



# Knutsford

## Neighbourhood Plan

### Knutsford Design Guide

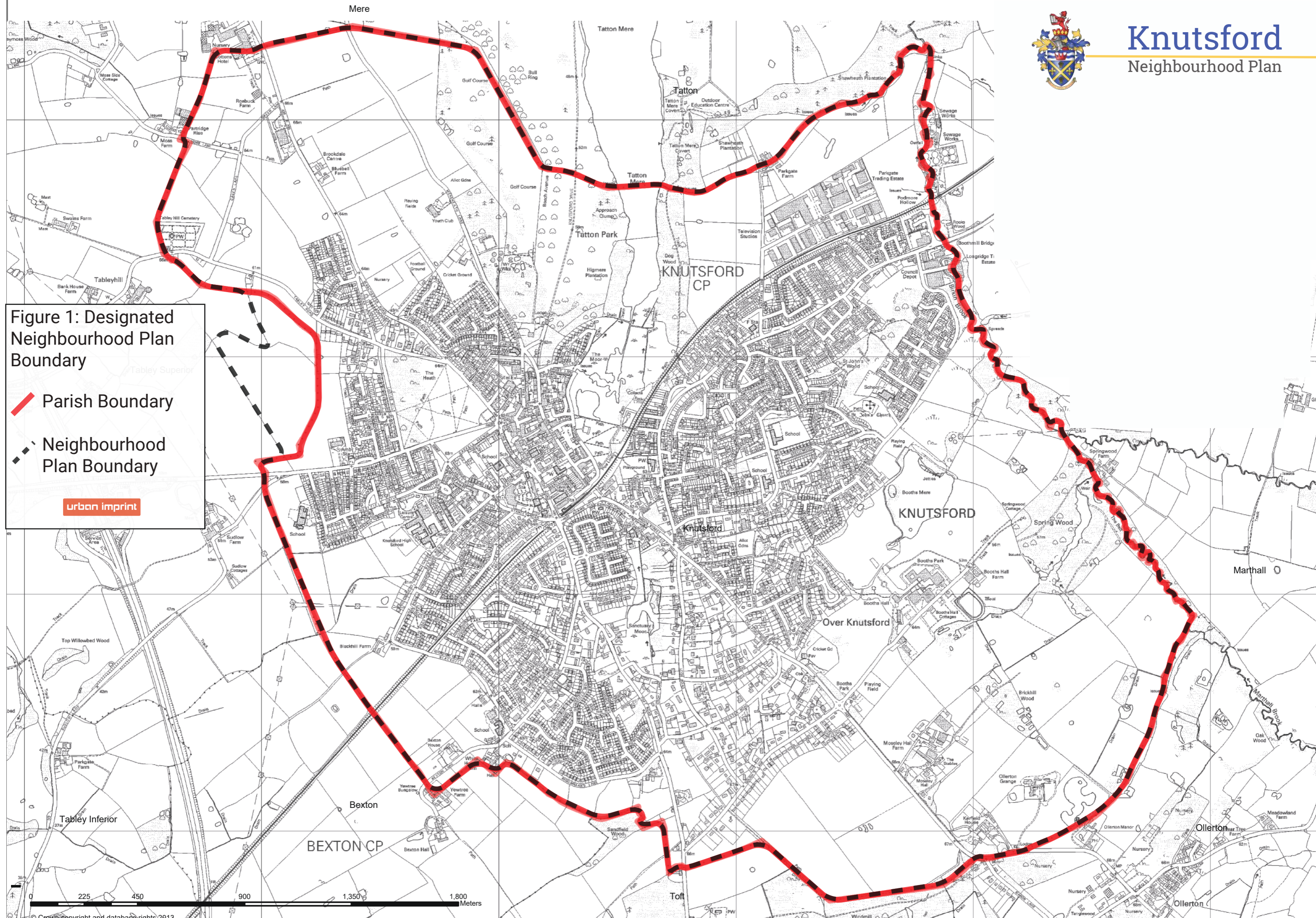
## Acknowledgements

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Considerable assistance in the preparation of this Design Guide was received from Knutsford's Town Clerk and its Town and Borough Councillors, Cheshire East's Neighbourhood Plan Team and its Conservation Officers, as well as residents, landowners and their planning consultants in the Plan's various Working Groups. Urban Imprint, Knutsford's Neighbourhood Plan consultants, also advised on content and designed the final document.

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# 1. Introduction

## Knutsford as a Special Place

- 1.1. Knutsford's distinctiveness lies in its origin on two sites – the medieval settlement on higher ground in Over Knutsford, of which some scheduled monuments remain, and the Georgian and Victorian development of Nether Knutsford on the other side of the valley along King Street towards Tatton Park.
- 1.2. The landed estates of the Egertons, the Leycesters and the Leghs surrounded the town and constrained development until the late 18th and early 19th century. This resulted in a rich and eclectic grouping of historic and architecturally interesting buildings within the town centre.
- 1.3. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries these were extended into equally varied and distinctive developments as the town expanded. Striking new contributions to Knutsford's architectural heritage continue to this day.
- 1.4. Knutsford's attraction lies in its five Conservation Areas which include the Town Centre, an inter-war local authority estate and an Edwardian development of prestigious houses in spacious grounds that is itself evolving with new designs.
- 1.5. The challenge as the town responds to the need for new housing and further expansion under Cheshire East Council's Local Plan Strategy is not only to preserve the many nationally and locally listed buildings but also to enhance their settings and significance, and give them new roles and purposes, whenever possible, in the economic, social and cultural life of the town.
- 1.6. Knutsford therefore has a strong sense of place and a distinctive character based on the diverse range of building types and architectural styles accumulated over the centuries. Residents have a strong relationship to this special and defining heritage, and value its contribution to the quality of life and its prosperity.

## The Purpose of the Knutsford Design Guide

- 1.7. Through this Design Guide, residents wish to ensure that future development respects the town's historic character and helps create a new design vision for the town's future. National and local policies require new developments to be 'contextually responsive' to the area in which they are proposed. Knutsford now has to make the most of the spatial and environmental opportunities that it offers, and overcome its constraints for the benefit of the residents coming to live in the town and for future generations of Knutsfordians.
- 1.8. This Design Guide is one part of the Knutsford Design Framework. The Framework comprises three documents – the Knutsford Design Guide (this document); the Knutsford Character Assessment; and the Knutsford Green Corridors Document. The Framework provides the overall design parameters for implementation of Neighbourhood Plan Policies.
- 1.9. The Knutsford Design Guide is intended to provide design guidance for new development within Knutsford's Neighbourhood Plan area. It applies to all development works, including new housing and employment sites and to extensions and conversions. The Guide also focuses on elements such as boundary treatments, public realm and the street scene.

## The Use of the Knutsford Design Guide

- 1.10. The following sections of the Design Guide are expressed as expectations that landowners/developers should take fully into account. The Guide is not intended to stifle innovative design. Developments, however, will be expected to follow the Design Guide unless well-researched and cogent justifications for any deviation from the Guide are provided..
- 1.11. These expectations are therefore intended for pre-planning application discussion. [CEC Local Plan Policy SE7 (5)].
- 1.12. Reference should be made to this Design Guide at both outline and reserved matters stages of the development process.

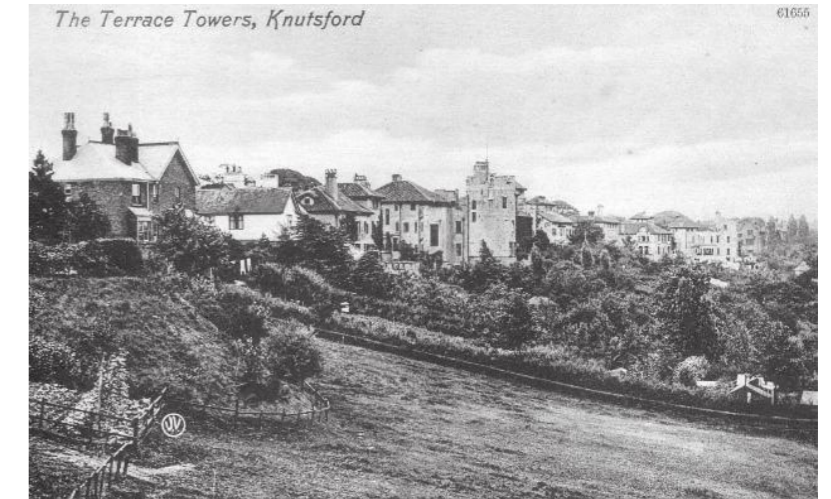


Illustration 1: Watt buildings on Legh Road from the Legh Arms c.1911



Illustration 2: St. Cross Church, Crosstown from Barncroft Open Space

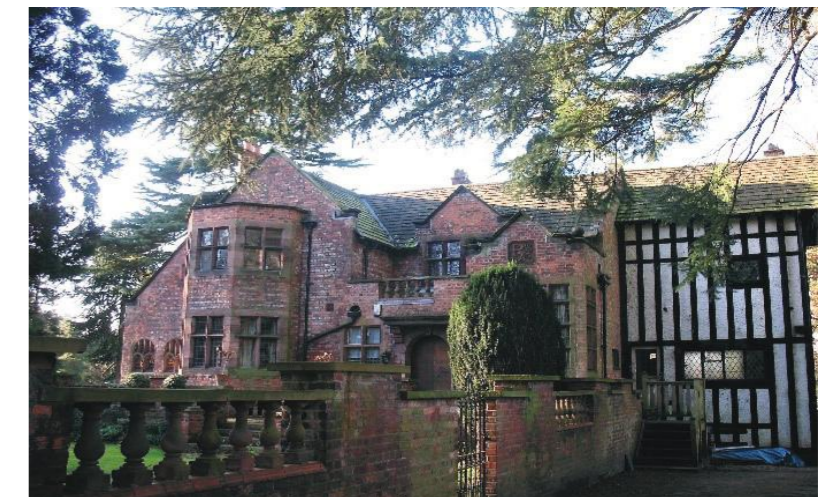


Illustration 3: Brae Cottage, home of Henry Royce, Legh Road

## 2. Objectives in Relation to Development

### Design Guide Principles

- 2.1. The Knutsford Design Guide complies with the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance, Cheshire East Local Plan, CEBDG and the saved Macclesfield Borough policies.
- 2.2. The Knutsford Design Guide and the CEBDG will be the main points of reference for planning proposals within Knutsford in relation to character, form, layout, scale, space and the use of specific materials. [CEBDG Vol1 ii: pp28-33; Vol2 iii: pp46, 47, 49].
- 2.3. Development proposals must also complete and submit a Design and Access Statement to include the project's objectives and how they meet the criteria set out by the Knutsford Design Guide. [CEBDG Vol2 i: pp51-56].
- 2.4. Applications for more than five dwellings must include a Masterplan to ensure that all development proposals within the town are of high quality and in keeping with the context and character of Knutsford.
- 2.5. The Masterplan and Design and Access Statement together will provide a template to ensure that the quality of concept is maintained in what is built on the ground. [CEBDG Vol2 ii: pp8-10]
- 2.6. The intention is that each development will consider the character of the neighbourhood to be created; indicate how that will determine the layout and look of the streets; and show how the design of individual buildings will create the fabric of the community.

