (e.g., replacement of a slate roof with tiles).
 - ▶ Please note that this summary should only be used as a guide. If you are in any doubt, please contact the Council's Conservation Officers who will be able to provide clarification
 - ▶ All work that triggers the need for a Listed Building Consent is covered in table on pages 27 to 55 of Historic England Advice Note 16, June 2021.

5.18 Demolition

- 5.18.1 Proposals to demolish all or part of a listed building will not be supported, other than in exceptional circumstances. The historic buildings of Central Bedfordshire, particularly listed buildings, form an integral part of its local character and make an important contribution to furthering our understanding of the historic development of the area. Once lost or irretrievably altered, historic buildings cannot be replaced, therefore the Council will make every effort to retain and protect listed buildings unless it is satisfied that the building is beyond any form of repair or retention



Figure 21: (top) Interior of former Town Hall, Toddington
Figure 22: (bottom) Re-roofing of the stables at Harlington manor

5.19 Conversions and Change of Use

- 5.19.1 Central Bedfordshire is predominantly rural, with a substantial number of historic farm buildings, many of which are listed. Such groups of traditional farm buildings, including those formerly belonging to large farming estates, are an important and notable characteristic of the district.
- 5.19.2 Converting buildings, particularly traditional farm buildings such as barns, stables, cart sheds and onion sheds to residential or office use can prove challenging in terms of ensuring the historic values of the building are retained. This is particularly the case for barn conversions. There is generally a presumption in favour of retaining the single space qualities of this building type with limited subdivisions and preferably using existing openings with limited or no additional openings in the structure.
- 5.19.3 Where subdivision is considered acceptable, it needs to respect existing historic fabric, and where possible, enhance the sense of openness. Whilst this can sometimes be difficult to achieve, there are a number of innovative and creative solutions which can be explored when considering in terms of any external alterations, the agricultural character of a traditional farm building needs to be retained as far as possible. Important features which make an important contribution to their character such as ventilation details, threshing doors, and long unbroken roof profiles should be retained, and any new openings kept to a minimum.
- 5.19.4 The layout or plan form of farm buildings should also be retained as part any conversion scheme. Extensions to a barn or farm building, particularly glazed extensions such as conservatories will be resisted due to both their domesticating effect and the potential reduction in the legibility of the plan form of the farm complex.
- 5.19.5 Consideration should be given to how renewable energy or efficiency initiative could be implemented, for example, sensitive insulation or double-glazing opportunities without having a harmful impact.
- 5.19.6 Further guidance on the conversion of historic farm buildings can be found in [‘Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings’](#) (Historic England, September 2017).



Figure 23: Careful and thoughtful intervention to historic buildings enables as much historic fabric to be retained preserving the character and special interest of the building



Figure 24: New openings should be kept to a minimum and cart openings and doors such as those at Crawley Hall Barns, Husborne Crawley should be retained as part of a conversion scheme.



Figure 27: Water End Barns, Eversholt. A successful conversion of a Bedford Estates model farm complex into office accommodation.



Figure 25: Large projecting cart entrance with gabled midstrey in the timber framed 18th century threshing barn at Longslade Lane, Woburn



Figure 26: A farm complex in Sewell showing the important relationship between the farm buildings and the farmhouse, and its wider rural farmland setting. It is essential that this relationship between farm buildings and their setting is maintained.



Figure 28: (left) Features such as shutters are important to the agricultural character and appearance of a farm building and can be made a feature in works to convert a building. Water End Barns, Eversholt.
Figure 29: (right) Bodger Barn, Sewell. Conversion of the timber framed barn to residential accommodation which has retained its historic character and setting.



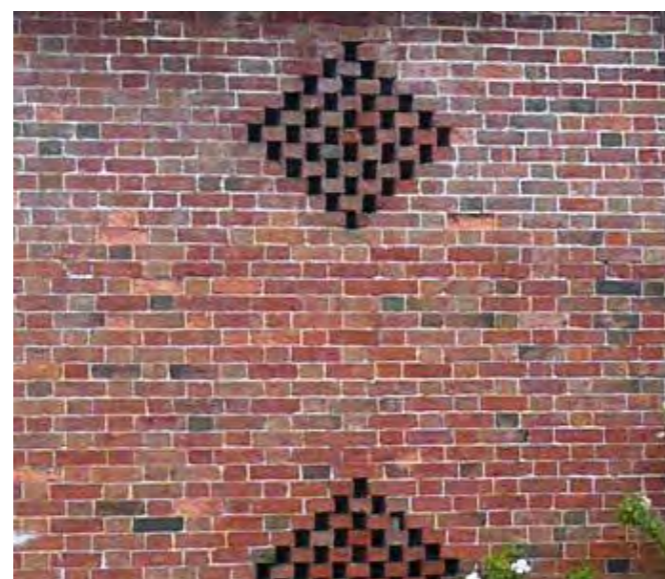


Figure 30: (top) Lower Farm, Millbrook. One of many model farm complexes within Central Bedfordshire created by the Bedford Estate which consist of a compact set of red brick buildings arranged in a particular pattern (such as an E shape) which integrated all farm base

Figure 31: (bottom left) Thatched cottage, Woburn Street, Ampthill

Figure 32: (bottom right) Diamond pattern ventilation detail at Horsemoor Farm, Woburn. One of many different types of traditional ventilation details which can denote the type of materials that were formerly stored in the building.

5.20 Alterations and Extensions

- 5.20.1 Most listed buildings in Central Bedfordshire can accommodate some degree of sensitive extension, associated thoughtful change or sympathetic alteration. There is, however, a balance that must always be carefully struck to ensure that any proposed changes and additions do not damage or compromise the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.
- 5.20.2 This applies to both the interior as well as the exterior, materials of construction and other fabric or decorative elements which contribute to the overall special interest of the building. At the heart of any proposals for change should be a fully informed understanding of what comprises the intrinsic special interest of the listed building or its significance. There is a clear presumption against the loss or alteration of historic fabric and detailing, including historic window joinery and window glass.
- 5.20.3 When considering proposals to extend and/or alter a listed building, both the principles set out in the Homes and Buildings chapter of this Design Guide and those set out below should be considered.

