

APPENDIX 6: Witherley Design Guide

Introduction

The quality of development across the villages is varied and therefore the Witherley Parish Neighbourhood Plan seeks to encourage all new development to aim for the highest standards in design and environmental sustainability and respond to the character of the part of the settlement in which it is located. As our parish is small any development will be of a small scale and it is therefore critical that any additions are of high-quality design

The whole Parish is very rural in nature and our survey evidences that the communities highly value the landscape, the diversity of our wildlife and the rural vistas and views. Any design, therefore, must be sympathetic to the rural nature of the Parish and be placed in order to maintain the identified key views and vistas of the parish. In each of the three main settlements views of the historic churches were noted to be of importance.

The evidence demonstrates that we need affordable housing and smaller properties of no more than 3 bedrooms. The needs of young families and older residents are of particular interest. Consequently, we expect any developments to be of the highest environmental standards with a focus on low energy bills. Passive housing would be particularly welcome.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Policy Frameworks

The Parish sits within Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and this guidance augments 'The Good Design Guide', the supplementary planning guidance the Council adopted on 18th March 2020. The guide's policy highlights key themes that *'frame the character of the Borough, providing the underlying context for developing good design'*.

Purpose

The purpose of this Design Guide is to ensure that future development within Witherley Parish respects the character and setting of the villages. Developers must demonstrate how their proposed development reinforces the individual settlements character and augments, compliments and fits within its neighbourhood.

The Design Guide does not supersede or replace the suggestions and guidance in relevant national and local documents but is designed to complement and augment them. The intention is that development within the Plan area reflects the high standard of accommodation desired by residents. The aspiration is to do more than avoid a negative impact. It is to ensure that future development improves the villages for the whole community.

It is not the intention of this guide to impose a style of building design, we recognise that our villages have developed and changed over the years and we want to encourage good examples of modern design and construction. It is, however, intended that any development proposals do not conflict with their surroundings nor diminish the existing historical value and local amenity

Design Guidance:

All development proposals should address the following:

Context and Character

New buildings are expected to maintain the integrity of the village character. Building scale, styles and materials should therefore be coherent with, and complimentary to, its surroundings in terms of visual impact. Particular care must be taken to reflect and respect the importance of neighbouring listed properties and ancient buildings, allowing generous sight lines to these buildings and their demesne.

Design Appropriate to the Historic and Rural Character of the Village

All residential development should enhance and reinforce the local character and sense of place of the specific location in which it is situated. New buildings are expected to maintain the integrity of the village character. Building scale, styles and materials should therefore be coherent with, and complimentary to, the neighbourhood in terms of visual impact.

Particular care must be taken to reflect and respect the importance of neighbouring listed properties and ancient buildings. We welcome modern designs of high quality and architectural merit, but they must not jar with neighbouring properties. Building densities should be in keeping with surrounding residential properties and provide space for greenery and planting if common to the area. If not terraced there should be good separation between the buildings to ensure that any development does not look suburban in nature.

Environmental impact

Development should incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques to meet high standards for energy and water efficiency, including the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology and where appropriate, grey water systems. This should be incorporated into the design in such a way that the visual impact in comparison to historical buildings within the village is inconsequential.

Good thermal performance of buildings, including use of thermally efficient building materials, is encouraged to help reduce fuel poverty, and ensure that local residents are able to live in warm, healthy homes which they can afford to heat.

Any new development should demonstrate how it will minimise the impact on local flora and fauna. Existing trees, hedgerows and topography should be preserved as far as possible. Provision should be made for encouraging and supporting wildlife through provision of bat boxes, nesting sites.

Existing grass verges and banks should be retained where possible and provision made for the upkeep of any new green areas within the development.

The Plan supports the retrofitting of historic buildings to improve their energy efficiency, whilst ensuring their heritage significance is protected. Where appropriate, new housing should be capable of being adapted to meet the changing needs of occupants over time.

New commercial development should aim to meet as a minimum the relevant design category of Buildings Research Establishment BREEAM building standard 'excellent'.

Flood Resilience and Resistance

Development should be designed to:

- reduce the consequences of flooding and to facilitate recovery from the effects of flooding
- incorporate flood-resistant construction to prevent entry of water or to minimise the amount of water that may enter a building in the event of a flood event.

Vehicular Access and Parking

All developments should provide adequate provision for vehicular access and off-road parking.

The number of parking spaces should be a minimum of two for properties of 3 bedrooms or less, three for 4-bedroom properties and four for 5 bedrooms or more.

Each enclosed garage space should include an external drive/forecourt large enough to accommodate vehicle standing to allow safe ingress and egress. The minimum acceptable dimensions for a car parking space will be 5.0m x 2.4m x 2.0m (length x width x height).

Utilities and Waste

Development should incorporate sustainable drainage systems with an adequate maintenance regime put in place. Appropriate provision for the secure storage of waste bins and recyclable materials out of sight of public areas is also important. Meter cabinets and utility entry points should not be sited on property frontages.