### Overall Objectives

- 2.7. This Design Guide applies to all development within the Neighbourhood Plan area (see Figure 1).
- 2.8. In order to sustain Knutsford's distinctive heritage and character, develop new homes and attract residents, the Design Guide seeks to:
  - Ensure all new residential and non-residential development is of high-quality design and materials, has appropriate layout, and is complementary to the character of the surrounding area;
  - Maintain and enhance the leafy nature of Knutsford, both within and on the approaches to the town, as the context for its present and future built environment.

### Cheshire East Local Plan Allocated Sites

- 2.9. The following objectives are focused on the sites that have been identified within the adopted Local Plan. The development of these sites should respect the guidance stated in this Design Guide and in the CEBDG [CEBDG Vol1 pp11-14, 72; Vol2 iv pp67-68].

### Large-scale Sites (100 or more dwellings)

- 2.10. These sites are to sustain viable communities with their own identity and sense of place yet are interconnected with existing facilities and amenities of the town as a whole. This objective will be achieved through the quality of the design of layout, buildings and public realm.
- 2.11. Strategic sites and the number of dwellings allocated under the Local Plan:
  - LPS 36(A) Land North of Northwich road (175 dwellings) subsequently approved for 190 dwellings;
  - LPS 36(C) Land East of Manchester Road (250 dwellings);
  - LPS 38 Land South of Longridge (225 dwellings);
  - LPS 37 Parkgate Extension (200 dwellings).

### Small-scale Sites

- 2.12. Small-scale developments are to create a positive relationship with existing communities and facilities. Layouts and building design should promote a sense of identity, in keeping with the Character Assessments of neighbouring areas. Character studies of the various areas are included in the Design Policies section of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.13. Site allocated under the Local Plan:
  - LPS 36(B) Land West of Manchester Road (75 dwellings) subsequently proposed for 60 dwellings.
- 2.14. The Design Guide applies to all extension and refurbishment of existing buildings which require planning permission. The intention is that proposals should respect and enhance established neighbourhoods in terms of size and scale in relation to the plot.



Illustration 4: King Street, Gaskell Memorial Tower by R. H. Watt



Illustration 5: Ruskin Court and Drury Lane from the Moor



Illustration 6: Town Centre Conservation Area - Church View



Illustration 7: Booths Park - Ancient Monument and 15<sup>th</sup> Century Fishing Ponds

## Employment/Commercial Developments

- 2.15. New non-residential buildings should reflect the local materials palette and complement the scale, massing and built form of the present low-rise office, industrial and retail premises in the town. These principles will also apply to non-residential buildings when they are replaced or refurbished.
- 2.16. Allocated sites:
- LPS 37 Parkgate Extension around 6 hectares of employment land;
  - LPS 36(B) development of a new 7.5 hectare high quality Class B1 business park.

## Potential Future Development Sites

- 2.17. Safeguarded land for future development
- LPS 39 Land South of Tabley Road (11 hectares);
  - LPS 40 Land North of Tabley Road (11 hectares);
  - LPS 41 Land adjacent to Booths Hall (8.7 hectares).

## Conservation Areas

- 2.18. Specific design criteria in the Conservation Area Appraisals will guide proposals within the Town Centre Conservation Area and other conservation areas within the Knutsford. The criteria are designed to retain the buildings, protect their historic setting yet enable them to be adapted and used to meet identified local needs.
- 2.19 Priorities for the management of Knutsford's five conservation areas will be included as part of their regular appraisals.



Illustration 8: Red Walls, Parkfield Road



Illustration 9: Coronation Square



Illustration 10: Former White Lion, King Street

## 3. Landscape and Biodiversity

### Protection and Enhancement

- 3.1. This section of the Design Guide focuses on the landscape and biodiversity of Knutsford. It seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment, including green and blue infrastructure and promote connectivity between environmental networks. The Knutsford Green Corridors document provides additional information and guidance.
- 3.2. A key objective within this Design Guide is to reduce environmental damage as effectively as possible. Existing wildlife habitats as defined in the Neighbourhood Plan and those assessed in relation to development proposals are to be protected and, wherever feasible, enhanced.
- 3.3. Where wildlife habitats and open green spaces are to be removed as a result of development, as highlighted in paragraph 74 of the NPPF, proposals are expected to provide suitable replacements of the same or better quality in appropriate locations, preferably within close proximity to the original site unless reasonably justified. Such offsite provision should connect to existing or new green corridors and infrastructure, following the principles of Biodiversity Net Gain. For example, where existing ponds with statutory protected species are to be removed, new water wildlife facilities should replicate and improve on the lost habitat.
- 3.4. Similarly, should proposals lead to the loss or felling of established trees, the planting of trees on a 'two-for-one' basis will be expected within the site or by commutation elsewhere.
- 3.5. These expectations apply particularly though not exclusively to Site LPS36B which contains ponds; sites LPS36C and LPS37 in relation to Tatton Park; and LPS38 in relation to the Birkin Brook and Booths Mere Protected Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

### Designing in Biodiversity and Sustainability

- 3.6. The provision of generous green open space has been shown by the Royal Institute of British Architects to contribute positively to the health and well-being of residents. It is also one of the defining features of the town.

### Green Infrastructure

- 3.7. Where appropriate, biodiversity plans are to be integral to planning applications to ensure that requirements of Policy CEC SE3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity are met.
- 3.8. Green corridors are to be included within development sites. They should be designed so that they can be managed effectively and informally overseen by residents.
- 3.9. Informal play areas are to be located so that children do not have to cross carriageways and can be within line of sight of housing.
- 3.10. Larger development proposals must provide sufficient open and green spaces. This should include children's play amenities and promote easy access to playing pitches and sports facilities.
- 3.11. Community allotments and/or orchards are to be provided in relation to new developments.
- 3.12. To improve carbon sequestration and the removal of harmful airborne particulate pollutants from traffic, hedgerows should be planted in preference to, or in front of, solid boundary walls or fences.



Illustration 11: Sanctuary Moor - designated Local Wildlife Site (LWS)



Illustration 12: Green Infrastructure, Dickens Heath, Solihull.

## Blue Infrastructure

- 3.13. Wherever feasible, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems [SUDS] are to be integral to planning applications.
- 3.14. Use of bio-swales is encouraged to contribute to biodiversity, drainage and flood risk management.
- 3.15. Tree cover needs to be planned to provide shade and to assist anti-flood measures through uptake of water.
- 3.16. Rainwater harvesting should be designed wherever feasible for garden watering and car washing. Surface treatments should be permeable to avoid excessive surface run-off..
- 3.17. In areas of intermittent standing water after extremes of rainfall, a sunken community space normally used for relaxation and recreation could be engineered to act as a 'holding pond' to prevent flooding and allow excess water to drain away gradually.
- 3.18. A management scheme must be in place for each site to ensure long-term effective maintenance of all green and blue infrastructure. Trees need a maintenance/replacement contract for the first five years after which they are generally self-sustaining. However, they will require programmes of 'succession planting' over the longer term to maintain environmental sustainability.
- 3.19. SUDS, bio-swales and holding ponds are relevant to the south-eastern section of LPS36A; the eastern side of LPS36B; the southern portion of LPS36C; parts of LPS37 and the section of LPS38 abutting Booths Mere.

### Cheshire East Borough Design Guide References:

- Protection and Enhancement [Vol2 iv: pp58-60]
- Green Infrastructure [Vol2 iv: pp33-64; p85]
- Blue Infrastructure [Vol2 iii: p45; iv: pp64-67; v: pp17-18]



Illustration 13: Green Infrastructure and Bio-swale, Milton Keynes



Illustration 15: Pond on site LPS36B and adjacent post war housing



Illustration 14: Bio-swale, Milton Keynes



Illustration 16: Bio-swale Upton Meadows, Northampton

## 4. Layout

### Principles

- 4.1. This section identifies principles for the layout of new development in Knutsford, particularly key gateways and green buffers and their relationship to existing residential development.
- 4.2. The objectives for this section of the Design Guide are to:
  - Create identity and a sense of place for each new development;
  - Provide variety in the street scene and public spaces;
  - Ensure that the function of developments is logical and apparent;
  - Make the development safe and secure;
  - Maintain the quality of the buildings and public realm over time.
- 4.3. Heritage assets and green spaces are key components in establishing a sense of place in Knutsford.
- 4.4. Woodland, hedges and open spaces are crucial contributors to Knutsford's identity. Developments should reflect elements of the local landscape and heritage through sensitive layout, orientation, design, materials and planting.



Illustration 17: Woodland and hedgerows - Mereheath Lane

### Gateways to Knutsford

#### Existing gateways

- Northern: on A50 Manchester Road and on Mereheath Lane;
  - Eastern: on A5037 Mobberley Road;
  - Southern: on A537 Chelford Road and on A50 Toft Road;
  - Western: on A5033 Northwich Road and on Tabley Road / Tabley Hill Lane.
- 4.5. Gateways should retain and protect existing trees and hedgerows, except where it is necessary to provide safe access to the site. [CEBDG Vol1 ii: p29 Positive Rural Transitions].
  - 4.6. If suitable native trees and plant cover are lacking at the outer limits of developments, new groves should be created wherever feasible, especially on the A50 Manchester Road, A5033 Northwich Road and along B5037 Mobberley Road.



