

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).

The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer responsible for Legal and Democratic Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 working days have passed and the Chief Officer responsible for Legal and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

- (1) That the Bedford Borough Design Code: Urban and Suburban Areas, as detailed in Appendix B to the attached report prepared to accompany the decision, be formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.**
- (2) That the Head of Planning and Building Control be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Prosperity, Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services, to make any essential minor amendments prior to publication.**

2. Date of decision

29 June 2026

3. Reasons for decision

- (1) As set out in government guidance, local authorities must formally adopt supplementary planning documents before 30 June 2026 under the current planning system. Any supplementary planning documents (known as SPDs) that are formally adopted before this cut-off date will be saved. They will remain in force and carry significant weight in the determination of planning applications across the borough until the new Bedford Borough Local Plan is adopted under new plan-led system. This will include the borough's existing suite of design codes and development briefs.
- (2) The Design Code – Urban and Suburban Areas is an area-specific design code setting out character assessments, design parameters and requirements to guide development within the existing urban area. Adopting the design code as a supplementary planning document will ensure that new development responds positively to the character and appearance of the urban area, contributes to high-quality place-making and aligns with national expectations on design, consistent with the principles set out in the Bedford Borough Design Guide (adopted in 2023). By codifying these rules before the government's deadline, we can secure the legal weight needed to enforce high-quality placemaking across the borough.
- (3) This document will also provide clarity to applicants, communities and decision makers and will help secure consistent design outcomes during the assessment of planning applications that reflect Bedford's identity, landscape, townscape and long-term growth strategy, in line with the policies set out in the adopted Bedford Borough Local Plan - as set out in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (adopted in 2020) and Allocations and Designations Local Plan (adopted in 2013). The document will also help reduce uncertainty when dealing with speculative planning applications and improve the effectiveness of these policies.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

The alternative option of not adopting the SPD has been rejected. This would reduce the weight in decision-making, reducing the borough's ability to secure high-quality design and consistent place-making outcomes.

Delaying adoption beyond the government deadline has also been rejected: the SPD cannot be adopted after 30 June under the current plan system and the opportunity to secure its formal status would be lost.

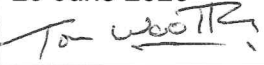
5. How decision is to be funded

All costs associated with preparation and consultation have been covered using existing budgets.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

29 June 2026


Signed: 

Date: **29 June 2026**

Name of Decision Taker: **Cllr. Andrea Spice**
Portfolio Holder for Economic Prosperity, Planning, Housing & Regulatory Services

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer responsible for Legal and Democratic Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: 30 June 2026

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: 9 July 2026

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Report to Executive

Date of Report: 29 June 2026

Report by: Portfolio Holder for Economic Prosperity, Planning, Housing & Regulatory Services and Head of Planning & Building Control

Subject: ADOPTION AND PUBLICATION OF A NEW SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT: BEDFORD BOROUGH DESIGN CODE – URBAN AND SUBURBAN AREAS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to adopt the Bedford Borough Design Code: Urban and Suburban Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that will strengthen Bedford Borough Council’s approach to securing high-quality design across the urban area. The document provides detailed guidance to support relevant policies in the adopted development plan and respond to the growing national emphasis on place-making, design quality, character and the creation of well-designed, accessible and environmentally responsible places.
- 1.2 The Bedford Borough Design Code: Urban and Suburban Areas underwent statutory public consultation between March and April 2026. Feedback gathered during this period (as summarised in **Appendix A**) directly shaped the final version of the document now presented (see **Appendix B**) to strengthen clarity, usability and alignment with local and national policy requirements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Executive is asked to consider this report and, if satisfied:

- (a) **Formally adopt the Bedford Borough Design Code: Urban and Suburban Areas, at Appendix B, as a Supplementary Planning Document; and**
- (b) **Authorise the Head of Planning and Building Control in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Prosperity, Planning, Housing & Regulatory Services to make any essential minor amendments prior to publication.**

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As set out in government guidance, local authorities must formally adopt supplementary planning documents before 30 June 2026 under the current planning system¹. Any supplementary planning documents (known as SPDs) that are formally adopted before this cut-off date will be saved. They will remain in force and carry significant weight in the determination of planning applications across the borough until the new Bedford Borough Local Plan is adopted under new plan-led system. This will include the borough's existing suite of design codes and development briefs.
- 3.2 The Bedford Borough Design Code - Urban and Suburban Areas is an area-specific design code setting out character assessments, design parameters and requirements to guide development within the existing urban area. Adopting the design code as a supplementary planning document will ensure that new development responds positively to the character and appearance of the urban area, contributes to high-quality place-making and aligns with national expectations on design, consistent with the principles set out in the Bedford Borough Design Guide (adopted in 2023). By codifying these rules before the government's deadline, we can secure the legal weight needed to enforce high-quality placemaking across the borough.
- 3.3 This document will also provide clarity to applicants, communities and decision makers and will help secure consistent design outcomes during the assessment of planning applications that reflect Bedford's identity, landscape, townscape and long-term growth strategy, in line with the policies set out in the adopted Bedford Borough Local Plan - as set out in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (adopted in 2020) and Allocations and Designations Local Plan (adopted in 2013). The document will also help reduce uncertainty when dealing with speculative planning applications and improve the effectiveness of these policies.

4. THE CURRENT SITUATION

- 4.1 The code will provide detailed guidance on design quality, character, layout and scale of development across different parts of the urban area to support consistent and high-quality placemaking. It will also assist applicants, officers and decision-makers in the interpretation of existing Bedford Borough Local Plan policies.
- 4.2 Without adoption, the design code would carry limited weight in decision-making, potentially weakening Bedford Borough Council's ability to secure consistent, high-quality and locally distinctive development. Adoption will ensure the code forms part of the borough's planning framework, allowing it to be effectively applied in the determination of planning applications in advance of the new Bedford Borough Local Plan 2050.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-making-regulations-explainer/plan-making-regulations-explainer>

4.3 The timing of adoption is critical due to the government's requirement to adopt SPDs before 30 June under the current planning system. As such, there is limited opportunity to secure the status and ongoing weight of these documents ahead of the transition to the new plan-led system.

5. **DETAILS**

5.1 The design code will supplement and complement the policies of the adopted Bedford Borough Local Plan and build upon the principles established in the Bedford Borough Design Guide (2023). It sets out expectations concerning the design, layout, massing, form and character of development within the existing urban area, including guidance on street patterns, public realm and green infrastructure. The overriding aim is to reinforce local distinctiveness and ensure that new development responds positively to the established townscape.

5.2 The public consultation on the design code ran from 6 March 2026 to 17 April 2026, with a further two-week extension to enable additional engagement and participation from a range of stakeholders, including residents, town and parish councils and government agencies. Appendix 1 provides a full schedule of representations and responses, outlining the proposed changes to the design code and other supplementary planning documents that were consulted at the same time². Please note: these changes are primarily minor in nature and seek to provide clarification and refinement, rather than altering the overall purpose or scope of the document.

5.3 Once adopted, the design code will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, ensuring a consistent approach to achieving high-quality design and placemaking across the urban area.

5.4 Minor amendments may be necessary before publication to correct typographical errors, enhance clarity or ensure consistency across the document. Authority is sought to make such changes without altering the overall scope or intent of the document.

6 **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Do not adopt the SPD

6.1 This option was rejected as the document would carry limited weight in decision-making, reducing the borough's ability to secure high-quality design and consistent place-making outcomes.

² The consultation was undertaken alongside the consultations on the Bedford Borough Tall Buildings Guide – Urban Area and Bedford Borough Design Code – Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements, as outlined in separate reports.

Delay adoption beyond the government deadline

- 6.2 This option was rejected as the SPD cannot be adopted after 30 June under the current plan system and the opportunity to secure their status would be lost.

7 KEY IMPLICATIONS

Legal issues

- 7.1 Recent government announcements on the new planning system confirm that Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) will no longer form part of the reformed framework. Existing and emerging SPDs will remain in force until local planning authorities adopt a new-style Local Plan. However, the final date to adopt any new SPDs is 30 June 2026, ensuring that advanced emerging SPDs can still be brought forward, as set out in schedule 1 of The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Commencement No. 11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2026.
- 7.2 The most relevant aspects to this exercise are as follows:
- A minimum four-week consultation period must be provided to enable individuals to submit comments on the supplementary planning document.
 - As part of the consultation process, a statement must be published setting out the persons consulted in the preparation of the supplementary planning document, a summary of the issues raised, and how these have been addressed.
 - As soon as reasonably practicable following adoption, an adoption statement must be published. This must specify the date of adoption and include details of the availability of judicial review.
- 7.3 Public consultation was undertaken in compliance with the regulations, including publication of the draft document and preparation of a consultation statement (see **Appendix A**) summarising who was consulted, the main issues raised during the consultation and how they have been addressed in the final document (see **Appendix B**).
- 7.4 Following adoption, an adoption statement will be issued in line with the regulations.

Policy issues

- 7.5 The code will support the implementation of design-related policies within the current adopted Bedford Borough Local Plan, notably:
- Policy 28S – Place-making
 - Policy 29 – Design quality and principles
 - Policy 30 – The impact of development – design impacts

- 7.6 SPDs do not establish new policies. Rather, they offer detailed guidance to support the consistent application of existing adopted policies set out in the Bedford Borough Local Plan and enhance the quality of future planning submissions in the borough.

Resource implications

- 7.6 All costs associated with preparation and consultation have been managed within existing budgets.

Risk implications

- 7.7 Not adopting this SPD would reduce the borough's ability to secure high-quality design, may weaken the defensibility of decisions at appeal and would leave gaps in guidance at a time of increased development pressure and national design expectations.

Environmental implications

- 7.8 The design code incorporates detailed principles on climate-resilient development, sustainable construction, biodiversity enhancement and green-blue infrastructure integration. It sets clear expectations on how development should respond to increasing climate pressures, including measures that support energy efficiency, sustainable drainage, nature recovery and the creation of multifunctional landscapes. These principles help ensure that new development contributes positively to environmental quality, strengthens resilience to future climate impacts and supports healthier, more sustainable communities across the urban area. The principles also build on the technical advice set out in conservation area management plans, landscape character assessments and urban character studies to ensure context-specific, environmentally responsible outcomes.
- 7.9 Sustainability appraisal (SA) screening concluded that SA was not required as the document does not contain any new policies and the parent policies were appraised as part of the Bedford Borough Local Plan process.
- 7.10 Public consultation activities took place in line with the requirements set out in the adopted Bedford Borough Statement of Community Involvement, with electronic communication used where appropriate.

Equalities impact

- 7.12 Due regard has been given to the Public Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The design code does not raise equality concerns, and an equality impact assessment is not required.
- 7.13 The code also supports the implementation of adopted Bedford Borough Local Plan policies that were previously subject to equality analysis.

8 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

8.1 The following councillors, council units, officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

- Portfolio Holder for Economic Prosperity, Planning, Housing & Regulatory Services
- Chief Executive
- Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for Environment
- Service Director Governance
- Service Director Regulation, Housing and Customer Contact

9 WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

9.1 The design code will affect all wards within the urban area of Bedford, including the core commercial and civic areas, the traditional residential areas surrounding the centre and suburban neighbourhoods.

10 CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

Report contact officer:	Philip Wadsworth Manager for Planning Policy and Strategy (01234) 718567 Philip.wadsworth@bedford.gov.uk
File reference:	Design Code – Urban Area Supplementary Planning Document
Previous relevant minutes:	None
Background papers:	None
Appendices:	Appendix A: Schedule of consultation responses Appendix B: Bedford Borough Design Code – Urban and Suburban Areas

Bedfordshire Fire Service

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
Emergency vehicle access & street design	<p>All three documents place strong emphasis on street hierarchy, sustainable movement and reduced car dependency (e.g. primary, secondary and tertiary routes; active travel corridors; pedestrian priority areas). While this aligns with contemporary planning goals, it is essential that fire appliances maintain unobstructed access to buildings, public spaces and hydrants.</p> <p>BFRS recommends that the design codes include explicit requirements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet Approved Document B (ADB) access standards, including fire appliance reach distances and minimum road widths. • Ensure bollards, street trees, planters, cycle lanes and home-zone features do not obstruct fire appliance movement. • Require vehicle swept-path analysis using a fire appliance template for all major planning applications. • Avoid long cul-de-sacs unless compliant turning heads are incorporated. • Ensure emergency access is maintained to new open spaces, linear parks and green/blue corridors referenced throughout the codes. 2. 	<p>Insert into the two design codes:</p> <p><i>New development must address emergency service requirements such as access and provision, water supply and safety principles) at the masterplanning and layout stage, including how it will be integrated into street hierarchy, block configuration, green infrastructure provision and layout and access arrangements. Detailed regulatory and procedural requirements will be managed through separate statutory processes, with engagement with Bedfordshire emergency services where appropriate. Early engagement with Bedfordshire emergency service representatives is strongly encouraged.</i></p>
Water supplies for firefighting	<p>The design codes do not explicitly reference water for firefighting. Given the scale of new development envisaged, particularly large urban extensions and higher density neighbourhoods, this is a critical omission. BFRS requests that the documents include guidance requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early engagement with BFRS to plan fire hydrant locations, spacing and flow requirements. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developers should meet the full cost of installing fire hydrants as required under Section 42 of the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004, supported by any additional local funding mechanisms adopted by the Fire & Rescue Authority. • Hydrants to be positioned to support high density, mixed use and taller buildings, which may increase demand on firefighting operations. Urban extensions and new settlements propose significant new street networks and building clusters where strategic water supply planning is essential for operational response and life safety. 	
<p>Green/blue infrastructure & wildfire risk</p>	<p>The codes emphasise extensive green and blue infrastructure networks, green roofs, street trees and woodland integration across new settlements and suburban areas. We recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear access routes for fire appliances into larger green corridors and parks. • Consideration of wildfire mitigation measures in larger or heavily wooded sites. • Fire breaks and species selection guidance for green roofs/walls. 	
<p>Fire safety at master planning stage</p>	<p>Across all three documents, there is strong emphasis on early master planning, block configuration, street hierarchy and design coding. BFRS requests that the council require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early-stage Fire Statements for major developments. • Inclusion of an outline fire strategy at master planning stage covering access, water supply, evacuation, façade materials and firefighting provisions. • Direct consultation with BFRS prior to submission of detailed applications for large or complex sites. 	
<p>Firefighting shafts, risers, firefighting lifts and evacuation lifts for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke control systems suitable for the building's scale and layout. 	<p>Fire safety and evacuation measures are addressed through building control and other</p>

<p>buildings above relevant height thresholds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External façade fire performance, including compliance with Building Regulations Regulation 7(2) for buildings over 18m. • Building massing and access arrangements that ensure adequate perimeter access for fire appliances. • Clear evacuation and stay put/evacuate strategies, including considerations for vulnerable persons. 	<p>regulatory regimes. However, access is a relevant planning consideration.</p> <p>Fire safety and evacuation measures are addressed through building control and other regulatory regimes. However, emergency access is a relevant planning consideration.</p>
<p>Building separation & fire spread</p>	<p>Several sections across the design codes encourage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous frontages • Terraced forms • Courtyard blocks • Perimeter blocks • Higher-density town centre development <p>These urban forms can reduce separation distances and increase the risk of external fire spread. We therefore recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit consideration of minimum separation distances and external fire spread between buildings, in line with Approved Document B. • Early fire engineering input where tighter urban grain is proposed, e.g. in town centre mixed use zones and high density new settlements. • Clear acknowledgement that block form and density choices affect fire risk, especially when incorporating green walls, timber, or novel materials. <p>These building types are heavily promoted in the Urban Area Design Code and New Settlements Code and must therefore be fully supported by robust fire design principles.</p>	<p>Amend text of Tall Buildings Guide – Urban Area SPD and Bedford Borough Design Code – Urban and Suburban Areas to include:</p> <p>Tall and higher-density development must prioritise public safety through building form, layout and density that enable safe and effective emergency access from the outset, particularly in constrained urban and town-centre locations, in accordance with the Bedford Borough Design Guide and the Tall Buildings Guide – Urban Area.</p>

<p>High-risk building types (Care homes, multi-residential, mixed use)</p>	<p>The suburban and large residential typologies include care homes, flats, mixed-use buildings and higher-density homes. These occupancies commonly have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable residents • Complex evacuation requirements • Increased fire loading <p>We recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to enhanced fire precautions (e.g., sprinklers) in higher-risk building types. • Requirement for robust evacuation strategies at planning stage. • Avoidance of single-staircase residential buildings above appropriate thresholds. These uses are explicitly identified in the larger residential area typologies within the Urban & Suburban Design Code. 	
<p>EV charging, parking courts and car-dominant elements</p>	<p>The documents highlight parking courts, undercroft parking, on-plot parking and multi-storey car parks as common features in suburban, town centre and new settlement designs. BFRS advises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of guidance on EV charging point fire safety, including spacing, ventilation, and access for firefighting. • Caution against hidden or enclosed parking courts, which the codes already identify as problematic in Great Denham and similar areas. 	
<p>Bin stores, refuse and waste management</p>	<p>The Tall Buildings SPD references waste strategies but further clarity is needed. We recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear minimum distances between bin stores and building entrances. • Fire-resistant enclosures for communal waste storage. • Avoiding refuse storage in egress paths or within access routes for fire appliances 	<p>The Tall Buildings SPD already highlights the need for well-designed waste and servicing strategies as part of safe and functional development. We agree that these matters are important considerations; however, more detailed requirements relating to separation distances, fire resistance and egress routes are more appropriately addressed through Building Regulations, fire safety legislation and detailed design at application stage. The SPD will continue to focus on high-level design principles while</p>

Appendix A

		recognising that detailed compliance will be secured through other regulatory processes.
Green/blue infrastructure & wildfire risk	<p>The codes emphasise extensive green and blue infrastructure networks, green roofs, street trees and woodland integration across new settlements and suburban areas. We recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear access routes for fire appliances into larger green corridors and parks. • Consideration of wildfire mitigation measures in larger or heavily wooded sites. • Fire breaks and species selection guidance for green roofs/walls. 	<p>Add to the two design codes: <i>New development must address emergency service requirements such as access and provision, water supply and safety principles at the masterplanning and layout stage, including how it will be integrated into street hierarchy, block configuration, green infrastructure provision and layout and access arrangements. Detailed regulatory and procedural requirements will be managed through separate statutory processes, with engagement with Bedfordshire emergency services where appropriate. Early engagement with Bedfordshire emergency service representatives is strongly encouraged.</i></p>
Fire safety at master planning stage	<p>Across all three documents, there is strong emphasis on early master planning, block configuration, street hierarchy and design coding. BFRS requests that the council require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early-stage Fire Statements for major developments. • Inclusion of an outline fire strategy at master planning stage covering access, water supply, evacuation, façade materials and firefighting provisions. • Direct consultation with BFRS prior to submission of detailed applications for large or complex sites. 	

Bedfordshire Police

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
Section 3, page 61	<p>Design Code SPD: The National Model Design Code states on that “<i>Neighbourhoods need to be designed to make all people feel safe and to reduce the incidence of crime in accordance with the recommendations of Secured by Design (SBD) which includes guidance for housing, commercial space, schools, hospitals and sheltered accommodation. Support and advice are available from the police through a network of Designing Out Crime Officers</i></p>	<p>Add to Design Code and Suburban Areas: <i>Development should demonstrate layouts, streets, public spaces and buildings that address crime prevention and community safety, consistent with ‘secured by design principles’ set out in the Bedford Borough Design Guide.</i></p>

Appendix A

	<i>(DOCOs) across the UK. Secured by Design advice incorporates proven crime prevention techniques and measures into the layout and design of places and spaces.”</i>	<u>Amend Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements</u> : Well-designed streets, layouts and public spaces should integrate ‘secured by design’ principles – such as active frontage and clearly defined public and private spaces – to enhance safety, encourage social interaction and create a welcoming public realm, in line with the Bedford Borough Design Guide. Practical elements like adequate lighting, physical protection such as gates and natural surveillance should be integrated to support safe and secure environments. Early engagement with Bedfordshire emergency services is encouraged.
Secured by design	The Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040 Draft will support the promotion of Secured By Design (SBD). This will ensure that developers properly consider the measures involved in designing out crime to create and maintain a sustainable community in accordance with the National Model Design Code, the National Planning Policy Framework, Bedford Borough’s Sustainable Community Strategy, and Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. Bedfordshire Police will therefore be encouraging all local neighbourhood plans to incorporate the Secured By Design principles and, where applicable, to apply for the SBD Developers Award.	The Local Plan 2040 has been withdrawn and does not form part of the borough’s development plan
Design out crime	The Bedford Design Guide 2023 promotes designing out crime on page 211 under <i>Design Principle 7: Consider local settlement and street patterns.</i>	Noted.
DOCOs	Bedfordshire Police have 2 DOCOs available to provide advice and guidance for developers and we are contactable at doco@beds.police.uk. Beds Police DOCOs are also consultants on planning applications and our responses are primarily concerned with the prevention of crime and disorder within the built environment, using the principles of CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design).	Noted.
Noted	To give a brief summary of SBD, it is a long-running flagship initiative of the National Police Chiefs’ Council. Its objective is to design out crime during the planning process. It is a highly respected standard in the sector, supported by numerous public bodies and professional organisations. SBD is therefore a vital guidance	Noted.

	<p>resource for planners and developers. SBD is available online, regularly updated and consequently, there is no danger of it ceasing to exist during the lifetime of the Local Plan. It should be noted that SBD can be applied to all sizes of new build developments, (residential, community, educational, leisure and commercial), self-builds and refurbishments.</p>	
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Canal & River Trust

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
All	<p>Thank you for your consultation on the above document. We are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals & rivers. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. These historic, natural and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation. The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) is a statutory consultee in the Development Management process, and as such we welcome the opportunity to input into planning policy related matters to ensure that our waterways are protected, safeguarded and enhanced within an appropriate policy framework. The Trust have no waterways within the area covered by the document and as such we have no comment to make. However, one of the Canal & River Trust's charitable objects is to promote, facilitate, undertake, and assist in for public benefit, the restoration and improvement of inland waterways. We are, therefore, generally supportive of any sustainable project seeking to expand or support the country's inland waterway network. As well as being an interested party, in light of our charitable objective, the Trust is also a member of the</p>	Noted.

	<p>Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway partnership and supports the proposed Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park which is being promoted by the B&MK Waterway Trust. We would suggest that every opportunity is taken to ensure that the future development alongside the new water space positively addresses and integrates the water and, by providing appropriate facilities, opens up access to it for all. Therefore, if not already, B&MK Waterway Trust should be consulted on the Design Code SPDs so that any potential design considerations for development adjacent or close to the waterway route may be incorporated, as appropriate.</p>	
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Elstow Parish Council

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
	<p>Having three very different consultation end dates is confusing, even more so given this consultation was relatively short, being only around 4 weeks, which means effective engagement for Parish Councils as the first tier of local government have been limited with being able to fully reflect and consider these important consultation documents</p>	<p>Four weeks is the statutory consultation period applicable to Supplementary Planning Documents and also the time period as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation period was extended a further two weeks, closing on 17 April enabling additional engagement to take place. However, it is acknowledged that inconsistent dates appeared across the website, email communications and some consultation documents. This lack of clarity is regrettable, and it was an oversight that consultees were not made aware of the additional consultation period.</p>
Design Code – Urban and Suburban Areas		
<p>Pages 76, 77, 86, and 101</p>	<p>As a rural village community, Elstow Parish Council, are mindful that whilst some of the parish is considered to sit within the urban area, it remains absolutely critical that Bedford Borough Council remember and respect that Elstow is a rural village. From the document presentation it is disappointing to see that Elstow as a rural parish in this planning policy document, like Biddenham, has not been</p>	<p>The character typology maps and associated colour-coding are taken from the adopted Bedford Borough Design Guide: Settlements and Streets (2023). They do not define settlement status, alter parish boundaries, or confer urban or suburban designation on rural villages but rather identify a set of broadly recognisable and comparable characteristics. All proposals will continue to be assessed on a</p>

<p>specifically mentioned and highlighted that these areas must be treated differently from other areas. The Parish Council feel the mapping is poor and misleading, as there needs to be a clear distinction maintained for Elstow and its special character as a rural village. The misrepresentation in the mapping is very disappointing for Elstow and its residents. On closer review of the document, there are illustrative maps on Pages 76, 77, 86, and 101 of this document, which are very challenging to read accurately. Having tried various different methods and techniques to enlarge the map presented, to try and identify the areas within the purple and yellow colour coding, located in the southern part of the diagram, it has been difficult to determine what areas of Elstow might have been included or excluded, which makes it challenging for the Parish Council to provide constructive feedback. Page 77 shows this diagram: The yellow colouring of Elstow that looks to be potentially part of Elstow in the South Avenue and Moss Lane area, would according to the local authority code, consider it to be a suburban neighbourhood, with Putnoe used as the example heavily in the policy document. There are predominately bungalow properties, and no street lights in this part of the village, which is a very rural part of Elstow, and distinctively different in many ways to Putnoe or in fact any other area of Bedford. So this assumption, and grouping is misleading, with absolutely in no way the same planning policies being applicable for this quiet, low density, rural setting as every other yellow coded areas across the maps in the policy document. There must be greater differentiation within the document to set this out so it is abundantly clear that any areas in Elstow are highlighted and protected fully to enable them to keep their very rural identity. The same issue arises for the Abbeyfields</p>	<p>site-specific basis, having regard to local character, landscape setting, and relevant development plan policies.</p> <p>Consequential clarification (legend):</p> <p><i>Please note: Character typologies are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide. They do not define settlement status or whether an area is urban or suburban or lies within a rural parish outside the urban area. The extent of the urban area is defined on the Policies Map.</i></p>
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	<p>areas of Elstow which is colour coded purple it appears, if reading the map correctly. The key suggests this is a modern suburban neighbour and/or suburban extension. The Abbeyfields community is passionate like other parts of Elstow, of being proud of its association to Elstow as a rural village and does not associate itself as part of Bedford or the urban area in any way. Elstow Parish Council would like to make it absolutely clear that no part of Elstow parish, is to be considered urban. Elstow is a rural village, and it is not to be inferred in any way to be part of the urban or suburban area in any way whatsoever.</p>	
<p>Design Code – Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements</p>		
<p>South of Bedford Framework</p>	<p>This document is referenced on many occasions, in the Urban Extensions and New Settlements Design Code policy document. As a Parish Council situated in the vicinity of this area, and with Council representatives being active in all local authority consultations during the Local Plan 2030 and 2040 process, there is no knowledge of this document or where to locate it. There was very brief external consultant engagement with Elstow, like Wilstead received, which then dropped off, with Parish Councillors invited to one meeting in November 2023 to discuss a topic paper document relating to the South of Bedford. The terms strategic placemaking were used but there is no awareness this document became a formal strategy or policy document as part of the Local Plan process or outside of the Local Plan process. Having tried to search the Local Plan 2030 examination library as well as the Local Plan 2040 examination library it is not possible to find a document titled 'South of Bedford Framework'. In light of there being no Local Plan 2030 planning policy supplementary document with this name and the Local Plan 2040 was withdrawn, which lists a Topic Paper, please</p>	<p>References to the South of Bedford Framework in the diagrams and photos will be deleted, while the associated diagrams will be retained as examples of possible design outcomes. The South of Bedford Framework document was not published as it related to a policy in the Local Plan 2040, which was withdrawn in October 2025.</p>

	<p>can the Borough Council confirm where the referenced South of Bedford Framework document is to be found given it is clearly a highlighted future of the Urban Extensions and New Settlements Design Code policy across multiple points (pages 13, 15, 17, 19, 20). Can the Borough Council also confirm when the South of Bedford Strategy Framework document was formally adopted by Bedford Borough Council.</p> <p>It has been challenging to comment fully on this important planning policy document which so regularly references the South of Bedford Framework, without being able to access or view this associated planning policy document to read the two side by side, to fully understand the strategic direction the local authority is planning for the South of Bedford and any other urban extension or new settlements. If the local authority are relying on the South of Bedford Topic Paper listed in the Local Plan 2040 library dated 2022, as the document being referenced, then it seems illogical and short sighted on how this associated planning policy/topic paper for a local plan deemed not to be sound is now being used to shape future developments in the South of Bedford and wider borough area. What is especially concerning is that there has been no local input given when a number of important items have moved on so much in this part of the Borough since 2022 and 2023. As well as given one of the main reasons the Local Plan 2040 was needed to be withdrawn was the lack of highways infrastructure to support the planned strategic growth through till 2040 with Highways England very clear during the examination process also included in the inspection report that the A421 was not able to manage the load for the development. Given this trunk road is the most key part</p>	
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	<p>of the highways infrastructure within the South of Bedford it does feel like there is not joined up thinking already taking place at this early stage of a new emerging Local Plan.</p>	
	<p>Images in the Design Code document reflect flats above retail units, the Parish Council feel that the local authority need to have a greater awareness of the challenges for local businesses to thrive in the local area, so there needs to be a careful balance to ensure there are not empty units in the current challenging climate.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Page 13</p>	<p>There is reference here and then throughout the policy document to the emerging new Wixams settlement, however, there is no detail of what or where this emerging new Wixams settlement is. This really needs clarifying within the document, as the Parish Council are not sure if this relates to Wixams town emerging or new/additional sites such as the East of Wixams and South of Wixams areas which have both come forward as proposed allocation sites. A diagram or some text clarity within the policy document would be helpful to avoid misunderstanding from the community perspective and developer perspective as it might differ to the Borough Council Officer interpretation. This is relevant to Elstow as the previously proposed allocated site in the Local Plan 2040 at Land East of Wixams, proposed growth towards Elstow which is a great concern for Elstow Parish Council and the local community, therefore the Parish Council would be worried at any potential development trajectory in the direction of Elstow from Wixams.</p> <p>The document for Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements Design Codes references the policy Landscape Character Assessment for the rural area on page 3, it reads that this assessment document sits</p>	<p>The document will be amended to make it clear that Wixams is referring to existing allocations in the adopted Local Plan and subsequent implemented permissions.</p> <p>Page 13:</p> <p>Amend the following:</p> <p><i>“Original illustrations of the proposed railway station at Wixams. The station will now come forward is now being reconsidered as a higher-capacity rail facility serving both Universal and the strategic allocation at emerging new Wixams settlement identified in the adopted Local Plan, subject to further design development and statutory approvals. Wixams is a long-standing strategic allocation, with development delivered through outline and reserved matters permissions and a safeguarded railway station within the masterplan”.</i></p>

	<p>alongside the LUE and NS policy, however there is no link to the Character Assessment document to view this document, so the two can be reviewed in parallel. As the Character Assessment is referenced early on, and relates to the rural area, the Parish Council had been expecting to be signposted to the document and that this document would also be out for consultation at this time so the two could be reviewed together alongside one another. This again seems short sighted as it is a very key factor for new settlements or any large housing development whether as part of an urban growth area or new settlement in a rural area. The Parish Council were expecting if the two documents were so interlinked that they would be consulted on at the same time to enable a joined up approach going forwards. Whilst the above comments are aligned with Wilstead's position, Elstow Parish Council feel it is important to raise these concerns equally with the Borough Council as any growth or changes to the nearby local area, around Wixams and/or Wilstead will in turn have a detrimental impact on Elstow village, which has a significant issue already in being used as a 'rat run' by vehicles trying to beat the endless queues at all hours along the A6.</p>	
<p>Tall Buildings Guide – Urban Area</p>		
<p>General</p>	<p>This document appears to on the surface deal with tall buildings which would not seem relevant to a rural community like Elstow, however, on closer review it in fact references Elstow a number of times throughout. The Parish Council have the following observations to make on this: Page 5 includes St Pauls Church, as one of the 5 or 6 storey high buildings, it seems strange that Elstow Abbey is not included given its height. The Parish Council feel the heritage asset needs referencing due to its height, and its</p>	<p>Elstow Abbey is mentioned in paragraph 2.19 and 2.23.</p>

	prominence, as well as given it is mentioned numerous times further throughout the document.	
Page 7	The Parish Council feel the synopsis is weak, when compared to the Biddenham and Kempston references. Elstow's summary is totally inadequate, the description must be strengthened significantly further given the direct link to John Bunyan and heritage assets of such high value in Elstow. Elstow has an exceptionally large number of historic assets in the conversation area in comparison to Biddenham and Kempston who are mentioned. Page 8, paragraph 2.14 again needs to have more stronger wording to reflect the rich history of Elstow better over time.	<p>Replace paragraph 2.14 with:</p> <p><i>Elstow is a village of exceptional historic and cultural significance, defined through Elstow Abbey, founded in the twelfth century, and its strong association with John Bunyan. The abbey formed the spiritual and economic focus of the settlement, with accommodation, shops and inns developing during the medieval period to serve religious life and visiting pilgrims.</i></p> <p><i>Following the dissolution, Elstow continued to thrive as an agricultural village, benefitting from its location on the historic north-south route between Bedford and Luton. Today, the village retains an unusually rich concentration of heritage assets within a well-preserved conservation area. Its form reflects this layered history, combining expansive open spaces associated with the abbey and its setting with dispersed historic buildings, alongside a denser cluster along the High Street. This depth of historic character remains central to Elstow's identity and sense of place.</i></p>
Paragraph 2.19	The section needs to have a picture of the Elstow Abbey and tower, given some high value assets are exemplified and pictured, the PC feel strongly that Elstow Abbey needs to have a map and be included given it is such a significant structure of historic importance. Further rationale for this is the local authority need to be respectful of how significant Elstow Abbey is viewed in planning policy terms, given the Inspector at the Local Plan 2024 hearings directed that the Abbey view was so high value that it must be protected. The proposed housing site in Elstow parish was the only housing site directed to be removed from the local plan by the inspector. The lack of pictures, mapping, and reference	<p>Amend paragraph 2.25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the grade 1 listed, 13th-century bell tower and remaining church structures of Elstow Abbey - set on open land near Elstow Brook - which stand out due to their height and visibility across a wide area, forming an important landmark to the south of Bedford. The detached bell tower and remaining church structures are visible from nearby industrial areas and modern residential neighbourhoods, reinforcing its significance within the wider townscape.</i>

	<p>dilutes its importance which is not acceptable. This feedback applies to Paragraph 2.23 as well.</p>	<p>Add photograph and include the source (https://www.elstow-abbey.org.uk)</p> 
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Tall Buildings Guide – Urban Area

<p>Page 11</p>	<p>There needs to be greater prominence in the policy document to ensure protection of views to this landmark. Whilst there is an image of the abbey on Page 11 it shows the side of the heritage asset that is seen from the village. There must be reference to the need to protect the view of the feature from the other side across towards the direction of the A6, as that aspect is the one most under threat. All sides and angles of the asset must be protected. Given the local authority have applied this level of clear protection within the policy document to St Paul's Church, which is in fact located in an entirely built up area, so already rather surrounded with hardly any available area nearby that could impact or intrude on the important views to the asset in the local area, as reflected on the accompanying detailed map</p>	<p>We recognise the importance of safeguarding the setting of key heritage landmarks and the contribution that views from multiple directions make to their significance. The guidance already requires proposals to demonstrate an understanding of the impact of height, massing and location on heritage assets and their settings, including effects on views and townscape character.</p> <p>However, it is acknowledged that clearer signposting would be helpful in the case of heritage assets located within more open or transitional settings. In response, the supporting text will be strengthened to clarify that assessments of tall building proposals must consider views to and from heritage assets from all relevant directions, not solely a single or commonly illustrated aspect, and</p>
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	<p>and explanation of how the building needs to be protected in the policy. Elstow Parish Council feels this same level of mapping needs to be applied to both Elstow Abbey and the Guru Nanak Gurdwara Temple which are both at far greater risk of development impacting on them as they are in far more open settings.</p>	<p>that the degree of protection should reflect the sensitivity and openness of the surrounding context.</p> <p>Insert after paragraph 2.28</p> <p><i>“Tall building proposals must demonstrate that height, massing, and siting protect and, where possible, enhance heritage settings, key views and sightlines from all relevant directions, with evidence provided through robust visual impact and heritage assessments that consider the wider landscape context and longer-range views.”</i></p>
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Historic England

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
Tall Buildings Guide – Urban Area		
1 Introduction	Para 1.2 is a good point that this should not be making new policy but helping to interpret LP policy.	Noted and support welcomed
	Para 1.4 This is helpful to clarify the purpose of the document and also to highlight that it is not promoting tall buildings.	Noted and support welcomed
	Paras 1.10- 1.12 This is a helpful starting point for the definition.	Noted and support welcomed
	Para 1.12 We note that this will be important for any large-scale proposals in the rural area.	Noted and support welcomed
2 Current situation	Para 2.8 We welcome the requirement for a heritage impact assessment for tall buildings within the setting of heritage assets.	Noted and support welcomed

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	<p>Para 2.9 We appreciate the important caveat that where tall buildings exist that are harmful to the significance of heritage assets, their replacement with another tall building is not a given.</p>	<p>Noted and support welcomed</p>
	<p>Para 2.23 We welcome the clarification that and landmark building doesn't necessarily have to be tall.</p>	<p>Noted and support welcomed</p>
<p>Important local views and vistas</p>	<p>The draft SPD does not include sufficient information to identify key local views and vistas and explore their significance.</p>	<p>Paragraph 2.24 states that <i>“Identifying a definitive list of local views is clearly dependent on the location and scale of a proposed tall building. As such, it is not possible to produce an exhaustive list. Local views must be considered on a case-by-case basis”</i>.</p>
	<p>We continue to recommend that a tall buildings study/guidance should include a map of key views/viewpoints summarising these in one place. This is currently missing from the guidance.</p>	<p>A single mapped summary of key views and viewpoints has not been included, as visual impact is inherently site-specific and cannot be accurately captured through a fixed or definitive plan.</p>
	<p>In addition, it would be helpful to include photographs of key views.</p>	<p>Fixed photographic viewpoints within the SPD could risk oversimplifying or pre-determining visual impacts that need to be assessed on a proposal-led basis. Instead, the document includes Google image extracts to provide indicative context and assist understanding of the general locations and characteristics of key views. These are intended for illustrative purposes only. Applicants are expected to undertake proportionate, site-specific visual analysis, including verified photography and visualisations where appropriate, as part of the planning application process.</p>
	<p>Reference should also be made to any key views to and from the town. This should include views from the Greensand Ridge, including any designed views.</p>	<p>The Greensand Ridge sits outside the urban area to which the SPD applies and, for the most part, lies beyond the borough boundary. However, tall buildings should nevertheless take account of the cumulative impact of development on longer-distance views across the largely flat surrounding landscape, including views from the Greensand Ridge.</p> <p>Add under paragraph 2.26: Views from other parts of the urban area and beyond are also important, particularly where they</p>

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		relate to identifiable historic skyline features and designated viewpoints across the predominantly flat surrounding landscape, including locations such as the Greensand Ridge, in accordance with policy NE1 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.
Assessment criteria	We welcome criterion 4.	Support welcomed
Conclusions	Paragraph 4.5 refers to the need to evidence suitability through robust visual testing. Either in this paragraph or ideally earlier in the document, the guidance should say that Planning Applications need to be supported by LVIA, HIA, Visualisations including photomontages, wirelines etc, informed by Zone of Theoretical Visibility etc.	Amend paragraph 4.5: <i>The level of supporting information required in relation to tall building proposals will depend on site-specific circumstances and potential impacts, and no fixed list of assessments is prescribed. Where significant townscape, visual, or heritage effects may arise, applications should include proportionate supporting material, such as visual or heritage assessments and verified visual representations. Visibility assessments, including a zone of theoretical visibility, may be required to inform viewpoint selection. The scope of assessment should be agreed through early pre-application engagement and remain proportionate to the proposal</i> ”.
Appendices	Para 5.1: This should be amended from four to three urban area case studies. Para 5.2: This should be amended from four to three urban area case studies	Yes, amend accordingly
	It would be helpful to include policy wording from Local Plan in an appendix.	While the suggestion to include relevant Local Plan policy wording in an appendix is noted, it is not considered necessary to amend the document in this way. The guidance draws on a wide range of existing Local Plan policies, and reproducing policy text would add length without material benefit. The SPD is intended to complement, rather than duplicate, the development plan, and users are expected to have regard to

		the full range of relevant policies when preparing or determining applications.
Design Code - Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements		
Page 2: Garden city principles	We welcome reference to the garden city principles. Whilst these principles are useful and do embody a number of modern town planning concepts, they do not address the historic environment. Therefore, in drafting your design code it is particularly important to ensure that appropriate reference is made to the need to conserve and enhance the historic environment. We therefore welcome the many references to heritage and the historic environment throughout the document.	Noted and support welcomed
Section 3: Context and character – pages 5 and 6	Page 5: We particularly welcome the focus on context and character.	Support welcomed
	Page 6: We advise that the section on heritage assets should be amended to read ‘designated and non-designated heritage sites assets and features’.	Text has been amended to refer to “ <i>Designated and non-designated heritage sites assets and features</i> ”
	You should also add reference to their settings. We recommend that you also add the following text to the section on heritage assets: For sites where there may be an impact on heritage (either on site or nearby), a heritage impact assessment/statement may be required to assess the impacts and how they can be minimised/what potential enhancements could be achieved.	Add: “ <i>Where a proposed urban extension or new settlement has the potential to affect heritage assets, either on the site itself or within the surrounding area, a heritage impact assessment may be required, consistent with policy 41S of the Local Plan 2030. This assessment will be required to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>identify the nature and extent of potential impacts on heritage assets.</i> • <i>evaluate how any harm can be avoided or minimized.</i> • <i>explore opportunities to secure benefits or enhancements to heritage assets as part of the development proposal</i>”.
	We advise that there should be more reference to local building vernacular (i.e. in terms of local building style and form, rather than just local materials) throughout the code.	Add as a sub section on built form: <i>Local vernacular and place structure</i>

		<p><i>“Urban extensions and new settlements should respond positively to local building vernacular, reflecting established patterns of built form, layout and scale across the borough. This includes the perimeter blocks, continuous building lines and strong street enclosure characteristic of Bedford and historic villages such as Bromham, Turvey and Great Barford, as well as the structured layouts of newer developments like Great Denham and Wixams. Typical local features (appropriate to the typology of the development) should inform the creation of legible streets, well-defined public spaces and coherent neighbourhoods. In urban typologies, this may include narrow plot rhythms, clear vertical proportions, articulated roofscapes and graduated height transitions. In suburban typologies, generous green infrastructure, less formal road layouts and varied housing types may be appropriate. This approach will ensure that contemporary design sits comfortably within the borough’s evolving character and sense of place.</i>”</p>
	<p>We welcome reference to historic field boundaries, views ridge and furrow etc.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>Page 8: Local character</p>	<p>We welcome the section on local character. This should be expanded to include built environment and settlement grain, historical pattern of development, landscape character, designations local heritage, local views to and from the site.</p>	<p>Add to the section on local character: <i>“Local character analysis should reflect established settlement patterns and townscape, including the urban grain of Bedford town centre, the historic form of surrounding villages such as Bromham, Turvey, and Great Barford, and the transition to the wider Great Ouse landscape. Consideration should include historic development patterns, landscape character, heritage assets and locally important views, such as church spires, river corridors, farmsteads and open countryside. These factors should guide the layout, scale, and form of urban extensions and new settlements</i>”</p>

to ensure a positive response to context and a strong sense of place”.