5.21 Retention of Historic Fabric and Important Features

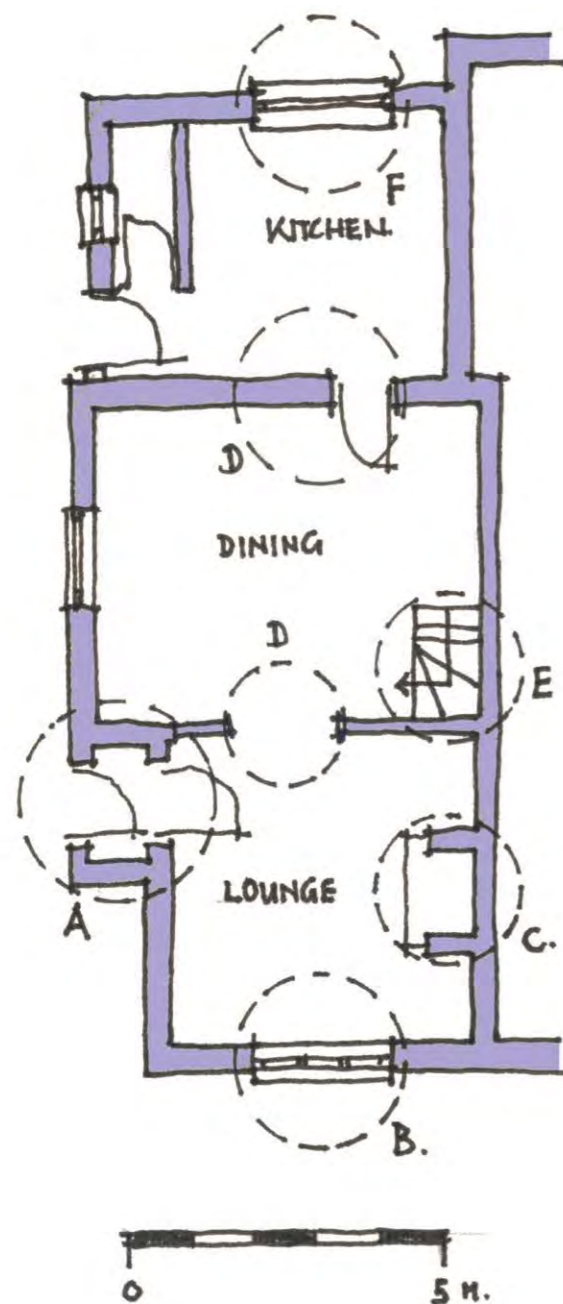
- 5.21.1 Every opportunity should be taken to retain original features and historic fabric when altering or extending a listed building to ensure its integrity, character and local distinctiveness is maintained. These include features such as original roof coverings and internal finishes such as lath and plaster ceilings, original or historic skirting boards and internal doors which are becoming increasingly rare.
- 5.21.2 If the loss of historic fabric and features can be fully justified against the wider benefits of the proposals, they should be recorded prior to their removal. The level of recording will depend on the significance of the feature to be lost and will be assessed using the guidelines set out in the Historic England document



Figure 33 (left): Staircase at 39 Church Street Ampthill

Figure 34: (right) Historic console at Queen Anne Summerhouse

- 5.21.3 One traditional historic feature which makes an important contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of Central Bedfordshire is long straw thatched roofs with simple ridge detailing. Some of the 200 thatched buildings in the district have retained this important material and detailing, however many have been changed to water reed or combed wheat reed thatch, particularly in the second half of the 20th century.
- 5.21.4 Central Bedfordshire Council aims to preserve this important long straw tradition by ensuring the retention of existing long straw thatched roofs and encouraging the re-introduction of the thatching material with simple vernacular detailing where this is technically appropriate.



- A. Original entrances and porches should be retained. Alterations which render original entrances redundant should be avoided.
- B. The windows of an historic building are one of the most important features. Alterations to the size and type of windows is unlikely to be acceptable (unless it is informed reinstatement of original windows and proportions).
- C. The chimney breast and fireplace are important dating features of a building and provide important evidence of how a house was used historically. There are historic and constructional reasons for not removing chimney breasts in an historic building.
- D. Alterations to the plan form should retain original partitions and internal walls. Some alteration may be acceptable (the widening of a door) but the original plan form should be easily readable. In some cases, unusual construction techniques may require all existing fabric to be retained – always consult the conservation officer before considering changes to internal partitions in a listed building.
- E. The staircase where original is an important dating feature of a building and its retention is essential. This will often be an issue where plans for loft conversions in two storey houses need to take account of current building regulations with regard to fire resistance of staircases, staircase enclosure and means of escape.
- F. Openings in rear walls may be altered to provide means of access to gardens. This will depend on the nature of the existing windows and their contribution to the special interest of the building. Where alteration is acceptable the width of the opening should not change.

Figure 35: The plan form of an historic building is an important part of its special interest. Even the simplest and most humble of dwellings can have a plan form which is worthy of retention. The example shows a typical plan form of a modest estate cottage.

5.22 Scale, Height, Depth, Massing and Bulk

- 5.22.1 It is crucial that the size of any proposed extensions or additions such as the introduction of dormer windows and porches, do not dominate, overpower, or overwhelm the original or existing building and its setting in terms of scale, bulk, material, or siting. Extensions should be seen as subservient, should respect the form and character of the building and should not obscure the interpretation of the building's original function. For example, extensions which are very domestic in scale, bulk or material could have a detrimental impact on the character and legibility of former agricultural buildings which have been subsequently converted to residential use.

5.23 High Quality Design

- 5.23.1 Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to promoting excellence in design and reinforcing local distinctiveness, vernacular traditions, and craftsmanship. Any extensions and/or alterations to a listed building should always be of the highest quality in design that compliments the architectural and historic values of the building. The Council is not particularly prescriptive in defining or imposing a particular architectural style or design approach.
- 5.23.2 It is, however, of great importance that any design concept positively relates to features which, as a whole, contribute to a building's character; for example, its proportions, feel and rhythm. Materials are also very important and should be of a high quality that compliments the historic character and appearance of the building.