Illustration 18: Existing northern gateway - Manchester Road



Illustration 19: Existing eastern gateway - Mobberley Road



Illustration 20: Existing southern gateway - Toft Road



Illustration 21: Existing western gateway - Northwich Road

## Gateways to New Developments

- 4.7. Where new gateways are proposed, on-site hedgerows and trees should be retained consistent with vehicle sight lines.
- 4.8. Proposed gateways and entrances that lack trees and planting at new entrances should, where possible, have new groves of native species trees and shrubs. They are designed to signal the entrance to a new housing or employment site and are crucial for LPS36A, B and C; LPS37; and LPS38.

## Edges of Developments

### Green Buffers

- 4.9. Green buffers require careful design and planting, with particular consideration of their relationship to the local topography and the character of the neighbouring area.
- 4.10. A suitable green buffer should be implemented to create a visually appealing transition to the wider countryside. This can be achieved by:
  - Creating a perimeter road that borders new developments;
  - Careful location and landscaping of housing and employment development where it meets the countryside.
- 4.11. Wherever suitable, pedestrian access to the buffer will be supported - preferably with a footpath threading through it.



Illustration 23: Gateway to a medium/high density mixed use development - Poundbury



Illustration 24: Rural transition - Beggarmans Lane



Illustration 25: Green screening - Toft Road

## Residential Development

- 4.12. Green buffers and corridors should create appropriate screening:
  - From major roads to reduce main road traffic noise within housing and employment developments;
  - As a means of softening the border between new developments and existing housing or employment land.
- 4.13. Green buffers are necessary between Warren Avenue and LPS36A; between Freshfields / Tabley Close and LPS36B; between Bluebell Farm and LPS36C; between LPS36C and the setting of Tatton Park; between LPS37 and Tatton Park to the north and Parkgate Industrial Estate to the south; and to improve the interface with Longridge at LPS38.

### Cheshire East Borough Design Guide References:

- Principles [Vol2 i: pp12, 18, 35; iv: pp68-70]
- Gateways to Knutsford [Vol2 ii: pp37-39]
- Green Buffers [Vol1 ii: p30; Vol2 i: pp36-38; ii: pp22-23; iv: pp59-60]



Illustration 22: Gateway to Alcester estate in Stratford Upon Avon.

## 5. Access and Circulation

### Permeability of Developments - Accessibility

- 5.1. This section of the Knutsford Design Guide focuses on access, circulation and streets. The objectives are to make streets and spaces attractive and safe so that people can move around easily, particularly by walking and cycling. This should be achieved by:
  - Making connections to frequently used facilities and amenities providing, wherever possible, a choice of routes to reach them;
  - Linking routes to green spaces like a bead necklace so that pedestrians and cyclists have attractive, enjoyable journeys and opportunities to pause;
  - Providing pedestrians with pavements and pathways of adequate width where litter bins, street signs and lamp posts are carefully placed to avoid street clutter and provide safe routes;
  - Noting chosen ways across spaces to destinations so that they are linked logically before final installation of surfaces;
  - Enabling access for cars, delivery and refuse disposal vehicles with safe separation for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 5.2. Wherever the topography and highways design requirements allow, the strong preference is for at least two vehicle entry/exit points to ensure permeability to each new development. The exceptions to this are LPS36A and B, each of which may have a single entry via a roundabout.
- 5.3. A number of entry points to LPS38 are necessary if the new development is to meld with existing housing north of Longridge
- 5.4. A clear hierarchy between roads with primary, secondary and tertiary functions is to be identified wherever vehicle entry/exit points are provided.
- 5.5. National guidance tends not to favour cul-de-sacs because they block connectivity within sites, create pockets of parking 'clutter' and restrict manoeuvring and access for emergency vehicles. However, if they are carefully designed with limited vehicle and good pedestrian and cycle access, they can be acceptable as overlooked informal play areas. They would then perform a social role and not restrict permeability through the neighbourhood.
- 5.6. New footpaths and cycleways, preferably with self-draining surfaces, must be designed to interconnect with the existing settlement.

### Street Hierarchy

- 5.7. The objectives are to ensure that streets and spaces in new developments have a clear function and create a hierarchy of different routes:
  - Existing Primary roads: those which are most used and which carry through traffic;
  - Secondary: residential avenues providing entry/exit for new developments, joining them to primary roads;
  - Tertiary: residential streets and lanes, courts and mews within developments;
  - Connections to open spaces and amenities: footpaths and cycleways.
- 5.8. LPS36A requires direct foot/cycle connection to The Heath and to Tabley Road. LPS36B needs similar access to the Town Centre, schools and to the sports facilities along Mereheath Lane. A footpath/cycleway from LPS37 to The Moor is necessary to improve access to the Town Centre
- 5.9. A primary road which is a relief road or major link to the town centre and which has to accommodate heavy traffic should be 6.8m wide [Highways Agency recommendations].
- 5.10. The standard width for a tree-lined residential avenue which has to cope with occasional use by buses and/or heavy goods vehicles should be 6.0m [Manual for Streets recommendation] with a minimum of 5.5m for other tree-lined streets so that all vehicles can pass one another.
- 5.11. Residential streets are expected to be tree-lined and accommodate pedestrian footpaths and cycleways [CEBDG Vol2 iii p36]
- 5.12. Residential lanes should also be tree-lined and roadways that are less busy should have shared space and trees on plot perimeters. A 4.8m carriageway allows a car to pass easily a large service vehicle, such as a refuse lorry, but two large vehicles can only pass with care.
- 5.13. Mews lanes should be a minimum of 4.1m wide which will allow for two large cars to pass. Mews/courts are expected to act mainly as adjuncts to central areas.
- 5.14. An 'urban square' within a development will provide a community focus and may sustain a mix of uses and enable two- and three-storey dwellings to be built in relatively high density



Illustration 26: A5033 Northwich Road - Primary Main Road



Illustration 27: Higher Downs - Secondary Residential Avenue



Illustration 28: Poundbury, Dorset - Tertiary Street Scene

Avenue

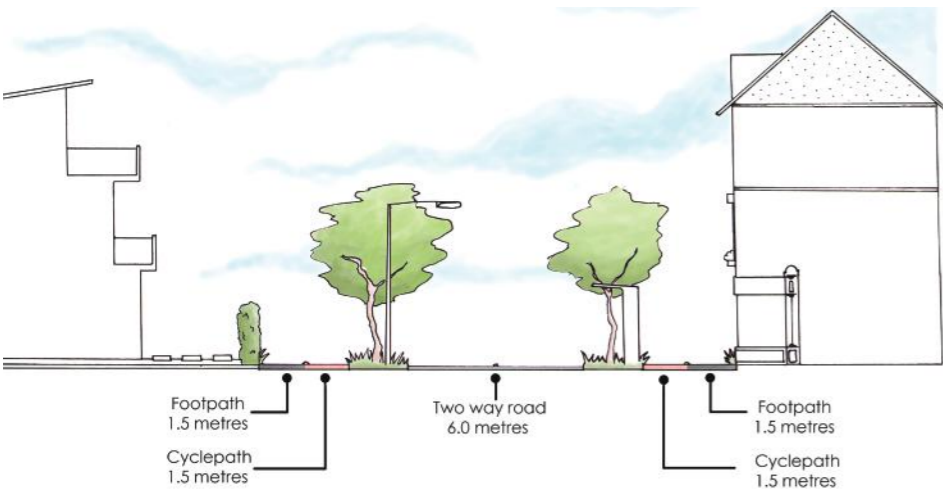


Illustration 29: Cross section of Avenue

5.15. Avenues of minimum width 6.0m should accommodate heavier flows of traffic including buses and refuse vehicles. They will act as primary routes through neighbourhoods and will provide enough space for both pedestrians and cyclists away from the traffic. Avenues are expected to be tree-lined.

Tree-lined Street

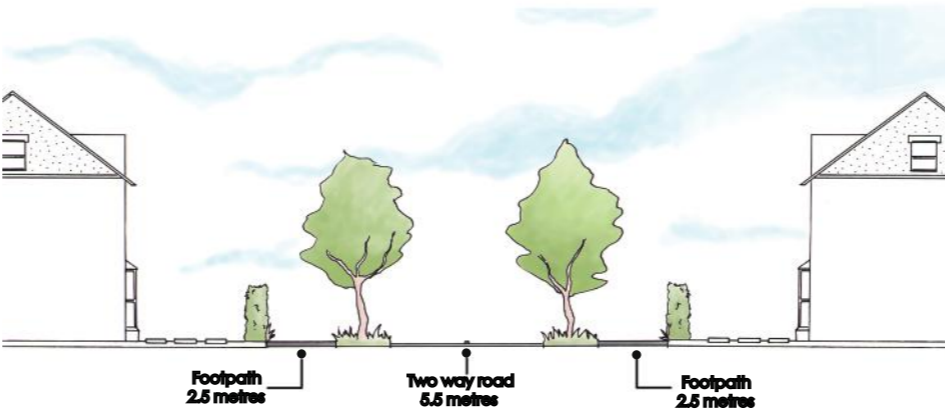


Illustration 30: Cross section of Tree-lined Street

5.16. Tree-lined streets of 5.5m will be expected to service residential neighbourhoods by connecting residential lanes and mews with avenues. Cyclists are expected to share the road as the flow of traffic is lower. Streets are expected to be tree-lined and hedged.

Lane

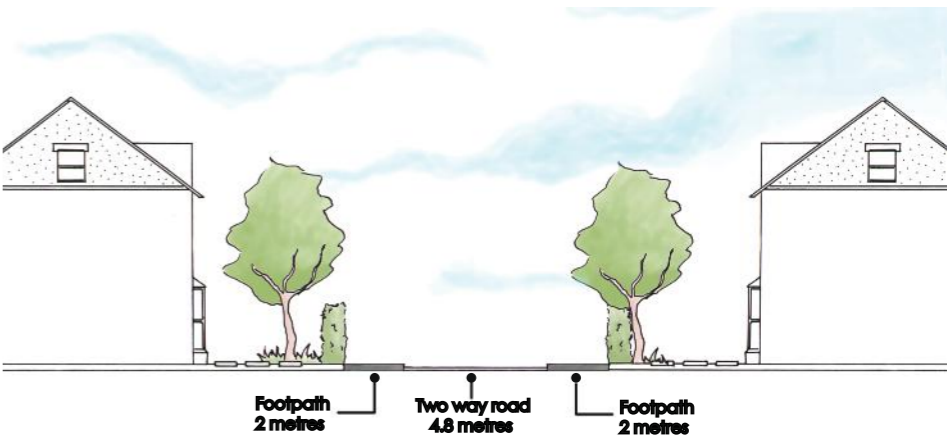


Illustration 31: Cross section of Lane

5.17. Residential lanes are expected to service majority of Knutsford's new homes. This road type will support a reduced amount of traffic in comparison to the streets. However, it is still expected that residential lanes should be tree-lined.