Add photos of farmsteads in the local vernacular

We welcome the use of ‘must’ and ‘should’ in the draft SPD. However, these are sometimes a little buried in the narrative text. We recommend that these are perhaps marked in bold or separated out into checklists to summarise and draw out the key requirements set out in the code. We recommend that you

The comment is noted. However, it is not proposed to highlight “must” and “should” wording through additional formatting or checklists. The guidance deliberately uses narrative text to convey requirements and recommendations in context, providing examples of how new development should be

	<p>ensure these terms are used appropriately and consistently to convey the correct degree of requirement or recommendation throughout the document.</p>	<p>coded. The documents are not meant to act as a list of considerations but provide context and ensure the right questions are asked in the early stages of design and layout.</p>
<p>General</p>	<p>Section 4 appears to be missing Streets for All</p> <p>We would encourage you to reference to Streets for All in the Section 5 Movement and /or Section 7 Creating multi functional streets and spaces. Streets for All – East of England is a manual that offers guidance on the way our streets are managed. Specifically, it includes advice on traffic management, signage, lighting, ground surfaces and verges etc.</p>	<p>Section 5: Movement</p> <p>“Street layout, hierarchy and public realm design should have regard to Streets for All: East of England principles, demonstrating how movement infrastructure responds to local character and supports coherent, legible streets”.</p> <p>Section 7: Creating multifunctional streets and spaces</p> <p>“Multifunctional streets and spaces should also have regard to Sport England’s Streets for All: East of England principles, coordinating highway elements to reduce clutter, reinforce local character and support accessible, legible placemaking”.</p>
<p>Section 6 Nature and blue-green infrastructure</p>	<p>Synergies with the historic environment and conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is an important facet of sustainable development. There is an important synergy between the historic and natural environment.</p> <p>Countryside, landscape parks and the open spaces in our cities, towns and villages often have heritage interest, and we recommend to highlighting this in this section of the code. For example, green Infrastructure should not only be considered in terms of the natural environment, health and recreation but also the role it can play in conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It can be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserve and enhance heritage assets • improve setting of heritage assets • improve access to heritage assets • create a sense of place and tangible link with local history 	<p>New paragraph under heading “Network of spaces”</p> <p>“Blue-green infrastructure provision within large urban extensions and new settlements should respond positively to, and seamlessly integrate with the natural and historic environment, where possible, enhancing the setting of heritage assets and linking present historic features with wider networks such as river corridors and country parks. New provision should respond to existing historic landscapes and townscape, including river corridors, parkland and settlement patterns, and be supported through appropriate long-term management to maintain quality and distinctiveness. Examples include the restored quarry landscapes and lakes at Stewartby and Wixams, plantation woodlands and green corridors within the Forest of Marston Vale, tributary watercourses including Elstow</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create linkages between heritage assets and other green infrastructure <p>Likewise, the historic environment can help contribute to the quality, character and distinctiveness of green spaces by helping to create a sense of place and a tangible link with local history. Opportunities can be taken to link new GI networks into already existing green spaces in town or existing historic spaces such as church yards to improve the setting of historic buildings or historic townscape. Maintenance of GI networks and spaces should also be considered so that they continue to serve as high quality places which remain beneficial in the long term.</p> <p>We recommend that Section 6 Nature and blue-green infrastructure is strengthened by adding in reference to the linkages and synergies between green infrastructure and the historic environment.</p>	<p>Brook and floodplain landscapes associated with the River Great Ouse”.</p>
<p>Page 21 Water management</p>	<p>Historic England welcomes the use of sustainable drainage systems in new development with the important caveat that SuDS should be designed so that they do not impact on archaeology. Impacts can be caused by draining waterlogged archaeology or introducing surplus water and pollution from surface runoff into archaeological sediments via soakaways. Consideration should be given to the most appropriate course of action to protect buried waterlogged archaeology through the design of SuDS. We therefore recommend including reference to highlight that SuDS should be designed to avoid impacts on archaeology’.</p>	<p>Amend water management paragraph on p 21:</p> <p><i>As Bedford borough is a water stressed area, new development should aim to achieve higher standards of water efficiency, in accordance with building regulations, using water efficient devices, rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling. The adopted Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance on incorporating sustainable drainage into developments to manage surface water and river flooding. Developments must be appropriately designed to both function correctly and fit with the character of the development. The most appropriate solutions will depend on various factors specific to the site and the proposed development.</i></p>

<p>Case studies</p>	<p>We welcome the use of case studies/worked examples in the design guide. We appreciate the use of illustrations, particularly those local to the area and also note the use of examples of best practice from the region including Eddington, Cambridge. We recommend including some heritage examples. This might include an example of how landscaping or set back can be used to both protect the setting of a heritage asset whilst at the same time providing open space for the development.</p>	<p>Add the case study alongside the Wootton example:</p> <p><i>“Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge is a landscape-led urban extension showing how green buffers, meadowland, and building setbacks can protect historic settlement patterns and landscape features while delivering high-quality development, with river corridors seamlessly integrating new homes into the surrounding countryside”.</i></p> <p><i>“The incorporation of river corridors and accessible open spaces forms a robust green infrastructure network that links new neighborhoods to the surrounding countryside, promoting biodiversity, recreation, and a strong sense of place”.</i></p> <p>https://hdawards.org/scheme/trumpington-meadows</p> <p>Add a photo:</p>
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	<p>Finally we recommend that more focus is given in the code to ensure that each new settlement or urban extension harnesses the power of heritage to inform sensitive design and positive placemaking, grounded in the local context and creating an important, distinct sense of place.</p>	<p>Noted -add the following paragraph at the end of chapter 2:</p> <p><i>The code does not seek to promote a particular approach but to demonstrate the scope of the considerations needed. Context is key and each development will need to identify the key areas and issues that need addressing in any new development.</i></p>
<p>Design code - urban and suburban areas</p>		
<p>Page 10</p>	<p>We welcome the many references to heritage and the historic environment throughout the document. We particularly welcome the contextual approach to site analysis on page 10.</p>	<p>Noted and support welcomed</p>

	<p>We advise that the section on heritage assets on page 10 should be expanded to specifically reference designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings.</p>	<p>Add to page 10: <i>“For sites where a development has the potential to affect heritage assets, either on the site itself or within the surrounding area, a heritage impact assessment may be required under policy 41S of the Local Plan 2030. The assessment should identify impacts, demonstrate harm avoidance or minimisation, and secure opportunities to deliver heritage benefits or enhancement”.</i></p>
	<p>We recommend that you also add the following text to the section on heritage assets: We advise that there should be more reference to local building vernacular (i.e. in terms of local building style and form, rather than just local materials) throughout the Code.</p>	<p>Replace: <i>“Development should take account of heritage assets on or near the site, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, recognising that local character derives from the cumulative evolution of buildings, spaces, scale, form, grain and their relationship to streets and landscapes. In Bedford, this is reflected in established building traditions, historic street patterns, building heights, materials and architectural forms (including terraces, detached villas, riverside warehouses and civic buildings, often articulated through pitched roofs, articulated façades, vertical window proportions and strong street enclosure) that together create a coherent and legible townscape. Proposals should treat historic character as an opportunity, drawing on local scale, form, layout, materials and detailing to reinforce local distinctiveness and contribute positively to the ongoing evolution of the area”.</i></p>
<p>Page 11: Local character</p>	<p>We welcome the section on local character. The helpfully includes factors such as era of development, streetscape, street layout, green infrastructure and building heights.</p>	<p>Support welcomed</p>

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	<p>We recommend that you also add the following factors: built environment and settlement grain, historical pattern of development, landscape character, designations local heritage, local views to and from the site.</p>	<p>Replace with: <i>“The Bedford Borough Design Guide analyses the character of the borough’s urban and suburban areas, identifying how built form, settlement grain, landscape and heritage shape local distinctiveness.</i></p> <p><i>Within each local distinctiveness area, a representative street has been analysed to identify prevailing characteristics such as scale, massing, enclosure, rhythm and relationships with surrounding spaces and views, which underpin the 16 design principles set out in the guide.</i></p> <p><i>The guide also provides a structured process to analyse local context -considering townscape, landscape, heritage and key views - to ensure new development responds positively to its setting and reinforces local distinctiveness”.</i></p>
<p>General comments</p>	<p>We welcome the use of ‘must’ and ‘should’ in the draft SPD.</p>	<p>Support welcomed</p>
	<p>We recommend that you ensure these terms are used appropriately and consistently to convey the correct degree of requirement or recommendation throughout the document.</p>	<p>No change. The draft SPD already applies the terms “must” and “should” in a clear and consistent manner, reflecting established planning practice and the intended distinction between mandatory requirements and advisory guidance.</p>
	<p>We would encourage you to reference to Streets for All - East of England in the following sections</p> <p>2.4: Movement 2.6: Public space.</p>	<p>2.4: Movement</p> <p><i>The best examples of street networks in Bedford reflect principles set out in Streets for All – East of England, demonstrate demonstrating a clear and legible hierarchy of with primary, secondary and tertiary routes that support accessibility, legibility and a strong sense of place.</i></p> <p>2.6: Public space.</p> <p>i) Streets</p>

		<p><i>The design of streets should be based on their role place in the street hierarchy and their surrounding context, in line with the principles set out in Sport England’s Streets for All – East of England. Analysis of the area will show how the street network is set out and how they interact with the buildings, spaces and uses around them.</i></p>
	<p>Natural environment and synergies with the historic environment. Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is an important facet of sustainable development. There is an important synergy between the historic and natural environment. Countryside, landscape parks and the open spaces in our cities, towns and villages often have heritage interest, and we recommend to highlighting this in this section of the code. For example, Green Infrastructure should not only be considered in terms of the natural environment, health and recreation but also the role it can play in conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It can be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserve and enhance heritage assets • improve setting of heritage assets • improve access to heritage assets • create a sense of place and tangible link with local history • create linkages between heritage assets and other green infrastructure <p>Likewise, the historic environment can help contribute to the quality, character and distinctiveness of green spaces by helping to create a sense of place and a tangible link with local history. Opportunities can be taken to link new GI networks into already existing green spaces in town or existing historic spaces such as church yards to improve the setting of historic buildings or historic townscape. Maintenance of GI networks and spaces should also be considered so that they continue to serve as high quality places</p>	<p><i>Add to introductory paragraph in section 2.5:</i></p> <p><i>Bedford has a wealth of natural assets including country parks, local nature reserves, sites of special scientific interest and local green spaces. It has large areas of countryside as well as the River Great Ouse and other waterways. Historic landscapes, parks and churchyards can form integral elements of green infrastructure networks.</i></p>

	<p>which remain beneficial in the long term. We recommend that section 2.5 Nature is strengthened by adding in reference to the linkages and synergies between green infrastructure and the historic environment.</p>	
	<p>Historic England welcomes the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems SuDS in new development with the important caveat that SuDS should be designed so that they do not impact on archaeology. Impacts can be caused by draining waterlogged archaeology or introducing surplus water and pollution from surface runoff into archaeological sediments via soakaways. Consideration should be given to the most appropriate course of action to protect buried waterlogged archaeology through the design of SuDS. We therefore recommend including reference in the SuDS section on page 29 to highlight that SuDS should be designed to avoid impacts on archaeology’.</p>	<p>Page 29: The adopted Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD provides guidance on incorporating sustainable drainage into developments to manage surface water and river flooding. Developments must be appropriately designed to both function correctly and fit with the character of the development. The most appropriate solutions will depend on various factors specific to the site and the proposed development <i>such as ground conditions, site layout, the presence of archaeological remains or areas of potential archaeological interest. Appropriate early assessments will need to be prepared to ensure suitable placement and potential mitigation of sustainable drainage locations.</i></p>

	<p>We welcome the use of case studies/worked examples in the design guide. We appreciate the use of illustrations, particularly those local to the area. We recommend including some heritage examples. This might include an example of how landscaping or set back can be used to both protect the setting of a heritage asset whilst at the same time providing open space for the development.</p>	<p>2.6 Public space</p> <p>Add the following words:</p> <p><i>A strong public-realm approach, rooted in heritage, design quality and accessible civic space, should underpin the redevelopment in sensitive historic settings. For example, redevelopment around Lincoln Castle, Cathedral views and historic wharves uses building set-backs and waterside public space to protect key vistas while delivering mixed-use development. Open space along the waterfront reinforces the historic relationship between the city, water and industry, similar in character to opportunities along the River Great Ouse</i></p>
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Kempston Town Council’s Planning Committee

Topic or reference	Comment	Topic or reference
All	<p>We welcome the opportunity to comment on the three draft Supplementary Planning Documents currently out for consultation. The committee commends the significant amount of work that has clearly gone into preparing these documents. They provide a well-structured and comprehensive framework, setting out high-level</p>	Noted – no change

	<p>principles that will help guide future development across the borough. The emphasis on design quality, placemaking, and coherent urban form is particularly valued, and the clarity of the guidance will support both applicants and decision-makers in achieving consistent and well-considered outcomes. We appreciate the thoughtful approach taken in developing these documents and look forward to seeing how they will shape future planning and development within Bedford and Kempston.</p>	
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Liberal Democrats

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
<p>General</p>	<p>Some links do not open e.g. Page 4 of the Tall Buildings - the policies map : https://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/OpenDocument.aspx?id=vISwaox7XRaXogfVY6q5A%3d%3d&name=Tall%20Buildings%20Guide%20Urban%20Area%20SPD%20-%20final%20for%20consultation%20March%202026.pdf</p>	<p>Amend. The correct links will be added to the document.</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>Consultation dates are not clear. The website says: "The consultation will run from 6 March 2026 to 17 April 2026." The Council's email has a different end date, and the documents themselves had a third set of dates... There is a risk that this becomes challengeable and this needs to be addressed in the consultation response.</p>	<p>Four weeks is the statutory consultation period applicable to Supplementary Planning Documents and also the time period as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation period was extended a further two weeks, closing on 17 April enabling additional engagement to take place. However, it is acknowledged that inconsistent dates appeared across the website, email communications and some consultation documents. This lack of clarity is regrettable, and it was an oversight that consultees were not made aware of the additional consultation period.</p>
	<p>There is some misnumbering in reports.</p>	<p>The documents will be reviewed to ensure numbering is correct prior to finalisation.</p>

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	LDA 3GU is an area designation in the Design Guide: https://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/OpenDocument.aspx?id=8Y1bAmK01b3mFv%2bioP%2bEaA%3d%3d&name=Bedford%20Borough%20Design%20Guide%20reduced%20size.pdf but isn't clearly explained in the document.	No change is proposed in response to this comment. DA 3GU is an area designation defined within the adopted Bedford Borough Design Guide, and the design code sits alongside this document rather than duplicating or re-explaining existing classifications. The design codes and the tall buildings guide should be read alongside the design guide for the detailed explanation of area designations and their characteristics.
	It should be explicit that the Design Guide principles override any exemptions that are implied in these subsequent Design Codes.	No change is proposed. The Bedford Borough Design Guide and the subsequent design codes are Supplementary Planning Documents that are intended to operate in a complementary and consistent manner. The design codes do not create exemptions from the Bedford Borough Design Guide, nor do they override its principles; both SPDs should be read together and applied alongside the Local Plan as part of the overall design framework.
Urban and suburban areas design code		
Page 6	Page 6 is inaccurate as a depiction of what is going on. There are three sub-design codes being developed within the Design Guide created in 2023. These all "sit within the same design framework". There already is a design guide, and these SPDs provide helpful additional guidance.	No change is proposed. The Bedford Borough Design Guide and the subsequent design codes are Supplementary Planning Documents that are intended to operate in a complementary and consistent manner. And should be read together and applied alongside the Local Plan as part of the overall design framework.
Pages 7 and 8	P7 and P8 in the pink box it says that orange is 18 th century development. This is not the case.	Amend: Orange (nineteenth century): Urban neighbourhood typology
Page 7	Urban areas are not predominately 19 th century.	The colour coding is intended to broadly indicate the predominant period of development within each area. It should be noted that none of the areas are exclusively defined by development from a single era. As noted above the text box, these local distinctiveness areas are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide

		<p>Replace wording in the text box as follows:</p> <p><i>Light blue denotes the town centre and conservation area, which contains development from multiple periods.</i></p> <p><i>Orange denotes areas where nineteenth and early twentieth century development is a significant characteristic.</i></p> <p><i>Yellow denotes areas of primarily mid to late twentieth century development</i></p>
4) p19	The photo on the right (Brickhill) is given as an area which is less permeable – but only for drivers. It is highly permeable for active travel, and is a useful road hierarchy in action for motor vehicles. Personal safety is not enhanced by unlit paths and cycle paths out of sight of roads and dwellings, often hidden by greenery.	<p>Noted. Amend descriptions of photos to read:</p> <p><i>More permeable road network: a connected network of Bedford streets</i></p> <p><i>Less permeable road network: a predominance of cul-de-sacs in Bedford</i></p>
5) p23	We need separation of bicycles and pedestrians. Currently cars/vans/lorries dominate the roads, and cyclists dominate the pavements, meaning that pedestrians lose out.	Noted. The National Model Design Code states that cycles should be separated from vehicles where possible (graphic from this code is reproduced on page 23).
6) p29	Can BBC make SUDs a requirement?	Noted – sustainable urban drainage is a Local Plan policy requirement. There is also an adopted supplementary planning document setting out how sustainable urban drainage systems should be considered in development.
7)	Public amenity green space (urban or rural) must be protected and highlight similarities in developments in urban and rural areas [e.g. p28]. Green spaces also function as meeting places [e.g. Bowhill in Putnoe, p 39].	Noted

<p>Page 44 & section 3.0</p>	<p>Referring to all orange-shaded areas as ‘urban’ seems simplistic. The orange-shaded areas in Goldington, Riverfield, some of Castle-Newnham and Queens Park have more in common with the yellow suburban areas – this allocation should be reviewed. Also, these areas listed are not 18th century. These areas listed are not addressed in section 3, further emphasising that they have been mis-classified.</p>	<p>Noted – the text box on page 7 will be amended to reflect this</p> <p>Noted. The local distinctiveness areas shown on the map demonstrate areas of broad similarity in characteristics, categorised largely by the period of development (the text box stating orange areas are largely eighteenth century will be amended to largely nineteenth century). They are not allocations or policy designations, but a guide to predominant development features that can form part of a design code. The map is taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide 2023. The design codes are not intended to review or revise these distinctiveness areas, but to present a consistent point of reference with the design guide. Any new development is encouraged throughout the code to take account of its immediate surroundings and characteristics in the early stages of design process.</p>
<p>Page 51 -</p>	<p>Ground floor should explicitly mention the protection of active frontage where possible.</p>	<p>Agreed. Amend paragraph on ground floor (page 51) to include:</p> <p><i>Active frontages should be maintained where possible, especially in the primary shopping area and, where possible, along other key streets in the town centre</i></p>
<p>Page 73:</p>	<p>This line: "especially in deprived wards such as Cauldwell, Castle, Goldington and Harpur" needs to reference Greyfriars, Kingsbrook and Queen's Park as well. And in subsequent sections (e.g. p83).</p>	<p>Amend:</p> <p><i>Public space: New developments should prioritise the provision of accessible open space (especially in deprived wards such as Cauldwell, Castle, Goldington, Harpur, Greyfriars, Kingsbrook and Queen's Park to address deficiencies.</i></p>

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	Additionally, small public spaces such as seating (benches) have been traditionally removed, as they can be a focus for anti-social behaviour.	Noted
Page 77	There is reference to 'a church', in Putnoe, but there is more than one.	Amend: <i>The neighbourhood is punctuated with generous green areas, schools, shopping parades and other amenities like bus stops, cafes, a library and churches.</i>
Page 78	Regarding parking, 'As car ownership increased, many of these front areas were converted into driveways, resulting in limited on-street parking across much of the area' fails to take acknowledge that there are many streets that were not designed for the current level of car ownership and on-street parking becomes congested. This should be acknowledged in p78. Off road parking in some of these areas (e.g. Harvey Road) is a problem as the front gardens are not long enough. Lack of parking, whether on-road or off- road, leads to parking on verges, which ruins the verges and the streetscape.	Noted. On page78, amend first bullet point in the section on challenges created to read: <i>Loss of front gardens to parking and in some scenarios with increased car ownership leading to parking congestion on streets not designed to accommodate current demand. In some cases, limited off-street provision in areas such as Harvey Road has forced vehicles onto verges and footways, harming street quality and safety.</i>
Page 80	Gostwick Road is in Cauldwell Ward, not Kempston as stated.	Amend page80 photo description to read: Gostwick Road, Bedford
	Boundary treatment – in reality, boundary treatment should allow for off-road parking, not 2m of planting.	It is noted in the text that the boundary treatments form an important part of how the private and public realms interact and that the treatments listed should be considered. There may be several options in considering parking in new developments that do not rely on it being a feature of boundary treatments.

<p>Page 88</p>	<p>Housing density: Opportunities to introduce higher densities in suburban areas "provided they do not compromise the character and identity of the neighbourhood" or "risk creating harm to neighbouring residents." This 'harm' needs to be recognised as insufficient parking and damage to the street scene. The suburban area's success can partially be measured by its density, and introducing higher densities may be harmful.</p>	<p><i>On page 88, the housing density paragraph will be amended to read:</i></p> <p><i>Generally, suburban development is lower density than urban or town centre development, However, there may be opportunities to introduce higher densities in suburban areas provided they do not compromise the character and identity of the neighbourhood or risk creating harm to neighbouring residents such as damage to the streetscene, loss of landscape features, increased parking pressure, reduced visual coherence, overlooking and loss of daylight.</i></p>
<p>Page 80</p>	<p>Regarding Putnoe, "New development will be predominantly two and three storey terraced houses" – new builds being terraced will be out of keeping with much of the current housing.</p>	<p>Noted. Terraced dwellings are present throughout Putnoe, however a mix of housing types will provide appropriate development and opportunity.</p> <p>Remove word 'terraced' from first paragraph on page 81.</p>
	<p>Examples used as illustration and then to develop principles do not apply across whole areas identified; this risks inconsistency with the design guide. Distinctiveness could be lost by applying case studies to the whole area leading to errors.</p>	<p>Noted. Examples and illustrations are used to demonstrate how characteristics and features can be identified when planning new development. They are not meant as a template to guide all new proposed development..</p>
<p>Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements Design Code</p>		
	<p>There should be a significant consideration of protecting green space, ensuring transport links are prepared in advance and well lit. Cycle paths need to be clearly marked and maintainable. They should not function as additional parking for domestic or commercial vehicles.</p>	<p>Amend the paragraph about legibility on page10 to read:</p> <p><i>Any new settlement or urban extension should be clearly legible, allowing residents, workers and visitors to move around with confidence. Clearly marked pathways and sustainable travel routes (protected from use as additional parking), street hierarchy and landmark features will assist in</i></p>

		orientation and help people understand their location within the settlement.
	Whilst it may fall out of the purview of a planning department, marketing materials should reflect planning applications and approvals and not mislead residents. In some development in Bedford Borough, marketing materials showing housing where eventually business units were built is a source of ongoing lack of confidence in planning functions.	Noted. This is not within the scope of these documents.
Page 2	Under 'Nurtured' – 'Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets' could mean the Borough Council, not Open Space Management companies.	This graphic is reproduced from the TCPA website. It is not within the scope of this document to amend it.
Pages 5, 13 and 20	Personal safety – personal safety is not enhanced by unlit paths and cycle paths out of sight of roads and dwellings, often hidden by greenery.	Noted
Page 9	"Active travel links connect the local centre with residential areas and local and strategic open space." Should also recognise connections to employment sites and the town centres and other travel links. Additionally, safe cycle storage must be provided.	Amend numeral 2 in image description to read: Active travel links should connect the local centre with residential areas, employment sites, town centres, local and strategic open space, and wider transport networks. Safe and secure cycle storage should also be provided"
Page 20	6) Again, whilst not falling within the purview of planning, we should explicitly oppose management charges.	This is not within the scope of these documents.
	7) p21 Is SUDS required?	Amend paragraph on page 21 to read: <i>As Bedford borough is a water stressed area, new development should aim to achieve higher standards of water efficiency, in accordance with building regulations, using water efficient devices, rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling. The adopted Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD provides guidance on incorporating sustainable drainage into</i>

		<p>developments to manage surface water and river flooding. Developments must be appropriately designed to both function correctly and fit with the character of the development. The most appropriate solutions will depend on various factors specific to the site and the proposed development.</p>
	<p>8) p23 'New settlements should incorporate various meeting places...'In new developments such as Wixams, village and community hall space has been lacking, stifling growth of community groups, youth pursuits and religious/cultural activities. Whilst school gyms are available for hire, they never have space allocated for storage by outside hirers, and valuable specialist equipment needs to be transported around by car instead.</p>	<p>Noted. Amend paragraph under heading 'Meeting Places' on page 23 to read:</p> <p><i>New settlements should incorporate a range of meeting places to facilitate both formal and informal gatherings and social interactions. These should include built facilities such as village or community halls, gyms and cafes/restaurants capable of supporting community groups, youth activities and religious or cultural uses. Formally planned play areas, greens and parks should serve as destinations that promote social cohesion and healthy lifestyle activities. Informal meeting points such as green spaces in street scenes or 'nexus' points where multiple routes intersect can strengthen community cohesion, provide active surveillance and aid wayfinding.</i></p>
<p>Page 25</p>	<p>In new developments such as Wootton, the dwellings may be built so that they can be signed off as net zero, but the air tightness and isolation balance mean that many residents have installed air conditioning to cool their homes.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
	<p>Bus and public transport connectivity should be considered in all developments. This also includes frequent and reliable connections to other employment sites in the BLMK area, such as Milton Keynes and Luton.</p>	<p>Noted. Page 13 contains commentary on public transport.</p> <p>Amend page 13 to read:</p>

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		<i>Streets should be designed to support and encourage the use of public transport. The layout of the street network must consider appropriate distances to bus stops, bus routes (both within the borough and to other key centres in the wider region) and rail stations, creating a coherent and circuitous movement pattern that radiates from key transport hubs. Bus stops should be near direct and reliable active travel routes.</i>
Tall Buildings Guide - Bedford Urban Area		
Page 15	Problems of overlooking and inappropriate window siting must be avoided.	Noted
p19, 3.28, criterion 3	There should be some threshold for requiring an assessment (probably numerical/appropriate) of the impacts of the building, in combination with the surrounding structures, channelling the wind and increasing turbulence.	Noted and this can be investigated through the new Local Plan
	Agree with the examples given in Appendix 2, and particularly in the case of Greyfriars, have serious concerns about "high-rise slums" with some developers trying to build flats with light-wells where bathrooms are overlooking and overlooked by bedrooms and social spaces.	Noted

Natural England

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
	While we welcome this opportunity to give our views, the topic this Supplementary Planning Document covers is unlikely to have major effects on the natural environment. We therefore do not wish to provide specific comments.	Support welcomed

<p>Green infrastructure</p>	<p>This SPD could consider making provision for Green Infrastructure (GI) within development. This should be in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and any GI strategy covering your area. Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Framework provides evidence-based advice and tools on how to design, deliver and manage green and blue infrastructure (GI). Development should be designed to meet the 15 Green Infrastructure Principles. The GI Standards can be used to inform the quality, quantity and type of GI to be provided. Major development should have a GI plan including a long-term delivery and management plan.</p> <p>GI mapping resources are available here and here. These can be used to help assess deficiencies in greenspace provision and identify priority locations for new GI provision.</p> <p>Further information is set out in the Planning Practice Guidance on Green Infrastructure.</p>	<p>Noted. These documents make reference to the need to consider green infrastructure as part of any early design code process. The Design Code - Urban Area contains section relating to nature and green infrastructure and the Design Code - Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements contains a section on nature and blue-green infrastructure.</p>
	<p>Urban green space provides multi-functional benefits. It contributes to coherent and resilient ecological networks, allowing species to move around within, and between, towns and the countryside with even small patches of habitat benefitting movement.</p> <p>Urban GI is also recognised as one of the most effective tools available to us in managing environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves. Greener neighbourhoods and improved access to nature can also improve public health and quality of life and reduce environmental inequalities.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

	<p>There may be significant opportunities to retrofit green infrastructure in urban environments. These can be realised through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • green roof systems and roof gardens; • green walls to provide insulation or shading and cooling; • new tree planting or altering the management of land (e.g. management of verges to enhance biodiversity). <p>You could also consider issues relating to the protection of natural resources, including air quality, ground and surface water and soils within urban design plans.</p>	<p>Page19 of the Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements Design Code references green technologies and techniques.</p>
<p>Biodiversity enhancement</p>	<p>Housing development should provide net gains for biodiversity in line with the NPPF paragraphs 187(d), 192 and 193. Major development must deliver a biodiversity gain of at least 10% from 12 February 2024 and this requirement is due to be extended to smaller scale development in spring 2024.</p> <p>Further information on biodiversity net gain, including planning practice guidance, can be found here. Local Nature Recovery Strategies will also set out biodiversity opportunities.</p>	<p>The design codes both contain information on the requirement for biodiversity net gain.</p>
<p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies</p>	<p>The SPD may provide opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value of urban spaces through the use of native species in planting and where possible allowing natural recruitment of plants from the site native soil seedbank and natural colonisation; this fosters native genetic diversity, generates authentic communities and avoids biosecurity issues. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy should be consulted for local species recommendations and Priorities and Measures relevant to the urban environment.</p> <p>Development also provides opportunities to secure wider biodiversity enhancements and environmental gains, as outlined in the NPPF (paragraphs 8, 77, 109, 125, 187, 188, 192 and 193).</p>	<p>Noted. These documents provide information on green spaces and infrastructure. Site specific considerations such as planting schemes would be addressed in site specific codes.</p>

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	<p>Opportunities for enhancement might include incorporating features to support specific species within the design of new buildings such as swift or bat boxes or designing lighting to encourage wildlife.</p> <p>Natural England’s Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool may be used to identify opportunities to enhance wider benefits from nature and to avoid and minimise any negative impacts. There is further information in Planning Practice Guidance for the natural environment.</p>	
Protected species	Natural England has produced Standing Advice to help local planning authorities assess the impact of particular developments on protected or priority species.	Noted
Landscape enhancement	The SPD may provide opportunities to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding natural and built environment; use natural resources more sustainably; and bring benefits for the local community, for example through green infrastructure provision and access to and contact with nature.	Noted
	<p>Landscape characterisation and townscape assessments, and associated sensitivity and capacity assessments provide tools for planners and developers to consider how new development might makes a positive contribution to the character and functions of the landscape through sensitive siting and good design and avoid unacceptable impacts.</p> <p>For example, it may be appropriate to seek that, where viable, trees should be of a species capable of growth to exceed building height and managed so to do, and where mature trees are retained on site, provision is made for succession planting so that new trees will be well established by the time mature trees die.</p>	These documents provide information on green spaces and infrastructure. Site specific considerations such as planting schemes would be addressed in site specific codes.

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	<p>Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places a duty on planning authorities to seek to further the statutory purposes of protected landscapes.</p> <p>Landscape Character Assessments and National Park and AONB Management Plans may set out relevant enhancement measures.</p>	
Other design considerations	The NPPF includes a number of design principles which could be considered, including the impacts of lighting on landscape and biodiversity (paragraph 191). The National Design Guide and National Model Design Code set out further detail on designing for nature.	Noted. These documents should be read alongside national guidance.
Strategic Environmental Assessment/Habitats Regulations Assessment	A SPD requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment only in exceptional circumstances as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance here. While SPDs are unlikely to give rise to likely significant effects on European Sites, they should be considered as a plan under the Habitats Regulations in the same way as any other plan or project. If your SPD requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment or Habitats Regulation Assessment, you are required to consult us at certain stages as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance.	Noted. Natural England were consulted on the scoping and sustainability appraisal screening and responded with no specific comments.

National Highways

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
	After reviewing the documents, National Highways are supportive of the focus on sustainable and active travel guidance can confirm we have no further comments to make.	Support welcomed.

Resident

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
	Do these statements on the urban suburban design impact on the countryside? Most villages have a NDP setting out sense of place and a possible design guide. Have you done a countryside landscape review over the rural area or you taken	Preparation of the Local Plan 2050 has commenced. Until adoption, the Bedford Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2020) remains the current evidence base informing plan making and design

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	<p>the landscape review under the 2030 plan? Oakley NDP predicted on the landscape Plan and design features and a sense of place.</p>	<p>guidance. The Design Code - Urban and Suburban Areas will provide guidance for development within the urban area as shown on the Policies Map. The Design Code - Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements will provide guidance on any larger new developments across the borough, alongside relevant rural evidence and guidance. These documents are supplementary planning documents that do not introduce new policy, but support policies adopted in the borough's development plan. . Neighbourhood Plans form part of the development plan.</p> <p>Countryside design and landscape matters continue to be guided through the Landscape Character Assessment, Local Plan policies and adopted Neighbourhood Plans until review through the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2050.</p>
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Renhold Parish Council

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
Consultation accessibility	<p>The purpose of the consultation is for the local authority to better understand if these policies meet the needs of the borough, with one of the following objective of the consultation set out below: Do they suitably support the design policies in the development plan (Local Plan 2030 policies 28S to 30)? On clicking on the link on the consultation email there is an error message when trying to reach the page, it displays as:</p> <p>In addition, there are conflicting dates as to when this consultation closes, the consultation notification email states</p>	<p>Four weeks is the statutory consultation period applicable to Supplementary Planning Documents and also the time period as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation period was extended a further two weeks, closing on 17 April enabling additional engagement to take place. However, it is acknowledged that inconsistent dates appeared across the website, email communications and some consultation documents. This lack of clarity is</p>

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	<p>This consultation will run until 5pm on 3 April 2026. The Borough Council webpage Design Codes and Tall Buildings consultation Bedford Borough Council states: The actual Design Codes and Tall Buildings consultation document states closure information as: Having three very different consultation end dates is confusing, even more so given this consultation was relatively short, being only around 4 weeks, which means effective engagement for Parish Councils as the first tier of local government have been limited with being able to fully reflect and consider these important consultation documents.</p>	<p>regrettable, and it was an oversight that consultees were not made aware of the additional consultation period.</p>
	<p>As a rural village community, Renhold Parish Council, are mindful that they are not part of the urban area, so have assumed as a rural parish this planning policy document does not apply to Renhold and its residents. However, on review of the document, there are illustrative maps on Pages 76, 86, and 101 of this document, which are very challenging to read accurately. Having tried various different methods and techniques to enlarge the map presented, to try and identify the areas within the purple colour coding, located in the north east part of the diagram, it has been impossible to determine where this area is in relation to Renhold and the Renhold parish boundary. The area is highlighted in red below: Renhold Parish Council would like to make it absolutely clear that no part of Renhold parish, so any area north of the brook that runs along Norse Road, is to be considered as urban. It is part of Renhold a rural village, and not to be inferred in any way to be part of the urban or suburban area in any way whatsoever. Given the maps are not clear or legible, if any part of Renhold parish has been included in any mapping that is coloured yellow or purple, the policy document MUST be amended in ensure the maps truly reflect that Renhold is a rural community. Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements Design Code policy comments The document for Large Urban Extensions and New</p>	<p>The illustrative maps within the design code do not define settlement status, alter parish boundaries, or imply that any part of Renhold parish is urban or suburban. Renhold remains recognised as a rural village and this position is unchanged.</p> <p>Comments regarding the legibility of maps on pages 76, 86, and 101 are noted. The document will be amended to clarify that the mapping is indicative only and does not confer urban or suburban designation.</p> <p>The Landscape Character Assessment remains the adopted evidence base supporting the current adopted Bedford Borough Local Plan and was not subject to consultation within this exercise. Engagement on landscape and growth matters affecting rural parishes will take place through future Local Plan consultation stages.</p> <p>These documents are meant to provide additional guidance on the application of policies found in the adopted development plan, particularly those relating to</p>

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	<p>Settlements Design Codes references the policy Landscape Character Assessment for the rural area on page 3, it reads that this assessment document sits alongside the LUE and NS policy, however there is no link to the Character Assessment document to view this document, so the two can be reviewed in parallel. Renhold Parish Council as a rural parish, that has historically like many villages, attracted a number of proposed areas as part of the Local Plan Call for Sites process, would have welcomed an opportunity at this stage of the emerging new Local Plan to have input to help shape both the Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements Design Codes and Landscape Character Assessment, so feel it is a missed opportunity for the Landscape Character Assessment policy document not to have been consulted on at this time.</p>	<p>design. They set out the considerations expected to be made where new development has been proposed.</p>
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Resident

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
Design codes	Design Codes based on TVA should be utilised in preference to Design Guides.	<p>The points raised are acknowledged. These matters are more appropriately considered through heritage strategies, conservation area appraisals and management plans, townscape improvement schemes, or other place-specific initiatives, rather than through plan-making policy or the design code.</p> <p>The council frequently works with various external organisations across an array of subject matters.</p>
	LAs should establish recurring partnerships with key Consultation Bodies, such as Create Streets and The King's Foundation, etc who specialise in getting through to a huge swathe of grassroots members of the public with tried and tested previous experience in Local Plans, such as Lichfield, etc.	
	Non-demolition of historic buildings prior to the 1950s must be made policy or adhered to as part of LCC's commitment to combatting the Climate Crisis through sequestering carbon in its Old Builds.	

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<p>SECTION 1:</p>	<p>LAs should adopt a Local List of Valued Buildings (Non-designated Heritage Assets), which have been a government requirement since the policy introduction through the NPPF in 2012.</p> <p>Historic England produced a guide to help Councils in May 2012. Bristol produced an exemplar list in 2015, which is well worth reviewing.</p>	<p>Noted. This is not within the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Option for people to provide feedback even if out of time for additional documents, such as SPDs or at the discretion of Councils where feedback may be particularly assistive or lead to additional academic and architect guidance. Option for public publishing of feedback should be encouraged with the consultee's consent to encourage wider consultation uptake moving forwards.</p>	<p>Four weeks is the statutory consultation period applicable to Supplementary Planning Documents and also the time period as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation period was extended a further two weeks, closing on 17 April enabling additional engagement to take place. However, it is acknowledged that inconsistent dates appeared across the website, email communications and some consultation documents. This lack of clarity is regrettable, and it was an oversight that consultees were not made aware of the additional consultation period.</p>
	<p>Existing Action Plan if present for Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets needs identifying and/ or establishing (I may support this if invited).</p>	<p>These matters are more appropriately considered through heritage strategies, conservation area appraisals and management plans, townscape improvement schemes, or other place-specific initiatives, rather than through plan-making policy or the design code.</p>
	<p>Era-style buildings, especially rows of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian architecture must be faithfully restored, retained and recreated to complement surrounding historic streets that may or may not be classed in official Conservation Areas preventing harsh contrast with newer built housing estates from the 1950s</p>	<p>These matters are more appropriately considered through heritage strategies, conservation area appraisals and management plans, townscape improvement schemes, or other place-specific</p>

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	<p>onwards. Where demolition is proposed for 1950s style housing onwards- any new construction must be in the historic building style and local materials to ensure high carbon capacity, quality aesthetic and true blending of the interconnected conurbations of any one area, place or location.</p>	<p>initiatives, rather than through plan-making policy or the design code.</p> <p>These documents are meant to provide additional guidance on the application of policies found in the adopted development plan, particularly those relating to design. They set out the considerations expected to be made where new development has been proposed. They are not meant as a prescriptive tool for design, but to encourage analysis of the character and context of areas where new development is proposed.</p>
	<p>Concerted efforts to identify and locate core suppliers for raw materials and specific heritage skills should encourage new uptake of these limited artisan craft skills by new contractors locally based to support the local economy, provide employment, and reduce the cost of product and service in the long-term. Volunteer labouring assemblies should be fully encouraged and supported identifying key individual an group skillsets that can be utilised to protect historic buildings or areas at risk with a view to supporting the construction of new authentic style housing (as and where appropriate) and the reconstruction of demolished prized old buildings beloved by the community, such as community pubs, libraries and community centres.</p>	<p>Identifying and locating of materials and skills are beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Simplified streamlined Planning Process for key stakeholders either working to authentically restore buildings and/ or build new ones, such as observed with many civic buildings in Budapest Hungary and the Federal University Buildings in the US.</p>	<p>The process of applying for planning permission is set out in national legislation and regulations and beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Where there have been evolving building styles over years, eg. Combination of one or more: Georgian, Edwardian and Victorian, the style that best promotes the area, ie. One that has</p>	<p>These documents set out the considerations expected to be made where new development has been proposed. They are not meant as a prescriptive tool for design, but</p>

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	the majority era structures left or capacity size requirements as examples should be utilised by house builders, especially where a streetscape may have been annihilated during the World Wars.	to encourage analysis of the character and context of areas where new development is proposed.
SECTION 2: Designated & non-designated heritage assets	Enhancement of Historic Areas to remove modern street furniture with the integration of classical style timepieces should be encouraged and pursued wherever possible with clear preferred guides set out for each part of the city.	These documents set out the considerations expected to be made where new development has been proposed. They are not meant as a prescriptive tool for design, but to encourage analysis of the character and context of areas where new development is proposed.
	Enhancement of Setting with funding grants and financial incentives from all tiers of Government for Private Investors especially those contributing actively towards achieving Net Zero through Embodied Energy/ Carbon Capacity rich measures, i.e. Retention of Old Builds.	Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.
	Archive Pooling of invaluable source material, such as Historic Photographs, Oil Paintings, such as “Memory Lane” featured on InYourArea Magazine to enrich existing material archives.	Archiving materials related to the historic environment is beyond the scope of these documents.
	New officialising of Non-Designated Heritage Assets must be actively supported even if informed by the (wider) community thereby providing some possibility of removing these from risk of demolition.	The designation of heritage assets is beyond the scope of these documents.
	Incentives must be provided to those dependable sincere third party investors that take on, maintain and protect said sites against their annihilation from the streetscape with rescue-packages actively promoted and supported once again with a trusted Directory creating goodwill amongst the local community.	Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.
	Opportunity to meet or correspond on Zoom Conference Call regarding key areas, buildings and places at risk where key stakeholders, such as property owners may be better placed to engage in positive and constructive discussion through third parties, such as myself and a trusted panel of experts in their fields and sectors who could enable these people and	These documents relate to design considerations for new development. The opportunity to comment on specific proposals or proposals for specific areas are more appropriately made through the preparation of a local plan or a planning application.

