

Abberley Design Guide

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Quality information

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Introduction

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1. Introduction

AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Group through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funded Neighbourhood Planning Programme, led by Locality.

This design guide has been produced to inform new development proposed in the area. It presents a summary of the key characteristics of Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area, which make this a special place to live and visit. This information is then used to inform specific design guidelines to promote sustainable development.

The approach set out here is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which encourages local authorities to consider using design codes, or in this case guidelines, to help deliver high quality outcomes for new development. It is important however, that guidance finds the balance between promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and allowing for innovation and originality. The NPPF suggests that 'design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics' (NPPF, 2019).

The NPPF also emphasises that 'the creation of high-quality 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' (NPPF, 2019). It is therefore important that planning policies and decisions should address the connection between people and places and how any new development will respond to and integrate successfully into the natural, built and historic environment.

1.1. Objectives

The main objective of this document is to establish principles so that new development is designed and planned with regard to the existing character and context of the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area. It sets out a series of design guidelines related to residential development.

The document initially provides context to the design guidelines including strategic issues identified during the consultation carried out by the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Group. The aspirations by the communities involved, although not strictly design issues, need to be considered in the context of any design proposal.

1.2. Process

The following steps were undertaken to produce this document:

- Initial call with Group representatives;
- Meeting with members of the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Group and site visit;
- Character assessment and urban design analysis;
- Preparation of design principles and guidelines to be used to assess future developments;
- Site specific masterplan exploration;
- Draft report with design guidelines; and
- Final report.



2. Context

2.1. Location and area of study

The Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area shown in Figure 1, is located in the Malvern Hills District of Worcestershire, which is jointly administered by Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire City Council which form the South Worcestershire Councils (SWC). The County of Worcestershire lies within the West Midlands Region and the City of Worcester is approximately 13 km south-east of Abberley.

The Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area has a population of 836 and covers an area of approximately 975 hectares (9.75km²) (Malvern Hills District Council, 2014). The main vehicular access east/west is provided by the A443 and north/south by the A451.

The B4202 (Clows Tops Road) diverges from the A443 passing north/south through Abberley Common and west of Abberley village. Access to Abberley village is possible via Suffolk Lane, an un-named road at the Village Hall and Wynniatts Way off the B4202 just south of Abberley Common. Wynniatts Way also provides access to Abberley Hill and Ridge, which is part of a series of ridges forming a continuation of the Malvern Hills. The nearest rail stations are located at Hartlebury, Droitwich Spa, Kidderminster and Worcester. The Neighbourhood Plan Area area is served by an extensive network of public rights of way (PRoW).

The River Sever is approximately 4.5km to the east of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, and vehicular bridge crossings at Holt Fleet, Stourport-on-Severn, Bewdley and Worcester are prone to traffic related congestion.

The River Teme passes approximately 500m to the south-west of the Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary and Teme Valley is the name given to the surrounding landscape. Landscape characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan Area have strong topographical variation, with an undulating mosaic of agricultural fields framed by tree and hedge boundaries.

Large woodland elements exist at Wordley Dingle (north-west), Abberley Hill Wood (central), Elbatch Wood (west), Crundle End (west), Ranscombe Coppice (Central) and an area of replanted ancient woodland to the south-east and north-west of Abberley Common.

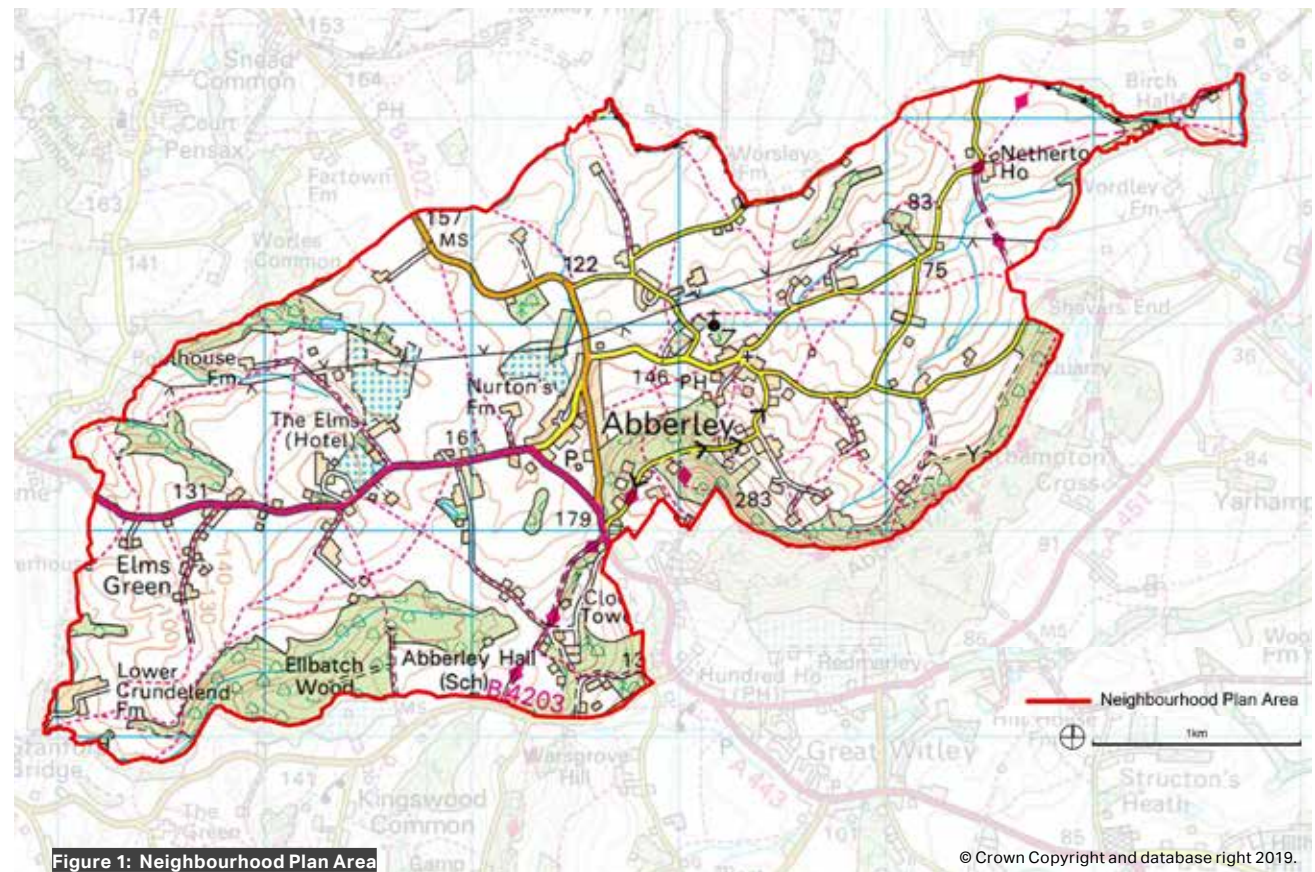
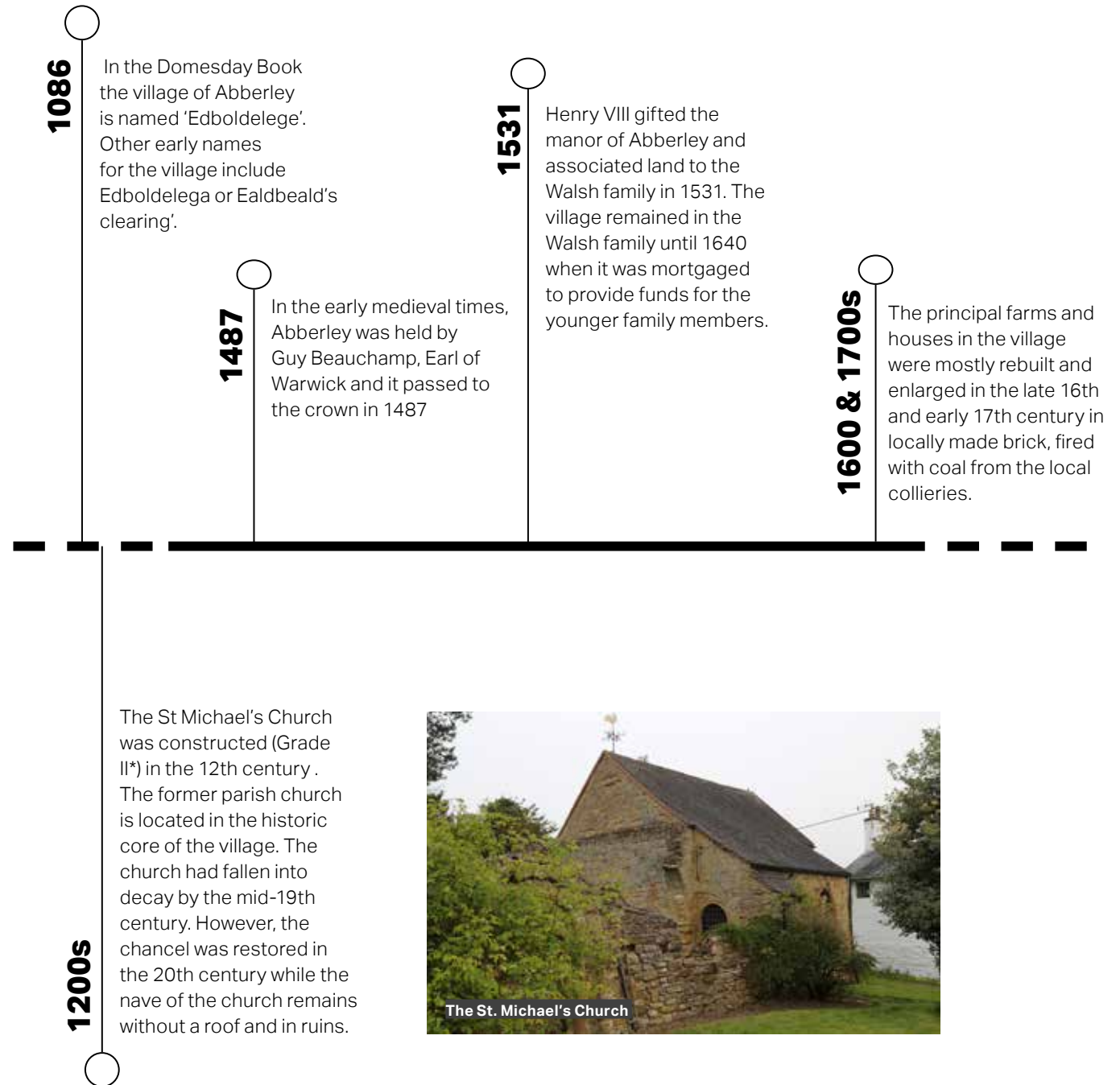


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Plan Area

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2.2. Historical development

A historical development timeline had been produced to demonstrate the influence of settlement growth on the history of the townscape.



1800 & 1900s

Houses that were built at Abberley Common had one elevation parallel to the road with their principal elevation aligned in order to gain maximum solar gain. This pattern of construction continued until the end of the 19th century.



1850-2

St Mary's Church (Grade II,) was built to the north-west of the main historic part of the village. The church was constructed in order to replace St Michael's Church.

1836

The estate was sold to John Lewis Moilliet of Geneva and a new house was designed for him, by Samuel Whitfield Daukes, known as Abberley Lodge. By that time, the estate was approximately 800 acres and covered mostly the central and western part of the parish. In 1845, the house was completed, however, the same year a fire destroyed most of it. The interior was restored between 1846 and 1848.