Mews

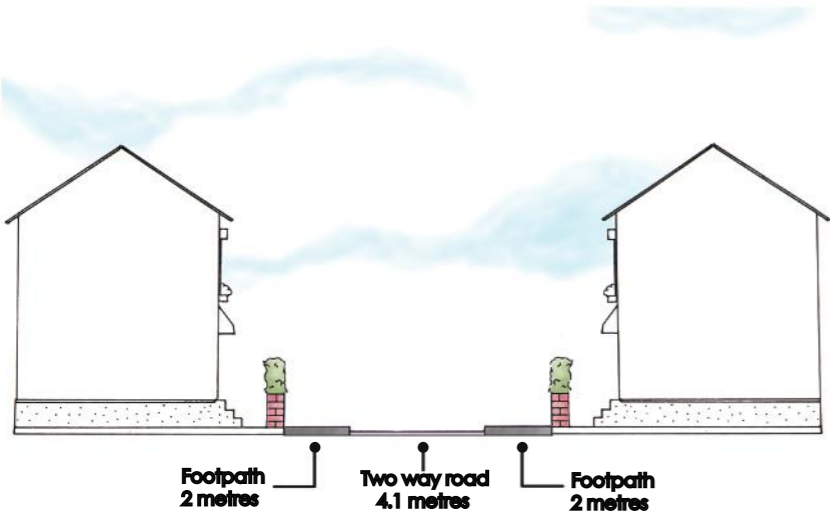


Illustration 32: Cross section of Mews

5.18. As highlighted previously, mews are expected to act mainly as adjuncts to central areas. Although this road type is not expected to be heavily vegetated, a leafy boundary interface will be expected.

Street Hierarchy - Width of Streets				
CEBDG Typology Vol2 pp36-39	CEBDG (metres)	Manual for Streets (metres)	Knutsford Design Guide	Knutsford Design Guide (metres)
Primary/Boulevard	6.8	6.8	Primary Road	6.8
Avenue	5.5 - 6.0	6.0	Tree-lined Avenue	6.0
Secondary/Street	4.8 - 5.5	5.5	Tree-lined Street	5.5
Lane	4.5 - 4.8	4.8	Lane	4.8
Shared Drive	3.3	4.1	Mews	4.1
Cycleway	2.3	3.0	Cycleway	2.5 - 3.0
Footpath	2.0	2.0	Footpath	2.0
Squares and Forecourts - Terminology				
CEBDG		Knutsford Design Guide		
-		Urban Square		
Garden Square		Green Square/Village Green		
Forecourt		Court		

Figure 2: Table representing Street and Square Hierarchy compared to the CEBDG and the Manual for Streets (Department of Transport)

Court



Illustration 33: Chris Fothergill visualisation of courtyard development

## Building a Sense of Community

- 5.19. Each development should provide appropriate access to sufficient open and green space, indoor and outdoor sports facilities and children's play facilities to meet relevant Local Plan policies. [see also Sport England Towards an Active Nation].
- 5.20. Residential areas should have some community open space in the form of a 'village green' or similar. Management schemes must be in place for maintenance and planned replacement of shrubs and trees in the public realm for all new developments.
- 5.21. Because of the generally low-rise nature of the town's architecture, building height will generally be two- or two-and-a-half storeys above ground level with a maximum of three storeys for town houses and apartment buildings in specially designated locations as focal points in substantial developments.
- 5.22. The articulation and design of property frontages is crucial in creating a sense of character and community. For example, front gardens offer opportunities to meet neighbours and passers-by; location of thresholds and front door design aid communication; and ground floor habitable rooms with windows onto the street, and first floor balconies where appropriate, foster informal surveillance and a sense of security.
- 5.23. Site LPS36C will need particularly careful disposition of streets to give a sense of space and greenery on a site scheduled for 250 dwellings.



Illustration 34: Town Square, Barnoldswick, Lancashire



Illustration 35: Courtyard housing, Dagenham



Illustration 36: Heathfield Square, inter-war housing



Illustration 37: Shared space - walking and cycling



Illustration 38: Shaded green parking provision ([www.localecologist.org](http://www.localecologist.org))

## Parking and Servicing

- 5.24. To avoid a sterile sea of cars, parking facilities should be of high quality design that includes appropriate spacing and landscaping features.
- 5.25. Residential streets must have appropriate parking arrangements out of the traffic stream, integrated into the street scene and softened by trees or suitable planting.
- 5.26. Busy streets should have off-street parking or a highway adapted for 'best fit' parking layout, again with suitable landscaping. Appropriate points for collections and deliveries should leave the main carriageway unimpeded.
- 5.27. Residential roads should have appropriate off-street parking spaces or garages within plots or facilities separated from road traffic. NB Residential and visitor parking provision must meet Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Appendix C Parking Standards.
- 5.28. The design of the road network must satisfy the need for emergency vehicles to have unfettered access in and around residential areas. This also applies to service vehicles such as refuse trucks and delivery vehicles. Where appropriate, proposals must demonstrate that they satisfy the requirements of the services concerned.

## Travel, Transport and Broadband

- 5.29. Development of new homes and employment areas should, wherever feasible, create alternative routes for traffic to avoid going through the town's central area and to minimise traffic congestion there.
- 5.30. Ideally, new developments of over 10 dwellings should have lit walking and cycling access, linked to existing routes into the town and its amenities.
- 5.31. New developments on the edge of Knutsford of over 100 dwellings or 5000m<sup>2</sup> of employment space should make contributions to provide safer routes into town where pedestrians and cyclists are at present insufficiently separated from vehicles, for example along Manchester Road from LPS36B and LPS36C.
- 5.32. All Knutsford bus services operate from or through the central bus station. The town has infrequent services to nearby towns and these are unlikely to improve. The Town Circular service 300 currently reaches Northwich Road at Lilac Avenue in the west and Longridge Trading Estate in the east.
- 5.33. Bus routes, where applicable, must be determined as part of the Masterplan so that adequate road widths and turning circles can be constructed. Roads with bus services should accommodate at least minibuses of up to 3.5 tonnes. Bus stops should ideally be within 500m of every home.
- 5.34. Bus stops must be out of the traffic stream, 3.5m long and with suitable alignments for ease of access for wheelchairs and the mobility impaired.
- 5.35. Cycle path widths: cyclists moving in the same direction and cycling side-by-side or overtaking must have a minimum effective width of 2.5m. When a cycleway is expected to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians, it should be extended to 3m and suitable demarcation of space indicated. Cycle path surfaces should meet Sustrans Technical Note 815 and gradients should not exceed 1m in 15m.
- 5.36. All new developments of five or more dwellings are to have the means to connect easily to high-speed broadband.

## Safety and Security

- 5.37. Streets and spaces must be safe and accessible. They should:
- Be overlooked by windows and doors at fronts of buildings so people in the public realm can be seen and feel safe;
  - Avoid creating voids and areas that cannot be seen;
  - Have a mix of uses, particularly in the Town Centre, to ensure areas are not empty at night;
  - Have views along streets and across spaces to enable pedestrians to see ahead.
- 5.38. In addition, streets should be designed to:
- Keep vehicle speeds low to provide safety for pedestrians and cyclists;
  - Make management and maintenance of the streets themselves and the green spaces obvious, to give users a feeling of care and pride in the area;
  - Take full account of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment [CABE] guidance: Better Residential Streets.

### Cheshire East Borough Design Guide References:

- Overall Objectives [Vol 2 ii: pp18-19; 22-23; iii: pp36-42]
- Accessibility [Vol2 i: pp11-12; 42-49]
- Street Hierarchy [Vol2 iii: pp36-42]
- Parking and Servicing [Vol2 ii: pp23-27]
- Safety and Security [Vol2 ii: p31]
- Travel, Transport and Broadband [Vol2 iii, pp40, 43-55; v: pp90-91]

### Further guidance available:

- Manual for Streets 1: Residential streets and lightly-trafficked lanes [Department of Transport]
- Manual for Streets 2: Busy urban and rural streets [Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation]
- 6Cs Highway Design Guide Delivering Streets and Places 1 and 2 [Leicestershire County Council]
- Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Appendix C Parking Standards



Illustration 39: Overlooking without intrusion, C G Fry Ltd, Devon



Illustration 40: Great Kneighton, Building Design Award 2014



Illustration 41: West London, award winning residential conversion

## 6. High Quality Design

### Vernacular Design and Local Architectural Styles

- 6.1. Each new development needs to demonstrate a clear design rationale related to its specific site and show how it complements the local character area.
- 6.2. Where applicable schemes will require a Masterplan or Site Layout Proposal accompanied by a Landscape Plan. They will also need a Design and Access Statement which shows how the development responds to the Character Area Assessment..
- 6.3. The materials palette for North Cheshire Fringe in the CEBDG should be the first point of reference in selecting materials.
- 6.4. Knutsford has an eclectic range of architectural styles. Opportunities abound for a wide variety of design approaches as Knutsford's vernacular ranges from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. It also has clusters of characteristic Cheshire farm buildings within the area, some of which have undergone change of use, for example Brookdale Farm now converted to business units, and Blackhill Farm to housing.
- 6.5. To maintain quality, development proposals should include provision for comprehensive management of the new development to include maintenance of internal and external communal areas, how residents are to be involved and what their responsibilities are. Effective management schemes are an important element which the Neighbourhood Plan will expect for new developments and which will be conditioned as required.



