

Ongar Design Guide

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AECOM



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The background of the slide is a close-up, slightly faded image of a wooden door. The door is constructed from vertical wooden staves held together by horizontal metal bands. The wood has a weathered, greyish-brown appearance. The metal bands are dark and show some signs of wear. The overall texture is rough and aged.

Introduction

01

1. Introduction

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

This Design Guide has been produced to ensure that any new development in the area is carefully designed to contribute to the unique character that makes Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area a special place to live and visit.

This report presents a summary of the character of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area, which is then used to inform the creation of specific design guidelines to promote sustainable development. The design guidelines will look to address key issues and enhance the character identified in sections 2&3.

This approach 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 integrate successfully into the natural, built and historic environment.



1.1. Objectives

The main objective of this document is to ensure that any new development is designed and planned with regard to the existing character and context of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area within the Neighbourhood Plan.

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

The main body of the document summarises the character of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area and develops a series of design guidelines related to residential and mixed-use development.

1.2. Process

Following an inception meeting AECOM and members of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group carried out a site visit and assessment of the different areas within Ongar. The Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group was invited to share their knowledge and experience of the area. Their collective observations and the evidence collected as part of the consultation, has been used to inform this document.

1.3. Structure of this document

This document is presented in five sections as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction and objectives of the Design Guide;
- Section 2: Context including strategic issues highlighted through consultation;
- Section 3: Character assessment;
- Section 4: Design guidelines;
- Section 5: Delivery

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Context

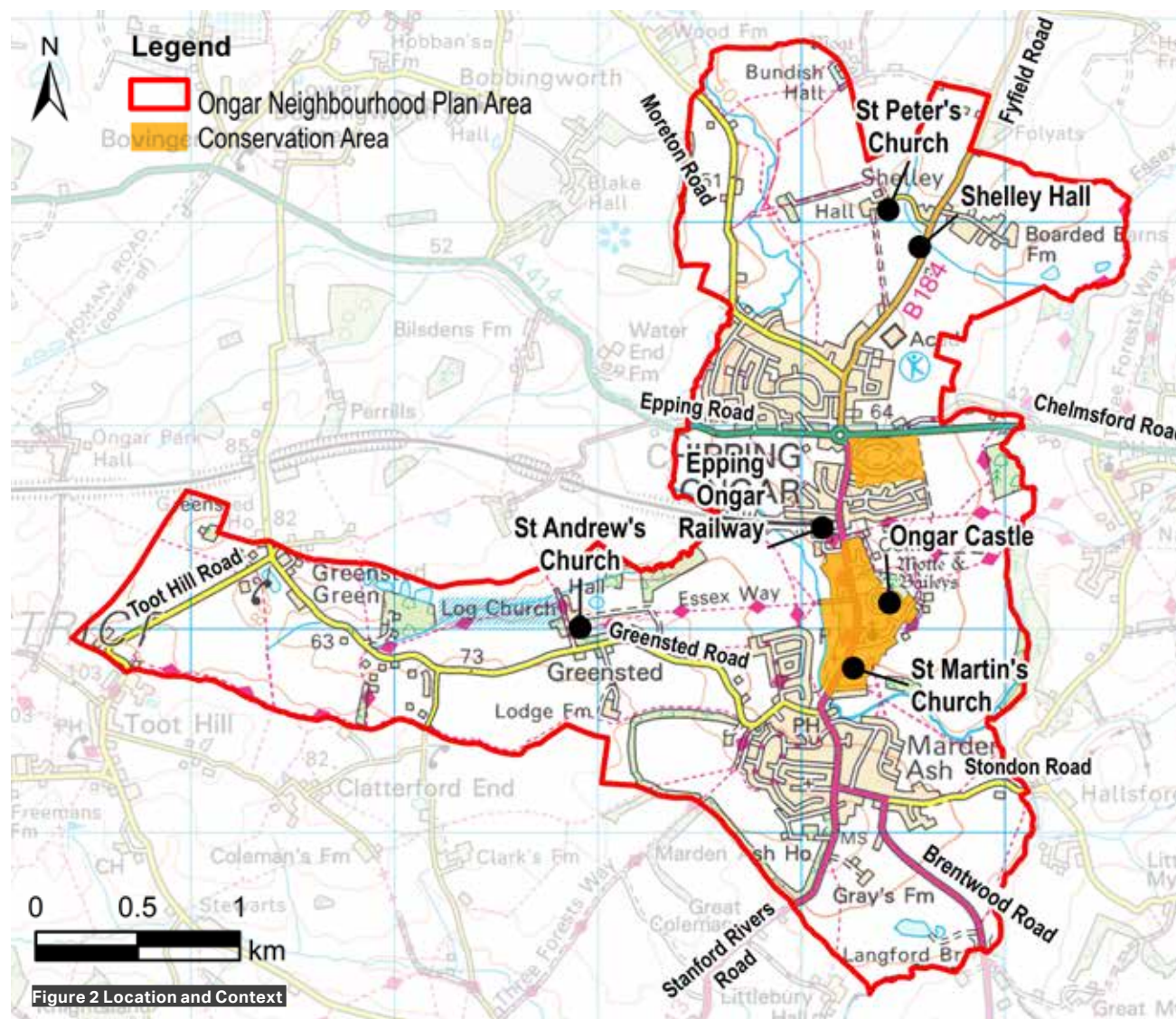
02



2. Context

2.1. Location and area of study

Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area is 12km² and is located 5km east of North Weald Bassett, 9km east of Epping, 11km south east of Harlow, 15km west of Chelmsford, 7km north-west of the M25 and 33km north-west of Central London. It is located in Epping Forest District in the county of Essex and consists of a central urban area comprised of Shelley, Chipping Ongar and Marden Ash surrounded by countryside containing the small nucleated settlements of Greensted, Greensted Green to the west and Shelley hamlet near St. Peter's Church to the north as shown in, Figure 2. Cumulatively the population in the 2011 census was 6,251.



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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.



St Andrew's Church, Greensted

1000s

The town of Chipping Ongar has Saxon origins and the word Ongar translates to grassland. At one time the town was known as Castle Ongar due to the presence of a motte and bailey castle. The addition of the name Chipping dates from the 14th century and means market and relates to the ancient market of the town.

1086

The land around Chipping Ongar is held by Eustace, the Count of Boulogne. His great grandson, William, Earl of Mortain and Surrey, granted the land to Richard de Lucy.

- Hamo the Steward held the land known as Gernestedam (Greensted)

1500s

- The keep at Ongar Castle is demolished.
- The White House, the Old Market House (171 High Street) and Castle House are constructed in Chipping Ongar
- The chancel at St. Andrew's Church in Greensted is constructed.
- Shelley Hall is constructed as a timber framed hall house



Castle House in Chipping Ongar

1564

Little Thorbens Cottage is constructed in Greensted

1000-1100

Records show a Church located on the site of the existing church in Chipping Ongar from 1080 with evidence to suggest alterations and additions in the 12th and 14th century.

St. Andrew's Church in Greensted is constructed. It is the oldest wooden building in Europe and oldest wooden church in the world. Saxon fabric survives in the timber nave, while later phases transitioned to flint.