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	<p>organisations to maximise their civic heritage, whilst proactively striving to protect more historic buildings from decline and/ or demolition where a strategy package for raising the revenue to do this could be arranged and facilitated.</p>	
	<p>Defining Character Areas- zoning symmetrical parallel construction recommended where distinctive individualised properties remain as checked against authentic archive blueprints. This will ensure high-quality housing for everyone reducing the Page 10 of 18 societal divides between misperceived “good areas” where affluent people reside in historical style properties and less advantaged reside in contemporary ones</p>	<p>The Local Distinctiveness Areas are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide: Settlements and Streets, adopted in 2023. It is not within the scope of these documents to amend them.</p>
	<p>Industry should be conserved at former industrial complexes, such as Economic Docks with equivalent sites offering modern-day uses, alongside traditional uses such as export and import of raw materials at places such as Docks and Port encompassing: ICT sector, Green Research & Development, etc</p>	<p>‘Zoning’ areas for particular types of development is not within the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Every effort must be made to reach out to Property Owners, especially Housebuilders that are pursuing demolition of long-beloved buildings, especially those with demonstrable evidence of Holy Worship.</p>	<p>Reaching out to speculative developers is not the purposes of these documents.</p>
	<p>Every effort must be made to reach out to Property Owners, especially Housebuilders that are pursuing demolition of landmark buildings, especially those with key links to an area’s founding or history locally.</p>	<p>Reaching out to speculative developers is not the purposes of these documents.</p>
	<p>All Powers to monitor, collaborate with existing and/ or new property owners to conserve these buildings should become mandatory with appointed Community Champions for Civic Heritage that area direct link between Local Authorities and said wider key stakeholders to prevent demolition of structures that may be at risk of destruction from vandalism, urban exploration and demolition.</p>	<p>Reaching out to property owners is not the purposes of these documents.</p>

	<p>Reconstruction Programme harnessing existing limited crafts people’s skillsets to be used as a fundraising vehicle to bring back buildings that may have been demolished to dissuade future demolition as a choice by property owners and by means of expanding these otherwise lost skillsets that are at live risk of becoming extinct from the UK. 13. Checklist of buildings at high risk must be expanded beyond the existing groups and organisations that are saturated with high caseloads, such as SAVE Britain’s Heritage, etc so that dialogue channels can be created and fostered between Community Champions for Civic Heritage. 14. Bespoke-tailored funding packages for Properties at Risk of decline or demolition should be integrated with Local, Regional and Central Government-funding as a means of regional economic output through the return on investment that may support other key grant funding capital infrastructure projects, such as transportation and drainage improvements.</p>	<p>Identifying and locating of materials and skills are beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
<p>SECTION 3: Conservation areas</p>	<p>Alterations for Listed Building Consent must be simplified with additional streamlined testing methodologies, such as proof of legitimate third party support, such as correspondence chains between applicant and Groups, such as The Victorian Society that can assist LAs complete workload much sooner allowing more attention for challenging cases, such as Non-Designated Heritage Assets at live or upcoming risk of demolition by Housebuilders, etc.</p>	<p>The process of applying for listed building consent is set out in national legislation and regulations and beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Highways & Street Furniture should be duly supported across the whole of an area to enhance its historic appeal to the commercial community as much to its indigenous community; as this is supported greatly in equivalent Public Realm Strategy SPDs where any and all guidance and support must and should be provided, with key at risk projects being an exceptional anecdote that may be cited in future documents or versions of this and other consultations to stimulate economic</p>	<p>Considerations for specific features in any new development would be more appropriate in site specific design-codes.</p>

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	construction and restoration across other designated Conservation Areas, etc or otherwise.	
	Provide incentives for the return of lost adornments and decorative features, such as roof fixtures like Chimney Stacks once again with an approved contractor directory to make Old Builds practical to own, live and work in the 2020s onwards. If a Directory cannot be provided then specific wording and guides on esoteric restoration and new traditional building styles that would see modern-day use of decorative features must be provided by the Local Council.	Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.
	Permissions for authentic replica and more durable materials, such as reproduction sash windows must be supported to prevent exorbitant high costs through procuring these, limited longevity and economic climates being unstable. This must be assessed on a case by case basis. 5. No more deliberate manipulation and selective misinterpretation of using contemporary modern designs using old-style fabric raw materials, such as stone cladding for new housing where the design and shape clearly undermine the concept of blending within or around a Conservation Area.	Considerations for specific features and materials in any new development would be more appropriate in site specific design-codes.
	Compendium of approved and recognised TVA Architects based across the UK with a view to supporting the training in time of more Northern counterparts to reduce cost associated with travel expenses, etc. This will actively reduce the level of demolition applications countering the purpose of this SPD and other live Policy. If a Directory cannot be provided then specific wording and guides on esoteric restoration and new traditional building styles that would see modern-day use of decorative features must be provided by the Local Council. 7	This is beyond the scope of these documents.
	New Conservation Areas should be established covering areas of surviving built historic environment to positively reverse fascia changes to more modern ones. 8.	Designating new conservation areas is beyond the scope of these documents.

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	<p>Blue Plaques should be fully supported across as many different Conurbations, especially if Applicants reach out for endorsements</p>	<p>Assigning blue plaques is beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Retention of historic street furniture, such as Lamp Posts adorning high streets or Promenade style streetscapes with collaborate fundraising models utilised from key stakeholders, such as property owners, undisclosed third party investors, Residents' Groups, etc.</p> <p>Retention of historic street furniture, such as Lamp Posts adorning high streets or Promenade style streetscapes with authentic identical reproductions permitted where all options to secure finance have been fully exhausted and/or the existing streetscape is at imminent risk of receiving contemporary replacement street furniture on health and safety grounds, eg. Lap Posts.</p>	<p>Considerations for specific features and materials in any new development would be more appropriate in site specific design-codes.</p>
	<p>Discretionary Rate Relief should be provided to those proactively support LAs with conserving their respective Conservation Areas through their own resources, skillsets and time as an incentive to others to work alongside the Council positively and constructively. Where long-lost prized buildings are reconstructed whether based in a Conservation Area or not this should confer discretionary financial support, e.g. Rate Relief for the length of time taken to produce this outcome acknowledging the embodied carbon now contributing positively towards the LA's Climate Change Action Plan Targets</p>	<p>Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
<p>SECTION 4: Climate change</p>	<p>Pleased to note that LAs broadly acknowledge and grasp this concept therefore the aim should be to increase the net number of carbon-rich Old Builds long-term through support packages that will combat the Climate Crisis, provide economic benefit and improve Conservation in a pioneering fashion that may draw wider funding opportunities for the area.</p>	<p>Specific requirements or measures to include technology to reduce carbon emissions are beyond the scope of these documents. The council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2030.</p>

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	<p>Retrofit Ventilation is a key point that should warrant future new construction utilising higher ceilings through the reconstruction of Old Builds outfitted for the modern day with retrofitted energy supplies, etc that will also serve to break down societal divides regarding perceived good and bad areas where streetscapes are harmonious yet distinctly unique in beauty like any one Conservation Area.</p>	<p>Considerations for specific features and materials in any new development would be more appropriate in site specific design-codes.</p>
	<p>Embodied energy and embodied carbon- must remain a central priority and so influence new construction to readopt TVA principles as this will be pivotal towards the area's future green credentials as outlined in many existing auxiliary planning documents approved presently with Carbon Studies taken of existing architecture, notably buildings saved from demolition.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
	<p>A brick by brick case study of as many buildings as possible may warrant invitation of national and international academic institutions to undertake a regional or national Carbon Study further justifying the retention of prized Old Builds elsewhere across the area, region and the UK.</p>	<p>An in-depth case study is beyond the scope and resource of these documents.</p>
	<p>Sustainable Materials- an approved contractor directory that could readily advise and source the necessary raw materials with realistically reduced costs substantially Page 13 of 18 again deterring potential demolition-driven applicants from consuming workload time of the Planning Department. If a Directory cannot be provided then specific wording and guides on esoteric restoration and new traditional building styles that would see modern-day use of sustainable materials must be provided by the Local Council.</p>	<p>A contractor directory is beyond the scope of these documents. Specific development proposals are more appropriately presented in site specific design codes and considered at planning application or local plan site allocation stages.</p>
	<p>Biodiversity- maximise greenery along all arterial roads and commuter routes with dense tree planting and the introduction of hedgerows and wherever possible financial incentives to get more private property owners on side.</p>	<p>The design code documents contain sections on blue/green infrastructure and open spaces.</p>

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	<p>Flooding Defences- existing and prospective hotspot areas should be clearly identified for emergency grant funding whereby Local Authorities, especially across a region may agree with the respective Government Department to distribute emergency flooding to prevent costly consequential recurrent repairs.</p>	<p>Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Transportation using arterial roads and commuter routes (Motorways and Railways) should prioritise linking each end of a Local Government sphere with the surrounding Local Government spheres, such as Southport at the very northern tip of Merseyside where transportation links are much weaker with Lancashire in the north and east than with the rest of Merseyside to the south.</p>	<p>This does not refer to Bedford borough.</p>
	<p>Coastlines should be reclassified as SSSIs, especially where the economic potential is not being fully realised, such as Coastal Towns with underused Beaches, such as Southport in Sefton as one example for other LAs.</p>	<p>Bedford borough does not contain any coastline.</p>
	<p>Financial Incentives for the demolition of Carbon-poor Glass Towers and contemporary construction should be utilised to restore the skylines across any one area whilst providing better mathematical application of the space for residential and commercial use, such as larger tenement buildings or the original streetscape reinstated yet designated specifically for housing where there may be a deficit.</p>	<p>Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
SECTION 5: Historic buildings	<p>Create a Designated AND a Non-Designated Heritage Asset List, such as AHV whereby existing buildings and those that may yet return can be logged and recorded to combat the Climate Crisis</p>	<p>Heritage asset lists are beyond the scope of these documents.</p>

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	whilst making heritage work for LAs in modern day with attractive locations timeless for everyone to appreciate enhancing the investor appeal, all-round interest and acknowledging the industrial pioneering legacy of the City.	
	Clearance of vegetation along the Railway Lines alongside other equivalent parts of the Line to eradicate the perceived neglected aesthetic.	Maintenance of railway lines is beyond the scope of these documents.
	Exception Areas, such as those at risk or recently restored have the real potential for wider grant funding for ambitious projects out of the realm necessarily of undisclosed third party investors supporting Property Owners, therefore all and any support in reaching these person(s) will greatly contribute to all possible tangible success in the interim period.	Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.
	Providing key guidance, such as agreed in-keeping historic street furniture, such as Cast Iron Lamp Posts, Bins, Planters approved upon inspection of historic photographs, agreed installation and where appropriate maintenance by the LA will ensure the iterative success of this transferring to other Conservation Areas, etc.	Considerations for specific features and materials in any new development would be more appropriate in site specific design-codes.
	Scheme to rebuild and reconstruct long-lost buildings, prioritising vacant sites that could adapt some mixed use with residential accommodation and commercial application thereby supporting Climate Action, creating employment and recordable success through placing of necessary economic drivers, such as offices for Technology Sector if original use cannot be sourced in sufficient time simultaneously meeting housing targets.	Considerations for specific features and materials in any new development would be more appropriate in site specific design-codes.
	Archive Blueprints for historic conurbations that have suffered architecturally over time through building conversions, demolitions, etc should be provided to key stakeholders, if necessary with a printing charge available for official spiral hard copy version to view detailed historic plans covering layouts, etc.	Archiving materials related to the historic environment is beyond the scope of these documents.

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	<p>Those people and organisations that have either/ both maintained their properties well over the years or may wish to provide additional support to others, such as restorative support, archive blueprint guidance, etc should be eligible for discretionary reductions by the Council across various property taxes where they may be suffering hardship or through personal circumstances.</p>	<p>Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Newer” style housing with true authentic rhythm, such as Suburban style faux Tudor fascia frontages with red clay tile pitched roofs and terracotta design windows (tile hung walls) are a good compromise whereupon finance and scheduling may otherwise adversely impact on housing settlements.</p>	<p>Considerations for specific features and materials in any new development would be more appropriate in site specific design-codes.</p>
	<p>Fascia Frontage details should be reinstated whether in a Conservation Area or not, especially where approval has been granted to rebuild an entire house using breeze block to produce a stereotypical black, white and grey dwelling out of plac</p>	<p>Considerations for specific features and materials in any new development would be more appropriate in site specific design-codes.</p>
	<p>LAs should work closely with Foundries to procure raw materials and building services in the event of harnessing their own Contractor Firm(s) in-house that could work cross-authority to make net savings whilst ensuring particular new housing neighbourhoods conform to an appropriate style.</p>	<p>Identifying and locating of materials and skills are beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Modern “Carbuncle” extensions should not be permitted at any one area- instead an authentic style addition may be used to retain blending.</p>	<p>Noted. The purposes of these documents is to provide guidance on analysis of context and character of an area any new development is proposed.</p>
	<p>Discretionary financial support packages to assist House Builders choosing the traditional vernacular route should be considered and utilised where it can be proven that this third party will restore the historic streetscape yet making it applicable or modern day requirements- residential or commercial. This may be especially so where they are able to help others prevent the demolition of a prized Old Build built before the 1950s.</p>	<p>Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.</p>

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<p>SECTION 6: Traditional Vernacular Architecture</p>	<p>Provide a directory of approved and trusted Conservation Specialist Contractors- this will be key for repairs and maintenance reducing costs for all parties, expediting the physical process of regeneration and smoothen planning work schedules so that finer detail may be considered on priority cases or those that may be at risk of consequential repair, such as Places of Worship and detached Buildings with flat roofs, etc at higher risk of damage than customary dwellings.</p>	<p>A contractor directory is beyond the scope of these documents. Specific development proposals are more appropriately appropriate presented in site specific design codes and considered at planning application or local plan site allocation stages.</p>
	<p>These same people should be readily contactable for new construction 3. Encourage smart building methods and use of TVA as meticulously explained in this SPD outlining “Breathing” Solid Wall Construction using older style materials thereby reducing maintenance cost which combined with the approved contractor directory will further drive down costs, time and effort for everyone. 4</p>	<p>A contractor directory is beyond the scope of these documents. Specific development proposals are more appropriately appropriate presented in site specific design codes and considered at planning application or local plan site allocation stages.</p>
	<p>Alterations- must introduce a simplified listed building consent form and application process that is streamlined encouraging better maintenance of Old Builds and reducing the rising propensity of builders to allow buildings to deteriorate, such as the Historic Pub that had to be rebuilt in Kilburn, London post 2015.</p>	<p>The process of applying for listed building consent is set out in national legislation and regulations and beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Provide specialist Heritage Arts & Craft Skills Programmes that anyone can learn and use so that these high cost tasks can eventually stabilise in price making them more affordable and available to those that don’t have the time to do this themselves or may be risk averse even.</p>	<p>The provision of skills programmes is beyond the scope of these documents.</p>
	<p>Extensions- there must be a proactive emphasis on in-keeping structural fabric to prevent future errors, such as the Municipal Building depicted in the SPD being replicated again thereby harming the Conservation value. 7. New Housing Estates should adopt historical archival blueprints, ie. A Georgian, Victorian or Edwardian layout with the likeliest period architecture utilised where this area remained greenbelt until the 1950s.</p>	<p>The purposes of these documents are to provide guidance on analysis of context and character of an area any new development is proposed.</p>

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	Area Expansion of housing must revert to traditional timeless designs that confer many practical advantages over modern styles that are harder to maintain are timeless with regard to dating and ensure a more evenly distributed community atmosphere in the long-term future.	Considerations for specific features and materials in any new development would be more appropriate in site specific design-codes.
	Infrastructure should be appropriately considered for existing and new areas so that no one area is at risk of becoming congested through traffic for a particular commodity, such as Schools, Doctor Practice, Dental Practice, etc.	Noted.
	Site Layouts should complement the historic layout with a view to Post 1950s contemporary Architecture out of place being one day demolished to reinstate Longlost beloved buildings from before the World Wars that could blossom economically today.	The purposes of these documents are to provide guidance on analysis of context and character of an area any new development is proposed, including street layout.
	Building Form shouldn't permit for dated modern structures that delineate and essentially divide communities between the old and new parts of any one location.	The purposes of these documents are to provide guidance on analysis of context and character of an area any new development is proposed, including street layout.
	Façade Design mustn't be compromised for contemporary architecture, especially in view of coveted Heritage Status for any one area being at risk of being lost if said contemporary architecture is pursued.	The purposes of these documents are to provide guidance on analysis of context and character of an area any new development is proposed, including street layout.
SECTION 7: Making an application	Identify recurring applicants that are harming civic heritage, be this across Conservation Areas, Non-designated heritage assets or elsewhere with experience of demolition to date- this should be considered before granting permission to apply or acquire planning approval.	This is not within the scope of these documents.
	Enforcement Penalties for key stakeholders that purposely allow their properties to fall into decline and hoped eventual demolition through this tactic, which is more prevalent since 2020.	Issuing of enforcement notices is not within the scope of these documents.
	Create an Action Plan to deter persons or organisations from pursuing demolition, such as financial incentives, sincere investor network directory set by Central Government to offload	Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.

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	for profit and enforced Design Codes that cannot be manipulated through semantics like Design Guides in isolation as has happened elsewhere. This must be kept for emergency instances where there is an expected threat of decline or demolition.	
	Agreed that temporary alteration of heritage sites, such as stairs or ramps for wheelchairs should be utilised to prevent deleterious loss of historic surroundings and features alike.	Noted.
	Full Pre-Consultation publicised and utilised to ensure appropriate Design Codes for new housing alongside positioning and layout in case volunteer assemblies may assist property owners with restoration of historic buildings.	Requiring pre-consultation publication of any new potential development is not within the scope of these documents.
	Brick by brick Analysis undertaken of projects set for Traditional reconstruction so that these statistics may provide both the Council with evidence for green grant funding support for other key infrastructure projects, such as Transportation and Page 17 of 18 Drainage Defences and property owners may incur a discretionary reduction in associated reconstruction costs of heritage buildings and vistas.	An in-depth case study is beyond the scope and resource of these documents. Grants and financial matters are beyond the scope of these documents.
	Ability to lock feedback in for Consultation automatically unless the council can alert interested consultees in taking part again whether they are locally, regionally or nationally based.	Noted.
	Special partnerships with Property Owners of historic buildings at risk of decline/ demolition to discreetly support them with the option to publicise this accordingly to reach out to others in the same position to secure alternative use for these structures as opposed to demolition.	This is beyond the scope of these documents.
	Proactive effort to stop Breaking and Entering style of “Urban Explorers” who are coincidentally apparent whenever demolition is scheduled for buildings especially since 2020.	This is beyond the scope of these documents.
	LAs to proactively work closely alongside Community Champions and other leading Heritage Groups, such as English Heritage giving these organisations a voice on the frontlines,	Where required, the council consults a wide range of stakeholders including heritage groups at local and national level.

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	especially where so many buildings are presently being overlooked for additional guidance and/ or support due to cost and time restraints facing these same groups and organisations (including the LA).	
SECTION 8: MISCELLAENOUS	Provide all possible support for the reconstruction of Old Builds as is happening elsewhere across Europe, especially Budapest, Hungary, North America, etc to significantly increase Embodied Energy/ Carbon storage.	Considerations for specific features and materials in any new development would be more appropriate in site specific design-codes. The purposes of these documents is to provide guidance and support on considering character and context of an area where new development is proposed.
	Establish a Plan to adopt Unadopted Roads or supply key services, such as carriageway resurfacing as disabled access and entry/ exit of Emergency Vehicles is presently a cause for concern.	The adoption of roads or services is beyond the scope of these documents.
	Provide Pre-Approval and agreement of specialist Conservation Area style Historic Street Furniture, such as Cast Iron Lamp Posts, Bins and Planters for this prime Conservation Area including installation, maintenance costs (where appropriate).	The process of applying for the appropriate permission or consent (where it is required) is set out in national legislation and regulations and beyond the scope of these documents.
	Provide full access to the Archive Resources (at no/minimal cost) as an invaluable incentive for existing and parallel undisclosed third Party Investors. Discretionary waivers may be appropriate for those third parties proactively working to prevent decline and demolition of historic buildings.	This is beyond the scope of these documents.
	Car Parking on and off street should be supported to ensure freedom of choice for everyone, accessibility and connectedness. Car Parking abodes should be tastefully designed like modern-day stables for vehicles that are in-keeping with the built historic environment.	Noted. These documents include reference to parking solutions and the council has published guidance through the Parking for Sustainable Communities SPD.
	Provide publicly published names of consultees willing to work alongside the Local authority and other key stakeholders, such as property owners and undisclosed third party investors, et.	This is not within the scope of these documents.

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	Provide select tours for prospective investors and housebuilders of existing traditional architecture where Design Codes of this identical style would complement both old and new architecture bending the area better more cohesively, eg. the form and layout of Oxford City Centre which has changed minimally structurally since the 1800s.	This is not within the scope of these documents.
	Provide a focused effort on utilising people's skillsets on a meritocratic basis, ie. Procure specialists and volunteers that could work together on key emergency projects, such as Historic buildings at risk without layered bureaucracy on achieving positive outcomes, such as Community Assets where deadlines can be thwarted by separate third parties.	This is not within the scope of these documents.
	Create a Top Ten Historic Buildings at Risk Register where appropriate conditions, such as security against Urban Exploration, etc can be utilised safeguarding these structures, providing the respective property owners peace of mind whilst actual scope for revitalising these for solid economic gain.	This is not within the scope of these documents.
	Infrastructure assessments should be fully outlined, such as Air Quality risk from new construction at presently congested areas, hence the case for Traditional Architecture that will confer longevity benefits in the long-term with as much free car parking as possible.	Noted. Suitable studies to support prospective new development are required as part of the local plan preparation process and the planning application process.
	Free Car Parking may be monitored through expected proof of purchase when visiting, eg. minimal £1.00 at a shop encouraging partnerships between private businesses and Las.	This is not within the scope of these documents.

Sport England

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
Active design	Sport England recommends that the Council consider embedding Active Design further within the Design Codes by having clear references to Active Design, its principles and the Active Design Checklist. Sport England has a <i>Active Design</i>	Support welcomed Page 28 of the Design Code: Urban and Suburban Areas:

	<p><i>Guidance within Design Codes</i> document which aims to assist Local Planning Authorities (and others) producing Design Codes to understand how they can embed and engage Sport England's Active Design principles which hopefully would be of use to the Council, this can be found at https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design?section=design-code-guidance-section.</p> <p>There are also other Active Design material that could be of assistance as the Council develops the Design Code documents, for example a suite of 'illustrative places' that illustrate how Active Design could be embedded in a particular environment such as town centres, new towns and existing suburban neighbourhoods as well as case studies, which can be found at https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design?section=case-studies-section</p> <p>The Active Design guidance can be found at https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design?section=active-design-guidance-section</p>	<p>Open space provision</p> <p><i>New development should provide open space in line with the open space standards in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan and Open Space Supplementary Planning Document and identified needs.</i></p> <p><i>Natural England have prepared green infrastructure standards on a national level, which measure provision differently from local standards. Both national and local standards should be referenced and an analysis undertaken to ensure new development achieves appropriate compliance. This analysis should include considerations from Sport England's Active Design principles and guidance (include links) to ensure that green infrastructure to supports health, activity and inclusive access alongside environmental objectives.</i></p>
<p>Open space/sport facility provision</p>	<p>Sport England notes that the documents refers to standards for playing pitches and built sports facilities. Sport England does not support a standards approach to providing new sport facilities as it is not based on local sporting needs nor addresses the nuances of sport facility provision, for example it does not indicate what type of playing pitch is required (e.g. Football, Cricket etc.) and the vital supporting infrastructure that is required for them to be sustainable. They could also result in small sites and sites not in strategic locations that could be difficult to use and maintain. Sport England advises</p>	<p>In the Design Code: Urban and Suburban Areas, on page 55:</p> <p><i>Open space provision: Within the town centre area type, there will be development proposals that require new public spaces or play provision in line with local identified needs.</i></p>

	<p>that the planning for sport facility provision should be informed by a robust assessment and strategy, such as the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (although the Strategy does not appear to have been reviewed annually so is likely to soon be considered out of date).</p>	
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Resident

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
<p><i>Are the documents easy to follow and navigate?</i></p>	<p>I think the documents would benefit from being more concise. I don't know who the intended audience is of course but 114 pages is too long for most non-professional residents to want to read.</p> <p>There's quite a lot of jargon (what does 'legibility' mean?) and use of terms like 'green infrastructure' which can be confusing (I thought it referred to solar and wind energy generation and EV charging points).</p>	<p>Design codes are inherently detailed, providing comprehensive guidance across a wide range of users, and are structured so readers can focus on the sections most relevant to them rather than reading the document in full. The National Planning Policy Framework includes a glossary that explains many of the terms used across the three documents.</p>

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<p><i>Does the commentary on the policy context appropriately set the scene for promoting design quality in the borough?</i></p>	<p>Yes but I think there's too much emphasis on integration with the existing built environment and legacy assets. Again I'm thinking about green energy – there's no guidance or recognition about how solar roof panels can 'fit in'. None of the many images show solar roof panels apart from the negative aspects of panels being applied after development and spoiling the design. I think the guidance should be strongly promoting roof top solar instead of being concerned about gables and dormers.</p>	<p>Add to the Design Code - Urban Extensions and New Settlements SPD:</p> <p><i>“Large urban extensions and new settlements should set a high standard in the integration of renewable energy as a fundamental component of place-making. Development should incorporate appropriate and suitable technologies, such as roof-mounted solar photovoltaic panels, planned from the outset to maximise energy generation across the site, while responding sensitively to building form, layout and local character, particularly where development may affect heritage assets or important views. Where this cannot be achieved due to site-specific constraints, equivalent on-site renewable or low-carbon measures should be clearly demonstrated with installations designed to minimise visual impact while maintaining energy performance”</i></p> <p>Add to the Design Code - Urban and Suburban Areas SPD:</p> <p><i>“Where heritage assets, their settings or important views are present, renewable energy installations should be sensitively designed and positioned to minimise visual impact without undermining overall energy performance aspirations”</i>.</p>
<p><i>Are the analyses contained within each helpful to your understanding of the qualities and characteristics of</i></p>	<p>Partly, but I'd like to understand how many people are affected by each of the three documents. The local plan talks about number of dwellings but none of the three documents tells me about the number and type of people (adults, children, employees, retired, residents, visitors etc.) who might be impacted and how.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>These documents provide guidance on design aspects of proposed new developments. They expand on design related policies in the development plan, particularly the Local Plan 2030, which was subject to an equality</p>

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<p><i>the places and spaces they seek to provide guidance for?</i></p>		<p>analysis and supported by evidence regarding housing mix.</p> <p>Detailed proposals and their impact are more appropriately considered at a site-specific stage, including any design code that may be required.</p>
<p><i>Are the advice and direction given in each appropriate, easy to understand and useable?</i></p>	<p>All a bit too vague for me and a bit too easy for NIMBY's to use in order to raise objections.</p>	<p>These documents provide guidance on design aspects of proposed new developments. They expand on design related policies in the development plan, particularly the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030. More specific detail can be provided at other stages in the planning process that may require a site-specific design code, including site allocation in the local plan preparation process or through planning applications.</p>
<p><i>Do they suitably support the design policies in the development plan (Local Plan 2030 policies 28S to 30)?</i></p>	<p>I would have to agree that they do with a reservation about safety which doesn't seem to be fully addressed in documents themselves. Also, as stated previously, there's too little about green energy but then again apart from the 'green infrastructure' provision, there's nothing in the policies about this.</p>	<p>Noted. Safety is mentioned throughout the documents, with reference to secured by design principles.</p>
<p><i>Do you have any other comments.</i></p>	<p>1. I'd like to see more consideration given to how people use spaces differently at different times of day and in different seasons. Cycling to and from school is a different prospect when days are short or when the weather is bad.</p>	<p>Noted. These are valid points, but it is difficult to account for every scenario. The purpose of these documents is to provide general guidance on how design aspects should be considered in prospective new development. Site specific considerations would be more appropriate at other stages of the planning process such as site allocation or planning applications, which may require site specific design codes.</p>

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	<p>2. Some guidance on safety lighting and shelter in public spaces would be useful (for example, bus shelters versus bus stops, low level lighting for public footpaths).</p>	<p>National guidance, including Manual for Streets and Inclusive Mobility (DfT), BS 5489 road lighting standards, secured by design principles, and local documents such as the Local Transport Plan and Bus Service Improvement Plan, cover lighting, shelter, visibility, and safety at bus stops and along pedestrian routes. These documents should be read alongside existing national and local guidance.</p>
	<p>3. ‘Swept pathways’ indicates a level of maintenance that may not be delivered without a commitment to dealing with litter, fly-tipping, dog mess, autumn leaves and snow and ice clearance. Small things like muddy patches and puddles can make pathways effectively impassable for vulnerable people and reduce accessibility. Recommendations for use of pathway materials would be helpful.</p>	<p>Insert into the Design Code – Urban and Suburban Areas:</p> <p><i>“Pathway and footway design should prioritise durability, ease of maintenance, and year-round accessibility, with materials used to prevent erosion and surface deterioration that can particularly affect vulnerable users”.</i></p>
	<p>I don’t think Ebenezer Howard is inspirational. The Garden City vision is a hundred years old and isn’t appropriate for 21st Century needs and challenges.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
	<p>5. Community cohesion would be promoted by small scale community energy programs but there’s nothing in these documents to promote that as a design consideration for developers.</p>	<p>Noted. Add:</p> <p><i>“Large urban extensions and new settlements should set a high standard in the integration of renewable energy as a fundamental component of place-making. Development should incorporate appropriate and suitable technologies such as roof-mounted solar photovoltaic panels, planned from the outset to maximise energy generation across the site, while responding sensitively to building form, layout and local character, particularly where development may affect heritage assets or important views. Where this cannot be achieved due to site-specific constraints, equivalent on-site renewable or low-carbon should be clearly demonstrated with installations designed to</i></p>

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		<p><i>minimise visual impact while maintaining energy performance”.</i></p>
	<p>None of these documents show how local employment opportunities can be incorporated into high quality design. I didn't see how commercial and industrial units can be integrated into large urban extensions. It seems to me that the approach is to separate offices, commercial units and warehouses and screen or hide the latter as much as possible. What if anything has been learned from Wixams? Again, no mention let alone promotion of rooftop solar giant warehouses and commercial buildings.</p>	<p>The design code supports mixed and balanced communities, including the integration of employment uses within large urban extensions. Guidance on layout, scale, movement, servicing and interfaces is intended to enable offices, commercial and light industrial uses to coexist with residential development through good design, rather than separation or concealment. Site specific proposals would be more appropriate at other stages of the planning process, including site allocations in local plan preparation and planning applications.</p> <p>See our previous response regarding renewable energy above</p>
	<p>Universal studios presents a unique challenge for Bedford. Does the tall buildings guidance apply to theme park rides? Is it OK to be able to see an (illuminated?) roller-coaster or Ferris Wheel from miles away across the Bedfordshire plain?</p>	<p>The tall buildings guide applies to development proposals in the urban area boundary as defined within the scope of the design codes and Local Plan policies. Development will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, having regard to height, scale, visual impact and effects on landscape character, heritage assets and key views. Any proposals associated with the Universal development site would be considered through the planning application process against the full range of relevant policies, including those relating to design, landscape, heritage and visual impact, rather than requiring bespoke amendments to this guidance.</p>
	<p>8. Where I live there is an issue with vehicles parking on grass verges beside the highway and turning the grass verges into rutted mud baths. There are problems too with vehicles including delivery vans parking with two wheels on the pedestrian pathway and blocking the path for buggies and</p>	<p>Add under green infrastructure section of the Design Code – Urban and Suburban Areas:</p>

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	causing problems for the partially sighted and others with disabilities. What does the design guidance offer to address this problem in urban and suburban places?	<i>Green infrastructure should integrate with street and parking layouts, protect footways and maintain the quality of streets and public spaces.</i>
	I don't want to sound too negative, overall, the documents are good; I'd rate them as a seven out of ten. I hope you find my comments helpful.	Noted.

Wilstead Parish Council

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
	Having three very different consultation end dates is confusing, even more so given this consultation was relatively short, being only around 4 weeks, which means effective engagement for Parish Councils as the first tier of local government have been limited with being able to fully reflect and consider these important consultation documents.	Four weeks is the statutory consultation period applicable to Supplementary Planning Documents and also the time period as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation period was extended a further two weeks, closing on 17 April enabling additional engagement to take place. However, it is acknowledged that inconsistent dates appeared across the website, email communications and some consultation documents. This lack of clarity is regrettable, and it was an oversight that consultees were not made aware of the additional consultation period.
Urban Extensions and New Settlements Design Code		
	South of Bedford Framework document. This document is referenced on many occasions in the Urban Extensions and New Settlements Design Code policy document. As a Parish Council situated in the vicinity of this area and with Council representatives being active in all local authority consultations during the Local Plan 2030 and 2040 process there is no knowledge of this document or where to locate it. There was very brief external consultant engagement with Wilstead which then dropped off with Parish Councillors invited to one	Delete references to South of Bedford Framework in the captions. The South of Bedford Framework was not taken forward as this related to a specific policy in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040, which was withdrawn in October 2025.

	<p>meeting in November 2023 to discuss a topic paper document relating to the South of Bedford. The terms strategic placemaking were used but there is no awareness this document became a formal strategy or policy document as part of the Local Plan process or outside of the Local Plan process. Having tried to search the Local Plan 2030 examination library as well as the Local Plan 2040 examination library it is not possible to find a document titled 'South of Bedford Framework'. In light of there being no Local Plan 2030 planning policy supplementary document with this name and the Local Plan 2040 was withdrawn which lists a Topic Paper please can the Borough Council confirm where the referenced South of Bedford Framework document is to be found given it is clearly a highlighted future of the Urban Extensions and New Settlements Design Code policy across multiple points (pages 13).</p> <p>Can the Borough Council also confirm when the South of Bedford Strategy Framework document was formally adopted by Bedford Borough Council.</p>	
	<p>It has been challenging to comment fully on this important planning policy document which so regularly references the South of Bedford Framework, without being able to access or view this associated planning policy document to read the two side by side, to fully understand the strategic direction the local authority is planning for the South of Bedford and any other urban extension or new settlements. If the local authority are relying on the South of Bedford Topic Paper listed in the Local Plan 2040 library dated 2022, as the document being referenced, then it seems illogical and short sighted on how this associated planning policy/topic paper for a local plan deemed not to be sound is now being used to shape future developments in the South of Bedford and wider borough area.</p>	<p>Delete references to South of Bedford Framework in the captions and diagrams.</p>

	<p>What is especially concerning is that there has been no local input given when a number of important items have moved on so much in this part of the Borough since 2022 and 2023. As well as given one of the main reasons the Local Plan 2040 was needed to be withdrawn was the lack of highways infrastructure to support the planned strategic growth through till 2040 with Highways England very clear during the examination process also included in the inspection report that the A421 was not able to manage the load for the development. Given this trunk road is the most key part of the highways infrastructure within the South of Bedford it does feel like there is not joined up thinking already taking place at this early stage of a new emerging Local Plan.</p>	
	<p>Images in the Design Code document reflect flats above retail units, the Parish Council feel that the local authority need to have a greater awareness of the challenges for local businesses to thrive in the local area, so there needs to be a careful balance to ensure there are not empty units in the current challenging climate.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
	<p>Page 13, as an example, there is reference here and then throughout the policy document to the emerging new Wixams settlement, however, there is no detail of what or where this emerging new Wixams settlement is. This really needs clarifying within the document, as the Parish Council are not sure if this relates to Wixams town emerging or new/additional sites such as the East of Wixams and South of Wixams areas which have both come forward as proposed allocation sites. A diagram or some text clarity within the policy document would be helpful to avoid misunderstanding from the community perspective and developer perspective as it might differ to the Borough Council Officer interpretation.</p>	<p>East of Wixams and South of Wixams sites were identified in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040 as allocation sites. Wixams applies to the site allocated in the adopted plan and any subsequent planning applications, which have both come forward as proposed allocation sites.</p>
	<p>The document references the policy Landscape Character</p>	<p>We will include link to this document and other relevant evidence on our web pages.</p>

	<p>Assessment for the rural area on page 3, it reads that this assessment document sits alongside the LUE and NS policy, however there is no link to the Character Assessment document to view this document, so the two can be reviewed in parallel. As the Character Assessment is referenced early on, and relates to the rural area, the Parish Council had been expecting to be signposted to the document and that this document would also be out for consultation at this time so the two could be reviewed together alongside one another. This again seems short sighted as it is a very key factor for new settlements or any large housing development whether as part of an urban growth area or new settlement in a rural area. The Parish Council were expecting if the two documents were so interlinked that they would be consulted on at the same time to enable a joined up approach going forwards.</p>	
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Wixams Town Council

Topic or reference	Comment	Response
General	<p>However, the Council wishes to raise a number of serious concerns where the content and presentation of these documents may have implications for Wixams and its neighbouring rural communities, particularly Elstow Parish. Wixams Town Council does not support any approach which would enable further unmanaged expansion southwards or eastwards from Wixams, or which risks undermining the clear settlement boundaries between Wixams, Elstow, Wilstead and surrounding villages.</p>	Noted
Design Code - Large Urban Extensions and New Settlements		
Lack of clarity around the “emerging	<p>The repeatedly refers to an “emerging Wixams settlement”, yet provides no definition or mapping to clarify what land this term refers to. This omission creates significant uncertainty for both residents and local councils. It is not clear whether this phrase</p>	<p>Wixams applies to the existing strategic allocation set out in the Local Plan and any subsequently implemented permissions. This will be clarified in the text.</p>

<p>Wixams settlement”</p>	<p>refers solely to the currently permitted Wixams development, or whether it is intended to imply further phases or outward growth, including areas previously proposed east or south of Wixams. This uncertainty is unacceptable in a strategic design document and risks misinterpretation by developers and decision-makers alike. Wixams Town Council requests that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any references to Wixams clearly distinguish between existing permitted development and any future proposals. • No implication of further expansion beyond existing Wixams boundaries is included without explicit policy justification and full public consultation. 	
<p>Impact on neighbouring rural communities</p>	<p>Wixams Town Council strongly supports Elstow Parish Council’s position that Elstow is, and must remain, a rural village, with no part of the parish treated as urban or suburban in planning policy. Design Code mapping which appears to categorise areas of Elstow as suburban or modern suburban neighbourhoods is deeply concerning. Any further growth or densification associated with Wixams risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerating coalescence between settlements, • Undermining Elstow’s rural character and historic setting, • Increasing traffic pressures through village roads already used as informal diversion routes. <p>Wixams Town Council considers that maintaining clear physical and policy separation between Wixams and Elstow is essential to sustainable placemaking across the south of the borough.</p>	<p>The design code mapping is indicative and illustrative only. It does not define settlement status or treat any part of Elstow as urban or suburban. The code will be amended to make this explicit. We note concerns regarding coalescence, impacts on rural character, and traffic, and agrees that maintaining clear physical and policy separation between Wixams and Elstow is important to sustainable placemaking.</p>
<p>Reliance on an Unpublished “South of Bedford Framework”</p>	<p>The consultation documents make frequent reference to a South of Bedford Framework, yet neither Wixams Town Council nor neighbouring parish councils can locate this document within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Plan 2030 evidence base; or • The withdrawn Local Plan 2040 documentation. <p>Strategic expectations for large urban extensions should not rely on a framework that has not been clearly published, consulted on, or formally adopted. Wixams Town Council shares Elstow Parish</p>	<p>Agreed. All references to the South of Bedford Framework will be removed.</p>

	Council’s concern that reliance on such a document undermines transparency and trust in the plan-making process.	
Highways and infrastructure capacity	<p>During the Local Plan 2040 examination process, a central issue identified was the limited capacity of the A421 and surrounding highway network to accommodate strategic growth. This constraint remains unresolved. Any implication that further development associated with Wixams could proceed without demonstrable, deliverable infrastructure solutions is concerning. Wixams Town Council is particularly mindful that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional growth would exacerbate congestion affecting both Wixams residents and neighbouring villages; • Incremental expansion risks eroding settlement boundaries without corresponding infrastructure upgrades. 	Noted
Tall Buildings Guide - Urban Area		
Tall buildings and context	<p>While Wixams is a planned settlement with defined character areas, they must not be used to justify higher density or taller development in locations where it would conflict with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established relationships with surrounding rural and heritage assets; • The setting of Elstow Abbey and other sensitive landmarks; • Long-standing inspector findings requiring protection of views and landscape context. 	Noted, however the document only applies to sites within the urban area boundary.
Conclusion	<p>Wixams Town Council urges Bedford Borough Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify all references to Wixams within these documents and remove ambiguity around “emerging” development. • Explicitly reaffirm settlement boundaries between Wixams and neighbouring rural parishes. • Ensure no reliance is placed on unpublished or unadopted strategic frameworks. • Recognise cumulative infrastructure constraints and avoid policy signals that encourage premature expansion. <p>Wixams Town Council supports well planned, policy compliant development within defined limits, but does not support any</p>	See above

	approach that risks unmanaged expansion towards Elstow or the erosion of distinct village identities.	
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Bedford Borough Design Code: *Urban and Suburban Areas*

An analysis of existing qualities of Bedford's urban and suburban areas and what makes the town unique to inform more detailed site-specific coding of new development.

June 2026



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6.0 Delivering design excellence

Adopted in March 2023, the [Bedford Borough Design Guide](#) analyses the key characteristics of the borough and sets out general principles to guide the design and layout of new developments.

The government has published the [National Design Guide](#) and the [National Model Design Code](#), which together provide advice on preparing design guides and codes to support the delivery of high quality, accessible, safe, well-designed and vibrant places.

Several policies have been adopted to guide decisions on the scale, pattern, design and quality of new development in the borough. These are set out in the [Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030](#) and [Allocations and Designations Local Plan](#).

To help demonstrate how these policies should be implemented, this code has been prepared to:

- build on the general principles of the Bedford Borough Design Guide, providing more in- depth but general guidance to inform the design and layout of new developments in the urban area of Bedford and Kempston; and

- help assess and improve the value, quality and delivery of new development in the urban area, based on different typologies;

The urban area contains both densely built-up neighbourhoods and sprawling suburban areas, each with distinctive characteristics. In the coming years, the urban area will undergo substantial development and physical change. The main challenge in creating a design code is to strike a balance between respecting the distinct character of the urban area and seamlessly integrating new developments, while fostering creativity and avoiding a uniform, one-size-fits-all approach.

Site-specific design codes and/or masterplans will need to be prepared to guide the design and layout of individual development sites, consistent with the guidance set out in the National Design Guide, National Model Design Code, Bedford Borough Design Guide and this design code.



1.1 Policy context

The design code is a supplementary planning document and operates within the context of existing national and local policy and guidance.

The [Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030](#) (adopted in 2020) contains several policies that relate to place-making and design, including:

- Policy 28S – Place making
- Policy 29 – Design quality and principles
- Policy 30 – The impact of development – design impacts.

Various supplementary planning documents (SPD) and guidance have been prepared to inform the design of buildings and spaces, which sit alongside and help implement the policies set out in the adopted Bedford Borough Local Plan.

Some of these documents provide specific guidance on how the policies set out in the Bedford Borough Local Plan should be applied to specific development sites and places.