5.24 Junction between Old and New

- 5.24.1 The junction between new work and the existing fabric always needs particular attention both for its impact on the significance of the building and the impact on its setting.



Figure 36: End House, Eversholt, Extension creates a junction between old and new

5.25 Reversibility

- 5.25.1 The concept of reversibility should form the basis of all proposed work to historic buildings. The building should be capable of being returned to its former condition with no permanent damage of the important fabric of the building. In practice, this is sometimes difficult to achieve. It should always be borne in mind that the heritage values of a building can be many and varied and that there is always a balance that needs to be struck when trying to build reversibility into a scheme. The concept of reversibility alone should not be used to justify alteration or addition, particularly if the significance of the building will be substantially harmed.



Figure 37: (left) Very good example of a traditional shopfront – Leighton Buzzard
 Figure 38: (top right) Fanlight, Linslade. A feature which contributes to historic character
 Figure 39: (bottom right) Sympathetic contemporary addition creating a foyer to a Victorian church, Linslade

5.26 Repair and Maintenance

- 5.26.1 Like for like repairs and replacement in matching materials, undertaken using traditional methods are always strongly encouraged, particularly in relation to listed buildings, as these will conserve the integrity of the building and the local distinctiveness of the area. Regular repair and maintenance are also crucial to prevent deterioration and damage of the building, ensuring it is conserved for the enjoyment of future generations.
- 5.26.2 Over restoration can be one of the most damaging interventions to the historic environment and can not only harm the appearance of a historic building but can also result in the loss of its intrinsic special interest. Well-intentioned removal of inappropriate modern finishings such as masonry paint and cement renders can lead to significant and un-justified damage to historic building fabric. The use of inappropriate modern tools and techniques, such as disc-cutters to remove existing pointing or form new openings, can also result in significant damage to building fabric. Any alteration should be undertaken with care, understanding of the original fabric, its significance and how it can be preserved.

5.27 Sustainability

- 5.27.1 Consideration will be needed for energy efficiency/renewable energy improvements and how it will fit in with the local character and significance of the assets. Improvements in energy performance through the retrofitting and potential installation of renewable technologies which do not compromise visual amenity of heritage build environment or traditional fabric of buildings will be encouraged. Guidance relating to electric vehicle charging in conservation areas and listed buildings is included in the [Electric Vehicle Charging Technical Guidance for New Development Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#).

5.28 Shopfronts

- 5.28.1 The approach to shopfront design should provide a legible and distinctive character to define both public and private spaces within a mixed-use development. The location and prominence of the building should be considered early in the design stage to ensure a hierarchy in spaces.
- 5.28.2 The amalgamation of existing units to form larger shops with their corresponding shopfronts and signage can be out of proportion with a traditional street scale and detrimental to the character of the host building(s).
- 5.28.3 The loss of historic shopfronts and historic features, such as hanging sign brackets, decorated pilasters (usually painted or defaced or neglected), unusual signage, traditionally painted signage, console brackets or original blind housings and mechanisms all contribute to a general degrading of the traditional quality of the commercial environment.
- 5.28.4 The use of security measures to secure shopfronts can result in a deadening effect on the street scene and discourage pedestrians from using certain streets out of shopping hours (these are often requirements of tenant's insurance policies).



Figure 40: Recent development incorporating a shopfront elevation designed as an integral part of the street scene and to terminate the view from a side street.

5.29 Heritage Assets: Scheduled Monuments and their settings

- 5.29.1 A Scheduled Monument is an archaeological site, monument or structure which is nationally important and afforded legal protection from unauthorised change under the terms of the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (as amended). Sites, monuments, and structures included in the “schedule” or list are wide ranging and include above and below ground remains. The Schedule now forms part of the National Heritage List for England (NHLE).
- 5.29.2 Under the terms of the Act certain works to a Scheduled Monument must be granted consent by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport before any work can be carried out. Historic England advises the government on each application and administers the consent system. Unauthorised works to a Scheduled Monument are a criminal offence.
- 5.29.3 In Central Bedfordshire there are many Scheduled Monuments; these include prehistoric burial mounds, high status Roman settlements, medieval castles, and moats, as well as post medieval bridges and ruined houses. In some cases, it is possible for sites and buildings to be both Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, for example St Mary’s Old Church, Clophill and All Saints Church, Segenhoe.
- 5.29.4 Developments that affect Scheduled Monuments or their significance through development in their settings must be accompanied by an Archaeological Heritage Statement.



Figure 41: (top) Scheduled Monument All Saints Church, Segenhoe
 Figure 42: (bottom) Scheduled Monument, Knolls Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery, Dunstable Downs

5.30 Heritage Assets: Registered Parks and Gardens

- 5.30.1 The Register of Parks and Gardens is a national record of designed landscapes considered to be of special historic interest in England. The Register forms part of the National Heritage List for England and includes over 1600 sites and is compiled and maintained by Historic England. Registered landscapes are graded in the same way as listed buildings, reflecting their relative significance. Grade I sites are of exceptional interest; Grade II* sites are particularly important, of more than special interest; and Grade II sites are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them (Historic England, 2010). The criteria for including a historic designed landscape on the register can be found on the Historic England website.
- 5.30.2 Central Bedfordshire has a particularly high number of historic parks and gardens, including designated landscapes, many of which are of exceptional interest and importance, namely Woburn Park and Wrest Park. The inclusion of a designed landscape on the register does not bring additional statutory controls, however, the Local Planning Authority is required to consider the register entry as a material planning consideration.
- 5.30.3 In Central Bedfordshire, developments that will have an impact on a Registered Park and Garden, or a known non-designated historic park and garden of equivalent significance may need be accompanied by a Historic Parks and Gardens Statement (see Policy HE2 of the Local Plan).
- 5.30.4 It is often the case that a registered park and garden will include other designated heritage assets, notably listed buildings. In many cases the main historic house, such as Woburn Abbey (Grade I listed), and possibly parkland features, buildings and boundary walls are separately listed. Some registered landscapes are also included as parts of a Conservation Area e.g., Ampthill Park, and some including Wrest Park have Scheduled Monuments within their boundaries.