Illustration 42: St. John's Conservation Area

### Character Assessment

- 6.6 Figure 3 indicates the 13 Character Areas of Knutsford, details of which are to be found in the separate document The Knutsford Character Assessment. In brief, the character of the areas that are closest to the Local Plan allocated sites are:
  - LPS36A Land North of Northwich Road: the area to the south is residential, mainly 1930s and post-war detached and semi-detached family homes and to the east it is mainly post-war local authority housing (now often owner-occupied) family homes.
  - LPS36B Land West of Manchester Road: the southern section is mainly post-war detached and semi-detached owner-occupied family housing; the northern section is allocated for a new low-rise office development.
  - LPS36C Land East of Manchester Road: the area to the south is a fairly spacious 1970s estate of detached family homes with a few inter-war semi-detached and terraced homes along Manchester Road. Sports grounds and Tatton Park lie to the east.

The above areas generally have tree-lined avenues and streets and include some green public realm.
- 6.7. The character of the areas close to the other allocated Local Plan sites are:
  - LPS37 Parkgate Extension: Tatton Park lies to the north and Parkgate Industrial Estate to the south. Mixed housing, mainly post-war and quite high density exists over the railway bridge to the south.
  - LPS38 Land South of Longridge: The area to the north is largely high density 1970s local authority housing with some flats; its design presents a challenge to create an inclusive and vibrant new community with the 225 new homes proposed to the south. To the west is 1970s largely owner-occupied housing and to the south-west Booths Mere Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and parkland.

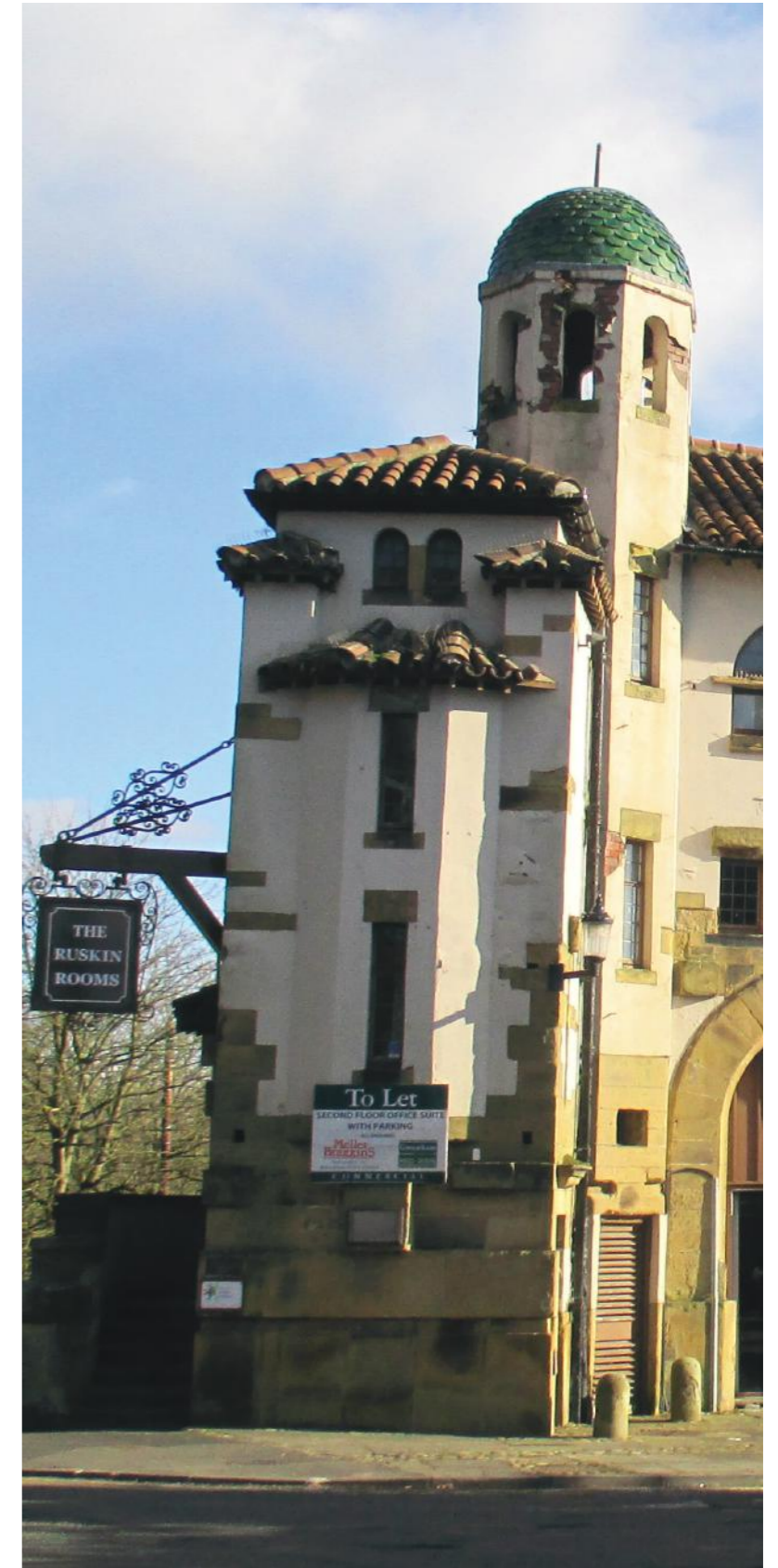
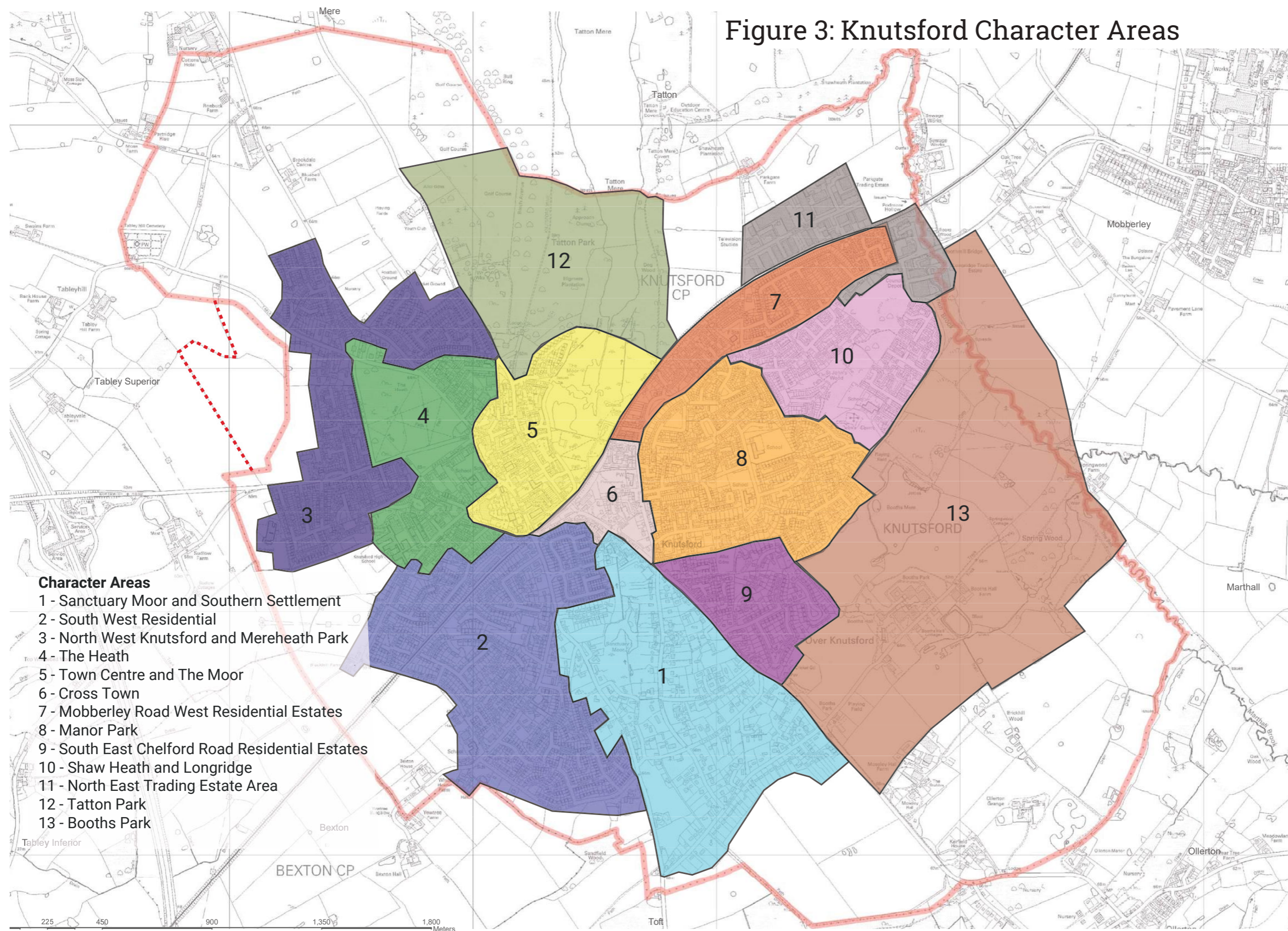


Illustration 43: Ruskin Rooms, Drury Lane

Figure 3: Knutsford Character Areas



## Contemporary and Distinctive Design

- 6.8. Design proposals for different architectural expressions should be well proportioned and demonstrate a unifying agreed material palette to create homogeneity.
- 6.9. Design options, traditional or contemporary, are to incorporate the most effective low-carbon or carbon-neutral fabrication. Innovative contemporary designs must reach high quality standards, draw on local materials and respond to the overall character of the town.
- 6.10. The larger developments on sites LPS36A and LPS36C, LPS37 and LPS38 may include a mix of designs which will require careful landscaping to ease the transition from one design to the next.
- 6.11. In those areas approved for a higher density of housing with limited space within the curtilage, additional amenity space may be gained at first-floor level, for example above a garage, provided intrusion and overlooking are avoided. The Accordia development at Eddington, Cambridge provides just such an example fronting communal open green space.
- 6.12. Possibilities exist for a number of dwellings in each housing development to have adaptable floor layouts, particularly on the ground floor, to enable an element of mixed use to be incorporated, for example a small craft or artisan enterprise. The objective would be to accommodate any growth in home working and to meet social, technological and economic change over time. Such homes with adaptable layouts could be grouped together or be suitably free standing.



