Wythall

Design Guidelines & Design Codes

October 2023

AECOM

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Quality information

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Revision History

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1	22.03.2023	Sections 1 - 2	Joe Greenhalgh	Urban Designer	04.05.2023	Anne-Louise Henderson
2	26.06.2023	Draft full report	Joe Greenhalgh	Urban Designer	07.08.2023	Anne-Louise Henderson
3	15.09.2023	Draft full report	Joe Greenhalgh	Urban Designer	13.10.2023	Anne-Louise Henderson

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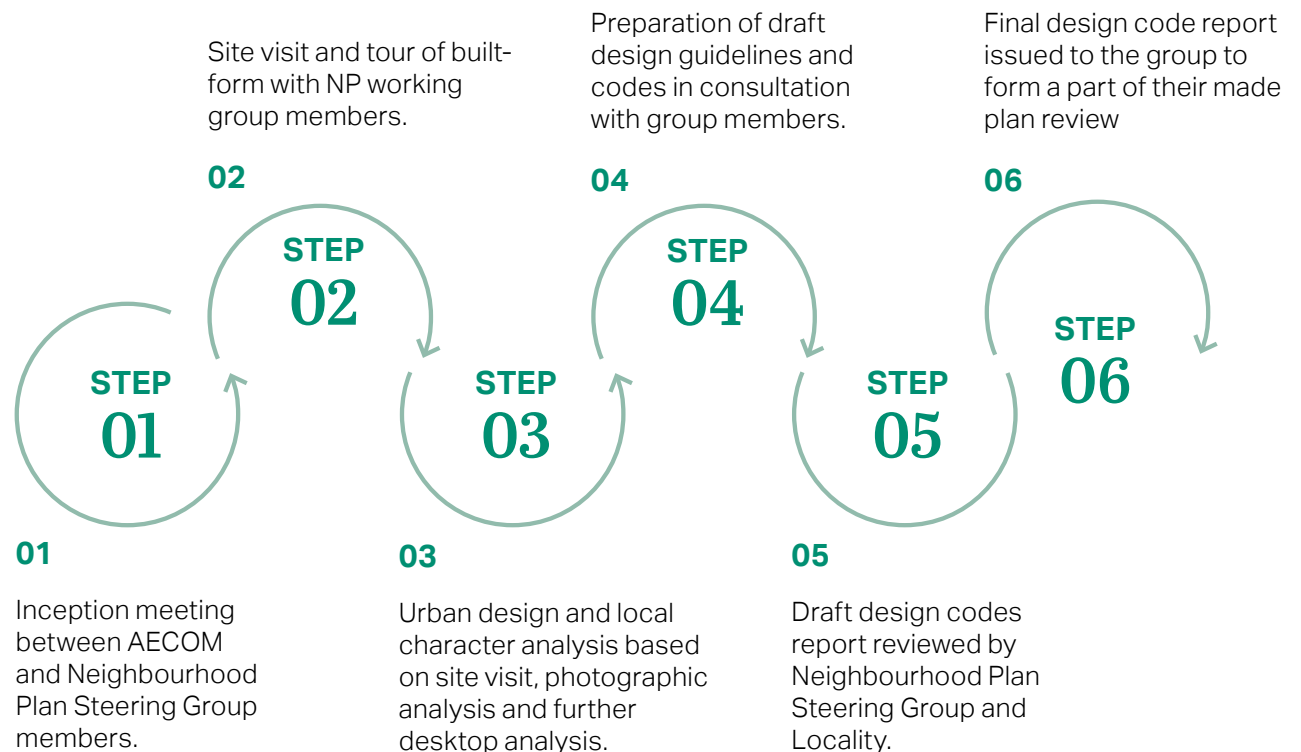
Contents

Introduction

01

1. Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were allocated AECOM's support by Locality to establish a design guide with a number of design codes to influence the character and design of new development within the Neighbourhood Area.

It is envisaged that design guidance will help the area in enhancing its built environment by providing important design principles to inform future planning applications. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group raised a number of focus areas for the design code including housing mix, parking, green gaps, open spaces, and the overall character and quality of new development.

The guidance and design codes are underpinned by a baseline assessment of the character across the Neighbourhood Area, including that of the landscape and built form. Particular attention will be paid to the spatial configuration and layout of development, as well as the area's rural character. Residential areas will be a particular area of focus due to the likelihood and expectation of residential proposals set to come forward within the area.

1.1 Aims

- To positively influence the character and design of potential new development within the Neighbourhood Area.

- To produce detailed analysis of the Neighbourhood Area's built form and landscape context.

- To identify how future residential proposals could contribute to local character.

- Provide design guidance to support contextual and sustainable development in the future.

02
Site visit and tour of built-form with NP working group members.

04
Preparation of draft design guidelines and codes in consultation with group members.

06
Final design code report issued to the group to form a part of their made plan review

STEP 02

STEP 04

STEP 06

STEP 01

STEP 03

STEP 05

01
Inception meeting between AECOM and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members.

03
Urban design and local character analysis based on site visit, photographic analysis and further desktop analysis.

05
Draft design codes report reviewed by Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Locality.

1.2 Objectives

The following objectives will help to achieve the overarching aims set out on the previous page.

- Review of planning policy and landscape character studies covering the whole Neighbourhood Area

- Detailed character analysis of the area's built form, including identification of its high-quality residential development

- Categorisation of distinct character areas based on character elements identified in the analysis

- Design guidance and codes covering the whole Neighbourhood Area

- Design guidance and codes specifically focusing on layout, character, landscape, and sustainable development

1.3 Study area

The Neighbourhood Area is situated in the north east corner of Worcestershire, within the District of Bromsgrove. Despite sharing borders with the more urban authorities of Solihull and Birmingham, the Neighbourhood Area has a modest population of just over 12,000, spread amongst several areas including the villages of Wythall, Hollywood, and Major's Green, as well as several smaller areas and rural hamlets such as Walkers Heath, Tanners Green, Batemans Green, Inkford, Headley Heath, and Bell Green. Due to this, the Neighbourhood Area has a strong landscape component with locally important green spaces separating its several residential areas.

As an area it is strategically placed between the open countryside to the south and the metropolitan area of Greater Birmingham to the north. Wythall village is around 9 miles south of Birmingham City Centre which is approximately a 25-minute train journey from Wythall Station on Norton Lane. The

Hollywood Bypass (A435) bisects the Neighbourhood Area and is a strategic route running between Birmingham and Alcester.

The Neighbourhood Area is served by a modest network of amenities and recreational venues. There are two small shopping parades in Hollywood and several shops serving Wythall along Station Road. There are also three golf courses, again reflecting the Neighbourhood Area's abundance of open space. A transport museum is also located on the site of the former Royal Air Force (RAF) Wythall station to the west of Chapel Lane. There are two primary schools (Coppice Primary School in Hollywood and Meadow Green Primary School in Wythall) and a secondary school (Woodrush High School in Hollywood) along with several day nurseries. Hollywood is also host to St Mary's Church (not to be confused with the Church of St Mary on Chapel Lane), Wythall Library, Hollywood Medical Practice and the Wythall Parish Council office. There is also Hollyoaks Medical Centre in Wythall.

Figure 01: Map showing the spatial context and key features of the Neighbourhood Area

1.4 Who should use the guide

The Design Codes and Guidance should be a valuable tool in securing context driven, high-quality development in the Neighbourhood Area. It will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table.

A valuable way the guidance and codes can be used is as part of a process of co-design and involvement that further understands, and takes account of local preferences and expectations of design quality. In this way they can usefully facilitate conversations on key issues, helping to align expectations and achieve an informed and balanced approach. A Design Code alone will not automatically secure optimum design outcomes but should help to prevent many of the worst. They can also help to raise standards and overall design quality.

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

Table 01: Potential users

1.5 Planning policy and design guidance

There are several national and local planning policy and guidance documents that have been referred to in the development of this design guide and the codes featured in it. This section highlights recent government initiatives such as the National Design Guide and Homes England adoption of Building For a Healthy Life.

1.5.1 National Planning Policy & Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the Government's overarching economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. The policies within the NPPF apply to the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and act as a framework against which decisions are made on planning applications.

The sections of the updated NPPF which are of most relevance to design and this design code are:

2. Achieving sustainable development

...(a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
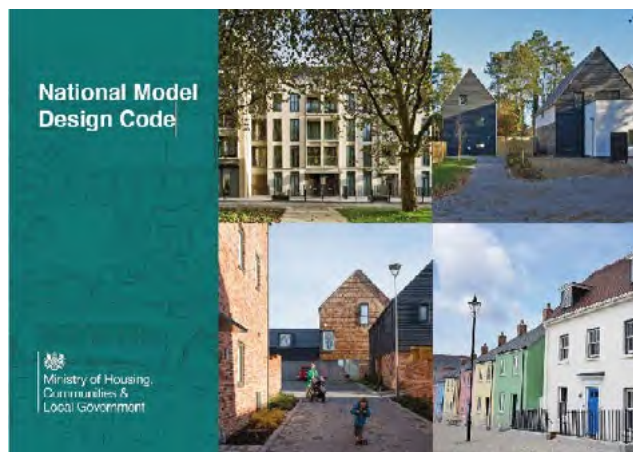
12. Achieving well-designed places

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

16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

190. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

The NPPF notes that *'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes'.*

2021 - National Model Design Code
DLUHC

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

Context, Identity, Built Form, Movement, Nature, Public Spaces, Uses, Homes & Buildings, Resources and Lifespan.

This guide should be used as an overarching reference for new development where topics are not covered in local guidance.

2020 - Building for a Healthy Life
Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the new name for Building for Life, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The new name reflects the key role that the built environment has in promoting wellbeing.

The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed schemes, as well as useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

1.5.2 National Design Guide (2019) & National Model Design Code (2021)

These companion documents set out characteristics of well-designed places. They support the ambitions of the NPPF to utilise the planning and development process in the creation of high-quality places. The National Design Guide states that '*specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set at the local level*'. The guides are expected to be used by local authorities, applicants and local communities to establish further design codes (such as this) and guides that can deliver this in line with local preferences.

1.5.3 Local Planning Policy & Guidance

The Neighbourhood Area is under the jurisdiction of three tiers of local government; Worcestershire County Council, Bromsgrove District Council, and Wythall Parish Council. The adjacent planning documents were reviewed to understand the policy context under which this document has been produced.

County

Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment - January 2004

A county-wide appraisal of Worcestershire's landscape character, identifying the patterns and individual combinations of features such as hedgerow, field shapes, woodland, land use, patterns of settlements and dwellings. Each combination of features produces a distinct landscape type, requiring different management and treatment than others with differing landscape features.

District

The Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 - January 2017

The Bromsgrove District's strategic long-term vision for how the area will develop and change in the period up to 2030. The document sets out how the vision will be delivered through a strategy of promoting, distributing, and delivering sustainable development and growth. The plan's strategy promotes economic and employment growth and provides detail on how the District will meet it's housing need, as well as detail on land use for activities including retail, sport, and leisure. The document also cites the need to find more land for development through a review of the Green Belt.

High Quality Design SPD - June 2019

The purpose of this document is to supplement the policies in the development plan and to provide detailed guidance on how a high standard of design could be achieved. The Bromsgrove District Plan contained Policy BDP19 High Quality Design. This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) aims to expand on this policy by providing more detailed design guidance for applicants seeking planning permission.

Outdoor Play Space SPG - July 2004

This guidance document supplements policies RAT5 and RAT6, Appendix 14 and supporting text in the Local Plan. The guidance will only apply to those residential planning applications including 6 units or more, or a minimum site area of 0.2 hectares. The requirement for play space will also include smaller parcels of land that are perceived as consecutive and cumulative, but together exceed 6 dwellings of 0.2 hectares.

Residential Design Guide SPG - January 2004

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document is one of a series, published to help those preparing planning applications produce good designs. The guides do not aim to remove the need for skilled professional advice but to instead supplement the services of the professional. It covers the topics of residential design, shopfronts and advertisements, car parking standards, conversion of rural buildings, and agricultural building design.

1.6 Site visits and engagement

A meeting in the Neighbourhood Area took place on 17th January 2023 between urban design consultants, planning consultants, and members of the local Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. An initial scoping meeting took place enabling both consultants to talk through the process of the study, as well as allowing the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members to raise any key concerns, themes, and areas of focus.

This was followed by a driving tour of the Neighbourhood Area, visiting each of its residential areas as well as key landscape spaces. This enabled consultants to appraise local character and key features informing its sense of place.

The day provided valuable insight into the area's key issues and opportunities, as well the overall context which the evidence-base of the Neighbourhood Plan will reflect. Housing mix, parking, green gaps, connectivity, and the overall character and quality of new development were the prevailing topics of engagement.

F.2

Figure 02: Consultants from AECOM met with several members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group at the Wythall Parish Council office on Beaudesert Road in Hollywood

Neighbourhood Context

02

2. Neighbourhood Context

This chapter outlines the landscape character, planning constraints, and context of the Neighbourhood Area.

2.1 Designations

The following designations are of great importance when considering development constraints within the Neighbourhood Area. The designations have been formalised to create a degree of protection for areas that are considered to be important for a variety of reasons, including planning, environmental, and social importance.

2.1.1 Site of Special Scientific Interest

There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the Neighbourhood Area, Berry Mound Pastures, a 11.84 hectare site comprising of horse grazed pastureland and meadow. The site was first designated in 1994 due to diverse semi-natural grassland. The site lies to the south west of Berry Mound Camp, an Iron Age hill fort.

2.1.2 Green Belt

Outside the tightly drawn settlement boundaries of Hollywood, Wythall, Majors Green and Walkers Heath, all of the Neighbourhood Area falls within the Green Belt. In accordance with the NPPF and Local Plan Policy BDP4, development within the Green Belt is limited to that which falls within a narrow range of appropriate development uses or to that where it can be demonstrated that very special circumstances exist.

2.1.3 Residential Area

As per the Local Plan there are four 'Residential Areas' within the Neighbourhood Area covering the three villages of Hollywood, Wythall, Major's Green, as well as a small housing estate extending from Kings Norton in Birmingham.

2.1.4 Shopping

As per the Local Plan there are three small 'Shopping' sites within the Neighbourhood Area, two within Hollywood and one within Wythall. All three sites consist of narrow single-sided shopping parades host to only a handful of small businesses such as convenience stores, eateries, and beauticians. Refer to the Local Plan's Policy BDP18 Local Centres for further detail on Shopping sites. Beckett's Farm is host to a farm shop and several other small retailers, however this is not formally designated.

2.1.5 Employment

There is a single Employment site to the west of Middle Lane including a contemporary office complex with landscaped gardens and a cricket ground. The complex is currently host to the Phoenix Group. There are several other undesignated sites of employment across the Neighbourhood Area.

2.1.6 Open Spaces

There are three Open Spaces designated within the Neighbourhood Area, all of which are located within Hollywood. They include Beaudesert Nature Park, the wooded land to north of Sycamore Drive and the piece of grassed land to the south of Falstaff Avenue. Refer to 2.3 (Values local green spaces and cherished views) of this report for a list of valued local green spaces.

N

0   1km

Walkers Heath

Berry Mound Pastures ●

Major's Green

Headley Heath

Batemans Green

Truemans Heath

Hollywood

Bell Green

Drakes Cross

Wythall

Wythall Heath

Wythall Green

Tanners Green

Inkford

Legend:
- Neighbourhood area
- Residential Area
- Employment
- Shopping
- Open Space
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Green Belt

F.3   **Figure 03:**   Map showing key designations within the Neighbourhood Area.

2.2 Landscape character

2.2.1 Worcestershire Landscape Types

Worcestershire County Council's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) document identifies distinct Landscape Types (LT), each formed from a series of landscape features found within them.