Figure 43: (left) Flitwick Manor Park
 Figure 44: (right) Archer Pavilion in snow



Figure 45: (top) The Swiss Garden, Old Warden Park
 Figure 46: (bottom) The Statutory Listed Gardeners Lodge and boundary wall to Woburn Park. These structures will also form part of the Registered Park and Garden

5.31 Heritage Assets: Conservation Areas and their settings

- 5.31.1 Conservation Areas are defined as areas of special architectural and historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The designation of a Conservation Area indicates the Council's positive commitment to these special areas and its intention to preserve and enhance the quality of the environment
- 5.31.2 Conservation Areas within Central Bedfordshire range from large towns such as Dunstable, to small rural villages and hamlets such as Eversholt.
- 5.31.3 Many of the Conservation Areas within Central Bedfordshire have Conservation Area Appraisals which provide an assessment of the special character, appearance and setting of the area and sets out what features contribute to its special interest. These documents provide guidance on how change can respond positively to the character and appearance and should be consulted in the first instance when considering any proposals for change within a Conservation Area and its setting. Within Conservation Areas, some buildings or structures may be highlighted as buildings of local interest (or positive contribution buildings).
- 5.31.4 These buildings/structures are considered to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area and will be classed as undesignated heritage assets. Other features such as highway surfaces, paving materials and historic street furniture can also contribute to the local sense of place and special character, for example, the large historic cobbled area surrounding the former Town Hall in Woburn.



Figure 47: (left) The Clock Tower and Square, Dunstable
 Figure 48: (right) Husborne Crawley Conservation Area

5.32 Development within a Conservation Area

- 5.32.1 Any development within a Conservation Area or in its setting, whether it is an extension to a building, introduction of shop advertisements, alteration of shop fronts, or new development should preserve or enhance its character or appearance and any contribution made by its setting.
- 5.32.2 Relatively minor alterations and changes to buildings and structures, such as the removal of a redundant chimney can both individually and collectively be extremely disruptive to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Other examples include the loss of boundary walls and replacement of traditional windows with modern uPVC equivalents.



Figure 49: Tringrith Conservation Area

- 5.32.3 Planning permission is required for the substantial demolition of a building over 115m³ and for the demolition of any wall, gate or fence which is more than 1 metre high and abutting a highway, or over 2 metres high elsewhere in the Conservation Area. The insertion of dormer windows and cladding or rendering the building exterior require permission. In addition, some permitted development rights have been removed from residential properties located within Conservation Areas.
- 5.32.4 If considering undertaking works to a dwelling within a Conservation Area, it is advised that the Council's planning department be contacted for further information and guidance on whether planning permission is needed.
- 5.32.5 A Conservation Area designation provides a general protection for all trees with a trunk diameter of over 75mm—all works to these are covered by a [section 211 notice](#). Some trees are also protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).



Figure 50: (left) Toddington Conservation Area
Figure 51: (right) Trees in Toddington

- 5.32.6 Two Conservation Areas, Toddington and Husborne Crawley, have 'Article 4 Directions' in place which remove specified certain permitted development rights where such permitted development poses a particular threat to Conservation Area character (such as a window replacement).
- 5.32.7 In the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal, an assessment of the character of a Conservation Area should be based on:
 - ▶ the landscape character;
 - ▶ the grouping of historic buildings;
 - ▶ the townscape and enclosure of spaces;
 - ▶ the scale, design, type and materials of buildings;
 - ▶ boundaries and the public realm;
 - ▶ landmarks, views and vistas.



Figure 52: (top left) The Dunstable townscape
 Figure 53: (bottom left) Market Square, Leighton Buzzard
 Figure 54: (right) Modern materials for roofs, windows, doors, and modern utilities (gas, electricity) do not always sit well with the historic environment.

- 5.32.8 The townscape can create a unique sense of place and identity as can traditional materials such as the variety of bricks from across the district, long straw thatch, plain red and orange tiles, lime plaster and timber framing.
- 5.32.9 Any proposals for new residential, town centre, or larger footprint development within a Conservation Area should have regard to the principles set out in the relevant sections of this Design Guide and the following guidelines:
- ▶ Has the proposal considered surrounding skylines, rooflines, and landmarks (e.g., church spires), or will the development have an impact on cherished view of the landscape or “signature” skylines?
 - ▶ Do the plot sizes and shapes (uniform or varied for example) respond to the typical sizes and shapes of surrounding building plots?
 - ▶ Does the development respond positively to the established patterns of how buildings relate to the back edge of the footpath or carriageway in the local vicinity?
 - ▶ Does the development relate positively to the way buildings relate to each other in the townscape? (For example, are the buildings on the street freestanding, small informal groups of regular terraces?)
 - ▶ Does the development respond to the way that buildings in the Conservation Area are linked? (With boundary walls for example)
 - ▶ Have the proposed buildings taken account of the orientation of adjacent rooflines? (For example, are main ridgelines parallel to the street or at right angles)
 - ▶ Does the development reflect the general character and scale of the surrounding buildings? (For example, are the surrounding building ‘grand’ or modestly proportioned?)
 - ▶ Does the development pick up on the established character of the front boundary walls, fences or mature hedgerows and trees?
 - ▶ Does it maximise the retention of the above features where they are an important part of the character or appearance of the Conservation Area?
 - ▶ What is the role of the proposed development within the setting? Is this a gateway or other edge development on the approach or periphery of the site? Is it a focal point development terminating a view or providing a skyline? Or is the site at a pivotal point in the townscape, turning a corner from one type of development to another?
 - ▶ Does the proposal pay sufficient regard to aspects of layout and provide an appropriate sense of identity and enclosure (for example, has a sequence of spaces and places been considered)?
 - ▶ Does any part of the development include inappropriate elements of suburbanisation: deep or irregular house plan, fussy elevations, inappropriate spacing between buildings?
 - ▶ Have the window proportions, subservience of elements such as garages, roof type or pitch, choice of materials, been chosen with regard to the character of the surrounding buildings?
 - ▶ If the proposal is a contemporary solution, has it been demonstrated that it responds sympathetically and positively with its context?