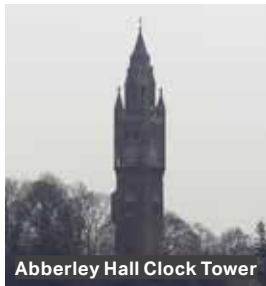
1867

In 1867, Moilliet's son, James, sold the manor to Joseph Jones of Severn Stoke who was succeeded by his cousin John Joseph Jones of Oldham in 1880. Joseph made many changes and improvements to the estate and grounds.



1883-4

The Clock Tower (Grade II*) was built by John Joseph Jones to commemorate his cousin and is located to the north of Abberley Hall. The Clock Tower has extensive views and is considered a local landmark.



Abberley Hall Clock Tower



Abberley Hall School access

Present

Today, the village of Abberley retains its historic character around St Michael's Church and its distinct 19th century addition, to the north-west, set around St Mary's Church. Abberley Hall (Grade II,) and associated buildings extend to the south-west of the village. Modern development, dating to the 20th century is mainly concentrated at Abberley Common.

1916

Abberley Hall was unoccupied from 1910, it was later leased and became a school and was sold to the school by the Jones' family in 1916.

1914-1919

A memorial to the residents of Abberley who died in the First World War has been erected in the entrance of St Mary's Church.

1900s

Following the construction of St Mary's Church, there was some additional development around the church. The initial settlement was centred around St Michael's Church, to the south-east, and comprises the main historic part of the village.

1994



Village Hall

Abberley Village Hall was built in 1994. The existing village Hall replaced St. George's Hall, the village hall from 1937 until 1994.

2.3. Landscape designations

Abberley village is a conservation area with a published appraisal conducted by Malvern Hills District Council in 2010. The appraisal sets out a framework to guide future decisions relating to the conservation and safeguarding of the Abberley village conservation areas special architectural and historical significance.

The special characteristics of the conservation area lie in the unusual layout comprising of two churches within proximity, each church acts as a focal point to development, forming two distinct areas within the same conservation area. An informal mix of building types further enhances the conservation areas uniqueness. A village green added in the 1990s between these areas provides an important village amenity space.

The conservation area and wider Neighbourhood Plan Area context contains numerous listed buildings and structures, mainly of Grade II status. There are no Grade I listed designations located within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Grade II status Abberley Hall, includes extensive grounds and contains several listed elements including a clock tower (Grade II*) and a Registered Park and Garden (Grade II). There are no local lists or Scheduled Monuments located within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 13km to the south and the Shropshire Hills AONB is located approximately 15km north-west of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. A proposal to extent the AONB to include the Abberley Hills is currently under consideration. The River Teme which passes within 500m of the Neighbourhood Plan Area south-west boundary extent is a site of special scientific interest (SSSI). The Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark covers an area of nationally significant geological landscape which spans five counties stretching from Gloucester to Bridgnorth. The Geopark Way long distance footpath runs along the crest of Abberley Hill through the Neighbourhood Plan Area.



Wayfinder signage

2.4. Strategic Issues

Members of the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Group were invited to share their knowledge and experience of the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area during a site visit on the 17th April. The group provided documentation relating to heritage, settlement pattern, archaeology and a resident survey prior to meeting. The observations made during the site visit and assessments have been used to inform this design guide.

Several key considerations and strategic issues emerged from the consultation, which have informed the preparation of the design guide. These issues have been identified at a wider scale and represent the aspirations of the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Group. These are summarised below:

- Attractive place to live, work and visit.
- Strong historical and cultural associations.
- A wide variety of buildings.
- Long distance views.
- Speed of traffic, traffic calming and road speed zones.
- Carrying capacity of local roads.
- Commuter traffic passing through.

- Highly valued but limited open space.
- Proportionate development.
- Connections between new development and wider settlement.
- Limited access to shops and amenities.



2.5. Proposed Development

Proposed development of the following land allocations derived from the strategic housing land availability assessment (SHLAA) and allocated within the Local Plan, represent a considerable focus for the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Group.

Land at Manchester House is not allocated under the SHLAA or Local Plan, however the site is viewed by the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Group with utmost settlement importance.

- SWDP 59 a / MHAB05 - Land at Walshes Farm
- SWDP 59-1 / MHAB01 – Land at The Orchard
- SWDP 59-2 / MHAB07 - Land west of Apostles Oak Cottage
- Land at Manchester House

Two further sites were put forward in the 2018 call for sites to supplement the SWDP allocation. Since sites already identified in the SWDP allow for significant growth in number of houses in the settlement on Abberley Common, detailed work on design features was not undertaken as further housing growth is not likely to be considered sustainable by the Parish Council.

Should this position change, the design considerations set out in this Design Guide should be applied.

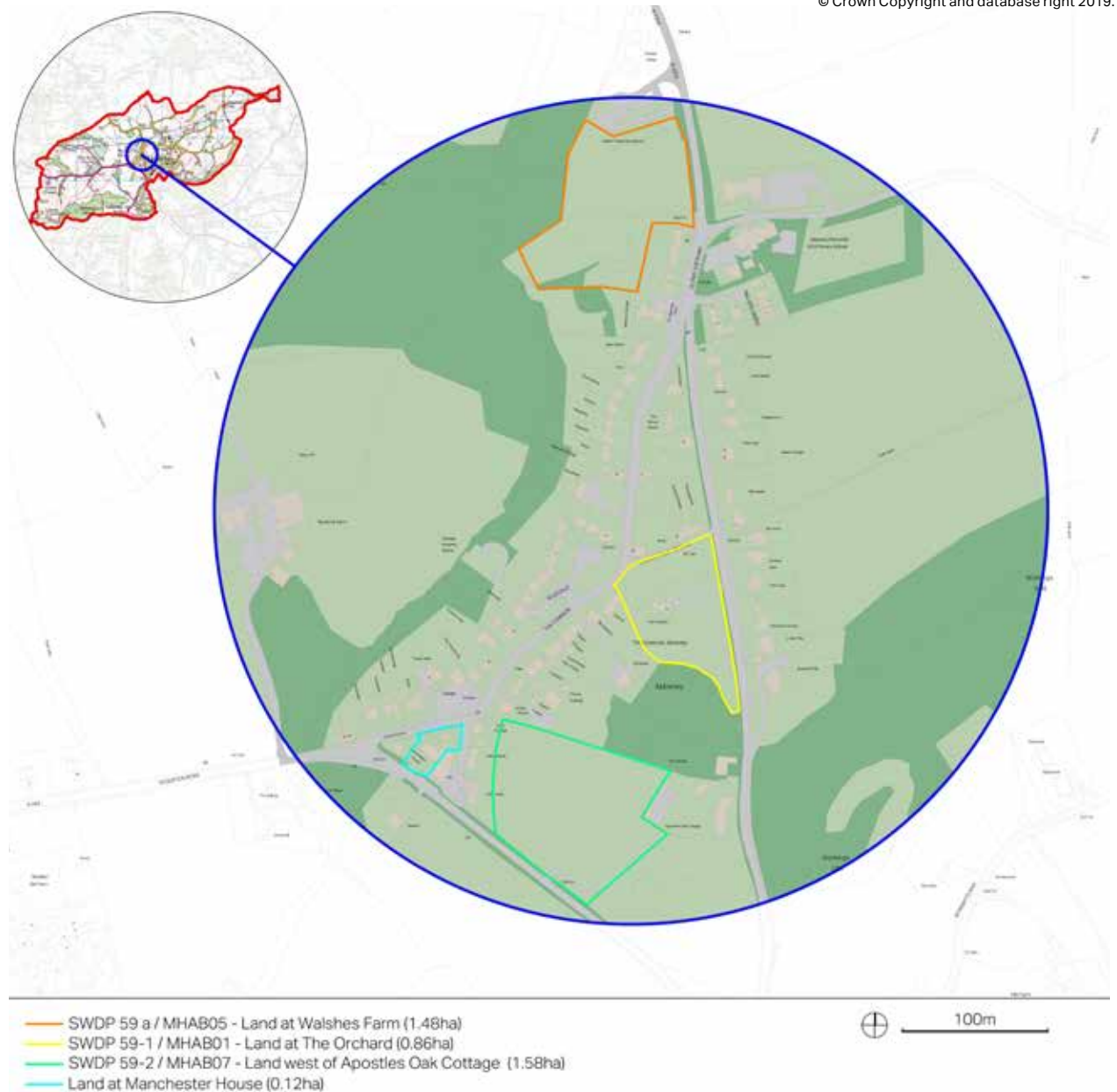


Figure 2: Development Sites



Character assessment

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3. Character assessment

3.1. Introduction

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area. Character assessment is used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a place. It is used to identify recognisable patterns of elements or characteristics that make one place different from another. This design guide is focussed on the character of townscape and its rural landscape setting. The features introduced in this section are later used to inform the design guidelines.

3.2. Existing character assessments and design guidance

A number of published character assessments and management strategies are relevant to the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Abberley Appraisal and Management Strategy

The strategy provides guidance for the Abberley Conservation Area is available at:

<https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/.../Abberley.../36fb0ebf-696e-44fe-9a1a-f34f28197>

National Character Area – 102 Teme Valley

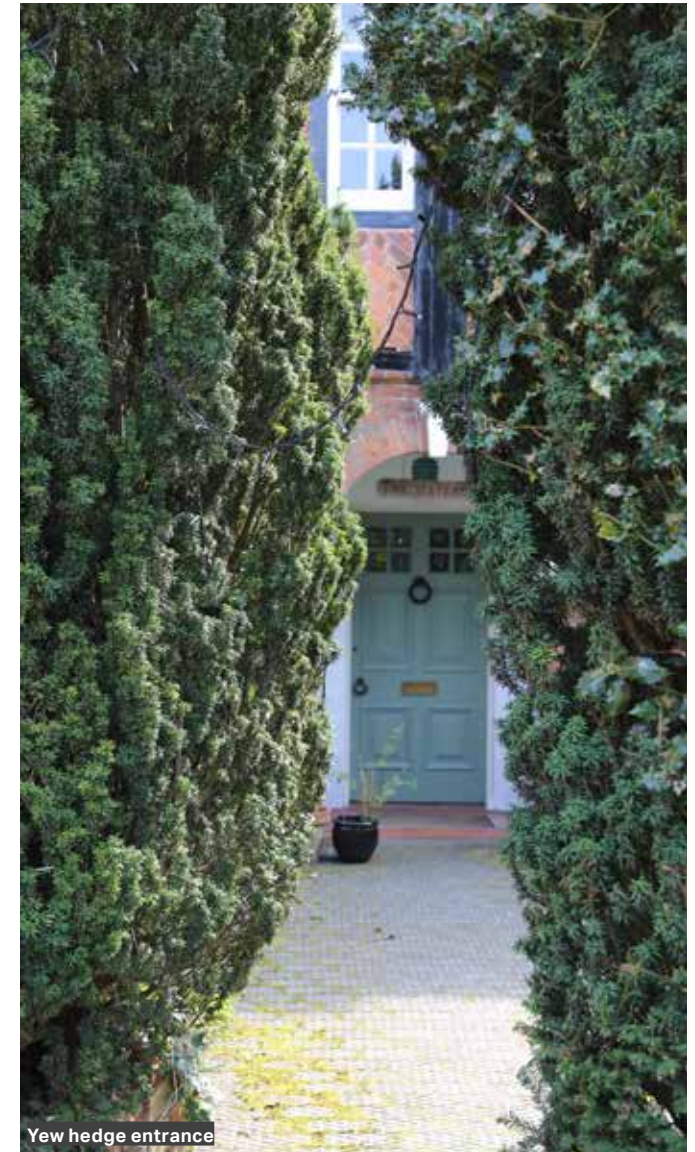
The Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area area falls within National Character Area (NCA) 102 Teme Valley, as defined by Natural England, 2014. Available at:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4947777108836352>

Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment

Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area is also covered by the Worcestershire County Council landscape character-assessment 2012 published as Supplementary Guidance (SG). available at:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/4788/landscape_character_assessment_supplementary_guidance



Yew hedge entrance

The following Landscape Types are represented within the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area:

- **Principal Wooded Hills (L2)**

“These are upstanding, wooded landscapes with a sloping, in places steeply undulating topography, often on the edge of higher ground. These are landscapes of large, irregularly shaped ancient woodlands and wooded streamlines, typically forming an interlocking pattern with surrounding hedged fields. The flowing woodland cover is a key visual element within the landscape, resulting in a strong sense of unity and visual integration”.