Within the LCA there are multiple LTs, two of which are within the Neighbourhood Area: Urban and Timbered Pastures. Timbered Pastures are small-scale, settled, pastoral landscapes characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. The oak trees convey a sense of scale and stature combined with a feeling of maturity and history. This is a complex landscape of relic commons and former wood pasture, reflected today by an intermixed pattern of irregular fields and scattered farms occurring next to areas of geometric enclosure, straight roads and strings of wayside dwellings.

The Urban LT describes those areas that are covered by a majority of urban development. No landscape features have been outlined or categorised within these areas. The adjacent plan shows this LT covering all of Hollywood, the Neighbourhood Area's largest continuous expanse of housing.

2.2.2 National Character Areas

The area falls within the wider Arden National Character Area (NCA), comprising of farmland and former wood-pasture. Traditionally regarded as the land lying between the River Tame and the River Avon in Warwickshire, the Arden landscape also extends into north Worcestershire to abut the Severn and Avon Vales. The eastern part of the NCA abuts and surrounds Coventry, with the fringes of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon to the south. This NCA has higher ground to the west (Clent and Lickey Hills) and to the east (Nuneaton ridge). Mature oaks set in hedgerows, distinctive field boundaries, historic parklands and narrow river corridors are key features, all on the doorstep of a heavily urbanised area.

F.4

Figure 04: Urban Landscape Type - typical suburban streetscape of Hollywood

F.5

Figure 05: Timbered Pastures Landscape Type

Walkers Heath

Major's Green

Headley Heath

Batemans Green

Truemans Heath

Hollywood

Bell Green

Drakes Cross

Wythall

Wythall Heath

Wythall Green

Tanners Green

Inkford

Neighbourhood area
Urban - Landscape Type
Timbered Pastures - Landscape Type

N

0   1km

Figure 06:   Map showing Landscape Types within Neighbourhood Area.

2.3 Valued local green spaces and cherished views

The tables on the subsequent pages were compiled by the Wythall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in order to tabulate the area's valued local green spaces and cherished views. As outlined in the previous pages on landscape character, the Neighbourhood Area is primarily made up of open landscape, with only a small area considered to be 'urban' in character.

As such, the Wythall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group hope to protect the valued local green spaces and cherished views from any future development that may negatively affect their character and amenity. Planning proposals should instead seek to enhance the valued local green spaces and cherished views.

F.7

Figure 07: Wythall Park, Silver Street, Hollywood

Design Guideline

Design Criteria: Valued local green spaces and cherished views

All planning proposals should consider the valued local green spaces and cherished views tabulated on pages 19-21 of this report. Proposals should respect the importance placed on them by the community by protecting their character and amenity, or by positively contributing to such.

Valued Local Green Space & Cherished Views	Description	Character	Proximity to Communtiy	Special Qualities
View of Church of St Mary's spire, Chapel Lane	Grade II listed redundant parish church	Built 1842, tower added 1903, attractive brick and stone tower, well known locally.	Located in the southern part of the Parish	Historically significant, prominent local landmark in primarily flat terrain, attractive image for the village.
Gorsey Lotts	Grassed area incorporating War Memorial, lined with old oak trees and planted with bulbs.		Off the main Alcester Road in Hollywood	Used as gathering place and focal point for Remembrance Day Service, Christmas Lights Switch On, Proclamations on death of a sovereign/ coronation.
Silvermead Conservation Area	Small largely wooded area, approx. 0.14ha.		In Hollywood	Quiet wildlife habitat with public access
Falstaff Avenue / Chesterwood Green Space	A roughly square green space of amenity grass land with several oak trees and a margin of dense scrub offering shelter for wildlife, approx. 0.31ha.		Right in the middle of dense housing	Used for dog walking/children playing
Beaudesert Nature Park	0.5ha of public open space between May Lane and Beaudesert Road, linking them with a footpath.	Area of woodland managed by Bromsgrove DC, North West Water Management have responsibility for maintenance of Hollywood Brook which flows through the site.	Located within the centre of Hollywood	WPC are enhancing the area with bulb and meadow planting, bird boxes and benches.
Woodrush Drive / The Innage	c. 0.07ha small, roughly square green space, long grass with mown margins and mown path.		Within built up area of Drakes Cross	Some locals would like to cultivate into an orchard / community garden.
Mynors Crescent / Shawhurst Lane	Linear green space of mown grass land c. 0.17ha with several mature oaks and surrounded by mature hawthorn hedge. Owned by BDHT.		Located within built up area of Wythall	

Valued Local Green Space & Cherished Views	Description	Character	Proximity to Communtiy	Special Qualities
Land at Mayhurst Close / Wythwood Road	Enclosed grassed area between 2 roads, used by dog walkers.		Located in built up area of Hollywood	
Harmony Wood	Wooded area bordering footpath linking Houndsfield Lane with Three Oaks Road.	Area of mature woodland		Well used by dog walkers
Johnson's Pond, Alcester Road	Privately owned pond and wildlife area between Wythall Park and Alcester Road.	Landmark of the area	Located within Hollywood	Designated local wildlife site
Batemans Lane Pond	Privately owned pond along Batemans Lane	Attractive view from lane	More rural location west of Hollywood, bordering Wythall park.	
Bills Lane Fishing Ponds	Commercial fishing ponds and wooded area		Located in Majors Green, bordering Solihull in the north east corner of the parish.	
Balancing Pond area – Selsdon Close	Surface water balancing pond built by developers of recent housing development to reduce surface water drainage flows from the site.		On edge of new build development between Wythall and Hollywood.	
SSSI Berry Mound Pastures	SSSI of 11.84ha lying to the south west of Berry Mound Camp.	Horse grazed pasture land and meadow. The interest of the site lies in the diversity of the semi-natural grassland. In addition there is a stream and a small pond, and much rich flora and fauna can be found here.	Located in Majors Green, bordering Solihull in the north east corner of the parish.	

Valued Local Green Space & Cherished Views	Description	Character	Proximity to Communtiy	Special Qualities
Wythall Meadow	Lowland meadow area between school playing fields and houses on Sycamore Drive. Bordered by mature trees.		Within Hollywood built up area	Designated local wildlife site. No public access.
Dark Lane meadow	Lowland meadow alongside Dark Lane, bordered by and containing mature trees.		On the edge of Hollywood	Designated wildlife site. Unknown if public can access.

2.4 Topography & Flood risk

Topography and flood risk are interrelated features of any landscape, and are both prominent variables in forming landscape character.

2.4.1 Topography

The area's landform gently undulates between its lowest point of 128m in the north-east, to 197m at its highest point in the west. Subsequently, the River Cole flows along the lowest point, following the red line boundary of the Neighbourhood Area's eastern border.

Several hilltop areas and rural hamlets are located to the west, such as Gay Hill, Forhill, Weatheroak Hill, and Red Hill. Long distance views of the Neighbourhood Area's open landscape and beyond can be seen from these locations.
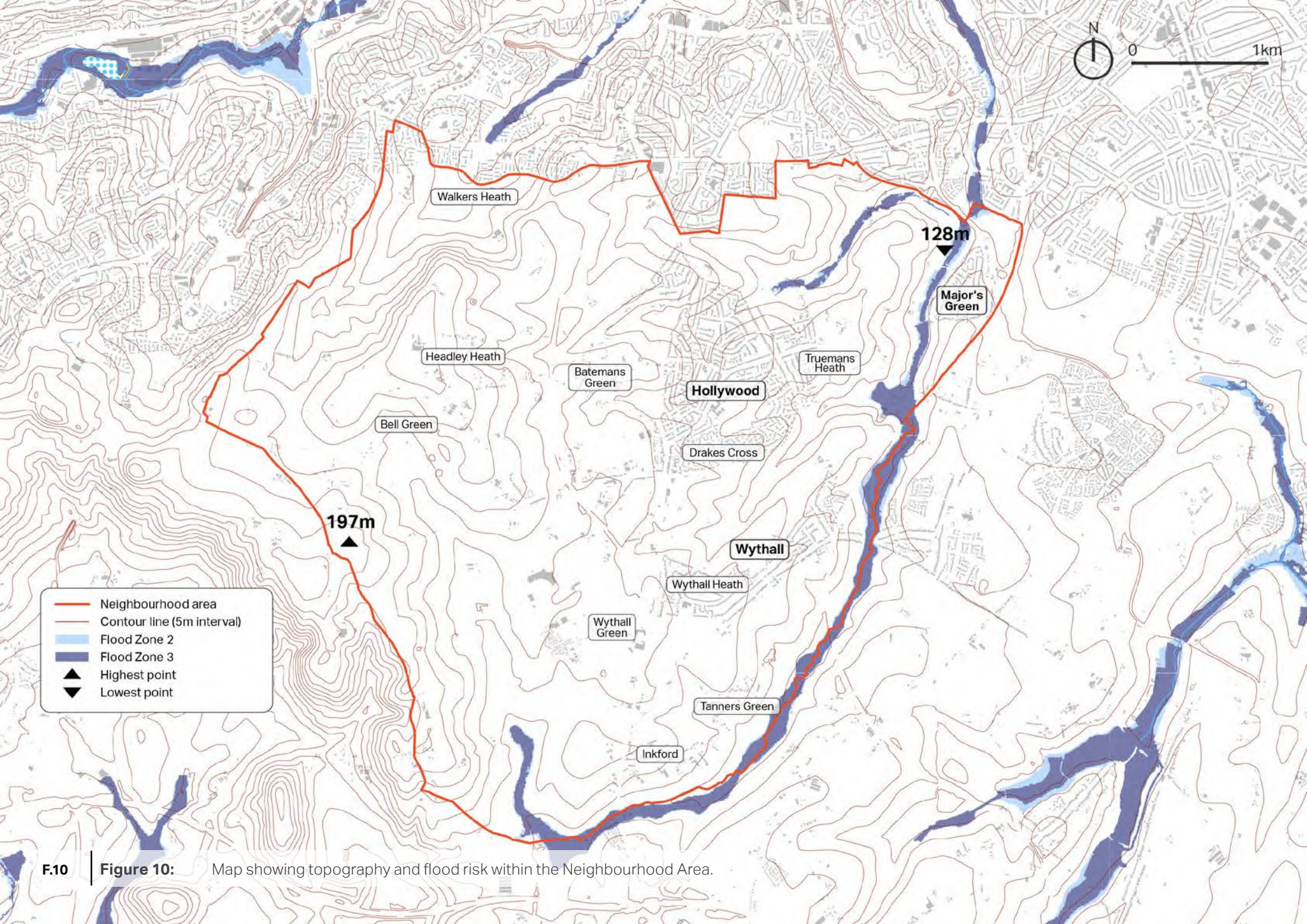
2.4.2 Flood risk

The Neighbourhood Area is host to a network of water bodies including multiple streams, a small stretch of the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal, Chinn Brook, and the River Cole. The River Cole forms a u-shape flowing from Bell Green in the north west before dipping down towards to the southerly tip of the Neighbourhood Area and then along a majority of the eastern boundary. Towards the north east of the Neighbourhood Area, the river veers off from the Neighbourhood Area boundary where it follows the western edge of Major's Green before down into neighbouring Solihull. The area most susceptible to flooding is along the riverbank of the River Cole's western stretch where both Flood Zones 2 and 3 are in place. There is also a stream radiating from the River Cole with both Flood Zones curling round Berry Mound fort to the north east of Hollywood.

Overall, a majority of Wythall's built areas fall clear of Flood Zones 2 and 3, with the exception of the buildings off Houndsfield Lane and the string of dwellings along the western edge of Major's Green.

Figure 08: Landscape view illustrating the undulating land form of the Neighbourhood Area

Figure 09: The River Cole flows down the easterly side of Wythall and the Neighbourhood Area

F.8

F.9

Walkers Heath

128m ▼

Major's Green

Headley Heath

Batemans Green

Hollywood

Truemans Heath

Bell Green

Drakes Cross

197m ▲

Wythall

Wythall Heath

Wythall Green

Tanners Green

Inkford

N

0   1km

— Neighbourhood area
— Contour line (5m interval)
  Flood Zone 2
  Flood Zone 3
▲ Highest point
▼ Lowest point

F.10 | **Figure 10:**   Map showing topography and flood risk within the Neighbourhood Area.

2.5 History & heritage assets

The first recorded settlement in Wythall was at Berry Mound to the north west of Major's Green at the site of the Berry Mound fort. In 1911 two thirds of the ancient parish of King's Norton was transferred to Birmingham and only Wythall remained within Worcestershire.

The name Wythall derived from the name Wythworth, with 'worth' meaning an enclosure where Withies or Osiers (typically used for thatching, basket making, and constructing woven wattle hurdles) are grown or prepared. During the medieval times there was a windmill on a mound at the site of Becketts Farm. This area was part of the ancient village of Wythall and formed part of the Manor owned by the Bell family which also included St Mary's Church, formerly known as Manor Church.

Chapel Lane and Station Road appear on the oldest existing road map dated 1330 and were used on the route from Droitwich to Coventry. Both streets are where some of the Neighbourhood Area's oldest buildings are located, including several Listed buildings such as the Church of St Mary and The Old School House. Silver Street is another historic road, once a salt track extending between Houndsfield and Droitwich used for carrying timber to the salt works.

The site of the Phoenix Group headquarters was previously RAF Wythall (from 1938 to 1960). The military base was a balloon barrage centre (No.6 Barrage Balloon Centre) defending southern Birmingham and Coventry during the Second World War. After the war it became a demobilisation centre for all Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) members nationally.

Shirley Drawbridge runs over the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal in Major's Green. The bridge is operational and is mechanised. Historically, it was manually lifted and lowered to allow canal barges to pass.

2.5.1 Listed buildings

There are 18 Listed buildings within the Neighbourhood Area each with a Grade II Listing. The buildings are sporadically distributed throughout the area, with a majority being historic farmhouses and agricultural buildings set within the open landscape. A notable listing includes the Church of St Mary, a redundant parish church built in 1862 with a unique landmark tower which was later added in 1908.

2.5.2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

The Neighbourhood Area is host to two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM). Firstly, there is the Moated Site at Blackgreves Farm which encompasses the moat and land surrounding the Grade II Listed Blackgreves Farmhouse to the south of Clewshaw Lane. The monument includes the buried and earthwork remains of a moated site with records referring to Richard I granting the tenement to Reginald De Barres, and in 1252 Henry III granting the same lands to William de Belne.

Secondly, there is Berry Mound Camp, an Iron Age hill fort dating to the 1st or 2nd century BC. The fort covers 4.5 hectares measuring 140m from north to south and 61m from east to west. The monument is a rare example of an univallate hill fort with evidence of a timber revetments and a re-cut V-shaped ditch which demonstrates the historic importance of the fortification's defensive capability.

Map showing heritage assets within the Neighbourhood Area.