St. Martin's Church in Chipping Ongar dating from 1080



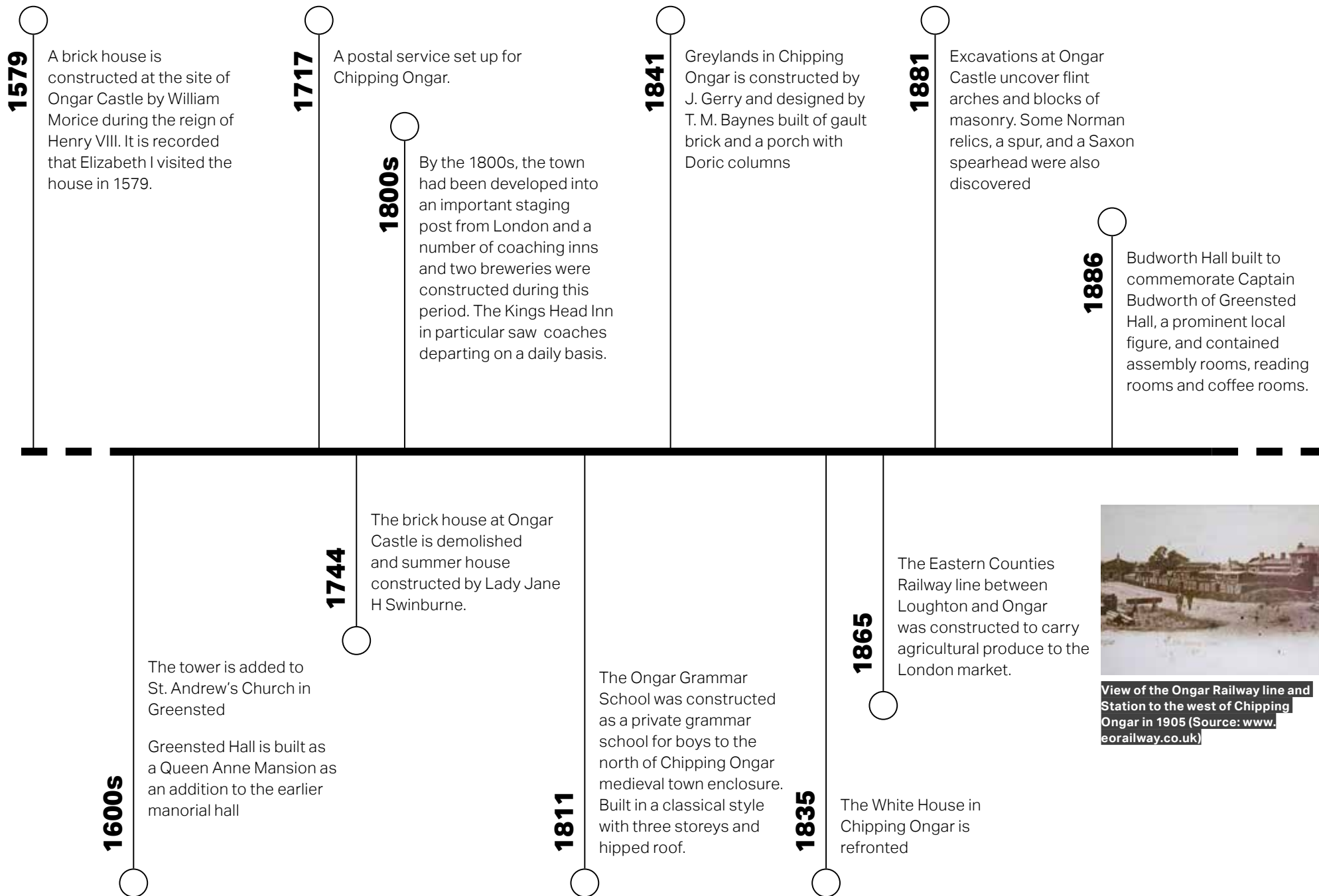
St. Andrew's Church, Greensted

1157

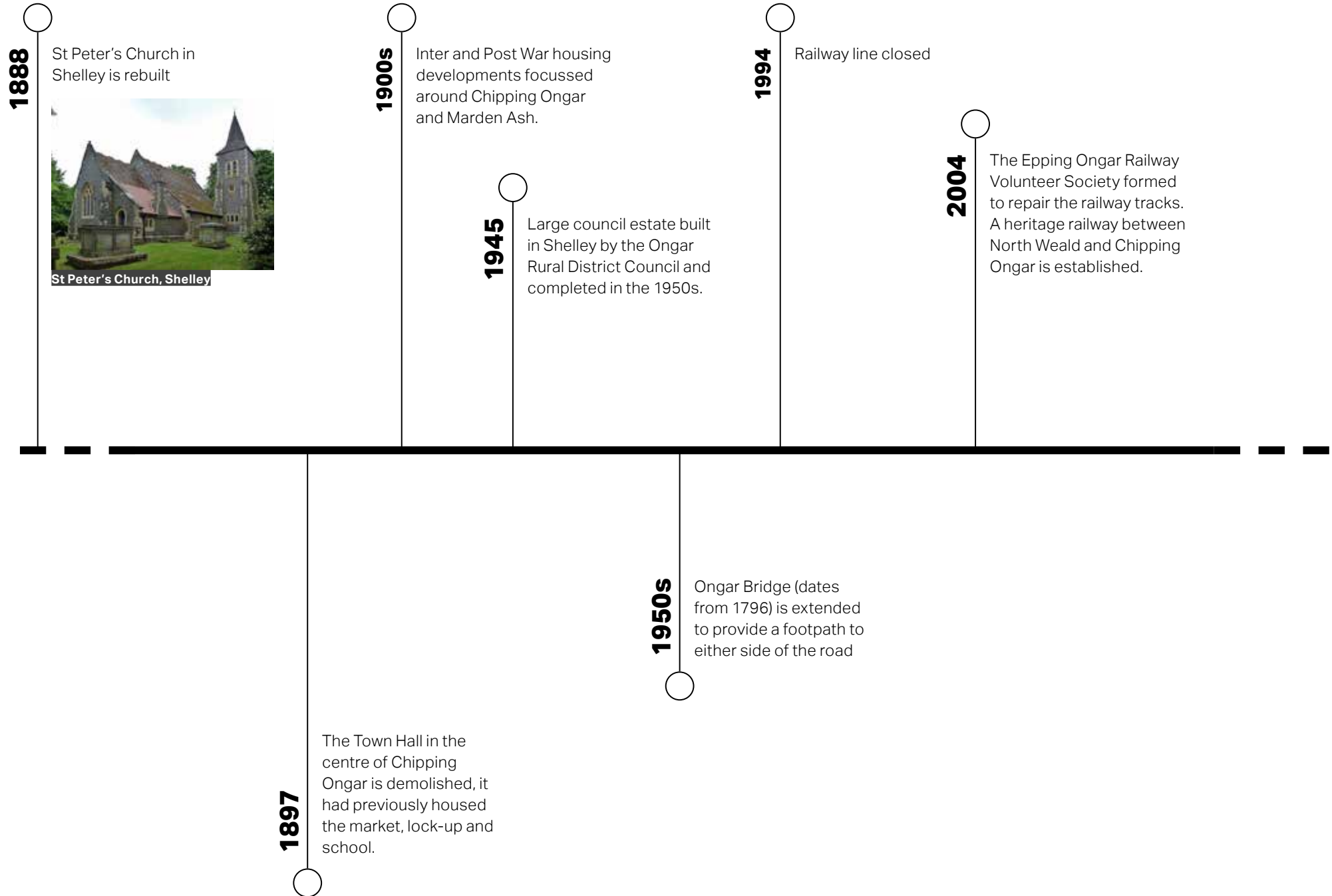
Ongar Castle is recorded as being built by Richard de Lucy as a motte and bailey castle comprising a flat-topped mount with encircling moat, an inner bailey, a weaker enclosure to the north and east, and the town-enclosure to the west.