Where relevant, they are signposted throughout this code and include (in publication date order):

- [Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas SPD](#) (adopted in 2005)
- [A Strategy for Bedford High Street SPD](#) (adopted in 2010)
- [Open Space SPD](#) (adopted in 2013)
- [Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities SPD](#) (adopted in 2014)

- [Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD](#) (adopted in 2018)
- [Bedford Borough Design Guide: Settlements and Streets](#) (adopted in 2022)
- [Forest of Marston Vale Development Design Guidance SPD](#) (adopted in 2023)
- [Tall Buildings Guide – Urban Area](#) (adopted in 2026)

Further plans and documents providing analysis and management of the urban environment also include conservation area appraisals and management plans development briefs, masterplans and site-specific design codes.



1.2 Coding for the urban area

This design code is divided into two parts.

Part 1 of the code (see **section 2.0**) considers how the key characteristics of a well-designed place, which are laid out in the National Model Design Code, work in the urban environments of the borough.

The code demonstrates existing examples of these characteristics, focusing particularly on context, identity, built form, movement, nature and public space and provides advice on how they can be applied as part of a design analysis to guide new development in the urban area (Bedford and Kempston).

Part 2 of the code (see **sections 3.0 - 5.0**) look at area typologies – particular neighbourhoods that share common design characteristics that can be codified to provide more specific guidance to ensure that future development responds appropriately to its context.

The Bedford Borough Design Guide mapped ‘urban distinctiveness areas’ in the urban area, and the typologies found in sections 3.0 - 5.0 (see overleaf) provide coding that highlight the key characteristics of these areas. This approach will ensure that new development respects and enhances the existing character and appearance of different parts of the urban area.

The design guide also emphasises the importance of context and identity in new development, including examples of analysis of places in different landscape/townscape character areas or urban distinctiveness areas. It also includes a process on how to carry out further analysis of these characteristics, where appropriate.

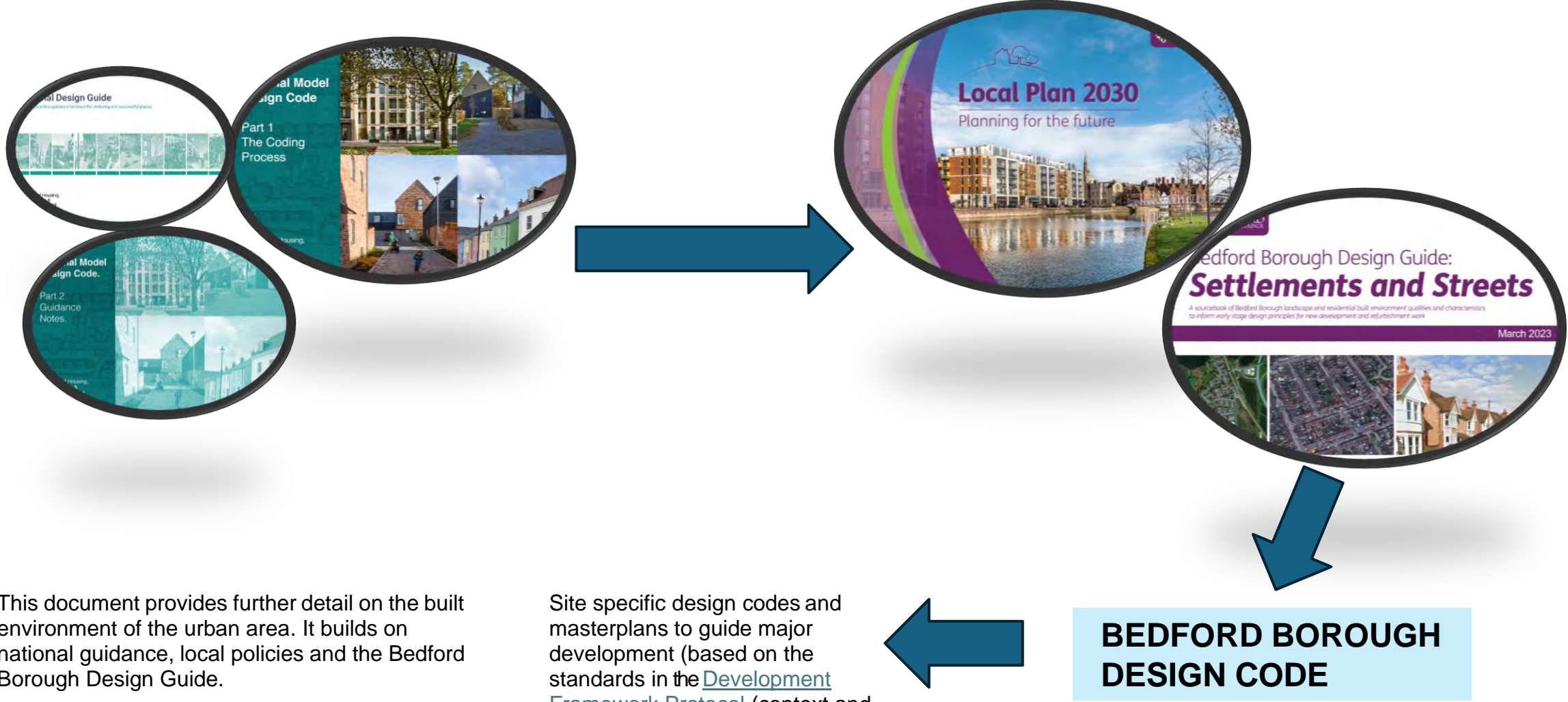
Where appropriate, this document provides signposts to other relevant guidance on design principles and place making under the relevant heading.

These signposted documents need to be read in conjunction with this design code, so a full assessment of the characteristics and context of an area can be undertaken, including the pattern and character of existing urban form and the surrounding townscape.

It is important to recognise that not all characteristics will be relevant in every situation, but the code and other documents will provide a commentary on each aspect.

The urban area (Bedford and Kempston) has numerous and varying distinctive features, as demonstrated through the Bedford Borough Design Guide. By analysing these features and how they influence future design choices, designers can create balanced and harmonious developments that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing, while integrating well with their surroundings and meeting the needs of future occupants. It also includes both urban and suburban characteristics.

How does the code relate to other guidance/policy?

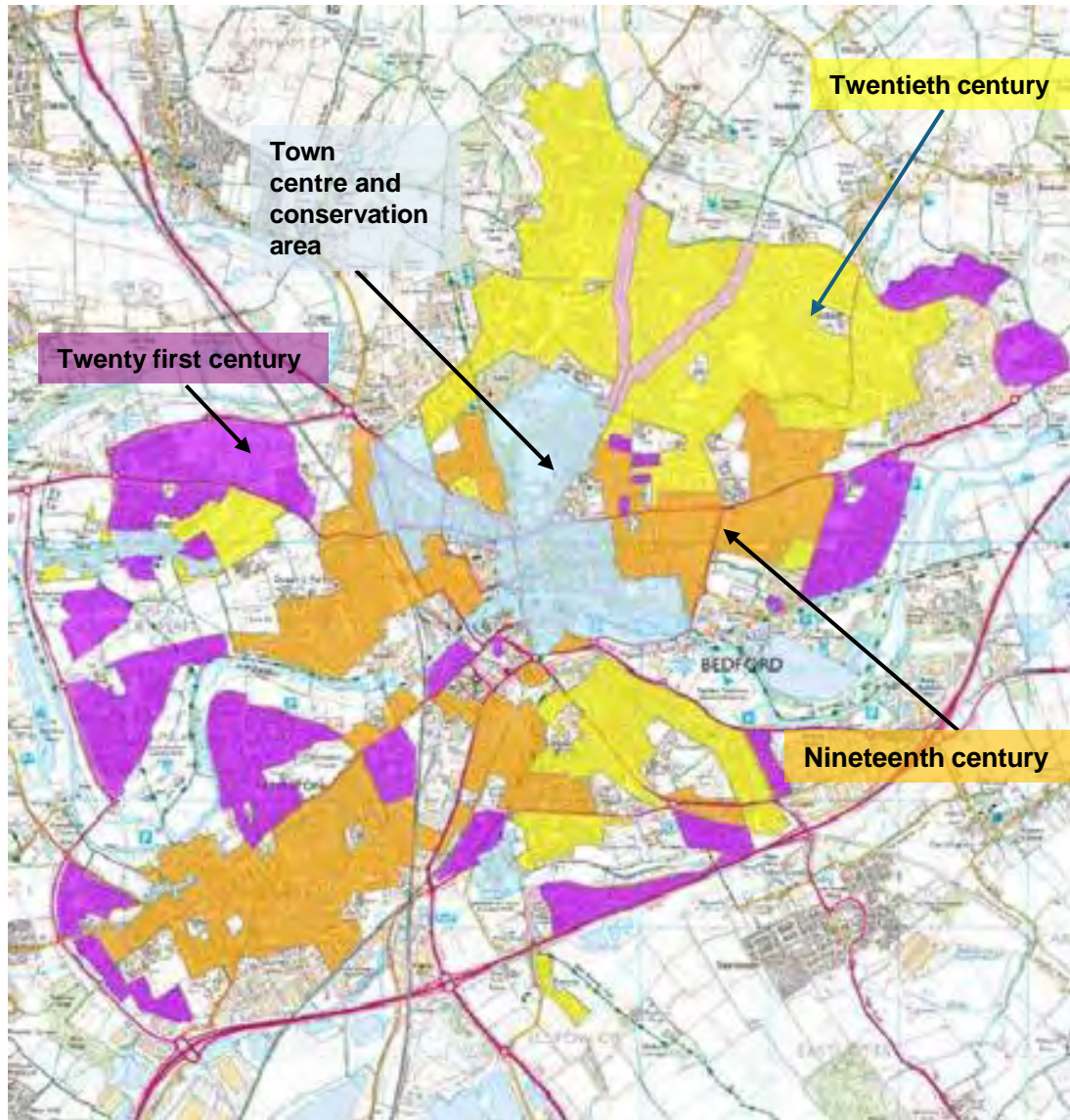


This document provides further detail on the built environment of the urban area. It builds on national guidance, local policies and the Bedford Borough Design Guide.

Site specific design codes and masterplans to guide major development (based on the standards in the [Development Framework Protocol](#) (context and spatial analysis))

BEDFORD BOROUGH DESIGN CODE

Urban distinctiveness areas



How to use this code

The following steps 1-3 summarise how to use this design code to inform the design and layout of new development in the urban area.

1 Location of the site

This map, taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide, categorises the urban area into local distinctiveness areas (LDAs) based on the era of development:

Light blue denotes the town centre and conservation area which contains development from multiple periods.

Orange denotes areas where nineteenth and early twentieth century development is a significant characteristic.

Yellow denotes areas of primarily mid to late twentieth century development.

Purple denotes twenty first century development.

Each area has different characteristics which underpin and inform the coding set out in sections 2 and 3.

Steps to coding:

- Locate the map provided in the Bedford Borough Design Guide that illustrates the defined Local Distinctiveness Areas (LDAs).
- Determine the exact location of your development site within the urban area.
- Use the map to identify which LDA your site falls within.

Please note: Character typologies are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide. They do not define settlement status or whether an area is urban or suburban or lies within a rural parish outside the urban area. The extent of the urban area is defined on the Policies Map.

2 General considerations

Once you have completed the above steps, please move to section 2.0 of this code. This section focuses on the main coding themes influencing development in the urban area. It provides overarching advice based on the first six themes in the National Model Design Code.

Please take note of those characteristics you think apply to your development site. You may want to review the design guide at the same time to get an idea of design features that characterise the area in which the site is situated.

3 Development typologies

Within this code, the local distinctiveness areas are assigned a typology – a type of development template that exhibits characteristics that are most closely associated with the LDA (as defined in the box below).

Light blue: Town centre/conservation area, which includes several listed buildings and noteworthy townscapes

Orange (nineteenth century): Urban neighbourhood typology

Yellow (twentieth century): Suburban neighbourhood typology

Purple (twenty first century): Modern suburban neighbourhood typology and modern extensions

Sections 3.0-5.0 (see overleaf on page 44) codes one location from each typology to demonstrate what should be considered when it comes to coding your site.

While areas within the same typology will share common characteristics (for example, suburban neighbourhoods shown in yellow), they are not identical due to variations in specific features like building density, green space distribution and the arrangement of amenities. The illustrative examples in sections 3.0-5.0 show the sort of approach that should be taken to the design coding of your site.

This code provides detailed information to guide all aspects of the design process from the outset, such as movement patterns, urban form, land use, building heights, landscape and materials.

For larger development sites, such as site allocations identified in the adopted Local Plans, site-specific codes should be prepared to ensure consistent design quality and address unique contextual factors.

PART 1: CODING PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO BEDFORD URBAN AND SUBURBAN AREAS

2.0 Coding for urban and suburban areas

This design code is based on the first six principles of the National Model Design Code to guide development in Bedford urban area. These are:

- context;
- identity;
- built form;
- movement;
- nature; and
- public spaces

While the remaining four principles remain relevant within site-specific codes, we will need to review the local context and evidence in more detail before tailored coding can be offered.

These principles also need to be understood and applied to the specific characteristics and the needs of individual sites, but they should not be seen as a panacea. They are meant to be applied with flexibility and judgment, adapting to the specific context and goals of the design.

Applicants will need to consider the principles and carefully explain how the proposed development responds appropriately to the site and its context. For instance, an appropriate place to do this would be as part of a design and access statement or something similar like a masterplan.



2.1 Context

The **National Design Code** states that “character includes all of the elements that go to make a place” and identifies the following sub-headings:

The **Bedford Borough Design Guide** already contains information for considering context. Different places within the borough have recognisable characters as defined by their geography, history, character, landscape and land uses.

The design guide shows how these characteristics can be analysed to provide an understanding of a site’s context. It also contains a mapped analysis of the urban area, which mainly correlates to the period of development and shows areas of common character in Bedford.

Site assessments

Applicants should seek to understand the unique characteristics of the place in which development is proposed. This may include more localised features that should be thoroughly researched and responded to through the design process.

Historic assessment

An in-depth analysis of a site - as outlined in [Historic England’s Understanding Place guidance](#) - necessitates a thorough examination of various factors to gain comprehensive understanding of its history, both past and present, including former uses, natural features, cultural features, urban form, street patterns and place names. For instance, looking at historic maps and archives can help explain the features of the site and inspire distinctive development, such as reinstating historic streets. The urban area contains many historic assets, including Bedford Castle and St Paul’s Church, as well as a long development history dating back to the medieval period. Bedford town centre overlaps with a designated conservation area, which gives additional protection to areas of special historic value.

When considering the context of development in the urban area, new development should enhance or at least preserve the character and setting of the area. The urban distinctiveness map offers a useful starting point in developing an understanding of the historic context.

Heritage assets

Development should take account of heritage assets on or near the site, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, recognising that local character derives from the cumulative evolution of

buildings, spaces, scale, form, grain, and their relationship to streets and landscapes. In Bedford, this is reflected in established building traditions, historic street patterns, building heights, materials and architectural forms (including terraces, detached villas, riverside warehouses and civic buildings, often articulated through pitched roofs, articulated façades, vertical window proportions and strong street enclosure) that together create a coherent and legible townscape. Proposals should treat historic character as an opportunity, drawing on local scale, form, layout, materials and detailing to reinforce local distinctiveness and contribute positively to the ongoing evolution of the area.

For sites where a development has the potential to affect heritage assets, either on the site itself or within the surrounding area, a heritage impact assessment may be required under policy 41S of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030. The assessment should identify impacts, demonstrate harm avoidance or minimisation and secure opportunities to deliver heritage benefits or enhancement.

Where heritage assets, their settings or important views are present, renewable energy installations should be sensitively designed and positioned to minimise visual impact without undermining overall energy performance aspirations.

2.2 Identity

The National Design Code states that “[a] sense of place is the quality that makes a place special and lodges it in the memory so that people want to stay or return. It results from the combination of many factors”. It further breaks down the broad themes into these more detailed headings:

- Legibility
- Local character
- Masterplanning
- Building design principles

Legibility

Development that occurred in the nineteenth century in Bedford generally stuck to more formal, grid type patterns, whereas later suburban development can be categorised as more ‘organic’, with curving roads, lower densities and interspersed green infrastructure

Local character

The Bedford Borough Design Guide analyses the character of the borough’s urban and suburban areas, identifying how built form, settlement grain, landscape and heritage shape local distinctiveness.

Within each local distinctiveness area, a representative street has been analysed to identify prevailing characteristics such as scale, massing, enclosure, rhythm and relationships with surrounding spaces and views, which underpin the 16 design principles set out in the guide.

The guide also provides a structured process to analyse local context -considering townscape, landscape, heritage and key views - to ensure new development responds positively to its setting and reinforces local distinctiveness.

Masterplanning

For large-scale development sites, creating a distinctive masterplan is central to strengthening local identity and fostering a strong sense of place. Masterplans can take many forms but should always be informed by the character and context of the surrounding area. For instance, a formal masterplan with a grid of streets would be appropriate in the older Victorian and Edwardian areas of Bedford (shown as orange in the Bedford Borough Design Guide local distinctiveness area map), whereas a more organic plan will fit better with the surrounding context, such as mid-twentieth century suburban development (shown as yellow).

However, there are several ways in which masterplans can foster a sense of identity and character while addressing specific design characteristics like uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan (as set out in the National Model Design Code).

Housing design principles

The Bedford Borough Design Guide contains information on how to consider identity when designing new places. The design principles set out how the emphasis on horizontal or vertical lines, rooflines, window setbacks and entrances to homes can all create a sense of identity and strong visual appeal.



Beverley Crescent, Bedford
Image source: Google maps



Kempston High Street
Image source: Google maps

Consistent rooflines: these provide architectural continuity and rhythm (for example, in Beverley Crescent - see pages 110 – 111 of the guide).

Repetitive elements: existing properties with bays, gables and chimneys.

Variety of roofline and architectural details: for example, in Kempston conservation area (see page 105 of the design guide). Great care is needed to ensure composition, scale, materials and details work harmoniously.

Entrances: Porches and setbacks mark entrances.

Setbacks: from the street with walls as boundary features.

Bedford town centre

Similar principles can be applied to the design of town centre buildings including apartments and offices.



High Street in Bedford town centre
Image source: Google

Varied roof line: A variety of heights, roof configurations and architectural details in Bedford town centre. Great care is needed to ensure composition, materials and details work harmoniously.



St Paul's Square northern edge
Image source: Google maps

Vertical window configuration: This creates a sense of height and continuity.



Harpur Street and St Loyes Street
Image source: Google maps

Layering: Setbacks provide articulation for the facades at ground and third floor level.

2.3 Built form

The National Design Guide suggests a successful place is one which has a coherent pattern of development, with careful thought given to the arrangement of blocks, streets, buildings and open spaces the built form.

For the urban area of the borough, this means:

- developing to appropriate densities which reflect the context and historic character of the town;
- ensuring the layout of sites are based on surrounding street patterns and historic settlement morphology;
- responding to the River Great Ouse corridor and its associated floodplain, including views, landscape character and public access;
- using appropriate building types and forms;
- reflecting the character of the prevailing context; and
- delivering high-quality public realm that reflects local distinctiveness and supports active frontages, particularly within the town centre and key routes.

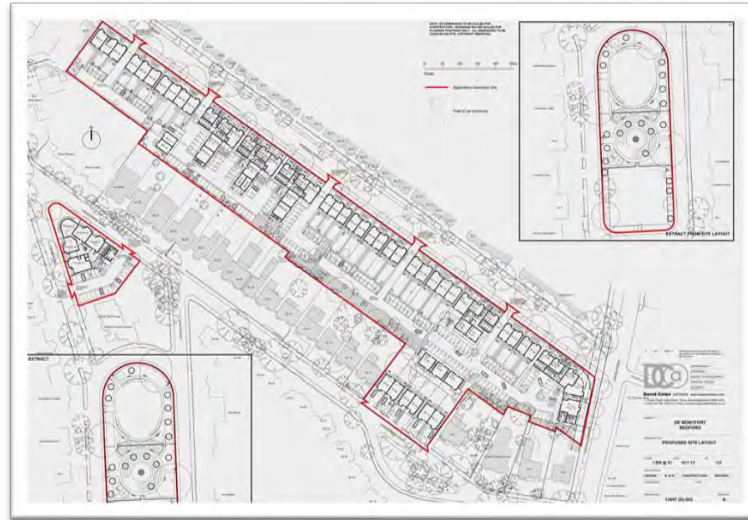
In creating low carbon places that are resilient to climate change, there may be innovative variations to these traditional norms that allow, for example, orientation towards the sun or ways in which buildings can be shaded from excessive heat during the summer months.

Where built form is designed to respond to climate resilience, the principles of good placemaking - such as ensuring a clear distinction between public fronts and private backs - should still be upheld.



The National Design Code includes the following subheadings when talking about the built form. Local examples are provided under each sub-heading.

- Density
- Whether buildings join
- Building types and forms
- Blocks
- Building line
- Height



Warwick Avenue, Bedford

- Urban location;
- High density – 68 dwelling per hectare
- 2.23 hecrares:152 dwellings;
- Strong street frontage;
- 3 storey buildings;
- Complements existing dwellings successfully integrated into surrounding urban landscape.

Whether buildings join

Appendix B

In Bedford, the way buildings are positioned, specifically whether they are joined or detached, significantly influences the density, compactness and overall character of an area. Joined buildings create a more compact urban form, while free-standing structures result in lower density and greater land use.



Bedford town centre

Buildings join to form a continuous frontage along the High Street. This creates a compact, accessible environment. Variation in building design and features create individuality whilst the building line provides consistency.

Density

Compact forms of development ensure people can access shops, local facilities and viable public transport, supporting the livelihoods of a community and maximising social interaction in an area.

The Bedford Borough Design Guide demonstrates how an appropriate analysis of the character – including built form – of an area can be undertaken to help demonstrate the main constraints and opportunities of the existing context and arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings and open spaces.

Building types and form

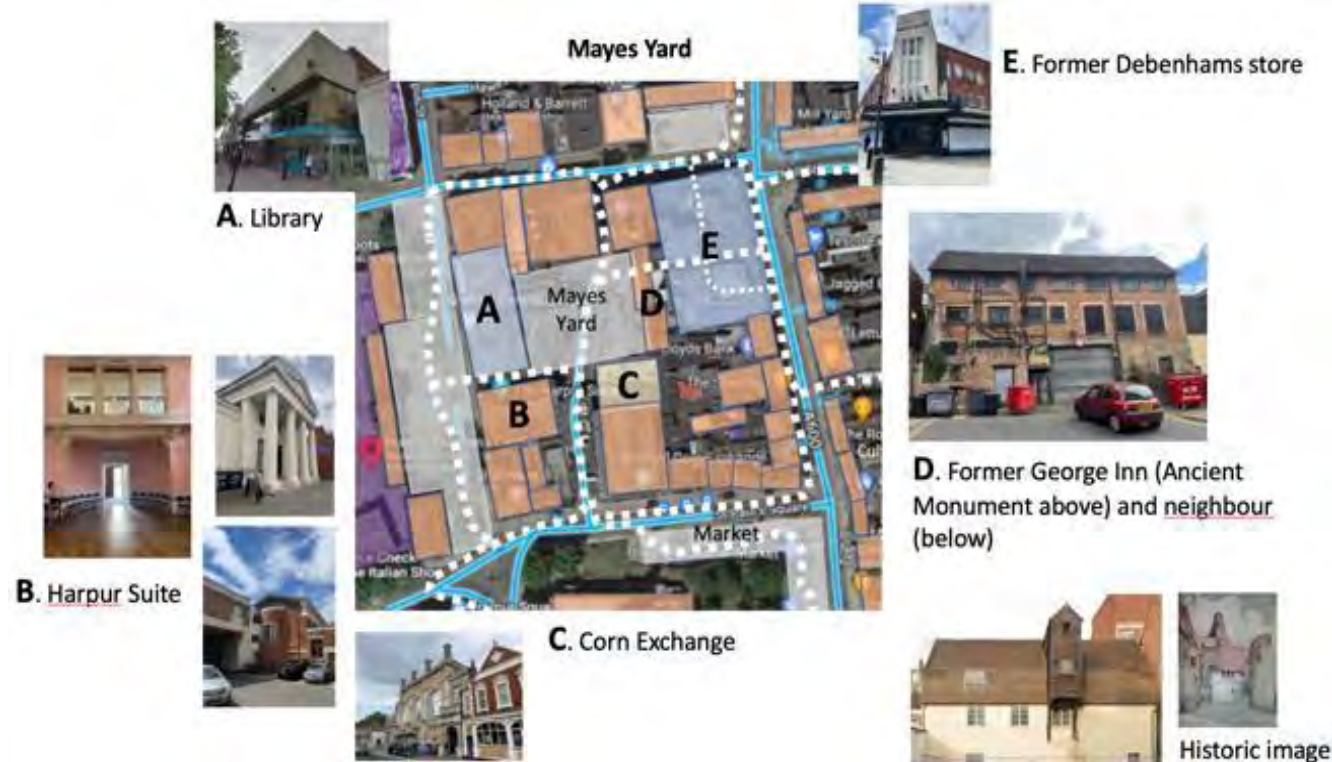
Bedford's rich and varied character should be a key driver in the creation of new developments. The mix of building types and forms varies across the different place types of the urban area (see sections 3.0 - 5.0), meaning the urban grain also differs. Even within place types, building types and urban grain can differ – the town centre has parts where narrow, thin, tightly packed plots prevail as well as areas where larger buildings contribute to a looser grain. New development will need to contribute to the creation of distinctive character and successful places, respecting the surrounding types and form.

Building types and form in Bedford town centre

The medieval street pattern of the town centre remains visible, and the High Street still features long, narrow plots that reflect its late Saxon and Medieval origins. Moving from the historic core of the town, plots sizes become more varied with the urban grain becoming generally less dense.

Masterplans need to indicate this plot structure, which together with the way that buildings join will determine the character of the development.

Mayes Yard in Bedford town centre (image above) is an example of an urban block with a considerable variety of plots and associated buildings of differing sizes. Indicative permeability is shown as white dotted lines.



Housing

Appendix B

Some key factors within the urban area which should be used to determine housing types and forms are as follows (not exhaustive) and drawn from the findings of the Bedford Borough Design Guide analysis work:

- Strong green setting – street trees and in suburban areas, informal green spaces and networks.
- Sense of place.
- Street patterns that vary across the urban area but create distinct neighbourhoods.
- Consistent scale and character.
- Use of symmetry, horizontality, verticality and rhythm of facades.
- Harmonious rooflines and materials.
- Homes with entrances of appropriate scale and prominence.
- Strong and well-designed gable ends.

Blocks found in the urban area

1. Perimeter block: A strip of development around a private courtyard/gardens. The private interior is not accessible to people from outside the scheme. It includes private and communal gardens and car parking.



Greenshields Road, Bedford

2. Informal block: Blocks like this can be found in many modern housing schemes. The housing faces outwards onto the surrounding streets with front and back gardens. The extra width allows a parking court to be included alongside houses and garage blocks within the courtyard to provide natural surveillance.



Duchess Road, Bedford

3. Terrace: The most common form is the typical English terrace, which may include a rear alleyway. In areas with traditional English terraces, design codes should consider reductions in back-to-back distances compared to common practice to ensure new development fits the existing context.



Howbury Street, Bedford

4. Courtyard block: Sometimes buildings join each other (party wall) not just on either side but also at the rear. This is a characteristic form of many historic towns and cities. There are also modern versions of this type of block with deep housing types with an internal courtyard.



Higgins Pantry Courtyard, Bedford

A connected network of streets defines a series of blocks to frame development. Built development blocks define the edge and the three-dimensional enclosure of street spaces, and their use help to animate them. Different area types will have an established network of streets and blocks. Coding can help ensure that the built form of new development in these areas relates well to the existing pattern of development. On large sites, a design code along with a masterplan may establish a new street network and structure of development blocks.



Castle area, Bedford

Images source: Google maps

Building line

Attractive streets and other public spaces are generally defined by the frontages of buildings around their edges.

Many of the residential areas in the urban area have a setback from the street or public realm. Depths and boundary treatments along with green infrastructure will vary but they create a sense of privacy and enclosure.

Building lines in the town centre typically abut the street, creating active, immediate access to shops.

In the urban area, residential areas are typically of nineteenth and early twentieth century origin, but there are areas of later development.



Central conservation area: Waterloo Road, Bedford. Uniform straight building line set back from the street.



Urban area: Manor Road, Bedford – an early twentieth century residential development. Uniform straight building line set back from the street.



Urban area: Roseby Way, Bedford. Suburban residential development (1950-1980) has buildings set back.



Urban area: Foster Road, Bedford – a newer/recent residential development (1980-present). Building line is less uniform. Examples of cul-de-sacs with dead ends and blank gable walls to be avoided.

Images source: Google maps

Height - tall buildings guidance

Although tall buildings are not typical in Bedford, the presence of individual tall buildings in the town centre is a notable feature of the townscape.

Future development may include buildings taller than those historically constructed where evidence demonstrates this is appropriate to the location. Such buildings should be sensitively designed to respond to their context and the character of the town centre or other sensitive areas. When appropriately sited and designed, tall buildings can act as positive landmarks, enhancing wayfinding and contributing positively to townscape quality, rather than being assessed solely against existing height context. Any proposals that include new tall buildings (as defined in the Tall Buildings Guide – Urban Area SPD) must be subject to design review panel.

Tall and higher-density development must prioritise public safety through building form, layout and density that enable safe and effective emergency access from the outset, particularly in constrained urban and town-centre locations, in accordance with the standards in the Bedford Borough Design Guide and the Tall Buildings Guide – Urban Area.



St Paul's Square, Town centre
Image source: Google maps



Meridian House off Kingsway Link
Image source: Google maps

Built form checklist

Compact development

- Development should consider existing building heights, block sizes, street patterns and established typologies (architectural styles, materials and uses) to ensure successful integration and determine appropriate density levels. Designs should also integrate seamlessly with the surrounding buildings and public spaces.
- For appropriate typologies, please refer to section 3, which should inform the layout and design of development.

Built form

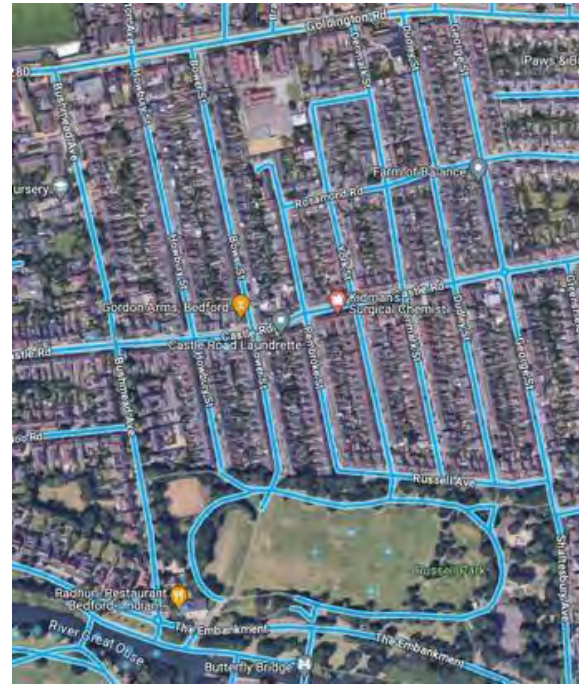
- New development should include appropriate permeable spaces and places that promote good connectivity. Built form block examples in the borough include perimeter, informal, terrace and courtyard. Mews blocks are not typically found. Cul-de-sacs should be avoided where possible
- Infill sites must take account of the character of the immediate area and fit with the street scene.
- The design of the development should also consider appropriate building line based on the local context. New buildings should generally step down toward lower-density areas to avoid creating harsh transitions or overly shadowing neighbours.
- Where taller buildings than the current prevailing height are proposed, they should respect the prevailing character of the area through robust analysis and incorporation of appropriate design cues.

2.4 Movement

The National Design Code emphasises that a well-designed place should be accessible and easy to move around. Successful development depends on a connected and reliable network that supports all modes of transport, promotes active travel and integrates parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure to meet the needs of all users. This section covers the following headings.

- The street network
- Public transport
- Active travel
- Street hierarchy
- Junctions and crossings
- Car parking
- Cycle parking
- Services and utilities

Looking south along Greyfriars, Bedford



More permeable road network: A connected network of Bedford streets



Less permeable road network: A predominance of cul-de-sacs in Bedford

Images source: Google maps

The street network

Bedford has a well-defined street network with distinct characteristics depending on the location and context. While these streets take different forms, they provide multiple options when it comes to journeys. The best examples of street networks in Bedford reflect principles set out Sport England's Streets for All – East of England, demonstrating a clear and legible hierarchy of primary, secondary and tertiary routes that support accessibility, legibility and a strong sense of place.

Various design measures can be implemented to control the permeability of a street and prioritise different users such as delivery vehicles. These include physical barriers like bollards to restrict vehicle access and time-based restrictions to limit access during certain hours. Different measures will be appropriate in different parts of the urban area; the town centre for instance may see more time-based restrictions due to comparatively less parking or access space.

Safety and security are also important considerations. Street layouts and footways can benefit from surveillance, good lighting and high levels of street activity with direct routes that prioritise walking and cycling.

Public transport

Good access to public transport like trains and buses is important to provide local people with choice and flexibility for everyday journeys.

The urban area (particularly Bedford town centre and Kempston district centre) is the most sustainable location in the borough, with relatively good access to services, facilities, schools and employment areas. Enhanced public transport connectivity is critical to reducing car dependency and supporting a more efficient and sustainable movement network, particularly in addressing peak-time congestion across the urban area and its hinterland.

Development sites should have good public transport accessibility, providing connections to town centres and surrounding neighbourhoods. Opportunities to enhance and integrate a more comprehensive transport network should be taken wherever possible. All dwellings should be located within walking distance of a public transport stop.

Active travel

'Active travel' refers to non-motorised and sustainable forms of transport, primarily walking and cycling. Prioritising active travel is about making walking and cycling easy, comfortable and attractive for all users, so they are seen as genuine choices for travel on local journeys.

Walking and cycling should be the first choice for short local journeys.

The urban area has a network of cycle and walking routes. Whilst many of these share space with cars, the street network allows sustainable movement. New developments should include new sustainable transport routes that allow easy active travel, adding to and joining up existing routes to promote sustainable travel as the primary choice for short journeys.



Street hierarchy

Common elements can be seen in the layout of streets across the different typologies identified in this code. The town centre still has traces of a tightly knit street structure: the High Street acts as the main north-south thoroughfare and Silver Street/Midland Road as the main east-west route. Much of the town centre is pedestrianised and prioritises walking over motor traffic.

Urban neighbourhoods display the regular, grid-like pattern common to certain eras of development. The street hierarchy typically features a centrally located thoroughfare, with residential streets branching off to serve individual properties. Castle Road exemplifies this, with its mix of uses and rows of dense terrace dwellings off this street. In mid-twentieth century suburban neighbourhoods, street hierarchies featured a clear distinction between main primary thoroughfares and the smaller residential streets (secondary and tertiary roads).

This has been replicated in modern suburban neighbourhoods and urban extensions (as evident in the examples in section 4.2). The Manual for Streets (editions 1 and 2) defines common street types and functions as reflected in this code. All street types should be welcoming, safe and accessible to everyone, prioritising the needs of impaired people, visually impaired people and people with non-visible disabilities. Site-based coding can be used to define the street hierarchy in a new development, giving distinct roles to each level.

Common terms help to establish a street hierarchy and identify the general purpose of each street within a new development:

Street hierarchy: A typical neighbourhood where streets can be categorised in accordance with their location, size, usage and relationship to other routes. All these streets would include frontage access.

High street: Primary or secondary street that acts as a focus for retail and other services.

Multi-functional streets and other spaces: High streets and secondary streets are at the centre of public life and support a wide range of activities. They can prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement while making it easy to get to their edges and beyond via public transport. A clear hierarchy of streets is encouraged to provide legibility to site development planning.

Primary street: Arterial, ring road or relief road with dedicated lanes for cycles and public transport, where possible.

Secondary street: Mainly carry local traffic and provide access into neighbourhoods; they are often the location of schools and community facilities and may also function as residential streets in themselves.

Local street: Residential streets with managed traffic flows to prioritise active travel. They provide access to homes and support active travel, social interaction and health and wellbeing.

Tertiary street: These are used for servicing or for access to small groups or clusters of homes. They can be lanes, mews courts, alleyways or cul-de-sacs.

This annotated aerial picture provides an example of a clearly defined street hierarchy.

The primary street runs to the west of the built area, with the High Street, secondary streets and local streets flowing from it into the development.

The tertiary street runs north/south in the middle of the built area from a small shopping area to the country park.

Primary street: A6 bypass

High Street: Saxon Way, Kingswood Way

Secondary Street: Anglia Way, Great Portway

Local Streets: South of Great Portway and west of Anglia Way

Tertiary street: Pathway from Archer Street to Great Denham Park

Multi-functional streets and other spaces: retail parade off Saxon Way, Great Denham Country Park



Great Denham

Appendix B

Streets should be designed to be inclusive, catering to the needs of all road users as far as possible. This is relevant to all street types.

Streets should be designed so that everyone can use them, benefiting the whole community. Accessibility needs to be designed in from the start as a 'golden thread' running through the design of the scheme. This includes considerations such as minimum footway widths, placement of street furniture, frequency and type of crossing points, and so on, forming an integral part of the design process.

Pathway and footway design should prioritise durability, ease of maintenance, and year-round accessibility, with materials used to prevent erosion and surface deterioration that can particularly affect vulnerable users.

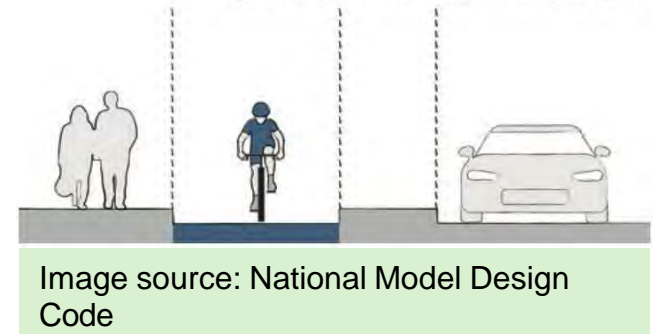
Everyone should feel they can use streets safely, whether walking, cycling, or driving.

Walking and cycling routes are also linked to coding for street types, parking and public spaces and through green infrastructure routes.

Low-traffic neighbourhoods keep streets connected but stop through-traffic, making it easier to walk and cycle and reducing car use. Careful planning is needed to avoid shifting traffic problems to nearby streets.

Wentworth Drive (as shown in the photograph below) has a segregated cycle and walkway that makes it safer and convenient for sustainable transport use.

Cycle Routes: Cycles should be separated from vehicles where possible.



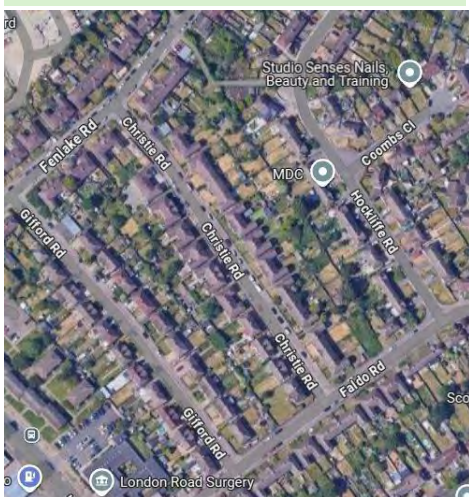
Wentworth Drive, Bedford Image source: Google maps

Junctions and crossings

The way that streets join each other and the way that people can cross streets and access points all have an important influence on walking and cycling. The choice of junctions also influences where built form may be positioned and so the quality of the street as a public space.



Goldington Road, Bedford



Christie Road, Bedford
Images source: Google maps

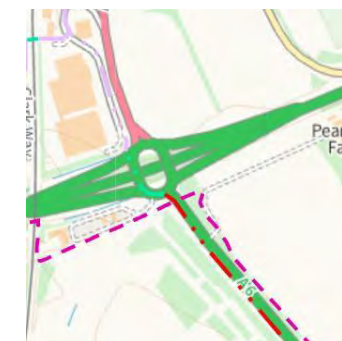
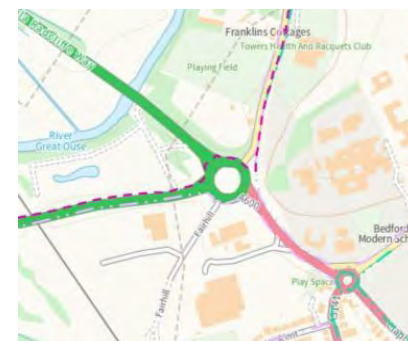
Junction types:

Roundabouts: Maintain traffic flows and speeds but do not provide well for cyclists and pedestrians and require more land than other junction types. Roundabouts in the urban area are generally positioned at points where traffic enters or exits busier areas;

Mini roundabouts: Manage traffic priority on junctions between primary, secondary and high streets in the built-up area. Mini roundabouts can be found in urban areas in Bedford where they manage the flow of traffic on busy urban roads;

Traffic signals: These will be dependent on the vehicle and pedestrian flow. They allow direct crossing routes for pedestrians and should incorporate pedestrian and cycle facilities wherever possible. Traffic signals can be beneficial on larger urban roads where they intersect with school routes, such as on Ridge Road, Kempston;

Simple junctions: Give way priority or unmarked junctions are appropriate between local streets and all other types of streets. There are numerous examples throughout the residential and commercial streets of the urban area.