Figure 55: (left) New sympathetic development in the Conservation Area - Clipstone Mews, Barton-le-Clay
 Figure 56: (right) New development in Ampthill Conservation Area



Figure 57: (left) Contemporary housing respects its historic setting
 Figure 58: (right) New development in the Clophill Conservation Area

5.33 Requirement for Heritage Statements

- 5.33.1 All proposed interventions in the historic environment need to be based on a full understanding of what is important about a place/building/monument, or defining how, why and to what extent it has heritage values: in sum, its significance (English Heritage, 2008). This understanding should then form the basis for developing proposals for positive change to heritage assets which protect this significance from harm or loss.
- 5.33.2 Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires applicants to provide information on the significance of any heritage assets to be affected by the development (including any contribution made by their setting). The level of detail provided must be proportionate to the importance of the asset(s) and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the development on their significance. Data on heritage assets should as a minimum be acquired from the relevant Historic Environment Record and assessed by those with appropriate expertise. Desk-based research is often sufficient, but in relation to archaeology, a field evaluation may be necessary.
- 5.33.3 In Central Bedfordshire, the description of the significance of a heritage asset should be contained within a Heritage Statement. The purpose of a Heritage Statement is to demonstrate a full understanding of the significance of the heritage asset(s) affected and to show that this significance has been considered when developing proposals for change. Policies HE1, HE2 and HE3 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 set out the Heritage Statement requirements for each type of heritage asset. Not all developments will require a Heritage Statement and applicants are recommended to contact the Council's specialist officers to confirm what is necessary.
- 5.33.4 All heritage assets have a setting and where relevant all Heritage Statements must include a consideration of how the setting contributes to the asset's significance. Reference should be made to [national guidance on the setting of heritage assets](#) that has been produced by Historic England (Historic England, 2017).



Figure 59: Flitwick construction impact

5.34 Requirement for Heritage Statements: Archaeology

- 5.34.1 Most archaeological sites do not have any statutory protection and are known as Non-Designated Heritage Assets. A heritage asset will have “archaeological interest” if it holds or potentially holds evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point (NPPF, 2021).
- 5.34.2 An Archaeological Heritage Statement can be derived from information gathered in a brief desk-based assessment of the known resource to the results of an intrusive investigation. The Council’s Archaeological Officers should be contacted to establish the parameters for Archaeological Heritage Statements. Where a development will have either a direct or indirect impact on a Scheduled Monument an Archaeological Heritage Statement must be supplied regardless of the scale of the development.
- 5.34.3 On some occasions an archaeological field evaluation is needed to provide the necessary information for the description of significance of the heritage asset(s). An evaluation usually consists of one or more stages of fieldwork and can include: field walking, earthwork survey, geophysical survey, and trial trenching. The combination of techniques used at any given site depends on the type of archaeology that is expected, the present land use at the site and the proposed development.



Figure 60: Warren Farm, Ampthill Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

- 5.34.4 When all the information on the archaeology of the application site has been assembled, the impact of the proposed development on archaeology can be assessed. As much detail as possible should be included on the likely impacts. For example, the dimensions of proposed foundations, whether there will be any underground services or ground reduction for the creation of features such as driveways.

- 5.34.5 Construction works will generally have a negative and irreversible impact on archaeological remains and therefore on the significance of any heritage assets with archaeological interest. However, this can be lessened by sensitive foundation design and in some cases, it may be possible to design developments in such a way that the archaeological horizon is not impacted upon, such as mounting solar arrays above ground on concrete pads. If design changes are an option, they should be included in the Archaeological Heritage Statement.
- 5.34.6 Where the development will have an impact on archaeological remains it is usual for that impact to be mitigated. This is usually achieved by a condition being attached to the planning permission for an archaeological investigation to be done in advance of construction work. The investigation is designed to record the archaeological remains before they are lost and to advance our understanding of the past (NPPF, paragraph 205 and Policy HE1 Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015–2035). The outcome of the archaeological investigation is a published report and the finds and records from the excavation are deposited with the local museum and the Archaeology Data Service where they are publicly accessible.
- 5.34.7 The value of archaeology in creating a sense of place and local character is recognised in the NPPF, as is its value in contributing to our understanding of the past. This is partly achieved through publishing the results of excavations and putting the archives in museums. It can also mean creating interpretation of the archaeology that has been found both on site through boards and signage and by other means such as websites. This can also be put in place by planning conditions.



Figure 61: (left) Archaeological Excavation at Sandy Roman Town
 Figure 62: (right) Reconstruction Drawing of Maiden Bower Hillfort, Dunstable in the Iron age

5.35 Requirement for Heritage Statements: Historic Parks and Gardens

- 5.35.1 Central Bedfordshire has an unusually high proportion of historic designed landscapes. Some of these landscapes are protected as Registered Parks and Gardens, whilst others are not. In Central Bedfordshire, developments that will have an impact on a Registered Park and Garden, or a known non-Designated historic park and garden of equivalent significance may need be accompanied by a Historic Park and Gardens Statement.
- 5.35.2 Most Historic Park and Garden Statements can be derived from desk-based research, and they must ensure that all elements of the designed landscape (including archaeology, buildings, and landscape features such as veteran trees, and managed woodlands) have been considered in the description of significance. When assessing the impact of a development on the significance of a historic park and garden, the Historic Park and Gardens Statement should consider whether the proposals will affect individual heritage assets as well as the whole designed landscape and as necessary its setting.