- **Timbered Plateau Farmlands (L6)**

“The Timbered Plateau Farmlands are varied, mixed farming landscapes of hedged fields, scattered farms, woods and wooded valleys associated with upstanding areas of undulating relief. The landform conveys a sense of strength and dominance which tends to override the pattern of tree cover and fields. Variations in landform within this landscape create a changing sequence of visual perspectives, ranging from open vistas on plateau summits to more secluded scenes along valley bottoms”.

- **Principal Timbered Farmlands (L7)**

“Principal Timbered Farmlands are rolling lowland landscapes with occasional steep sided hills and low escarpments. They have a small scale, wooded, agricultural appearance characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. These are complex, in places intimate, landscapes of irregularly shaped woodlands, winding lanes and frequent wayside dwellings and farmsteads”.

- **Wooded Estatelands (L9)**

“These are open, gently rolling agricultural landscapes characterised by an ordered pattern of hedged fields and discrete rural villages connected by a network of minor roads. These are landscapes of heavy, poorly drained soils, typically associated with broad clay vales backed by steeply sloping escarpments. Ridge and furrow, a relic of medieval farming practice is often distinctive. The field pattern tends to define the scale of the landscape”.

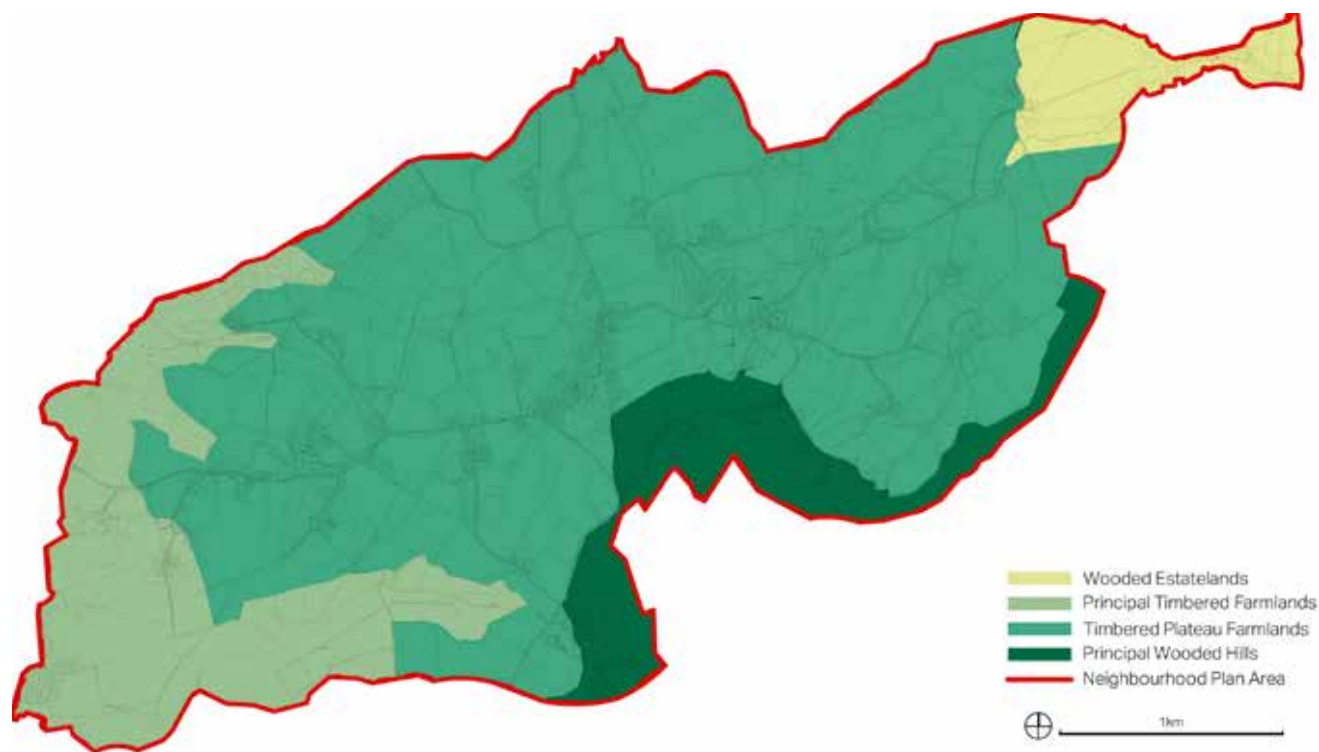


Figure 3: Landscape Character Types

3.3. Character assessment

Two distinct townscape character areas have been identified within the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area, as shown in Figure 3. The surrounding areas within the Neighbourhood Plan Area are covered by existing landscape character assessments.

- Character Area 1 (CA1) – Abberley Conservation Area
- Character Area 2 (CA2) – Abberley Common

Character Area 1 (CA1) – Abberley Conservation Area

Settlement pattern

The character of the conservation area is heavily influenced by the Abberley Hill ridge, which wraps around the southern boundary to the Neighbourhood Plan Area and provides enclosure. The landscape consists of undulating topography of hills and valleys surrounded by agricultural fields, punctuated by tree and hedge boundaries. Agricultural fields on the lower slopes of Abberley Hill provide a degree of openness to the area, with views towards surrounding forested elevated areas. Abberley Village Green and Community Woodland is located centrally to townscape development within the conservation area.

Topography splits the settlement into two distinct areas. To the west, at St. Mary’s Church, the settlement pattern is dispersed, whereas to the east, the village layout is ordered and density increases where access roads intersect at a junction outside St. Michael’s Church. The widening of the junction area provides a sense of arrival in the village, after narrow sinuous approach roads, enclosed by buildings and high boundary walls.

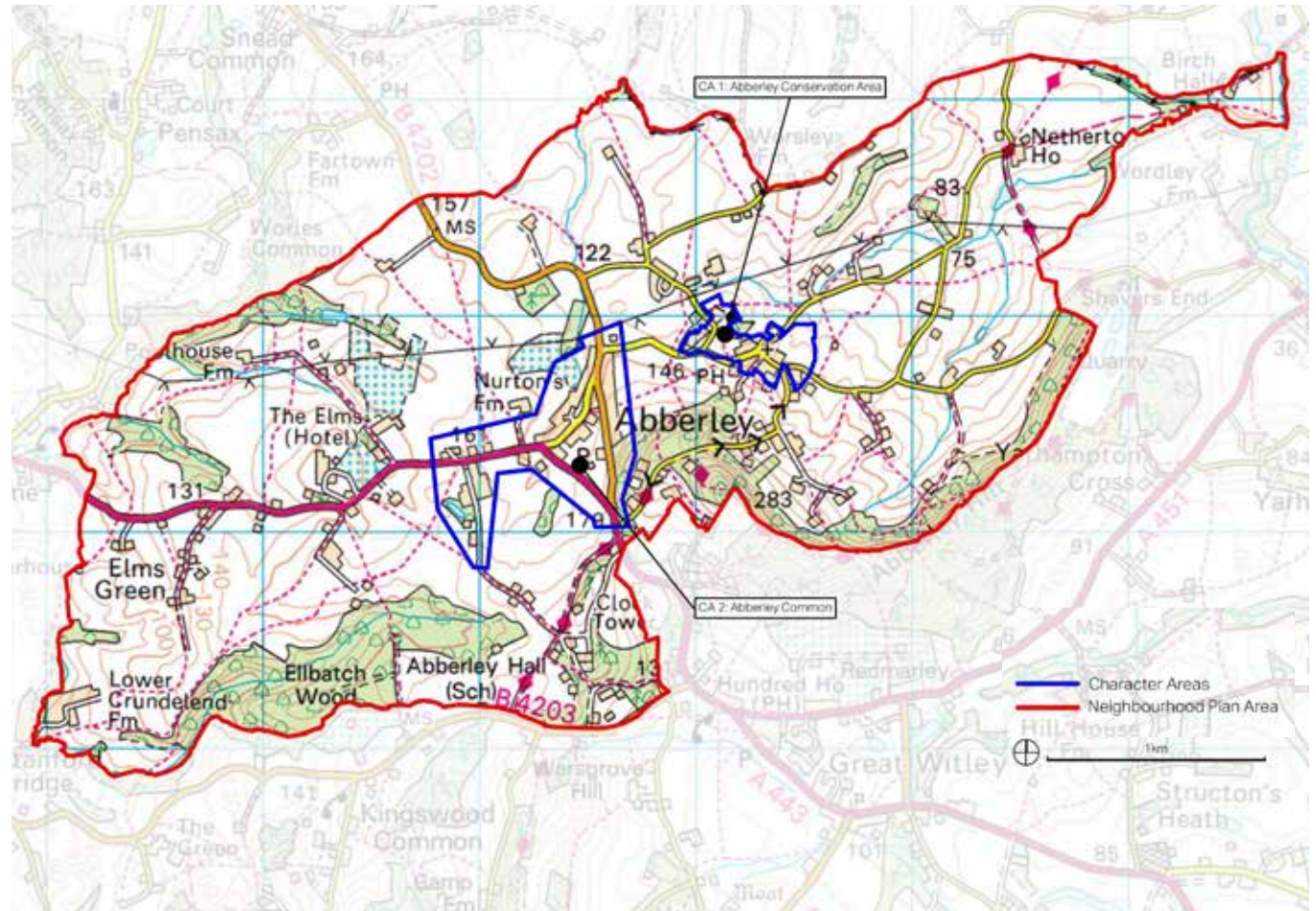


Figure 4: Local Character Assessment

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Heritage assets

Abberley Village Conservation Area contains 8 listed buildings; comprising of 7 Grade II listed buildings and 1 Grade II* listed building at St. Michael's Church. The conservation area appraisal identifies further non-designated buildings that make a positive contribution to the area's character and appearance.

Green spaces and streetscape

Abberley Village Green is at the centre of the conservation area and is well maintained, consisting of undulating lawn with pedestrian routes, accented by ornamental tree planting and enclosed by native hedge. Tree planting is confined to the northern and eastern perimeter of the village green, allowing strong visual connections to be maintained south towards Abberley Hill and ridge.

Public realm is limited to pavements, with the widening of the central junction and parking provision at St. Michael's Church giving the appearance of a small square, albeit non-pedestrianised.