Ridge Road, Kempston
Image source: Google maps

Car parking and cycle parking

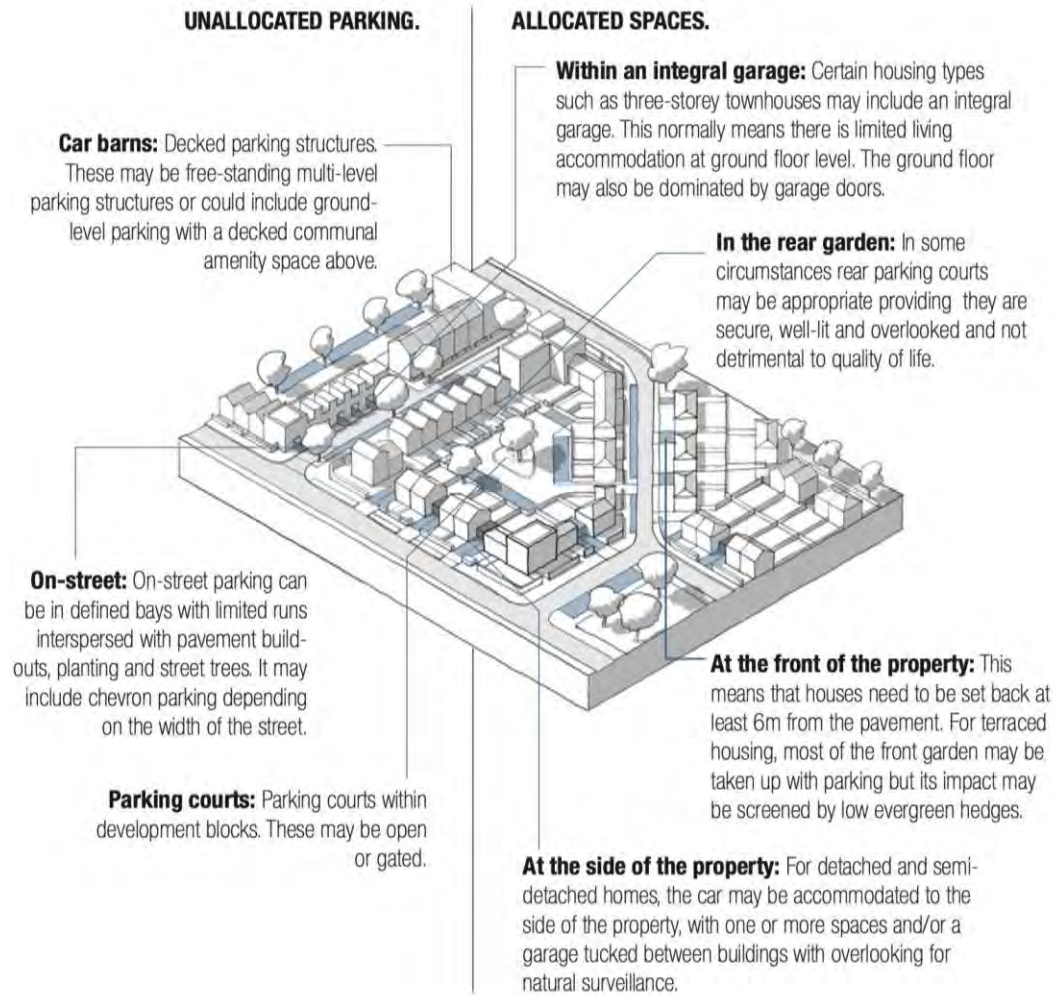


Image source: National Model Design Code

The adopted Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities: Design & Good Practice SPD sets out our approach to car parking standards within new developments.

These standards contain information on the design and layout of parking and should be read alongside this design code.

Further national and local guidance can be found on our website: [Highways design guides | Bedford Borough Council](#)

Not all parking options depicted in the image would be suitable in the urban area.



Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities: Design & Good Practice

Supplementary Planning Document
ADOPTED September 2014



Services and utilities

Services and utilities are often located under streets and pavements, for instance, broadband cables, wastewater pipes, electricity and gas lines.

New development must connect to existing services where available, which may necessitate works on public roads and pathways. Before proceeding, it is essential to assess potential capacity issues with utilities and determine whether the proposed development could create or exacerbate them. For example, development may exceed existing sewerage capacity or require upgrades to the electricity network to accommodate increased demand. Where works in the public realm are required, they should be carried out with minimal disruption, and reinstatement of roads, pathways and other surfaces must be completed to a high standard.

Where new public paths and roads are planned as part of new development, easy access to below-ground utilities must be built into any design to allow easy maintenance and upgrade.

Everyday and emergency services access

New development must address emergency service requirements such as access and provision, water supply and safety principles at the masterplanning and layout stage, including how it will be integrated into street hierarchy, block configuration, green infrastructure provision and layout and access arrangements. Detailed regulatory and procedural requirements will be managed through separate statutory processes, with engagement with Bedfordshire emergency services where appropriate. Early engagement with Bedfordshire emergency service representatives is strongly encouraged.

Site specific or area based design codes should consider the following:

Connected places

- The way in which new development contributes to the creation of an overlooked and well-lit permeable street network.
- The provision of public transport and the distance of all dwellings from a bus stop.
- A framework plan indicating the street hierarchy for the area.
- Prioritise safety and security considerations in the layout of streets and footways for all.

Active travel

- Encouraging walking and cycling, including the layout and design of safe, direct and convenient cycle routes.
- Balancing the needs of cyclists and pedestrians with those of vehicles.
- A toolkit of street junctions and layouts in accordance with Manual for Streets.
- Guidance on multi-functional streets, including the situations in which they can be used and their design principles.



Image source: National Model Design Code

Parking and servicing

How to accommodate the Bedford Borough Local Plan parking requirements, including:

- acceptable locations and design of unallocated parking;
- accommodation of bays for disabled spaces, electric charging and car share;
- position of on-plot parking;
- guidance on the design of parking for non-residential uses;
- the design and location of cycle parking, ensuring it is secure; and
- the design and siting of bins and refuse collection services.

2.5 Nature and green infrastructure

The National Model Design Code states that development should protect and enhance the natural as well as the built environment.

Green infrastructure should integrate with street and parking layouts, protect footways and maintain the quality of streets and public spaces.

Nature is essential for health and wellbeing, for biodiversity, shading and cooling, noise mitigation, air quality and mitigating flood risk as well as tackling the climate crisis. Nature is also central to the creation of beautiful places.

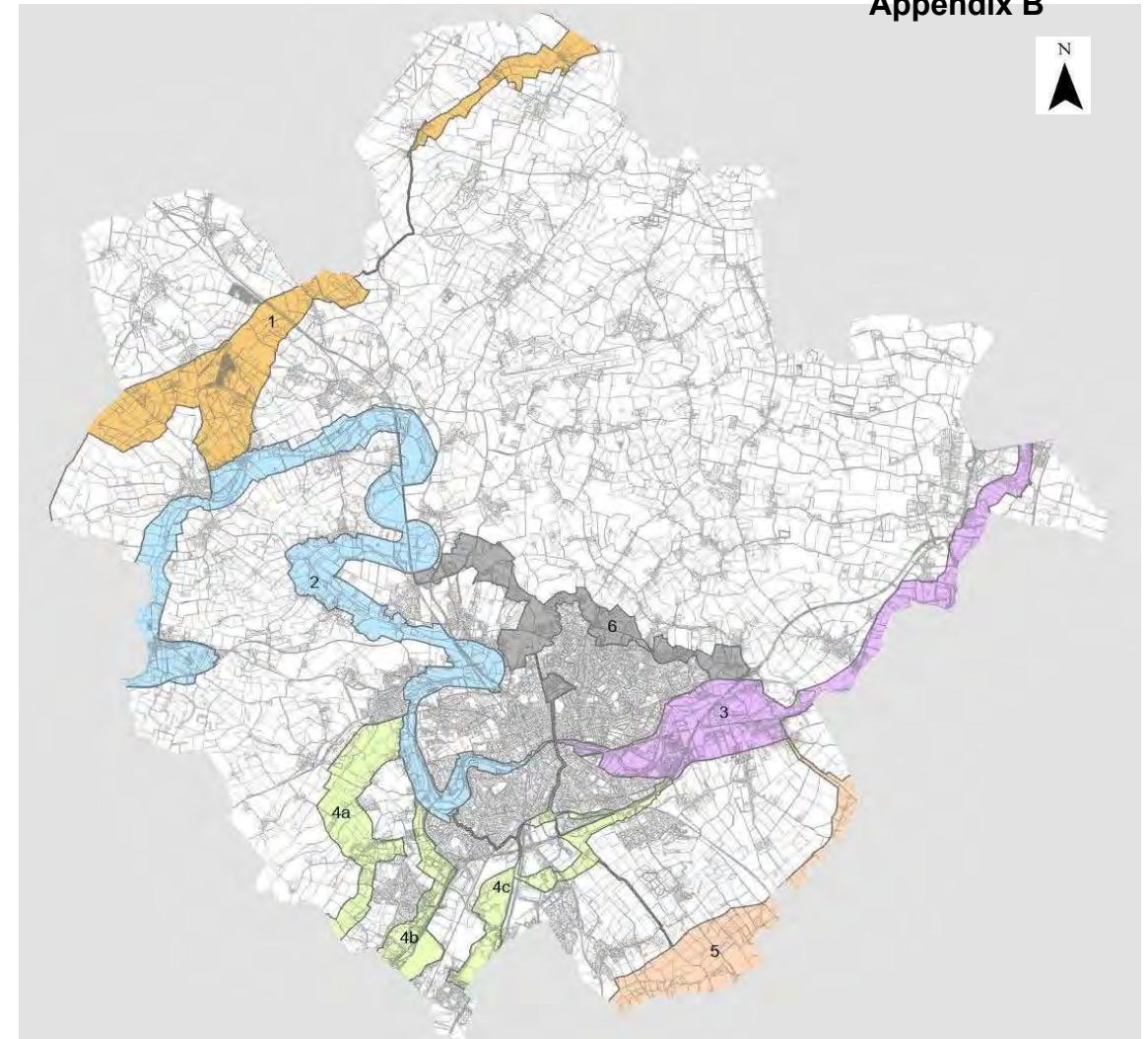
The design code considers the following aspects of the natural environment.

- Network of spaces
- Open space provision
- Open space design
- Working with water
- Sustainable drainage
- Flood risk
- Biodiversity net gain
- Street trees

Bedford has a wealth of natural assets including country parks, local nature reserves, sites of special scientific interest and local green spaces. It has large areas of countryside as well as the River Great Ouse and other waterways. Historic landscapes, parks and churchyards can form integral elements of green infrastructure networks.

Network of spaces

This network consists of interconnected corridors (known as green infrastructure opportunity zones) where the protection and enhancement of existing blue-green infrastructure assets are prioritised alongside the identification of opportunities to create new blue-green infrastructure at different spatial scales in Bedford.



Green infrastructure zones in Bedford borough

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Milton Keynes to Grafham Wooded Wolds | 4 Bedford to Milton Keynes - Marston Vale |
| 2 Upper Great Ouse River Valley | 5 Greensand Ridge Fringes |
| 3 Lower Great Ouse River Valley | 6 Bedford Northern Fringes |

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Open space provision

New development should provide open space in line with the open space standards in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan and Open Space Supplementary Planning Document and identified needs.

Natural England has prepared green infrastructure standards on a national level, which measure provision differently from local standards.

Both national and local standards should be referenced and an analysis undertaken to ensure new development achieves appropriate compliance.

This analysis should include considerations from Sport England's Active Design principles and guidance to ensure that green infrastructure to supports health, activity and inclusive access alongside environmental objectives.

Open Space Standards		
Type	Amount	Accessibility
Parks and Gardens	0.5ha per 1000 people	15 mins walk 1000m straight line distance
Accessible Natural Green Space	0.5ha per 1000 people	5 mins walk 300m straight line distance
Equipped/Natural Play Areas	0.25ha per 1000 people	Pre-teens (up to 12 years) 5 mins walk 300m straight line distance Young people (13-16/17) 15 mins walk 1000m straight line distance
Outdoor Sports Space		
• Synthetic Turf Pitches	0.052ha per 1000 people	No more than 20 mins travel
• Grass Pitches	1.016ha per 1000 people	No more than 15 mins travel
• Bowls/Tennis	0.052ha per 1000 people	No more than 15 mins travel
Total outdoor open space	3.22ha per 1000 people	
Built Facilities Standards		
Type	Amount	Accessibility
Sports Halls	15.6sqm per 1000 people	No more than 20 mins travel
Swimming Pools	6.2sqm water space per 1000 people	No more than 20 mins travel
Total built facilities	21.8sqm per 1000 people	

Note: Travel time includes all modes of transport including walking, cycling, public transport and motor vehicle

Open space design and location

Appendix B

Open space should be provided on site where appropriate in accordance with the size of the development and location.



Working with water

The river Great Ouse crosses the borough from west to east, flowing east through Bedford towards the Ouse Wash. The river represents the largest source of fluvial flood risk in the borough - extensive areas along its banks are located in flood zones 2 and 3.

The largest area of development alongside the Great Ouse is the town of Bedford. Bridges of varying design cross over the river, including the well-known Butterfly Bridge and the Town Bridge, dating from the early nineteenth century.

The river provides a green and blue corridor through the urban area, offering scenic recreational spaces like Great Denham Country Park, Russell Park and Priory Country Park, while also supporting wildlife. Development along the embankments of the river, often with some setback, can exacerbate flood risk due to reduced natural floodplains and increased runoff. A distinct green corridor visible along the riverfront can be seen from various vantage points, though development within parts of the town centre, Kempston and Great Denham encroach into it.

The embankments offer potential sustainable transportation opportunities but accessibility and clear signposting along the river path through the urban area can sometimes be problematic.

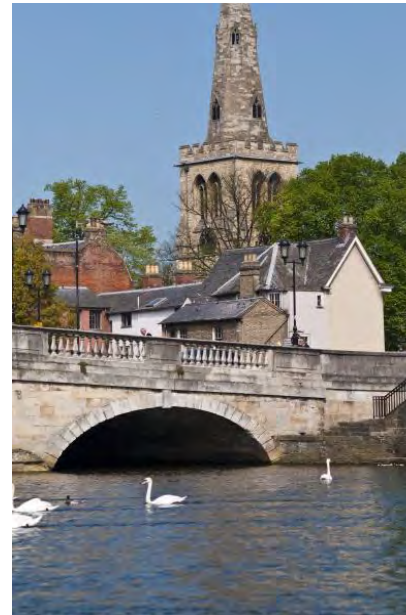
It is important that site specific flood risk assessments are included with development proposals where flood risk from any source is present.

Sustainable drainage

The adopted Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD provides guidance on incorporating sustainable drainage into developments to manage surface water and river flooding.



Butterfly Bridge, Bedford



Town Bridge, Bedford town centre

Developments must be appropriately designed to both function correctly and fit with the character of the development. The most appropriate solutions will depend on various factors specific to the site and the proposed development such as ground conditions, site layout, the presence of archaeological remains or areas of potential archaeological interest. Appropriate early assessments will need to be prepared to ensure suitable placement and potential mitigation of sustainable drainage locations.

Policy 92 in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 outlines the key considerations relating to water management and flood risk in new development.



The Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Park aims to create a 26-kilometre green corridor and purpose-built waterway park connecting the Grand Union Canal in Milton Keynes to the River Great Ouse in Bedford, offering recreational opportunities and flood mitigation and drainage for adjoining development, while strengthening green infrastructure networks, supporting habitat creation, and delivering wider social, environmental and economic benefits.

Biodiversity

The Environment Act requires most new developments to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain.

The Bedfordshire Nature Recovery Strategy identifies priority areas and actions to improve and expand wildlife habitats across Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. It provides a spatial framework to guide where habitat creation and enhancements will be directed which will maximise biodiversity net gain and wider environmental benefits.

This document must be considered when assessing development proposals that impact biodiversity in Bedford, including identifying opportunities to protect, enhance and create habitats in line with local priorities. Further details are available on the website at <https://bedslocalnaturerecoverystrategy.commonplace.is/>

Kempston Mill landing stage on the River Great Ouse to the south west of Bedford town centre



Browns Wood, north east of Clapham and accessed from Twinwoods Road - a county wildlife site and local nature reserve.

Street trees

The [Development in the Forest of Marston Vale SPD](#) and policy 36S Forest of Marston Vale in the Local Plan 2030 provide details of how development in the Forest of Marston Vale area should contribute to the ambition to develop 30% tree cover in the Marston Vale.

The [Trees and Development SPD](#) provides guidance on new trees and landscaping for new development. This also includes guidance on new street trees.

Our highways team are developing designs and specifications for new street trees to ensure that enough space is available to accommodate tree roots and services in the highway.



Developing in the Forest of Marston Vale: Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

December 2022 (Adopted by BBC January 2023)

Prepared by Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council, in partnership with the Forest of Marston Vale Trust



Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document

June 2024



Nature and green infrastructure checklist:

New development must have regard to:

- contributing to the protection, enhancement and creation of an integrated blue green infrastructure network, particularly with regard to the designated opportunity zones and any subsequent policy or guidance;
- the inclusion of appropriate and accessible open space, in line with the Open Space Standards SPD and any subsequent policy or guidance, including connections to existing parks, open spaces and nature reserves (e.g. country parks) and the wider network;
- the protection and enhancement of the River Great Ouse and its setting, including the Embankment, as a key blue-green infrastructure corridor;
- where necessary, how flood risk will affect any site, particularly near or along water courses;
- the retention and enhancement of existing landscape features, including trees, hedgerows and watercourses;
- the legally required and minimum 10% biodiversity net gain;
- the inclusion of suitable sustainable drainage systems in accordance with the Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD; and
- the inclusion and long-term management of trees in line with the Trees SPD and, where appropriate, the Development in the Forest of Marston Vale SPD or subsequent policy or guidance

2.6 Public space

The National Design Code states that:

“Streets and roads make up three-quarters of all public space. How they are designed therefore has a significant impact on people’s lives. Manual for Streets defines common street types and functions, which this code seeks to align with. These street types include multifunctional streets and spaces, each with different place and movement functions.”

Its sub-headings are as follows:

- Primary streets
- Local and secondary streets
- Tertiary streets
- Meeting places
- Multi functional streets
- Home zones
- Secured by design
- Counter terrorism

Public spaces interact with both the built and natural environment. Each local distinctiveness area has a distinct relationship with the public realm. For instance, the nineteenth century urban neighbourhoods tend to have a more formal arrangement, seen in the grid-like urban layout and the larger areas of separated green spaces, such as Russell Park in the Castle area and Bedford Park near Prime Ministers. Later suburban neighbourhoods have comparatively informal layouts, with winding roads, smaller, more frequent areas of green space and larger setbacks between the private and public areas.

The following key principles will apply more broadly:

i) Streets

The design of streets should be based on their role in the street hierarchy and their surrounding context, in line with the principles set out in Sport England’s Streets for All – East of England. Analysis of the area will show how the street network is set out and how they interact with the buildings, spaces and uses around them.

ii) Social interaction:

Public spaces should encourage activity and social interaction.

iii) Multi-functional streets:

Streets should aim to accommodate a range of travel modes. This will require tailored approaches in different areas. In suburban areas, the more informal layout of public spaces makes it generally easier to incorporate multi-modal routes. However, careful design can also deliver improvements in the more constrained, tighter-knit nineteenth century neighbourhoods.

iv) Safety and security:

All schemes should aim to create a safe and secure environment and provide a sense of security for all users. Where proposals involve or have the potential to attract a significant concentration of people, appropriate and proportionate security measures should also be incorporated.

Primary streets, arterial and high streets

Enclosure: The proportion of width to building height will change by area type. In the town centre, the High Street is framed by buildings with strong continuous frontages. Elsewhere, the primary streets are still enclosed by buildings of 3 or 4 storeys, but with less continuation in the building line (e.g. De Parys Avenue).

Active frontage and supervision: The town centre is dominated by retail on ground floors, creating active frontage during trading hours. However, when shops close at night, there is markedly less natural surveillance. In other areas of the urban environment where residential development is prevalent, active frontage is achieved through dwellings orientated towards the street.

Security: Measures which can be blended into the streetscape to protect against hostile vehicles.

Setbacks: The setback of buildings will vary by area type: the town centre has minimal setbacks, with premises often opening directly onto the public highway. Residential parts of the urban area vary in their setbacks from opening straight onto public pavements (such as in the Prime Ministers area) through smaller front areas (such as the Castle Road area) to larger interminable spaces providing a buffer between public and private space (such as Putnoe).

Footways: Footways on primary roads vary in width. Town centre footways are generally wide.

Service roads: Service roads in the town centre often come off primary roads, such as those service roads off Horne Lane into the Riverside development, or into Mayes Yard. These can cause traffic disruption when service vehicles, such as refuse or emergency vehicles needing to use them.

On street parking: The town centre has limited on-street parking, with greater reliance on multi-storey car parks around its outskirts. Urban residential neighbourhoods built in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are often lined with cars parked, narrowing roads that were designed before motorised vehicles needed to be considered. Later neighbourhoods provide more parking, but it can often lead to conflicting uses in the public realm.

Green and blue infrastructure: The Embankment and the Great River Ouse provide large areas of blue and green infrastructure leading into the town centre. Better links to new areas of open space would help create an integrated town centre network.



Urban street characterised by trees on one side: De Parys, Bedford looking north



Horne Lane, Bedford town centre looking east

Images source: Google maps

Cycle facilities: Cycling routes feature in the town centre and suburban neighbourhoods, however they are not always continuous or segregated and missing links can lead to a disjointed network. New development should include ways to connect with existing networks.

Secondary streets and local high streets

These are important streets that sit between primary streets and local streets. Secondary streets perform an important function within settlements. They normally connect to high streets and provide access into neighbourhoods. Without them more traffic would be forced to use the local street network. Secondary streets can accommodate shops, retail space, cafés and restaurants as well as community facilities, such as schools, health service and community centres. The pedestrianised area of the town centre contains both local and secondary streets that meet these purposes. Most roads in the town centre are local streets with multiple roles.

Community and social hubs: They serve as places where people live, work and connect, drawing activity from a wide catchment area. The pedestrianised area focuses on retail and commercial activities.

Active travel routes: The Embankment, a circular route along the Great River Ouse, provides safe and convenient walking and cycling connections from the town centre to Priory Country Park and other areas.

Access and servicing: They accommodate emergency services, refuse storage/collection and deliveries.

Traffic management: These streets accommodate low levels of traffic at low speeds.

Bus/tram lanes: Where possible dedicated bus lanes should be provided. Care will be needed to ensure that stops are accessible and safe with clearly marked crossings.



Mill Street, Bedford: Links to High Street and Mill Yard



Ram Yard, Bedford: Link to High Street (above), shops and parking (below)



Bedford contains examples of primary streets across a range of local distinctiveness areas:



Suburban primary street: Ampthill Road. Trees line both sides of the carriageway. A main north-south traffic route in the southern part of the urban area, leading to the A6 and A421.



Ring roads and relief roads can often be designed to emphasise the sense of place, for example as avenues, like the Embankment. An avenue is a street with a central carriageway and wide tree-lined verges. The Embankment has many functions: it acts as a conduit for various modes of transport; it provides an area to walk and enjoy the river; it links through to many other public spaces in the urban area and beyond and acts as a biodiversity corridor.



Town centre primary street: The High Street with single lane traffic with wide, tree-lined pavements and retail units on either side, including historic shopfronts



Parkways (for example Kiln Park, Stewartby) have a wide central grass reservation with trees, along with carriageways and pavements. These may provide a focal point for development, a wayfinding feature as well as an attractive piece of landscaping and green infrastructure. They are typically well suited to suburban locations.



Town centre primary street: Silver Street Pedestrianised part of the town centre, with street trees and plant beds.



Images source: Google maps

Local streets

Enclosure: Streets will vary by area type: In urban neighbourhoods, streets feel comfortable where the width of the space is only a little wider than the height of the buildings. In suburban neighbourhoods, the width of the street is likely to be at least twice that of the building height.

Frontage: Buildings can front the street and take their main access from it. In urban neighbourhoods, many of the buildings will be terraced. In suburban neighbourhoods, many of the buildings may be semi-detached or detached and they may have crossovers or drives.

Active frontage and supervision: In urban neighbourhoods and inner suburbs, active frontages will be permitted but not required. In areas with strong plot boundaries, such as those heavily planted with trees or other landscaping, the presence of eyes on the street may be sufficient to meet safety standards, rather than requiring active frontages.

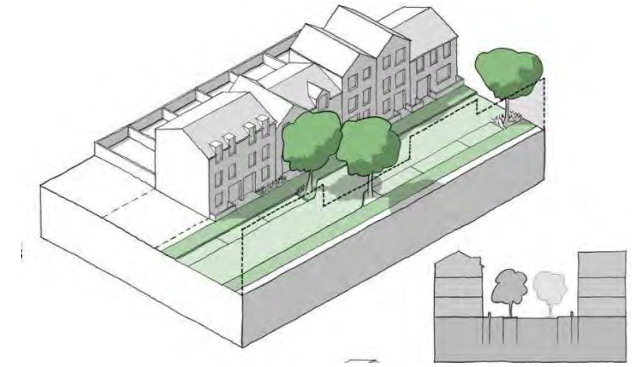
Setbacks: These will vary by area type. In urban neighbourhoods, housing may be set back between 0.5 and 3 metres to provide a privacy strip or small front garden. This may also accommodate a bin store and a low boundary wall, railing or fence. In suburban neighbourhoods, setbacks may be larger than this to provide larger front gardens.

Footways: The street should have pavements of at least 2 metres unobstructed width for pedestrians with crossings as necessary. Street furniture may be provided such as seating, appropriate to projected users, space and where clear access can be maintained. Further information on designing footways can be found in [Manual for Streets](#).

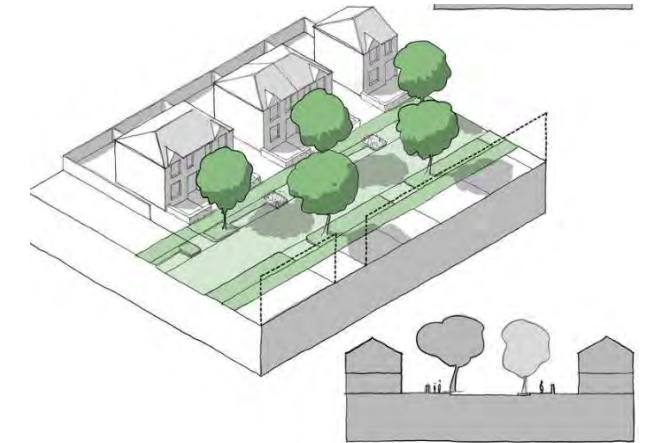
Servicing and parking: Deliveries and refuse collection will take place from the front of the property. There may be a separate access to the back garden. On-street parking may be provided in designated bays where space is available.

Green infrastructure: Street trees may be provided on at least one side of the street within the parking zone. Verges/ swales/ rain gardens may be provided.

Cycle facilities: Where traffic levels are low, segregated facilities are less likely to be required. Provision should be based on the scale of development, movement patterns and expected cycling levels.



An example of a 24-metre wide suburban street with two-storey buildings creating an enclosure ratio of 1:4.



An example of a 14-metre wide urban street with three-storey buildings creating an enclosure ratio of 1:1.5.

Images source: National Model Design Code

Tertiary streets

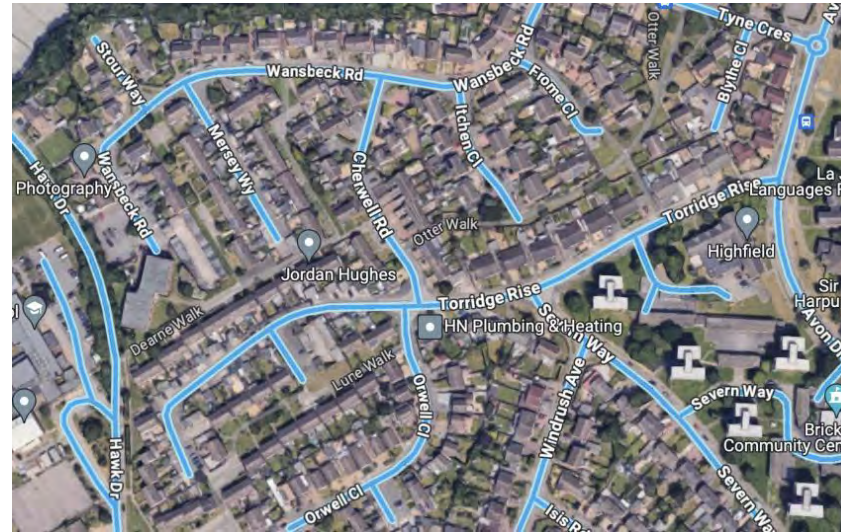
In some areas, there will be other existing or proposed street types that perform different functions and have different design parameters. It may be appropriate for area-specific design codes to be clear about these depending on local conditions. There are a wide variety of other street types that characterise existing development and may be used to inform new development schemes.



Ram Yard alleyway to High Street alleyways:

Many historic towns and cities include a network of alleyways. They can provide established and well-used pedestrian routes that need to be preserved in new development.

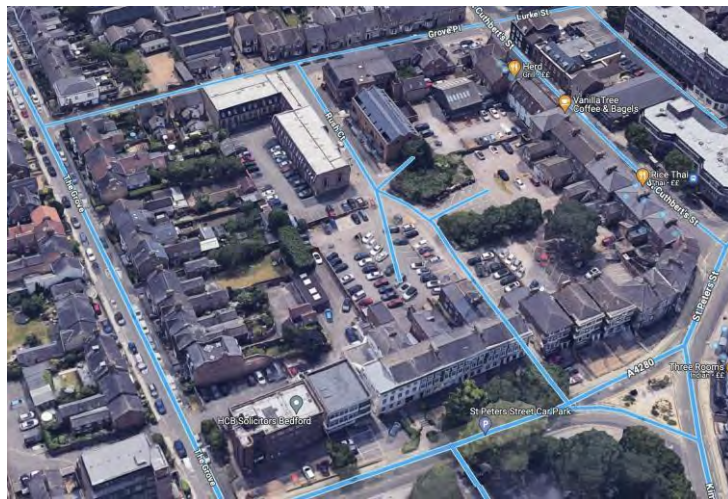
Nineteenth century housing areas can include rear alleyways that provide access to backyards.



North Bedford, cul-de-sacs dominate the streetscape

Closes and cul-de-sacs: Short residential streets to open up sites where through streets are not possible.

Images source: Google maps



Rush Crescent, Bedford - network of streets

Back streets: A network of back streets provides access to the rear of properties for servicing. These are often narrow without pavements.



Hawes Court, Bedford - in behind access burgage courts:

Historic towns and villages can have burgage courts. These provide access into deep burgage plots and can be fronted by cottages. They provide access off the high street, often through an archway and may allow vehicle access.

Home zones

Home zones are streets where people and vehicles share space equally, prioritising quality of life over traffic. Speeds are kept to walking pace, and features like one-way layouts, chevron parking, planting and play areas help calm traffic.

- **Surfacing:** Home zones often include shared surfacing but can also include low kerbs and separately marked pavements.
- **Street furniture:** Can create sitting areas and act as barriers to vehicles.
- **Play:** Small play areas create community space.
- **Planting:** The street can accommodate planters and trees.
- **Cars:** Speeds are reduced to walking pace with parking potentially accommodated in chevron spaces.
- **Signs:** Should clearly mark the entrance to the zone.

Multi-functional streets

Many high streets have been pedestrianised and, when implemented effectively, it can help boost trade and create a more inviting environment. Pedestrianisation can be full-time, limited to shopping hours or restricted to weekends. Where full pedestrianisation is not appropriate, vehicular access may be retained but the street design should be rebalanced to allocate more road space over to walking and cycling.

Social interaction

Streets, squares and other public spaces should be designed as key social places that support community life, especially in the town centre, local centres and neighbourhoods. These spaces should promote activity, interaction and longer dwell time, integrate with nearby uses and prioritise safety, inclusivity and crime prevention.

Movement

There are often concerns that reallocating road space will have a negative impact on business. However, evidence shows that people who walk and cycle take more trips to the high street over the course of a month than people who drive. Improving walking and cycling access to high streets has been proven to generate substantial economic benefits.



Home zone:

<https://www.restreets.org/case-studies/home-zones>



Multi-functional streets

Pedestrianised and should aim to accommodate a range of travel modes.

Image source: Google maps

Meeting places

Many neighbourhoods include public spaces as focal points at the heart of the community. Bedford town centre includes large pedestrianised areas where shops have outside amenity areas. Small courtyards can be found off larger roads, such as Ram Yard, Mayes Yard and Mill Yard, creating intimate and secluded nooks in the street fabric. Larger civic spaces such as those outside the library or St Paul’s Square accommodate markets, gatherings and cultural events.

Bedford Park offers a formal Victorian layout, whereas Priory Country Park is a larger, more informal area set around the lake. In more suburban areas, green spaces such as Bowhill in Putnoe, or the garden square off Dynevor Road lend themselves to multi use informal gatherings and new spaces should support a wide range of activities, such as play space and outdoor fitness.

A strong public-realm approach, rooted in heritage, design quality and accessible civic space, should underpin the redevelopment in sensitive historic settings. For example, redevelopment around Lincoln Castle, Cathedral views and historic wharves uses building set-backs and waterside public space to protect key vistas while delivering mixed-use development. Open space along the waterfront reinforces the historic relationship between the city, water and industry, similar in character to opportunities along the River Great Ouse.



Town square:
Town centre,
Bedford

Hard
standing and
market stalls



Garden square:
Dynevor Road and
Linden Road,
Bedford

Roads/buildings on
four sides enclose a
green space
bounded by railings

Images source:
Google maps

Bedford town centre includes a range of high-quality public spaces, notably the central area which accommodates the market and is organised around a one-way traffic system. Non-trafficked areas include Harpur Street, which is pedestrianised, and feature many fine buildings defining public space.



Bedford Harpur Street aerial and view south: Traffic free route

Images source: Google maps



Riverside Square: Pedestrianised square framed by buildings including dwellings and business

Principles of public space design

Scale: Public spaces need to be appropriately sized and proportioned. In new development, it is good practice to identify suitable precedents to inform their dimensions.

Enclosure: The size of a square is informed by the scale of surrounding buildings. Typically, the enclosure ratio of the short dimension of a square is at least twice the height of the buildings.

Public uses: Squares should be designed to frame public uses like educational buildings, churches, pubs, restaurants and cafes and function as gathering spaces that draw large numbers of people.

Events: Facilities should support wide range of events (from outdoor stages and tiered seating to market stalls) and essential infrastructure like power supply and lighting.

Movement and access: Squares should prioritise pedestrian movement and active travel, creating safe, accessible and legible environments. Limited vehicle movement may be accommodated at the edges where necessary, provided it does not compromise the quality or usability of the space.

Frontage: Buildings can frame a square, take their main access from it and provide a continuous building line around it.

Active frontage: Active frontages need to be provided around a public square, preferably at least two sides of it.

Setbacks: Buildings should normally be positioned at the back of pavement around the square.

Servicing: Deliveries can be made either from the rear of properties or directly from the square, with appropriate provision being made to support this.

On-street parking: On-street parking can be provided either on a permanent basis or when the space is not required for other activities.

Green infrastructure: Trees should be incorporated within squares, where appropriate. The type of trees and their position will depend on the function of the square, so as not to compromise the flexibility of the space.



Castle Mound, Bedford



Riverside development, Bedford
Images source: Google maps

Parks and other green spaces should respond to their context. In urban areas, new or enhanced provision should be more formal, with defined edges, clear entrances and strong connections to surrounding streets (existing examples include Bedford Park and Russell Park). In suburban areas, green spaces should be more informal, flexible and integrated with residential development (e.g. Bowhill Park, Waveney Green).

Larger parks should function as destination spaces, providing a wide range of facilities and supporting recreation, biodiversity and longer visits (e.g. Priory Country Park, one of the largest parks in the urban area, provides a range of facilities including lakes, playgrounds, an outdoor gym and a café). Smaller spaces should be located near shops, schools and community facilities, acting as accessible, well-overlooked places for everyday use and social interaction.

Public space checklist

Designs should have regard to the following principles.

Streets

- The street hierarchy within and around the proposed development site should be respected. Proposed uses should be appropriate to the street type, with primary streets suited to a wider range than secondary or tertiary streets.
- Different local distinctiveness areas demonstrate different street layouts, design, grain and density. Design of public space must respect these characteristics, including how the public space interacts with private space.

Social interaction

- Public space should encourage social interaction by providing places to meet both by arrangement and by chance. Locations near popular destinations - such as shops and schools - should be prioritised to enable chance encounters and informal gatherings.

Security and public space

- Public space should be safe and secure. Natural surveillance can be enhanced through the relationship between pathways and surrounding buildings, particularly along routes that diverge from main streets, such as cycle paths and pedestrian walkways.
- Reducing crime has a significant impact on building strong communities and ensuring the long-term sustainability of a development. The increasing threat of terrorism also needs to be considered in the design of public spaces. Development should demonstrate layouts, streets, public spaces and buildings that address crime prevention and community safety, consistent with 'secured by design principles' set out in the Bedford Borough Design Guide.



Bedford Park. Bedford
Image source: Bedford Borough Council

Secured by design

Neighbourhoods need to be designed to make all people feel safe and to reduce the incidence of crime in line with the recommendations of 'Secured by Design' which incorporates proven crime prevention techniques and measures into the layout and design of places and spaces.

Support and advice are also available from Bedfordshire's police designing out crime officers who provide guidance on crime prevention in the design of development. Early engagement with Bedfordshire Police is encouraged.

Insecure public spaces can disproportionately impact certain groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, which requires due regard to eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by law.

Communal parking areas and courts behind dwellings or gardens lack natural surveillance and are discouraged.

The location of streetlights and other street furniture that could function as 'natural ladders' should be carefully positioned to avoid enabling access to private spaces or buildings.

Secured by design principles

Access and movement: Places with well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security;

Safe routes: Creating safe routes that are as straight as possible, wide, well lit, without hiding places and well maintained and overlooked for security and provide a sense of security for all users;

Structure: Places that are structured so that different uses do not cause conflict;

Lighting: Ensuring appropriate and non-obtrusive lighting levels are achieved;

Private space: Creating a clear separation between public and private spaces, avoiding public routes next to back gardens;

Surveillance: Places where all publicly accessible spaces are overlooked;

Ownership: Places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community;

Physical protection: Places that include necessary, well-designed security features;

Activity: Places where the level of human activity is appropriate to the location reduces the risk of crime and creates a sense of safety at all times;

Appendix B

Image source: National Model Design Code



Management and maintenance: Places that are designed with management and maintenance in mind, to discourage crime in the present and the future.

PART 2: URBAN, SUBURBAN CODES AND LARGE RESIDENTIAL/EMPLOYMENT AREAS

Drawing on the National Model Design Code, the Bedford Borough Design Guide categorises the urban area into a series of distinctiveness areas (as shown on the map to the right) based on their period of development. Each area shares common characteristics, with specific examples identified.

3.0 URBAN PLACE CODES

3.1A: Urban town centre: This area features a mix of uses (e.g. High Street) as shown in light blue.

3.1B: Urban town centre: Housing is the dominant use (e.g. Rothsay Road). Refer to other guidance on the design aspects of each conservation area, as shown in light blue.

3.2: Urban neighbourhoods: This area includes the Prime Ministers area and other neighbourhoods, as shown in orange.

3.3: Urban summary

4.0 SUBURBAN PLACE CODES

4.1: Suburban neighbourhoods (e.g. Putnoe area and other areas as shown in yellow)

4.2: Modern suburban neighbourhood (e.g. Hartwell Drive, Kempston and other areas as shown in purple)

4.3: Suburban extension (e.g. Great Denham is a new extension with a strong urban neighbourhood feel)

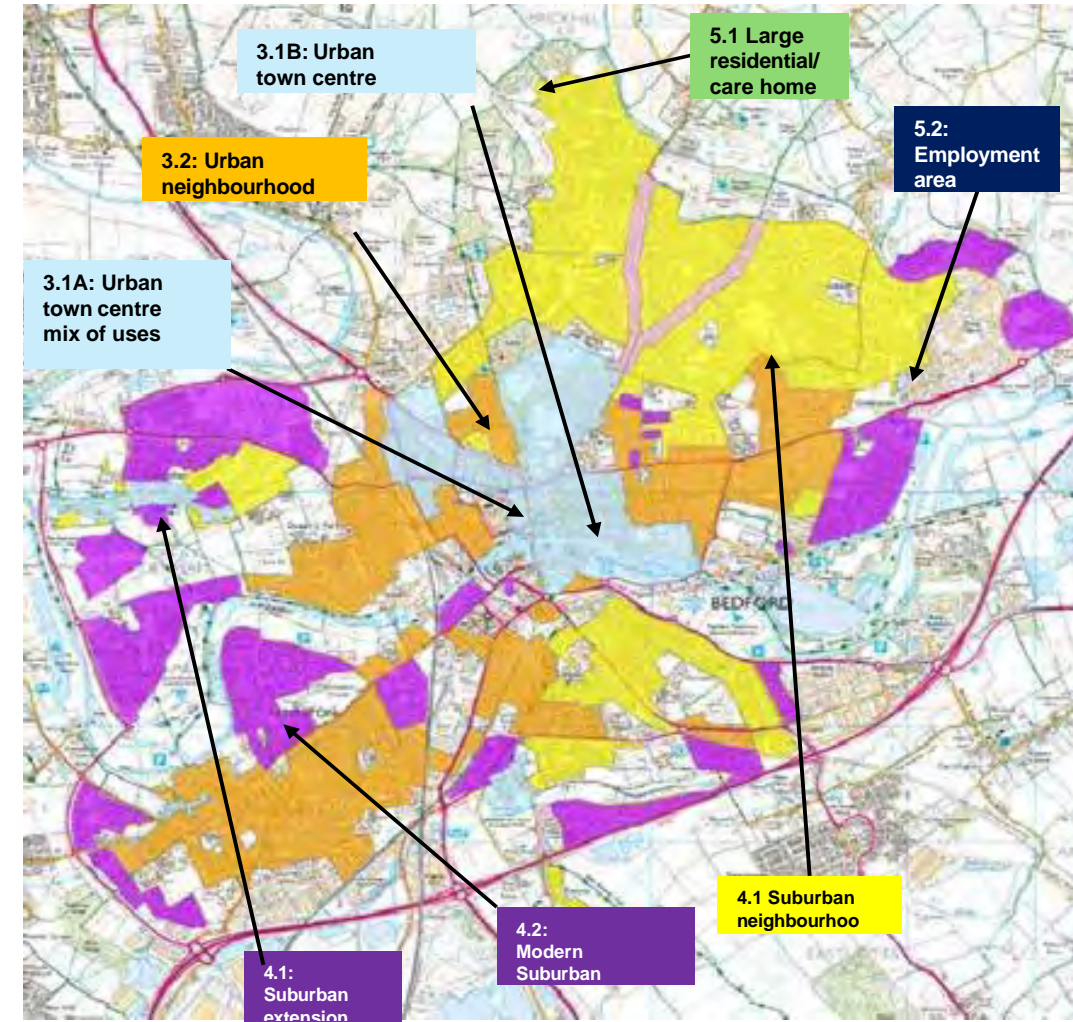
4.4: Suburban summary

5.0 LARGE RESIDENTIAL AND EMPLOYMENT AREAS

5.1: Large residential and care homes (e.g. MHA Anjulita Court - residential, nursing and dementia care home, Bramley Way, Bedford)

5.2: Employment areas (e.g. Elms Farm and other industrial areas in the urban area)

5.3: Large residential/employment areas summary



Please note: Character typologies are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide. They do not define settlement status or whether an area is urban or suburban or lies within a rural parish outside the urban area. The extent of the urban area is defined on the Policies Map.

Sections 3.0 - 5.0 analyse the important principles of design in a range of existing built environments (see previous pages). These include the historic urban town centre mix of uses and housing, suburban neighbourhoods, more recent modern suburban neighbourhoods and urban extensions, large residential buildings and employment areas. The aim of the analysis is to understand the underlying principles and distil these into a set of codes to inform high-quality development.

This understanding of good design principles does not relate to architectural style. The examples (right) illustrate a range of good historic, contemporary, low embodied carbon and operational energy designed and built homes. Issues of style, form and scale will be dependent on individual site analysis and evolving an appropriate design to sit well with the local context and character.