5.36 Heritage Statements: Built Heritage and Conservation Areas

- 5.36.1 Most of the traditional buildings and historic areas in Central Bedfordshire have evolved through generations with some being representative of many hundreds of years of adaptation. These changes are often of importance in their own right and should be identified when assessing the significance of a building as a whole. When providing a description of the significance, particularly a for a listed building, it is often helpful to include a coloured phasing diagram based on a measured survey drawing of the building which shows the original structure and features of special interest, and subsequent phases of additions and alterations. For smaller scale works, this might only apply to the part of the building affected by the proposals.
- 5.36.2 When appropriate, the description should be prepared and assessed using specialist historic building conservation skills and expertise. The Historic Environment Record should be consulted as well as the formal list description or register entry, which can be obtained from the [National Heritage List for England](#) via the Historic England website.

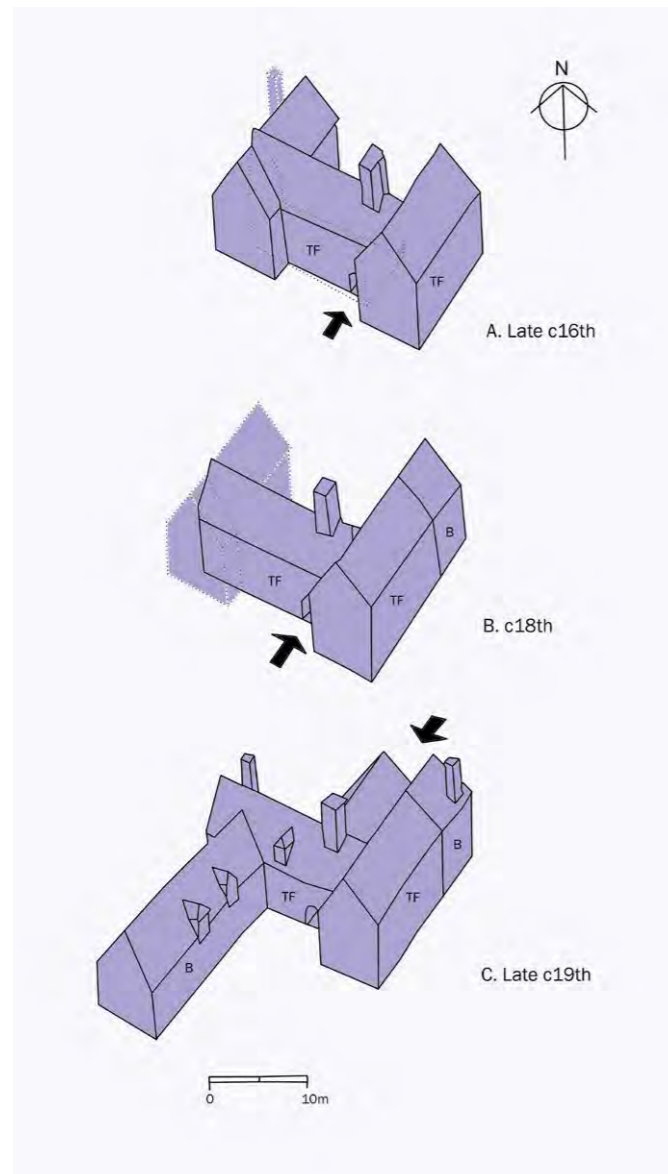


Figure 63: The story of a building - Complex buildings with multiple building phases can often best be illustrated as a series of simple sketches highlighting the key phases of the building

5.37 Heritage Statements: What Happens if the information is not supplied?

- 5.37.1 If an application requires a Heritage Statement and it has not been supplied, the application may not be validated, or the Council's specialist officers may request that it is withdrawn until the information has been obtained. If the information is not made available, the planning/listed building consent application can be refused on the grounds that it does not contain enough information to be able to assess the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset and does not conform to the policies in Section 18 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 and paragraph 194 of the NPPF.



Figure 64: Long throw thatched cottage, Wrestlingworth - application of vernacular materials contribute to local distinctiveness

5.38 Historic Buildings and their Materials

- 5.38.1 Unlike the large majority of modern buildings, most traditional buildings are constructed of vernacular materials which were, until the Industrial Revolution and the introduction of improved communications, locally indigenous to the area. These local vernacular materials make an important contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area.
- 5.38.2 When considering any repairs to a traditional building, whether it is listed or not, it is important to understand both the building's construction, sources of decay, and the vernacular materials used. As shown in the illustration below, traditional buildings were constructed in porous breathable materials such as soft handmade bricks and timber, which allow moisture to be adsorbed and then evaporated from the surface. Mortars and renders were usually a mix of lime and sand.



Figure 65: (top left) Diamond leaded light in a Bedford Estate cottage - an important feature of the building's historic character and appearance. Every effort should be made to retain features such as these.
 Figure 66: (bottom) Toddington - Conger Hill, and bailey enclosure, with Church beyond
 Figure 67: (top right) All Saints Church Segenhoe Grade II* Listed Building & Scheduled Monument