Local signage

In general gardens of older properties near St. Michael's Church are confined to the rear or side elevations, with a limited number of small planted areas fronting the road. In contrast, later development additions incorporate gardens on the front elevation. Despite the limited number of front gardens, this area of the village is softened by the presence of mature trees and hedge boundaries, together with borrowed or glimpsed views of the surrounding landscape.

Properties which occupy more generous plots, incorporate land along road frontages which provides a more verdant character.

Pattern and layout of buildings

The conservation area has two different patterns of settlement within it. The first is focused around St Michael's Church in the historic area of the village where buildings are densely planned and generally front directly onto the area's narrow winding lanes. The second is in the area of St Mary's Church and represents expansion of the village westwards, where the buildings occupy larger plots in a more haphazard arrangement influenced by the area's agricultural buildings.



Central junction area

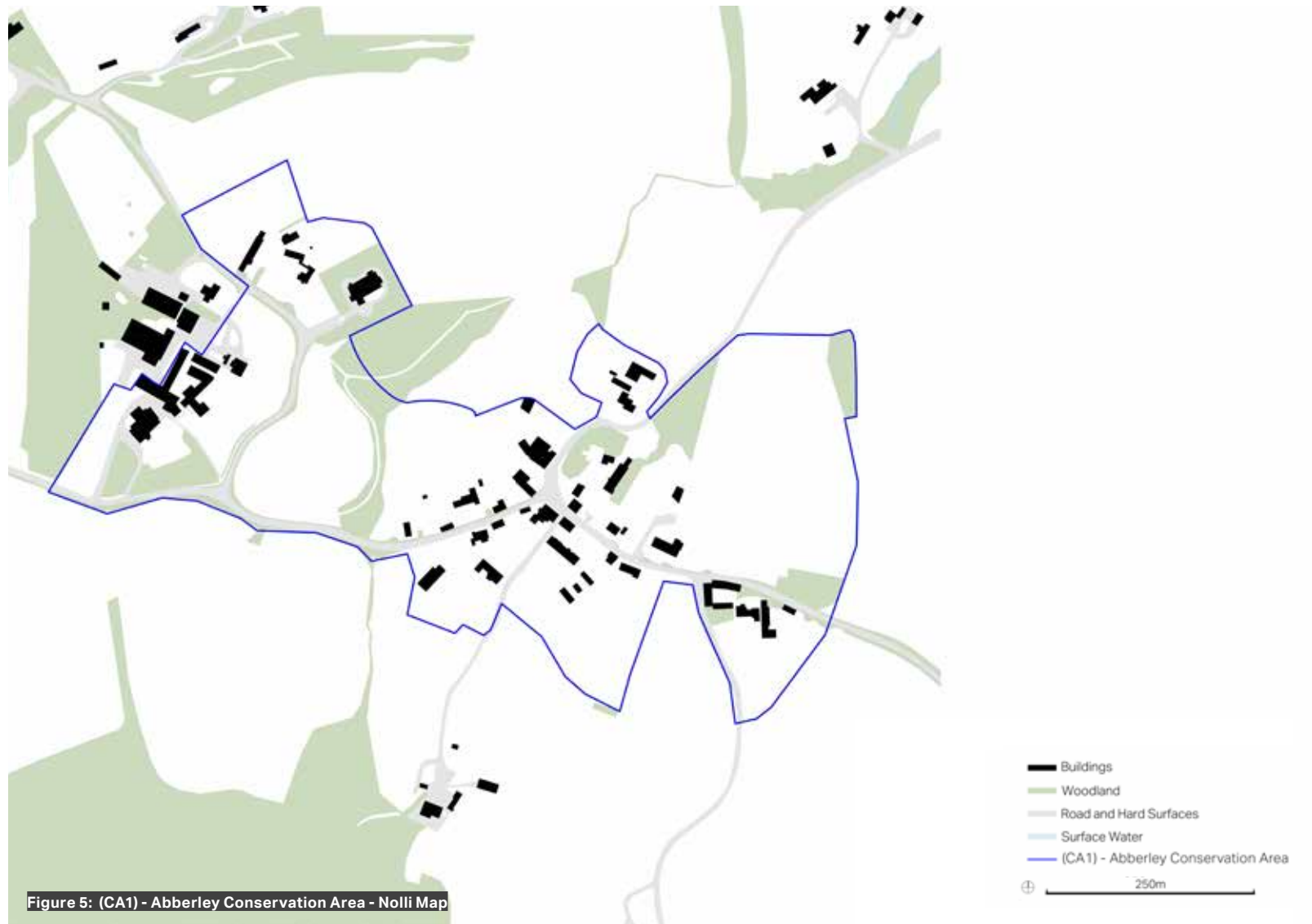
The variation of building typologies within the conservation area underpins the gradual development of the village with examples ranging from the Norman period to the 20th century (Malvern Hills District Council, 2010). With the exception of St Michael's, the area's earliest buildings are timber-framed and of high status, such as the Rectory and Town Farm. Likewise, later buildings in the historic core of the village, tend to be high-status, well-designed buildings of their period, generally constructed in brick with some use of stone detailing. Beyond the very centre of the village more modest cottage-style properties prevail, mostly constructed in brick, but some with external render. In the area of St Mary's many of the area's brick farmstead buildings have been sensitively converted to residential use, retaining their agricultural character.

The increasing building density and increasing scale of buildings towards the centre of the historic village is a key characteristic of the settlement. The range of periods and styles represented, combined with a legacy of adapting buildings to different uses contributes to the character and a common material palette helps bind the village forming a homogeneous village aesthetic.



Timber frame exposed elements

The following Nolli map illustrates the clustering of properties within the character area.



Views and landmarks

The undulating topography of Abberley Conservation Area and the surrounding landscape features combine to offer a range of views across the conservation area. Enclosed rural roads, lined with buildings and high brick boundary walls, at times restrict views, before opening up across large areas of landscape, or at the centre of the village, opening out into the village junction at St Michael's where some of its key buildings are located. Expansive views on the western approach towards the village green and over agricultural land towards Abberley Hill combine with the restricted and intimate, inward looking, nature of the village junction area. Topography along the eastern village access, restrict views to a predominantly northern aspect, albeit views are long ranging.



Open agricultural views

Building line and boundary treatment

Building frontages which surround the junction area at St. Michaels Church, predominantly face the road, albeit examples of perpendicular placement exist. Buildings are located either directly on the road/pavement or with minimal relief afforded by small planted areas. An effect which creates a tight urban grain character.

Building line on the whole is maintained through building placement, boundary walls or hedges. Stepped access at times is utilised owing to the topography which shapes the village, and examples of basements incorporated into dwellings exist.



Storey and a half

Building heights and roofline

In tandem with the increasing density of buildings moving towards St Micheal's the scale and height of buildings also increases. This contributes to the drama of the approach and the sense of arrival achieved at the centre. The scale of buildings in the centre, such as the two-storeys with basement and attic at Jaylands, is exaggerated by the opening out of the roads around them, and by the land sloping away from them towards properties of more modest height and massing. In those areas, buildings are of two- storeys and single-storey with an attic. Rooflines are predominantly pitched, and dormer windows on the front elevation are common. Double-pitched and hipped rooflines are also present. Buildings in general have chimneys, some of considerable height due to the surrounding topography and in keeping with 18th and 19th century fashions. The varying height and scale of the buildings combines with the topography to present a pleasingly haphazard appearance to the rooflines that emphasises the building density at the settlement junction area.



Roofline variation

Architecture

Abberley is characterised by its wide range of building types and scales, representing architectural styles from the Norman period to the 19th century and modern. The area is not characterised by one particular architectural style or a single character, but rather the harmonious mix of different styles and how they respond to the street layout and topography.

The most noteworthy buildings are the surviving timber-framed structures from the medieval and early post-medieval period, but these do not typify the area. Instead brick is the prevalent material that unifies the settlement. The earliest standing brick building is the late 16th or early 17th century Tump House, but early use of brick in buildings of more modest means is also a feature of the area, seen at the Old Village Stores, Field Farmhouse and Poolhouse Farmhouse. These houses are built from good-quality, brick-fired in coal-fired kilns and they may have been the homes of mine owners and overseers. Key buildings of the 18th century are high-status houses such as the Old Village Stores, with its decorative Dutch gable and brick string courses, and Jaylands, with its balanced symmetrical façade and decorated central gable. These are offset by the more modestly proportioned 19th century brick buildings around them, displaying cottage-

style architecture, and occupied by workers from the local mines and farms, but these too have architectural details that contribute to local character. With the exception of the area's two churches, stone construction is generally limited to boundary walls and some outbuildings.

Key architectural details comprise of pitched roofs with integrated dormer windows, with multiple examples of storey and a half housing form. Decorative brick detailing at eave and window headers combine with small flat clay roof tiles. Access points are generally integrated with protection either by sheltered recess or external canopies of timber with a tiled roof. Frequent examples of decorative brick bonds; such as English garden wall bond or Flemish bond give brick-built buildings added character and visual complexity, decorative brick diapering is also used at times.

Symmetrical fenestration and timber window construction, of sash or side hung casement type is common. Windows are predominantly of timber construction, of sash or side hung casement type.

There is a combination of single-pane windows together with multi-paned windows with timber glazing bars, some leaded examples exist. The use of decorative plaster mouldings is generally concentrated around the embellishment of windows, whilst there are also some examples of sham timber-framing across the area

Land use, levels of activity and parking

Land use within Abberley Conservation Area is predominantly residential housing, with limited complimentary local amenities including; The Manor Arms public house and the churches of St. Michael and St. Mary.

Parking provision is space restrictive, due to the tight and narrow access roads around the village. Areas outside both churches provide limited parking resources which additionally serve users of the village green or central junction area. The Manor Arms also provides off-road parking at the rear. Village properties are generally equipped with off-road parking.



Positive aspects of character

There are a number of positive aspects of character which should be sustained, reinforced or enhanced. These relate to building typology variation, density, architectural detailing, vernacular synergy and urban structure throughout the character area, as set out below:

- A diverse range of building styles and scales reflecting the area's historical development, social structure, and relationship to the local mines, is delivered in general at low density and adds significant richness to the settlement. The variation of building style, height and character provides visual depth to settlement views which are principally inward looking;
- A small increase in village density at the St. Michael's Church junction, helps give the village an area of focus within a principally dispersed settlement morphology;
- Door porches, at time very generous, dormer windows and eave details contribute to the character of the area;
- The use of brick on much of the housing stock, provides a cohesive settlement aesthetic; and
- Settlement centred around a village green and central junction (square) area delivers an appealing urban structure.

Issues to be addressed in design guidelines

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management. These principally relate to car parking provisions, plot layout and fenestration as follows:

- Limited off-road parking provision within the St. Michael's Church junction area of the character area, has the potential to increase street clutter which can detract from the overall visual appearance of the village;
- Archetype 20th/ 21st century front and back garden layouts do not suit the conservation area vernacular; and
- Rosewood effect uPVC casement windows look at odds with the predominant use of white timber frame windows.



Character Area 2 (CA2) – Abberley Common

Settlement pattern

Beyond the conservation area, a linear settlement morphology is visible with contoured side roads arranged around a central triangular axis. The axis is formed by the Clows Top Road (B4202), an elevated road located on the lower slopes of Abberley Ridge. The majority of development here is located on the upper eastern side of the road, with front elevations facing the road with views west, albeit a number of dwellings exist on the lower western side. Below this road, The Common diverges from the B4202 just south of Abberley Parochial Primary School, with development on both sides of the road with the same contoured character creating an upper and lower side. The A443 (Stockton Road) connects both of these roads and provides access east/west from Abberley Preparatory School in the south, to the western extent of the Neighbourhood Plan Area beyond The Elms (Hotel). Development is dispersed along the A443, although a small concentration exists south of Stockton Road at Abberley Park.

