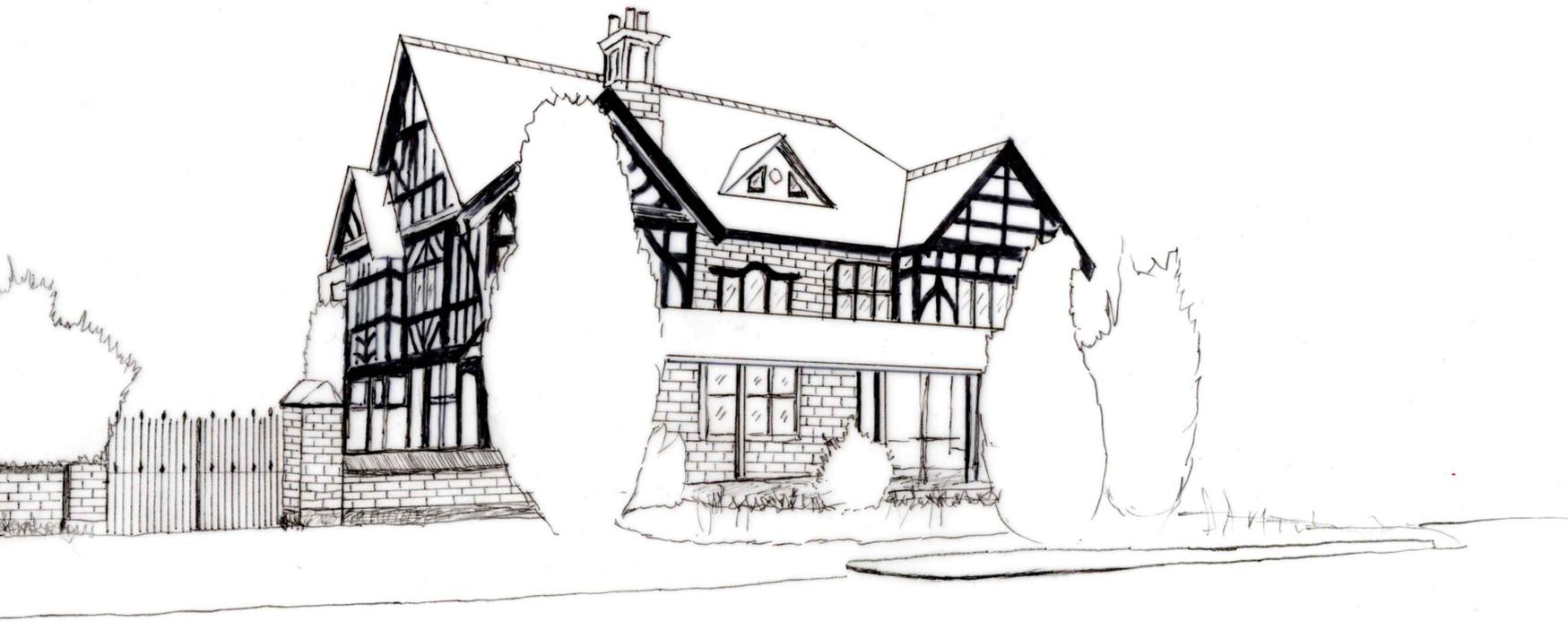


# LITTLE BOLLINGTON

## DESIGN GUIDANCE



FOR LITTLE BOLLINGTON PARISH MEETING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP | OCTOBER 2019

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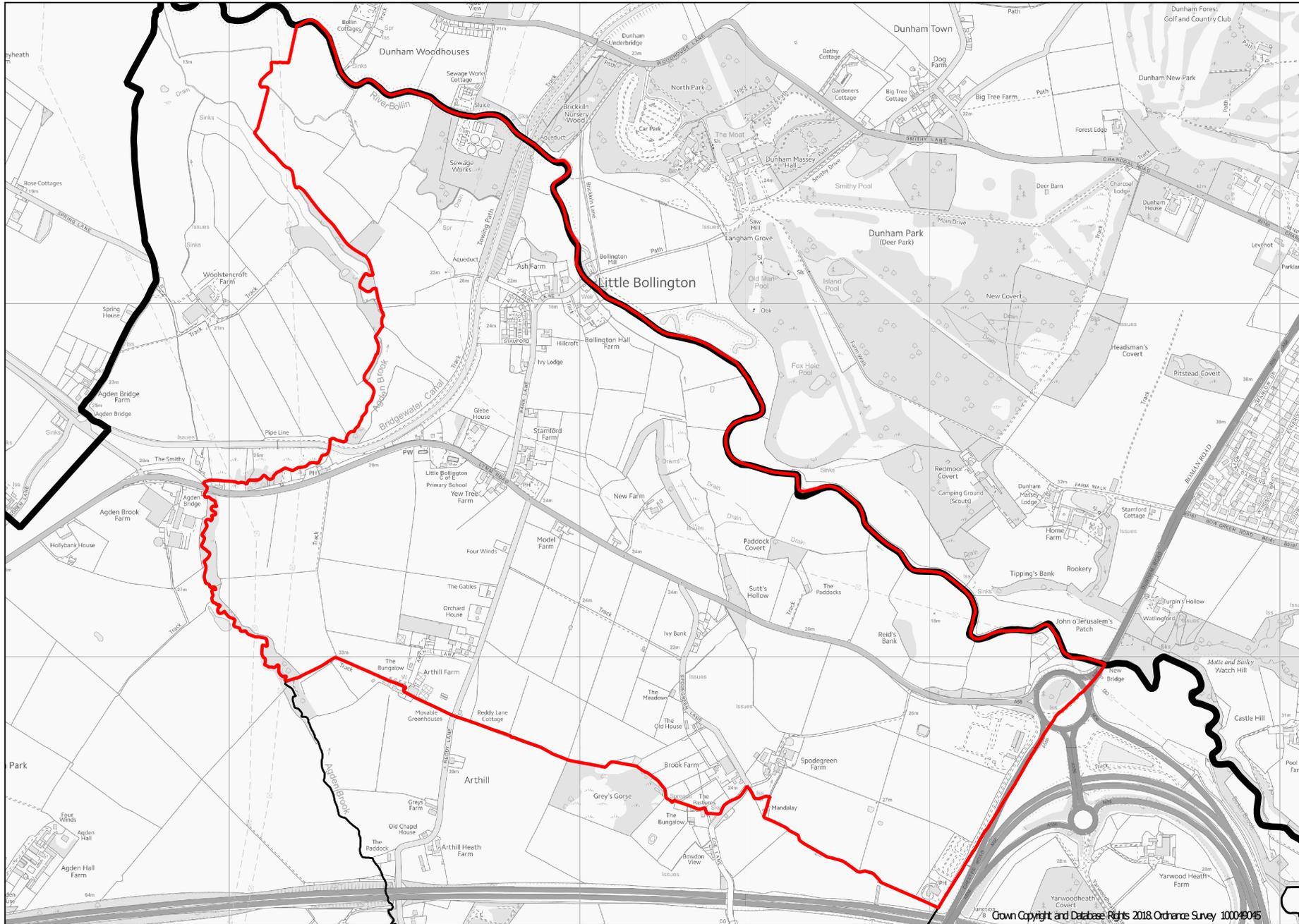
**10 September 2019**

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# Little Bollington Parish



# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This study is designed to identify the key characteristics of the landscape and the built form within the parish of Little Bollington, Cheshire in order to inform further work to be undertaken in support of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 Each chapter examines a different element of the parish's characteristics before providing guidance on how the design of new development should be approached and undertaken. This work will inform the development of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan. One of the key aims of the Neighbourhood Plan is to protect and enhance the existing character of the parish through careful design that is sympathetic to the existing built form whilst ensuring the parish is able to meet future needs of its residents.
- 1.3 This document is designed to fulfil a dual role. First and foremost, it is intended that it will support the policies in the Little Bollington Neighbourhood Plan. It will also operate as a standalone document that can be used by decision makers and the community to help shape the quality and design of new

developments coming forward in the parish. In this regard, it acts as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

- 1.4 Further to this, the document both complements and provides greater detail with regard to the specific landscape and design characteristics within the parish. It sits alongside the guidance within Cheshire East Design Guide (2017) and should be read as part of a family of design documents.