Urban: e.g. Warwick Avenue, Bedford
Image source, Google maps



Suburban: e.g. land off Bedford Road, Wootton.
Image source: Crown Estates and Architects



Employment area:
e.g. Elms Farm
Image source: Google maps



Large residential: e.g. Bramley Way, Bedford
Image source: Google maps

3.0 Urban place codes

This section covers the following:

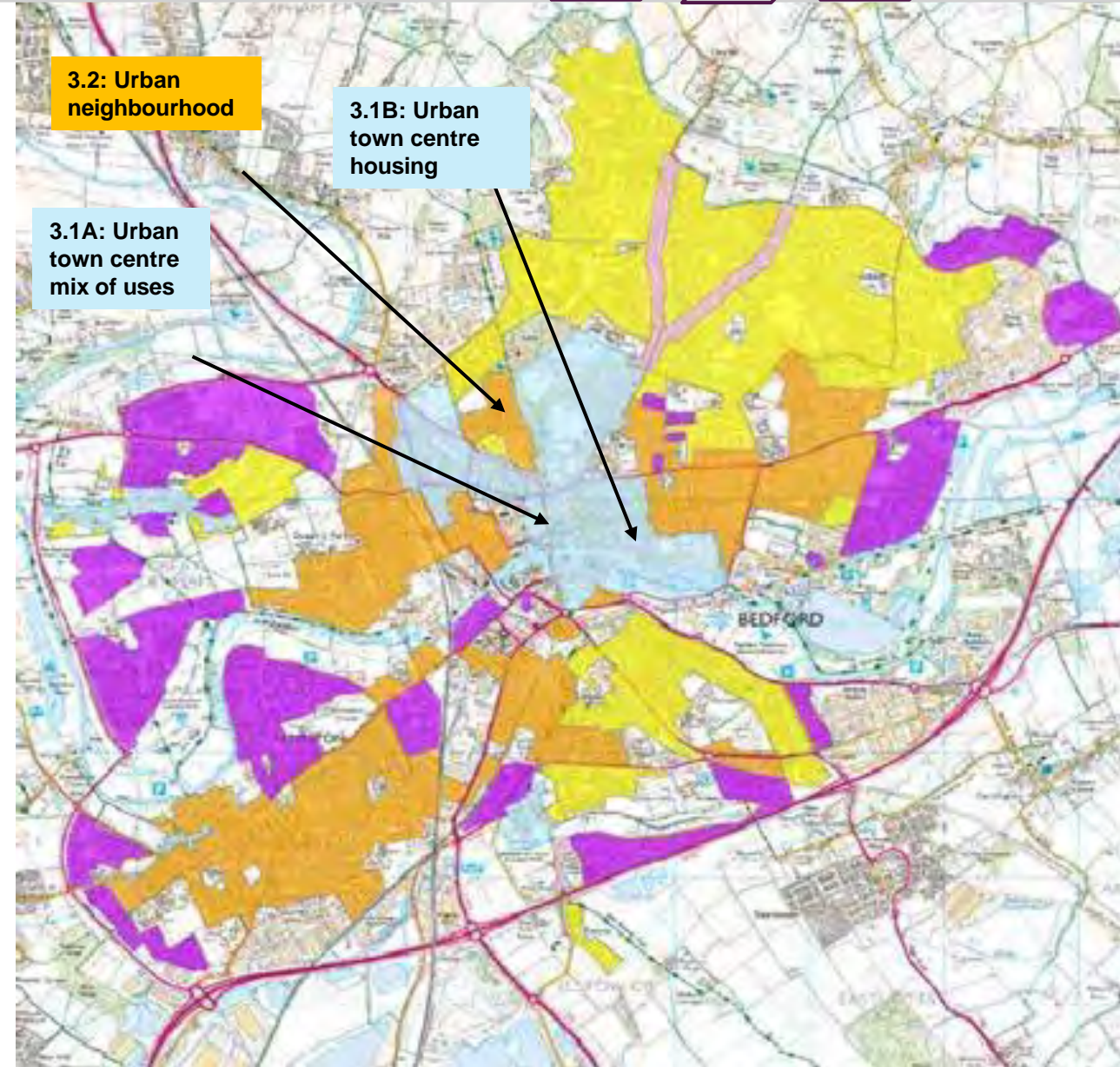
3.1A: Urban town centre: mix of uses (e.g. the High Street is shown in light blue).

3.1B: Urban town centre: housing (e.g. Rothsay Road is shown in light blue - please refer to other guidance on the design aspects of the other conservation areas).

(Note: The above two categories 3.1A and 3.1B are both within the light blue, which denotes the urban town centre area).

3.2: Urban neighbourhoods (e.g. the Prime Ministers area, Castle quarter and other areas of the diagram shown in orange).

3.3: Urban summary



Please note: Character typologies are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide. They do not define settlement status or whether an area is urban or suburban or lies within a rural parish outside the urban area. The extent of the urban area is defined on the Policies Map.

3.1 A Urban town centre: mix of uses

Existing character of the town centre

The town centre has a rich architectural heritage with many fine neighbouring buildings often of varying heights. Intricate detailing can be seen on building facades, particularly along the High Street. Urban space can be found on St Paul's Square, outside the library on Harpur Street and along the pedestrianised part of Midland Road to accommodate markets. The Embankment features strong green infrastructure, including mature trees.

The town centre contains a rich variety of architectural expressions. An understanding of the existing character and context of the area is critical; it will shape the overall design of new development, from concept to detailed layout.

The High Street is a combination of mainly two and three storey buildings with a main street that is approximately 13 metres wide, with continuous shopfronts offering a good level of active frontage during the daytime, a strong and consistent building line and a variety of uses on the upper floors. The architectural style varies along the length of the High Street, with many characterful historic buildings side by side. One-way, single lane traffic flows north-south towards St Paul's Square where the road widens into multiple lanes that carry straight onto St John's Street or around St Paul's Square. Access to the wider town centre from the High Street is more direct to the west, where the street network is more pedestrianised. Access to the east, into the Castle area and beyond, is not as straight forward, with less permeability. Pedestrian crossings are spaced along the length of the High Street, but the presence of road traffic can create a degree of severance, affecting east-west movement across the town centre. There is limited tree planting which reinforces the urban feel.



Predominantly two and three storey buildings – Bedford town centre. Images source: Google maps

An analysis of the town centre identifies many strong and positive characteristics:

- There is a generally permeable grid of streets, good access to public transport (both buses and rail) and various multi-storey car parks that are situated on the edge of the town centre.
- The built form of the High Street has a strong and consistent building line.
- Key landmarks, such as St Paul's Church, the Arcade and River Great Ouse, contribute to a strong sense of place and improve legibility.
- There is a good mix of uses with retail and services at ground floor level and residential and other retail/office uses on the upper floors.
- There are a variety of building styles and materials and many original architectural features, including some original shopfronts.

The overarching architectural character is one of variety. The images (on the right) demonstrate:

- variety in the height of the roofline: 2-storeys with room in roof to 4-storeys in a stepped profile;
- variety of roofs including pitched over 2 storeys and 'Dutch' style gables;
- a variety of windows such as vertical casement and sash of varying widths;
- a variety of floor-to-ceiling heights at ground level;
- gable fronted buildings with strong verticality, which contrast with classical façades that look squatter and the parapet wall emphasises horizontality at the top; and
- a variety of materials: stone, brick, render, white painted elevations etc.

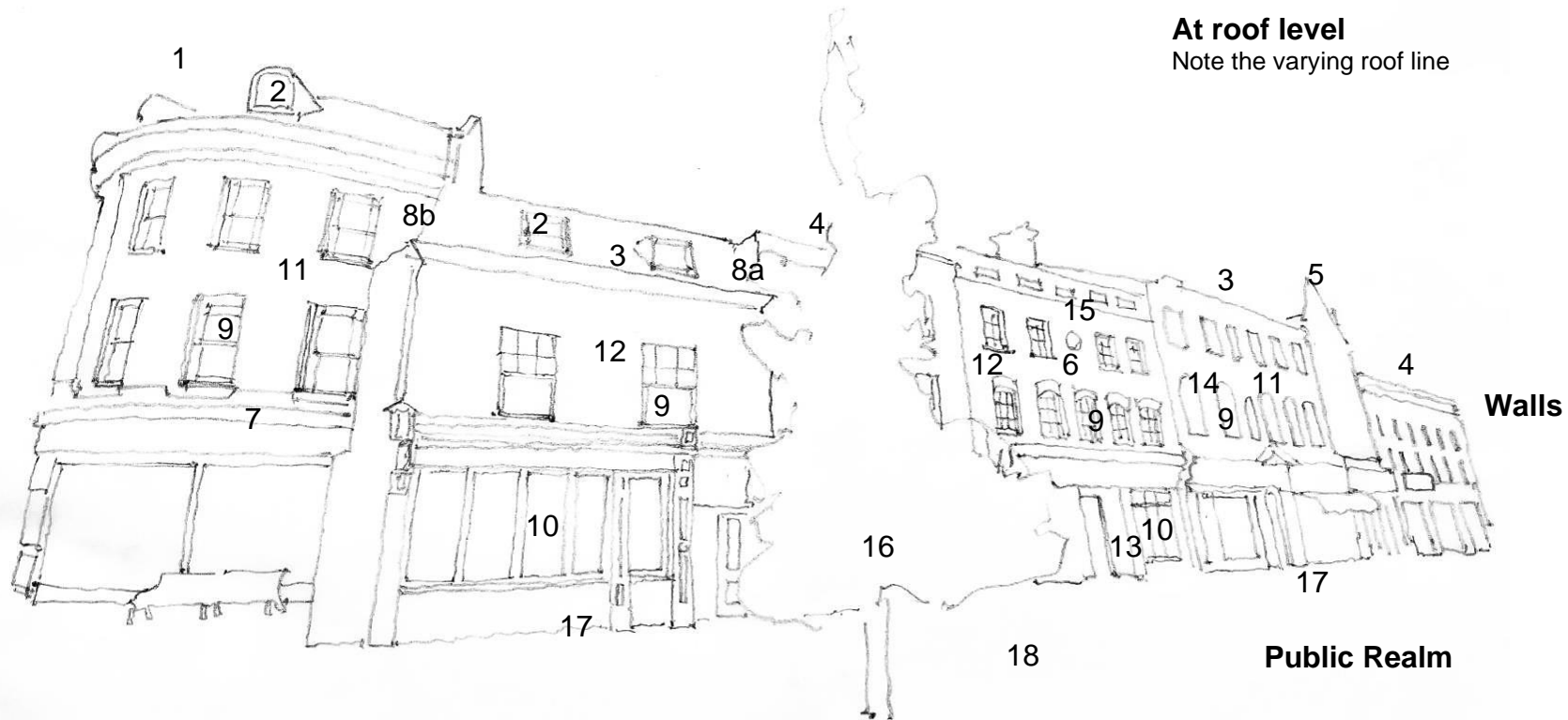


High street elevations showing variety in roof line, details and materials
Bedford High Street Images source: Google maps



The sketch of the High Street shows the variety that should inform an approach to design.

Note: The sketch is deliberately 'light touch' highlighting principles/key features for design consideration but not to be copied.



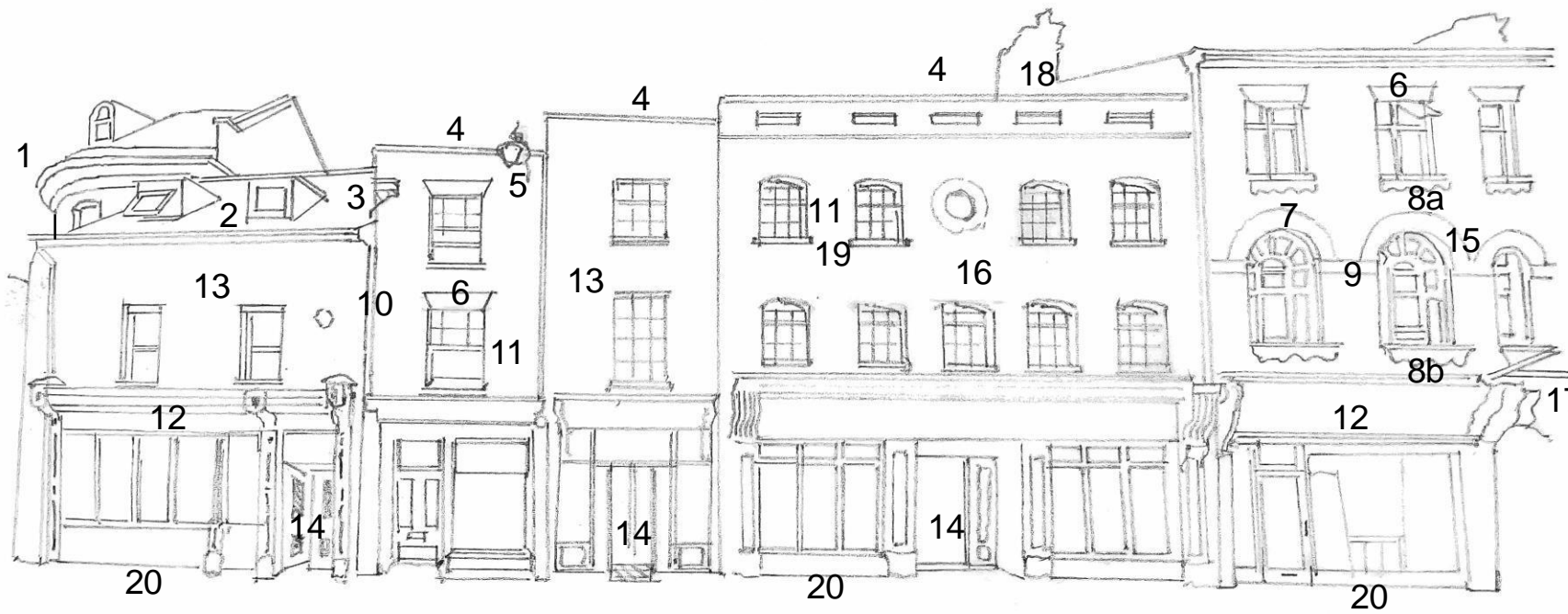
Existing key features (not exhaustive)

Whilst the historic heart of Bedford cannot be replicated, it should be possible when designing new development to achieve some of the variety it contains. Some key characteristics include the following.

1. Design to turn street corners well
2. Rooms in the roof
3. Pitched roofs
4. Well detailed parapet walls
5. Gables
6. Intricate brick arches at window head
7. Banding in different materials
8. Minor building setbacks e.g. 8a major setback at 8b
9. Variety in window design
10. Varying shopfront heights with strong detail.
11. Brick prominent
12. Painted brickwork finishes
13. Recessed entrance areas give depth
14. Semi-circular window heads
15. Symmetrical façade
16. Strong green infrastructure in public realm
17. Continuity of building line at ground level
18. Variety of material finishes in public realm

The High Street and historic central area of Bedford contain a great variety of rooflines and eaves heights, roof types, windows and doors of differing sizes, gables and buildings emphasising horizontality and verticality and a wide range of materials. New proposals should illustrate an understanding of this through a contextual analysis explaining how it informs the design of new development.

The High Street sketch below shows the wide variety of roof line, roof profile, materials and detailing.



Existing key features (not exhaustive)

1. Curved building feature to turn corner
2. Rooms in the roof
3. Pitched roof visible
4. Parapet walls with pitched roofs behind
5. Street lighting fixed to building façade.
6. Intricate brick detailing at window head
7. Arched brick arches
8. Intricate brick (8a) and stone (8b) detailing in relief
9. Stone banding
10. Minor building setback.
11. Sash windows of varying sizes
12. Varying shopfront heights
13. Painted brickwork finishes
14. Recessed entrance areas give depth
15. Semi-circular window heads
16. Symmetrical façade
17. Stone portico
18. Brick chimneys
19. Stone cills
20. Continuity of building line at ground level

Identity

The National Design Code does not seek to impose a particular architectural style on new buildings. The following principles should apply to the design of new buildings and associated spaces.

Boundary treatment: The way in which buildings front onto the street will be as follows:

- **High Street:** Important to preserve the continuous building line. Minor setbacks are permissible in line with what is currently present. Major setbacks of adjacent buildings require justification.
- **Other streets:** As above, buildings should also preserve the continuous building line.

Architecture: The town centre has a variety of architectural styles that show its development through the centuries, from the Georgian and Victorian periods through to Edwardian, early 20th-century and contemporary forms. New development must respect the story of the place, ensuring quality and appropriateness.

Ground floor: Bedford contains many examples of different floor-to-ceiling heights at ground floor level. Where different ground floor uses are proposed like office space, retail and residential, you should consider how differing neighbouring floor to ceiling heights would work and how they might add variety to building facades. Active frontages should be maintained, especially in the primary shopping area and, where possible, along other key streets in the town centre.

Windows: Consideration should be given to the existing window types, sizes, and proportions, building a comprehensive understanding of the current context. This analysis should then inform and justify any proposed window strategy.

Upper floors: Upper floors of town centre buildings accommodate a variety of uses. These buildings often emphasise verticality, with shop frontages clearly defining ground floor activity and creating a strong visual distinction between the street level and upper storeys. Bedford has very few tall buildings, so new development should carefully consider the role and design of upper storeys, ensuring that their uses complement and integrate effectively with ground floor activities.

Materials: The town centre features a diverse palette of materials, including York stone paving, red and buff brickwork, large, glazed windows on traditional shop fronts, painted render, timber shopfronts and stone detailing. New development should demonstrate an understanding of this variety and explain how it informs the selection of materials.

Active frontages: Development should achieve active frontages where possible and include considerable and well-proportioned glazing with clearly defined shop fronts incorporating signage.

Existing shopfronts of merit should be retained and enhanced in accordance with the A Strategy for Bedford High Street SPD. Design should draw on the high-quality traditional shopfronts found along the High Street and within the Edwardian Arcade, with careful attention to how entrances address the immediate public realm.

Rooflines: The High Street features a varied roofscape, with a mix of heights and pitched roof types, occasionally incorporating gables facing the street. Many buildings include parapet walls, often concealing pitched or flat roofs behind. New development should respect the local roofline, considering heights, forms, and ground-level views. Where multiple frontages exist, rooflines must turn corners in a consistent and integrated way.

Investment in the town centre will seek to enhance the quality of the High Street and promote new development with a similar character. New development will be consistent with the existing scale, variety and building line to create attractive streets and public spaces.

Housing density: New housing in the town centre must be built at urban densities based on an understanding of existing development patterns. A separate analysis of town centre housing in Rothsay Road follows on page 56. Higher densities will be encouraged in accessible locations, particularly around key transport nodes such as the bus and rail stations, and at key gateways to the town centre, in line with the spatial strategy of the Bedford Borough Local Plan and national policy promoting sustainable patterns of development.

Party wall: The High Street contains many party walls between properties which form a clear dividing line - often between buildings quite distinct from each other - which contribute to a varied and fine-grained townscape.

Built form: The current High Street features numerous small buildings that vary in façade design, materials and height. While this diversity cannot be replicated exactly, it is important to understand how these differences coexist harmoniously to guide new development. Focusing on shared characteristics - such as a continuous building line, small plot sizes, and detailed roof features - while introducing distinctive, contemporary design will help maintain coherence within the town centre.

Building line: The existing building line should be followed where buildings are replaced. Setbacks and projections from the building line such as balconies are permitted but large projecting balconies would be out of place on busy urban streets.

Urban grain: New development should create a varied and fine-grained development form with a variety of building heights, generally narrow frontage and a range of materials responding to the character of the High Street. Buildings on corner plots must turn the corner well, providing distinctive features with windows overlooking the public realm. In the primary shopping area, redevelopment and street remodeling should reinforce the existing pattern of development, reflecting and building on the established variety, plot widths and architectural rhythm of the High Street as well as other key streets including Silver Street, St Paul's Square, Harpur Street and the Arcade. Smaller plot divisions and active frontages should be incorporated where appropriate to support a fine-grained and vibrant town centre.

Height and enclosure: The height of new buildings should be sympathetic to the context and neighbouring buildings. Taller building proposals with the town centre will be assessed in accordance with the Tall Buildings - Urban Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and associated guidance.

Overarching key characteristic: Variety of facades and wall/roof line.

Note: Applicants must demonstrate how the key characteristics and variety of the street/area have informed the design and layout of the proposed development. While there is no expectation to replicate existing features, a thorough site-specific analysis should be undertaken. The applicant should clearly explain how this analysis, together with the requirements of the design code, shapes the design principles applied to the new development.

Interesting ways of turning corners where streets meet

Variety in height of roof/wall junction line

Circular windows and intricate façade detailing



Variety in fenestration and window head details

Variety of wall finish including brick, stone, painted and render

Variety in ground floor approach to floor to ceiling heights, flush and recessed access doors and large/small pane fenestration

Narrow buildings emphasise verticality

Examples of symmetrical buildings

Continuity of building line at ground level. Generally, minor setbacks

Movement

The town centre has good links to the High Street and both the rail and bus stations, as well as the surrounding neighbourhoods. However, traffic on High Street can sometimes act as a barrier to east-west movement and walkways to the east of the town centre into the Castle Quarter are limited. Existing connecting alleys tend to be narrow. New development should consider how to increase movement and flow throughout the town centre.

The town centre area typology therefore includes the following:

Streets: Streets will be designed to be active, safe and attractive spaces for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, prioritising active frontages along principal streets, particularly within the primary shopping area.

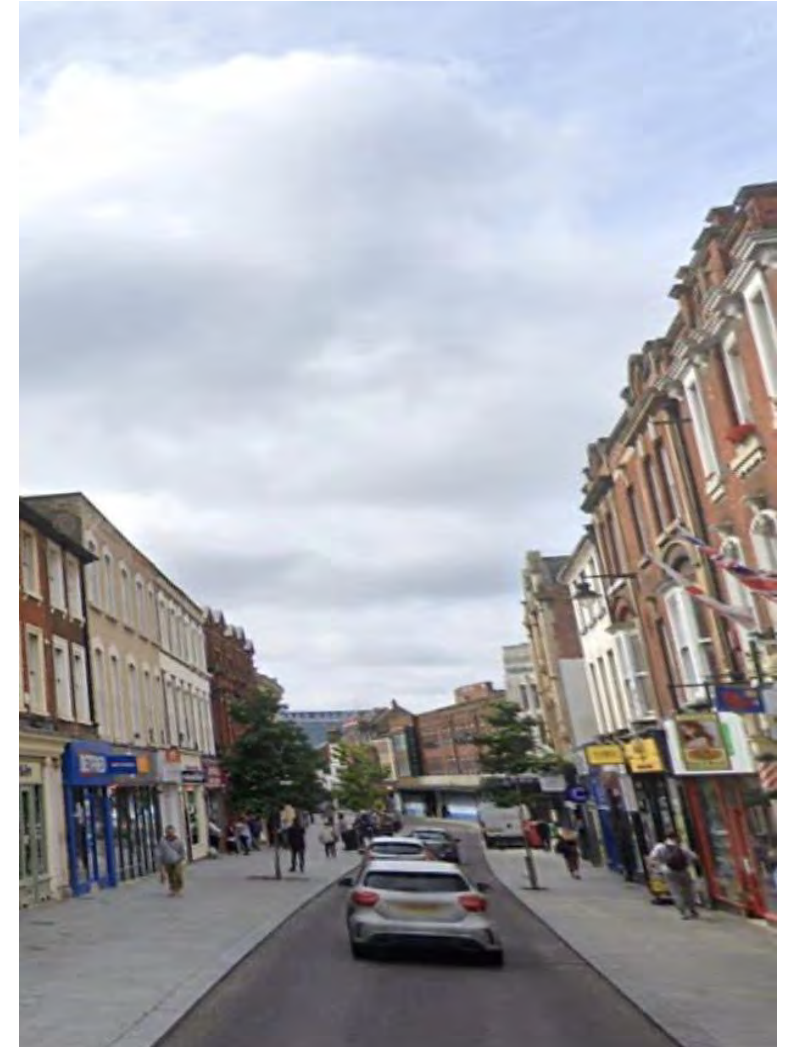
Connectivity: All new streets and routes in the town centre will ideally connect at either end to other routes to ensure accessibility and permeability. Cul-de-sacs will not be permitted. Wayfinding should be easy to understand allowing simple navigation through the urban environment. Prominent buildings and key locations should serve as clear reference points, helping town centre users orientate themselves and maintain a sense of direction. There is a particular need to improve access to the river, with development expected to support and contribute to enhancements to riverside routes and spaces.

Junctions: All new and redesigned junctions must be designed to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. Swept paths and visibility splays must be accommodated without creating pedestrian diversions or compromising the urban form, such as through building demolition.

Residential parking: Residential parking will be guided by the Parking Standards in Sustainable Communities SPD.

Cycling: Cycle lanes will be provided as part of all highway improvements. Residential cycle parking must be in accordance with the Parking Standards and Sustainable Communities SPD.

Bins: Adequate ventilated rubbish and recycling facilities must be provided within buildings or dedicated structures to accommodate all refuse bins, ensuring they do not obstruct streets or pavements. Vehicles must be able to access new developments to ensure refuse bins can be emptied.



Bedford town centre (High Street)
Image source: Google maps

New larger scale development will include new and, where possible, consolidated, accessible green spaces to enhance biodiversity, avoid habitat fragmentation and support human health and wellbeing.

Green infrastructure should be integrated within the urban fabric and connected as far as possible to the existing network of spaces like the Great River Ouse corridor and the Embankment. Section 2.5 contains more information on specific green infrastructure standards, open space, biodiversity, sustainable design and tree planting.

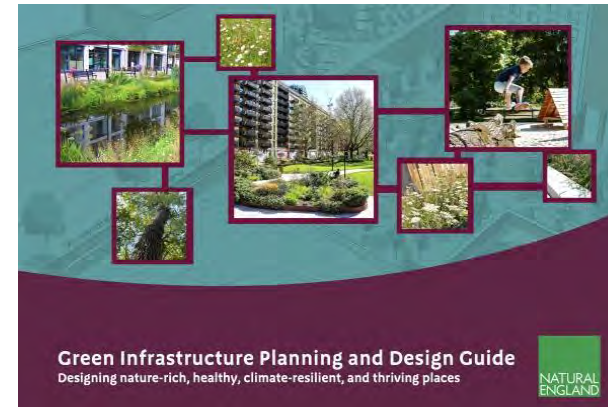
Open space provision: Within the town centre, there will be development proposals that require new public spaces or play provision in line with local identified needs. New residential apartments should have access to high quality communal green space, including roof terraces, balconies and shared courtyards.

Biodiversity: In line with national policy, all new development will achieve a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. In town centre locations where on-site green space is limited, this will need to be achieved through tree planting, green walls and roofs and integrated habitat features.

Drainage: Within Bedford town centre and adjoining areas, sustainable drainage should be integrated into the urban fabric through space-efficient and multifunctional design solutions. In highly constrained locations, measures such as green roofs, rain gardens, permeable paving, tree pits and, where appropriate, below ground storage should be incorporated as integral design features to achieve greenfield runoff rates without increasing flood risk elsewhere (for further advice, please refer to the Sustainable Urban Drainage SPD).

Trees: Existing trees in this area should be retained wherever this can be achieved without conflicting with other requirements of the code. As outlined in the public realm section, all streets - including the High Street and key routes linking to the Great River Ouse - should incorporate new trees where feasible to increase shade and enhance the quality of the townscape. Where constraints limit planting, alternative greening measures such as planters, permeable paving, tree pits or roof planting should be considered.

Public space



Natural England has produced guidance on green infrastructure and design at <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk>

The street hierarchy: Development in the town centre should contribute to the character of the streets on which it is located. Where new pathways or streets will be created, these need to follow the street hierarchy prevalent in the area.

Street design: Section 2 contains more information on what should be considered where new streets are being created, or existing ones being improved.

3.1 B Urban town centre housing

Rothsay Road: Existing key features

Streets near the town centre feature some of the oldest residential areas in the urban area. Many date from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, representing the first wave of residential expansion. These streets generally feature a gridded pattern of terraced housing of varying sizes and grandeur, with other uses focused on primary streets such as Castle Road. There are other examples of this type of housing layout in the town centre, such as River Street, the area either side of Midland Road and the terraces to the west of the railway line.

Rothsay Road divides to form a circular route around a narrow oblong island, creating a sense of symmetry. This feature enhances the feeling of spaciousness, while mature trees - both within the central island and in some gardens - provide a complementary backdrop to the large, predominantly detached and individually designed Victorian villas lining both sides of the road.

New development and interventions should preserve the formal layout, symmetry and open character of the streets. The scale, spacing and setback of buildings should reflect the prevailing pattern, maintaining views, tree cover and the landscaped setting. Boundary treatments, planting and materials should reinforce the character of individual villas within a coherent streetscape.



Rothsay: Location east of Bedford town centre. Formal arrangement, focal point spaces and terracing.

Rothsay Road: Existing key features



A range of elegant bay designs and rooms in the roof.



Brick homes sharing key features but each slightly different



Homes facing each other distinctly different with entrances onto different roads



Identical homes side by side

Images source: Google maps

Apartments in Bedford town centre

There are a range of apartments in Bedford using a differing material and a variety of building designs.



Lurke Street apartments

Different brick colours and a metal set back roof. Right (lower), a framed building with extensive glazing to the façade and tile hung horizontal component to an upper level. Small, cantilevered balconies appear at top floor level.



The Embankments apartments

Images source: Google maps

Characteristic repetition in the façade components creating harmonious solutions, with balconies and well-defined gardens/amenity space at ground level. Another common feature of the town centre is apartments over shops or other mixed uses on the ground floor.

As a counterpoint to the High Street, the historic town centre housing in Rothsay Road relies less on variety and more on repetition of features, symmetry and bold design features such as projecting bays.

Understanding existing town centre housing character



Rothsay Road: sketch elevations identifying some key features

3.1B Urban town centre: Housing

Some key design features of existing town centre housing which may form a reference point for the design of new include:

1. Projecting gables a strong feature
2. White painted bargeboards
3. Stone lintels picked out as painted band
4. Eaves overhang with rafters visible
5. Harmonious windows
6. Projecting (splayed and square) bays with hipped roofs
7. Recessed entrance areas
8. Repeated housing
9. Extensive use of brick
10. Brick chimneys
11. Stone cills
12. Swept head windows
13. Tiled entrance paths (behind gate)
14. Homes set back from the pavement
15. Strong green infrastructure
16. Brick walls to front

The National Design Code does not seek to impose a particular architectural style on new buildings and encourages efforts to promote high quality design including the use of design review, more than one architecture practice using design-based tenders or competitions. The following rules relate to the principles that should apply to the design and layout of new buildings in this area.

Character: The overall character is consistent with Victorian and Edwardian housing development: a gridded road pattern with strong front boundary lines and consistent features.

Boundary treatment: The way in which buildings front onto the street should include a shallow setback with a low boundary wall to provide transition between private and public realm.

Architecture: The following principles must be followed regardless of style:

- Ground floor: Level access should be provided to new properties.
- Materials should predominantly be in keeping with the appearance of town centre housing. Consistency and uniformity will be important. An analysis of materials can be found on page 65.
- Active frontages: Development predominantly faces onto the street creating active frontage with passive surveillance. This should be continued with living spaces facing streets.
- Windows should be orientated vertically with the use of bay windows.
- Rooflines: Rooflines should predominantly run parallel with the street, with pitched roofs and occasional gables and dormers.

Conservation area: Alterations to existing buildings in the town centre neighbourhood should respect and reinstate where possible existing architectural features. If development falls within the conservation area, applicants should refer to the Conservation Area Management Plan.

Existing streets often have constraints that limit large-scale redevelopment, but smaller interventions like rear extensions and attic conversions can unlock additional capacity without major disruption. New development in this area should predominantly comprise 2-3 storey terraced houses that follow a consistent building line, resulting in appealing streetscapes and shared, enclosed space.

Housing density: New housing should generally reflect the prevailing density of the area. However, there are opportunities to increase density or encourage intensification, particularly at key gateways and underutilised sites, provided that new development does not undermine the established character of the area. In some parts of the town centre, large houses with distinctive façade features integrate well alongside higher-density housing, demonstrating how thoughtful design can achieve harmony across different scales.

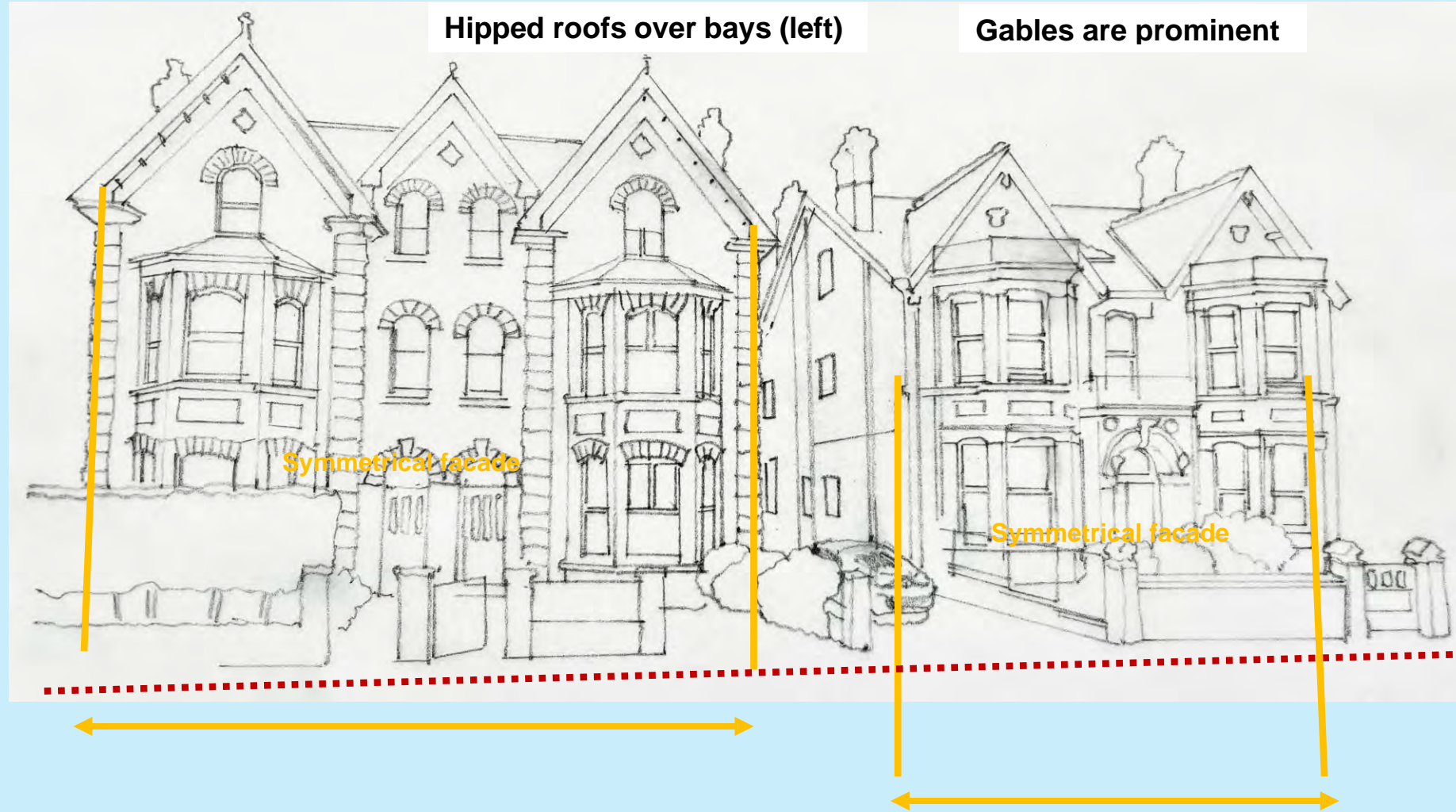
Frontage: Maintaining consistent architectural features helps create continuity along building frontages. Most Victorian and Edwardian built terraces face the street, enhancing natural surveillance and fostering a sense of security.

Built form: The town centre consists of many small buildings that are similar in size, materials and overall appearance. New buildings should seek to reference the existing urban grain, whilst adhering to modern residential standards.

Building line: Existing buildings lines are straight, strong and formal. The existing building line should be followed where buildings are replaced.

Urban grain: New development should create a fine-grained, formal development with fairly consistent building height, narrow plots and materials replicating the character of the Victorian streets. Buildings on corner plots must turn the corner, providing distinctive features with windows overlooking public realm.

Height and enclosure: New town centre neighbourhoods should consider higher-density development, including taller buildings and greater enclosure ratios, where this can be achieved without compromising the character of the area. Larger and taller buildings subdivided into flats already exist in the area. Appropriately designed apartment blocks of 3 - 4 storeys and predominantly 2-storey townhouses can fit within the context, provided new development maintains a suitable mix of housing types to meet diverse needs.



Recessed entrance areas.

Intricate details add interest to the elevations.

Dominant bay windows and arched head windows.

Predominantly brick finish with differing window head details (painted stone).

Continuity of building line at ground level.
Low brick walls define defensible space at front.

Town centre neighbourhoods are well connected to the retail core. The design code aims to promote active travel and enhance street environments with high quality integrated planting.

Streets: Neighbourhood streets should be designed to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists while accommodating local traffic and some through traffic. Development occurring on existing streets should reinforce established lines and contribute positively to the prevailing gridded nature of the area. New streets should reflect the layout, scale and feel of the surrounding street network. Clear and legible wayfinding to the town centre and riverside areas should be included.

Connectivity: Streets should connect at both ends. For narrow streets, one-way systems may be most appropriate. Traffic access to primary and secondary routes must be planned, and routes to the town centre should be clear and easy to navigate.

Junctions: All new and redesigned junctions must be designed to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. The design of swept paths and visibility splays must prioritise pedestrian safety (e.g. avoid diversions and the demolition of buildings) and preserve the urban form.

Visitor and residential car parking: Developments will be subject to the requirements set out in the Parking Standards in Sustainable Communities SPD.

Cycling: Residential cycle parking must include a minimum of 1 space per dwelling to be provided in secure courtyards or bike shelters.

Bins: Adequate ventilated rubbish and recycling facilities must be provided within buildings, gardens or other structures for all refuse bins so that they do not obstruct streets and pavements.



Image source: Google maps

Town centre neighbourhoods will be close to the Embankment and parks such as Russell Park and Priory Country Park. The fine urban grain will mean significant swathes of new green infrastructure may not be possible. However, it is important that all new development adds to the biodiversity value of the area.

Open space provision: All residential properties should have access to some outdoor space - in the form of a garden, balcony or shared parks. Clear pathways/signposted routes to established open spaces like the Embankment should be provided. Public and private green space must be clearly distinguished with threshold treatments.

Biodiversity: In line with national policy, all new development must achieve at least 10% biodiversity net gain. In narrow urban streets this could be encouraged more in rear and front gardens, street trees, planters and window boxes. Buildings and structures should incorporate nesting spaces, such as swift bricks and owl boxes. In addition, green crossings or underpasses could be provided to enable wildlife to navigate major road and rail infrastructure, linking up fragmented habitats.

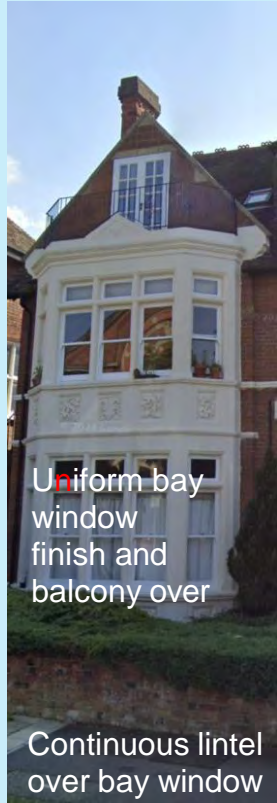
Drainage: All new development should incorporate sustainable urban drainage to achieve a greenfield run-off rate, particularly in areas influenced by the River Great Ouse and its floodplain.

Trees: Existing trees should be retained where this can be achieved without conflicting with other parts of the code. Trees and planters should be introduced into town centre neighbourhoods along roads and paths provided they do not interfere with other street furniture, utilities equipment or cause an obstruction to pedestrians. To ensure the long-term health and survival of trees and greenery, planting must be tailored to the specific needs of the chosen species and the surrounding environment.

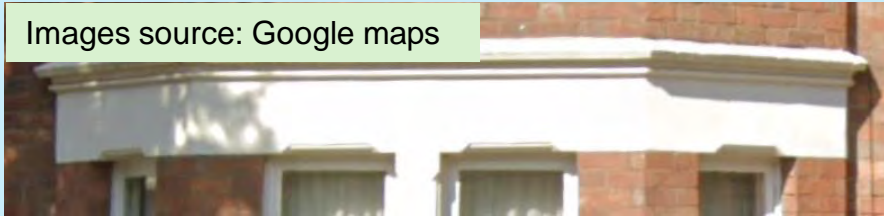
Public space: Streets are currently dominated by vehicles, with narrow pedestrian pavements and limited public realm. Where possible, small public spaces should be introduced, like the 'green islands' on Rothsay Road, where communities can gather and visual breaks can be provided in the urban fabric. Trees, planting and seating should be designed into streets to enhance the public realm.

The street hierarchy: Development on existing streets should respect the character of the street and not add incompatible amounts of traffic. New developments that reflect town centre neighbourhoods should set out a clear street hierarchy, with primary streets limited to the edges and secondary and tertiary streets become the focus of pedestrian activity and new development.

Street design: When creating new streets or improving existing ones, urban designers should follow the guidance set out in section 2.6.



Images source: Google maps



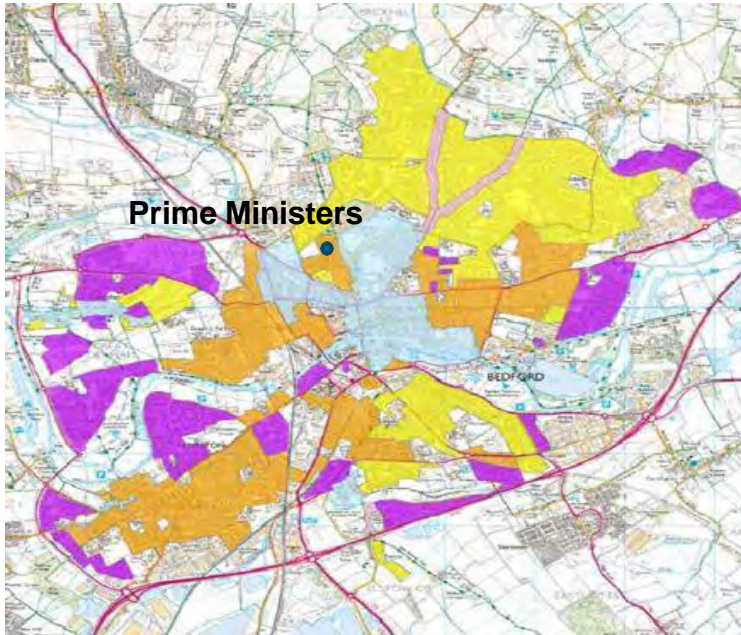
Element	Materials	Colours
Roof	Slate, tiles	Grey
Gables (walls)	Brick, timber	Red brick White timber
Fascias/ bargeboards	Timber	White painted
Walls	Brick	Red
Bay roofs	Hipped slate, flat with balconies	Grey slate Black ironwork
Bays	Brick Timber	Red White painted
Doors/ Entrances	Generally timber	Various
Windows	Sash	White
Window heads	Stone, brick arches	White painted
Front walls	Brick	Red



3.2 Urban neighbourhood

This typology relates to Bedford urban neighbourhoods including the areas shown on the map below in orange. Most of these areas form the historic inner neighbourhoods of Bedford.