Legend:
- Neighbourhood area
- △ Grade II Listed building
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- ★ Shirley Drawbridge

Labels on map:
Walkers Heath, Berry Mound Camp, River Cole, Shirley Drawbridge, Major's Green, Headley Heath, Batemans Green, Hollywood, Truemans Heath, Bell Green, Drakes Cross, Moated Site at Blackgreves Farm, Wythall, Wythall Heath, Wythall Green, River Cole, Tanners Green, Inkford

F.11 | **Figure 11:**   Map showing heritage assets within the Neighbourhood Area.
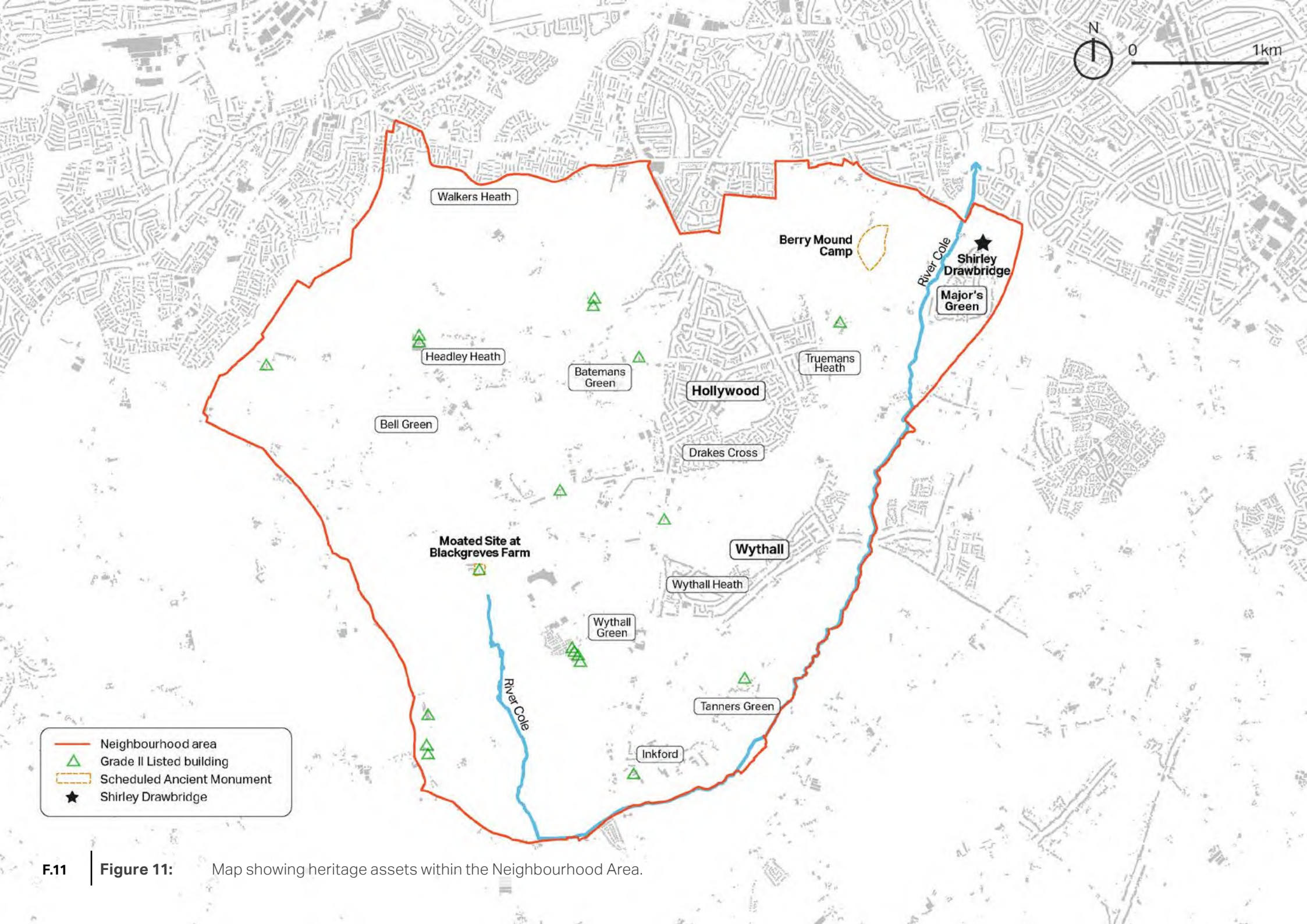
F.12

F.13

F.15

F.14

Figure 12: Grade II Listed Church of St Mary with it's distinctive landmark tower

Figure 13: Grade II Listed Kingswood Meeting House and Sunday School to the west of Hollywood

Figure 14: Grade II Listed Chapelgreen Farmhouse on Chapel Lane, Wythall

Figure 15: Grade II Listed The Old School House on Chapel Lane, Wythall

F.16 Source: Transport Museum Wythall

F.19

F.17

F.18

Figure 16: Historic photo of the former RAF Wythall, on the site of the now Phoenix Group office complex

Figure 17: Red brick Victorian terraces fronting Alcester Road, Hollywood

Figure 18: Vicarage Cottage fronting Chapel Lane, Wythall

Figure 19: Row of Victorian cottages / terraces fronting Chapel Lane, Wythall

2.6 Figureground

The Neighbourhood Area's built area is illustrated by the adjacent figureground plan, where the white space represents open unbuilt spaces (or voids) between the darker shaded areas representing buildings.

The large volume of white space reflects the area's rural character with only Wythall, Hollywood, Major's Green, and Walkers Heath constituting the majority of the area's developed land. The exception to these areas are the isolated buildings and rural hamlets distributed throughout the open landscape. Many of these areas are host to farms or other rural businesses and their associated infrastructure.

As well as reflecting the Neighbourhood Area's volume of open landscape, it illustrates the use of land amongst its built form. The scale and layout of most of the built form resemble that of typical

20th century – 21st century residential estates made up of similar sized houses. Residential is therefore the prevailing building use within the area. It is also evident that detached and semi-detached homes are the dominant housing type in the Neighbourhood Area, with the exception of several smaller clusters of terraced housing and apartments.
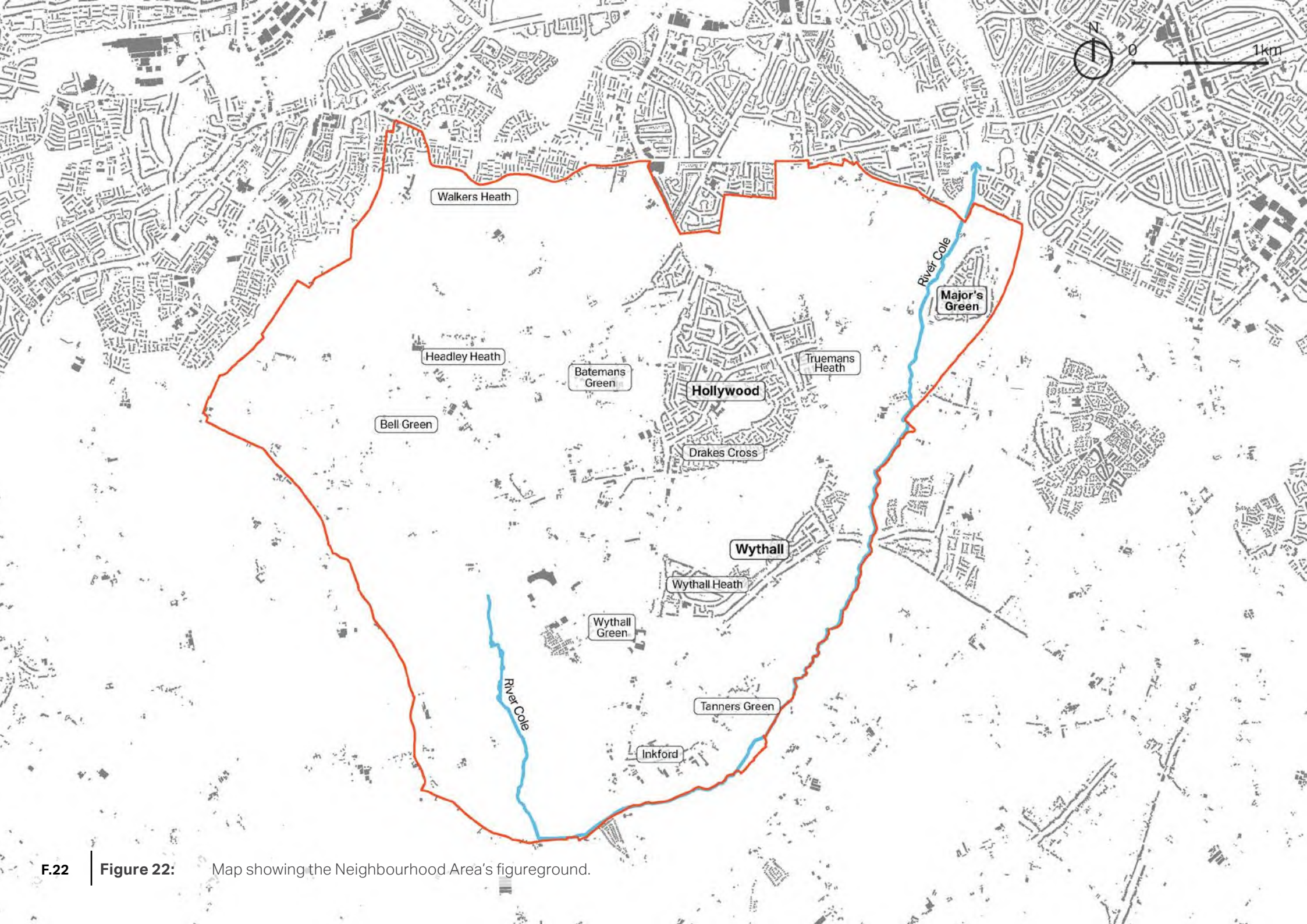
Buildings with larger footprints include the Phoenix Group's headquarters, primary and secondary school buildings, and a number of leisure and industrial businesses distributed throughout the area.

F.20

Figure 20: Mid 20th century semi-detached dwellings in Wythall

Figure 21: Later 20th century detached dwellings in Hollywood

F.21

Walkers Heath

River Cole

Major's
Green

Headley Heath

Batemans
Green

Truemans
Heath

Hollywood

Bell Green

Drakes Cross

Wythall

Wythall Heath

River Cole

Wythall
Green

Tanners Green

Inkford

Figure 22: Map showing the Neighbourhood Area's figureground.

2.7 Pedestrian & cycle networks

The Neighbourhood Area is served by a network of Public Rights of Way (PROW), most of which are footpaths providing connectivity throughout the area's open landscape. Many provide active travel links between key places within the Neighbourhood Area, including between Hollywood and Wythall and Hollywood to Birmingham in the north. Wythall Park also has a number of informal (permissive footpaths) and formal (Public Rights of Way footpaths) running throughout it.

As well as footpaths, there are several bridleways to the north of Kings Norton Golf Course as well as around Gay Hill further north. These are well used by horse riders and recreational walkers alike.

The Route 55 of the National Cycle Network runs through the north west of the Neighbourhood Area, entering via Primrose Hill before following Icknield Street where it leaves the area at the junction with Redhill Road.

Route 55 is 113 miles long and runs in sections between Ironbridge (Shropshire) and Preston (Lancashire) via Telford, Newport, Stafford, Macclesfield, Stockport, and Wigan or Bolton. Between Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent the route follows Route 5, which can be seen to the north west of the Neighbourhood Area.

There are 20 miles of PROW within the Neighbourhood Area which are an asset and are well used recreationally. Many roadside pavements are narrow or of poor quality, making it difficult for pedestrians to safely navigate traffic and move around the area.

F.23

Figure 23: Wythall Park is host to a number of permissive footpaths and PROW connecting it to surrounding areas

Figure 24: PROW in Wythall

F.24

N
0 ——————— 1km

Walkers Heath

Major's Green

Headley Heath

Batemans Green

Truemans Heath

Hollywood

Bell Green

Drakes Cross

Wythall

Wythall Heath

Wythall Green

Tanners Green

Inkford

Legend

— Neighbourhood area
— Route 55 - National Cycle Network
— Route 5 - National Cycle Network
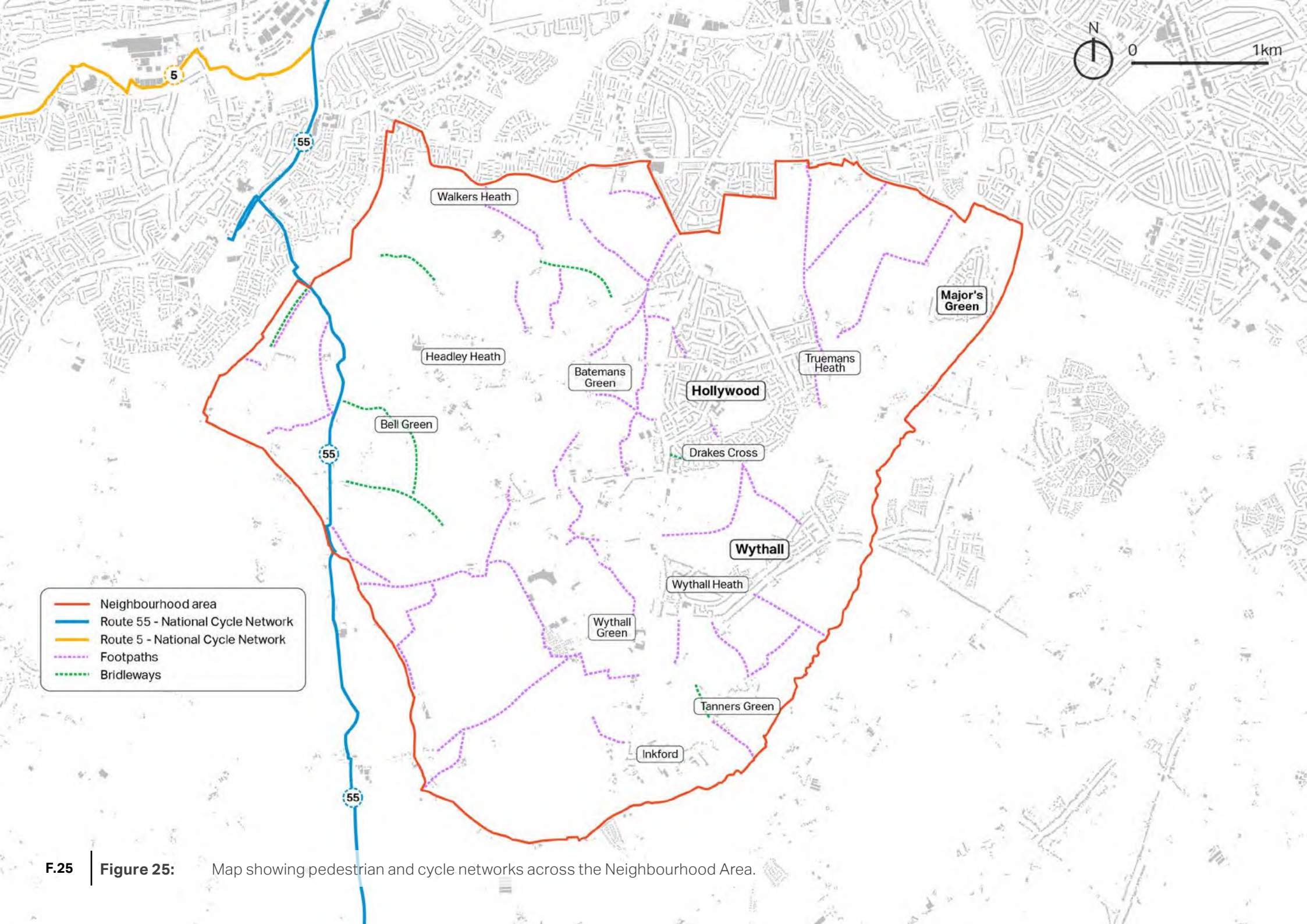······ Footpaths
······ Bridleways

F.25 | **Figure 25:** Map showing pedestrian and cycle networks across the Neighbourhood Area.

2.8 Vehicular networks

The Neighbourhood Area is strategically located to the south of Birmingham, the country's second largest city and a major economic centre. Birmingham City Centre, a mere 9 miles from Wythall Island, can be reached via the A435, part of which is known as the Hollywood Bypass which bisects the Neighbourhood Area.

The A435 is a cross-county route between Birmingham in the West Midlands and Alcester in Warwickshire. Although outside of the Neighbourhood Area, the M42 also runs from east to west in the south. It runs north east from Bromsgrove to just south west of Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire, providing connectivity via Redditch, Solihull, the National Exhibition Centre, and Tamworth on the way.

The villages of Wythall, Hollywood, Walkers Heath, and Major's Green are served by a network of neighbourhood and residential streets, providing connectivity between one another as well as between the numerous housing estates within the area.

A high proportion of streets are cul-de-sacs; typical of residential estates built between the mid-20th century to the present day. This not only reduces permeability but degrades a pedestrians ability to navigate an area, with Hollywood in particular having many cul-de-sacs.