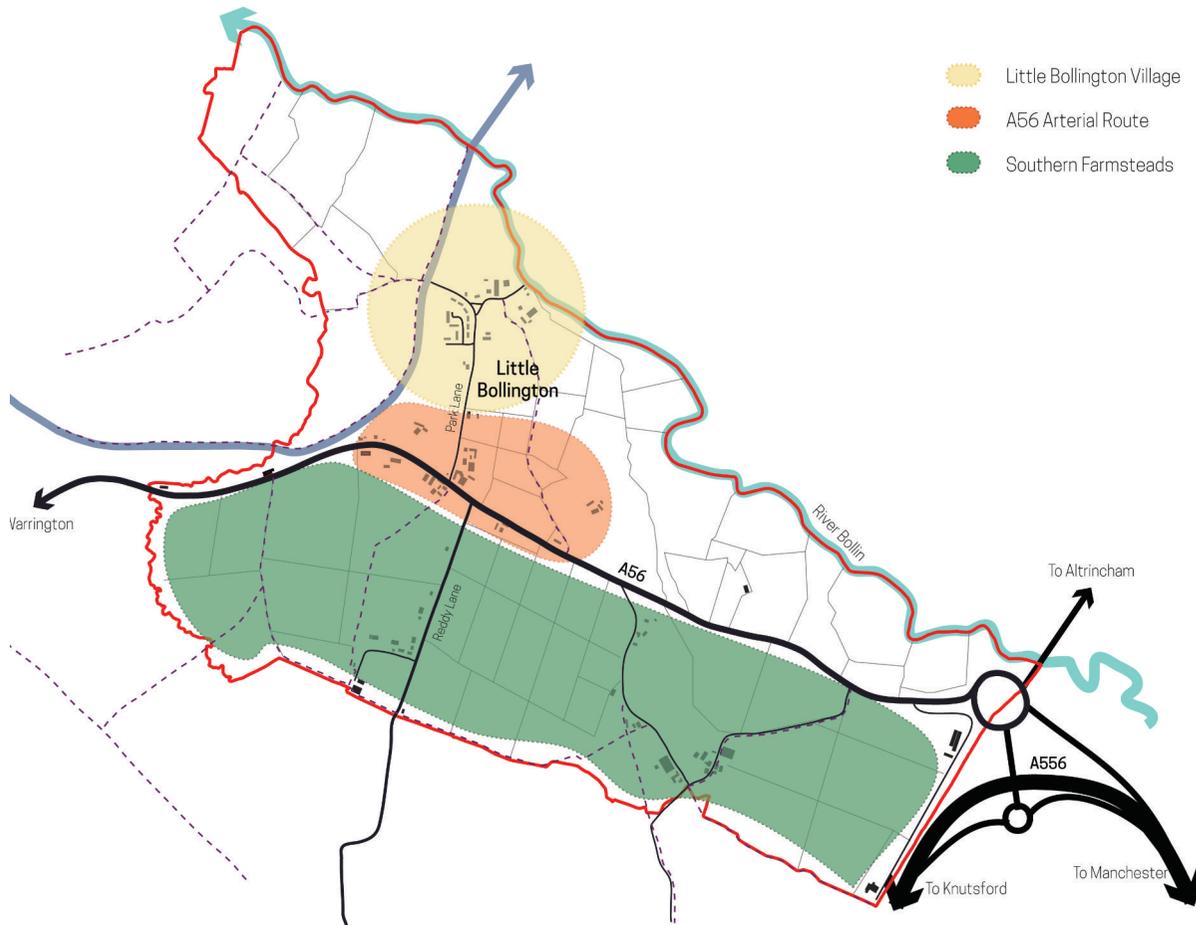
## Background and context

- 1.5 Little Bollington is a small parish lying on the north-western edge of Cheshire East Borough. It is located to the south of the Manchester conurbation, approximately three miles from Altrincham, between Dunham Massey and the M56 motorway. The northern and western boundaries also form the boundary of Cheshire East Borough.
- 1.6 The parish comprises one small settlement, the village of Little Bollington, but is predominantly characterised by a rural landscape of arable and pastoral agriculture. Outside

of the settlement, farmsteads and development along the main arterial routes through the parish form the pattern of landscape and townscape features which define the area's character.

- 1.7. Beyond the north-east parish boundary is the stately home and immediate grounds of Dunham Massey, which is in Trafford Borough. The house and its associated estate, are a nationally significant heritage asset, and are owned by the National Trust. Some of the buildings within the estate are Grade I listed, however, none of these are within the parish of Little Bollington. However, their setting covers much of the north-western corner of the parish and the village has strong historical and visual ties with the main estate.
- 1.8 The National Trust are a significant land and property owner with the parish of Little Bollington. Each building within the parish which is under the ownership of the national trust is easily identified by their recognisable burgundy facias and sign posting.

## Character areas in Little Bollington



1.9 Little Bollington consists of three character areas each with a distinctive built form which are detailed below. These character areas are used throughout the document to help with orientation and to provide specific design analysis and guidance. A map of these character areas is shown to the left.

### Little Bollington Village Character Area

1.10 The first character area covers the ‘traditional settlement’, which is nestled between the banks of the River Bollin and the Bridgewater Canal and is largely residential in nature. This area has strong connections to Dunham Massey and includes two of the four listed buildings within the parish. It also includes a large ‘finger’ of pastureland to the north-west. This area is identified as the ‘Little Bollington Village’ character area, however, in scale terms it is little more than a hamlet.

### A56 Arterial Route Character Area

1.11 The second character area comprises the buildings along Lymm Road (A56). The spinal route runs east-west connecting Bowdon roundabout with Lymm. There is a mix of residential and civic buildings including Little Bollington Primary School and the Church and a

number of former coaching inns that are remnants of the route's original turnpike history. As a result, a number of the larger more modern farmsteads are also in this area. This area is identified as the 'A56 Arterial Route' character area.

### **Southern Farmsteads Character Area**

- 1.12 The third character area is a much larger expanse of flat arable and pastoral farmland that runs south of the A56, broken only by copses and clusters of residential properties, which are predominantly located on farms. This area has a rectilinear field and road pattern, suggesting it is the product of a later enclosure. An area closest to the A556 has been the subject of some disruption as a result of the dualling of the route and junction improvements. This area is identified as the 'Southern Farmsteads' character area.
- 1.13 For clarity, the clusters of buildings described in the first and second character areas have the characteristics of a village. The third does not.

### **When to use this guidance**

- 1.14 This guidance is for anyone interested in plan making, but also it is for those who are making decisions about development proposals. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states in paragraph 125 that:  
*"Design policies should be developed with communities so that they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in new development."*
- 1.15 Development is often a misunderstood term. In the context of the planning system, it can include the building of a single house or a larger number of dwellings, such as alterations, or extensions to existing properties. It may also include changes to or installation of front boundary treatments or public realm improvements. A change of the use of land is also considered 'development'. This guide should be

useful to all those seeking planning permission for a range of new development types.

- 1.16 Development does not always require planning permission. Certain works or changes of use can be undertaken without permission in accordance with the General Permitted Development Order (2015). However, in a lot of cases planning permission will be required and guidance should still be consulted. Where development is considered 'permitted development' this guidance and the policies it supports may be useful, but is unlikely to carry significant weight in the planning process.
- 1.17 The Parish Meeting have initiated the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. This Design Guidance document should sit alongside the Neighbourhood Plan providing design and heritage guidance for development proposals in the parish.
- 1.18 Whilst the Local Plan has not identified the parish as an area for growth, ad-hoc development or *windfall development*, is likely to continue, whereby sites unexpectedly become available for development. In short, areas are always

subject to development and change. As a result, this design guide and the policies it informs will focus on these types of development, as larger schemes would be in conflict with policies at the national and borough level – specifically the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

- 1.19 Please note that it is not the purpose of this document to set out the acceptability or not of development. Its role is to help users understand the type and nature of development that might come forward and to advise on the appropriate design response in these circumstances.

### The format of this document

- 1.20 Chapter 2 sets out a design policy appraisal of the relevant plans and policies at the national and local level. This is not a comprehensive policy review, it simply looks at policies relevant to the development of this design guide and seeks to understand the scale and nature of the planning applications that may come forward in the parish.
- 1.21 Chapters 3 and 4 of this report are divided into four interlinked sections which are designed to distil the local character into the key components of the local character. These chapters take a 'landscape-led' design approach, however, given the local context this is considered entirely appropriate.
- 1.22 The outline for chapter 3 is:
- Landscape character – the features and elements of the wider landscape draws upon work done at the national and local level.
  - Settlement setting – How the position of the buildings and their relationship with the landscape impacts the setting of Little Bollington.
- 1.23 The outline for chapter 4 is:
- Settlement form – Addressing the positioning of the buildings and their relationship with roads and spaces.
  - Local built vernacular and local building details – This includes a wide range of issues from architectural detailing, and fenestration through to local materials and how they contribute to the unique local character.
- 1.24 Chapter 5 of this report sets out some broad guidance for new development, looking across all chapters and signposting possible issues that should be included within the Neighbourhood Plan policies.
- 1.25 A separate study has been prepared that should be read alongside this document which details the designated heritage assets within the parish. It also identifies buildings which may be candidates for local listing, based on the findings of this design guide.

## 2. PLANNING CONTEXT

### Planning policies relating to design

- 2.1 In order to place the design guide in context, it is first necessary to set out the key plans and policies that are used to determine the acceptability of the design of new development. The following chapter identifies the key design messages and drivers from the relevant plans and documents. It is important that this design guide provides in-depth information that is relevant to the policies that will be used to determine planning applications, and that the policies developed for the Neighbourhood Plan complement, rather than repeat, these policies.

- 2.2 Applicants will be encouraged to demonstrate how they have addressed the policies and documents set out in this section within their planning applications or within their Design, and Access Statements, where required.
- 2.3 Collectively, the overriding policy message is that high quality, contextually responsive design, should be the goal for all development irrespective of scale or location. Throughout this document the term '*contextually responsive design*' is used to summarise the policy position outlined below.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

- 2.4 The NPPF sets out central government's planning guidance for England. It views the delivery of sustainable development as central to the planning system. Indeed, within the NPPF, there is a '*presumption in favour of sustainable development*'.

#### Achieving well-designed places

- 2.5 Chapter 12 of the NPPF stresses the need for all development to demonstrate good design which serves to improve the general character and quality of the area. Developments should aim to ensure that they are functional, enhance the overall quality of the area and respond to the local character and history. They should also optimise the potential of the site to ensure that it is visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

### **Protecting Green Belt land**

- 2.6 Little Bollington is entirely washed over by the Cheshire East Green Belt. Development in the Green Belt is considered inappropriate unless it meets the criteria set out in paragraph 145 and 146 of the NPPF. This includes limited buildings for agricultural and forestry, the expansion or alteration of an existing building, limited infilling in villages, erection of replacement buildings, limited affordable housing and the partial/complete redevelopment of previously developed land (whether redundant or still in use) that do not have an adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 2.7 The limitations placed on new development by the Green Belt status means that the type and scale of new development is limited within the parish. This may be overruled if there is a strategic alteration to the Green Belt boundaries; however, this is a matter that can only be determined by a neighbourhood plan or a local plan.