Abberley Common is the larger of the two character areas, with a higher concentration of housing development. Settlement pattern is influenced by the topography of the area, with terraced building plots set out down the hillside of the settlement. Stepped topography affords many properties long views across the surrounding landscape and good aspect to receive solar gains which can passively contribute to heating dwellings. A centralised area along The Common has the feel of a village centre, however it is dominated by a car garage/mechanics and a large area of hardstanding utilised as a car park for business use.



Green spaces and streetscape

Areas of green space or public realm within the character area are limited. A verge area at Rosedale, is the only publicly accessible area of green space in the character area. Public realm access around The Common is provided by pavement on one side of the road with a short stretch of pavement on both sides in front of the school.

The Common has the feel of the village centre, at times with strong views south towards Abberley Hall clock tower, which provides a strong sense of place. An informal pedestrian access route beside the convenience shop which once connected Stockton Road to The Common, has been fenced off.

Heritage assets

North Lodge is the only listed building within the plan character area.

Pattern and layout of buildings

A linear morphology along triangular axis provides a sense of depth and concentration to the village, without a village centre as such.



Verge provides spatial relief

Significant development around The Common began in the mid- to late-19th century with a series of dispersed dwellings in large plots mainly to the east side of The Common. Most of these have been replaced with mid-20th century and later detached or semi-detached housing, which is more extensive, denser and has a more regular layout lining the road. These houses have front and rear gardens and off-street parking. Modern development along Clows Top Road (B4202) has a more individual character of larger detached properties in large plots.

Clusters of surviving historic buildings are present towards the southern and northern end of The Common and Churchfield Terrace. These buildings are individually designed, generally of 19th to early-20th century date. They include a short row of terraced housing representing former estate workers housing.

Good views are afforded for most dwellings due to the topography of the settlement.



Churchfield Terrace

Views and landmarks

The undulating nature of the character area, affords opportunities for distant views throughout the settlement. Areas along the Clows Top Road have long views north and north-east across the Teme Valley landscape towards Abberley Park.

A significant landmark for the Neighbourhood Plan Area is the Abberley Hall clock tower, commissioned by owner John Joseph Jones and completed in 1882. Standing at 49m, and occupying a commanding elevated position, the clock tower can be seen across the character area. In particular residential areas to the south of Abberley Park and areas along The Common, have strong visual links with the clock tower. The Grade II* Abberley Hall clock tower is part of the Abberley Hall estate which is also a Registered Park and Garden. This is located outside of this character area.

Abberley Village Hall car park located close to the northern gateway to Abberley Common, has a long ranging view towards the northern edge of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, and east towards the steeple of St. Mary's Church. Abberley Hill and Ridge wrap around the southern extents of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, providing a constant visual backdrop and significant contribution to the settlements countryside setting.



Abberley Hall Clock Tower

The following Nolli map illustrates the clustering of properties within the character area.

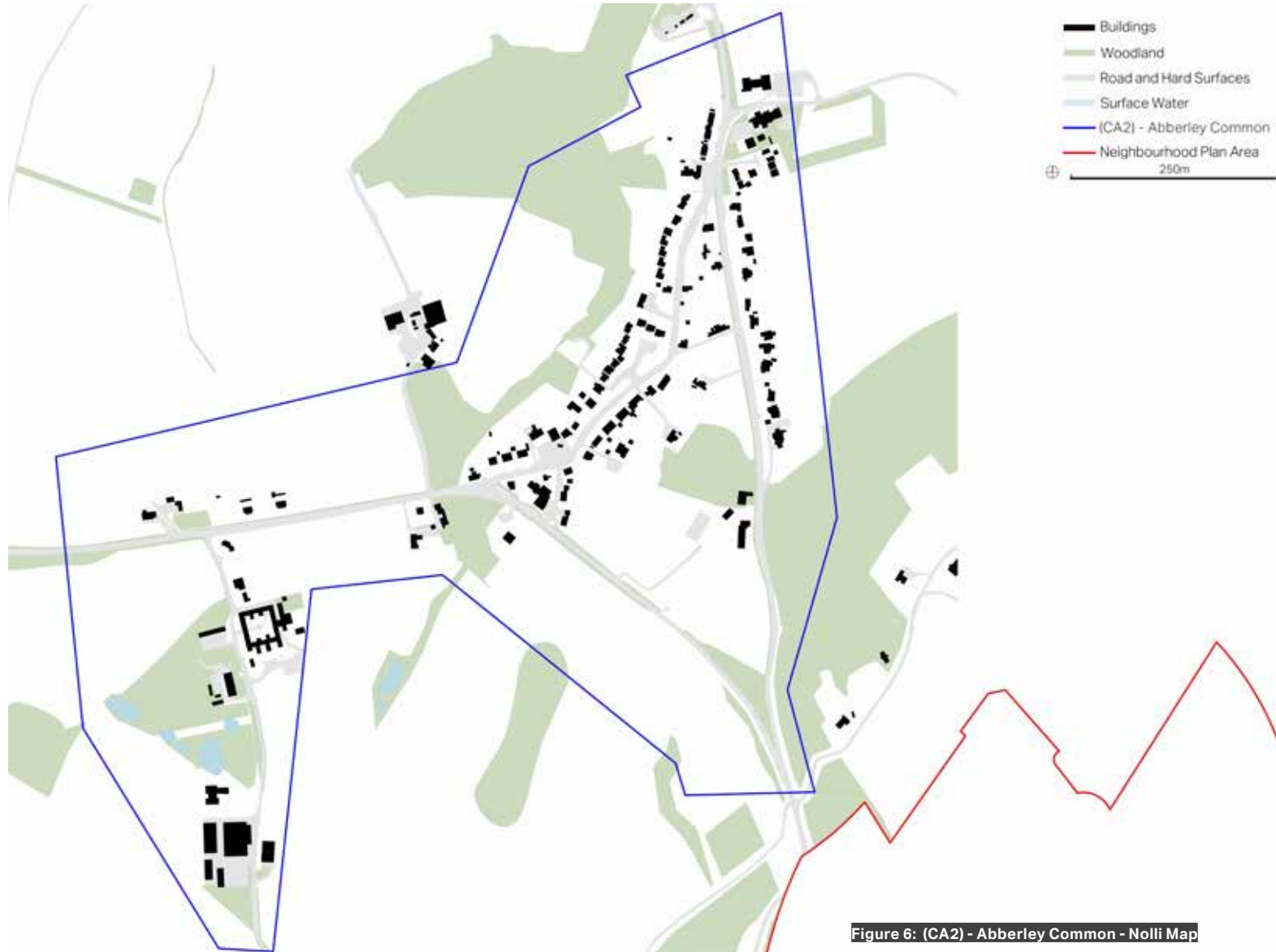


Figure 6: (CA2) - Abberley Common - Nolli Map

Building line and boundary treatment

Dwellings predominantly include front gardens, and are set back from access routes although a limited number of historic properties along The Common are located directly on the road, sited perpendicular to it. The contoured topography of the settlement creates an upper and lower side to access roads at The Common and Clows Top Road, with sloped access to dwellings commonplace.

Boundary treatments take on the agricultural influence of the area, with hedge boundaries and dwarf stone walls. Examples of picket fencing, railings or brick built walls which illustrate the evolution of materials somewhat dilute the agricultural characteristic.

Building heights and roofline

Two storey dwellings with simple pitched roofs fronting access roads is the predominant style of the character area, some older properties make use of level changes and incorporate basements.

Some specific dwellings on the eastern side of The Common are formed in a Dutch bungalow style with large dormer roof windows and expansive roof areas.



Gambrel or 'Dutch' roof construction

Other examples include storey and half dwellings with dormer windows, and two storey dwellings with gables facing the road. A small development of five dwellings to the north-west of The Common are constructed with gambrel roofs.

Architecture

The building style in the area comprises of early and pre 20th century detached, semi-detached dwellings with one small terrace, mixed with mid-20th century dwellings predominantly of detached and semi detached type, built to standard designs seen across the country. These do not reflect any local influences.

The area's historic buildings, of which there are few, display evidence of how the area's geology has provided the availability of materials for the brick making process which has shaped part of the industry and character of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Red brick housing is the primary construction type, combined at times with upper storeys of contrasting timber framing, decorative brick courses or rendered elements. Ashlar stone window lintels feature on earlier properties.

Two dwellings located on the north side of Stockton Road, rich with character, accommodate many of the areas architectural details with decorative brick bonds and red small flat roof tiles. These properties are representative of the Arts and Craft movement.



Design elements and facade decorations

Fenestration within the character area comprises of timber construction of sash or side hung casement type, with some leaded examples and modern uPVC. Fenestration on older built-form examples is executed with symmetry, whereas more recent builds demonstrate less symmetry and generally use uPVC, although modern examples of symmetrical timber frame windows exist.

Land use, levels of activity and parking

Land use within the character area comprises of private residential dwellings, supported by a limited range of local amenities including: a school, a car mechanics garage and convenience shop. The fertile soils of the Teme Valley have a strong agricultural influence on the character area, with large swathes of the surrounding countryside under private farm ownership.

Dispersed amenities without a village centre means activity is spaced, with fluctuations primarily associated with school opening/closing times. Car parking within the character area is mainly incorporated into private residences. Parking provision at amenities across the settlement reduces the requirement for on-street parking, and therefore Abberley Common is not susceptible to street scene clutter.



Village shop parking

Positive aspects of character

There are a number of positive aspects of character which should be sustained, reinforced or enhanced. These relate to building densities, parking, material synergy and connectivity, as set out below:

- Settlement densities are low, a product of generous plot sizes accessed from primary settlement roads. There are no estate roads which incorporate secondary or tertiary access;
- An architectural style which includes timber framing elements at building gables demonstrates how the architectural styles introduced by John Joseph Jones at Abberley Hall Park influences the local style;
- Low housing densities and the incorporation of off-road parking means street scene clutter and associated problems do not occur in this character area; and
- A linear settlement morphology provides good settlement connections and a reduction of dead-ends. The placement of settlement built-form along access routes, ensures good relationships between dwellings and the settlement. Successful developments which incorporate cul-de-sac arrangements have maintained active frontages and a strong relationship with the street, such as those at Rosedale.

Issues to be addressed in design guidelines

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management. These principally relate to village opportunities, green space provisions, new development layouts and road speeds as follows:

- An area on The Common associated with the garage has a large area of hardstanding utilised for business parking. This is strategically underutilised and if appropriately designed could form an attractive village centre. The garage is however a source of employment for the village;
- The lack of green space in Abberley Common is acutely apparent, despite the setting, access to areas with recreational opportunities are limited to grass verges. Indeed the South Worcestershire Development Plan, recognises this short fall in play areas, and new development should seek to incorporate recreational green space where possible;
- Examples of densely packed enclosed pocket developments (Millers Green) without areas of amenity space restrict settlement cohesion; and
- Speeding by car drivers is an issue in specific places around the settlement, principally at the northern entry point on the B4202, close to Abberley Parochial Primary School and the downhill westward trajectory along A443. Traffic calming measures here would significantly improve road safety and increase settlement enjoyment for residents.





Design guidelines

04

4. Design guidelines

4.1. Introduction

This section is divided into two parts. The first is a set of key elements to consider when assessing a design proposal. These are presented as general questions which should be addressed by developers and their design teams who should provide clarification and explanation as necessary. The second part is design guidance setting out the expectations of the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Group.