There are several long rural lanes providing connectivity to some of the more rural areas such as Tanners Green, Bell Green, and Headley Heath. They often lack a formal pavement, are bounded by hedgerow, and are bordered by open fields on either side.

2.8.1 Rail travel

The Neighbourhood Area is served by a single railway station, Wythall Station. It runs hourly trains in each direction between Birmingham Snow Hill and Stratford-upon-Avon, with most Birmingham services continuing through to Stourbridge Junction. There is also an hourly Sunday service in each direction, to Worcester Foregate Street and Stratford. Whitlocks End Station is also located just over the neighbourhood boundary to the south of Major's Green.

2.8.2 Parking

On-street car parking is a cause for concern in several areas where developments have impractical parking making many streetscapes overcrowded spaces where cars dominate building frontages and pavements. Such areas include recent developments such as Selsdon Close and Burnham Road. This not only degrades the visual character of the streetscape but also the movement capability of pedestrians and vehicle users alike.
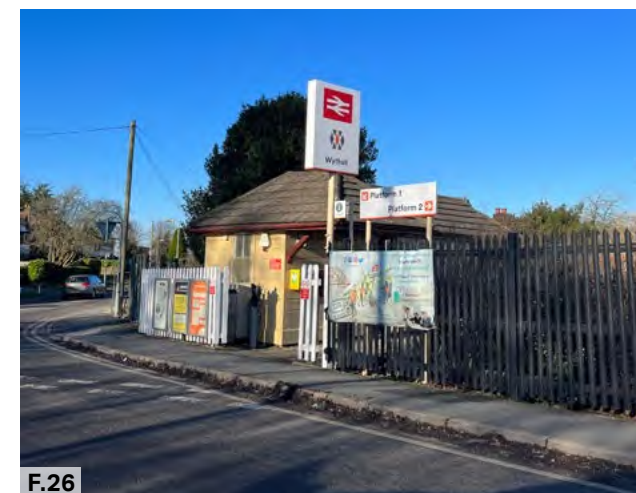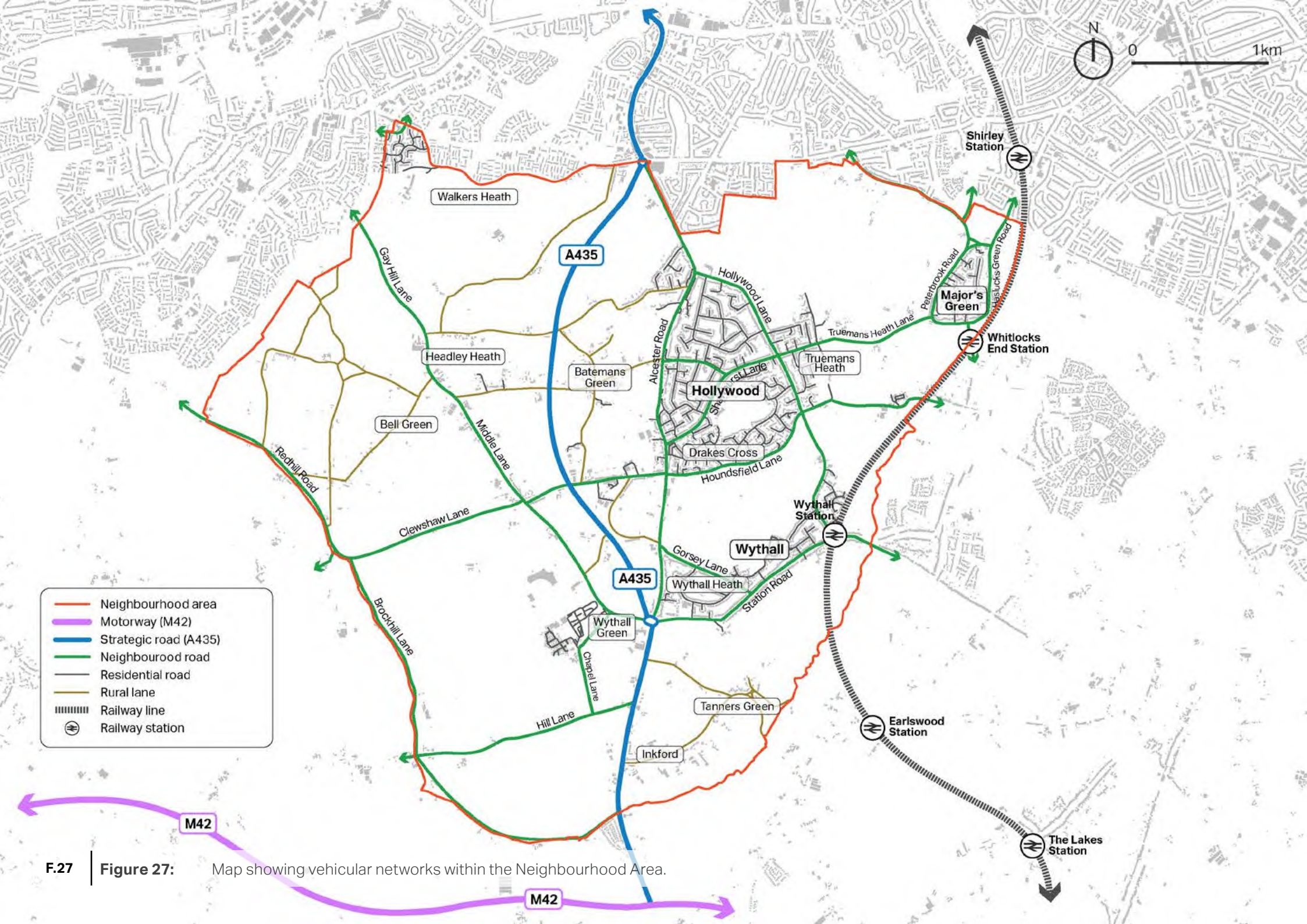

F.26

Figure 26: Wythall Station accessed from Norton Lane, Wythall

N

0 — 1km

Walkers Heath

A435

Gay Hill Lane

Headley Heath

Batemans Green

Alcester Road

Hollywood Lane

Truemans Heath Lane

Major's Green

Peterbrook Road

Haslucks Green Road

Shirley Station

Whitlocks End Station

Truemans Heath

Hollywood

Bell Green

Middle Lane

Shawhurst Lane

Redhill Road

Drakes Cross

Houndsfield Lane

Wythall Station

Clewshaw Lane

Gorsey Lane

Wythall

Wythall Heath

Station Road

A435

Brockhill Lane

Chapel Lane

Wythall Green

Tanners Green

Hill Lane

Inkford

Earlswood Station

The Lakes Station

M42

M42

Legend	
Neighbourhood area	
Motorway (M42)	
Strategic road (A435)	
Neighbourood road	
Residential road	
Rural lane	
Railway line	
Railway station	

F.27 | **Figure 27:** Map showing vehicular networks within the Neighbourhood Area.

Character

03

3. Character

This section identifies Character Areas. These were informed by the analysis of existing built form, landscape along with the local knowledge of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Character Areas identify local character, distinctiveness, and the different types of development in the area.

3.1 Introduction

A primary purpose of this document is to generate sensitive and characterful design responses to the existing settlements and their landscape settings. The character analysis that is presented helps understand both the landscape setting and the detailed pattern of settlement growth that underpins the varying appearances across the area. This analysis has been cross-checked on site as part of this study with a walking tour and photographic study, guided by both local people and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Each character type may require a subtly different design response regarding infill sites or regeneration schemes that will be in keeping with the specific local context of each character area.

Alternatively, the area may continue to acquire new layers with design approaches and concepts that are innovative and look to meet future challenges of sustainability and bio-diversity net gain. However, these responses must still seek to tie in with the landscape and villagescape appeal that help give this area its distinctive character.

Overall, the Wythall Neighbourhood Area has a subtle built character due to most of the area's housing having been built between the mid-late 20th century. This said, the area is host to notable built heritage, particularly surrounding Chapel Lane and other historic routes. Many of these buildings are of high quality and are adorned with materials and details that are unique to the area.

Figure 28: Drakes Cross Shopping Parade - a typical local retail area constructed in the late 20th century

Figure 29: Wythall House - a historic building in Hollywood now used as a community venue
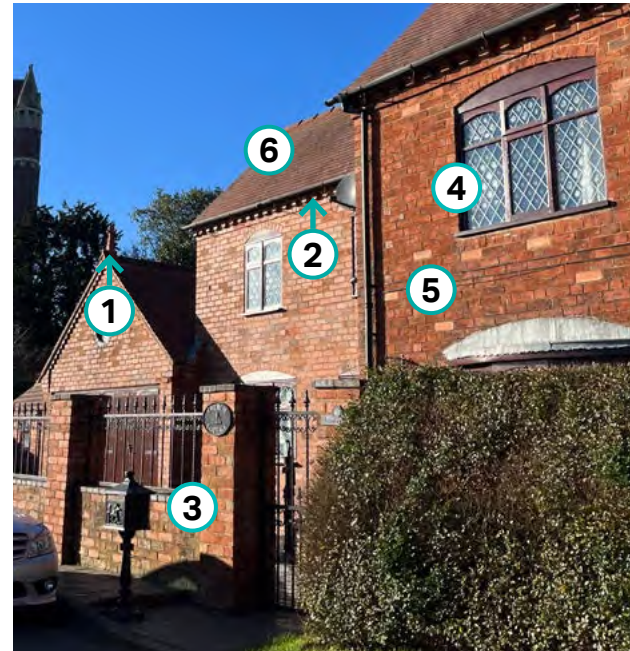

F.28

F.29

3.2 Features of the local vernacular

Vernacular architecture is typically defined as a type of local or regional construction, whereby traditional materials and build methods specific to the area are used. An area's local vernacular is often rooted in the more historic development, rather than that from recent decades. With most of the Neighbourhood Area's development having been constructed post the 20th century, only a small selection of 'traditional' buildings exists.

The adjacent images are of some of the Neighbourhood Area's oldest buildings, most are found within the more historic character areas of Wythall Village and Chapel Lane (Wythall). Many of their built features reflect the vernacular architecture of the area as well as local character. This contributes to the creation of attractive and interesting streetscapes.

Church Cottage

1. Clay finial
2. Dentil brickwork
3. Red brick wall and wrought iron boundary treatment
4. Leaded window
5. Red brick facade
6. Rosemary tile roof

Vicarage Cottage

1. Hedgerow and red brick wall boundary treatment
2. Wall dormer window
3. Red brick facade
4. Grey slate roof
5. Sash window

Victorian terraces

1. Wrought iron boundary treatment
2. Bay window
3. Timber bargeboard
4. Brick / stone window header
5. Brick dental course
6. Grey slate roof
7. Red brick facade

Chapel Lane cottages

1. Casement window
2. Timber porch with finial
3. Hedgrow boundary treatment
4. Rosemary tile roof
5. Pale render and red brick facade

Wythall House

1. Hedgerow boundary treatment
2. Bay window
3. Sash window
4. Decorative door surround
5. Grey slate roof
6. Red brick facade
7. Stone quoining

3.3 Character areas

The adjacent map illustrates the Neighbourhood Area's overarching character areas. They are based on analysis undertaken in sections 1 and 2 as well as the local knowledge of the Wythall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

They are primarily based off urban features such as the style and era of development, building use, settlement envelopes, and the general character features informing each area's distinct sense of place.

3.3.1 Character areas summary

The below list provides a summary for each character area identified on the adjacent map.

1. Walkers Heath

Walkers Heath is an outlying suburban area of Birmingham's urban extent spanning the Birmingham-Worcestershire border.

2. Major's Green

Major's Green has a well-defined urban envelope and is host to mid to late 20th century development.

3. Hollywood

Similar in character to Major's Green but much larger in scale, Hollywood is the Neighbourhood Area's largest settlement.

4. Bovis Estate

While part of Hollywood this area is locally referred to as the 'Bovis Estate' and is host to larger and well landscaped detached plots.
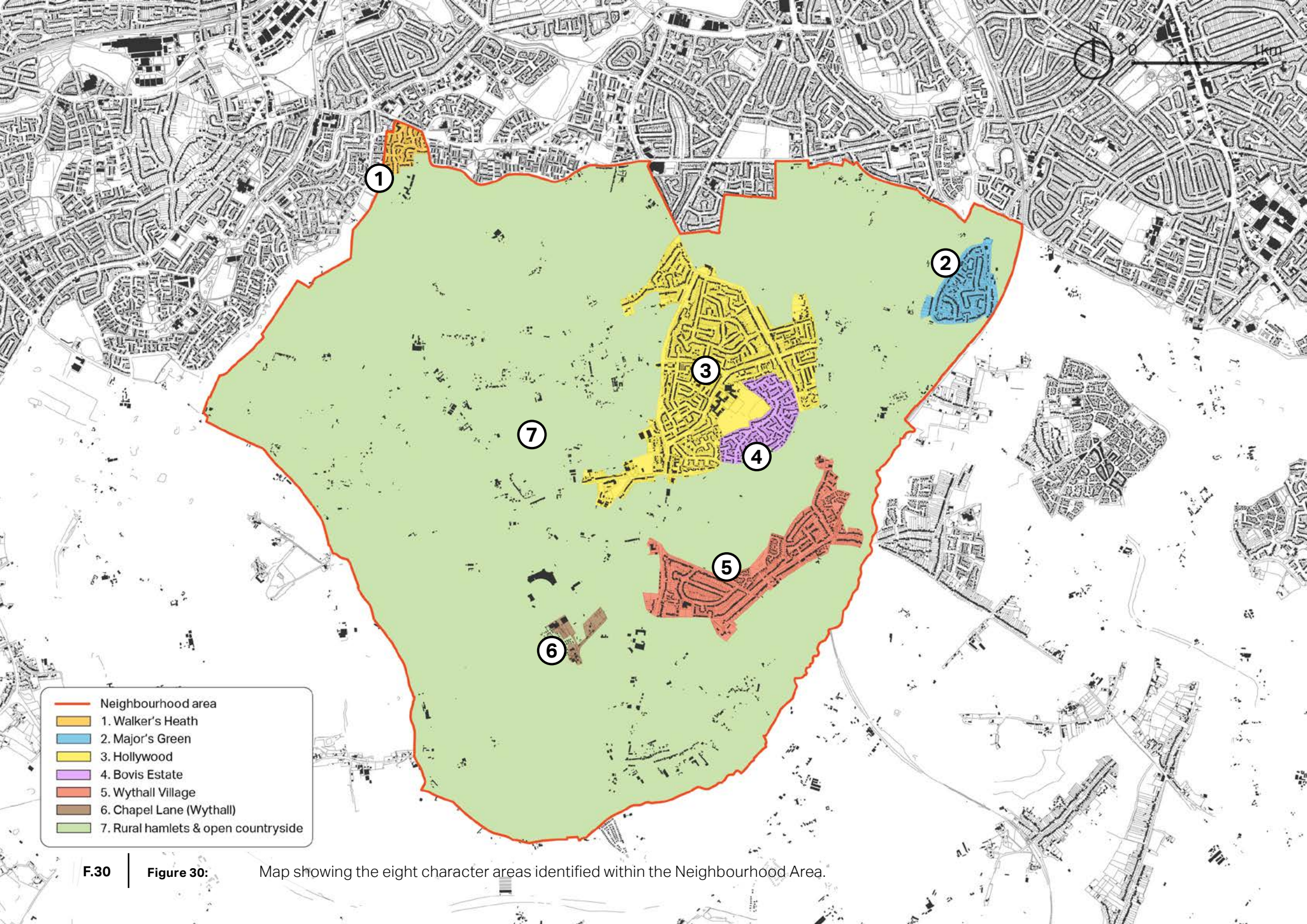
5. Wythall Village

The oldest settlement within the Neighbourhood Area host to a number of developments from different eras.