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) (2017)**

- 2.8 The Cheshire East Local Plan (Part 1) was formally adopted in July 2017 and sets out the planning policies for the entire Cheshire East Borough. The specific policies relevant to the design guide are listed below.

#### **Policy PG3 - Green Belt**

- 2.9 Within designated Green Belt land, development proposals must not conflict with the five purposes of the Green Belt. The five purposes are directly taken from the NPPF are set out below:
- Check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
  - Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another
  - Safeguard the countryside from encroachment
  - Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
  - Assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

- 2.10 The policy reiterates the position of the NPPF that development within the Green Belt is inappropriate. There are however, a number of exceptions to this which exactly mirror those exceptions set out in national policy.

#### **Policy SD1 – Sustainable development in Cheshire East**

- 2.11 This policy sets out several criteria with which all proposals must comply in order to be considered sustainable development. Development proposals must contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built, historic, and cultural environment whilst making efficient use of land, protecting agricultural land and making best use of previously developed land where possible. Proposals should also provide safe access to properties and to local services and support the health, safety and social wellbeing of residents.

**Policy SD2 – Sustainable development principles**

- 2.12 This policy states that all development must contribute positively to local character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of the following elements:
- Height, scale, and form
  - Materials
  - Design features
  - Massing of development
  - Green infrastructure
  - Relationship with neighbouring properties

- 2.13 The design guide should set out how each of these could be met.

**Policy SE1 – Design**

- 2.14 This policy contains five tests with which development proposals must comply to make a positive contribution to their surroundings:
- Sense of place
  - Design quality
  - Sustainable urban, architectural and landscape design
  - Liveability / workability
  - Designing in safety

- 2.15 The design guide should set out how each of these could be met.

**Policy SE2 – Efficient use of land**

- 2.16 Policy SE2 promotes the redevelopment or re-use of previously developed land. This complies with the NPPF which encourages the efficient use of land, provided that it is not of high environmental value. However, this should not be at the expense of the local character and sense of place.

**Development activity**

- 2.17 There has only been a limited number of planning applications submitted in the parish over the last three years. The majority of these relate to extensions or alterations to existing properties, with most of the extensions being approved.

- 2.18 Having examined decisions and officer reports, design and character does not appear to have been a determining factor, but rather a scale and proportion argument. In many cases this has been a clumsy approach based on the saved policies of the Macclesfield Borough local Plan (2004) which has a broad test

of the acceptability of rural extensions within the Green Belt based around a 30% increase size being considered appropriate or proportionate. The decisions do not seem to have turned on the appropriateness of the design response.

- 2.19 Some decisions do reference character and appearance of the area but this seems to be of lesser importance and little justification or detailed consideration appears within them. However almost all officer reports identified SE1 (the design policy within the CELPS) as being important.
- 2.20 There are a number of examples of lawful development certificates for extensions under permitted development and as such planning permission is not required.

# 3. LANDSCAPE AND SETTING

## What is landscape character?

- 3.1 Landscape character can be defined as the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics in the landscape which contribute towards its identity- i.e. what makes one landscape different from another. It is an important element of determining what could be considered contextually responsive design.
- 3.2 Landscape character assessment is the process of identifying and describing these variations in character across a landscape. It also seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of features and attributes (characteristics) that make different landscapes distinctive. Landscape character is particularly important when considering rural areas – such as Little Bollington.
- 3.3 The following chapter is a review of the Character Assessments that have already been completed at the national and local level covering Little Bollington parish. National characters are defined by Natural England’s ‘National Character Area’ study (for this area prepared in 2014) and the Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment (2018).

## Landscape features of the parish

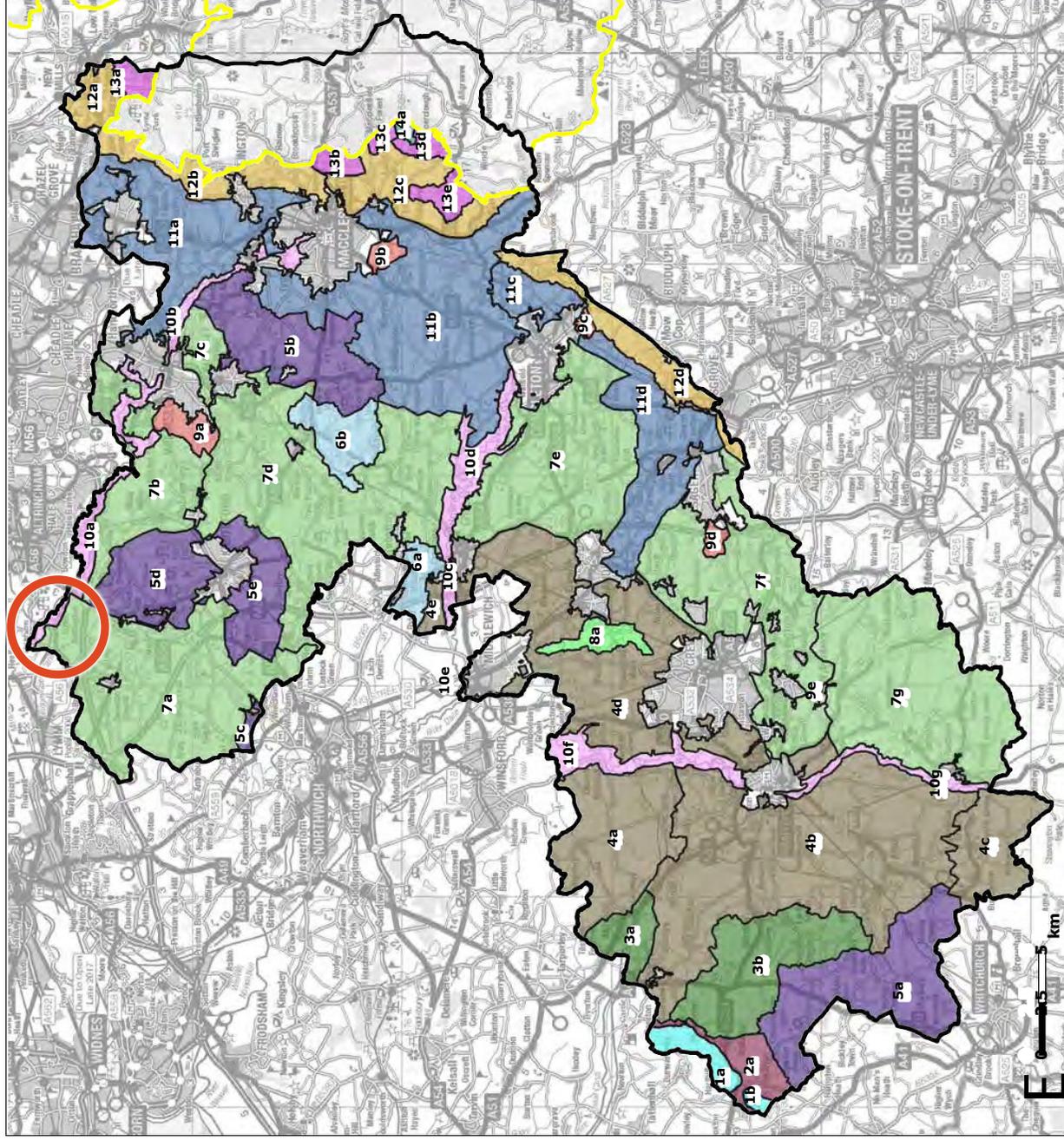
- 3.4 The parish is rural in character, with narrow country lanes away from the main arterial routes of the A56 and A556. The landscape contains a great number of traditional farm buildings which are still in active use. There is a more densely populated settlement which is archetypal of post-1945 development in the Stamford Road/Park View area. Some areas are heavily wooded, with an intact hedgerow system and frequent woodland blocks scattered across the countryside. There is a strong rectilinear field pattern to the south.

- 3.5 The high proportion of hedgerow and lack of elevated vantage points means that many of Little Bollington’s key views are not fully visible at ground-level. To the west, the most obvious landmark is the Bridgewater Canal, running raised above the landscape from north-south. The views are much clearer when looking eastwards, where the Pennines and Manchester are visible in the distance.
- 3.6 Whilst not within the parish, the Dunham Massey Park and house to the north (and its estate landscape south of the River Bollin) do have a great impact on this landscape, providing an important backdrop which has influenced this landscape for hundreds of years.