Map showing the location and extent of Ongar Castle, moat, baileys and enclosures



View of the Ongar Railway line and Station to the west of Chipping Ongar in 1905 (Source: www.eorailway.co.uk)



2.3. Townscape designations

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments are nationally important archaeological sites. Five are located within the Neighbourhood Plan Area;

- Ongar Castle;
- Bundish Hall moated site; and
- A series of earthen burial mounds known as bowl barrows around Shelley Common.

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are buildings of special architectural and historic interest. There are over 100 listed buildings within the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area, including grade I and grade II*.

Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are designed to protect features of an area which make them distinctive and include both buildings and spaces which surround them. The elements of a conservation area that contribute to the character include; the historic layout of property boundaries and roads, views along streets and between buildings, characteristic materials, details of buildings, walls, railings and hedges, and trees and open spaces.

There are two conservation areas within the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area;

- Great Stony School Conservation Area: An area covering a number of school buildings, infirmary and assembly room that are set around a central village green. The school was built between 1903 and 1905 as an orphanage for children of paupers.
- Chipping Ongar Conservation Area: The administrative centre of the Saxon Hundred and includes the Norman Ongar Castle which is also a designated Scheduled Monument. The historic core of Chipping Ongar is a medieval plantation town enclosure focused around the High Street and includes the 11th century St Martin's Church.

Other Landscape Designations

Greensted Wood, in the west of the Neighbourhood Plan Area is designated as an area of Ancient Woodland and much of the Local Plan Area is designated as Green Belt with the exception of the settlements of Chipping Ongar, Shelley and Marden Ash with defined boundaries which separate each settlement. Further information can be found on the Epping Forest District Council's website: <http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-building>



View of the Grade I listed St Martin's C Of E Church

2.4. Public Consultation

The Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group has undertaken public consultation and identified the following to be considered in the development of the Design Guide:

- Desire to attract tourism and increase footfall on the High Street in Chipping Ongar;
- Concern over the decreasing numbers of services offered along the High Street in Chipping Ongar;
- Levels of parking provision and effects of on street parking;
- Traffic speed and vehicular weight on the High Street in Chipping Ongar which influences the experience of the users on the street;
- The current interpretation of the Essex Design Guidelines which have resulted in development which is not in keeping with the character of the Neighbourhood Plan Area with a;
 - Reduction in quantity of trees and soft edges to streets; and
 - Narrower streets with fewer offstreet parking spaces than is typical for the area.
- Concern about the erosion of local vernacular by recent developments which include such features as; a greater number of storeys than typical, a steeper pitched roof or an inappropriate materials palette and increasing densities;
- Concern over future development densities;
- Desire to encourage pedestrian movement via vehicular free routes;
- Desire to preserve the social mixture of the Ongar Neighbourhood Area through a provision of a pre-school, youth facilities; such as sports multi-use indoor and outdoor spaces, climbing wall, and properties which accommodate a mix of housing types at all stages of life;
- Preserve historically significant views of and from the built environment and links to the wider countryside; and
- Desire to safeguard a corridor for a future bypass around Chipping Ongar, Shelley and Marden Ash to reduce traffic flow through the settlements.



Site walkover with members of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group

A faded background image of a wooden cross in a field. The cross is made of two weathered wooden beams. It stands in a grassy field with bare trees in the background. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be overlaid clearly.

Character assessment

03

3. Character assessment

3.1. Introduction

Landscape is a broad, collective term that encompasses natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It is defined by the European Landscape Convention as "... an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors." Landscape character assessment is used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a particular place. The principles of landscape character assessment apply to all types of landscape, including urban townscape. It is used to identify recognisable patterns of elements or characteristics that make one place different from another. This report is focussed on the character of the urban townscape and its rural landscape context.

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area. The features introduced in this section are later used as the basis for the design guidelines.

3.2. Existing character assessments

3.2.1. The Epping Forest District Council Epping Forest Landscape Studies Landscape Character Assessment, 2010

The Epping Forest Landscape Studies Landscape Character Assessment assesses the landscape surrounding the urban areas. It covers small settlements such as Greensted and Greensted Green but excludes the three main settlements of Shelley, Chipping Ongar and Marden Ash. These are identified as an urban area. Four Landscape Character Areas (LCA) are identified surrounding the urban area as shown on Figure 3. These areas collectively form the rural area of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area. Key characteristics of the rural LCAs of relevance to this Design Guide are summarised in the following paragraphs:

B3 - Middle Roding

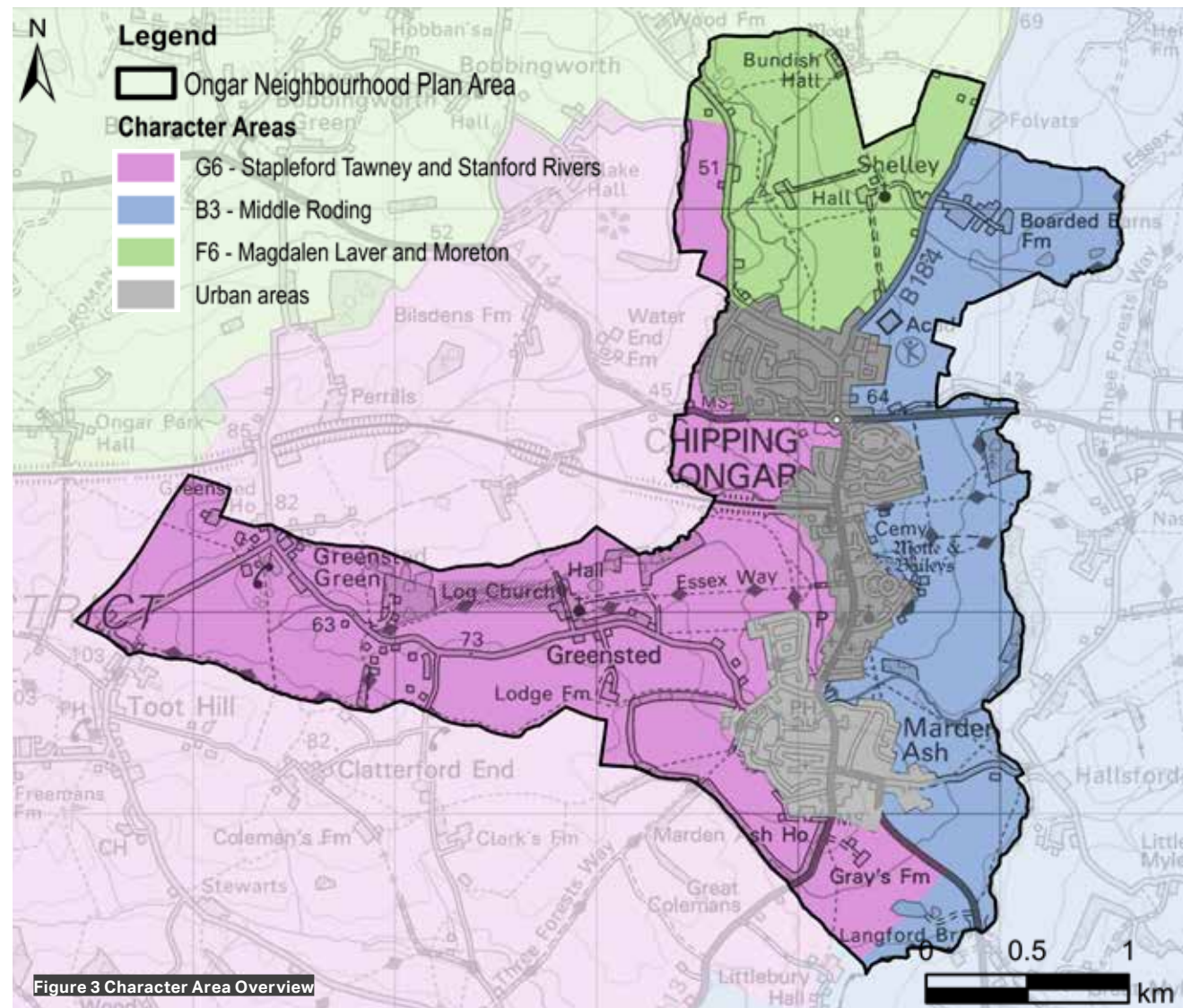
- A patchwork of large, predominantly arable fields is situated within the wide valley floor of the middle section of the Roding Valley;
- Settlement pattern comprises a series of scattered farmsteads and the small, nucleated village of High Ongar in the south of the area
- Field pattern is delineated by a network of mature hedgerows, which contain deciduous trees in places and are gappy in others; and
- Narrow road corridors are lined with trees and mature hedgerows contrast with the noise and movement associated with the primary road corridor which disturbs the overall sense of tranquillity.