6. Chapel Lane (Wythall)

This historic area is distinct due to its cluster of built heritage concentrated around Church Lane to the west of Wythall Village.

7. Rural hamlets & open Countryside

The largest of the character areas covering the Neighbourhood Area's vast open landscape owing to its rural character.

Legend:

- Neighbourhood area
- 1. Walker's Heath
- 2. Major's Green
- 3. Hollywood
- 4. Bovis Estate
- 5. Wythall Village
- 6. Chapel Lane (Wythall)
- 7. Rural hamlets & open countryside

Figure 30: Map showing the eight character areas identified within the Neighbourhood Area.

1. Walkers Heath

3.3.2 Walkers Heath

Walkers Heath is a small residential area to the north of the Neighbourhood Area, bordering the neighbouring authority of Birmingham City Council where it is attached to the Birmingham suburb of Kings Norton. The north of the area also spans the county border of Birmingham and Worcestershire. The area's position forming part of Birmingham's urban extent makes it isolated from much of the Neighbourhood Area's villages and developed areas.

A notable feature of the area is Walkers Heath Park which falls within the Bromsgrove boundary but is managed by Birmingham City Council.

As a residential area Walkers Heath is host to a mixture of housing typologies including detached and semi-detached houses and maisonettes. Development is of a similar style with the area having been constructed during the mid-late 20th century.

Key features:

- Walkers Heath Park and Moundsley Hall Care Village are key facilities

- Mid-late 20th century architecture

- Mix of detached, semi-detached and maisonette residential development

- Borders neighbouring authority of Birmingham City Council

- Isolated from the Neighbourhood Area's villages and developed areas

F.31

Figure 31: Typical semi-detached development in Walkers Heath with grass verges and street trees adorning their frontages and side boundaries.

Character Area 1 design principles:

- To reduce the amount of hard boundaries (i.e. closed-board fencing) found within the area, and replacing with natural boundaries such as hedgerow and planting

- Maintain the area's community planting and green spaces such as the area's green verges, street planting, parks and allotment space

- Improve the area's permeability by providing pedestrian routes through / extending cul-de-sacs where possible

- Protected pedestrian links to the south of the area to maintain connectivity with the rest of the Neighbourhood Area

- Provide a sensitive landscape treatment where development borders the open landscape/green spaces to the south of the area

2. Major's Green

3.3.3 Major's Green

Major's Green is the northeastern-most settlement in the Neighbourhood Area, situated close to the neighbouring authority of Solihull. Primarily a residential area, Major's Green lacks its own designated open space or community buildings, with the exception of the Five Lake Woods Farm Fishery, Wake Green Amateur Football Club, and Drawbridge Inn Public House.

The public house is named after the historic drawbridge going over the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal which flows to the east of the village. In addition, there is a site of an Iron Age hill fort, Berry Mound, to the north west of Major's Green.

The village is mostly host to a mix of mid to late 20th century detached and semi-detached houses. Many are adorned with traditional bay frontages but with some varying styles introduced with more recent infill development.

Key features:

- Historic drawbridge over the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal

- Mid-late 20th century architecture

- Distinct village envelope

- Five Lake Woods Farm Fishery, Wake Green Amateur Football Club and Drawbridge Inn Public House

- Berry Mound hill fort located to the north west of the village

F.32

Figure 32: Typical streetscape of Major's Green as demonstrated by the 20th century semi-detached dwellings on Littlemead Road

Character Area 2 design principles:

- To maintain the village's distinct settlement boundary and separation from adjacent settlements

- Coalescing with nearby developments should be avoided by maintaining green gaps

- Provide sensitive settlement edge development to ensure a soft transition (i.e. natural buffers such as verges, pedestrian routes, street trees) between development and surrounding landscape

- To preserve the amenity and identity of the villages's historic assets including the drawbridge and Berry Mound hill fort

- To enhance the boundary treatments of existing and new development via red brick wall and hedgerow boundaries

3. Hollywood

3.3.4 Hollywood

Hollywood is the largest settlement in the Neighbourhood Area and includes the area known as Drakes Cross. Most of the village's community buildings are centred around Woodrush High School and the adjacent Coppice Primary School on Shawhurst Lane. Wythall Park, located off Silver Street is the largest designated open space in the Neighbourhood Area.

Hollywood contains several housing estates of differing styles. The area around Paddocks Road includes a mix of semi-detached and link-detached flat fronted houses. The area around Douglas Road contains mostly semi-detached homes of both flat and bay-fronted styles. This is also where you will find the majority of Hollywood's bungalows. Finally, the area around Simms Lane is host to semi-detached former council houses and existing Bromsgrove District Housing Trust houses/flats.

Key features:

- Largest settlement within the Neighbourhood Area

- Host to majority of the Neighbourhood Area's community facilities

- Mix of different housing estates with varied styles, albeit with mid-late 20th century architecture as well as more recent 21st century development

Figure 33: Typical Hollywood streetscape with 20th century residential development. A mix of both semi-detached and detached house types.

Character Area 3 design principles:

- To reduce the amount of hard boundaries (i.e. closed-board fencing) found within the area, and replacing with natural boundaries such as hedgerow and planting

- To maintain the village's distinct settlement boundary and separation from adjacent settlements

- Coalescing with nearby developments should be avoided by maintaining green gaps

- Provide sensitive settlement edge development to ensure a soft transition (i.e. natural buffers such as verges, pedestrian routes, street trees) between development and surrounding landscape

- To preserve and enhance Hollywood's green infrastructure such as its grass verges, street trees and parks

4. Bovis Estate

3.3.5 Bovis Estate

The 'Bovis Estate' (developed by Bovis Homes) is an area within Hollywood host to housing with a distinguished architectural style and green character in relation to the rest of Hollywood's residential development. It is made up of 14 roads, each named after a type of tree. The estate was built between the late 1970s and 1980s with a mock Tudor style, represented by the use of timber beams and pale render facades.

The house types are typically large detached dwellings, many with double garages and large private driveways. Subsequently, the area has a sense of openness due to the size of the plots with substantial setbacks (i.e. in the format of substantial front gardens and driveways) as well as grass verges along its streets.

Key features:

- Single housing estate within Hollywood, made up of 14 roads

- Distinguished architectural style (mock Tudor) in relation to the rest of Hollywood

- Large detached dwellings with ample on-plot parking and garages

- Green character due to grass verges, street trees and substantial front gardens

F.34

Figure 34: Typical Bovis Estate style with mock Tudor timber and pale render facade on a projecting gable as well as ample on-plot parking.

Character Area 4 design principles:

- To replicate the open character of the estate in future development in the area's adjacent to the Bovis Estate, as well as across the whole Neighbourhood Area

- To maintain the green character of the area by preserving and enhancing its green infrastructure (i.e. grass verges, street trees, front gardens)

- To maintain the area's openness by ensuring on-plot parking remains a key feature of residential plots within the Bovis Estate, as well as within plots across the Neighbourhood Area.

- To utilise junctions at either end of Hollywood Lane as gateway locations for creating a sense of arrival to Hollywood (see Code F: Village Gateways)

5. Wythall Village

3.3.6 Wythall Village

The historic village of Wythall, in which the Neighbourhood Area (and Civil Parish) claims its name, is situated to the south of the larger settlement of Hollywood. It is here that Wythall Train Station is located, serving the Neighbourhood Area with rail link to surrounding areas. The local village hall, Wythall Institute (erected 1888/89), is located on Alcester Road and is one of a handful of heritage assets within the area. Meadow Green Primary School is also located within Wythall.

Much of the village's development consists of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows, primarily of mid to late 20th century construction.

The more recently built estates around Burnham Road and Selsdon Close have been omitted from the character area of the original Wythall 'village' as the Steering Group believe these are of a different character, primarily due to the density of development.

Key features:

- Linear village with most development located to the north of Station Road

- Host to Wythall Train Station

- Handful of heritage assets including the Wythall Institute building and several Arts and Crafts-era and Victorian-age dwellings

- Mid-late 20th century architecture

Figure 35: 20th century bungalows along Ann Road on the western side of Wythall

Character Area 5 design principles:

- To utilise either end of Station Road as gateway locations for creating a sense of arrival to Wythall as well as the whole Neighbourhood Area (see Code F: Village Gateways)

- Promote the area's local vernacular by referencing the style and features of its historic development, in new proposals

- Provide sensitive settlement edge development to ensure a soft transition (i.e. natural buffers such as verges, pedestrian routes, street trees) between development and surrounding landscape

- Uphold the village's settlement boundary by ensuring new development avoids coalescing with surrounding settlements (i.e. Tidbury Green to the east)

6. Chapel Lane (Wythall)

3.3.7 Chapel Lane (Wythall)

This area is identified separately from Character Area 5: Wythall Village due to the age and heritage of the buildings/streets within this area. These include St Mary's Church, the Transport Museum, agricultural buildings, and several cottages. The area encompassing the cemetery and transport museum was once host to the site of a Royal Air Force station as well as a Joint Services School of Applied Linguistics (1952-57).

The area today is host to a mix of uses including residential, burial grounds, leisure, tourism, commercial and agricultural. Chapel Lane is the character area's primary route, connecting between Middle Lane in the north and Hill Lane in the south.

There is also a caravan club caravan and park home site located within, and to the west of the area. This has been omitted from the character area due to the nature of development here.

Key features:

- Historic character due to presence of several historic buildings and heritage sites

- Rural character due to openness and lack of development, as well as surrounding agricultural fields and hedgerow bounding Chapel Lane

- Mix of uses including residential, tourism, commercial, tourism, leisure, burial grounds, and agricultural

Figure 36: Hedgerow boundary along Chapel Lane with historic cottage and the tower of St Mary's Church in the background

Character Area 6 design principles:

- Promote the area's local vernacular by referencing the style and features of its historic development (i.e. Chapel Lane cottages), in new proposals

- Provide sensitive settlement edge development to ensure a soft transition (i.e. natural buffers such as verges, pedestrian routes, street trees) between development and surrounding landscape

- Uphold the area's rural character by ensuring new development incorporates hedgerow / landscape features within proposals

7. Rural hamlets & open countryside

3.3.8 Rural hamlets & open countryside

The largest of the character areas due to the volume of landscape in the Neighbourood Area. It includes natural open landscape, arable farmland, isolated rural development and the hamlets of Tanners Green and Inkford.

Development in Tanners Green is mostly detached dwelling while Inkford has a mix of both semi-detached and detached. The area is host to the Neighbourhood Area's largest volume, of Listed buildings as well as both Scheduled Ancient Monuments, albeit they are sporadically distributed in the open countryside. Many of these are historic farmhouses and of other agricultural heritage uses.

There are a mix of architectural styles due to historic Listed buildings, 20th century housing, and isolated pockets of 21st century infill. There are only small pockets of 'estate' development when homes have been designed/constructed in tandem. Most development therefore varies in style to what stands beside it.

Key features:

- Host to majority of area's heritage assets

- River Cole wildlife corridor

- Primarily isolated rural development as well as the two hamlets of Inkford and Tanners Green

- Strong green and rural character due to the volume and openness of its landscape, as well as its overall lack of development

F.37

Figure 37: The River Cole flowing beside Major's Green

Character Area 7 design principles:

- Promote the area's local vernacular by referencing the style and features of its historic development (i.e. farmhouse-style heritage), in new proposals

- Provide sensitive settlement edge development to ensure a soft transition (i.e. natural buffers such as verges, pedestrian routes, street trees) between development and surrounding landscape

- Uphold the area's rural character by ensuring new development incorporates hedgerow / landscape features within proposals

- To protect and enhance the area's natural/wildlife assets (i.e. River Cole)

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3.4 Precedent development

The Neighbourhood Area, as well as area's just outside, are host to a number of precedent developments which uphold high quality urban design. By contrast, there are several developments which exhibit poor design and have subsequently impacted upon the character and functionality of some urban spaces.

The adjacent images illustrate examples of both poor and high quality developments from within the Neighbourhood Area, as well as those in surrounding areas such as in Dickens Heath, Solihull. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have also highlighted several developments which they deem the aspiration for future development within their area. Many character features found within the high-quality precedent reference the traditional materials and architectural details outlined on the previous page (3.2 Features of the local vernacular).

LOW-QUALITY PRECEDENT

Morrey Close, Wythall

- Poor integration of social housing dwellings with surrounding market housing within the development

- Lack of definition and boundary treatment between public and private space (i.e. pavement and driveway/front garden) as well as between dwellings themselves

- Repetitive and simplistic design of social housing dwellings

- Hard landscaped driveways dominating the frontage of houses with parked cars also negatively impacting the character of the streetscape

HIGH-QUALITY PRECEDENT

Silverbirch Drive, Hollywood

- Varied roof typologies to create interest and corner articulation

- Combination of facade treatments with red brick, timber and render

- Ample on-plot parking

- Imitation sash windows fostering a sense of heritage

- Planting softening the hard surface car parks and building facades

Burnham Road, Wythall

- No one house is the same with each dwelling having a different but cohesive mix of architectural details and materials, creating an attractive and interesting streetscape

- Decorative brick dentil course along roof life

- Imitation casement windows

- Stepped garage/extension allowing space for additional on-plot parking

Burnham Road, Wythall

- Attractive use of materials (red brick and pale render) and colours within facade and window/door treatments

- Decorative brick detailing on corners (quoining) and above windows

- Hedgerow planting softening streetscape frontage

- Ample on-plot parking and well screened along side of dwelling

Design Guidance & Codes

04

4. Design Guidance & Codes

The design codes and guidance set out in this section prioritise the character and quality of new development, sustainable design approaches and several key topics of community importance. These include village gateway, shop frontage, car parking, and street furniture design.

4.1 Introduction

This section provides guidance and codes on the design of development, setting out expectations that are relevant to planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area will be expected to address.

The guidance and codes developed in this section focus on residential environments. However, new housing developments should not be viewed in isolation and mixed-uses are encouraged generally. First and foremost the design and layout of development must respond to the context of the character area it falls within, as well as the wider urban pattern and landscape context this document has outlined in sections 1-3.

The design codes in this section set out the context and direction in relation to infill, edge of settlement, and sites in the open countryside. It will also provide detailed guidance on topics of local concern such as the design of outbuildings and extensions, the preservation of the historic environment, and sustainable design.

Based on the understanding gained in the previous sections, this section will identify design codes for future developments to adhere to. As identified in the diagnostic report, the following design codes have been created to apply to the whole Neighbourhood Area. However, some codes will be more applicable to some character areas more than others.

As per prior analysis the eleven design code sections are as follows:

A - Built character features

B - Infill development

C - Conversions, extensions and outbuildings

D - Green infrastructure and habitat creation

E - Sustainable design and climate resilience

F - Village gateways

G - Shop frontages

H - Street furniture

I - Car parking

J - Settlement edges

K - Protecting cherished views

L - Protecting and enhancing green verges

A Built character features

4.2 Built character features

The design quality of built form is paramount to achieving attractive places. With much of the Neighbourhood Area's built form having been built during the mid to late 20th century, the overall quality and architectural detail of development is limited. New proposals should seek to enhance local built character by incorporating attractive build details within their designs. Many of these features can be seen within the Neighbourhood Area's Victorian-era development, as well as being referenced in more development.

Incorporating decorative character features will elevate the aesthetic of streetscapes, creating intrigue as well as variety. This will strengthen the Neighbourhood Area's appeal as an attractive destination for people to live, work, and spend their recreational time in.

A1 - Architectural detailing: Decorative brick, stone and wood detailing is encouraged to provide reference to the area's historic character. Such detailing should reference the Neighbourhood Area's local vernacular, which is outlined in Section 3. Please note, these features will vary slightly depending on the character area in which a site lies and/or relates to.

A2 - Contextual colourways: The choice of colour and finish is an important design consideration in mitigating adverse visual impacts on villagescapes and character. Subtle or muted colours should be used to ensure cohesion with existing high-quality development.