It is important that full account is taken of the local context and that the new development responds to and enhances a “sense of place” and meets the aspirations of people already living in that area. The aim of this section is to produce design guidelines that help to assess design quality and appropriateness in residential development proposals. Images have been used to reflect good examples of local architecture.

The guidelines developed in this document focus on residential development, considering the character of the immediate neighbouring buildings, the townscape context and surrounding landscape of the area. The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural environment should all contribute to determining the character and identity of new development, whilst recognising that new building techniques and technologies can deliver acceptable built form which may sometimes be more relevant.

4.2. General Design Considerations

This section sets out a series of general design principles followed by questions against which the development proposals should be evaluated.

As an initial appraisal, there should be evidence that development proposals have considered and applied the following general design principles:

- Harmonise with and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form, movement pattern and land use.
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views.
- Reinforce or enhance the established character of streets and other spaces.
- Integrate with existing access; public rights of way (PRoW), streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity.
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality.
- Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness.
- Retain and incorporate important existing landscape and built form features into the development.
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing.
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details.
- 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; to provide a safe, attractive and cohesive environment.
- Make enough 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.
- Sensitively integrate energy efficient technologies within the scheme at the start of the design process.

4.2.1. Key points to consider when assessing planning applications

The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment overview as to whether the design proposal has considered the context and provided an adequate design proposal.

Townscape structure or settlement pattern

- What are the essential characteristics of the existing settlement and street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- Does the proposal respect local landscape features including topography and hydrology?
- What are the important landscape or historic features within and surrounding the site? Have these features, including existing trees been considered in the proposal?
- If located in a conservation area, do proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- How does the proposal relate to its setting? Are there any important links both physical and visual that currently exists on and adjacent to the site?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?

- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-de-sac models? If not, why not?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement and road speeds?
- Do the new points of access and street layout take regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

Green spaces and street scape

- Do new proposals respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features including trees on or adjacent to the site?
- In rural and edge of settlement locations does the development negatively impact on visual character or interrupt existing tranquillity within the area, and has this been fully considered and sufficient mitigation included?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been considered?
- Does the proposal positively contribute to the quality of the public realm and street-scape?
- Providing continuous green infrastructure linkages is important for biodiversity. Have opportunities to

provide green infrastructure links been considered and integrated within the scheme?

- Is there adequate public/ private/ communal amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- 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 existing residents, and how will it be managed?
- Have all aspects of security been fully considered and integrated into the design of the buildings and open spaces?

Pattern and layout of buildings

- What is the pattern and layout of existing buildings and have these been respected in the proposal?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of existing building layouts and their relationship with the main roads through the settlement?
- If the design is within or adjacent to a heritage asset, have the elements which contribute to their significance been considered in the proposal? (Heritage assets include listed buildings and registered landscapes).
- Does the proposal preserve or enhance the setting of a heritage asset?

Views and landmarks

- What are the existing key views and visual landmarks in the area and have these been retained and enhanced in the proposal?
- Where long distance views exist, how are these respected in the design?
- Are new views and visual connections with the existing settlement and surrounding area incorporated into the proposal?
- Are new landmarks to be formed within the proposals?

Building line and boundary treatment

- Does the proposal respect the existing building line and harmonise with the adjacent properties?
- Have the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

Building heights and roofline

- Does the proposed development compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens?
- Has careful attention been paid to height, form, massing and scale of new buildings? Is it appropriate to reflect the proximate scale of development?

- If a proposal is an extension, is it subordinate to the existing property?

Architectural details and materials

- Has the local architectural character been reflected in the contemporary or traditional design of new proposals?
- Does new development demonstrate strong design rationale, quality material specification and good detailing evocative and appropriate for the context?
- What are the distinctive materials in the area, if any? Do the proposed materials harmonise with the local vernacular? Are the details and materials of sufficient high quality?
- Can local materials be used?
- Have window, door, eaves and roof details been refined and considered in the context of the overall design?
- Has energy efficiency been integrated as a primary design driver? Are there opportunities to improve the thermal performance of the building fabric and future proof development?

Parking and utilities

- Has adequate provision been made for car and cycle parking both private and public?
- Do the proposed private car and cycle parking locations complement the existing provision or

introduce new approaches? If new, do these new approaches change the character of the street?

- Has adequate provision been made for bin storage including facilities for waste separation and recycling?
- Is the location of bin storage facilities appropriate in relation to the travel distance from the collection vehicle?
- Has the impact of the design of bin storage facilities been considered, including quality of materials and location within the development? Could additional measures be incorporated to help integrate facilities into the development?
- Has the location of utilities including appropriate maintenance access been integrated into the proposal?
- Is the use of energy saving/efficient technologies encouraged and maximised? Are these technologies well integrated?
- Does the lighting strategy reflect the strategy of the settlement for both private and public lighting applications?

4.3. Design guidelines

The following design guidelines are a general approach to layout and design that apply to all character areas. Design guidelines unique to each character area are provided after the general design guidelines. The guidelines should be applied as a starting point to all new development, regardless of where it is in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. These guidelines advocate character-led design which responds to and enhances the existing townscape. Reference to context does not mean to copy or replicate in a pastiche manner, it means taking inspiration and influence from surrounding precedent and forming a contemporary approach and design synthesis in harmony with the surroundings and local vernacular.

The Worcestershire County Council Streetscape design guide should also be consulted when designing new development. Available at:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/streetscape_design_guide.pdf

General design guidelines

Townscape structure

- Development should respond to the immediate context of the built environment with regard to building lines, frontages and distance from the road.
- Development in conservation areas or close to heritage assets should respect the setting and architectural form of these elements through the specification of complementary materials.
- Conservation area or heritage asset management plans should be reviewed and guidance integrated.

- Layout and clustering should take precedent from the surrounding built form context.
- Building density, height, boundary design and road width should be designed at ratios which reflect the existing context.
- A strong visual relationship between new development and the existing street scene must be maintained and encouraged. Primary building elevations should face the street. Small numbers of buildings sited directly perpendicular to the street reflect local character.
- Development should be strategically considered at settlement level and opportunities for greater settlement connections should be facilitated by development. Developments should not be considered in isolation.
- Edges of urban developments should be highly considered. New development should engage with edges of existing development and building elevations should project an attractive and positive frontage. Edge of settlement development should relate to the surrounding landscape context.
- Regular breaks in built form should be provided to increase visual permeability, opportunities for views and pedestrian access connections to public rights of way (PRoW). Neighbourhood Plan Area landmark views should be incorporated into development to reinforce the sense of place.
- Where possible residential streets should either loop or connect through to other streets to improve connectivity, reduce the reliance of cul-de-sacs and reflect existing linear settlement structure.



- Diversity of building types should reflect the surrounding streets; where existing development varies, a variety of sympathetically proposed development will be encouraged; whereas, in proximity to streets with more uniform development, consistent building types with subtle variation will be favourable.
- Sufficient parking should be integrated into development where possible; either, as an internal garage or included as part of a vegetated front garden to lessen the impact parked cars have on character. Permeable surfaces should be used for areas of hardstanding.
- Streets must incorporate needs of pedestrians, cyclists, as well as be considered as a 'social space' to be used by all, not just motor vehicles.

Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

- The retention of existing landscape green infrastructure of value should be incorporated into development masterplans and the felling and removal of trees should be avoided.
- Where tree removal is unavoidable a replacement strategy should be developed through consultation with the local planning authority.

- Tree and plant species specification should be appropriate for site and application with consideration for management requirements and seasonal colour variation. Further information can be found:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/.../streetscape_design_guide.pdf

- Developments should incorporate greenspaces and dwellings should front onto areas of public open space to improve natural surveillance. Proposed green space should complement existing green space within the locality, to provide a well-structured variety of uses and facilities for residents.
- Front gardens, where this is characteristic of the area, should incorporate planting and where possible include native hedgerows as a boundary treatment to soften the street scene.
- Dwelling layout should be designed to limit adjacent plots overlooking rear gardens. Rear gardens should be considered as ecological corridor extensions and designed to connect with surrounding green infrastructure.
- Public realm street furniture elements such as benches and bins should be designed as an integral part of the street. Benches should be located at nodal points or places of interest.
- Street lighting should not be used within areas of public realm, in-line with existing settlement character.



Pattern and layout of buildings

- Development densities should reflect village settlement character.
- Proposed development should be sympathetic to existing development patterns within the immediate context, in terms of building size, layout and building line. Primary building elevations should face the street. Small numbers of buildings sited directly perpendicular to the street reflect local character.
- Building plot levels should be interpreted and contoured to replicate the placement of proximate development. Building heights should be maintained as a steady continuation of surrounding precedent.
- Settlement layout should be a key design driver for development masterplans and cul-de-sacs should be avoided.
- In areas of established architectural diversity; proposed developments should incorporate architectural variation which responds to the proximate context.
- Development should aim to incorporate existing natural factors such as topography, level changes, existing green infrastructure and elements of historic built form including ruins.
- New development should respond to site specific micro climates and sun paths and use these as key design drivers to increase the environmental comfort for building users, both internally and externally. Correct building orientation can contribute to passively heating or cooling buildings, and effectively reduce the heating and cooling requirement.

Views and landmarks

- Key views of settlement landmarks should be maintained and incorporated as development features to safeguard the settlements distinctive identity.
- Development density should allow for spaces between buildings to preserve views of countryside setting and maintain the perceived openness of the settlement.
- Trees and landscaping should be an integral part of the design strategy to help blend and embed development with its surroundings and provide privacy.
- Levels of natural/passive surveillance should be maintained or enhanced.



Building line and boundary treatments

- Buildings should be aligned along the street with their main facade and entrance facing it. Small numbers of buildings sited directly perpendicular to the street reflect local character.
- Building line should be responsive to settlement topography. Grass verges/ spaces should be incorporated into new development in areas where buildings are set back from the road.
- New development or building extensions should respect the existing building lines where appropriate. Subtle façade variations demonstrated through recesses or projections can increase the streets visual appeal but maintain unified synergy.
- Boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of building line continuity, to help define the street. Stone, brick wall or native hedge vegetation boundaries are most appropriate to maintain settlement character.
- Panel fencing should not be used on primary elevations. High boundary treatments which interrupt/impair views into the street or natural surveillance should be avoided. New development should contribute to settlement, not be separated from it by large/high boundary treatments.
- Front gardens should be included only where this is characteristic of the area. Front gardens are not generally included with development within the conservation area.

- Building utilities, waste functionality and bicycle storage should be integrated into proposed development, landscaping can also be used to minimise the visual impact of bins and recycling containers.

Building heights and roofline

- Roof type and pitch should reflect or be sympathetic to existing styles and materials of the settlement. In general gables project laterally along the street, with exception of dwellings sited directly perpendicular to the street which directly project gables onto it.
- Mansard or other roofing variants should be avoided as they are not in keeping with settlement character. The scale of the roof should always be in proportion with the dimensions of the building itself.
- Roofing tile materiality should be sympathetic to local character. Incongruent profiled cement tiles should be avoided.
- Pitched dormer windows incorporated into roof spaces reflect the local character for storey and a half typologies. Flat roofed dormer or bay windows should be avoided.
- Locally traditional brick eave detailing should be considered and implemented where possible.
- Gable and eave overhangs should be generous, to afford the building fabric maximum protection from the elements.
- Chimney type and height should be congruent with the typical chimney of surrounding developments.