A typical view showing the gently undulating landscape interspersed with woodland and hedgerows dividing fields

# LANSCAPE CHARACTER MAP - LITTLE BOLLINGTON SHOWN CIRCLED IN RED



Cheshire East District boundary	12 - Upland Footslopes
Peak District National Park	12a - Higher Disley
<b>Landscape Character</b>	12b - Kerridge
1 - Sandstone Ridge	12c - Langley
1a - Peckforton	12d - Mow Cop Ridge
1b - Maiden Castle	13 - Enclosed Gritstone Upland
2 - Sandstone Fringe	13a - Whaley Moor
2a - Beeston-Duckington	13b - Teggs Nose
3 - Undulating Farmland	13c - Macclesfield Forest
3a - Oulton	13d - Cessbank Common
3b - Faddiley	13e - Stretton Common
4 - Cheshire Plain East	14 - Moorland Hills and Ridges
4b - Ravensmoor	14a - High Moor
4c - Dodcott	
4d - Wimboldsley	<b>Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000</b>
4e - Stublach	<b>Cheshire East Landscape Evidence Studies</b>
5 - Wooded Estates and Meres	<b>Figure 4.2</b>
5a - Cholmondeley	<b>Landscape Character Types and Area Classification</b>
5b - Capesthorpe	
5c - Budworth	
5d - Tatton and Rostherne	
5e - Tabley	
6 - Woodland, Heaths, Meres and Mosses	
6a - Rudheath	
6b - Withington	
7 - Lower Wooded Farmland	
7a - Arley	
7b - Ringway	
7c - Chonar	
7d - Marthall	
7e - Breton Heath	
7f - Barthomley	
7g - Audlem	
8 - Salt Flashes	
8a - Sandbach Flashes	
9 - Mossland	
9a - Lindow Moss	
9b - Danes Moss	
9c - Congleton Moss	
9d - Oakchanger Moss	
9e - Wybunbury Moss	
10 - River Valleys	
10a - Lower Bollin	
10b - Upper Bollin	
10c - Lower Dane	
10d - Upper Dane	
10e - High Dane	
10f - Upper Weaver	
10g - High Weaver	
11 - Higher Wooded Farmland	
11a - Adlington	
11b - Gawsworth	
11c - Buglawton	
11d - Little Moreton	
99b - Little Bollington	

## Landscape Character Areas

- 3.7 Little Bollington falls within National Character Area (NCA) 60 “Mersey Plain” which comprises of expansive flat or gently undulating, lush, pastoral farmland. The character area covers a large area of land running alongside the Mersey River, its tributaries between Greater Manchester, Warrington and the Mersey estuary.
- 3.8 As is evident throughout the parish, this ‘plain’ is punctuated by numerous ponds and subsequent colonisation of vegetation, which has resulted in the establishment of bogs, known as mosses. As a result, water retention and fertility of the clay soil supports lush pastures for grazing dairy cattle. Not all of these features are present within Little Bollington.
- 3.9 The Cheshire East landscape character assessment was conducted by external landscape consultant LUC in May 2018. It provides a more detailed review of the Borough’s landscape character breaking the Borough into smaller areas of land known as character areas. The parish of Little Bollington falls within two

landscape character area profiles identified within this study – LCT7a Lower Wooded Farmland (Arley), and LCT10a River Valleys (Lower Bollin).

- 3.10 The majority of the Parish falls within character area LCT7a Lower Wooded Farmland (Arley) which takes its name from the settlement nearby covering a large area of both Little Bollington and Arley parishes. However, the presence of the River Bollin along the northern boundary of the parish also introduces the second landscape character area, LCT10a River Valleys (Lower Bollin), in the strip of land running along the south bank of the river.
- 3.11. Whilst the area to the North of Little Bollington is identified as part of LCT10a’s Character area, the features as outlined in the Cheshire East landscape character assessment do not adequately interpret the landscape. This is due to the broad characteristics that were used to analyse and assess Cheshire East as a whole. While the description for LCT10a does describe some key features of the landscape within Little Bollington, its broad

description relates closer to the landscape that is encountered further upstream and outside of Little Bollington’s area designation (towards Wilmslow). As a result the paragraphs below focus on the relevant characteristics.

## Key characteristics

3.12 A summary of each of these characters taken from the LUC 2018 study and the features of them (where they reflect the characteristics of Little Bollington Parish), is detailed below. Full details can be found in the principal document.

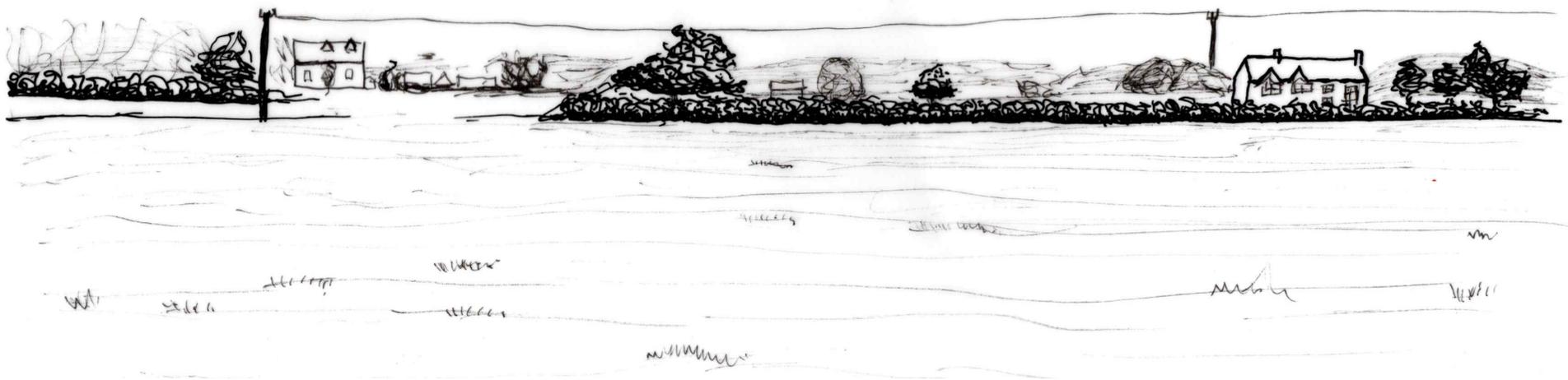
### LCT7a Lower Wooded Farmland (Arley)

- *Topography and vegetation:* A low lying, gently undulating landscape, related to watercourses and with a number of meres and water bodies within the landscape. Mature trees within the field pattern and mature

hedgerows contribute to the character of the area, with a greater proportion of mixed woodland typologies.

- *Land use and pattern:* Mix of agricultural types with medium scaled field sizes set out in the medieval and post-medieval period. The field boundaries are primarily defined by hedgerow, however more modern alternatives exist in some areas. There are a number of registered parks and gardens which contributes a historic estate character to the area.

- *Settlement patterns:* Medium density, nucleated settlements and dispersed farms predominantly of red brick and render construction with a mix of major arterial routes and narrower lanes making up the road network. There is an intact network of public rights of way.
- *Views and perception:* A relatively rural character, often influenced by the proximity to larger urban areas introducing noise and other urban impacts. Trees and woodland restrict some views but include views to prominent landscape features, including the Pennines.



The lower woodland farmland character in Little Bollington showing dispersed woodland, scattered farms and mature hedgerows

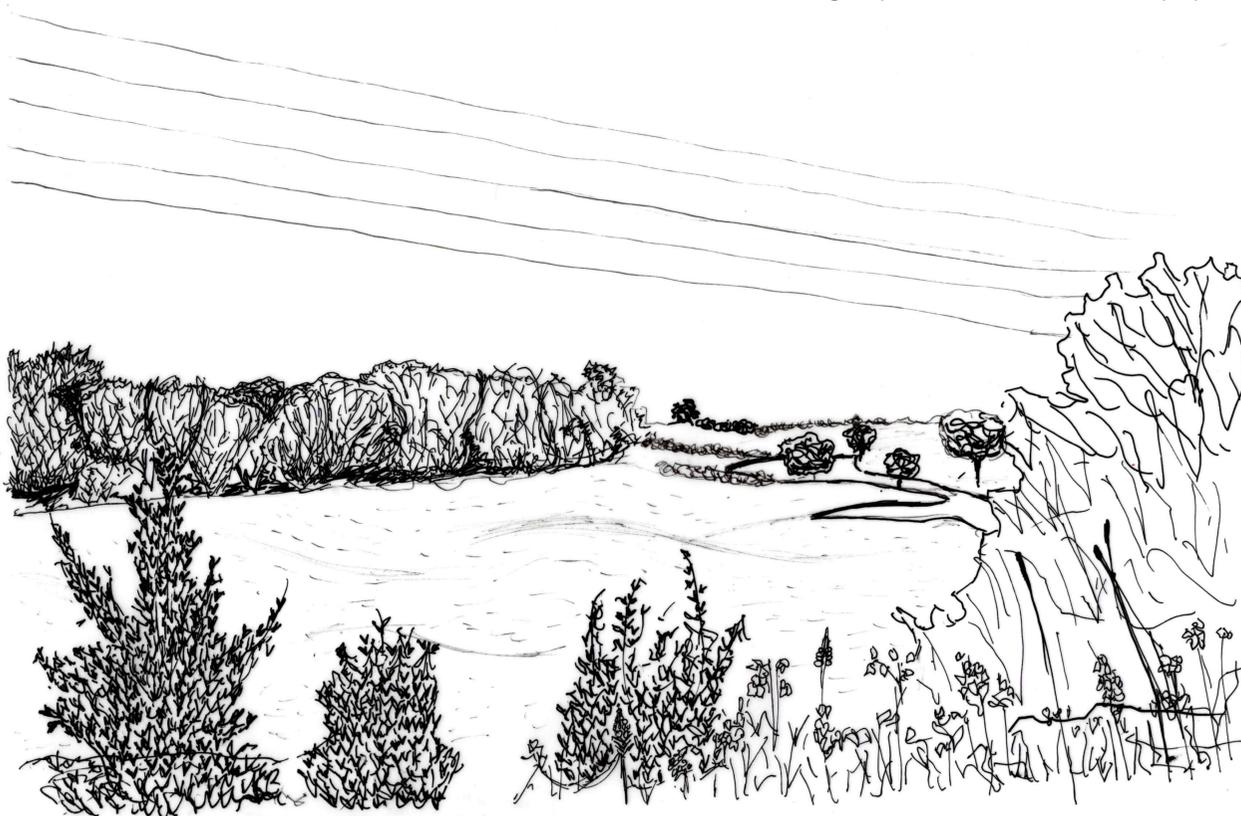
### LC10a River Valleys (Lower Bollin)

- *Topography and vegetation:*

Meandering river valley with a variety of valley sides. Predominantly a flat bottomed wide valley in comparison to the steep wooded valleys present further upstream. There are a high number of mature trees within fields and in field boundaries.