A3 - Boundary treatments: Residential plots should include either red brick wall, hedgerow, wrought iron fences, or include a hybrid mix of these as boundary treatments.

A4 - Avoiding overly complicated design: Proposals should adopt a simple and focused palette that responds to the streetscape and space in which it relates. Overly complicated and random mixes of materials / palettes should be avoided. For example, some of Wythall's Victorian terraces and cottages have a distinct but simple character, with uncomplicated red brick facades.

A5 - Avoiding low quality precedent: Existing and/or nearby examples of low quality design should not be referenced or replicated. Instead, proposals should refer to high-quality contextual features such as those illustrated in the built form features graphic in section 3.

A6 - Character area response: Proposals must respond to the character area with one of the following three approaches, considered in the following order;

1. Harmonise – clearly respond to existing characteristics within the character area, street and site, including scale, form and appearance;

2. Complement - doing something slightly different that adds to the overall character and quality in a way that is nonetheless fitting, for example, additional high quality materials but harmonising in scale, form and positioning; or

3. Innovate – doing something of high design quality that is different but adds positively to the built-form and character and is considered an exemplar approach for others to follow. For example, develop innovative building form and use low embodied energy, high quality materials that add to the overall design quality, sustainability and richness of the area.

NOTE: When adhering to 'harmonise' or 'complement', low quality precedent should be avoided in the design stages

F.38

Figure 38: Example of high quality new build housing in Dickens Heath, Solihull. The design includes stone and brick window and door surrounds as well as bay and dormer windows.

F.39

Figure 39: Mix of hard and soft boundary treatments on a new build residential development in Dickens Heath, Solihull with the landscape element of the design softening the frontage.

F.40

Figure 40: High-quality residential development on Burnham Road, Wythall. Dwellings are adorned with decorative detailing including quoins, dentil brickwork, porches, and window header and cils.

B   Infill development

4.3 Infill development

Infill development is smaller scale development (generally fewer than 10 homes) within an existing urban/developed context. This type of development commonly consists of three main types:

- Gap site development within a street frontage
- Backland development
- Site redevelopment (for example, replacement of existing building/s)

The overarching aim of these design codes is to promote context sensitive infill housing of a high quality, including affordable housing within the Neighbourhood Area. This should help reinforce local character and in the 'completion' of streetscapes, as well as aiding managed and contextually responsive growth across the Neighbourhood Area.

B1 - Scale and massing: Building scale and massing should be in keeping with the prevailing development pattern and not be overbearing on existing properties or deprive them of light, including over-looking or over-shading of both windows and amenity space.

B2 - Fenestration: Building fenestration and pattern should be in keeping with the predominant positive buildings character on the street or harmonise with adjacent buildings of good character.

B3 - Access: Building entrances will address the street with a main access and main fenestration. Corner buildings should address both streets with fenestration but the main entrance could be on either subject to access requirements.

B4 - New build quality: New build proposals must adhere to Code C1 - Quality and durable construction

B5 - Setbacks: The building line should reflect the street and be set back no more than a maximum of 1.5m from adjacent buildings unless additional landscaping or tree planting is being introduced to the street scene; where buildings are set back from the pavement a boundary feature should define the plot and link up to adjacent buildings.

B6 - Enclosure: Building scale and position on plot should help to define and enclose the space within the street corridor or square to an appropriate degree based on the existing street section (building to building) and level of enclosure (ratio of street width to building height).

B7 - Facade design: Building façade design should respect the horizontal rhythm of plots and building subdivisions on the street in order to integrate and maintain visual continuity or add to the visual interest where required.

B8 - Building height: Buildings heights should vary from 1.5 – 2.5 storeys depending on adjacent plots. A variable eves line and ridgeline is allowed to create interest but variation between adjacent buildings should be a maximum of 0.5 storeys in general.

B9 - Refuse storage: Bin storage amenity should be provided with stores big enough for 3 bins per dwelling being integrated within plot boundaries. Ginnels / alleyways should be considered for terraced buildings with 4 or more units in order to accommodate bin storage and access.

B10 - Parking provision: Parking should be integrated on plot where possible with parking spaces set behind the building line, generally to the side of plot being preferable. Off-street parking should be provided within all residential developments to alleviate the area's chronic on-street parking and congestion issues.
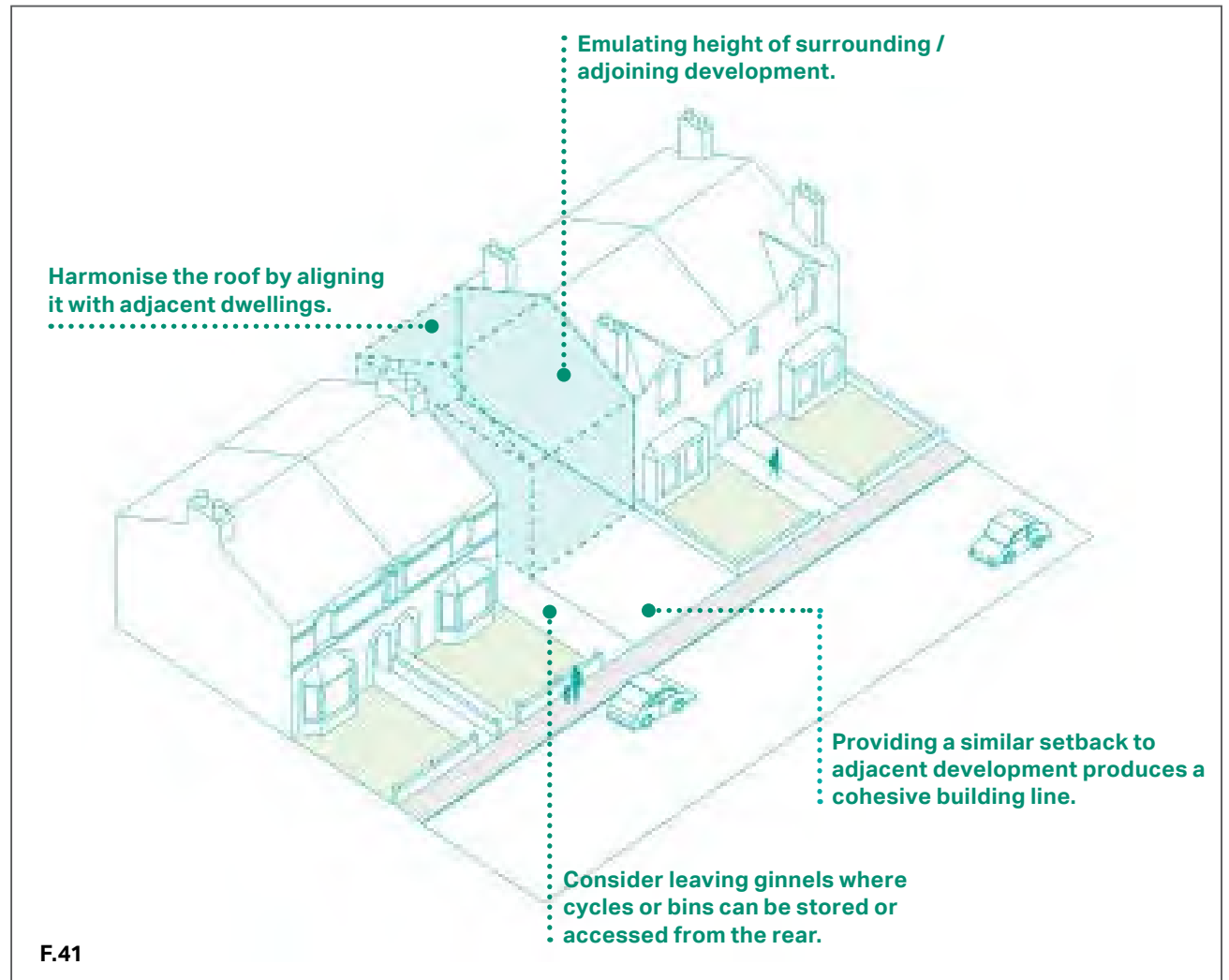
Emulating height of surrounding / adjoining development.

Harmonise the roof by aligning it with adjacent dwellings.

Providing a similar setback to adjacent development produces a cohesive building line.

Consider leaving ginnels where cycles or bins can be stored or accessed from the rear.

F.41

Figure 41: Contextual infill development diagram

C Conversions, extensions and outbuildings

4.4 Conversions, extensions and outbuildings

The following guidelines are in response to the Neighbourhood Area's number of conversions, extensions and outbuildings. Outbuildings are typically separate from the primary dwelling and comprise a number of uses including garages, storage sheds, and stables. The demand for external home offices that are detached from the primary dwelling has seen a significant increase. This is in response to the shift towards home working since the COVID-19 pandemic. Given their scale and impact on surroundings, it is vital they too adhere to design guidance.

With most planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area being either a conversion or extension, it is paramount they adhere to the Neighbourhood Area's landscape character and rural context. Outbuildings are also increasingly becoming a characteristic of many plots, making their impact on the surroundings a design consideration.

C1 - Quality and durable construction: Conversions, extensions and outbuildings should be made from high-quality and durable materials so to maintain their integrity and aesthetics over time. They should use both the high-quality construction methods of nearby development as well as the latest sustainable construction techniques on the market at the time. The lifespan of any new construction should be maximised wherever possible.

C2 - Matching the existing dwelling: Conversions, extensions, and outbuildings should emulate or reference the architectural detailing and character of the primary dwelling. The architectural details (i.e. finials, coping, string courses, and window and door surrounds) of the existing dwelling should be carefully considered in any new construction within the plot.

C3 - Dormers: Dormer windows should be modest in size and either match, complement, or reference the existing building.

C4 - Doors and windows: New windows and doors should reflect the character of each village, as well as that of the original dwelling. Both the material and colour of doors and windows are an important design consideration and should complement both plot and setting.

C5 - Chimneys: Chimneys contribute to the local roofscape and overall character of the area. They should therefore be retained, referenced, or emulated in areas where chimneys contribute to the streetscape.

C6 - Screening outbuildings: They should ideally be positioned behind screening so to be out of public view (e.g. trees, planting, existing buildings).

C7 - Positioning outbuildings:
Outbuildings (not including garden structures such as sheds, greenhouses etc.) should be positioned close to the primary dwelling. This will help to minimise the visual impact of any outbuilding due to screening provided by the dwelling.

C8 - Outbuilding aesthetic: Where screening is not possible, the aesthetic quality of the structure should be of a higher quality, so to positively contribute to the character and context of the surrounding area.

C9 - Outbuildings as secondary tier buildings: There should be a clear building hierarchy with outbuildings being secondary to the primary dwelling within a plot.

C10 - Office conversions and outbuildings: Offices can be housed within outbuildings, whether it be a converted building or new construction.

F.42

Figure 42: Hay Manor House (background) and Blounts Hole Stable (foreground) - the former having been sensitively renovated and the latter being a converted barn now serving as a family home.

F.43

Figure 43: Sensitive conversion of the Grade II Listed Holly Tree Farm in Hollywood, restoring original features and creating an attractive barn conversion.

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

F.44

Figure 44: Outbuildings such as garages should always be subordinate to the primary dwelling within the plot such as in the above example.

D Green infrastructure and habitat creation

4.5 Green infrastructure and habitat creation

The Neighbourhood Area's settlements are set within a vast green landscape which envelopes them. Its green spaces present a strong foundation for enhancing local biodiversity as well as the value they provide locally as recreational spaces. It's landscape character is also a valuable asset to the area, attracting visitors from the more urban areas nearby to access the area's open and green spaces. Such spaces are therefore well-used by those both within and outside of the area, making the enhancement and preservation of its green spaces a priority for future development.

Proposals should consider green infrastructure both within and outside of the site boundary, and how it can achieve the most uses. Green infrastructure can be incorporated into numerous elements of a proposals design including boundary treatments, front and back gardens, facades, and even roofs and walls.

D1 - Retaining landscape habitats: Existing landscape features such as trees, ponds, streams, hedgerows, verges and ditches should be retained where possible. The creation, maintenance and extension of wildlife corridors will be encouraged. All proposed planting should be native species in order to promote biodiversity.

D2 - Replacing landscape features: Where trees and other landscape features cannot be retained, they should be replaced with a proportional or higher quality landscaping scheme. A minimum replacement ratio of 2:1 must be adhered to, ensuring new planting considers future growth within its context and how it will affect the surrounding area. The size and amenity of the original landscaping should also be accounted for when deciding upon replacement planting. For now native UK plant species trees should be preferred or non-native where a specific reason exists.

D3 - Wildlife habitats: New developments must provide habitat creation by installing wildlife-friendly spaces and movement corridors such as solitary bee bricks, bumble bee boxes, swift bricks and hedgehog highways. All homes within a development should include some form of wildlife-friendly installation to ensure a cohesive network of spaces for wildlife is created.

D4 - Interconnectivity: Landscaping and public realm should be interconnected to create a network of green infrastructure both within any site, whilst connecting to the wider routes and places across the Neighbourhood Area.

D5 - Recreational green spaces: Open spaces should be located within walking distance of residential areas and linked through a series of green networks or corridors. Such linkages support a green infrastructure approach to development, allowing

wildlife to move along corridors to access foraging opportunities and habitats and people to access a range of different recreational facilities.

D6 - Natural offsets: Include suitable offsets to boundary vegetation such as hedgerows and provide additional planting on sensitive landscape edges. Screen planting may be required on some sites and should be designed in conjunction with results of any landscape and visual impact surveys.

D7 - Street trees and grass verges: New street proposals should include street trees and/or grass verges. Grass verges in particular are commonplace throughout the Neighbourhood Area, making the continuation of such features important in retaining local character. Grass verges should vary in shape and size dependent on location, but should be no narrower than 1.5m.

F.45

Figure 45: Fence panel with a hole at ground level to allow hedgehog movement. Multiple homes should have these to create a travel corridor for wildlife.

F.47

Figure 47: Lea Green Drive apartment development surrounded by grass verges, trees, hedgerow, and green spaces for use by residents.

F.46

Figure 46: Swift bricks - peripheral homes (i.e. facing the open landscape) should incorporate swift bricks within their facades.

F.48

Figure 48: Bee bricks - all homes should have some form of habitat creation designed into them such as this bee brick.

E Sustainable design and climate resilience

4.6 Sustainable design and climate resilience

Climate change has created the need to decrease our carbon footprint towards net-zero by providing innovative solutions to transportation (electrification) and the energy use of buildings. These codes are, therefore, in response to the climate emergency facing the world. Every locality has a part to play in decarbonising and moving towards achieving net-zero. This can be achieved by incorporating innovative design features and techniques into both new and existing developments.

Sustainable design incorporates innovative practices at all scales of design to achieve less impactful development footprints, whilst future proofing homes, settlements and natural environments. Reducing use of imported natural resources whilst increasing utilisation of local resources and sustainable natural resources can help to achieve this.

E1 - Resilience to Climate Change

All new development should work to moderate extremes of temperature, wind, humidity, local flooding and pollution within the parish:

- Avoid siting homes in high risk flood areas and mitigate increased risk of storms/flooding with sustainable drainage systems. These reduce the amount and rate at which surface water reaches sewers/watercourses. Often, the most sustainable option is collecting this water for reuse, for example in a water butt or rainwater harvesting system.

- Plant trees as part of major development for habitat, fuel and sustainable building materials.

- Ecosystems cannot adapt as fast as the climate is changing leading to loss of biodiversity. Protecting and enhancing the Neighbourhood Area's watercourses and green

infrastructure can combat this. Aim to increase ecology through biodiversity net-gain (BNG) on major development sites.