Figure 68: Cockayne Hatley Church setting

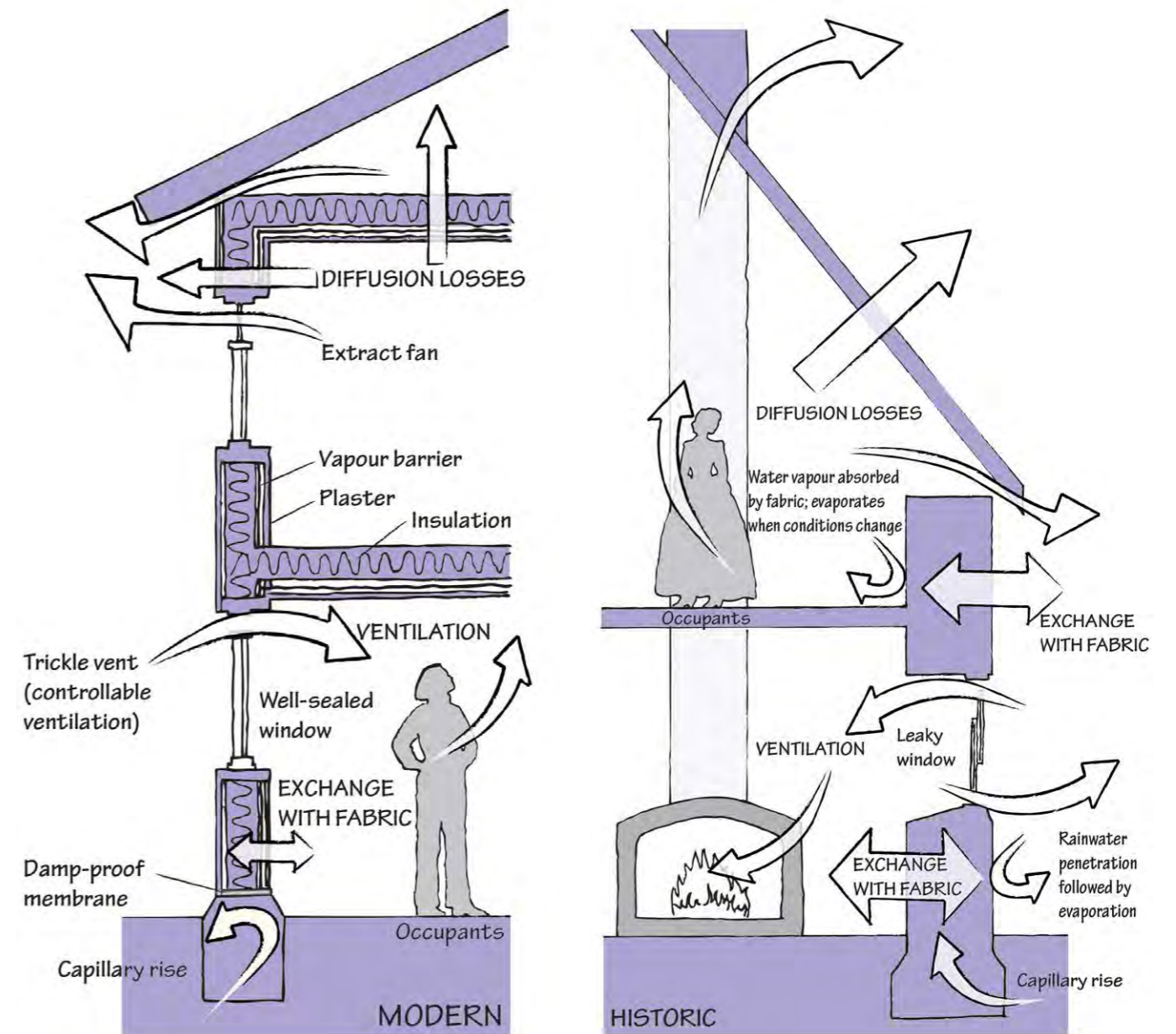


Figure 69: (left) Heat and moisture movement in modern buildings
 Figure 70: (right) Heat and moisture movement in historic building