F6 - Magdalen Laver and Moreton

- Field boundaries and narrow rural lanes are often delineated by a combination of hedgerows containing hedgerow trees and ditches;
- Small-scale settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and small, historic settlements with prominent historic buildings;
- Small patches of broadleaved woodland punctuate the landscape with pockets of enclosed meadow pasture; which provide an intermittent sense of enclosure;
- A relatively strong sense of tranquillity and associated predominantly rural character throughout.

G6 - Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers

- Predominantly arable fields, lined with a network of mature hedgerows;
- Small-scale settlement pattern, encompassing isolated farmsteads and small, nucleated villages;
- Traditional, isolated houses, with red brick and occasional thatched barns;
- Narrow, rural lanes, lined with mature trees and species-rich verges; and
- Very strong sense of tranquillity throughout most of the area



Legend

- Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Character Areas**
 - Chipping Ongar
 - Marden Ash
 - Shelley

The map shows the geographical distribution of three character areas within the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan area. Chipping Ongar is highlighted in orange, Marden Ash in purple, and Shelley in green. The map also displays surrounding roads, landmarks like Greensted Log Church, and various farmsteads.

3.3.1. Shelley

Townscape structure

Shelley is a settlement located to the north of Chipping Ongar. The two settlements are separated by Epping Road (A414), a strip of agricultural land and Great Stony Park which are designated as Green Belt. There is a pedestrian crossing which connects the two settlements across Epping Road. The current centre of Shelley is positioned to the west of Fyfield/Ongar Road (B184) which runs north from a roundabout on Epping Road. Historically, there was a small settlement surrounding the manorial church hall complex, Shelley Hall and St. Peter's Church to the north of the current centre with a few houses along the Fyfield/Ongar Road (B184), near the crossroads, now the roundabout on Epping Road. Although outside the identified Urban Area in the Epping Forest Landscape Studies Landscape Character Assessment, this hamlet forms an important part of Shelley as it contains Shelley Hall and St. Peter's Church.

From the early 20th century, Shelley expanded to the west of Fyfield Road and north of Epping Road, with the addition of initially council built housing containing open spaces and Shelley Primary School and later developer built housing abutting Epping Road (A414). To the east, a late 20th century housing development has been constructed containing housing, shops and community facilities. The hamlet to the north remains separated from the main part of Shelley by agricultural fields, retaining its form as a small nucleated settlement.

As shown in Figure 5 the street layout of the main settlement of Shelley consists of a network of looping streets and cul-de-sacs off a central road through the village. The properties within Shelley include semi-detached houses which are set back from the road with front gardens and occasional driveways, detached houses and short rows of terraces. Around the edge of the settlement there are roadside verges which provide a green edge to the urban development and trees and hedgerows planted throughout Shelley result in a green leafy character with strong visual links to the surrounding countryside. The few shops and commercial properties are located along Fyfield Road with a small number of local stores on St Peter's Avenue.

The northern isolated element of Shelley has a completely rural character due to the intervening agricultural fields and detached properties set on large plots. To the east of Ongar Road (B184) is a recent housing development which comprises of semi-detached and detached properties with small front gardens, driveways and garages. Access to St. Peter's Church is along Church Lane, the Rectory and a farm is also located along this road.



Figure 5 Shelley Settlement Pattern

Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

The grass verges, trees and hedgerows in addition to the front and rear gardens, creates a verdant open character to the area e.g. along Moreton Road.

There are a few small greenspaces located within the residential areas of Shelley, some of these contain play areas and are enclosed by buildings. These greenspaces include Shelley Park on St Peter's Avenue, a greenspace on Walter Mead Close and playing fields at The Ongar Academy and Ongar Primary School.



Pattern and layout of buildings

Shelley has a mix of house types, although one housing type is usually prevalent on a particular street, suggesting a single stage of development. The most frequent type is semi-detached two storey buildings with fronts facing onto the streets, with a front garden and / or driveway with wide gaps between properties to allow views of back gardens and to the rear of other properties or the surrounding countryside. There are also instances of short rows of terraced houses such as on Acres Avenue.



More recent developments are considered locally not to have responded to the existing structure of the streets but have followed the Essex design codes; they have smaller setbacks from the street with small or no front gardens. They generally have increased building density and height with tighter bends in the streets which create a more enclosed character e.g. Walter Mead Close and The Gables.



Views and landmarks

Views are primarily influenced by the built development in the foreground with gaps between properties revealing countryside beyond back gardens of adjacent streets.

Long distance views over low rise buildings are also possible of the surrounding rural landscape looking west along streets such as Shortlands Avenue, Kimpton's Close or Queensway.

Other medium to long distance views within the area include the linear views along the primary roads such as Moreton Road which are framed by the road corridor, landform, developments and hedgerows lining the roads. Similarly, within the Shelley, Fyfield Road is framed by built form set back from the road interrupted by trees and vegetation in the streetscene with glimpses of the surrounding countryside between dwellings.



Views of back garden vegetation and built form on adjacent residential streets through gaps in built form



Views along primary roads framed by landform and built form along Moreton Road



Elevated view over rural surroundings from Shortlands Avenue



View over rural surroundings between houses

Boundary treatment

The building line within Shelley is typically set back from the roadside with front gardens or paved driveways. The boundary treatments in the area contain a mixture of low brick walls and hedges with a relatively consistent height and offset from the street which creates a unifying street scene. Occasional low quality wooden or metal fences interrupt the established rhythm of the street and many of the boundaries have been removed to allow for paved areas of parking. Parked cars on the street and mounted on the kerb are more prominent visual features than the boundary treatments within more recent developments for instance; Walter Mead Close.



Building line and boundary treatments on Cripsey Avenue



Front garden and boundary removed for paved surface

Building heights and roofline

Building heights typically vary between one and two storeys. The roofline is predominantly pitched with some examples of hipped and mansard roofs e.g. Queensway. The presence of chimneys is common throughout the area. Front facing projecting gables are commonly found on the early 20th century semi-detached properties along Fyfield Road.