Illustration 44: Accordia, Eddington, Cambridge, Stirling Prize

## Eco-design

- 6.13. The intention is that all new homes in Knutsford shall be as energy efficient as possible in order to meet sustainability requirements. The government terminated the Zero Carbon Homes policy in 2015 but energy performance requirements are implemented under Building Regulations.
- 6.14. Knutsford will look for a good proportion of the new homes to meet the 16 criteria of Lifetime Homes Standard to create accessible and adaptable homes for lifetime living. The standard will be relevant to all types of tenure.
- 6.15. New homes must have sufficient internal and secure external storage to cope with household needs.
- 6.16. High levels of insulation of buildings, photovoltaic roof tiles rather than visually obtrusive solar panels, grey water retention and re-use will be supported.
- 6.17. Ground-source heating options either for individual homes or area installation will be supported, provided they do not raise construction costs to the extent that they defeat the original low running-cost objectives. It is expected that options for area heating, energy generating technology, heat pumps, passive heating and cooling and best use of natural light will have been evaluated and incorporated into designs accordingly.
- 6.18. New developments are expected to help Knutsford mitigate climate change impacts which research suggests will become more frequent.
- 6.19. It will be a clear advantage for all new developments to set out to achieve the highest possible rating on the Building Research Establishment's Home Quality Mark certification scheme.



Illustration 45: Cambridge: Civic Trust Award 2015



Illustration 46: Norbury's Yard, Moorside



Illustration 47: Worsley, Salford



Illustration 48: Contemporary Housing, Longridge



Illustration 49: Huf Haus energy saving homes



Illustration 50: Photovoltaic roof tiles (solar energy)

## Self-build, Custom-build, Conversions and Extensions

- 6.20. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 requires Cheshire East to keep a Register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in order to build houses to occupy as homes.
- 6.21. The same design principles in this Guide will apply to applications for self- or custom-build homes. However, sustainable structures will be encouraged which achieve low energy consumption, minimise heat loss and blend in with the character of the area and neighbouring properties.
- 6.22. The re-development of bungalows into two-storey dwellings will be resisted. Their retention is essential to meet the needs of specific groups, for example those who require a single dwelling on one level but not an apartment.
- 6.23. The over-extension of small dwellings will be resisted. Their retention is essential to meet the needs of specific groups, for example the elderly and those living alone.

## Design Samples

- 6.24. To ensure an appropriate palette and high quality materials are used in sensitive locations, a sample of the materials chosen and evidence that they are durable enough to cope with the local damp climate will be required. Of particular concern will be windows, their reveals and sills; means of dispersing water from surfaces; and the durability and low maintenance of installations.
- 6.25. The way the chosen materials deal with water run-off without staining and maintain long-term viability will be major considerations in the approval of developments.

## Pollution

- 6.26. Development proposals will be supported where they do not contribute to unacceptable levels of pollution in respect of air, noise or light, or contamination of ground, air or water.
- 6.27. Acceptability of proposals will be judged in relation to pollution data gathered by Cheshire East Council.
- 6.28. The main constituents of a 'healthy home' approach are:
  - Air quality: as far as possible use chemical-free structural materials and finishes, and efficient air extraction;
  - Heat: use insulation with adequate ventilation to prevent condensation;
  - Noise: provide effective sound-proofing;
  - Natural light: make best use of as much natural light as possible, especially on south- and west-facing elevations for solar gain and warmth;
  - Artificial light: the criterion is to have sufficient brightness by which to cook or read, but not so glaring as to become oppressive.
- 6.29. As noted above, hedges are the preferred choice for boundary treatment to assist in capture of air-borne pollutants.

## Utilities

- 6.30. Principles:
  - The use of overhead cables is to be avoided;
  - Meter boxes must be accessible but must not detract from the design of the frontages of new or remodelled homes;
  - Storage of wheeled refuse bins must not intrude visually into the street scene.

### Cheshire East Borough Design Guide References:

- Contemporary and Distinctive Design [Vol2 ii: pp27-28]
- Eco-design [Vol2 v: pp86-93]
- Management Plans [Vol2 iv: p83]
- Pollution [Vol2 vi: p96]
- High Quality Elevations and Design [Vol1 ii: pp28-33; 69-76; Vol2 i: pp6-15]

## 7. High Quality Spaces

### Key Townscape Views

- 7.1. Layouts of buildings, roads and pathways should set out to frame views of existing landmarks both outside and within the town; layouts should also intersperse routes with varied points of interest: public art, green spaces and occasional small 'social spaces', for example at the entrance to a primary school.
- 7.2. Developments should seek to create new or enhance existing views and vistas. Landmarks and prominent structures provide visual connections to help orientation and ease of movement around the town.
- 7.3. A map of significant views into and out of the town is provided in the companion guidance The Knutsford Character Assessment.
- 7.4. Examples include the view west from LPS36A and LPS36B towards the Cemetery Chapel spire and the woodland cluster at Tabley Hill; the Shawheath Plantation to the north of LPS37; and views from LPS38 towards Booths Mere and Spring Wood, and towards the woods along Birkin Brook.



Illustration 51: The Moor

### Public Space

- 7.5. Public realm should be designed to make management and maintenance efficient and effective. Without appropriate management, poorly maintained spaces have a negative impact on the neighbourhood and, by association, the people and community within it.
- 7.6. Each new development should contain at least sufficient open space, children's play areas and outdoor sports facilities, either within it or easily accessible from it, to meet relevant Local Plan Policies.
- 7.7. Knutsford's role as a Key Service Centre requires provision for indoor sport and physical activities to meet the needs of the growing number residents both within and outside the town and for them to be accessible to all.
- 7.8. Walking, cycling and heritage routes require effective sign posts, especially in the Town Centre, to guide residents and visitors. Routes should have resting places at intervals. Signs should be as dementia-friendly as possible, for example by colour-coding or by easily understandable symbols, to enable individuals to maintain their independence and self-confidence.



Illustration 52: Town Centre Conservation Area at Stanley Green



Illustration 53: High Moreland Lodge, Legh Road

## Boundary Treatment

- 7.9. Developments are to promote open frontages to the street scene with either open-plan front gardens or a low hedge, wall or fence with a maximum height of 1 - 1.5m to allow visual permeability between the development and the street.
- 7.10. The Design Guide does not support gated-community developments. Entrance gates to individual properties are to be suitable to the area and not forbidding or isolating in design or materials.
- 7.11. Perimeter security and gates are not considered to be substitutes for appropriate crime-reducing design within a development.
- 7.12. Good-sized back gardens for family housing are not only an important aspect of retaining Knutsford's character they also act as informal green corridors contributing to the sustainability of new housing and existing established garden habitats. No references are made to garden size in the Local Plan Strategy. However, a typical three- or four-bed post-war home in Knutsford has 140m<sup>2</sup> of garden.
- 7.13. Layout should protect privacy within the outdoor private amenity space, with appropriate separation between backs of housing. The spaces should be orientated to avoid overlooking and overshadowing, and to maximise sunlight.
- 7.14. In the Town Centre, St John's Avenue, Heathfield Square and Crosstown Conservation Areas, boundary treatments must be consistent with age and style of the area/buildings.
- 7.15. In Legh Road Conservation Area, boundaries can be hedges with native species (maximum height 2m); low stone walls backed by native species to 2m; split oak post and rail (maximum 1m) with native species behind; no close/feather-edge boarded fences higher than 1m. The objective is to allow glimpses of the architectural wealth of the area through natural boundary treatments..
- 7.16. Boundary treatments here are in urgent need of increased protection and, after the next Conservation Area appraisal, Article 4 Directions will be sought for these and other features as required.



Illustration 54: Legh Road Conservation Area boundary treatment



Illustration 55: Legh Road Conservation Area boundary treatment



Illustration 56: Two tier garden

## Development in Gardens

- 7.17. A High Court decision (Dartford Borough Council v SoS - CO/4129/2015) has held that the definition of 'previously developed land' excludes residential gardens in 'built up' areas.
- 7.18. In order to protect the verdant nature of private spaces throughout the town, development in gardens will only be permitted where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated.
- 7.19. If exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated, development will only be permitted if the proposal:
- Conserves and, where possible, enhances the environmental assets and biodiversity of the site;
  - Does not damage gardens that contribute strongly to the street scene and townscape, for example developments associated with the gardens of large Victorian villas;
  - Exemplifies high standards of architectural and urban design;
  - Does not harm the character of the area, damage the setting or interfere with views within, into or out of the area;
  - Conserves and enhances the built environment, particularly in conservation areas, by its respect for existing buildings in the area, their form and spacing, and the materials used;
  - Makes effective use of the land in order to minimise water run-off, pollution and noise, particularly from additional traffic;
  - Does not change the housing density to the detriment of the character of the area;
  - Does not degrade the amenity of existing or new occupiers or their neighbours in the locality with overbearing structures that are too large or too close, that overlook or shade, or create cramped plots, awkward access or provide too little amenity space.
- 7.20. Applicants will need to show in their Design and Access Statements how they will meet satisfactorily the above requirements.

## Lighting

- 7.21. Street Lighting is subject to CEC Highways approval
- 7.22. All street lighting will seek to minimise light pollution and meet Dark Skies objectives. Inefficient lighting in either urban or rural locations is visible for many miles. Inefficient street lighting is still the main contributor to light pollution; it spills into people's homes and into the sky. It causes the sky-glow that hangs over urban areas
- 7.23. The following requirements will be applied to street lighting in new developments, car parking areas and business parks, and when replacement installations are required.
- Lights should shine only where and when needed;
  - Lighting should always shine downward to cover the area to be illuminated;
  - Lighting should not intrude into neighbouring properties;
  - Lighting requirements for each area should be evaluated and times identified when lighting can be reduced or is not required, and programmed accordingly;
  - Full Cut Off (FCO) lighting should be specified for outside lighting and in relation to extensions and approved refurbishments and redevelopments of private property.
- 7.24. Knutsford Planning and Licensing Committee will work with Cheshire East Highways to ensure that only FCO lighting is used to light streets and public circulation areas. These fitments provide excellent spread along streets, and prevent light being wasted into the sky. Because they are more efficient, fewer FCO lights are required compared to standard bowled lighting.
- 7.25. A Lighting Plan that meets these criteria will be required for each development, indicating the proposed location of each current and proposed outdoor lighting fixture with intended hours of use, and certified by a qualified professional.
- 7.26. Street Lighting in conservation areas: suitable heritage lighting masts and lanterns are to replace standard provision when street lighting installations are replaced.