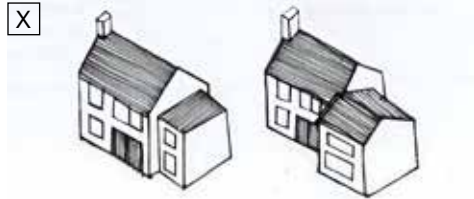
Building modifications, extension and plot infill

- Infill plot development should take precedent from neighbouring development architectural style, detailing and proportions. Proposed development design and layout should respect the existing street scene and character of the settlement.
- Extensions should not exceed the height or footprint size of the original building. Extension should be subordinate to the existing building. The scale of an extension or modification should be in keeping with the existing property and appropriate to the size of the plot.
- Flat roofs should be avoided for extensions and garages.
- Renewable technologies should be encouraged and integrated within new development. Retro fitting renewable technologies to heritage buildings should be done with great care to protect the character of the existing building.

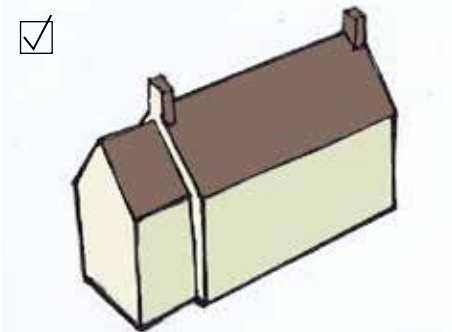




Good example for side extensions, respecting existing building scale, massing and building line.



Both extensions present a negative approach when considering how it fits to the existing building. Major issues regarding roofline and building line.

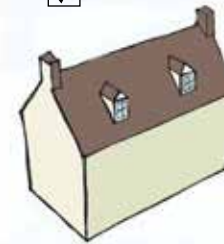


The extension has an appropriate scale and massing in relation to the existing building. Design ancillary structures to be subordinate to the main dwelling.

Design treatment in case of loft conversion:



Loft conversion incorporating skylights.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.

- Minimum 0.5m recess from edge of gable to dormer.
- Maximum height of dormer not to exceed existing ridge.
- Avoid side windows that could harm neighbours privacy.
- No extension to project forward of original roof footprint.



Original roofline of an existing building.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers which are out of scale and do not consider existing window rhythm nor frequency.

Architectural details

The following should not be read as a prescriptive list for inclusion within new development, but as a list of elements which could help to underpin the special architectural character and quality of built form within the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area:

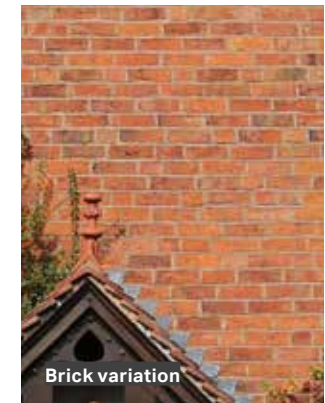
- Eave brickwork details.
- Decorative brick bonds.
- Generous eave and gable overhangs.
- Small flat roofing tiles.
- Unboxed eaves without soffits or .
- Gable barge boards to gable ends.
- Pitched dormer windows in roof space.
- Window rhythm and window sizing proportionate to building and generously sized.
- Arched window headers or embellished lintels.
- Stone sills or contrasting brick details.
- Generous porch details.
- Timber doors.
- Brick or stone boundary walls.
- Native landscaping.



Materials

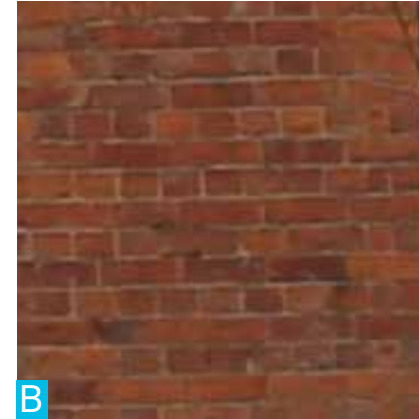
The following material considerations could be applied to new development:

- Brick specification to match tonal attributes of the area.
- Brick tonal variation should occur, but overly busy variation should be avoided.
- Decorative brick bonds in keeping with settlement precedent.
- Timber accents, integrated through quality porch elements, barge boards, dormer windows facias and headers.
- Stone or brick detail sills.
- Quality timber doors, in keeping with settlement style.
- Well designed robust gates of metal or timber construction.
- Local stone or brick used for all wall applications.
- Materials for alterations and extensions within the conservation areas should be of high quality and retain, or if possible enhance the character and appearance of the host building or the surrounding area. Often high quality contrasting elements work best in extension scenarios.



Brick bonds

The following images illustrate bonds that could be incorporated into new development aside from stretcher bond:



A English garden wall bond - Three stretcher courses are punctuated by header courses.

B English bond - Laid in alternate header and stretcher courses.

C Flemish garden wall bond - Three stretcher courses laid between alternate header and stretcher courses.

D Flemish bond - Headers and stretchers are placed alternately in the same course.



Brick colour

The following brick colouration study conducted by members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group, aims to assist new development by ensuring brick specification is well matched to existing built- form. A study of 19th century built- form was carried out and a series of sample images and Munsell Soil Colour chart references have been included.

Building	Approximate date	Hue	Value	Chroma
No 57 The Common	1850s	10R	6	8
No 59 The Common	1860s	10R	5	8
Old Chapel Wall	1860s	10R	4	4
No 62	1852	10R	5	8
No 63	1850s	10R	5	8
Linden House	1890s	10R	5	6
Former Manchester House wall	-	10R	4	4
Lower section of wall	1880s	10R	5	6
No 65	-	10R	5	6
No 69	1880s	10R	3	6

Munsell Soil Colour chart



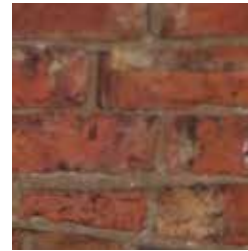
No 57 The Common



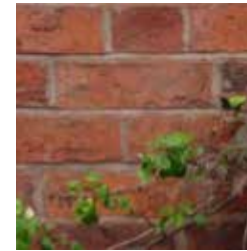
No 59 The Common



Old Chapel Wall



No 62



No 63



Linden House



Former Manchester House wall



Lower section of wall



No 65



No 69

Specific design guidelines

Character Area 1 (CA1) – Abberley Conservation Area

- Development densities and layout should be responsive to context. New development close to St. Michael's church should be tighter and closer together in layout terms than the more spatially generous development on the conservation area edge.
- New development should be limited to small numbers, and be well integrated within the character area.
- Built-form should be positioned in a manner which accords with existing development frontage attributes. Front gardens should be avoided when not representative of settlement character.
- Pitched storey dormers and porches are representative of the character area.
- Development built-form variation should be strongly encouraged, unified using brick with tonal attributes well matched to local brick colour and variation.
- Decorative brick bonds, detailing and sympathetic roof tiles can be used as a way of incorporating local design character and should be encouraged where appropriate.
- Timber framed window construction and symmetrical fenestration arrangement will accord best with existing precedent.

Character Area 2 (CA2) – Abberley Common

- New development should follow character area precedent of low densities.
- Architectural styles, materials and brick details should be representative of place, with rich variation encouraged.
- New building frontages should locate their main entrance onto the principal street to promote activity and natural surveillance. A symbiotic relationship between built-form and the street is important to increase character area cohesion.
- Boundary treatments such as native hedges which reflect a rural countryside aesthetic are most appropriate for this location.
- Easy access, through roads and route options should be used within all new development to promote community interaction and sustainable travel methods.
- Areas of public open space should be delivered with new development.



Potential development sites

05



5. Potential development sites

5.1 Approach to Site Plans

This chapter uses high level concept plans to illustrate how the layout elements of the guidelines above might be applied to specific sites. The sites put forward by the group represent a combination of SHLAA allocated sites and important community level sites with planning permissions.

The adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan and design guide Supplementary Planning Document set out the overall spatial strategy for future growth in South Worcestershire policy area and the following policy and information on housing mixes is applicable to all new Neighbourhood Plan Area development:

SWDP 13: Effective Use of Land: *“Average net density of 30 dwellings / ha”.*

SWDP 14: Market Housing Mix: *“The mix will be informed by the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment and / or other local data, for example, Neighbourhood Plans, Parish Surveys, Parish Plans and developers’ assessments”.*

SWDP 15: Meeting Affordable Housing Needs: *“On sites of 15 or more dwellings on greenfield land, 40% of the units should be affordable and provided on site. On sites of 15 or more dwellings on brownfield land within Worcester City and Malvern Hills, 30% of the units should be affordable”.*

SWDP 21: Design: *“All development will be expected to be of a high design quality. It will need to integrate effectively with its surroundings, in terms of form and function, reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve, and where appropriate, enhance cultural and heritage assets and their settings. New and innovative designs will be encouraged and supported where they enhance the overall quality of the built environment”.*

Within the design guide Supplementary Planning Document, Note 2: Market Housing Mix Position Statement sets out justification with reference to The Worcestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2012), for the appropriate allocation of market housing mix for all new developments as follows:

“The policy recognises that the evidence from the SHMA indicates a substantial growth in one-person households which will increase demand for 1 and 2 bedroom properties, many of which will need to be suitable for older people, but that there is also a sustained demand for larger family homes too. The MHMPS suggests that the focus for new residential development should therefore be on the provision of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings to help meet this identified need, with other bed sizes provided in lesser amounts. It is recognised however that 1 bed units will usually only equate to a few percent on each site and indeed may not be viable or suitable in all locations” South Worcestershire Councils (2018)

The following sections outline the precise design considerations and drivers for each site and high level concept plans have been prepared to illustrate masterplanning options for the following sites:

- MHAB07 - Land west of Apostles Oak Cottage
- MHAB05 - Land at Walshes Farm
- MHAB01 – Land at The Orchardw
- Land at Manchester House

The designs reflect community aspirations and good design practice but have not been subject to viability appraisal as part of this work.

The concept masterplans provide

- Housing numbers/ approximate gross density;
- Access/ connectivity arrangements and opportunities;
- Site opportunities/ constraints; and
- Basic green infrastructure and open space strategies.

Land west of Apostles Oak Cottage



Development site area: 1.58 ha

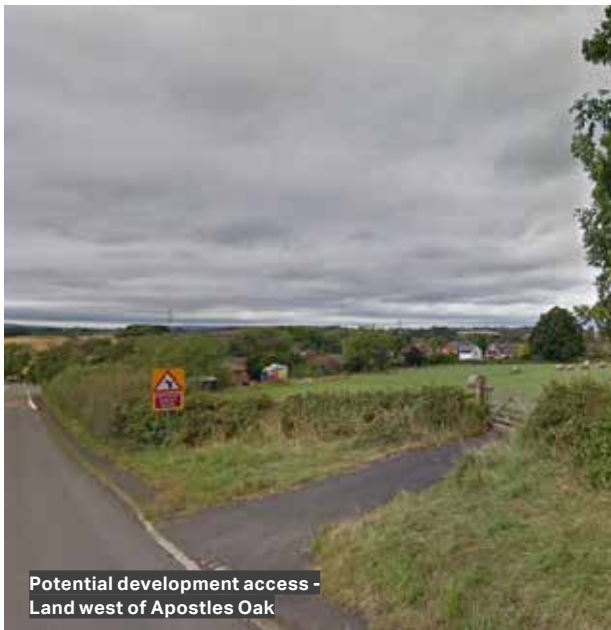
Approximate gross density: 17 d/ha

Approximate units: 27

Provisional affordable requirement:
40%



..... Gradient profile



Potential development access -
Land west of Apostles Oak

Design considerations:

- Sloping site east to west;
- Road speeds - Potential extension to 30mph zone;
- Access required to northern paddock for maintenance;
- Existing residential receptors located directly east and west of the site; and
- Species diverse hedge at frontage.