The recent Gables are typically two or three storey buildings with more complex steeper pitched roofs with various intersecting gable ends.



Mansard roofs on Queensway



Steep pitched roofs of The Gables

The new development in the north of Shelley village contains two storey properties with pitched roofs, with gaps between filled with driveways and garages but with materials atypical for the area.



New development north of Shelley



Row of repeating buildings with bay windows on Fyfield Road

Architectural details and materials

Although the majority of the properties in the village of Shelley date to the late 20th century, more traditional buildings exist in the hamlet to the north of the village and along Fyfield Road. Originally the area had a rural character that in the early 20th century was transformed into suburban character defined by semi-detached council housing properties with gardens. This transformation from rural settlement to suburban character is reflected in the variety of architectural details and materials present within Shelley:

- Pitched and hipped roofs;
- Red clay plain and ridge tiles;
- Pitched roof dormer windows;
- Thatch;
- Some examples of clay pantiles, Roman tiles, Welsh slate and concrete tiles on late 20th century housing;
- Red brick chimney stacks;
- Red brick walls;
- Gault (buff cream) brick;
- Rendered walls;
- Flint (St Peter's Church);
- Porches;
- Bargeboards to gables;
- Red brick boundary walls; and
- Bay windows.



Land use, levels of activity and parking

The southern area of Shelley is pre-dominantly residential with relatively few commercial ventures. The B184, Fyfield/Ongar Road forms the key north-south road through the area and splits the settlement with the majority of the settlement to the west.

Ongar Primary School (previously named Shelley Primary School) is situated to the south-west of the residential area backing onto Epping Road. The new Ongar Academy is located in the east of the settlement east of Fyfield Road. In most residential streets there is either on street parking or front gardens converted into driveways with some houses with garages. The Gables feature driveways and parking courtyards beside or behind the dwellings. Walter Mead Close has very limited space for parking and the overflow parking on the pavements often render them inaccessible.

Heritage Assets

There are approximately 20 listed buildings within Shelley, most of them located to the north, at the end of Church Lane or associated with Boarded Barns Farm. These include the Church of St Peter (Grade II), and Shelley Hall (Grade II*).

There are four scheduled monuments, three bowl barrows on Shelley Common, individually scheduled and Bundish Hall moated site.



Local shops on St Peter's Avenue



Limited parking provision in Walter Mead Close



St Peter's Church - Grade II listed



Shelley Hall - Grade II* listed

Positive aspects of character

There are a number of positive aspects of character which should be sustained, reinforced or enhanced. These relate to:

- Pedestrian crossing reduces the severance with Chipping Ongar;
- Looping residential streets within the residential blocks;
- Consistent height and offset established on most streets for boundary treatments; typically hedges or low brick walls;
- The consistent density, offset from the street and pattern of built development;
- The variety of sympathetic housing type with consistent types per street – establishing a localised character;
- Grass verges and front gardens in the street scene; and
- Greenspaces with natural surveillance within the residential area.

Issues to be considered in design guidelines

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management.

- Numerous cul-de-sacs reducing access and permeability;
- Severance from Chipping Ongar by a busy road;
- Rhythm of boundary treatments broken by atypical wooden / metal fencing or the altogether removal of boundary treatments;
- The streets which have an increased density or decreased off set from the street which have a more urban character than is typical for the area;
- Inappropriate use of Essex design codes creating a density atypical for the area e.g. Walter Mead Close;
- New developments which do not respond to the surrounding context in terms of: the existing layout of street, boundary treatments or materials palette;
- Lack of parking and the resulting parking on pavements in areas such as Walter Mead Close; and
- The loss of front gardens and hedges to paved driveways; and limited numbers of greenspaces for residents.

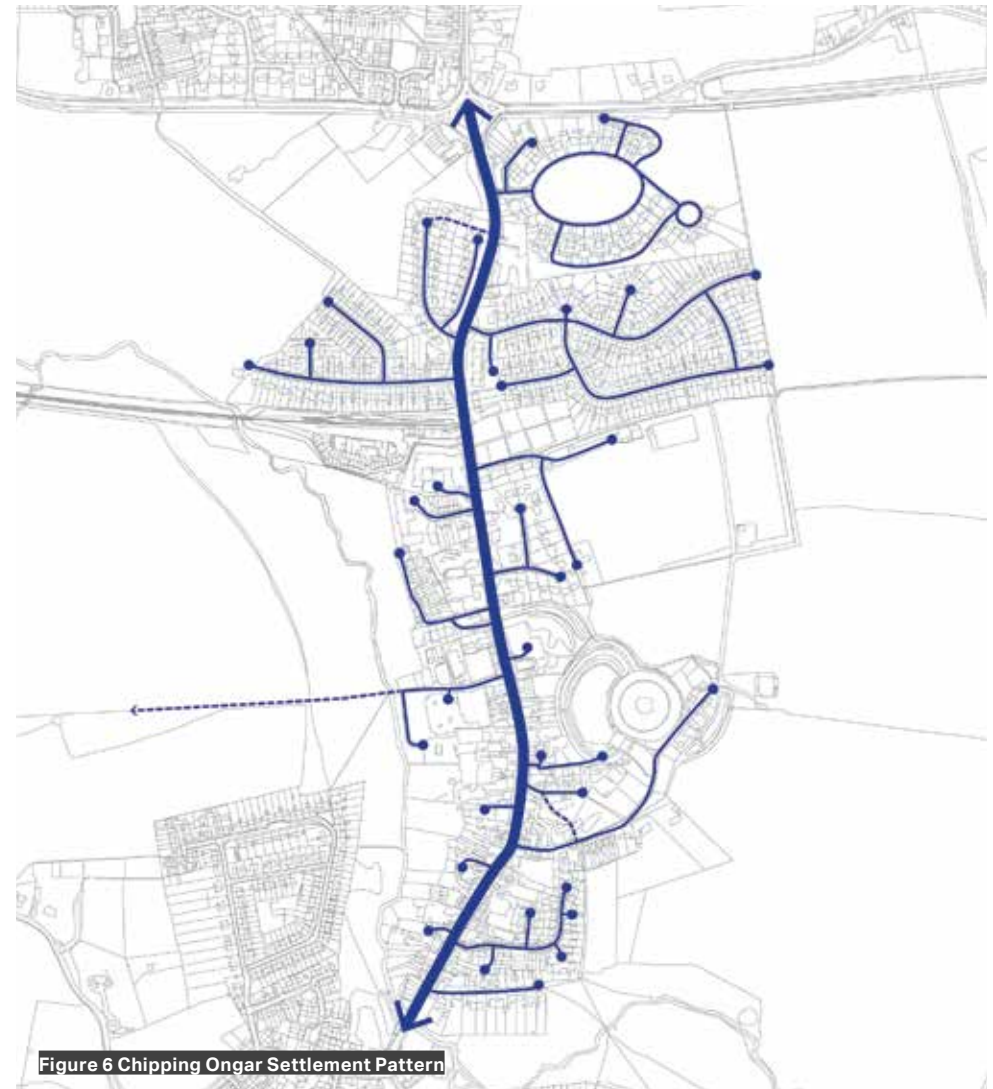


3.3.2. Chipping Ongar

Townscape structure

As shown in Figure 6 the settlement of Chipping Ongar is primarily structured around the linear medieval and early post medieval High Street (B184) on a north south axis with numerous adjoining residential streets. The height and density of buildings increases within the primary shopping area between Castle Street and Budworth Hall - being between the south gate of the medieval town enclosure and close to the north gate, within Chipping Ongar Conservation Area. Within the core of the settlement gaps between buildings are minimal and there are few green spaces. The adjacent residential streets include a mixture of; cul-de-sacs, backland development and recently built flats in the yards or stable areas.