Prime Ministers area is a typical example of Victorian grid layout streets. Bedford Park, a nearby green space, serves as a communal area to offset the typically small private gardens found in such area. The streets north and south of Stanley Street, which runs east-west, offer different housing types with the streets south providing smaller, closely spaced 'workers' dwellings, while the streets to the north are wider with small front areas and often featuring bay windows.



Stanley Street - end of short terrace.
Image source: Google maps

Please note: Character typologies are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide. They do not define settlement status or whether an area is urban or suburban or lies within a rural parish outside the urban area. The extent of the urban area is defined on the Policies Map.

Existing context and character

Urban neighbourhood characteristics include:

- mainly terraced properties with some variation on the presence of bay windows or more flat frontages;
- a permeable grid of streets with a consistent building line and sense of enclosure;
- mainly 2-storey terraced housing but with some 'room in the roof';
- plots with relatively small back gardens;
- a building design of predominantly Victorian and Edwardian character;
- greening of the built environment and traffic calming present but limited public realm space;
- a rough split of housing types – south of Stanley Street feature smaller houses with little/no front area;
- front doors opening onto street, with no 'transition' between private and public space;
- larger houses north of Stanley Street with front areas creating recessed front entrances;
- uniform house types, largely north and south of Stanley Street, with common features that create consistency in building lines and roof lines and a sense of continuity along streets;
- streets containing local pubs and shops in between residences; and
- courtyard gardens with little private amenity space although Bedford Park, laid out in the Victoria era, is located immediately to the east of this area.



Some challenges created by this spatial arrangement include:

- on-street parking which causes congestion and conflict between road and path users;
- narrow pavements in places blocked by bins;
- some homes have no setback from pavement: no defensible space or sense of public/private threshold;
- few street trees and limited greenery/biodiversity on street; and
- a limited/narrow public realm, which can create conflict between multiple uses (infrastructure, green spaces and parking etc.).



Stanley Street (above): Consistent building line



Stanley Street (above and below): brick terrace variations



Examples of homes opening straight onto the street (Gladstone Street and Hartington Street)



Consistent materials palette and colours



Images source: Google maps

Apartments in Bedford urban neighbourhood area



Grove Apartments, Goldington Road, Bedford

Brick with black cladding on the upper floors, Juliet balconies, parapet walls and likely flat roofs.

Characteristic - both repetition in the façade components creating a harmonious solution, set in a strong foundation of greenery at the ground level.

Understanding existing urban neighbourhood housing character



Stanley Street: sketch elevations of key features of the urban neighbourhood

Key features (not exhaustive)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Projecting gables on the front elevation | 10. Repeated facades | 19. End wall of neighbouring property |
| 2. Double height bay windows | 11. Handed facades | 20. Cabling into properties |
| 3. Single height bay windows | 12. Brick walls | |
| 4. Eaves overhang with rafters visible | 13. Brick chimneys | |
| 5. Sash windows | 14. Stone cills | |
| 6. Inlaid stone detailing | 15. White painted barge boards | |
| 7. Ornate metal railings | 16. Tiled entrance paths | |
| 8. Recessed entrance areas | 17. Homes set back from the pavement | |
| 9. Stone lintels over window head | 18. Terrace continues | |

The National Design Code does not seek to impose a particular architectural style on new buildings and encourages efforts to promote high quality design - such as conducting design reviews, engaging multiple architectural practices and using design-based tenders or competitions. The following rules relate to the principles that should apply to the design and layout of new buildings and related spaces in this area.

Character: The overall character of this area follows a grid road pattern with strong front boundary lines and consistent features. Contemporary interpretations should utilise the characteristics identified on the following page.

Boundary treatment: The way in which buildings front onto the street should be as follows:

- Primary roads – setback with low-walled front garden and planting;
- Secondary and tertiary roads – where there is space, setback of 1-2 metres incorporating low-walled front gardens and plantings.

Architecture: The following principles should be followed regardless of style:

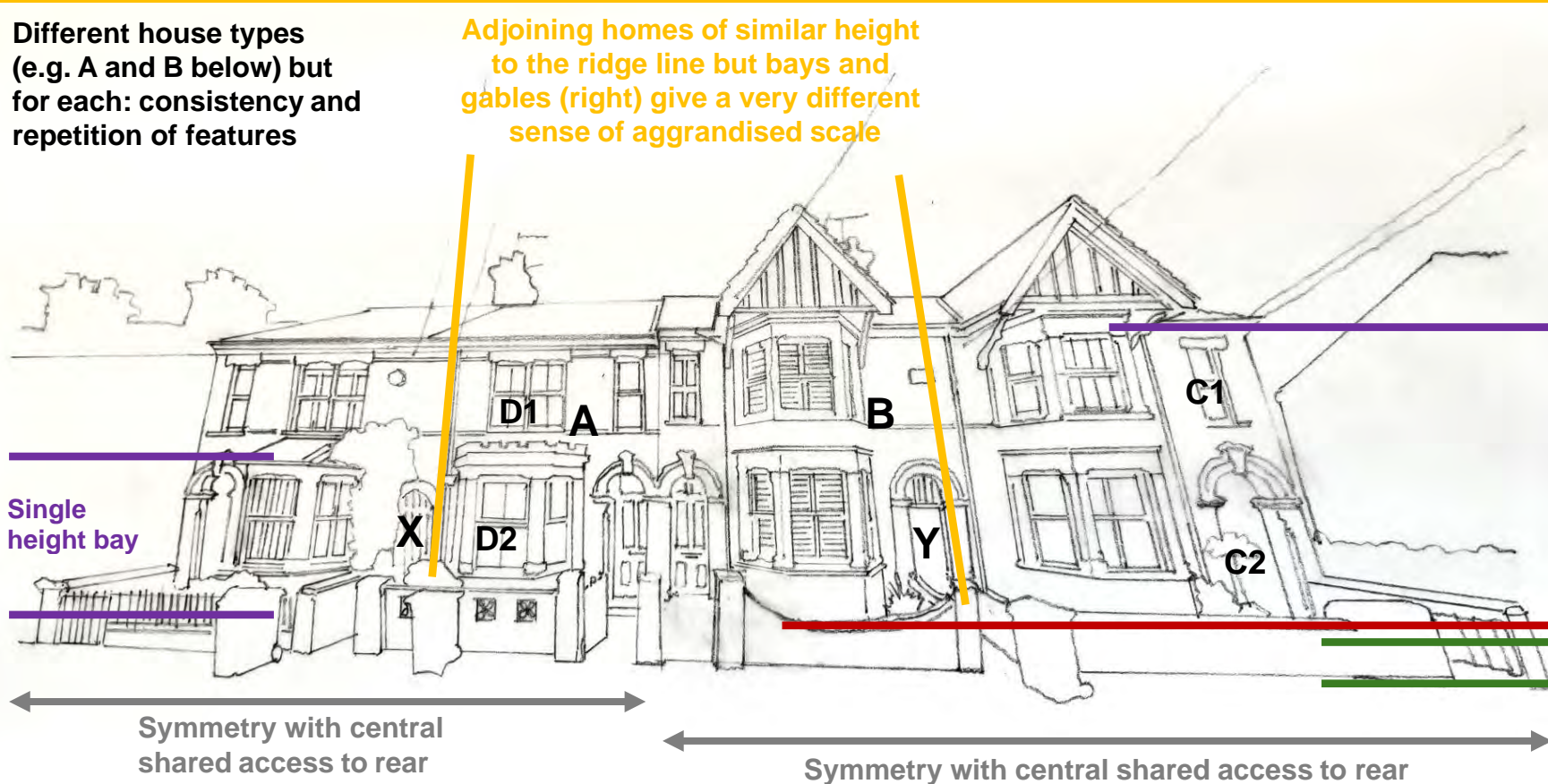
- Ground floor: Level access should be provided to new properties.
- Materials should predominantly be in keeping with the appearance of the urban neighbourhood and based on an understanding of how key existing features and characteristics inform new development. An analysis of materials can be found on page 74.
- Active frontages: Development predominantly faces onto the street creating active frontage with passive surveillance. This should be continued with living spaces facing streets. Windows should be orientated vertically with consideration given to the use of bay windows.
- Rooflines: Rooflines should predominantly run parallel with the street, with pitched roofs and occasional gables and dormers. This should be reflected in new developments.

Conservation area: Alteration to existing buildings in urban neighbourhoods should respect and reinstate, where possible, existing architectural features, such as bay windows, sash or timber windows, decorative brickwork, chimneys, roof forms and traditional boundary treatments.

Overarching key characteristic: Differing house types but within each consistency and repetition of key elements such as doors and windows

Different house types (e.g. A and B below) but for each: consistency and repetition of features

Adjoining homes of similar height to the ridge line but bays and gables (right) give a very different sense of aggrandised scale



Predominantly brick walls but with key features such as lintels and bay windows utilising a different material and in a different colour.

Double height bay windows
Ground and first floor doors and windows of proportionate width and scale e.g. single window (C1) over main entrance door (C2) and double window (D1) over bay window

Continuity of main façade and bay windows building line at ground level

A variety of low walls and railings provide defensible space to front.

The urban neighbourhoods are well connected to the town centre and the design code aims to promote active travel and enhance street environments with integrated street planting. Development in urban neighbourhoods, including infill and backland plots, should reflect their established character, including their proximity to the town centre and well-connected street structure.

Streets: Urban neighbourhood streets should be permeable to pedestrians and cyclists and accommodate local traffic and some through traffic. Development occurring on existing streets should continue the building line, roof line and gridded nature of the area. New streets should reflect the layout and feel of existing streets.

Connectivity: Streets should connect at both ends. One-way systems should be implemented on narrow streets to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. The gridded street layout can make wayfinding confusing, so clear signage is essential to create routes that are simple and easy to navigate.

Junctions: All new and redesigned junctions must be designed to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. The design of swept paths and visibility splays must not create diversions in existing street layouts or necessitate the demolition of buildings to protect the existing urban form.

Visitor and residential car parking: Provision must be provided in line with the requirements set out in the Parking Standards in Sustainable Communities SPD.

Cycling: Residential cycle parking must include a minimum of 1 space per dwelling to be provided in secure, well-designed courtyards or bike shelters.

Bins: Adequate ventilated rubbish and recycling facilities must be provided within buildings, gardens or other structures for all refuse bins so that they do not obstruct streets and pavements.



Perpendicular street patterns in the urban area – typically associated with terrace housing

It is important that all new development contributes positively to the biodiversity value of the site and the wider green infrastructure network.

Open space provision: All residential properties should have access to some outdoor space - in the form of a garden, balcony or shared communal courtyards. Public open space may be provided in the form of small areas that allow gathering and spontaneous interaction. Public and private green space must be clearly distinguished with threshold treatments. Access to existing areas of green space must be included.

Biodiversity: In line with national policy, all new developments must achieve at least 10% biodiversity net gain. In narrow urban streets, this could include more planting in rear and front gardens, window boxes, street trees planters and integrated features, such as bird and bat boxes.

Drainage: All new developments should incorporate sustainable urban drainage in built-up areas to achieve a greenfield run-off rate.

Trees: Existing trees should be retained where their retention can be achieved without conflicting with other parts of the code. Trees and planters should be introduced into urban neighbourhoods along roads, paths and within parking courtyards. However, careful planning is essential to avoid conflicts with other street furniture, utilities equipment or infrastructure.

Public space: New developments should prioritise the provision of accessible open space (especially in deprived wards such as Cauldwell, Castle, Goldington, Harpur, Greyfriars, Kingsbrook and Queen's Park) to address deficiencies. Where possible, small public spaces such as trees, raingardens, seating and pocket parks should be introduced to encourage social interaction. New planting should be strategically integrated into streets to enhance the public realm. Consideration should be given to how streets can be designed in a way that does not lead to the dominance of parked vehicles.

The street hierarchy: Development within urban neighbourhoods should integrate with and enhance the character of the existing streetscape and overall character of the area. New development should not introduce inappropriate uses on smaller roads.

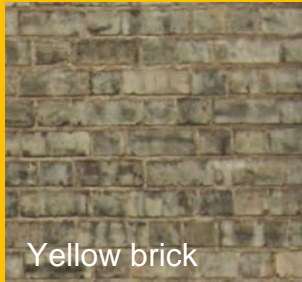
Street design: When creating new streets or improving existing ones, designers should follow the guidance set out in section 2.6.



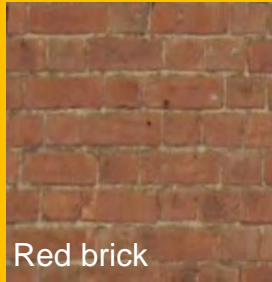
Flat facade
Entrance set-back



Verticality



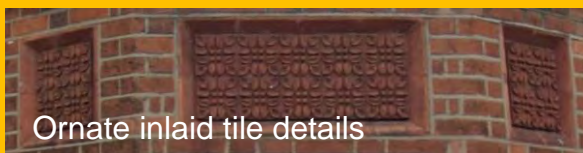
Yellow brick



Red brick



Corner shop integral to streetscene



Ornate inlaid tile details

Element	Materials	Colours
Roof	Slate, tiles	Grey
Gables (walls)	Brick, timber	Red brick White painted timber
Fascias/ bargeboards	Timber	White painted
Walls	Brick	Red Yellow
Bay roofs	Hipped tiled, flat	Grey
Bays	Timber Stone	White painted
Doors/ Entrances	Generally timber	Various
Windows	Sash Casement	White
Window heads	Stone	White painted
Front walls	Brick	Red/Yellow






Urban neighbourhood housing examples

Image source: Google maps

3.3 Urban summary

Consistency is a key feature of housing in the town centre and surrounding urban neighbourhoods. This is expressed through the use of symmetry, strong geometric forms, bay windows, gables and a richness of architectural detail. Key materials and colour features include: a relatively small palette of materials, a consistent approach to finishes and a relatively harmonious appearance between homes of different periods.

Ref	Typology	Example area	Key characteristics	Typical example
3.1A	Urban town centre mixed use and conservation area	High Street	<p>VARIETY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line/junction between roof and wall. Verticality, symmetry of facades; Variety of fenestration and wall finishes; Variety of floor to ceiling heights in ground floor spaces; Roofline variations provide interest and uniqueness; Heights are generally 2-5 storeys. Generally good permeability; Market town scale and character. 	
3.1B	Urban town centre housing	Rothsay Road	<p>CONSISTENCY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symmetrical facades with prominent gables: continuity of building line; Pitched roofs to main house and hipped to bay roofs; Predominantly red brick finish with low brick walls to front; Some detailed variations (e.g. over double-height bay windows); Imposing 2.5/3 storey homes; Significant decorative detailing and predominantly tiled roofs. 	
3.2	Urban neighbourhoods	Prime Ministers	<p>DIFFERENTIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> between the house types (e.g. 2/3 storey Victorian terraces) but significant consistency within each house type; Symmetry between like house types, ridge and wall/roof line same; Single and double height bays; Party walls, narrow streets and long gardens, relatively consistent building line and sense of enclosure. 	

4.0 Suburban place codes

This section covers the following areas:

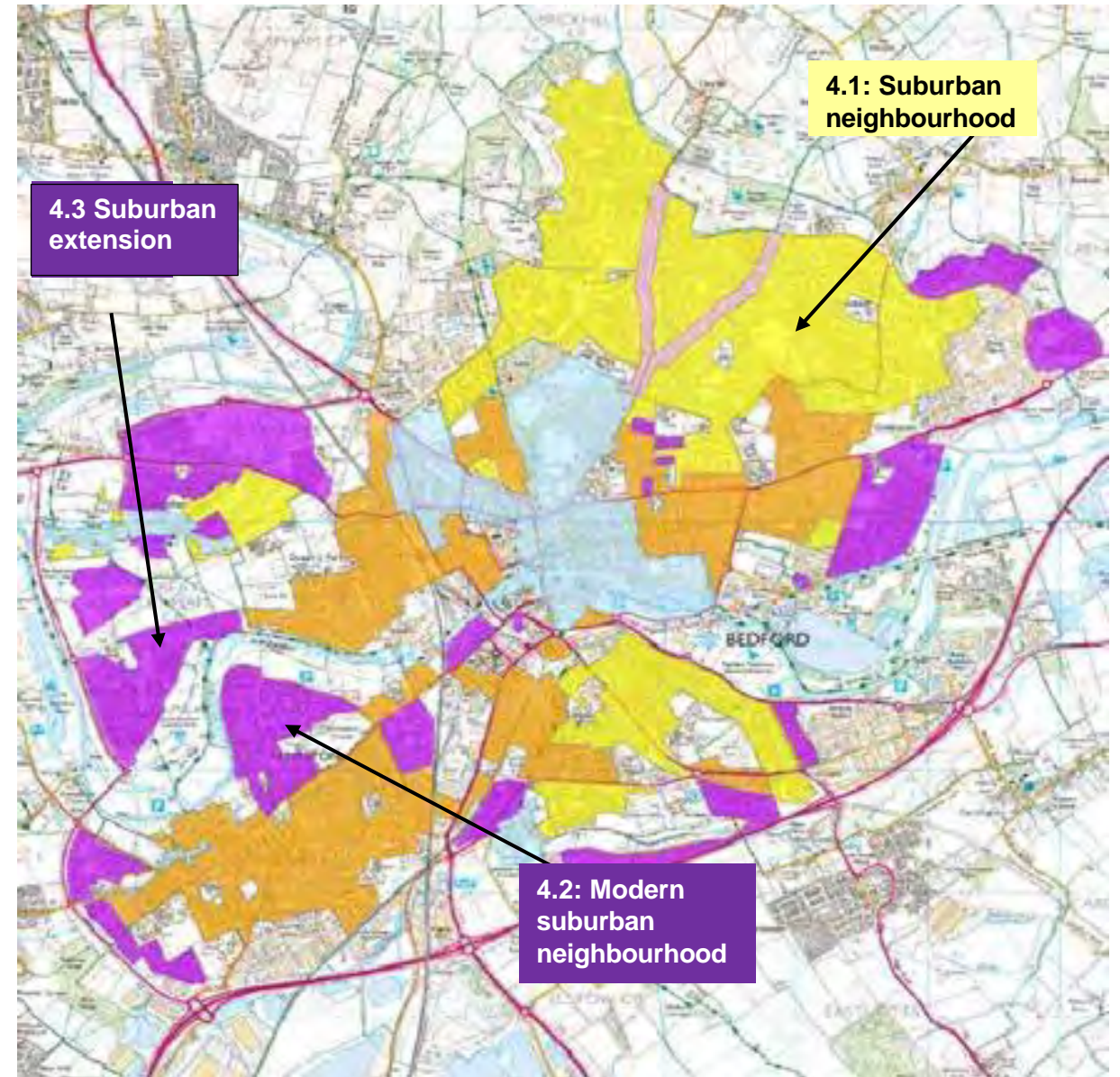
4.1 Suburban neighbourhoods (e.g. Putnoe and other residential areas as shown in yellow on the diagram)

4.2 Modern suburban neighbourhood (e.g. Hartwell Drive, Kempston and other areas as shown in purple on the diagram).

4.3 Suburban extension (Suburban extensions such as Great Denham represent more recent planned growth, typically developed as large-scale urban extensions with a clear neighbourhood structure and a distinct urban character).

4.4 Suburban summary

Please note: Character typologies are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide. They do not define settlement status or whether an area is urban or suburban or lies within a rural parish outside the urban area. The extent of the urban area is defined on the Policies Map.



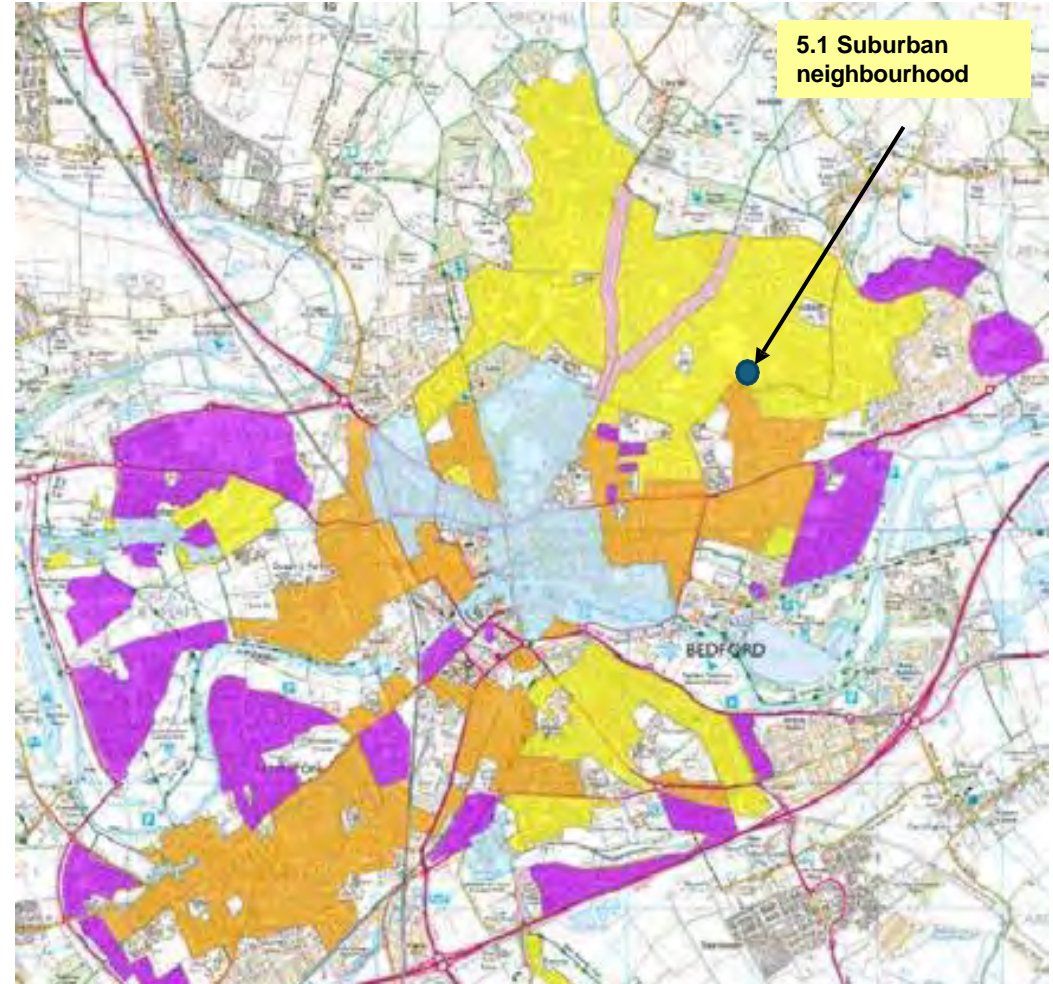
4.1 Suburban neighbourhood

Mid twentieth century suburban neighbourhood

The Putnoe area (identified as LDA 3GU in Bedford Borough Design Guide) is a planned suburban extension featuring a more 'organic' street pattern than urban neighbourhoods (in section 3). The road hierarchy is more recognisable with main routes being Putnoe Lane and Church Lane moving north-south and Wentworth Drive and Putnoe Street moving east-west. Mixed housing types incorporating terraced, semi-detached, detached, flats and bungalows are present but all with similar materials, colour palettes and styles. The neighbourhood is punctuated with generous green areas, schools, shopping parades and other amenities like bus stops, cafes, a library and churches.

Paths and roads are generally wider in comparison to urban neighbourhoods, catering to road traffic but with generous crossing points and a network of foot and cycle paths that weave through the area. Features include:

- a large urban extension to Bedford on previously undeveloped farmland;
- a comprehensive and coherent masterplan evident in design, materials and legibility of the area;
- varied densities, typically increasing eastwards towards Church Lane;
- large areas of green space accessible;
- an open aspect, with houses generally set back from the road and front gardens providing privacy. With rising car ownership, many of these front areas have been converted into driveways, resulting in limited on-street parking across much of the area;
- a network of foot and cycle paths traverse through the area although many lack natural surveillance where they pass behind fenced rear gardens with under-passages to crossroads.



Please note: Character typologies are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide. They do not define settlement status or whether an area is urban or suburban or lies within a rural parish outside the urban area. The extent of the urban area is defined on the Policies Map.

Suburban neighbourhoods provide:

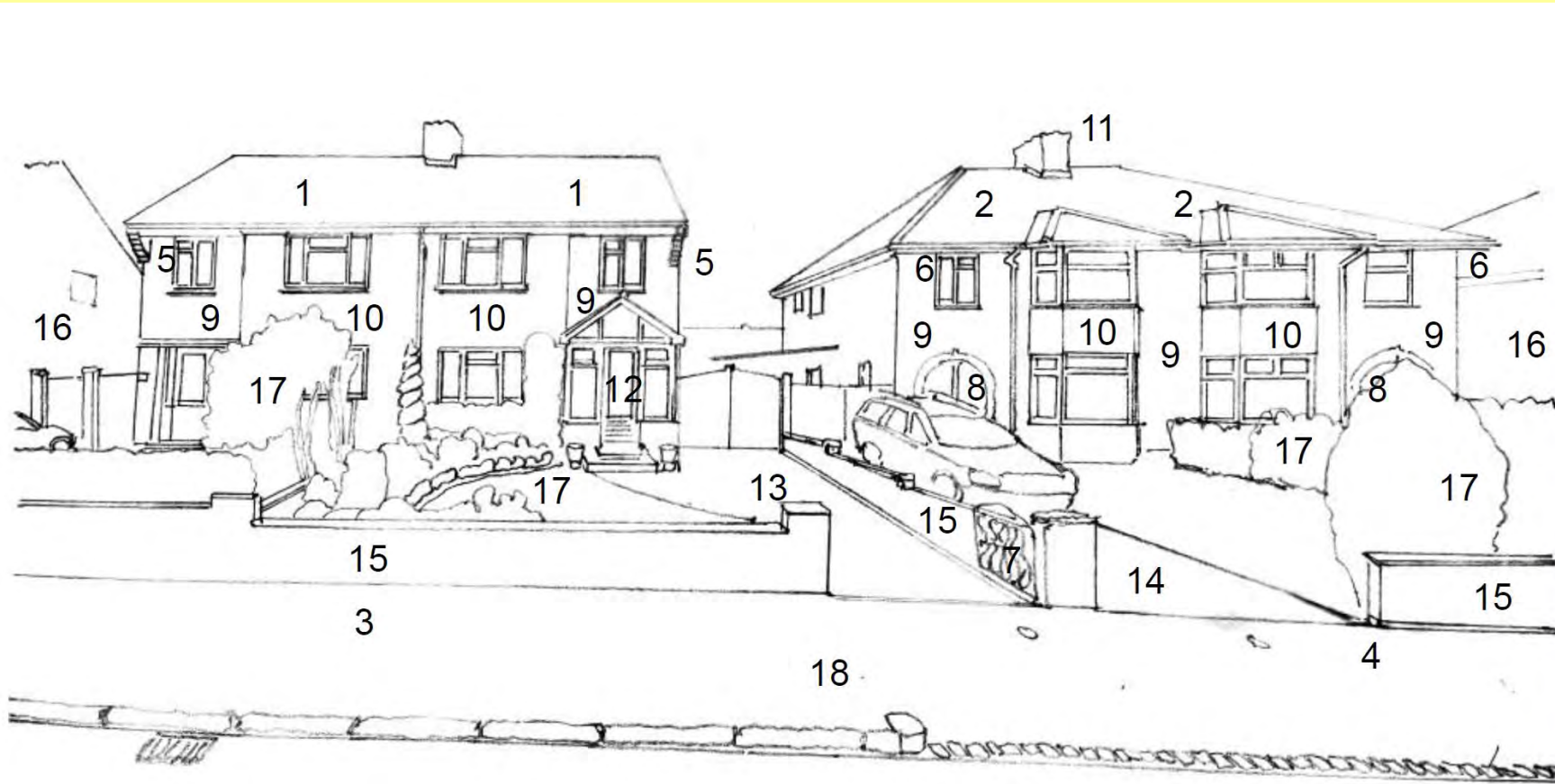
- a strong sense of ownership and community;
- predominantly off-street parking with limited street parking;
- clear connected streets with strongly defined building lines;
- good natural surveillance with homes facing onto the street;
- large gardens, mature planting biodiversity;
- access to local green space;
- good quality housing in terms of floor areas, windows and natural light;
- architectural features – bays, gables, arched doorways, porches/chimneys/brick detailing (see key features on page 79);
- a good mix of house types and sizes; and
- easy access to amenities and infrastructure.

Some challenges associated with this spatial arrangement include:

- loss of front gardens to parking with increased car ownership leading to parking congestion on streets not designed to accommodate current demand. In some cases, limited off-street provision in areas such as Harvey Road has forced vehicles onto verges and footways, harming street quality and safety;
- possible poor energy efficiency in external walls in some properties, although shared party walls can provide some thermal benefit; and
- limited tree planting, with some street trees present but lacking continuity.



Putnoe Street, Bedford
Images source: Google maps



Putnoe Street

Key features

- 1 Dual pitch roof
- 2 Hipped roof
- 3 Flat fronted semi-detached
- 4 Double height hipped roof bay windowed semi-detached
- 5 Brick corbelling at eaves level
- 6 Generous soffit to bayed semi-detached
- 7 Ornate metal gates
- 8 Recessed entrance areas
- 9 Brick walls
- 10 Render
- 11 Brick chimneys
- 12 Porch added
- 13 Concrete slab drive
- 14 Brick pavers
- 15 Brick boundary walls
- 16 End wall of neighbouring properties
- 17 Planting, hedges and grassed areas
- 18 Public realm: pavement

The following rules relate to the principles that should be applied to the design and layout of new buildings and spaces in suburban areas.

Boundary treatment: The way in which buildings front onto the street is a defining feature of the neighbourhood. Boundary treatments create clear distinctions between public and private spaces, while houses are usually set back from their front boundary creating transition space. The building lines are less continuous than in compact urban neighbourhoods, reflecting wider plots as well as wider plots and greater more-spaces between buildings and more generous setbacks. The boundary treatments and setbacks form an important role in defining part of how the private and public realms interact. Boundary treatments should consider the following:

- Primary roads – a setback with low walled front garden of 2-3 metres and planting;
- Secondary and tertiary roads - Where there is space, a setback of 1-2 metres with a low walled front garden and planting.

Architecture: The following principles must be followed regardless of style.

Ground floor: Level access should be provided to new properties.

Materials: New development should be based on a contextual analysis of the suburban area and adopt a materials palette that is sympathetic to neighbouring buildings. Design of non-residential architecture (e.g. electricity sub-stations) should also consider a suitable materials palette when located within predominantly residential areas.



Roseby Way, Bedford (above and below)



Gostwick Road, Bedford

Images source: Google maps

While new builds on existing streets are often restricted due to limited space, rear extensions and attic conversions offer viable opportunities to expand existing properties and increase living space. Any new development should aim to make efficient use of land, balancing density with the character of the area.

Housing density: There may be opportunities to accommodate new development at slightly higher than the current prevailing densities so long as the character of the area remains intact, with open spaces, low boundary treatments and intermediate spaces between building lines and the public realm.

Frontage: All buildings must face onto a public street and take their main pedestrian access from it. Active frontages provide a friendlier environment as well as greater natural surveillance.

Built form: New development should generally consider an urban form that follows more 'natural' curving lines to meet the less formal presentation of suburban neighbourhoods.

Building line: New development should present a broadly consistent building line, with appropriate setbacks to create defensible space between public and private realms.

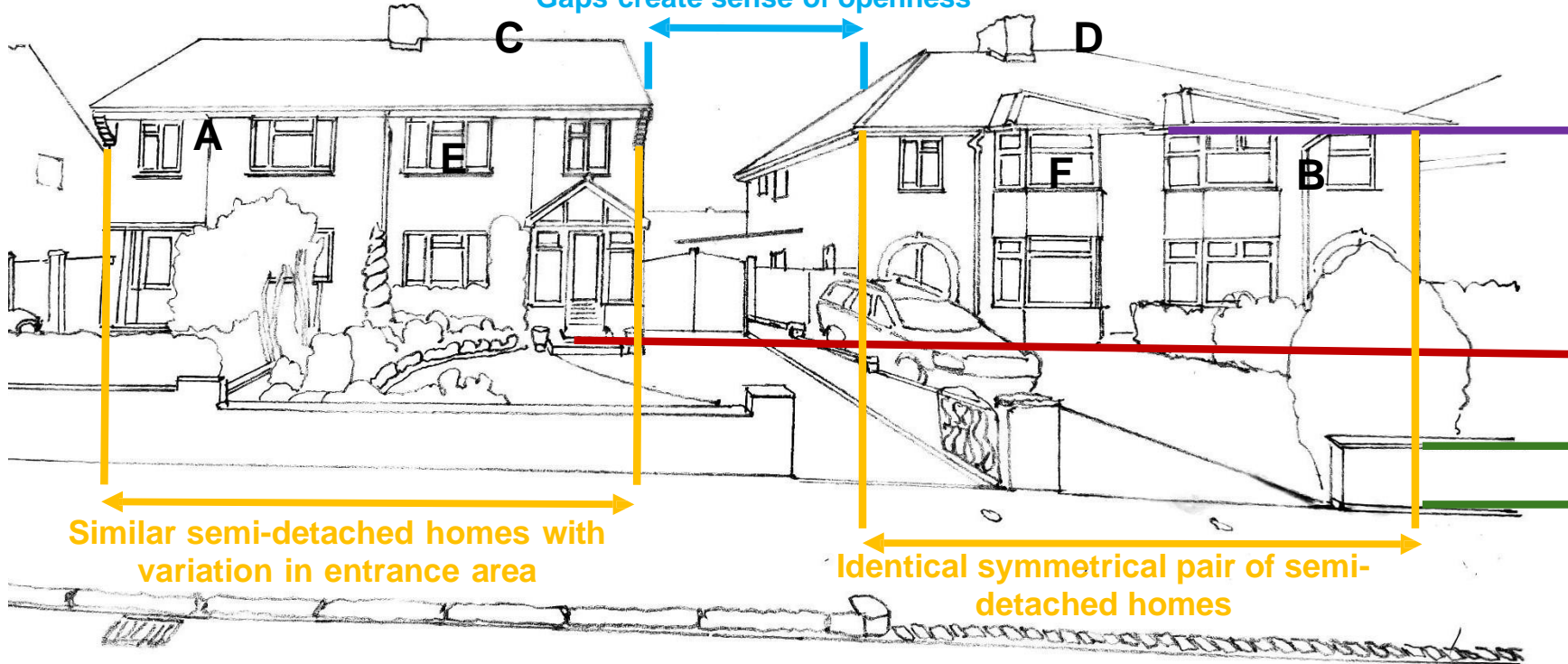
Urban grain: The grain should be looser than in urban neighbourhoods, with more spaces between built development and a greater integration of green infrastructure.

Height and enclosure: Development should respond to the prevailing suburban character, which is predominantly two storeys. may be appropriate where they are well-designed, sensitively located and contribute positively to the character of the area. The area features predominantly two-storey buildings with occasional taller structures, such as flats at Queens Drive and Roundmead. Rooflines should generally run parallel to the street, with pitched roofs and occasional gables or dormers. Gateway or landmark buildings may incorporate additional heights where they support legibility and wayfinding and are appropriately integrated into the surrounding context.

Given the low-lying nature of the area, new development must incorporate strategies to manage surface runoff and mitigate flood risk.

Different semi-detached house types (e.g. A & B below) but for each: consistency and repetition of features with the neighbouring property creates harmony

Gaps create sense of openness



Double pitched roof (C) and hipped roof (D).
Brick walls but with key features part facade (E) and bay windows (F) finished in render.

Double height bay windows

Continuity of main façade and bay windows building line at ground level

Low walls provide defensible space to front.

Homes well set back from the pavement/road (generous pavement width).

Putnoe Street, Bedford

The suburban neighbourhoods in the urban area often have a range of facilities such as shops, schools, libraries and green spaces within walking distance of many residential properties. Estates have historically been designed with a focus on road traffic with wider streets and parking spaces but are increasingly prioritising walkability and access to services that cater to everyday needs. Mature green infrastructure and well-planned layouts further enhance the quality of these areas.

Streets: Streets should be designed to prioritise a more 'natural' feel rather than rigid grid systems. Street hierarchy should be clearly defined, with primary roads forming the main routes around neighbourhoods and secondary and tertiary streets providing local access.

Connectivity: Streets should connect at both ends. While cul-de-sacs are common in suburban areas, new developments should minimise or avoid them to promote better legibility and accessibility within the urban environment. Street design should maintain clear routes that support navigation within the neighbourhood and the wider area. Where appropriate, streets should enable movement that is simple and easy to understand.

Junctions: All new and redesigned junctions must be designed to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. Functional requirements like swept paths and visibility splays should not compromise the integrity of the urban form or lead to unnecessary demolition. Mini roundabouts and traffic lights are suitable features in suburban neighbourhoods to control traffic flow and prioritise sustainable forms of transport. Larger roundabouts should be limited to primary roads due to land-take and to reduce disruption in the suburban environment.

Parking: Parking provision should accord with the Parking in Sustainable Communities SPD.

Cycling: Sustainable transport should be prioritised with a network of cycling routes provided throughout the development and connecting to neighbouring areas. Where feasible, routes should be segregated from other road traffic. Secure cycle parking spaces should be provided at key locations (e.g. shops and other facilities) to encourage sustainable trips.

Bins: Adequate ventilated rubbish and recycling facilities must be provided within buildings, gardens or other structures to ensure that refuse bins do not obstruct streets and pavements.

Street hierarchy and design: New development should incorporate a well-defined street hierarchy and be appropriate to the nature of the street where it is located. Consideration should also be given to how development will affect the character and appearance of the street. New streets or improvements to existing streets should follow the guidance set out in section 2.6.

Nature and green infrastructure

Suburban neighbourhoods often include generous green spaces such as neighbourhood parks, local play spaces, recreation grounds and natural or semi-natural features, alongside wider green infrastructure. These spaces punctuate built development to provide a pleasant, healthy and beautiful environment. Access to green spaces is a key characteristic of Bedford's suburban neighbourhoods.

Open space provision: All residential properties should have access to some private outdoor space, normally in the form of a garden. Provision of new public open space should align with the requirements set out in the [Open Space SPD](#) to address deficiencies, especially access to natural greenspace and equipped/natural play areas. Both formal and informal parks should be located throughout any new streets or neighbourhoods. Tree planting in both green spaces and on streets should be incorporated.

New development in suburban areas should prioritise the creation of public spaces that foster community interaction and a sense of belonging, including open multi-functional areas and adaptable activities (e.g. outdoor gyms).

Biodiversity: In line with national policy, all new development must achieve at least 10% biodiversity net gain, linked to the priorities set out in the Bedfordshire Nature Recovery Strategy, including:

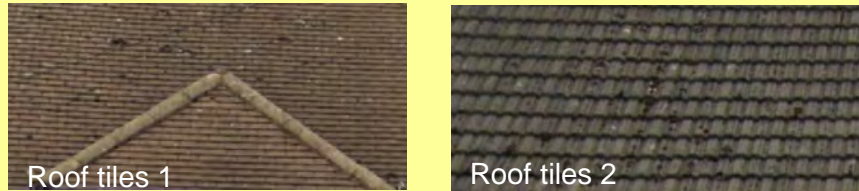
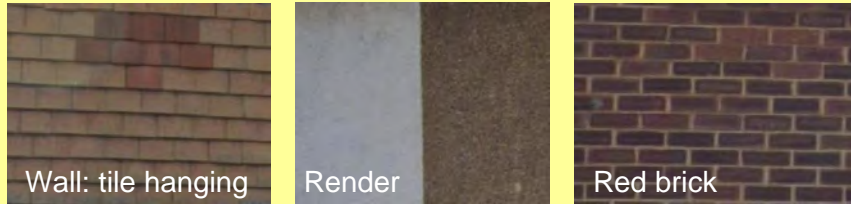
- the restoration and creation of wetlands (e.g. ponds and reedbeds);
- provision of linear features along water spaces;
- planting of hedges, trees and community woodlands; and
- the management of grassland and heathland, like open mosaic habitats and verges.

Drainage: All new development should incorporate sustainable urban drainage (e.g. features in new green spaces) to achieve a greenfield run-off rate, in line with the [Sustainable Urban Drainage SPD](#).

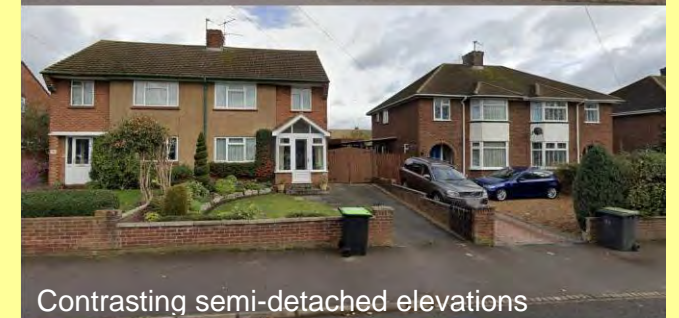
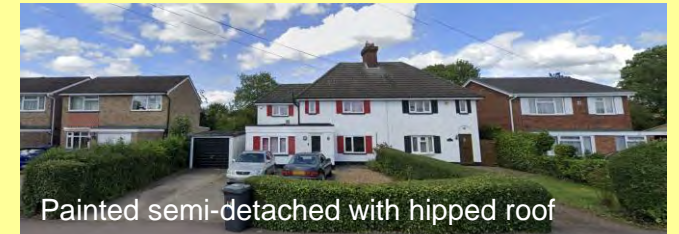
Trees: Existing trees should be retained where this can be achieved without conflicting with other parts of the code. New trees in green spaces and on new streets must be accommodated in line with the standards set out in the [Trees SPD](#).