Implications for Local Ecology

Development proposals should demonstrate how the application addresses the following environmental issues:

- Roof and wall construction should follow current technical best-practice recommendations for integral bird nest boxes and bat breeding and roosting sites
- Hedges (or fences with ground-level gaps) should be used for property boundaries to maintain connectivity of habitat for small ground-based animals such as hedgehogs.
- Security lighting should be operated by intruder switching, not on constantly. Site and sports facility lighting should be switched off during 'curfew' hours between March and October, following best practice guidelines in Bats and Lighting (Leicestershire & Rutland

Environmental Record Centre 2014). Maximum light spillage onto bat foraging corridors should be 1 lux.

- Existing trees and hedges of ecological or arboricultural value on and immediately adjacent to new development sites should be retained and protected whenever possible. Where this is demonstrably not practicable, the developer should be responsible for arranging new plantings on a one-for-one (or better) ratio, using diverse native species, either on site or elsewhere suitable locations in the Plan Area. Heights and density at maturity should be considered when planning tree planting.
- Sustainable drainage and landscaping schemes such as ponds should be designed to incorporate measures for habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement and should include a resourced management plan to maintain the designed biodiversity value of these features.
- All applications for new development shall demonstrate that all surface water discharges have been carried out in accordance with the principles laid out within the drainage hierarchy, in such that a discharge to the public sewerage systems are avoided, where possible.

Density and Layout

Density should be sympathetic to the settlement; no private gated areas of housing should be created, as integration of the new developments to the village is essential. All proposed densities should be appropriate to that of the surrounding residential properties and proportionate to the immediate setting.

The arrangement of buildings should be such that it maximises the benefits of natural light for the properties. It must also avoid a negative impact in terms of noise or light pollution for its neighbours. The arrangement of buildings should be such that the visual impact on village approaches and on views from within and without the village will be small in scale and complement those existing. It should also provide space and amenity for practical considerations such as parking and gardens as set out in later sections below. Building frontages should be set back from the street and privacy of new dwellings from public areas should be maintained.

Height and Scale

Dwelling heights should be one or two stories. Evidence shows there is a particular need for bungalows. The height of proposed buildings should be proportionate, and sympathetic to the topography and not overbearing to the surroundings.

Elevations

Sensitive use of oak frame and glazing is acceptable when appropriate to the setting if not overlooking adjacent residential property. Other external cladding materials such composite panels, glass fibre, plastics, tensile sheeting, concrete or similar modern construction materials will be considered in exceptional cases where the quality of architectural design and setting justifies its use.

Rooves

Rooves across the development should have a mixture of materials chiefly clay tiles, which are the local vernacular. Modern substitutes for these materials would not normally be encouraged unless they are part of a modern design of significant architectural merit. Solar panels are encouraged but must not detract from the architectural integrity of the area.

Roof lines should be pitched with appropriate ridge tiles. Flat roofs would not normally be acceptable. Edge detailing to tiled rooflines and gable end boards should be incorporated into the design. Design features such as overhanging eaves must be similar to the local vernacular.

Garages

Should be constructed to match village dwelling materials with conventional dual pitched roofs and either timber framed open fronts or timber doors. No UPVC or aluminium doors should be used unless complementary to the rest of the development style and of good quality.

Roads and Driveways

Should be of varied materials to sit in with the landscape, taking material examples from the village. Stone cobbles, stone sets, and gravel are all desirable. Tarmac should be used only in smaller areas. Hard standing should not comprise the entirety of property frontage and should be off set using planting or lawns to soften the visual impact and reduce surface water run-off. Boundary kerbs should usually be formed of stone to be in keeping with the village

Green Building Materials

Use of green building materials with a high μ -value for thermal insulation and the exploitation of green technologies is implicit in an appropriate choice of materials. The use of new technologies that can minimise the carbon footprint of new dwellings whilst blending in seamlessly with their surroundings is positively encouraged. Grey water systems, low carbon technologies such as heat pumps and photo voltaic panels are actively encouraged subject to appropriate consideration of visual impact

Chimneys

Chimneys should reflect one of the many styles of the parish or other materials that can be seen in the adjacency, chimney pots should be encouraged to maximise decorative finish.

Gables

Gables open to prominent view do not need to be represented with equilibrium, but as with existing village housing, the use of odd windows to draw the eye with interest, barge boards or decorative gable boards as part of an accepted design scheme would link with the existing village architecture.

Window Treatments

Treatments should be varied and consistent to neighbouring properties and building style. Detailing such as stone lintels and sills, coloured cant brick sills and stone pad stones or keystones are actively encouraged. UPVC should be avoided.

Doors

All doors should be wood not UPVC and in keeping with the design of the dwelling. A porch, canopy or overhang is desirable for doorways of detached and semi-detached houses. A porch area should be incorporated to the entrances of new dwellings.

Boundary Walls

Boundary walls should not usually exceed 1.8m in height where facing on to roads. Boundary fences should not usually exceed 1.2m in height where visible from public areas and the use of traditional metal rails and bar fences is preferable to picket fencing and timber boards

Colours

Paint finishes to doors, windows and walls must be sympathetic to the village and thus bright hues and the use of bold colours should not form the dominant colour of the building or the majority of its design features (not an issue requiring planning permission but encouraged as good practice).