The settlement is surrounded by farmland and Green Belt with Epping Road and Shelley located to the north, Greensted to the west and Marden Ash to the south with small areas of green spaces following Cripsey Brook in-between.



Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

The town of Chipping Ongar has relatively little green infrastructure. Green infrastructure is defined as a *“a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, space for recreation and climate mitigation and adaptation”* (European Commission 2014).

There are a few pockets of green open space which include the area by Great Lawn and the cemetery on Love Lane. Other green infrastructure is limited to flowering baskets incorporated into the street scene or frontages of buildings which adds colour to the street.

A concentration of green infrastructure is located in the area where Ongar Castle and associated buildings used to stand. Although there are still some historic buildings in the area, this space is mostly defined by historic water features, open green space and mature trees. It is located just east of the main built-up area of the High Street and partly visible from the High Street.



Flower baskets bringing colour to the street scene

There is a small play space between the Ongar Library and Ongar Castle.

Along residential streets green verges, front and back gardens and views over surrounding agricultural land gives the residential streets a verdant character.

Allotments are located between Castle Street and Stanley Place.

Pattern and layout of buildings

There is a wide range of building types, ages and styles along the High Street reflecting the stages of historic growth of Chipping Ongar with buildings, including houses, dating from the 11th to the 19th centuries. Dominant building lines enclose the gently curving High Street creating a sense of enclosure that is interrupted by a few car parks and the north-eastern extent of the Ongar Castle that faces onto the High Street. Variations in the building lines emphasise the widening of the High Street towards the centre, marking the site of the former market and old market house.

Buildings plots on the west side of the High Street are long with the areas behind the shops being used mainly for parking or redeveloped with flats. On the east side, the

plots are considerable shorter, due to the extent of the inner bailey of the castle. These areas are mostly used as gardens.

Common house types along the residential side streets include; larger detached houses, streets of consistent detached or symmetrical pairs of semi-detached houses suggesting a single stage of development in the 1960s and 1970s, and infrequent short rows of new terraced houses e.g. Meadow View which are atypical for the area.

Large new semi-detached developments are situated on private or gated streets which is atypical for the area e.g. Banson's Mews

Castle Street features a number of distinctive, detached cottages with small front gardens and driveways separated by narrow gaps between buildings.

Dwellings on Bushy Lea are a characterful mixture of building types including semi-detached bungalows semi-detached cottages and detached properties with short plots on the north and larger set backs and plots south of the street opening out to the countryside beyond.



Small play area between Ongar Library and Ongar Castle



Gated street of Banson's Mews

Views and landmarks

Views along the High Street are linear and framed by built development which provides visual complexity and interest via its architectural variety, complexity, texture and heritage assets. The northern and southern parts of the High Street contain areas of trees which break up the built form but a linear view is maintained along the town.

Looking west from elevated locations such as Shakletons over development on the western side of the High Street offers views of a verdant backdrop.

Gaps between buildings offer views out from the High Street to the open countryside. These views are often from specific locations e.g. along the Essex way, from end of Bowes Drive, Onslow Gardens or Meadow View. A view from the area around Ongar Castle toward Greensted is possible in winter with reduced foliage on the trees. Views of St Mary's Church in High Ongar are possible from the eastern edge of Chipping Ongar.

On the east side of the High Street, there are two visual gaps to the otherwise built street scene; Manor House that is set back from the High Street and Wren House just north of the Church of St Martin provides a glimpse of the church. Many of the heritage assets are important landmarks or focal reference points including St Martin's Church and Ongar Castle.



View from Onslow Gardens



View toward St Mary's Church in High Ongar



View along Essex Way



View within Chipping Ongar Conservation Area along the High Street

Boundary treatment

Along the High Street to the north there are medium height hedges, brick and or fences in front of properties

The built form within the historic core on the High Street typically front directly onto the pavements with a staggered building line created by varying offsets from the road changing the width of the pavement; in some places becoming narrow. In proximity to the pedestrian crossing there are expanses of fencing and bollards stretch along section of the pavements. Outside the medieval town enclosure the High Street has residential or commercial properties with small front gardens with low walls, hedges, wooden or wrought iron fences and a couple of properties feature flint cobble paving to the front of the properties. The close proximity of built form encloses the street scene.

The residential streets away from the High Street feature a variety of boundary treatments. Commonly properties are situated behind pavements, grass verges, small to medium sized front gardens delineated by; hedges, low brick walls, wooden fencing, low planting or just lawn leading up to the back of the pavement. Many of the front gardens incorporate driveways but occasionally driveways replace the front garden entirely. The generous

front gardens on both sides of the street create an open character. Treatments to the sides / backs of properties include wooden panel fences and brick walls.

Shakletons, a small cul-de-sac, features properties which are situated above the street level. Front gardens and driveways are slightly offset to the street and have a gentle incline which encloses the street scene.

More recent residential developments are more enclosed with properties fronting directly onto the pavements with no green verge, minimal front gardens and limited parking space.

Building heights and roofline

Building heights along the High Street vary between one and three storeys with many of the buildings displaying architectural features, intricate detailing and shop frontages and signs which are sympathetic to their historical context.

The roofline varies in form and styles creating an interesting roofscape. There is a wide variety of roof shapes, pitched, hipped, cross hipped, M shaped, jerkinhead, mansard and flat roofs with numerous styles

of chimney and a clock tower. Dormers frequently face onto the street.

The residential side streets typically have either pitched or hipped roofs occasionally intersected by gable ends with most dwellings including at least one chimney. Within each residential street the approach is relatively uniform, featuring little variety in building heights and two or three roof types suggesting the developments were constructed at similar points in time.

The contemporary developments on the western settlement edge of Chipping Ongar including Basons Mews are three storeys tall with a steeper pitch to the roofs and have a more uniform appearance than is typical in Chipping Ongar.



Narrowing pavement on the High Street



Residential properties on the High Street



Boundary treatment on a secondary street



Limited parking space on secondary street



The varied roofline of the High Street

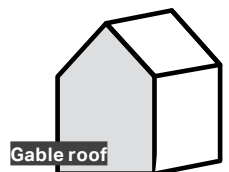


Atypical roofline for Chipping Ongar

Architectural details and materials

Buildings in Chipping Ongar date from the 11th century to the present day with a majority in the historic core dating to the 17th and 18th centuries illustrating the significant role of the town as a traveller's staging post. As a result there is a wide variety of building facades and roofscapes with no prevailing architectural style which is reinforced by the range of architectural details and materials:

- St Martin's Church's courses of flint and brick quoins
- Decorative timber bargeboards and finials;
- Timber sliding sash windows;
- Bay windows, occasionally with decorative hung tiles;
- Brick arched doorway lintels;
- Gable, pitched and hipped roofs;
- Plain clay tiles, clay pantiles and slate;
- Clay peg tiles and shingles (wooden tiles);
- Decorative 20th century red clay ridge tiles (Great Stony Park Conservation Area);
- Pitched and flat roof dormer windows facing the street;
- Red brick, yellow stock brick and white gault brick;
- Red brick with decorative buff brick quoins;
- Timber frame with painted infill;
- White render, rough cast render, pargetting; and
- Weatherboarding.