F.49

Figure 49: Key alternative natural energy sources

E2 – Assessing Alternative Energy Sources

Key considerations in the assessment of alternative energy sources may include:

- Optimise solar orientation of streets and buildings. Aim to orient buildings within 30' of south (both main fenestration and roof plane) for solar gain, solar energy (solar panels) and natural daylighting;

- Ground conditions to accommodate loops for ground source heat and space for air source heat pump units;

- Links to local estates for sustainable coppicing, harvesting or recycling of biomass fuels;

- Local wind speed and direction for micro-grid wind turbines;

- Applicants must be mindful noise and visual pollution by providing appropiate screening measures.

E3 - Energy efficiency measures towards Net-Zero carbon

By default, new development should adopt a fabric first approach in line with the governments emerging Future Homes Standard, to attain higher standards of insulation and energy conservation.

- Reducing energy demand further by employing passive design principles for homes is desirable and can make some forms of development more acceptable to the community (window orientation, solar gain, solar shading, increased insulation, ventilation with heat-recovery);

- Maximise on-site renewable energy generation (solar, ground source, air source and wind driven);

Consider building form and thermal efficiency: point-block/ terraced / semi-detached / detached all have different energy efficiency profiles. This must be balanced with local design preference and character considerations to ease acceptance for development.

F.50

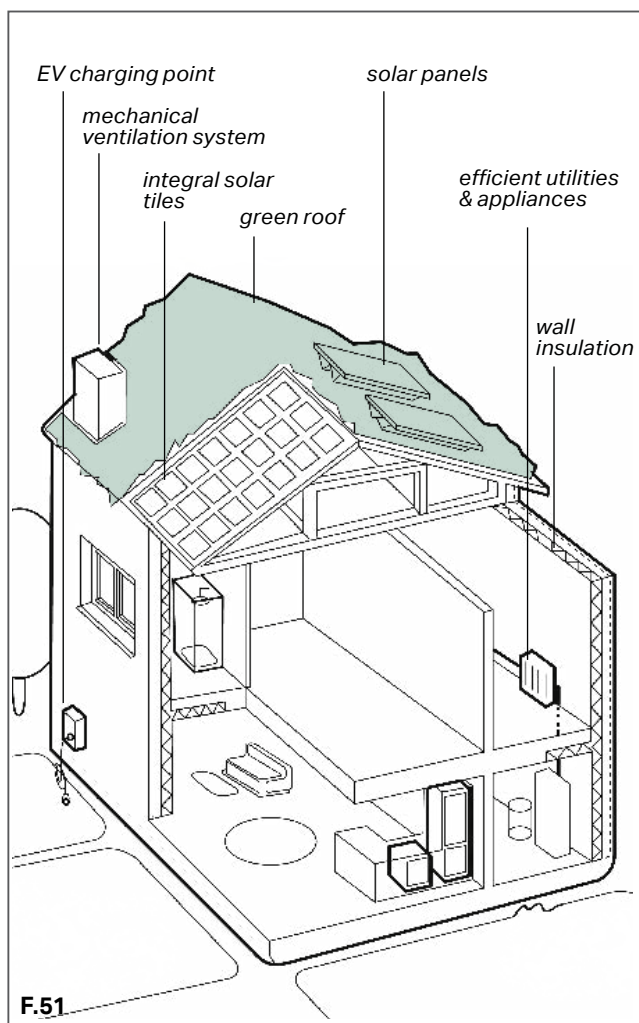**Figure 50:** Air source heat pump unit hidden out of view at the rear / side elevation of a building

Figure 51: Cut-through diagram of an energy efficient home and its features

EV charging point

solar panels

mechanical ventilation system

integral solar tiles

green roof

efficient utilities & appliances

wall insulation

F.51

E4 – Electric Vehicle charging

Current transition to electric vehicle technology and ownership comes with related issues that must be addressed by new development. Design issues to address for EV charging at the home include:

- Convenient on plot parking and charging points close to homes

- Potential to incorporate charging points under cover within car ports and garages

- Still need to integrate car parking sensitively within the street scene. For example, parking set behind the building line or front of plot spaces lined with native hedgerow planting

- Need to consider visitor parking / charging needs

- Potential for providing secure, serviced communal parking areas for higher density homes

- Existing unallocated / on-street parking areas and feasibility to provide electric charging infrastructure not linked to the home
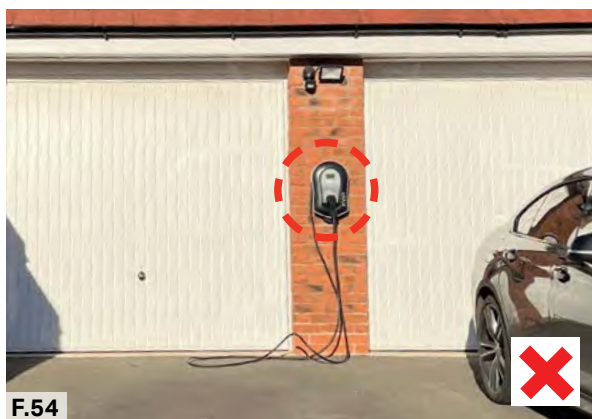

F.52

Figure 52: Typical domestic EV charging point

Figure 53: EV charging points should ideally be positioned to the side of dwellings to minimise complicating building facades.

Figure 54: EV charging points on front elevations should be avoided as they generally degrade the character of building frontages.

F Village gateways

4.7 Village gateways

A gateway is an entrance which acts as a transition between different areas, creating a sense of arrival into the settlement.

Gateways should be easily readable to those who pass through, understanding their location in context to the wider area.

The gateway or entry to any village, town or city plays an important function in forming initial impressions and either appealing or repelling potential visitors. It might be viewed as a key tool for persuading the tourist to spend time and money at that specific area.

Particularly significant features are historic roadside elements such recognisable fingerposts, milestones, post and telephone boxes, nameplates, war monuments, horse troughs, etc.

F1 - Placemaking: Designers must set out a clear response to the character of the individual settlements in which development is sited or adjacent to. This should be achieved by respecting and/or referencing both the built and natural character features within the village.

F2 - Entry Treatments: Entry treatments are often used at the sides of roads to notify drivers of their arrival into an area with a different character. They can be employed to indicate the beginning of traffic calming measures or that the driver is entering a different speed zone.

F3 - Location: A gateway should be positioned so that motorists do not encounter it unexpectedly as this could be dangerous. Consideration should be given when putting gateways on lengthy curves where they might not initially be visible to the vehicle. Gateway placement ought to avoid obstructing access to frontage properties, and there should be a sufficient clear verge to accommodate any vertical elements. A gateway placed close to the first structures in a neighbourhood can accentuate a shift in the nature of the journey in rural settings.
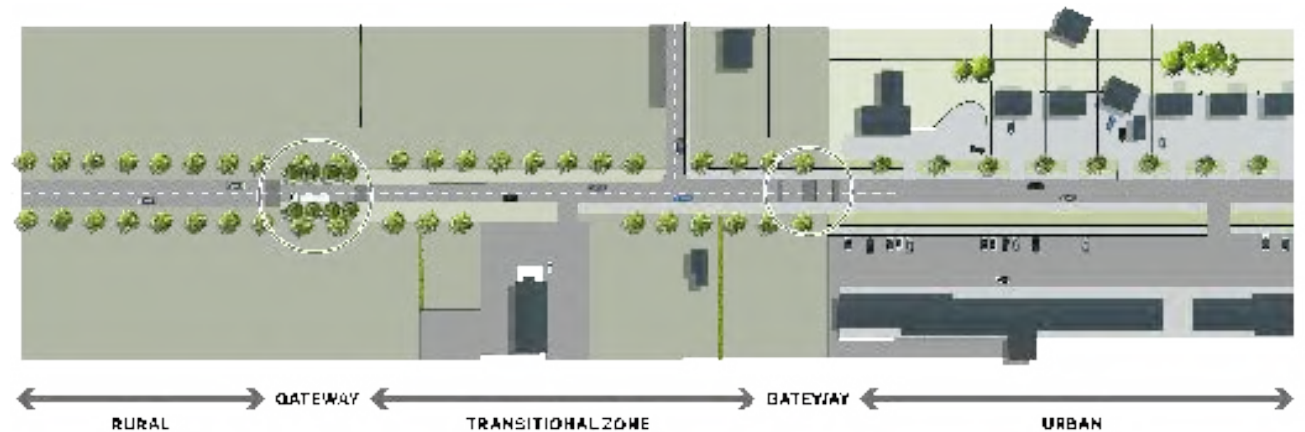
F4 - Road Surfaces: A rumbler device provides a visual, audible and vibratory effect for motorists. These can take the form of a surface with contrasting colours, and/or a textured surface. In order for the surface to be clearly seen from a distance, it should typically be at least 5 meters long, with longer lengths increasing the conspicuity, but lessening the impact of the entryway.

Edgeline hatching markings can provide the impression that the roadway is smaller than it actually is whilst allowing larger vehicles to pass through these spaces if necessary. To

provide a narrowing impression, one can also use build-outs, chicanes, and pinch-points.

F5 - Signage: Signs create the opportunity to enhance the sense of place in the neighbourhood by establishing initial impressions. Settlements should utilise this by reflecting the local environment, culture and history. Utilising natural materials, muted colors, and placing gateway signs in open spaces can help to achieve simplicity and visual appeal.

F6 - Landscaping: Transitioning from naturalistic planting to more formal schemes helps to delineate the change from a rural to urban setting. Tree planting enhances the feeling of enclosure and creates a threshold to the village, separating it from the rural environment and other settlements.

F.55

Figure 55: Example of a rural to urban transition zone

F.56

Figure 56: Buxton village sign incorporates a mounted millstone from the local mill to represent its agricultural heritage

F.57

Figure 57: Example of a settlement gateway at Dickens Heath with a timber and metal plaque sign

G Shop frontages

4.8 Shop frontages

A sensitively designed shop front can have a beneficial impact by not only advertising the business inside but also by enhancing the overall character of the area. These can then provide improvements to the viability of towns.

Wythall's settlement areas each have their own identity, which stems from their historic functions, street patterns, and use of local materials and design elements. This sense of uniqueness is important to both residents and visitors, and it is this traditional character that should be preserved and enhanced.

G1 - Placemaking: Designers must set out a clear response to the character of the individual settlements in which development is sited or adjacent to. This should be achieved by respecting and/or referencing both the built and natural character features within the village.

G2 - Design: The unique character of the host building should be considered while designing a shop front.

- The design of the shop front should reflect the overall character and proportions of the building.

- When the host building lacks architectural significance and it would be improper to replicate its style within a proposed shop front, crucial aspects such as design, materials, and height should be pulled from neighbouring structures.

- Materials should complement the building's and the surrounding character. Traditional storefronts should be made of natural materials as well as being designed, coloured, and polished in traditional fashion. Modern designs offer more freedom, but the finish and colour should compliment rather than conflict with the surroundings.

- Signage can be made to enhance both old and modern storefronts, and it can significantly improve the quality of the street scene.

G3 - Retail boundary treatments: There is currently no uniformity in boundary treatments across existing shopping parades. New treatments should be in keeping with the immediate surrounding area such as low brick walls or hedging, not necessarily in keeping with the other parades.

G4 - Parking: There should be parking provisions made for new shops or parades, including disabled spaces and EV charging points. To prevent damage caused by parking on grass verges, the implementation of class II kerbs will prevent the encroachment of parking vehicles whilst allowing emergency vehicles to climb them.

F.58

Figure 58: A good example of uniform and proportionate shop frontages on Station Road, Wythall

F.59

Figure 59: Diagram of shops which relate well to the building facade and the streetscape

F.60

Figure 60: Class II Bullnosed Kerb

H Street furniture

4.9 Street furniture

Street furniture includes street signs, posts, luminaries, light columns, seating, post boxes, bins, cycle racks, bollards as well as items designed to house utilities.

Street furniture should provide comfort, perform a function, and contribute to the aesthetic value of local character.

For the purpose of this guide we will include here manholes, meter casings and other street furniture used to house or cover said utilities. Some of these elements are governed by specific standards and their aesthetics or format cannot be changed. However, if the possibility for customisation is an option, the following codes should be adhered to during the design stages of any proposal.

H1 - Location: Consider the location of street furniture and routes of utilities from the early stages of the design process. Analyse how all the elements will be seen and perceived when placed and viewed at once.

H2 - Usage: All public space should be clearly defined and designed to fulfill specific roles and functions for different range of users.

H3 - Rest Stops: Provide seating places in convenient locations and gathering spaces such as public green spaces. Recycled composite benches in a natural wood finish is preferred over timber or metal due to its sustainability and longevity credentials.

H4 - Design: Create a palette of street furniture and signage that is complementary and is likely to stand the test of time.

H5 - Paving Styles: Existing local pavements, shop fronts, and parking have tarmac surfacing, providing a practical and uniform finish across the Neighbourhood Area. Block paving could be used in pedestrian only areas as it can easily accommodate tactile paving at crossings.

H6 - Lighting: Proposed lampposts are to be of similar style to the existing 6m steel columns with TRT mini LED lamps.

H7 - Bollards: Both plastic and concrete bollards are found throughout the Neighbourhood Area. Plastic mounted bollards are preferred from both an aesthetic and practical standpoint.

H8 - Bins: Bromsgrove District Council have agreed black and gold waste-bins, either square or circular, for use around the Neighbourhood Area's as well as any future developments.

H9 - Cycle Racks: Creating opportunities for active travel throughout the area is encouraged, with cycle racks being implemented in key locations, such as nearby shopping parades. These should be simple in nature, both covered and uncovered designs are encouraged.

H10 - Noticeboards: Existing shopping parades and other urban areas have timber mounted community noticeboards which should be incorporated into larger future developments.

Figure 61: Re-composite bench & a black and gold litter bin

Figure 63: Example of a suitable bike rack (Sheffield Stand) located at the front of a building

Figure 62: Example of neighbourhood noticeboard, recycled plastic bollard, tarmac with tactile paving, signage, black and gold bins, and 6m steel lamposts.

I Car parking

4.10 Car parking

Car parking is a particular issue within the Neighbourhood Area, with several developments not adequately catering for the number of vehicles realistically used. With public transport somewhat limited, private vehicular ownership is required by most inhabitants, making car parking design an important design consideration for new development. The requirements of the vehicle should not be the overriding consideration in the layout of new housing. New roads and parking areas should not visually dominate areas of housing.

For further guidance on car parking standards refer to Bromsgrove District Council's *Residential Design Guide, Parking and Access Arrangements (Page 25)*.

I1 - On-street parking: On-street parking is the only parking option for several dwellings within the Neighbourhood Area. In order to reduce the visual impact of parked cars, on-street parking should be avoided in future development. Where on street parking is unavoidable it should be broken up by landscaping and tree planting.

I2 - Front of dwelling driveway parking: Parking provided on driveways directly in front of dwellings should be restricted due to the visual impact that cars have on the street. Therefore, a maximum of 2 dwellings in a row will be permitted to provide parking in this way. Front gardens should be a minimum depth of 6m to allow movement around parked vehicles and also be well screened with hedgerows when providing parking space to the front of a dwelling.

I3 - Side of dwelling driveway parking: Parking being provided on a driveway to the side of a dwelling should be of sufficient length (5m minimum) so that a car can park behind the frontage line of the dwelling. This will reduce the visual impact that cars will have on the street scene. When parking is provided to the side of a dwelling a minimum front garden depth of 3m should be provided.

I4 - Garage parking: Parking being provided in a garage to the side of a dwelling should be set back from the frontage line of the dwelling to reduce the visual impact of cars on the street. Garages should also provide sufficient room for cars to park inside them as well as provide some room for storage. The minimum internal dimensions of a garage should therefore be 6m x 3m.

I5 - Car parks: Generally runs of car parking spaces should not exceed 6 spaces in width before being interspersed by planting. All landscaping and car park surfaces should be chosen to respect the rural setting of the Neighbourhood Area and should be of a good quality and appropriate appearance for their immediate context.

I6 - Planting buffer: All car parks and parking spaces should incorporate appropriate planting as a landscape buffer. Parked cars have a negative visual impact on streetscape character and should therefore be softened by planting such as street trees, planters, and planted grass verges.