## Street Furniture

- 7.27. Overall objectives:
- Street furniture must enhance its location, promote local distinctiveness and reinforce a sense of place;
  - Different items of street furniture should relate to each other in terms of design, siting and colour;
  - The extent and variety of street furniture should be kept to a minimum commensurate with function, in particular street signs, railings and bollards;
  - Distinctive historic elements of street furniture should be retained and refurbished.

## Seating

- 7.28. The principal objectives for the location of seating are to ensure:
- No obstruction impedes the flow of foot traffic and seats have clear views of approaches;
  - Sites have an attractive outlook;
  - The seat's purpose as an incidental stop or for longer-term waiting is clear;
  - Sunny positions are chosen, although dappled shade is needed in summer from appropriate low-maintenance tree species;
  - Sources of pollution are avoided, for example from traffic fumes;
  - Sites likely to be used for the consumption of alcohol or street food are avoided where they may encourage anti-social behaviour;
  - The design and match to other street furniture in the area is consistent;
  - Sufficient space to position wheelchairs is available nearby.
- 7.29. Seating should normally include armrests and backs to assist the elderly; central armrests prevent sleeping. Traditional timber designs are preferred, especially for parks and open spaces, but steel seating in local centres is less easily damaged and can be used in curved form to fit the space available.



Illustration 57: Regent Street - function dominates design



Illustration 58: Princess Street traditional lighting



Illustration 59: Canute Place standard lighting



Illustration 60: Shared Space - Bromsgrove, High Street



Illustration 61: Town Centre - Truro, Cornwall

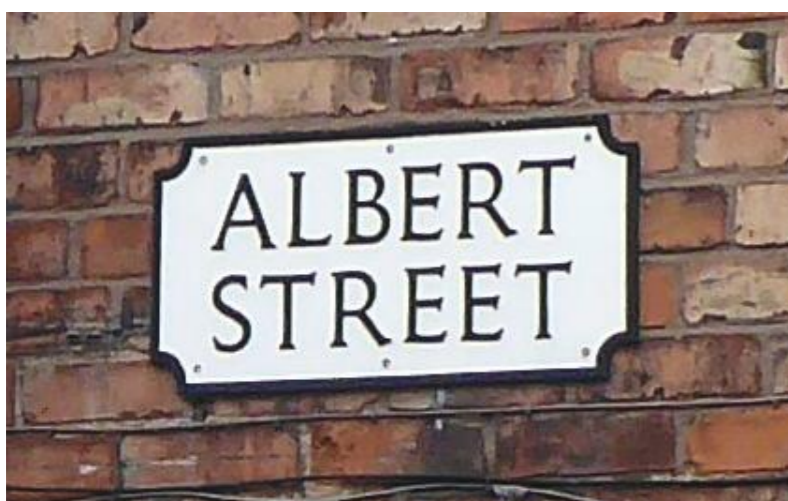


Illustration 62 - Town Centre Conservation Area, Victorian sign

## Bollards and Railings

7.30. The overall objectives for the location and design of bollards and railings are to:

- Use tree planting or other street furniture to reduce the need for bollards;
- Limit obstruction by positioning bollards close to the kerb;
- Make use of bollards to affix signs and way pointers wherever possible;
- Avoid 'sheep-pen' railings and 'dog leg' crossings which emphasize precedence of vehicles and which pedestrians often circumvent;
- Ensure the bollards' design blends into their settings;
- Refurbish old bollards and, where desirable, retain the design by having a mould made;
- Use 'heritage' railings to harmonise with conservation areas.

## Cycles, Stands and Shelters

7.31. Overall objectives are to:

- Provide cycle stands as close to shops and public buildings as possible with a distinctive but standard design to avoid 'Cycle Parking' signs;
- Avoid street clutter and pedestrian obstruction;
- Ensure layout matches the site, for example cycle parking parallel to the kerb, use as bollard replacement or in radial patterns to make best use of space;
- Cycle and bus stop shelters require individual design proposals, especially where the siting of shelters is next to open space and may require lighting for personal safety.

## Traffic and Parking signs and Town Centre Directional Signage

7.32. Overall objectives are to ensure that:

- Pedestrians are not obstructed by seating on pavements;
- The number and size of signs are kept to a minimum;
- The design of signs brings together a neighbourhood through colour, height, font and size, especially in conservation settings;
- Signs can be read by people with disabilities;
- Signs with yellow or overly bright colours are not used in sensitive settings, for example near listed buildings or where they distract from important views;
- Signs use existing posts, lamp columns or walls, or are placed at low height to minimise clutter and new furniture matches existing where the design is appropriate;
- Demarcation of traffic and pedestrian 'zones' in shared surface schemes is through the nature and colour of the road materials used and, where pedestrians and cycles share surfaces, the pedestrian symbol is placed above the cycle symbol.

## Street Names

- 7.33. For new developments, Cheshire East Council authorises street names and numbers in conjunction with Royal Mail and the emergency services. Developers are asked to consult on street names and nameplate design for new developments.
- 7.34. Historic street nameplates – ceramic, cast iron and enamelled – are valuable townscape features and must be retained.
- 7.35. Street nameplates must be fixed to walls wherever possible to avoid the clutter of metal posts; if the street plate is placed on a house wall, it should be 2.5m above ground level or if at low level 1m above.
- 7.36. As refurbishment becomes necessary, a phased replacement programme to a consistent design will operate within existing areas of the town. In all new developments, especially in shopping areas, the street number must be included in the frontage design.

Cheshire East Borough Design Guide References:

- Key Townscape Views [Vol2 i: p10; ii: pp20-21]
- Public Space [Vol2 ii: pp17-18; iv: pp77-80; vi: p95]
- Boundary Treatment [Vol2 iv: pp68-71,73; pp77-80]
- Lighting [Vol2 iii: p44]
- Street Furniture [Vol2 iii: pp44-45]

## 8. Commercial and Office Developments

### Overall Objectives

- 8.1. In respect of other sites in Knutsford both for new build and extension, redevelopment/ refurbishment projects, the same criteria in response to their setting will apply in terms of scale, massing form and quality of materials, and the larger volume buildings set back to create 'human scale'. Careful selection of materials and their colour will be required to achieve a consistent architectural composition. The design and materials must be appropriate and in keeping with the market town character, especially in developments in employment areas in or near the Green Belt or conservation areas, or otherwise of particular significance (for example, SSSI, LWS).
- 8.2. Renovated and redeveloped commercial buildings coming forward in future will be assessed in relation to the above design requirements
- 8.3. Points of entry/exit to commercial sites and the layout of roads within the site require the same sensitive orientation and landscaping as those for housing developments.
- 8.4. Screen planting of native trees and shrubs common to the area and the placing of service areas behind buildings will be required in order to improve the street scene, offer attractive views and reduce the negative visual impact of commercial activity. Trees and shrubs will also assist water absorption and provide shade to deflect heat.
- 8.5. Ground surfaces for car parks are to be permeable, trees should be used to soften starkness. Parking bays are to be differentiated by materials rather than painted lines.
- 8.6. Materials choice should minimise energy consumption and maximise renewable energy generation. If proposed, wind turbines will be subject to separate planning approval.

### Development of Allocated Employment Sites

- 8.7. Land of around 6.0 hectares is proposed under the Local Plan for employment development at Parkgate Extension.
- 8.8. An employment area, designated on 7.5ha released from the Green Belt, is in the northern section of the 11.5ha mixed use Site LPS36B with up to 75 dwellings on the southern section.
- 8.9. A further 1.5 hectares required by the Local Plan has yet to be allocated. At Booths Park 6.2 hectares was granted outline planning permission for offices in 2014.
- 8.10. The designs of the buildings at all these sites are to enable form to respond to function and complement their setting.

### Landscaping of Allocated Employment Sites

- 8.11. The employment site at LPS36B is at the sensitive northern gateway to Knutsford on A50 Manchester Road which requires a similar sylvan entry to other gateways.
- 8.12. The key to the employment site is the existing car showroom specifically designed to blend into the Green Belt. It is a brick, ridged and gabled building with restrained cladding and signage. It still looks out across open fields in the Green Belt to the east. Its vehicle park is screened by hedges and trees, and its frontage complemented by silver birch and careful landscaping. It sets the tone for the new development to the south and west.
- 8.13. South of the showroom, the site should be screened along the A50 by trees and hedgerows but with glimpses through to high quality office buildings and not to office car parks. The buildings should not be positioned in such a way that they appear as a regimented succession along Manchester Road. The layout within the site should enable further tree and shrub planting to promote a verdant setting and biodiversity. Wherever possible, premises closest to open country to the west should have green roofs to mitigate loss of bird habitats
- 8.14. Road access could be direct from A50 to serve both the housing and employment site. It could also be by means of a roundabout to give access not only to this site but also to the housing development on site LPS36C, east of Manchester Road. A roundabout has the advantage of slowing traffic on the A50 in both directions.



Illustration 63: Brookdale Centre, former farm



Illustration 64: Chester Business Park



Illustration 65: Booths Park office accommodation

## Building Design on Allocated Employment Sites

- 8.15. Buildings are to be so arranged that they complement the design of the car showrooms and the former farm buildings of the Brookdale Centre east of Manchester Road in terms of height, scale and style. Service areas are to be located behind rather than in front of the offices so that they are not detrimental to the street scene, particularly for those premises closest to the A50 and where they face housing.
- 8.16. New commercial buildings here for B1 Business are not to use sheet cladding but should be substantially brick with tiled roofs, particularly along Manchester Road. Within the site, innovative designs of architectural merit and suitable landscaping will be supported.
- 8.17. Materials used must be durable and neutral in colour rather than white or other primary colours, and are to complement the local palette to merge into the landscaping of the site. Materials liable to stain or deteriorate visually are not acceptable.
- 8.18. Where space is at a premium, green walls and roofs should be considered.
- 8.19. Signage on buildings and floodlighting will be subject to separate planning consent.
- 8.20. Signage and any lighting of building exteriors should be subdued and appropriate to the location and the environment. Flags, bunting and other semi-permanent ornamentation for advertising purposes will require advertisement consent.
- 8.21. Where more substantial structures are required because of the nature of the business to be accommodated, the design should set out to reduce visual impact by variation in the massing of the buildings, for example by a single storey office suite or entrance treatment. Careful selection of materials and their colour will be required to achieve coherent architectural composition.
- 8.22. Manchester Road is the major green gateway into the town from the north. The landscaping and green buffers on Site LPS36B will provide a harmonious transition from the office buildings in the north of the site to the new housing to the south. LPS 36C also needs to maintain a similar sylvan approach along the east side of Manchester Road. A retail offer would therefore be unsuitable for this section of the main road. Should the area next to Bluebell Farm on LPS36C be approved for employment purposes, suitable green buffers will be essential to protect the amenity of this existing residential property.