Land use, levels of activity and parking

The High Street is dominated by traffic with large commercial vehicles using it as a short cut. This reduces tranquillity, increases pollution, undermines the pedestrian and cyclist experience and results in severance east-west through the town. The central part of the High Street contains shops, restaurants and community facilities including Budworth Hall interspersed with residential properties. St Martin's Church, Ongar United Reformed Church and the Catholic Church of St. Helen's are located east and west of the central part of the High Street. Adjacent streets and to the north and south, beyond the original town gates, land use is more residential with a few commercial ventures.

Along the High Street parking is restricted to parking laybys and car parks. In total there are three public car parks: Basons Lane, Sainsbury's supermarket and The Pleasance. There are a number of car parks for private use including Ongar Station on the Epping Ongar Heritage Railway. Residential side streets approach car parking in various ways including driveways in front of the house, on street parking and less frequently; parking to the side of the house, private garages or, as demonstrated on Mayflower Way, shared drives in the gap between adjacent semi-detached houses.

The density of buildings along the High Street has left little space for bins and they are typically located to the side or to the rear detracting from the street scene.

Heritage Assets

There are more than 70 listed building in Chipping Ongar, most of which are concentrated on both sides of the High Street.

Ongar Castle is designated as a scheduled monument and is located to the east of the town. This area is dominated by the inner bailey of the original defences and by the motte, where the castle originally stood. Mature trees cover the island of the motte as well as the area around it and the ramparts of the inner bailey.



Positive aspects of character

There are a number of positive aspects of character which should be sustained, reinforced or enhanced. These relate to:

- The surviving medieval street pattern of the High Street contributes to the varied and intricate texture of the urban grain;
- A high proportion of historic buildings and their settings have been given statutory protection as designated Heritage Assets in recognition of their architectural and historic interest;
- The wide range of traditional local building materials and the variety of façade detailing and roof scape contribute to the character and appearance of the area;
- Ongar Castle, the Church of St Martin and the medieval pattern of the area illustrate the medieval origins of the settlement;
- The majority of the historic properties dating from the 18th and 19th century illustrating the importance of the area as a staging point for travellers;
- Dominant building lines along the High Street creating a strong sense of enclosure;
- Visual gaps between properties allow for views of important buildings such as the Church of St Martin;
- Residential streets feature a low roof height with limited variety of building height and roof types on each street create interest whilst maintaining the urban structure;
- Community assets within central Chipping Ongar including sports facilities, a library and community halls;
- Boundary treatments to properties on the residential streets feature vegetated front gardens, hedges and green verges which provide a verdant character;
- Variety of shops and frontages create a small town character;
- The varied development types, styles and ages along the High Street create visual interest and add to the historic interest;
- Views of the surrounding countryside from the edges of Chipping Ongar and elevated points over the low rise buildings; and Views along the visually intricate High Street.



Concentration of protected heritage assets



Commercial ventures on the High Street creating a small town character

Issues to be considered in design guidelines

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management.

- Poor connections of the cul-de-sacs stemming from the High Street;
- The urban texture of the High Street is sensitive to any future development that is unsympathetic in size, scale, materials, urban texture and varied offset from the road or lacks sufficient parking allocation;
- Recent rows of terraced houses or those with high, uniform rooflines e.g. Meadow View which deviate from the typical character of the area;
- Private or gated streets which are atypical for Chipping Ongar;
- Driveways replacing front gardens, green infrastructure and boundary treatments interrupting the rhythm of the street;
- Higher density of recent residential developments with limited or no front gardens, inappropriate boundary treatments, no green infrastructure and insufficient parking provision;
- Building line of recent residential developments close to pavement increasing enclosure;
- Inappropriate car parking damaging green verges and pavements;
- Car parks facing onto the High Street detract from the historic character and appearance of the area; and
- Contemporary developments with style, size, form, roof pitch and uniformity which are atypical for Chipping Ongar.



Atypical built form layout in terrace rows



Contemporary developments with uniform style, size, form and roof pitch which are atypical for Chipping Ongar

3.3.3. Marden Ash

Townscape structure

The urban settlement of Marden Ash is located to the south of Chipping Ongar, separated by a narrow strip of greenspace surrounding the Cripsey Brook and The Borough / Greensted Road. The settlement is otherwise surrounded by agricultural land, designated as Green Belt.

Marden Ash was developed around several large Grade II and Grade II* listed mansions Coopers Hill road, and a separate village to the south of Chipping Ongar. The village was extended substantially in the second half of the 20th century while Cloverley Road was developed in the early 20th century.

Marden Ash has a number of main roads passing through it. Coopers Hill / Stanford Rivers Road and Brentwood Road which divide up residential areas with internal residential streets. The main roads within the settlement are lined by residential dwellings. Their organic winding form suggests they have evolved from historic routes connecting Marden Ash with nearby villages and hamlets.

As shown in Figure 7 there are three residential areas separated by the primary through roads: west of Coopers Hill and east of Coopers Hill and between the Brentwood and Stranford Rivers Road. These residential blocks are formed of a network of winding, looping roads, long dead end roads and short cul-de-sacs. Dwellings are primarily arranged parallel to the residential streets (Kettlebury Way being an exception) behind front gardens and / or private driveways. Within the residential areas are a number of instances of infill development such as behind Cloverley Road or Parkland Way.