F.64

Figure 64: Street parking like this should be avoided as it has a negative visual impact and often impedes pedestrian access along pavements.

F.66

Figure 66: Side of dwelling and garage parking like this is the standard of parking most dwellings should adopt, ensuring cars are not as visible.

F.65

Figure 65: An example of how front of dwelling parking with no landscape or boundary treatments, allows cars to dominate building frontages.

F.67

Figure 67: While front of dwelling driveway parking is not normally accepted as best practice, the above image shows how landscaping can soften the appearance of cars.

J Settlement edges

4.11 Settlement edges

The Neighbourhood Area's prominent landscape character lends its settlements to have sensitive edges with the surrounding open countryside. The character of the area's open landscape is valued by the local community and cherished views in particular are features that should be protected from future development.

Where the area's villages border the open countryside, development should be sensitive to the character of the landscape by providing an element of transition between the two area types. This not only respects landscape character but it is also conducive in producing attractive and gentle village gateways (see Code F for specific design codes on village gateways).

J1 - Avoiding ribbon development: New development should be sensitive to the surrounding landscape. Inappropriate ribbon development away from the principal settlement should be avoided where it has an adverse impact on landscape character.

J2 - Avoiding settlement coalescence: Landscape gaps between settlements should be retained to ensure the distinctiveness of each settlement and avoid coalescence.

J3 - Maintaining distinctive settlement edges: Development should not be proposed which breaches a distinctive settlement edge.

J4 - Planting buffers at the settlement edge: Development at the settlement edge should be buffered with dense vegetation belts that help mitigate the visual impact from any new developments.

J5 - Integrating green corridors: Green corridors are recommended so as to integrate the new development with the surrounding landscape, as well as providing additional pedestrian and habitat links.

J6 - Lower density at the settlement edge: Consider using lower density development at the settlement edge in fostering a gentle transition between built form and the character of the low-lying landscape. This could include bungalow or 1.5 storey development. Anything above 1.5 storeys should be appropriately screened with planting to mitigate its scale against the backdrop of the surrounding landscape.
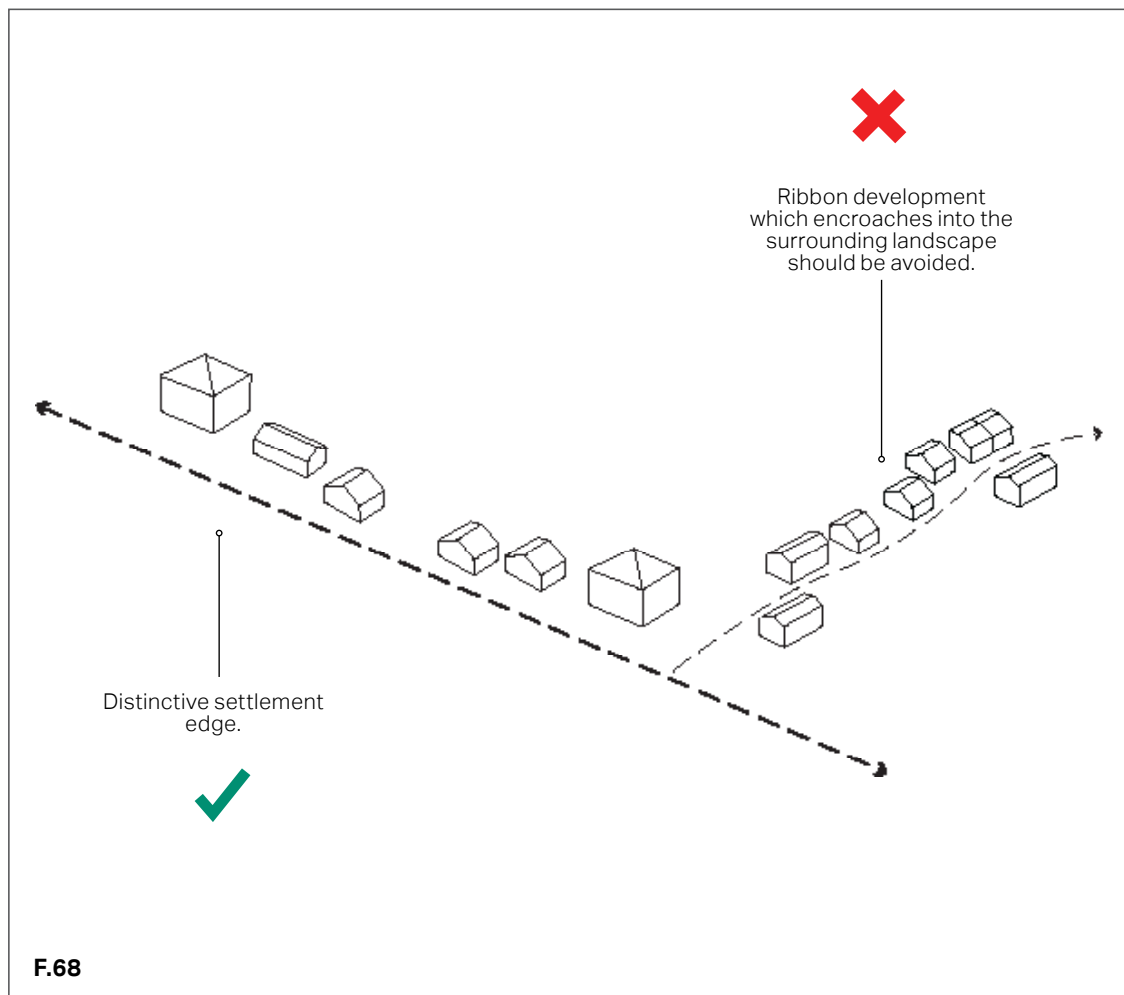
❌ Ribbon development which encroaches into the surrounding landscape should be avoided.

Distinctive settlement edge.

✓

F.68

Figure 68: Design Code showing settlement edge within the Neighbourhood Area.

F.69

Figure 69: Development at the settlement edge should have lower densities to achieve a soft transition in to the surrounding landscape.

K Protecting cherished views

4.12 Protecting cherished views

The Neighbourhood Area is host to an array of cherished views. These views are tabulated in Section 2 (2.3 Valued local green spaces and cherished views) of this report where descriptors and further detail of their character can be found. The views have been identified by the Wythall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and are therefore considered to be of great importance to the local community.

As such, the views should be protected, with planning proposals ensuring they are sensitive to the views. This can be achieved by adhering to the adjacent design codes on protecting cherished views in the Neighbourhood Area.

K1 - Obstructing cherished views: The position of new development should be carefully considered in relation to cherished views characteristic of the Neighbourhood Area identified in Section 2 of this document. Any attempt to disrupt or inhibit existing views should be resisted.

K2 - Minimising detractors and light spill in new development: The use of skylights, large glass panes, reflective materials or expansive flat roofs for new developments should be carefully considered if the building will be prominent in important views. This is to minimise detractors in views and light spill. New developments should seek to reduce light spill by minimising glass panes/windows/doors/ skylights and using downward directional lights/ bollards where lighting is necessary for safety.

K3 - Locally appropriate planting schemes: Appropriate planting to integrate buildings into the landscape is encouraged however this should be used to enhance and retain character rather than to alter it. Planting should reflect native species mix and be used chiefly to soften building lines or unavoidable visual detractors.
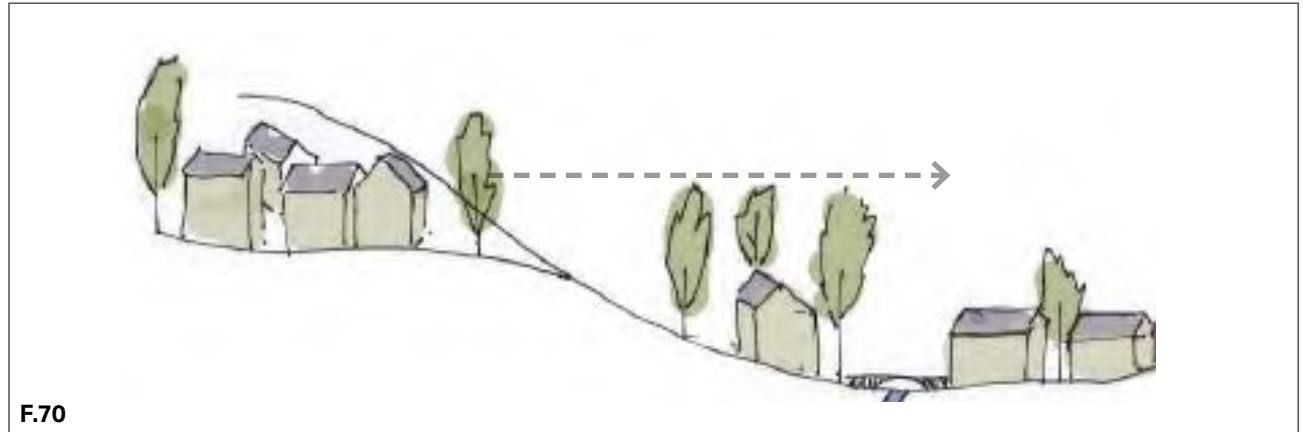
K4 - Avoiding camouflage of poor design: The use of planting as 'screening' to avoid following the design principles set out in this document is unacceptable. Likewise, camouflaging roofs through material/ colour/green roof, but failing to consider the height of elevations is unacceptable. Good design is about integration, not camouflage.

K5 - Prominent landmark views: Views to key landmarks within and around the Neighbourhood Area should be retained through careful siting of new development. The
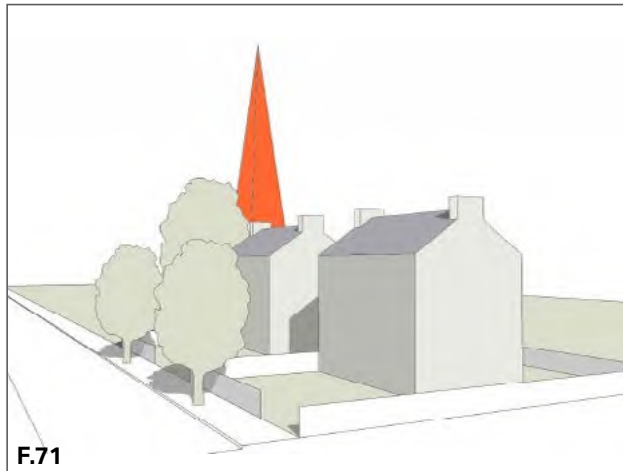
setting of key landmarks, should be a consideration in all new development. Where new development is sited within the setting of a key landmark, provision must be made for the enhancement of its setting (such as increasing the amount of open space around it or increasing its distance from buildings) and provision of information panels/signs.

K6 - Protecting and creating views for way-finding: Buildings should be oriented to maintain existing key views or to create new views/vistas which can contribute to local way-finding. Views of both landmark buildings (i.e. church spires) and landscape features (i.e. hills) should be utilised to promote legibility within the area.

F.70

Figure 70: The cherished views identified on page in 2.3 of this report should be unobstructed by any future development. This also includes views of local landmarks which aid local wayfinding.

F.71

Figure 71: Views of important landmarks such as church spires/towers should be protected to enhance way-finding in and around each village.

F.72

Figure 72: St Mary's Church in Wythall is an example of a local landmark due to its prominent church tower. Views of this should be protected.

L Protecting and enhancing green verges

4.13 Protecting and enhancing green verges

The Neighbourhood Area is host to a network of green verges both along streets and at junctions where corner plots are setback from the road via a green corner verge. These spaces contribute to the openness and character of streetscapes, as well as providing buffers between roads, buildings and pavements. Corner verges in particular also enhance safety for both pedestrian and car users as they provide more splay (i.e. visibility around corners).

The Wythall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has identified grass verges as areas to protect and preserve. Houses within areas of the Parish have increasingly begun to encroach on the boundary verge spaces, in particular, garden walls being extended to pavement edge, resulting in reduced splays, less green space, and an overall degradation in character along streets. This activity or corner plots is of particular concern due to degraded vehicular visibility. The following codes aim to maintain original estate development designs.

L1 - Avoiding the loss of green verges Incorporating existing grass verges within plots (i.e. for front gardens or extensions), particularly at corners/junctions, must be avoided. Grass verges are important assets that should be maintained as character features of the Neighbourhood Area's streetscapes. When designing plots, proposals must ensure corners are left in the public space environment.

L2 - Creating open streetscapes - all proposals including new streets should incorporate green verges within the streetscape design. This is to enhance the openness and green character of streets which has successfully been achieved in areas such as the Bovis Estate (See Character Area 4: Bovis Estate in Section 3 of this report).

L3 - Avoiding verge (and pavement) parking - To mitigate the likelihood of illegal or improper street parking, the use of bollards, planters and trees should be utilised to prevent car users from being able to mount and park on grass verges, as well as pavements. This is particularly important at corners/junctions where visibility must be maintained.

L4 - Enhancing visibility at corners/junctions - New proposals must include grass verges at corners/junctions to increase splays and the subsequent visibility for both pedestrians and car users.

L5 - Planting within corner/junction verges - Planting within corner/junctions verges should be low-medium in height to maintain visibility. High-level planting such as trees should therefore be avoided.

L6 - Planting within linear verges - Linear verges along streets should include planting such as street trees to enhance the green character of streetscapes, as well as providing natural barriers to on-street parking.

L7 - Placement of planting within verges - planting such as street trees should be positioned near enough to the road so to mitigate the likelihood of car users mounting the verges for parking.

L8 - Placement of verges - Green verges should be incorporated within all Neighbourhood roads and Residential roads (See Vehicular Networks plan on pages 32-33) to foster open, green and attractive streetscapes.

L9 - Width of green verges - The width and/or the splay of verges should generally be larger on Neighbourhood roads than on Residential roads, due to the contrast in car speeds and street widths. Buildings should be setback further along busier roads (i.e. Neighbourhood roads) as is currently practiced along a majority of the Neighbourhood Area's existing Neighbourhood road network.

Figure 73: BEFORE (left) & AFTER (right) - two examples of how corner plots encroaching on corner green verges has degraded the streetscape due to loss of green space.

Checklist

05

1

General design guidelines for new development:

- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;

- Reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces;

- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;

- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;

- Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;

- Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;

- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;

- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;

- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;

- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;

- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;

- Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;

- Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;

- Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind; and

- Seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation), before specification of energy efficient building services and finally incorporate renewable energy sources.

2

Street grid and layout:

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?

- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?

- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?

- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?

- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?

- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

3

Local green spaces, views & character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?

- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?

- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?

- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? I.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.

- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?

- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?

- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?

- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?

- Can any new views be created?

- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?

- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?

3 (Continued)

Local green spaces, views & character:

- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how will this be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention e.g. permeable landscaping, swales etc.?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

4

Gateway and access features:

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

5

Buildings layout and grouping:

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the villagescape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?

5 (Continued)

Buildings layout and grouping:

- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles, with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?

- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night? This is to reduce peak loads. And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?

6

Building line and boundary treatment:

- What are the characteristics of the building line?

- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?

- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

7

Building heights and roof-line:

- What are the characteristics of the roof-line?

- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?

- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?

- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now, or in the future?

- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over shading?

8

Household extensions:

- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing or overshadowing impact?

- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?

- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?

- In case of side extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?

- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?

- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?

- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?

- Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?

- Can any materials be re-used in-situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?

9

Building materials & surface treatment:

- What is the distinctive material in the area?

- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?

- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?

- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?

- Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?

- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?

9 (Continues)

Building materials & surface treatment:

- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.

- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced? E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

10

Car parking:

- What parking solutions have been considered?

- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?

- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?

- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?

- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?

- Can electric vehicle charging points be provided?

- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/ communal facility where appropriate?

- If covered car ports or cycle storage is included, can it incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels or a bio-diverse roof in its design?

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