Design drivers:

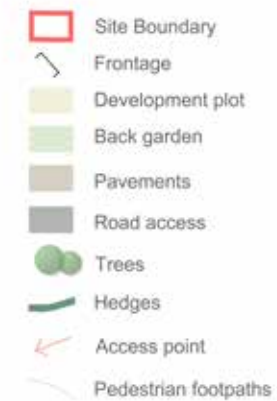
- Opportunities for incorporation of public green space and play equipment;
- Landscape elements should embed the area's fruit growing heritage within development by the specification of fruit bearing trees;
- Ensure good pedestrian and vehicular access;
- Incorporate visual connection with Clock Tower to reinforce the developments sense of place;
- Housing mix bias 1,2 and 3 bed dwellings;
- Built form typology should vary within developments;
- All buildings should have at least a minimum of 3 metres of front garden and 10 metres of back garden for privacy considerations;
- Parking provision on individual plots, visitor parking should be provided on-street, additional parking courts should be considered where appropriate; and
- Green infrastructure linkages to existing networks.

Land west of Apostles Oak Cottage

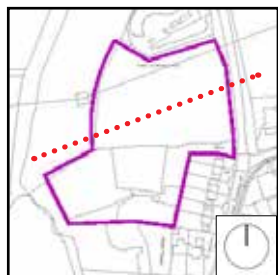


Design features:

- Central public green space aligned to incorporate clock tower views.
- Opportunities for SuDs incorporation.
- Properties with frontage onto central green area.
- Strong property frontage onto road.
- Access maintained to paddock at rear.
- Additional development parking.
- Opportunities for future pedestrian connections at northern boundary.
- Retention of large sections of hedge and a replacement strategy to be integrated into the design language of the scheme.
- Enhanced green infrastructure links to bolster existing surrounding networks.



Land at Walshes Farm



Development site area: 1.48 ha

Approximate gross density: 16 d/ha

Approximate units: 23

Provisional affordable requirement:
40%



..... Gradient profile



Potential development access -
Land at Walshes Farm

Design considerations:

- Sloping site east to west;
- Small watercourse close to southern boundary;
- Road speeds - Potential extension to 30mph zone;
- Edge of settlement countryside views;
- Overhead cables traverse the site (northern site area);
- Water treatment works at northern boundary; and
- Close proximity to village hall and primary school.
- Species diverse hedge divides site.

Design drivers:

- Opportunities for incorporation of public green space;
- Opportunities for water attenuation at lower western site areas;
- Ensure good pedestrian and vehicular access;
- Encourage development community links, easy connections with proximate village hall and school;
- Housing mix bias 1,2 and 3 bed dwellings;
- Built form typology should vary within developments:
- All buildings should have at least a minimum of 3 metres of front garden and 10 metres of back garden for privacy considerations;
- Parking provision on individual plots, visitor parking should be provided on-street, additional parking courts should be considered where appropriate; and
- Green infrastructure linkages to existing networks.

Land at Walshes Farm

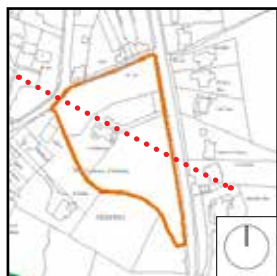


Design features:

- Potential tabled area at main development access point to provide traffic calming for settlement and to increase connectivity with village hall and school.
- Retention of large sections of hedge and replacement strategy to be integrated into the design language of the scheme.
- Provide enhanced green infrastructure links to bolster existing surrounding networks.
- Large central green areas.
- Opportunity for SuDs attenuation.
- Strong property frontage onto road to encourage development cohesion.
- Building alignment follows existing property lines.



Land at The Orchard



Development site area: 0.86 ha

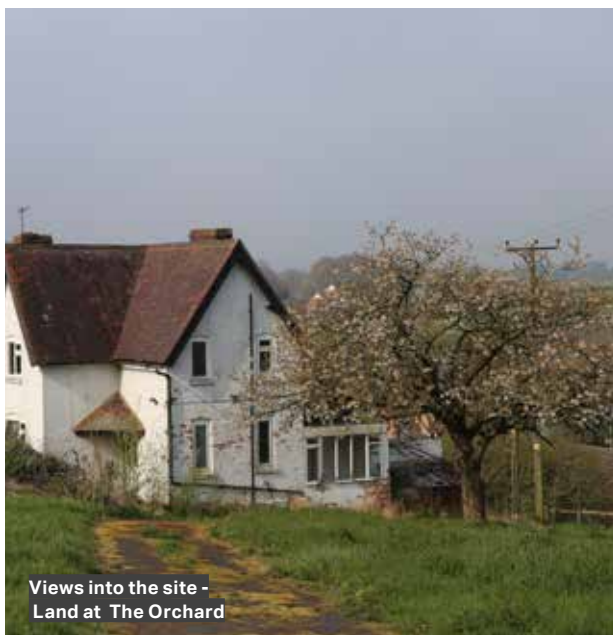
Approximate gross density: 7 d/ha

Approximate units: 6

Provisional affordable requirement:
20%



..... Gradient profile



Views into the site -
Land at The Orchard

Design considerations:

- Sloping site east to west;
- Vehicular access provision from B4202 and pedestrian access from The Common;
- Road speed on downhill section - potential traffic calming;
- PRow connection opportunities;
- Views to surrounding countryside;
- Existing dwelling and outbuildings on-site for incorporation;
- Very low density (6 dwellings total) inline with South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP);

General principles and guidelines:

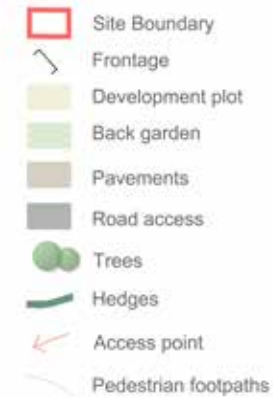
- Opportunities for incorporation of public green space;
- PRow connection opportunities;
- The site's fruit bearing trees should be bolstered as part of the landscape scheme strategy;
- Housing mix bias 1,2 and 3 bed dwellings;
- Retention of existing dwelling and out building infrastructure as part of the design;
- Built form typology should vary within developments;
- All buildings should have at least a minimum of 3 metres of front garden and 10 metres of back garden for privacy considerations;
- Parking provision on individual plots, visitor parking should be provided on-street, additional parking courts should be considered where appropriate; and
- Green infrastructure linkages to existing networks.

Land at The Orchard

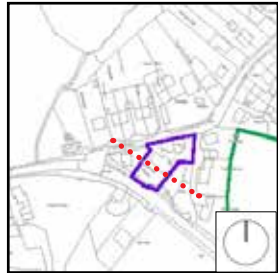


Design features:

- Establishment of large central park to the settlement – connecting different areas of The Common and the B4202.
- Existing property integrated into the development.
- Maintains road frontage and building line.
- New orchard integrated into the landscape.
- Existing vehicular access maintained and enhanced.
- Multi pedestrian connections and links to PRow.



Land at Manchester House



Development site area: 0.12 ha

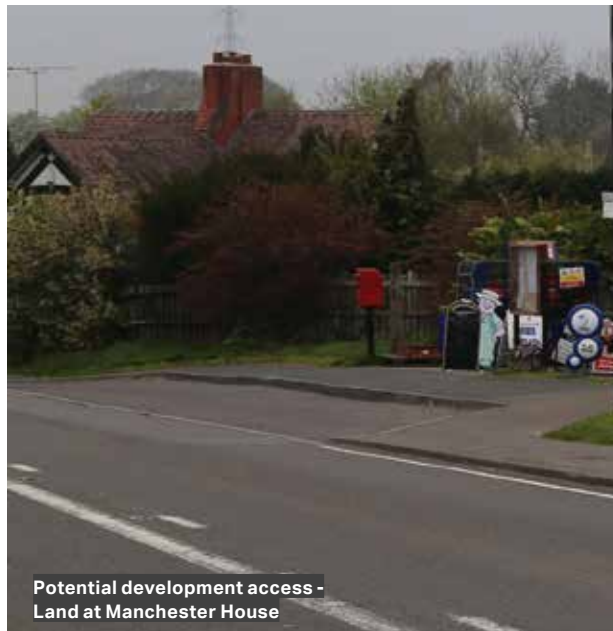
Approximate gross density: 17 d/ha

Approximate units: 2

Provisional affordable requirement: 20%



..... Gradient profile



Potential development access -
Land at Manchester House

Design considerations:

- Required demolition of existing bungalow before development;
- Road speed on downhill section - potential traffic calming;
- Incorporation of Clock Tower views;
- Existing residential receptors located directly north, east and west of the site; and

General principles and guidelines:

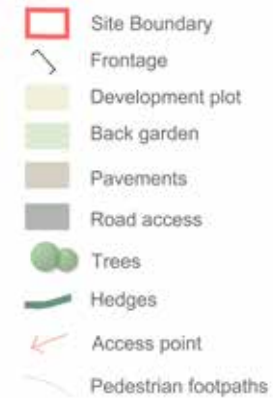
- Central site, opportunities for incorporation of public green space and provide pedestrian access through to The Common;
- Housing mix bias 1,2 and 3 bed dwellings;
- Built form typology should vary within developments;
- All buildings should have at least a minimum of 3 metres of front garden and 10 metres of back garden for privacy considerations;
- Parking provision on individual plots, visitor parking should be provided on-street, additional parking courts should be considered where appropriate; and
- Green infrastructure linkages to existing networks.

Land at Manchester House



Design features:

- Simple open green space which strategically links two areas within The Common.
- Building maintains frontage toward green space.
- Opportunities to link with future strategic site to the north.
- Built-form orientation to align perpendicular to main access roads, a characteristic seen within the settlement.



6. Deliverability

6.1. Delivery Agents

The design guidelines will be a valuable tool for securing context-driven, high quality development in Abberley Neighbourhood Plan Area. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table below:

Actor	How they will use the design guidelines
Applicants, developers and landowners	As a guide to the 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.
Where planning applications require a Design and Access Statement, the Statement should explain how the design guidelines have been followed.	
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	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the design guidelines are followed.
Community organisations	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.

6.2. Deliverability

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 35) emphasises that a proportionate evidence base should inform plans. Based on a 'positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings' (see paragraph 15). Policies should be 'underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals' (paragraph 31). Crucially planning policies 'should not undermine the deliverability of the plan' (paragraph 34).

Neighbourhood Plans need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the corresponding Local Plan. Where new policy requirements are introduced (that carry costs to development) over and above Local Plan and national standards it is necessary to assess whether development will remain deliverable. The principles and guidance set out in this document and within the Neighbourhood Plan's policies are aligned with national policy and non-statutory best practice on design.

The values and costs of construction between new developments and within new developments will vary based on location, situation, product type, design (architecture, placemaking etc.) and finish; and the state of the market at the point of marketing the properties. The guidelines herein constitute place making principles and guidance to help interpret and apply the statutory policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. Good design is not an additional cost to development and good placemaking can result in uplifts in value.

7. References

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