- *Land use and pattern:* Mainly pastoral farming along the valley floor with pastures divided by post and rail fencing. A series of distinctive bridges and viaducts adding character to the area.
- *Settlement patterns:* Roads within the character area have infrequent crossings at important bridges or along key arterial routes. It is a popular

- landscape for recreation and includes a number of recreational routes and long distance trails. There are very few villages within the valleys (Little Bollington being an exception).
- *Views and perceptual qualities:* There are a number of key views within this landscape, however, these are sometimes blocked by woodland and vegetation. There are sometimes funnel views along the river which are terminated by the Pennines. Although a primarily tranquil area, the proximity to urban areas can have an adverse effect on this.



The river Bollin flows through the parish via a wide bottomed valley of pastures interspersed with mature trees with long views funnelled along it

## Implications for new development

- 3.13 The Cheshire East Landscape Character Study (2018) includes a very detailed series of landscape guidance points which are designed to help preserve and enhance the landscape characteristics. In many cases, these focus on items that are beyond the scope of the planning system and design matters, however, there are some important points, reiterated in both characteristics that should be understood as part of this design guide.
- 3.14 Please note that there are many other interesting matters pertaining to landscape management and wildlife preservation and enhancement that are not relevant to this design guide.
- 3.15 The key design related points can be summarised as follows:
- Avoid the placement of new buildings in prominent locations – either on high land or on steeply sloping land.

- Minimise the impact of infrastructure through siting, design and planting ensuring that it does not impact on long distance views within the landscape.
- Preservation and interpretation of heritage assets, whether this be rural buildings, canals or other historically important sites or features.
- Respect and reflect the rural character within the design of new development, avoiding suburban characteristics in buildings and their curtilages.
- Retain and repair the historical field patterns and woodland areas, avoiding their loss and ensuring that they are managed effectively in the long term.
- Retain the character of rural lanes, avoiding increasing of their width or removal of hedgerows and other features that typify their character.
- Carefully manage access to the countryside and the impact of tourism (this will especially be the case in the village of Little Bollington)

## Understanding settlement setting

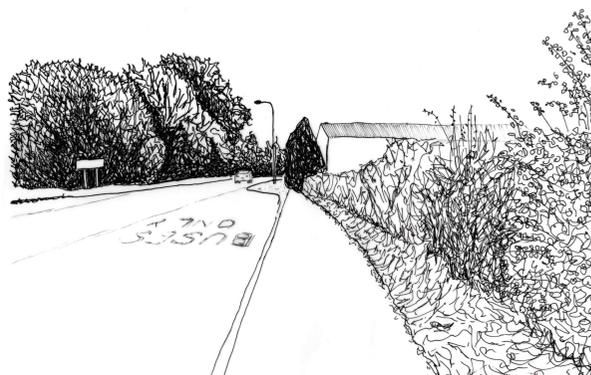
- 3.16 It is important that the relationship between any proposed development and the wider area is carefully considered when preparing any design within a rural area. The previous section highlights how, at a landscape level, contextually responsive design can be delivered.
- 3.17 However, it is important that in developing any design response the interface between the built form and the wider landscape is effectively studied. In this landscape, the ‘edge’ created by new development through planting, boundary treatments and materials and scale can be the difference between being assimilated into the landscape or becoming an eyesore.
- 3.18 As noted, there are three broad characters within the parish. Within each of these characters, the relationship that the built form (or settlement) has with the landscape is subtly different and needs to be understood and examined in order to ensure that contextually responsive design is achieved. A description of each of these, alongside a sketch is shown on the following page.

### Settlement setting in each character area

3.19 *Little Bollington Village* – the undulating landscape and the mature vegetation and with views from the west, the canal embankment means that the built form in this area is often obscured from view by vegetation (with the exception along the canal towpath). Buildings are often glimpsed through gaps and around this vegetation. As a result, from most vantages (see key views to follow), the scale and nature of the development form is almost blocked and cannot be read as complete mass of ‘development’. It is important that this is maintained when new development is planned by ensuring that new and existing planting and landform is used to break up direct and full views of development.



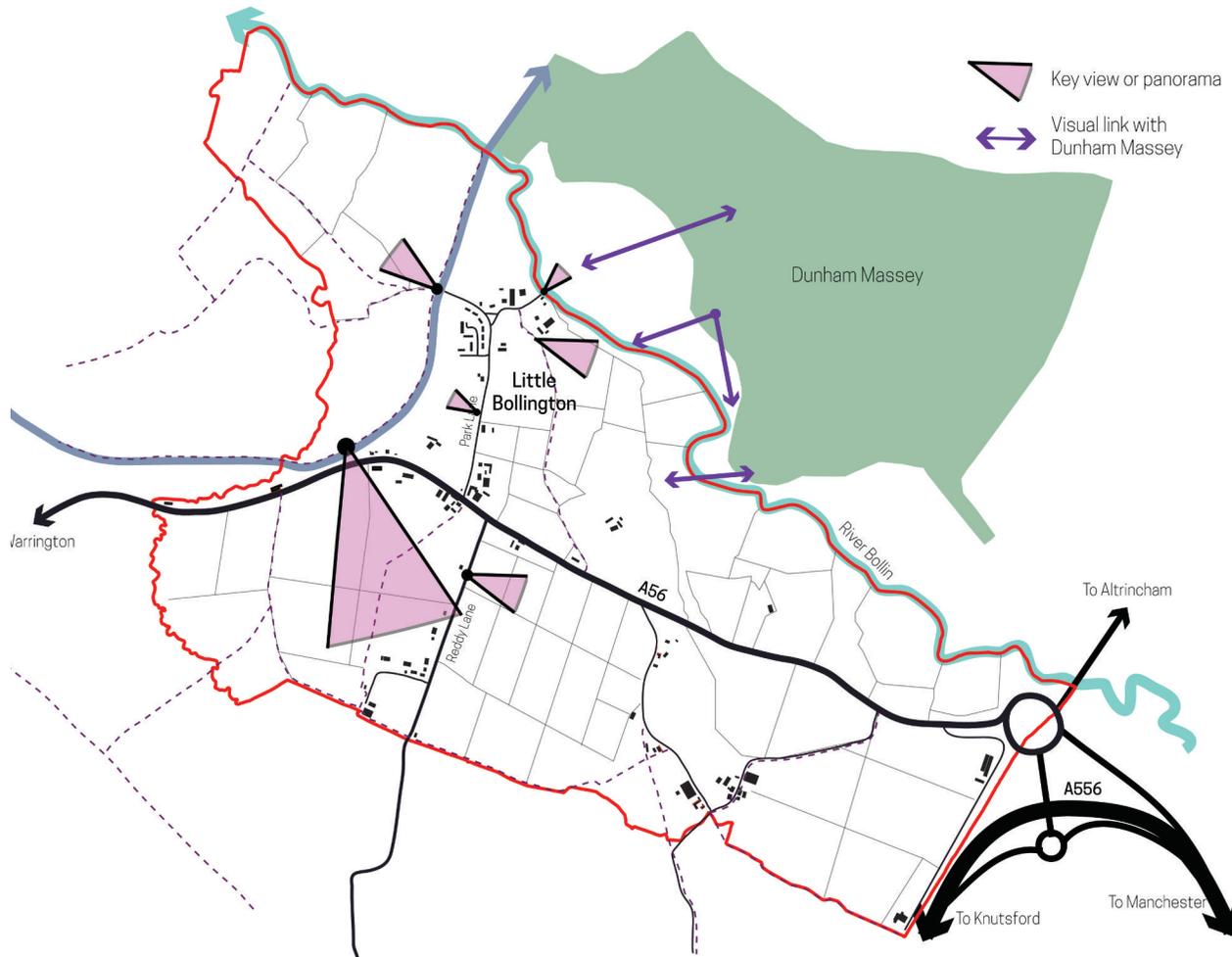
3.20 *The A56 Arterial Route* – The mature vegetation to the north of this character area means that, despite being slightly raised in the landscape, much of the more built up areas of this character area are enclosed and have a strong relationship with the road. Clearly there is some relationship between the surrounding farmland and this development, however this is typically rural in character (with the exception of the school) with agricultural barns and other ancillary buildings forming most of the edges of development. New development should ensure that the scale and form of development at the ‘edge’ reflects this agricultural character (as well as delivering planting) in order to assimilate into this local landscape character.



3.21 *Southern Farmsteads* – The landscape in this part of the parish is much more open than elsewhere with longer views across regular field patterns towards farmsteads and other agricultural uses which can be viewed from longer distance vantages. Here, inappropriate development is more clearly visible and some erosion of the traditional rural character has already occurred and impacts the landscape negatively. This is often a result of inappropriate materials and poor boundary treatments. However, built form should relate to the rural lanes, and avoid sprawl as well as introducing planted sheltered belts. These are common in this area and can help with the overall integration of built form and landscape.



## Key views and visual links



## Key views

- 3.22. Following a survey of the parish there are a number of key views from public vantage points that may be described as key views. The most important of these is the panoramic view from the canal embankment looking south and east across the southern edge of the parish. Ensuring that development in this area is sensitively designed in line with the local character and scale will be particularly important as large and alien features will be highly visible.
- 3.23. More widely there are a number of views east and west out of the village from key points along Park Lane and Reddy Lane where the topography and the landscape features offer views across the fields from the settlement. Important examples of this are a view of the wider landscape to the east as you pass under the tight canal aqueduct, a view across the River Bollin at the bridge to the rear entrance to the Dunham Massey and a view along the river valley. These views, along with others, have been marked on the accompanying plan

3.24 In these cases, not only should new development within these views be carefully managed and be well designed to have limited visual impact, but the streets and spaces from which these views orientate should be carefully conserved to preserve the relationship of the village to the landscape setting. The strong link between the villages and the setting has already been considered above.