4.1 Suburban neighbourhood Appendix B





Element	Materials	Colours
Roof	Tiles	Grey/Red
Gables (walls) to front	No	
Fascias/ bargeboards	Timber/ PVC	White painted or white finish
Walls	Brick Brick painted Render	Red White Natural/Paint
Bay roofs	Hipped slate, flat with balconies	Grey slate Black ironwork
Bays	Hipped Flat	Grey/Red
Doors/ Entrances	Timber PVC	Various
Windows	Mainly PVC	White
Window heads	As per wall finishes	
Front walls	Brick tiles	Red



Suburban neighbourhood housing examples

Images source: Google maps

4.2 Modern suburban neighbourhood

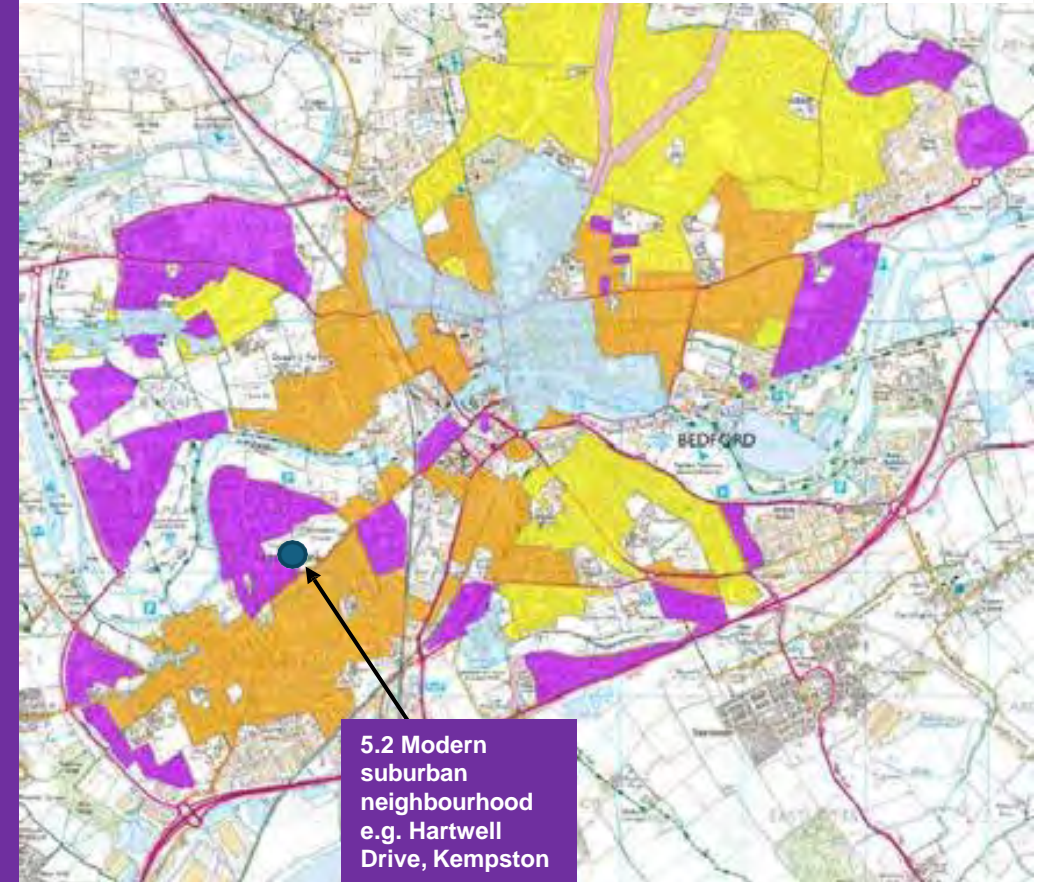
Modern suburban neighbourhoods often reflect contemporary development practices, which can result in more standardised layouts and weaker connections to local character if not carefully designed.

While attempts have been made to import the more natural, informal urban form of the mid-twentieth century suburban neighbourhoods, key features are missing. These include lack of defensible spaces between dwellings and the public realm, weaker green infrastructure and green space, lack of considered parking solutions and facilities such as shops to allow for walkable neighbourhoods. It has often led to incongruous forms of development that lack coherence.



Hartwell Drive showing relationship between the street, verge, pavement and homes.

Please note: Character typologies are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide. They do not define settlement status or whether an area is urban or suburban or lies within a rural parish outside the urban area. The extent of the urban area is defined on the Policies Map.



Existing context and character

Hartwell Drive, Kempston is part of the large urban extension to the west of Bedford that encompasses Great Denham and West of Kempston. It includes:

- a comprehensive plan evident in design, materials and legibility of the area;
- pockets of some larger green space that breaks up the street scene;
- lack of defensible space and clear boundaries between private and public realms;
- some variation in housing design but lack of overall cohesiveness creates confused character; and
- large areas of blank walls create awkwardness where dwellings are situated on corners.

Identity

New development should cultivate the identity of a residential neighbourhood with informal streets, generous open space and green infrastructure alongside sustainable transport options. Cycle paths should be threaded through the neighbourhood with facilities within walking distances.

Boundary treatment: The way in which buildings front onto the street should be consistent, creating a coherent building line.

Architecture: While the code does not require a particular architectural style, architectural and design features should contribute to a sense of identity.

Windows: Designs should take into account existing window types, sizes, and proportions, and clearly explain how this analysis informs the proposed window strategy.

Rooflines: Rooflines should be consistent with justification given to the roof types utilised. New modern neighbourhoods provide the opportunity to create contemporary features as long as they contribute to a consistent and harmonious character.

Housing density: Generally, suburban development is lower density than urban or town centre development. However, there may be opportunities to introduce higher densities in suburban areas provided they do not compromise the character and identity of the neighbourhood or risk creating harm to neighbouring residents such as damage to the streetscene, loss of landscape features, increased parking pressure, reduced visual coherence, overlooking and loss of daylight.

Frontage: Suburban neighbourhoods generally provide a set back approach, with defensible space between the private and public realms. However, adjustments to this approach may be justified where the character of the area is not compromised. Clearly defined frontages with consistent areas of use (defensible space, public realm, greenery, pathways etc.) should be supported to make a useable street scene.

Building line: Buildings lines should be consistent to create a sense of continuity and definable space. Depending on the prevailing character, gaps between buildings can be used to create breaks in the street scene, allowing openness and space.

Built form and urban grain: New development should take cues from existing suburban neighbourhoods when considering form and grain. In general, the urban form is less formal and more course-grained, with larger spaces between buildings.

Height and enclosure: The predominant height will be 2-3 storeys with the possibility of carefully designed and sensitively located development that incorporates more storeys. 'Gateway' or 'key' buildings may be used to help with wayfinding and navigation when set correctly in the wider built environment.

Hartwell Drive, Bedford

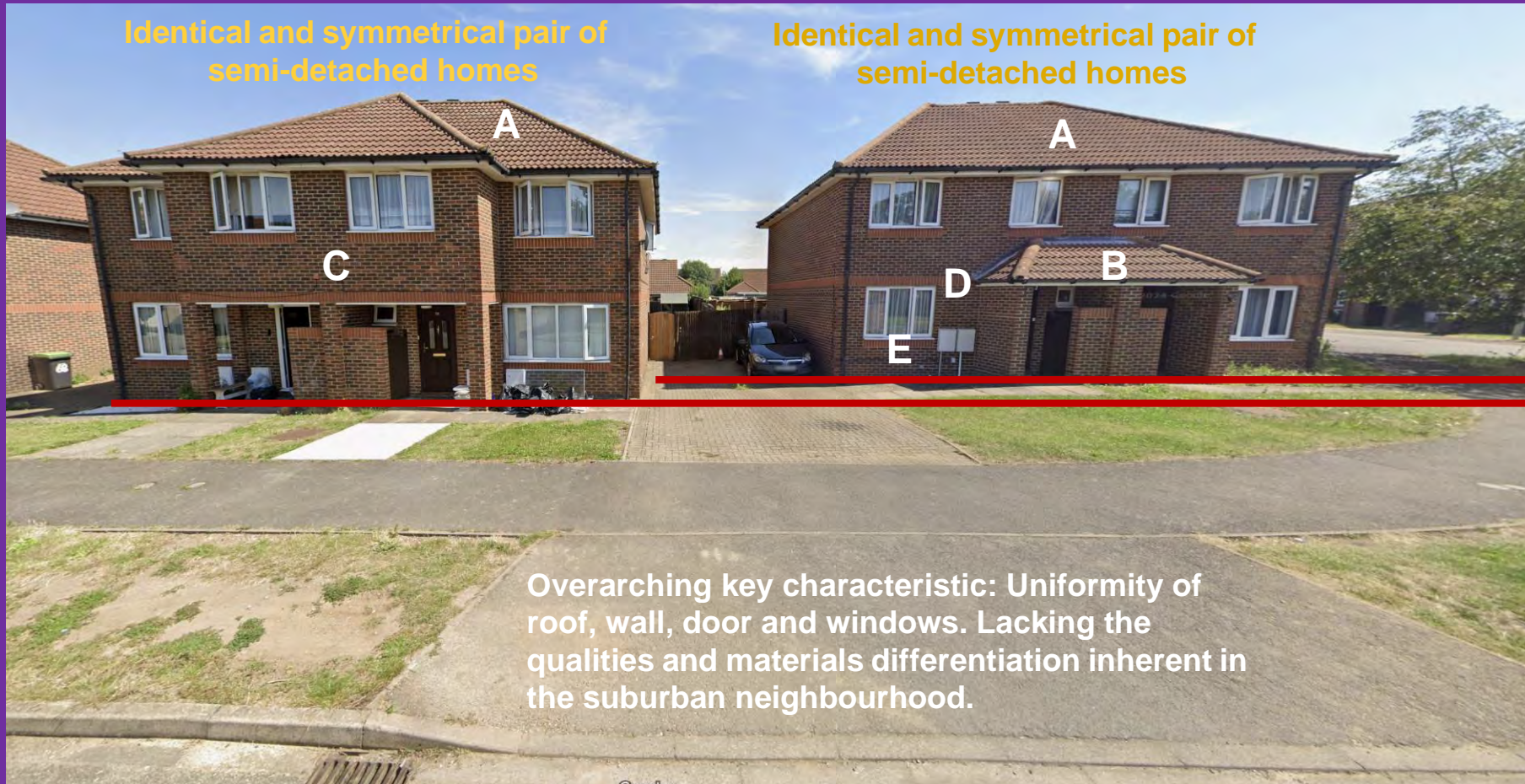


Inconsistent approach to frontage to be avoided

Identity and urban form:

Hartwell Drive: modern suburban neighbourhood

Italicised text denotes more consideration needed to improve character



Identical and symmetrical pair of semi-detached homes

Identical and symmetrical pair of semi-detached homes

Overarching key characteristic: Uniformity of roof, wall, door and windows. Lacking the qualities and materials differentiation inherent in the suburban neighbourhood.

Tiled roofs. Hipped roofs to main houses (A) and to entrance area (B).

First floor projection of rooms (C).

Brick walls with brick soldier courses to intermediate level (D) and window cills (E). No variation of materials.

Too large a differentiation in the building line.

Homes well set back from the pavement/road but no defensible space to front of properties.

Large areas of ill-defined green space and tarmacadam

Movement

Connectivity: Modern suburban neighbourhoods should aspire to a high degree of connectivity, both internally and with existing developments and facilities. Street design should feature a clear hierarchy, with suitable traffic control measures and walking and cycling provision. Wayfinding should be simple, with clearly marked pathways and noticeable architectural or urban design features to help residents easily navigate and understand their surroundings.

Junctions: All new and redesigned junctions must be designed to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. In suburban areas, the design of swept paths and visibility splays must prioritise pedestrian safety and maintain the existing urban fabric. Mini roundabouts and traffic lights are suitable features in suburban neighbourhoods to control traffic flow and prioritise sustainable forms of transport. Larger roundabouts should be limited to primary roads due to land-take and thus reduce disruption in the suburban environment.

Parking: The Parking in Sustainable Communities SPD dictates that parking provision in new suburban developments should adhere to minimum standards (including garage spaces, driveways and parking bays within the highway) and prioritise low car speeds.

Cycling: Sustainable transport should be prioritised with cycling routes throughout and into neighbouring areas separated from other road traffic where feasible. Secure cycle parking spaces should be provided at key locations, such as shops and other facilities to encourage sustainable trips.

Streets: New street construction or upgrades to existing streets should adhere to the design guidelines outlined in section 2.6.

4.2 Modern suburban neighbourhood

Appendix B



Nature and green infrastructure

Modern suburban neighbourhoods feature green space, parks and other green infrastructure in larger, consolidated areas rather than more spread through the settlement. Smaller areas of green space can be seen amongst existing development. A coherent approach to green space and green infrastructure needs to be planned into site layout to allow easily accessible spaces, especially for future occupiers.

Open space provision: New suburban developments must incorporate accessible public open space on site, designed to encourage recreation, relaxation and community interaction in line with the standards set out in the Open Space SPD. This space should be integrated into the design of the development rather than on the periphery of the site. Every home should have access to some form of private outdoor space, such as a balcony or garden. A range of formal and informal parks should be distributed throughout any new streets or neighbourhoods.

Biodiversity: In line with national policy, new suburban development will generally be expected to provide at least 10% biodiversity net gain on site. Given the lower-density character and availability of land, proposals will be expected to maximise opportunities to exceed this minimum where feasible.

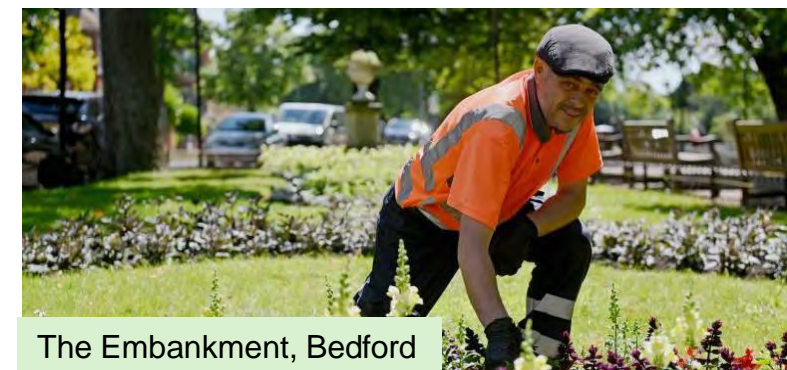
Drainage: In suburban areas, sustainable urban drainage will be required (especially on low lying land and greenspaces) to achieve a greenfield run-off rate, adhering to the standards set out in the Sustainable Urban Drainage SPD.

Trees: In suburban areas, existing trees along avenues and boulevards should be retained. New streets and green spaces must incorporate tree planting, especially along their edges, in line with the standards set out in the Trees SPD.

Street hierarchy and design: Modern suburban development should prioritise a well-defined street hierarchy supporting safe movement, clear wayfinding and a high-quality public realm and ensure it aligns with the specific character of the surrounding street and landscape. New or improved street design should adhere to the guidance outlined in section 2.6.



Images source: Google maps



Great Denham: Focus on transport and movement

Italicised text denotes more consideration needed to improve layout/character

The aerial shot (right) illustrates homes arranged in close proximity, reflecting a relatively high-density layout in Great Denham.

Parking courts dominate the development, consisting mainly of large tarmac areas with minimal green infrastructure within both the parking areas and across the wider site.

While pavements are present, there are no clear or dedicated spaces for cycling. Permeability tends to rely on primary roads, with courtyards and cul-de-sacs creating dead ends. This approach may produce a continuous road network but can leave green spaces fragmented and isolated.

Parking courts should therefore be avoided within new suburban developments.



Great Denham housing development showing extensive parking courts in behind dwellings

Great Denham analysis of a row of housing

Italicised text denotes more consideration needed to improve character



*The Great Denham elevation illustrates a wide variety of roof profile, roof types, wall finish, dormers and relationship to the public realm. This variety is more characteristic of the **town centre** (image top right). The above image also has an uneasy relationship between historic referencing of doors and windows (sash) and low carbon (solar thermal) technology 'applied' rather than integral to the tiled roof. Awkward gaps are present between homes (A) with little apparent purpose or regard to access.*

The strength of a **well-designed urban neighbourhood** is shown bottom right and higher density new urban extensions would benefit from an understanding of the urban neighbourhood coding principles (see section 3.2).

Town centre variety



The characteristics (left) of the properties shown here are not derived from the homes 'Identity and urban form' coding of well-designed homes in the Bedford urban area.

Strong urban neighbourhood character



Italicised text denotes more consideration needed to improve character



This elevation illustrates symmetrical facades (1) left and right in the three yellow brick homes. However, the elevations are flat faced and the parapet wall (2) on the far right creates a box like character. The parapet wall likely conceals a pitched roof behind but the variety this provides alongside pitched roofs of varying angles feels somewhat arbitrary and lacks a coherent design rationale.

The space in front of homes (3) also feels arbitrary but does at least provide a degree of defensible space.

Detailing is limited although entrances to properties do have stone effect surrounds (4) and windows have different brick/lintel details on the yellow and red brick homes (5). There is some brick corbelling at the wall/roof junction of the red brick homes (6). A curious roof profile to the red brick home (7) furthest left appears to be a result of its relationship with the eaves line of the yellow brick home.

The overall roofline and profile requires significant flashing at the junctions between roof and walls (8). This variety is not a characteristic of the homes coded in sections 4.1 to 4.3.

The characteristics of the properties have little regard for 'identity and urban form'. There is no distinct character to establish a sense of place or create a cohesive identity within the development.

Italicised text denotes more consideration needed to improve character



Woodlands Park/Ashmead Road showing dominant green infrastructure through the site.

A strong green infrastructure network runs right through the heart of the site, creating a focal point for the development as well as clear sustainable travel routes and green corridors.

MHA Anjulita Court - a residential, nursing and dementia care Home on Bramley Way, acts as a 'formal' focal point destination (see section 5.1 on 'large residential care homes') at one end of the green infrastructure at 'A'. A more diverse 'informal' landscape and setting 'B' is seen at the other end.

The built environment in this area would have benefited from a clearer idea of identity and character, however the green setting forms the heart of the scheme, providing a valuable shared space for users and visitors.

4.3 Suburban extension

Woodlands Park/Ashmead Road: focus on green infrastructure

This development, located on the northern edge of Bedford, exhibits high quality and consolidated green infrastructure, with a tree-lined green corridor running through the heart of this area from west to east.

The estate is a relatively formal part of Woodlands Park (A). A directional route runs from the residential nursing home dissecting the housing through to areas of woodland. Green infrastructure is similarly formal in character with straight runs of trees and hedgerows.

This culminates in a less formal area (B) comprising trees and a play area.

This juxtaposition of formal and less formal space provides a strong and effective approach to green infrastructure in the townscape, with clearly defined pathways.



Woodlands Park/Ashmead Road

Images source: Google maps

4.4 Suburban summary

Suburban neighbourhoods in the Bedford urban area often exhibit a variety of house types, such as detached, semi-detached and terraces.

In suburban areas, housing typically ranges from inter-war to modern developments, mostly detached and semi-detached and two storeys on wider streets with front and back gardens.



Suburban areas, including surrounding villages and residential neighbourhoods, are also typically more spacious, with lower building heights and lower densities than the more compact urban areas in and around the town centre.



Similarities exist between the mid-century suburban (see section 4.1) and more modern suburban neighbourhood (see section 4.2), but key important design principles evident in the former are missing in the latter. Sections 2.0 – 2.6 of this code establish the context, identity, built form, movement, nature and public space attributes of the Bedford urban area. Section 3.2 sets out the defining qualities of the urban neighbourhood, which might lend themselves well to more cohesive, walkable and well-structured suburban extensions.

Town centre - High Street variety



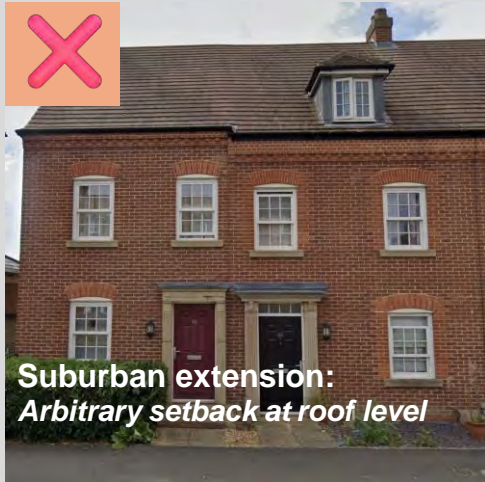
Town centre - housing symmetry and uniformity



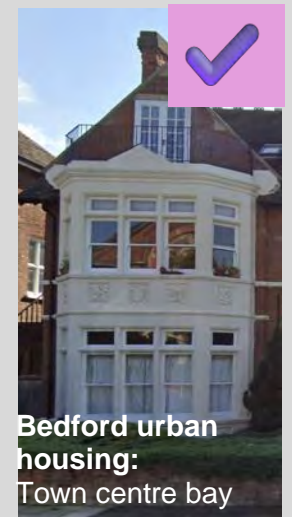
The modern suburban extension (below) features a varied roofline not dissimilar to the town centre High Street (above left). However, the High Street might not be a good reference point for suburban housing design. While the extension has symmetrical features, its overall appearance feels bland and lacks the richness and architectural detail found in the town centre and Edwardian housing (above right). The modern suburban extension lacks no gables or bays, offering relatively little variation in the building design. While higher density housing is desirable in suburban extensions, the extension shows a lack of clear reference points or design cues, resulting in an incoherent architectural approach (below).






Italicised text denotes more consideration needed to improve character



The new homes here aspire to but fall short of the qualities of the town centre and edge of centre housing.



Ref	Area type	Example area	Key characteristics	
4.1	Suburban Neighbourhoods	Putnoe area	<p>DIFFERENTIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiation between the house types but significant consistency within each pair of house types (e.g. consistent flat walls or double height bays); • Continuity of building line; • Significant setbacks. 	
4.2	<i>Modern suburban neighbourhood</i>	Hartwell Drive	<p>UNIFORMITY/MONOTONY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Despite differentiation in entrance areas (double/single height), generally uniform materials palette and hipped roofs in both pairs of semis;</i> • <i>Small differences with suburban neighbourhoods such as a lack differentiation leading to monotonous appearance, poorly defined public realm and lack of defensible/private space.</i> 	
4.3	<i>Suburban extension</i>	Great Denham	<p>INAPPROPRIATE VARIETY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A variety of roofline which is not dissimilar to the town centre High Street. Similarly, the flat faced walls echo the town centre;</i> • <i>Clear and appropriate reference points will be required.</i> 	

Italicised text denotes more consideration needed to improve character

This section covers the following areas:

5.1: Large residential/care homes

This area includes:

1. Fernleigh Court care and nursing home, Fletcher Road, Kempston.
2. MHA Anjulita Court - residential, nursing and dementia care home, Bramley Way, Bedford

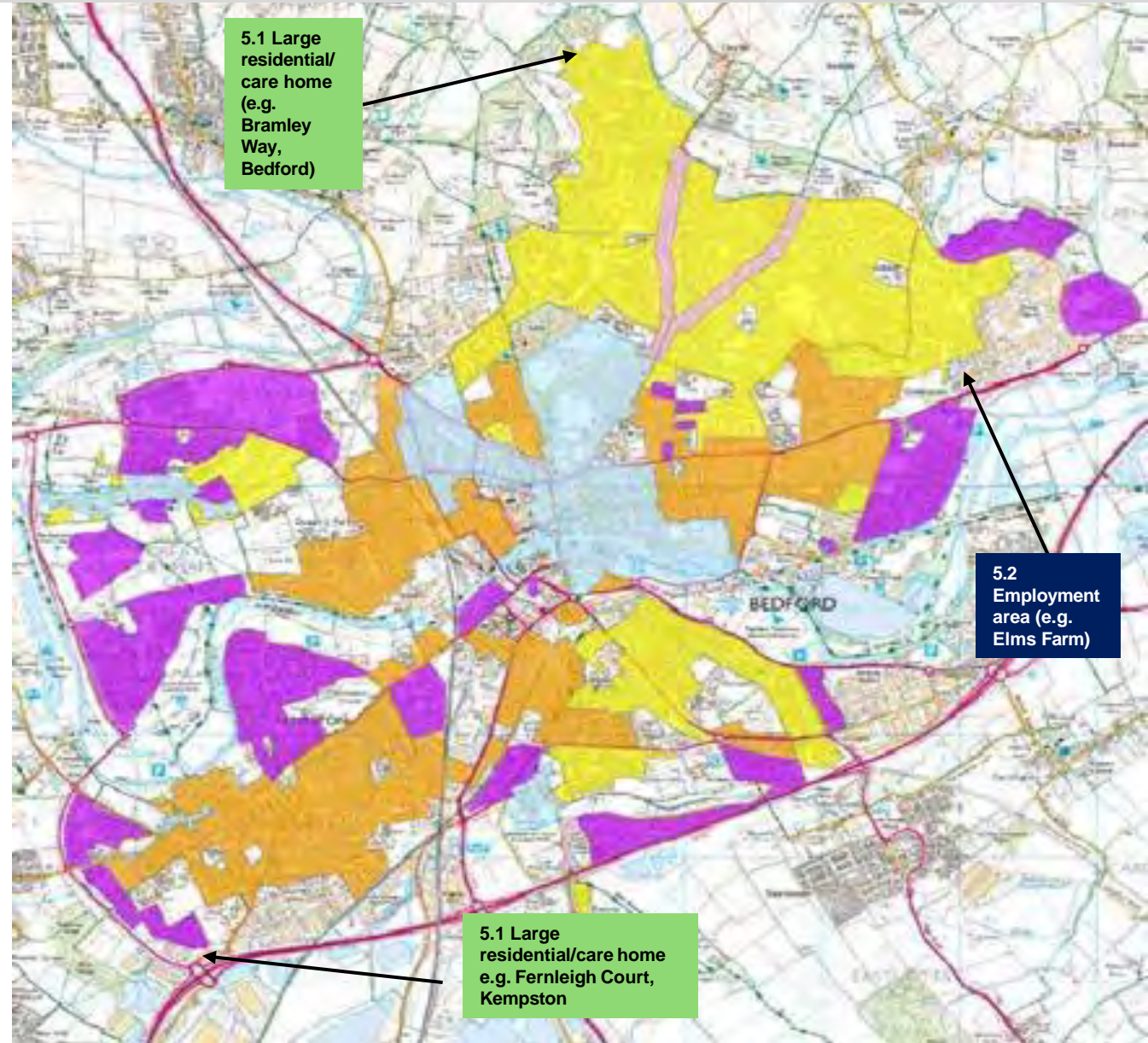
Although 'large residential/care homes' are not a defined character area within Bedford's urban fabric, valuable lessons can still be drawn from examples of this building type within the borough. For this reason, we have included a selection of illustrative examples.

5.2: Employment areas:

Elms Farm industrial estate and other employment areas (e.g. Manton Lane, Cauldwell, Shuttleworth Road and Woburn Road) in Bedford urban area

5.3 Large residential and employment areas summary

Please note: Character typologies are taken from the Bedford Borough Design Guide. They do not define settlement status or whether an area is urban or suburban or lies within a rural parish outside the urban area. The extent of the urban area is defined on the Policies Map.



5.1 Large residential care homes

Large residential care home developments do not constitute a standalone typology, as they can be found across various character areas, including the town centre, urban neighbourhood, suburban neighbourhood and modern suburban neighbourhood. The following analysis offers general guidance based on existing examples. Given their scale, designs should attain the highest quality and respect the character of the surrounding area.

On arrival, the first impressions of this large residential care home building (Fernleigh Court) are generally poor:

- *Gable ends (G) with poor window locations (below);*
- *Ancillary building is the most prominent on arrival on the road (A). This is a poor location;*
- *Uneasy relationship between the window head and eaves (X);*
- *Very flat facades and no eaves or gable end roof overhang to give the building depth (F);*
- *Variations in roofline (V) (see image bottom right) are more reminiscent of the town centre than of large residential building quality. These are all qualities to be avoided in large residential homes design.*

Italicised text denotes more consideration needed to improve design/character



Fernleigh Court care and nursing Home, Fletcher Road, Kempston
Images source: Google maps

Poor massing and location of ancillary room at 'A'.



Too much arbitrary roofline variation (above).



Significant variation in town centre roofline (above).



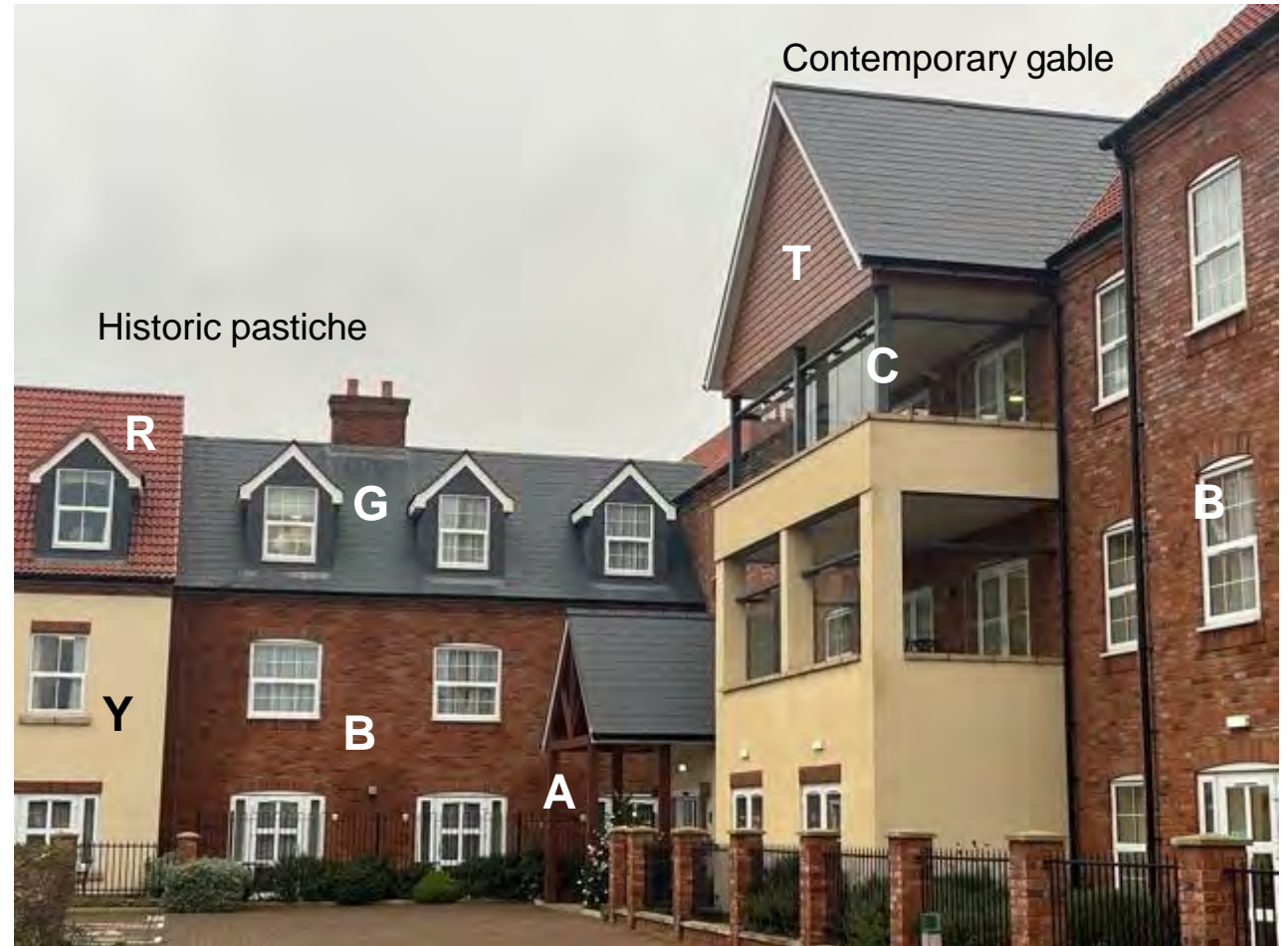
Italicised text denotes more consideration needed to improve character

Moving into the heart of this large residential/care home building the following observations can be made:

- *Lack of harmony in the material variations such as composite red roof tiles (R), concrete grey (G) roof tiles, yellow coloured render (Y), red brick (B), metal columns (C) and (likely) painted metal columns (A), timber boarding (T);*
- *Historic pastiche including dormers and mock sash windows sit uneasily with a more contemporary gable projection which includes timber boarding protected by eaves overhang, metal columns and glass balustrading.*



Building composition lacks harmony, especially in terms of overall massing, roofline and materials palette



Fernleigh Court care and nursing home, Fletcher Road, Kempston (left and above)
Images source: Google maps



MHA Anjulita Court – Residential and nursing and dementia care home, Bramley Way, Bedford

A care home scheme with an innovative façade, interesting choice of materials and finishes. Roof innovation with a ‘Sydney Opera House’ shape to the three projecting gables. Contained green space with private courtyard to the rear.

Images source: Google maps



MHA Anjulita Court: Residential, nursing and dementia care home, Bramley Way, Bedford

This type of large residential/care home building has not yet been coded. This example showcases innovative construction techniques, thoughtfully designed private indoor and outdoor areas and integrated green spaces to provide an uplifting and vibrant environment.

Images source: Google maps



4.2 Employment areas

Existing character

The industrial areas in Bedford are generally car dominated and hard landscaped but with grass verges and occasional tree planting to break the monotony of the streetscape. Buildings are typically large in footprint and predominantly single storey, with some two-storey elements accommodating additional office space.

Identified strengths of the industrial area type include:

- density – plots are fairly well occupied;
- pavement widths;
- clear functional layouts, supporting business operations and logistics; and
- parking and delivery space.

Elms Farm industrial estate is dedicated to non-domestic business uses. The National Design Code supports the continual success of these businesses, while exploring ways to improve surrounding streetscapes and boundary conditions to create less segregated and detached areas of industrial and business uses.

Elms Farm, near Putnoe on the northeastern edge of Bedford, represents a blocked approach to development. The area features low-lying terrain with small to medium-sized industrial units and little distinctive architecture.

Industrial areas can create challenges to the general aesthetics of the town and often cover significant areas, which can limit opportunities to create desirable connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. Key general characteristics that should be addressed through design where possible include:

- poor legibility with layouts that can be disorientating and lacking a clear sense of place;
- fine urban grain of large units, not very engaging with unclear blocks;
- language of fronts and backs unhelpful;
- boundaries – unwelcoming security fences and concrete wall;
- building height/street proportion – low sense of enclosure and low efficiency (form factor);
- uninspiring building design (some have very limited fenestration);
- poor passive surveillance with little overlooking and limited local facilities; and
- limited biodiversity and/or street trees.

5.2 Employment areas



Overarching key characteristic: Blocks broken down to reduce scale (yellow vertical lines).



Image left: Distribution unit (left) shallow gables broken down into smaller sized blocks.



Image left: Likely offices (left) storage unit (right). Steel portal structural frame exposed on the front elevation creating two double pitched roofs with central gully.



Image left: Industrial/warehousing space with double pitch rooves and central gully. Offices (foreground) in adjoining block with flat roof behind.



Image left: Significant tree planting, grass right up to the building and different coloured metal cladding make for a more interesting industrial setting.

Images source: Google maps

Office/industrial space examples: integral, adjoining and detached blocks.



Image left: Industrial/warehousing space (left) and integral offices (right).



Image left: Industrial/warehousing space (right) with double pitch roof and central gully. Offices (left) in adjoining block with parapet wall and (likely) flat roof behind.



Image left: Self storage space (left) with parapet walls and likely flat roof utilising cladding materials, part brick walls (storage units in background) and brick plinth (office building in foreground). Newer foreground building is detached.



Image left: Hedges and mature trees create a relatively green setting for the industrial units.



Image left: Relatively sparse green infrastructure with industrial buildings dominating.

The National Design Code avoids prescribing architectural styles and promotes high-quality design through tools like design reviews and, where suitable, design-based tenders or competitions. However, builders of low-cost units are unlikely to participate in such competitions.

The following principles should be applied to the design and layout of new industrial buildings.

Boundary treatment: Buildings should front onto the street with clearly defined thresholds. This should be articulated through low height boundary features such as hedges, ancillary cafes, walls and fences of less than 1 metre in height. Rear boundaries should be securely fenced.

Architecture: New development should encourage variety in architectural styles and create a strong connection with the street.

Ground floor: Entrances should be clearly highlighted and windows should face the street to ensure active and legible frontages.

Materials: Materials should include brick and metal cladding, with strong colour themes and graphics to create identity and enhance the appearance of the wider streetscape. Front facades should incorporate articulation and detailing to avoid large monotonous surfaces.

Conservation area: Alterations to existing buildings should respect and reinstate, where possible, existing architectural features.

Active frontages: Active frontage should be integrated where possible through industrial areas with the inclusion of cafes and offices.

Windows: Windows should face the street with at least 20% of the front facade glazed to provide passive surveillance and visual interest.

Rooflights should also be integrated into buildings with large internal footprints to encourage natural daylighting.

Rooflines: Sawtooth roofs and pitches are favoured to flat roofs to create visual interest and reflect the functional character of industrial buildings. Gable roofs should be orientated to face the street where appropriate. Where flat roofs are built, green roofs should be considered.

Urban form

The National Design Code seeks to create a stronger urban form in industrial areas, with better definition of fronts and backs, urban blocks and more active frontage to create a safer, more pleasant and more legible urban design.

Frontage: All buildings must face onto a public street and take their main pedestrian access from it.

The street hierarchy/design: Street hierarchy will need to take account of the need to accommodate large goods vehicle access, with wider streets where appropriate. It is an opportunity to create an open feel to new development.

Built form: New development should create a varied form with an informal layout, a variety of building heights and a coordinated palette of materials. Buildings on corner plots must turn the corner, providing distinctive features with windows overlooking the public realm.

Building line: The design should set a clear building line, which can be softened with suitable landscaping and border treatments.

Urban grain: Industrial areas should have a medium to high density with a course building grain to accommodate larger warehouses (which form part of the proposed mix). This layout should be broken down where possible with some smaller buildings which engage with the street like office blocks and ancillary facilities (food and drink/retail etc.).

Height and enclosure: 1-to-3 storey development. Most buildings will have pitched gabled roofs, which help break up building massing. Corner plots and buildings at the end of vistas should be encouraged to explore taller heights and increased fenestration.

Movement

Industrial areas in Bedford rely on access from large heavy goods vehicles, which park up on the road or in delivery bays. Some employees walk to work or take public transport. However, the presence of cars around industrial estates suggest that car reliance dominates - detracting from the walkability of streets as vehicles mount pavements. Pavements are quite wide and buildings are often setback from the road, allowing opportunities to explore landscaped verges, better integrated parking and safer cycle routes.

Streets: Streets through industrial estates should be permeable for pedestrians and cyclists and accommodate local traffic - including large delivery vehicles - but should be designed to discourage through traffic.

Connectivity: All new streets and routes should connect at either end to other routes. Better footpath connections should be introduced to facilitate permeability through large plots.

Junctions: All new and redesigned junctions must be designed to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. Swept paths and visibility splays must ensure that larger delivery/service vehicles can manoeuvre safely within the industrial estate without obstructing traffic and pedestrians or compromising the urban character and form.

Visitor car parking: Car and lorry parking should not dominate the street scene. Cars should not be allowed to obstruct pavements, and specific parking bays should be allocated for deliveries and visitor parking. Delivery vehicle parking should be sited to the rear of buildings, where possible.

Employee parking: Where parking is provided, this should be discreetly integrated into rear parking courts or screened from the street, where provided in front parking yards.

Cycling: Cycling is facilitated on roads in industrial areas. Employee cycle parking must follow local guidance standards and provided in secure courtyards or bike shelters. Visitor cycle parking should be provided in the form of Sheffield stands as part of public realm improvements to industrial estates.

This industrial area typology is not expected to incorporate any substantial areas of green space. However, all new industrial and commercial development should contribute positively to biodiversity through the incorporation of appropriate planting, green features and habitat enhancements.

Open space provision: Connections to existing green spaces surrounding industrial areas should be strengthened through improved pedestrian and cycle links, clear wayfinding and safe and attractive routes to promote employee health and wellbeing opportunities. Within industrial areas, small communal green spaces should be explored, incorporating features such as seating, shade, tree planting and soft landscaping to provide lunchbreaks, relaxation and socialising.



There are opportunities to improve public realm in industrial areas with softer landscape to mitigate flooding and pollution and create a more attractive streetscape. Usable public space and better links through to existing public open spaces should be provided for employees.

Biodiversity: In line with national policy, all new development will achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain. In the absence of green spaces this will need to be achieved through tree planting, green walls and roofs, courtyards and habitat creation (like bee bricks). Wildflower verges, shrub and hedgerow planting should be strengthened around site boundaries to provide visual screening where industrial buildings face residential properties.

Drainage: All new developments should incorporate sustainable urban drainage to achieve a greenfield run-off rate.

Trees: Existing trees should be retained wherever feasible and where such retention does not conflict with other provisions of the code. Opportunities to introduce new street trees should be pursued where practicable, and businesses should be encouraged to incorporate soft landscaping within frontages.

5.3 Large residential/employment summary

Ref	Area type	Example area	Key characteristics	Examples
5.1	<p>Large residential / care homes</p> <p>Not coded but should have the characteristics of urban housing.</p>	<p>Fernleigh Court Kempston</p> <p>MHA Anjulita Court - Bramley Way, Bedford</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative façade; • Harmonious choice of materials and finishes; • Roof innovation with a 'Sydney Opera House' shape to the three projecting gables; • Consistent main block roofline. 	
5.2	<p>Employment areas</p>	<p>Elms Farm Industrial Estate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massing: Employment units have been broken down to a more human scale to reduce their visual impact. This principle should underpin the design and layout of new employment buildings in Bedford urban area. The example illustrates one approach - using repeated gables to reduce perceived scale; however, alternative methods (e.g. integrating ancillary office space more effectively or variation in building form and façade articulation) may offer improved outcomes. 	

6.0 Delivering design excellence

This code focusses on the six principles of good design as set out in the National Design Code to guide new development in Bedford urban area: context, identity, built form, movement, nature and public space (as covered in section 2.0). New development proposals will need to demonstrate an appropriate understanding of these principles to inform more detailed site-specific coding.

Section 3.0 provides a more detailed analysis of a range of urban place typologies, focusing primarily on aspects of the built and natural environment. Coding highlights the principles of what constitutes good design - such as eaves line, roof variety, use of gables, horizontality, verticality, material choices etc - rather than prescribing specific styles. These principles can be applied to deliver a range of architectural responses, from those drawing on historic references to more contemporary forms. In essence, the coding identifies components of well-designed places in a reasonably systematic way without straying into more subjective feedback on beauty and aesthetics. Section 3.0 provides a more detailed analysis of a range of urban place typologies, focusing on key aspects of the built and natural environment.

The extensive analysis serves to highlight positive aspects of design and provide indicative high-level coding on the six principles. Conversely, where development has not delivered an appropriate design response, the analysis serves to inform why and where possible hints at what could be improved. In this way, an overall picture of the Bedford urban area can be formed. This does not preclude learning from other schemes outside the borough, but the primary focus is on assessing the design quality of development within the urban area.

This code is an important a material consideration in the determination of planning applications across the Bedford urban area. Applicants are required to follow the rules and principles outlined in the code to:

- show a full appreciation of the design context;
- clearly illustrate how the proposed scheme has responded to the character and identity of the built and public realm in the Bedford Borough Design Guide;
- outline how the proposals align with the requirements of this code (including the various categories of the urban area set out in section 3.0) and the National Design Guide themes; and
- inform and frame pre-application discussions around the themes of the Bedford Borough Design Guide and code.

To compliment this design code, the [Bedford Borough Council Development Framework Protocol](#) has been developed to ensure that the principles of the design process can be effectively implemented and maintained throughout the lifecycle of development at the planning application stage. The protocol outlines the process for delivering design excellence in Bedford.