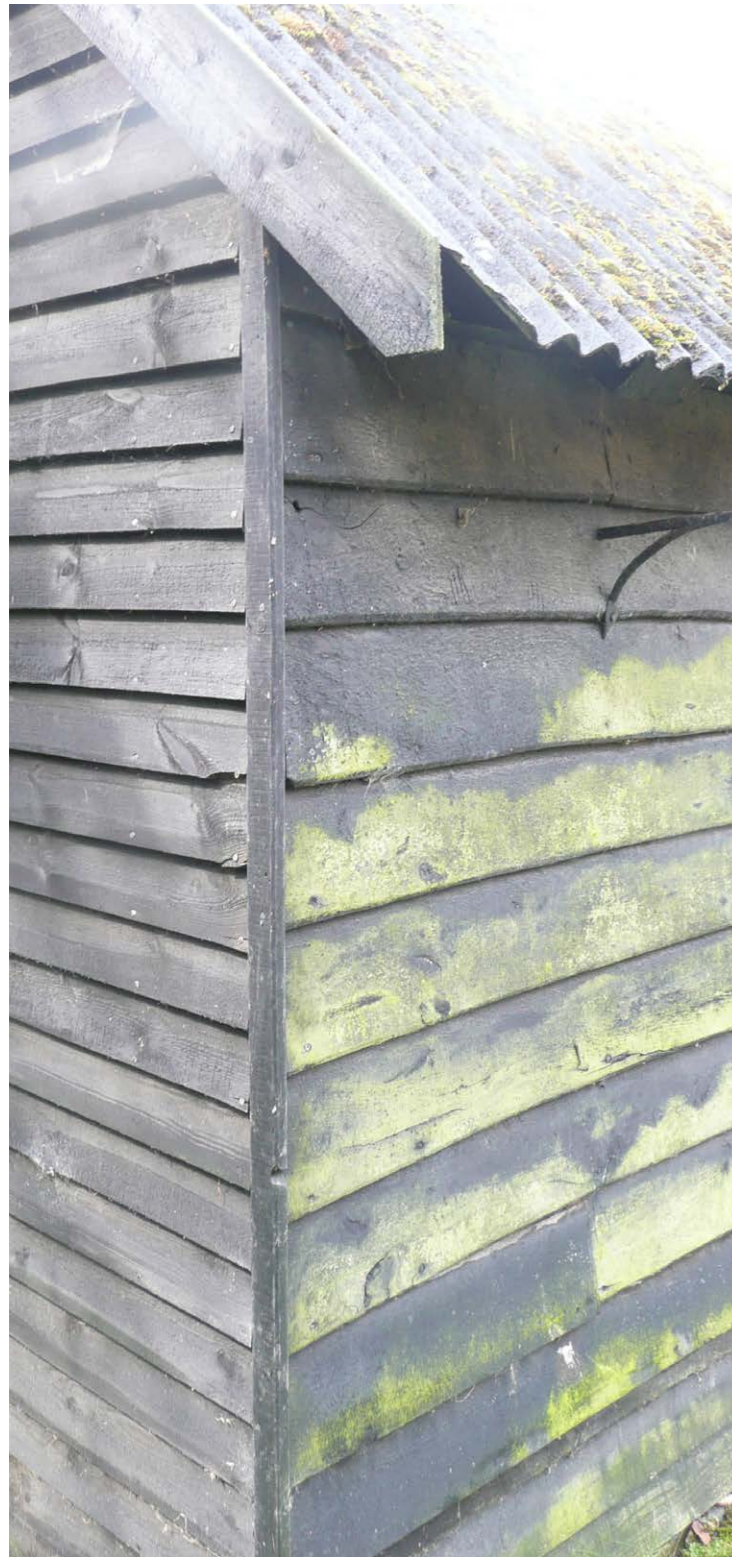


Figure 71: (bottom right) Ironstone repointed using lime mortar and a sharp gritty sand providing a traditional finish which will preserve the integrity of the historic stonework
 Figure 72: (left) Barn at Barton le Clay showing different depths of weatherboarding
 Figure 73: (top right) Example of good practice timber repair – sections of timber being spliced in retaining as much of the historic fabric as possible



Figure 74: (top) West Front of St Peters
 Figure 75: (bottom) The damaging effects of cement painting

5.39 Appraising a Site and its Setting – key questions for establishing the context and identity

5.39.1 All new developments should be designed to respect and respond to the historical, cultural and landscape context of Central Bedfordshire. The following tables provide a useful appraisal tool for ensuring context and identity is fully considered at the outset of the design process:

Natural Environment

Table 1: Natural environment appraisal

Topography	Which way does the site slope?
Drainage	Is the site liable to flooding? Does it need a Flood Risk Assessment?
Trees/Hedges	What trees and hedgerows are to be found on the site? Are there any subject to a Tree Preservation Order/ Ancient Hedgerow?
Biodiversity	What are the ecological corridors they use through the site? Are there green corridors that need to be retained? What species can be found on site?
Watercourses	Are there any watercourses crossing the site? Are they to be retained and incorporated?
Landscape Character	What is the character of the landscape?

Built Environment

Table 2: Built environment appraisal

Easements	Are there any easements for services that cannot be built on?
Buildings	Are there any buildings/structures within the site? Should they be retained?
Listed Buildings	Are there any listed buildings within or adjoining the site?
Contamination	Is the site contaminated?
Archaeology	Form following the function of the building, where that form does not undermine the urban grain.
Adjoining Buildings	Are there any buildings adjoining the site? What is the form, scale and layout of these?
Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens:	Does the site lie within or adjoin a Conservation Area or Historic Park?
Scheduled Monuments:	Does the site include a Scheduled Monument, or lie within its setting?

Land Use

Table 3: Land Use appraisal

Local facilities	What local facilities are there within walking distance of the site? Are there any opportunities to improve links to adjoining/ surrounding public rights of way? What condition are the public rights of way – do they need improvement?
Surrounding Land Use	What is the use of land adjoining the site, either existing or proposed?
Existing Land Use	What is the existing land use of the site?

Movement

Table 4: Movement appraisal

Rights of Way	Are there any existing rights of way across the site?
Movement Networks	How does the site relate to the existing movement framework?
Public Transport	Where are the nearest bus routes and bus stops?
Access	What are the access points to the site?
Desire lines	What are the desire lines to local facilities?
Walking and cycling	What is the local walking and cycling networks like?

Legibility

Table 5: Legibility appraisal

Views	Are there any important views? From the site or of the site from off-site?
Landmarks	Are there any important landmarks on or off site?
Neighbouring Properties	What is the relationship of neighbouring buildings to the site? Do neighbouring properties overlook the site?
Adjoining Uses	Will there be any impacts such as noise from neighbouring uses?

Character of the Surrounding Area

Table 6: Character appraisal

Layout - Block Structure/Size	What size and shape are the development blocks? Are the blocks rectilinear or irregular in shape? Does this make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Street Types	Is there a recognisable street hierarchy - e.g., mews, residential streets, park edges etc.? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Orientation	A compact, efficient use of built form in the inner core of larger settlements ensuring that these inner cores are easily walkable. Does building orientations provide the best opportunities for solar gain?
Street Layout	A compact, efficient use of built form in the inner core of larger settlements ensuring that these inner cores are easily walkable. Is there a connected street network? Are street layouts straight or irregular? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Plot Sizes	A compact, efficient use of built form in the inner core of larger settlements ensuring that these inner cores are easily walkable. What size and shape are the residential plots? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Relationship of building to street	A compact, efficient use of built form in the inner core of larger settlements ensuring that these inner cores are easily walkable. Do buildings front the street? Are the buildings gable end on to the street? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Continuity of frontage	Do the streets have a continuous frontage or are there gaps in the built frontage? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Setbacks/building line	How far are the buildings set back from the highway? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Car Parking	Where is parking being provided? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Front boundaries	What form of front boundary treatment is there - hedges, walls, soft landscaping etc? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?

Open Space/Landscape

Table 7: Open Space/Landscape appraisal

Public Space	Is the street layout characterized by areas of public space - e.g., village greens, public squares, circuses, Sustainable Drainage Basins, rain gardens and swales? Do these elements make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Garden Sizes	What size and shape are the gardens? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Street trees/hedges	Are the streets characterised by tree planting and/or existing hedges? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area? Will this support natural cooling?

Building Form

Table 8: Building Form appraisal

Roof Form	A compact, efficient use of built form in the inner core of larger settlements ensuring that these inner cores are easily walkable. What is the roof type - flat, ridge, hipped etc.? What is the degree of slope? Are there dormer windows? Will this impede solar photovoltaic or solar thermal arrays? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Materials	A compact, efficient use of built form in the inner core of larger settlements ensuring that these inner cores are easily walkable. What materials are used - brick, stone, tile, slate etc.? What is the typical colour? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?
Windows	A compact, efficient use of built form in the inner core of larger settlements ensuring that these inner cores are easily walkable. What type are they - sash, bays? How many are there and what are their size and shape? What proportion of the facade do they take up? - solid to void ratio What colour is the frame of the window? Does this element make a positive contribution to the character of the area?