3.25 The final point worth of note, is that LUC consultants, also undertook a study of the landscape setting of the Dunham Massey estate and identified a number of key views, identified in the report as 'visual links' from the estate that affect the wider landscape. These extend over the parish and therefore it is considered that they should also form part of this study.

3.26 Development within these areas is almost certainly going to have an impact on the heritage asset of the registered parkland and listed Dunham Massey complex and thus development within these views would necessarily have to demonstrate compliance with wider policies at the national and local level. It is unlikely that non-traditional building forms (see chapter 4 for more details) would be acceptable within these views.

## 4. DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

- 4.1 The previous chapter has focused primarily on the role of the landscape, the setting of the settlement and how they each contribute to the understanding of what makes Little Bollington parish unique. This chapter goes on to look at the buildings specifically, their design features and materials. The chapter focuses on a series of typical types of buildings, known as archetypes, which have formed the basis for the material presented in this chapter.
- 4.2 It should be noted that some buildings (mainly to the south of the parish) and extensions, erected within the last 20 years, have introduced non-traditional scales, mass and roofscapes and a number of non-typical materials, and many include over-elaborate detailing and materials and hard boundary treatments that are not necessarily typical of the area. These buildings are few in number and do not have a great impact, however, care should be taken to avoid these in the future.
- 4.3 This chapter does not include details of heritage assets which are considered as part of a separate document.

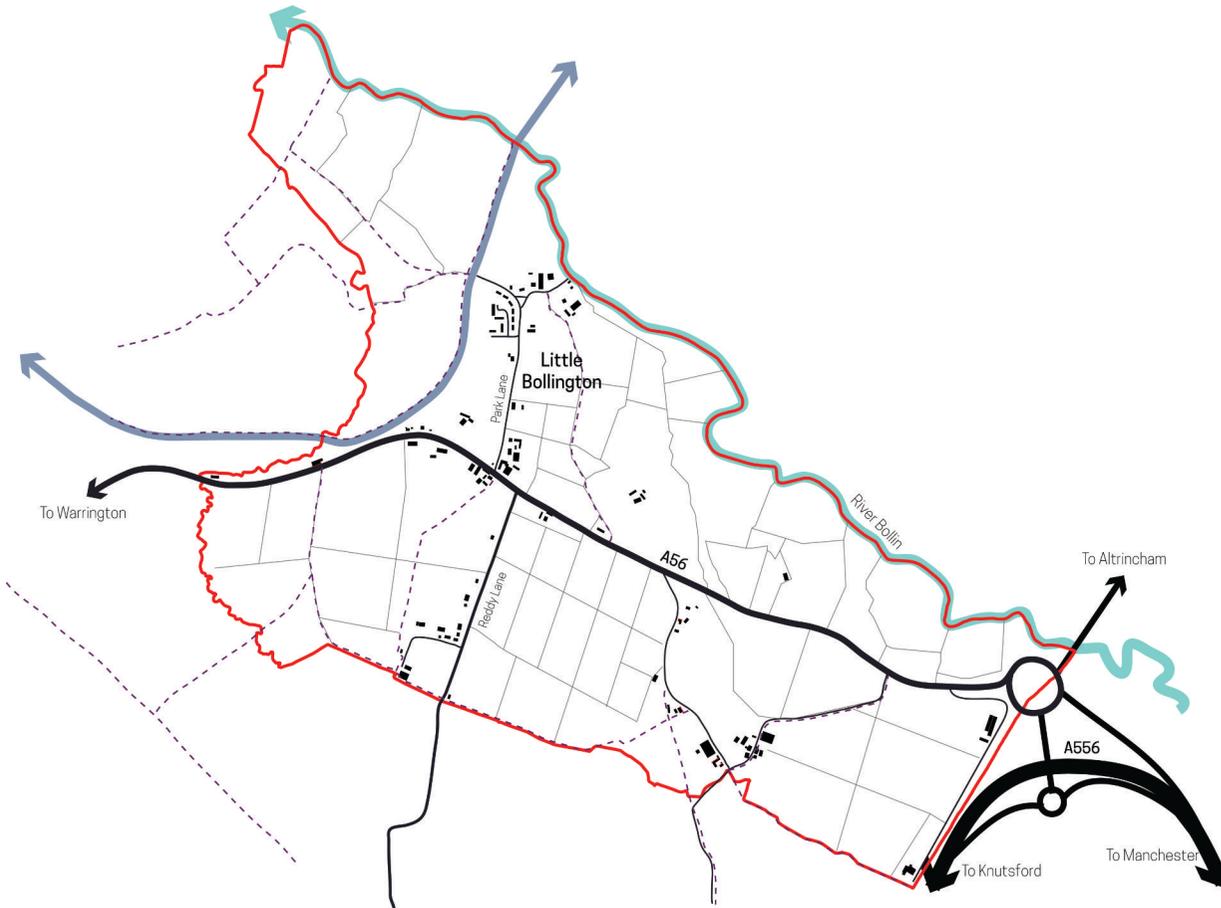
### Settlement form

- 4.4 The parish of Little Bollington comprises only limited urban form. The majority of the parish's buildings are located within the traditionally linear village of Little Bollington or along Lymm Road (the A56), thus falling into just two character areas. To the south the development is mainly within farmsteads. The pattern of built development is shown on the following page (on a diagram known as a figure ground) which reveals the sporadic and informal nature of developments and a lack of strong urban forms common in suburban areas. Some buildings have significant plots, from which it is clear that many are converted farmsteads with the farmhouse remaining.
- 4.5 The traditional centre of Little Bollington is situated to the north of the parish, where the Swan with Two Nicks pub now stands. Many of the local assets, such as the school and church, were built along Lymm Road, creating a more dispersed settlement somewhat separate from the original focus of the village. The area is predominantly comprised of a series of farmsteads and smaller cottages. This small scale, informal, linear form, where

buildings having a principal relationship with Park Lane, set on irregularly shaped and sized plots is important to the area's character, these are arranged around a triangular shaped junction at its heart.

- 4.6 The presence of a small residential cul-de-sac of municipal housing, popularised in the UK in the post-war period does not correspond to the traditional urban form. As a result it is important that new development reflects the linear, informal and small scale form of the built form along Park Lane.
- 4.7 The A56 arterial road character area operates as the civic centre for the parish and includes large footprint buildings set in larger plots such as the Little Bollington C of E primary school, the Church and two public houses (one operational and the other closed). The area is also home to a number of farmsteads, cottages and some larger properties arranged around the two key junctions of Reddy Lane and Park Lane. The surrounding development in the parish is residential and is scattered along Lymm Road with some gaps between the property curtilages offering glimpsed views across the countryside.

## PATTERN OF BUILT FORM (FIGURE GROUND)

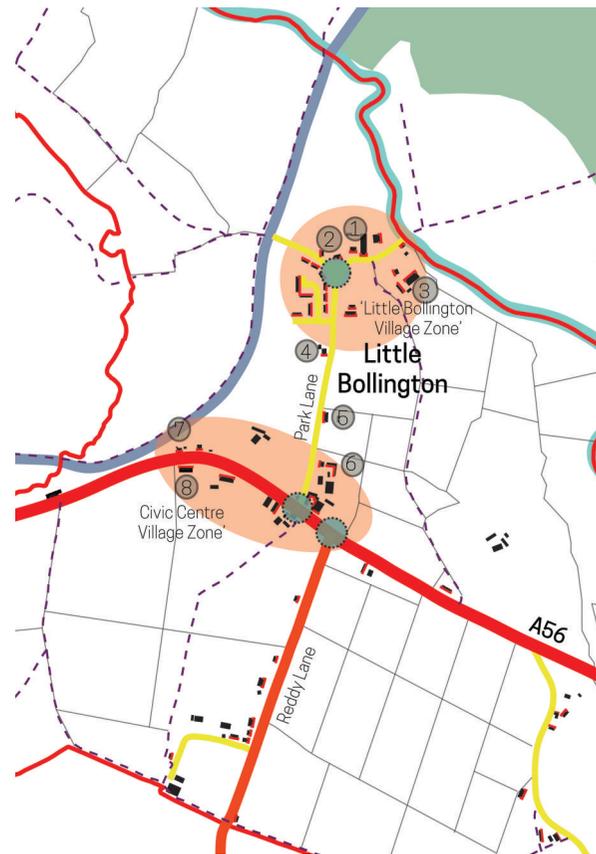


- 4.8 Buildings are typically set back from the route (originally a turnpike and later characterised by highways engineering as a trunk road). Whilst the 'gaps' in the frontage may continue to be filled by extensions or infill, care must be taken to ensure that the glimpsed views and strong relationship with the route are not undermined by new development.
- 4.9 The townscape analysis clearly shows how two 'village zones' are created – the traditional village arranged around the central space in the north, and the civic zone around the junctions of the A56 Lymm Road (the Turnpike) with Reddy Lane and Park Lane. These two zones reflect the two dominant character areas as well as being the focus for many of the key buildings (listed and also locally important) which collectively give the parish its character. Beyond this settlement form being more agricultural in character based around farming rather than any other uses.
- 4.10 The remainder of the parish (the southern farmsteads) is accessed from either Reddy Lane / Arthill Lane or Spodegreen Lane. The settlement form is based around larger farmsteads and associated outbuildings and smaller cottages. In recent years, redevelopment of farmstead sites, modern agricultural buildings, conversions and limited infill development have introduced a range of urban forms and functions.

## TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS PLAN

4.11 Some of the farmsteads have become ‘sprawling’ with large areas of hard standing and modern storage areas being constructed away from the traditional core of these farmsteads and the traditional buildings. As a result these have lost the relationship that traditionally they had with the key routes. The long term historical integrity of these farmsteads should be secured. Any new development within or adjacent to these farmsteads should take care to maintain their integrity, through appropriate scale, mass, materials and above all reducing any ‘sprawl’.

4.12 Importantly, across all of the three character areas, most properties have a set back from the road (the exceptions being some of the farm outbuildings). This setback has a ‘green’ character often being a mature or established garden area that is not, as is in many cases in modern housing, dominated by car parking. The protection of the front gardens from car parking should be a key feature of retaining the parish’s character, however, careful attention should be given to ensure that accessibility and visual amenity of areas is not undermined as a result of on-street parking



- Primary route
- Secondary route
- Tertiary route
- - - Footpath
- Building (Red indicates frontage)
- Node or key junction
- Building
- Field division
- Village ‘zone’
- Dunham Massey

### Key heritage buildings

- ① Swan with Two Nicks
- ② The White Cottage: Grade I Listed
- ③ Bollington Hall Farm House Grade II Listed
- ④ Ivy Lodge:
- ⑤ Post Office
- ⑥ Stamford Farm House: Grade II listed
- ⑦ Holly Bank: Grade II Listed
- ⑧ Holy Trinity Church

## Local archetypes

4.13 There are six typical archetypes within the parish. An archetype is a typical type of building found in an area, with characteristics or features that might be found in a number of buildings, which whilst not identical clearly are part of a common architectural style. Ignoring some of the more modern and incongruous properties, six different archetypes have been identified within Little Bollington. Each is described below coupled with a simplified sketch of a typical example showcasing the features.

4.14 *Small Cottage* – The smallest of all the archetypes and typically 1.5 storeys, with the second floor using the roofspace. The materials are typically red brick and render, with these archetypes being the most common to be entirely rendered. The roofscape is more varied than many, often having gables and gable windows making better

use of the first floor. The properties are built towards the front of the plot and are the only archetype to offer a gable or end to the road. This archetype is only found within the Little Bollington Village character area.

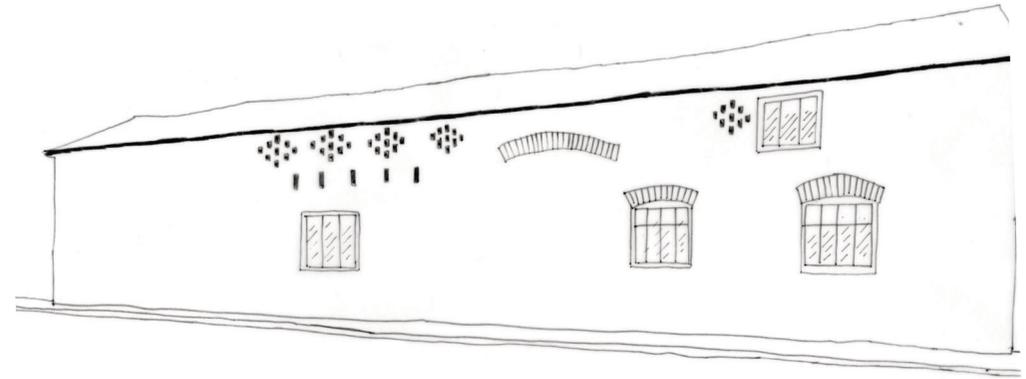


Typical small cottage archetype



Typical symmetrical property archetype

4.15 *Symmetrical property* – Found throughout the three character areas, either as a large estate property, a farmhouse or even as a standalone property on the turnpike. These properties have a grand appearance given that they are a traditionally 2 or 2.5 storeys (the latter using the roof space). The properties have a central entrance which fronts the road on the plot. The dwellings are usually arranged in three bays with a symmetrical fenestration arrangement. The roof simply pitches front to rear with an apex in the middle, and tall chimneys on the gables adding to the overall appearance of scale. Brick and stone detailing adorns the front elevation.



Typical agricultural barn archetype

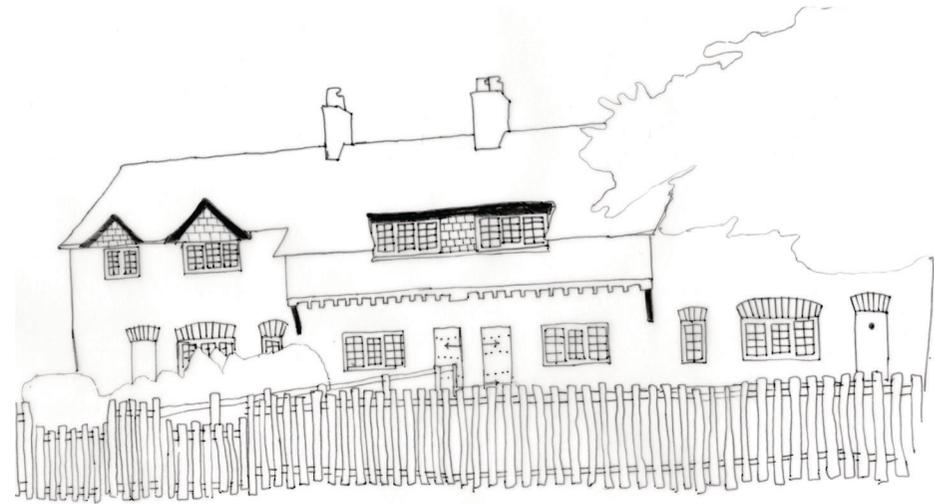
4.16 *Agricultural barn* – Typically found within the farmsteads across the parish, this archetype introduces elongated features within the built form. In some cases these run parallel to the road or at right angles to the road, often arranged in small groups in a grid pattern. These simple buildings with a little in the way of fenestration, but with large door openings (often away from the road) offer an imposing feature within the landscape. Detail is restricted to brick arches and detail around apertures and ventilation holes which in a number of cases are arranged in a distinctive diamond pattern.

4.17 *Large property* – Alongside the A56 (the former turnpike) there are a number of larger buildings that do not necessarily reflect the local vernacular, but rather the wider styles of Victorian and Georgian architectural styles used across the UK. In most cases these are unique in the parish (such as the school or church) however, a number of larger properties have a typical Victorian red brick vernacular. The 2 and 2.5 storey buildings included a much wider and eclectic mix of materials and occupy a prominent position at the junction of Lymm Road and Park Lane. The plots, footprint and scale of these buildings are larger than anything else within the parish.



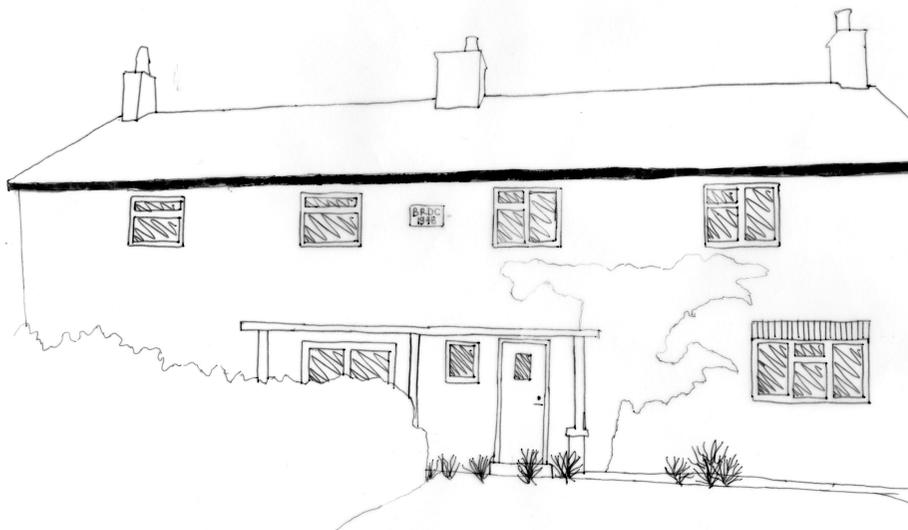
Typical large property archetype

4.18 *Estate cottage* – There are a number of examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century cottages made for estate workers as part of the Dunham Massey estate that define this archetype. They are arranged to front the road, with their long elevation to the road. These buildings have an arts and crafts architectural style and the most common examples are arranged in pairs or in quads in a symmetrical style. The scale is again 1.5 storeys with the roofspace used extensively, but the low eaves and clay tile roof contribute to this being different from the small cottage vernacular. Wooden bargeboard and eaves detail are a typical feature of this archetype.



Typical estate cottage archetype

4.19 *Municipal dwelling* – The immediate post-war period resulted in a number of dwellings built throughout the country to a similar style and materials palette. Little Bollington has examples of this development in the village character area. Whilst they are often considered to have little architectural merit, their arrangements and simple architectural detail fit well with the local vernacular. The colour of the brick is not typical of the area and does mean that despite their scale, mass and detail being sensible, they do ‘stand out’ a little. However, this is a sensible interpretation of the local vernacular that can offer a useful benchmark for modern house types.



Typical municipal dwelling archetype

## Details and features

- 4.20 The buildings within the parish, in the main, exhibit a simple and clean design. There are some notable exceptions, including the Church and the former public house at the junction of Park Lane / Lymm Road. As noted properties usually are arranged to face the road, occupying the plot parallel to the road rather than extending back into the site. There are a number of exceptions to this orientation rule and these often are in key locations within the street scene.
- 4.21 Most properties have a simple front to rear pitch providing a central ridge running parallel with the principle elevation. These are often very simple roofscapes without hips, but many have gables to reduce the overall scale of the building and use the roofspace. The gable ends are often fairly plain and without fenestration. This is almost certainly a reflection of the agricultural / rural characteristics of the parish as a whole.
- 4.22 The buildings almost always exhibit a sense of balance with symmetrical features often being commonplace as well as repeated stacked features in bays offering a strong rhythm to the design of the elevations. Where this is not the case, this is in most cases the result of a smaller cottage (often in render presumably to hide the various materials and stage of building) being

extended over a period of time rather than being developed as a whole. Buildings with varying roof heights or pitches are very rare and in most cases are only found on larger properties (see archetypes).