Illustration 66: King Street, solicitors office



Illustration 67: Kids Allowed, Knutsford Business Park



Illustration 68: Oxford Business Park



Illustration 69: Offices, Windsor Way

## 9. Retail Development

### Retail Buildings in New Developments

- 9.1. Design of these buildings should be congruent with the design features of the residential buildings in the rest of the new development. The commercial buildings should not offer stridently contrasting facades, roof structures or materials but must still meet their commercial or services function.
- 9.2. Particular attention will be paid to the design of areas for parking, storage and waste to ensure that clutter is minimised and servicing is efficient.

### Shop-front Design in Conservation Areas

- 9.3. Shop fronts are integral to the identity of Knutsford's historic Town Centre character area and should respect and reflect the design of the building they front within the street scene. The range and variety of buildings and their ornamentation and detailing bring the past into the present and create the sense of place. Shop frontages are the public face of the street and the quality of the design should enhance the buildings themselves and not conflict with the streets' historic character.

### General

- 9.4. New and refurbished shop fronts should meet the following criteria:
  - The proportion of the shop front to that of the building above should be retained;
  - As far as possible, original features should be shown to best advantage, for example brickwork, pilasters, corbels, plasterwork, ironwork, decorative tiles and glasswork;
  - Traditional materials of brick, wood and wrought iron must be used: sheet metal, plastic and shiny surfaces are inimical to a street in a conservation area;
  - Security shutters should be internal and grill/mesh to maintain an element of night-time vibrancy and an active retail frontage.



Illustration 70: Corner shop, modern housing development



Illustration 72: King Street, looking north



Illustration 71: Victorian shop, Seven Dials, London



Illustration 73: King Street, looking south



Illustration 74: Minshull Street, looking towards King Street

## Fascias

9.5 Design above shops should seek to:

- Keep original fascias wherever possible;
- Ensure the depth of all fascias is in proportion to their height;
- Maintain space between fascia tops and first floor windows;
- Where two buildings have been joined at shop-front level keep the fascias separate and consistent with the buildings above;
- Ensure that the style, colours and size of symbols/logos respect neighboring buildings so that the corporate identity displayed does not conflict with the character of the street.

## Signage

9.6. Requirements for signage include:

- Wooden fascia boards and hanging signs with painted lettering or individual letters in a clear type face that respects the relevant era; plastic signage is not acceptable;
- Use of paint colours that are in keeping with the period and not excessively reflective;
- Use of internally-lit signs, flashing lights, cathode ray tubes and neon lighting are inappropriate;
- Illuminated box signs should not be intrusive (for example, those used for menus);
- Swan-neck lights should not be used to illuminate fascia boards as they create visual clutter.

## Windows

9.7. Window design should comply with the following objectives:

- Windows should reference the architectural style of the building they front;
- Windows should be in due proportion to the shop front size;
- Transoms, mullions and, where necessary, glazing bars must be consistent with the historical period of the building;
- Excessively large areas of glazing must be avoided in historic buildings;
- Stall risers under shop windows should be about 750mm in height; glazing to ground level is not usually acceptable;
- Too many signs, over-large window stickers, paper notices randomly placed in windows detract from the street-scene.

## Doorways

9.8. Doorway design is also important to maintain the historic ambience of the street:

- Retain recessed entrances, ensure doors are proportionate in size and reflect the period and style of the building.
- Ensure that the kick-plate on the door is at a similar height to the stall risers so that a symmetry exists between windows and door.

## Blinds

9.9. To gain planning permission in the Town Centre Conservation Area, blinds and canopies should:

- be of the traditional retractable type when needed to shade goods so that the fascia is not permanently obscured;
- match the width of the shop front but not obscure architectural features such as pilaster tops or corbels. Dutch canopies, plastic or highly coloured blinds are not suited to this conservation area.

9.10. Where premises do not already meet the specified criteria, they will be expected to do so at any subsequent remodelling or refurbishment.



Illustration 75: Appropriate fascia design



Illustration 76: Minshull Street fascia

## 10. Conclusion

- 10.1. The Design Guide exemplifies the intention of the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that development of new and refurbished homes and businesses must:
- Meet the required standards in construction and Building for Life 12, and the needs of prospective occupiers;
  - Be appropriate and sympathetic to the site in terms of scale, appearance, form and layout;
  - Respect the natural and built environment, landscape character and biodiversity of the area;
  - Protect the setting of groups and individual trees, hedgerows and green corridors and enhance them through new and replacement planting;
  - Ensure that the materials used respond positively to the local colour palette and do not jar with the site and its setting;
  - Not adversely affect amenity in terms of additional impacts, visual intrusion, overlooking or shading;
  - Minimise adverse impacts associated with traffic and pollution (including noise and light pollution), and meet the required standards for open space and car parking.
- 10.2. Variation from these criteria will require full justification and evidence of the measures to be taken in mitigation.
- 10.3. Non-material amendments to planning applications will not be acceptable where they lower the quality or deviate from the original approved design.



Illustration 77: Green Hills, Blackburn: Kingswood Homes



Illustration 78: Single storey homes, Poole. David James Architect



Illustration 79: Affordable housing, New Haven - Connecticut

## 11. Monitoring and Review

- 11.1. This Design Guide is an integral part of Knutsford's Neighbourhood Plan which itself is a constituent of the Cheshire East Local Plan. It is unlikely that the Local Plan will remain current and relevant for the whole Plan period and will be subject to periodic review. The Neighbourhood Plan and this Design Guide should therefore be reviewed at these review points and whenever local circumstances require.
- 11.2. Knutsford Town Council through its Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee will retain overall responsibility for implementation of the Design Guide but the day-to-day monitoring and implementation of its intentions will lie with its Planning and Licensing Committee in conjunction with Cheshire East Council's Planning Department as Local Planning Authority.
- 11.3. The Design Guide has been written in the light of Planning Practice Guidance on Use of Planning Conditions: that they should be necessary; relevant to planning; relevant to the development to be permitted; enforceable; precise; and reasonable in all other respects.

12. Appendix

KEY NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICIES FOR HOUSING

National Planning Policy Framework [relevant chapters]

2 Achieving sustainable development

3 Plan-making

7 Ensuring the vitality of town centres

12 Achieving well-designed places

15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Cheshire East Local Plan 2017 [relevant policies]

MP1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

PG1 Overall Development Strategy

PG2 Settlement Hierarchy

PG3 Green Belt

PG4 Safeguarded Land

PG6 Spatial Distribution of Development

SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 Sustainable Development Principles

IN1 Infrastructure

IN2 Developer Contributions

SC1 Leisure and Recreation

SC2 Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities

SC3 Health and Well-being

SC4 Residential Mix

SC5 Affordable Homes

SC6 Rural Exceptions; Housing for Local Needs

SE1 Design

SE2 Efficient Use of Land

SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE4 Residential Mix

SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE6 Green Infrastructure

SE7 The Historic Environment

SE8 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

SE9 Energy Efficient Development

SE12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Stability

SE13 Flood Risk and Water Management

SAVED POLICIES OF THE MACCLESFIELD LOCAL PLAN 2004

Of the 85 policies retained under the Local Plan pending final selection of non-strategic sites, the following are of particular importance:

BE2: Preservation of Historic Fabric

BE13: Legh Road Conservation Area

BE15: Listed Buildings

BE17: Preservation of Listed Buildings

BE18: Design Criteria for Listed Buildings

BE19: Changes of Use for Listed Buildings

BE22: Scheduled Monuments

RT5: Open Space Standards

RT6: Recreation/Open Space Provision

RT7: Cycleways, Bridleways and Footpaths

RT8: Access to Countryside

H6: Town Centre Housing

H9: Occupation of Affordable Housing

H11: Existing Housing Stock

H12: Low Density Housing Areas

KTC1: Conservation of Historic Character

KTC2 - 4: Design Guidance

KTC5: Redevelopment Criteria for ‘The Yards’

KTC6: Red Cow Yard

KTC8: Silk Mill Street

KTC9: Shopping Areas

KTC10: Shopping Area Development

KTC11: Upper Floor Development

KTC12: Housing and Community Uses

KTC13: Housing Development

KTC14: Mixed Use Areas

KTC16: Office Development

KTC17: King Street Link Road

KTC18: Pedestrian Priority Measures

KTC19: Car Parks

KTC20: Additional Car Parking

KTC21: Car Parking Provision

DC2: Design - Extensions & Alterations

DC3: Design - Amenity

DC6: Design - Circulation & Access

DC8: Design - Landscaping

DC9 - 10: Design -Tree Protection and Landscaping

DC35: Residential - Materials & Finishes

DC36: Residential - Road Layouts and Circulation

DC37: Residential - Landscaping

DC38: Residential - Space, Light and Privacy

DC40: Residential - Children’s Play/Amenity Space

DC41: Residential - Infill Housing Development

DC42: Residential - Subdivision

DC43: Residential - Side Extensions

DC46 - 47: Residential - Demolition

DC48 - 49: Retail - Shop Front Design and Security

DC50: Shop Front Canopies, Awnings etc.

DC51 - 53: Advertisements

DC54: Restaurants

CHESHIRE EAST: STANDARDS FOR ACCESS

Public Transport	
Bus Stop	500m
Public Right of Way	500m
Railway Station (where applicable)	2km
Open Space	
Amenity Open Space	500m
Children’s Playground	500m
Outdoor Sports	500m
Public Park and Village Green	1km
Services and Amenities	
Convenience Store	500m
Supermarket	1km
Post Box	500m
Post Office	1km
Bank or Cash Machine	1km
Pharmacy	1km
Primary School	1km
Secondary School	1km
Medical Centre	1km
Leisure Facilities	1km
Local Meeting Place / Community Centre	1km
Public House	1km
Child Care Facility (nursery or crèche)	1km