- 4.23 As for key details, chimneys, as typical, are a feature in enhancing the balance of the buildings and in articulating the roofscape, with some quoins being used at corners. However, in the main, decoration is provided by window surrounds (cills and lintels) in either brick, stone or in some cases a mixture of both. Porches are rare, however, porticos on larger buildings and pitched shelters on smaller properties, can be found.
- 4.24 Some of the farm complexes include a series of brick string courses which also add an interesting detail. However, in most cases, brickwork laid in either the English or Flemish style is a more common design feature of primary elevations with the simpler stretcher bond used on rear and side elevations. Shallow brick arches above windows and doors are also very common.

- 4.25 Detail at the eaves is a common feature with rainwater goods often working alongside a cornice detail or bargeboard to create a feature of the transition between the facing wall and the roof pitch. It should be also noted that gablets (where the facing wall runs directly into a window projecting up from the roof slope much as in a gable window) are quite common. Again this allows the roofspace to be used effectively whilst maintaining a 1.5 storey character to the overall building.

## Material palette

- 4.26 Red brick remains the dominant building material throughout the parish but subtle variations in colour exist between buildings. There are a number of properties that exhibit what is locally known as the 'Cheshire-brick' with its mottled and slightly irregular colouration and finish. There are a number of smaller, residential buildings that have a render finish. Almost exclusively these are small residential cottages, as larger residences are predominantly in the orange-red brick.
- 4.27 Contrasting brick is often used for decorative effect on many buildings, but mainly shades of orange-red brick rather than blue or yellow engineering brick as is common elsewhere. This brings a sense of unity to the elevations. For example, many of the larger Victorian buildings are built in the Tudor-revival style with brick, hanging tiles, half-timbering and stone detailing in order to provide an eclectic elevation typical of the era. There are some traditional half-timbered buildings, but these are rare.

4.28 Materials often vary between elevations, for instance render or painted brick is often found as a feature within main façades with simple brick side and rear elevations. As noted, elements of render (white or off-white in colour), half-timbering and some limited hanging tiles exist on the Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

4.29 Almost without exception, slate is the common roofing material, although this is unlikely to have been the traditional material for some of the older buildings. However, some of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings have small clay tiles, often with a deep red colour which adds to the overall interest but equally sits comfortably with the colour palette of the remainder of the parish.

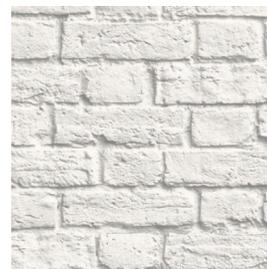
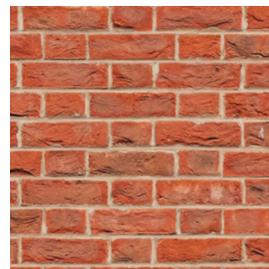
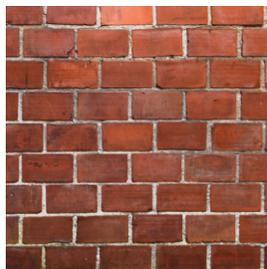
4.30 Stone is most commonly found on boundary walls rather than building exteriors with the exception of the Church, which is one of a handful of stone built buildings. Where stone is more commonly used, it is as a detailed element for window surrounds or decorative corner quoin, however it is equally possible that this is delivered as a brick detail.

4.31 Boundary treatments are a broad mix of brick and stone walls, hedges, railings and timber fencing. Given the rural nature of the parish (see previous sections) hedges are perhaps the most common form of enclosure, sometimes coupled with a low wall or fence. Walls are most common on larger buildings and within the farm type vernacular.

4.32 Modern fencing, such as higher close board fencing, is beginning to replace the traditional boundaries outlined above, and appears incongruous. The school site is enclosed by a typical black and white painted curved top Cheshire railing but this style of boundary is used less frequently elsewhere.

## TRADITIONAL MATERIALS PALETTE

### Wall materials



### Roof materials



## 5. GUIDANCE FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

### Context for the guidance

- 5.1 The following chapter summarises the findings of earlier chapters and seeks to provide guidance for how this should be considered as part of new developments. The guidance is focused on four key elements, all specifically mentioned within Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) SD2 (Sustainable development principles). This allows the Neighbourhood Plan to work with this guidance, presenting it sensibly as a policy (or policies) in line with guidance contained within paragraph 125 of the NPPF.
- 5.2 It should be noted, that this necessarily focuses on smaller forms of development as within the current policy context, larger scales of development are unlikely to be acceptable in principle. These smaller types of development include: redevelopment of previously developed sites, applications for agricultural and forestry, extensions, alterations and limited infilling within the village. The guidance should be used with applications that are submitted to Cheshire East Council.

### Preparing neighbourhood plan policies

- 5.3 When drafting neighbourhood plan policies it is advised that the group ensure that new development should seek to meet the following criteria, making reference to these within design and access statements and other supporting documentation where necessary. Schemes that do not address these design criteria should be refused or these matters addressed.
- 5.4 Given that this is broad guidance, and every eventuality cannot be predicted, there may be instances where it is impracticable or undesirable to deliver these design requirements. In these cases, if drafting policies the group may wish to allow the opportunity for applicants to demonstrate why they have not complied with these through detailed justification. Without detailed justification for a departure from the policies created then there is a presumption of refusal on any schemes that do not take on board the criteria below.

- 5.5 In all cases, chapters 2 – 4 of this document provide the necessary evidence and guidance to support the design guidance below.

### Landscape character guidance

- 5.6 The following design guidance should be used to ensure that the local landscape character is preserved and enhanced. Any development proposal:
- Should not be located on steep slopes or on high points within the landscape and avoid the removal of mature trees and hedgerows
  - Should work with, and preserve, the existing field and plot pattern, and avoid the encroachment of residential gardens into the landscape
  - Should be designed to reflect the local rural character in both materials and scale of development

### Views and setting guidance

- 5.7 The following design guidance should be used to ensure that the setting of the existing settlements and key views are safeguarded. Any development proposal:
- Should work with localised landform, avoiding building up (terracing) sites which would mean that buildings would 'sit up' in the landscape
  - Should maintain a series of glimpsed views in to and out of, the settlement areas, offering a clear visual connection with the landscape
  - Should avoid views from key public vantages or within key view corridors which are direct onto or face towards complete single elevations or taller buildings,
  - Should include soft, planted boundary treatments and not include hard boundaries such as walls or close boarded fences

### Scale, mass and siting guidance

- 5.8 The following design guidance should be used to ensure that new development reflects the pattern of development within the parish. Any development proposal:
- Should not exceed 2 storeys in height
  - Should reflect the traditional agricultural character of the area in terms of the scale and mass of development, avoiding buildings of large mass
  - Should be sited so as to present wide elevations to the road (as a principle elevation) behind a front garden area
  - Should ensure that the majority of the plot remains free from built form, contributing to the 'green' setting and allowing for appropriate landscape and planting

## Parking and servicing

- 5.9 The following design guidelines should be used to ensure that parking and servicing of all new development is considered appropriately in development proposals and does not undermine the character of the area.

Any development proposal:

- Should ensure that any new hard surfaces are integrated into the landscape design of the development and are of neutral colours and permeable in nature
- Should ensure that new development includes appropriate spaces for the storage and sorting of refuse so that bins, and their store are not visually intrusive in the street scene or landscape.
- Should avoid the frontage to buildings and plots being dominated by car parking or other hard standing to maintain the 'green' character
- Should carefully integrate parking into designs so that it does not dominate the street scene or frontage and provides sufficient off-street spaces in accordance with the Council adopted standards.

## Design detailing guidance

- 5.10 The following design guidance should be used to ensure that the details used in new development reinforce the local character. Any development proposal:

- Should have a simple roofscape, avoiding hipped and stepped roofs, but making use of gables where this allows the use of the roofspace. Flat roofs and mono pitches will be discouraged.
- Should include chimneys and fenestration in a way that stresses verticality is sympathetic to the principal elevations
- Should only use simple detailing, often using brick, including details under the eaves, as part of window surrounds
- Should include brick detailing either in the form of traditional bonds (English or Flemish bonding) or through the inclusion of decorative string courses

## Materials guidance

- 5.11 The following design guidance should be used to ensure that the materials used in new development reinforce the local character. Any development proposal:

- Should have a simple materials palette which in most cases will be led by red Cheshire brick, with simple brick, stone and wooden detailing.
- Should only use render sparingly as a detail, unless on smaller cottages, and should be in a white, cream or off-white colour only.
- Should be roofed in either slate or deep red clay tile, or a visually similar modern material, avoiding ridged concrete tiles.
- Should have landscape designs that prioritise the use of traditional and natural boundary treatments including native hedgerows and timber post and rail fencing
- Should have walls and 'Cheshire' railing to form elements of landscape boundaries for larger building, with close boarded timber fences avoided.





Urban Imprint Limited  
16 -18 Park Green  
Macclesfield  
SK11 7NA

01625 265232  
[info@urbanimprint.co.uk](mailto:info@urbanimprint.co.uk)  
[www.urbanimprint.co.uk](http://www.urbanimprint.co.uk)