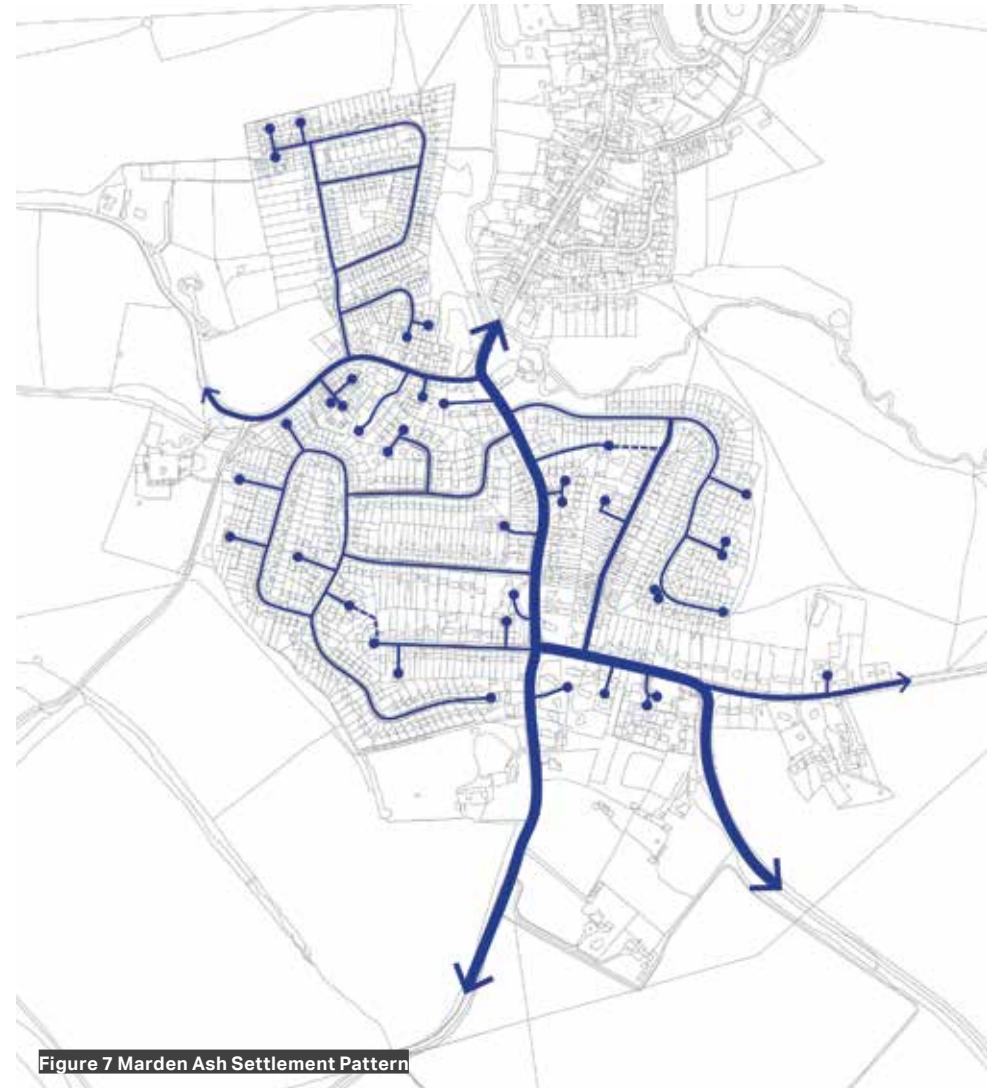


Figure 7 Marden Ash Settlement Pattern

Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

There is a verdant backdrop to much of the periphery of Marden Ash with views over agricultural land. Green verges, some of which are widened to accommodate shrub or tree planting along the streets and front and back gardens provide a large contribution to the verdant character of the area. The majority of the properties have small front gardens, most of which are partially vegetated while others are comparatively generously proportioned

such as Landview Gardens. The rear gardens are larger with a few mature trees.

Between Marden Ash and Chipping Ongar is a green corridor following Cripsey Brook which separates the settlements and creates an open character to adjacent properties.

Pattern and layout of buildings

Primarily the area features a variety of detached houses and semi-detached houses often with narrow gaps between each dwelling. There are variations between the streets, each of which typically has a prevalent form, and layout.

There are small rows of terraced houses in the recent cul-de-sacs e.g. the Borough. Jacksons Close also features a row of terraced houses and a far more enclosed layout atypical of the area.



Views over agricultural land



Generously proportioned front gardens on Landview Gardens



Dense grain of detached houses with narrow gaps between in new developments



Green verges with tree or shrub planting



Green corridor along Cripsey Brook



Jacksons Close - new development

Views and landmarks

Along the primary roads of the area the views are linear and framed by large trees or native hedgerows or by the rows of properties lining the street.

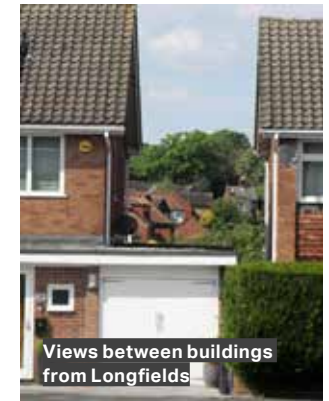
Within the residential streets views are primarily limited by the surrounding houses or houses on nearby streets creating a suburban character. Views along streets are occasionally interrupted by tall dense evergreen hedges. Glimpsed views between detached properties of back gardens, adjacent dwellings, tree canopies above the low rise rooflines and surrounding countryside are available within the residential area. The area generally has high natural surveillance. Many distant views over the low rise buildings toward Chipping Ongar can be experienced for instance from Kettlebury Way or Woodland Way.

There are long distance views to the east over rural landscapes with fields, parkland trees and wooded horizons from the open ends of residential streets such as Longfields, and where possible to the north towards the Cripsey Brook and allotments and houses of Chipping Ongar.

Long distance views over rural landscape are also experienced southward over the valley and to the west of the settlement.



Long distance views over agricultural landscape from the end of Longfields Road



Views between buildings from Longfields



Unmade road with lots of green infrastructure



Elevated views north from Kettlebury Way



Views along tree lined streets



View of allotments and houses of Chipping Ongar over Cripsey Brook



View of Chipping Ongar over Cripsey Brook

Boundary treatment

Along primary roads such as Coopers Hill a variety of boundary treatments are featured. These can include waist high red brick walls and tall hedges, sometimes elevated on embankments. Occasionally driveways and bin storage have replaced front gardens and omitted boundary treatments. In several instances boundary treatments are perpendicular to the road featuring hedges or planting which divide front gardens / driveways of semi-detached plots. Often along the primary roads the dwellings are elevated above the road resulting in either

an embankment before the front garden or a sloping front garden or driveway.

Within the residential areas there is a variety of boundary treatments which typically have an open character between dwellings with green verges and low boundary treatments; including low walls, low hedges, or open lawn with ornamental planting as demonstrated on Woodland Way. In some places properties have evergreen hedges which interrupt the open character.

Rear garden boundary treatments include hedgerows and wooden panel fencing and occasional high red brick walls

which are taller and more enclosing than other boundary treatments in the street scene

Some areas of development have a short setback from the street which gives the street a more enclosed character. The short setback either features a small front garden or driveways with no defined boundary for instance along Cloverley Road. In several locations there is a concentration of front gardens which have been converted to driveways such as Fairfield Road or Cloverley Road which gives a more urban character.



Various boundary treatments on Coopers Hill road



Wooden panel fencing rear boundary treatment



Shallow front gardens with on street parking along Cloverley Road



Green verges and minimal boundary treatments with an open character along residential streets



A concentration of front gardens replaced with driveways on Fairfield Road

Building heights and roofline

Building heights are typically two storeys but there are a number of bungalows scattered through the area with a concentration on The Spinney. Typically, the roofline is either pitched, hipped or crossed gabled and most buildings have chimneys.

Buildings typically have a regular structure, form and layout but architectural variations in palette and style on each block or street; for instance those along Milbank Avenue, Fairbank Close, Kettlebury Way, or Rodney Road. This forms a localised character and distinctiveness from street to street. A greater variety of architectural styles can be found on some streets; typically streets with older developments such as St James Avenue or Landview Gardens or along the primary roads which contain a number of listed buildings and experienced organic growth.

Contrast in age and styles can be witnessed at the end of Kettlebury Way where there is a thatched house located in proximity to a more modern brick house.



Repeating localised architectural style on Milbank Avenue



Repeating localised architectural style on Fairbank Close



Repeating architectural style on Kettlebury Way



Older built form showing organic growth on St James Avenue



Older built form showing organic growth in Landview Gardens



Listed buildings along primary roads



Juxtaposition of architectural styles and materials on Kettlebury Way

Architectural details and materials

With the rapid expansion of the settlement in the late 20th century, a wide range of materials and architectural details have been adopted in Marden Ash. Some of which do not reflect the typical design of the local vernacular. The more traditional materials and details are reflected in the buildings that pre date the 20th century development and often these have been incorporated into later developments. Architectural features include:

- Gable, pitched and hipped roofs;
- Plain clay tiles, clay pantiles, slate and thatch;
- Clay peg tiles and shingles (wooden tiles);
- Red brick, yellow stock brick and white gault brick;
- Render, plaster and weatherboarding;
- Timber frame;
- Weatherboarding; and
- Timber sliding sash windows



Two storey buildings with gable roof



Yellow stock brick with red brick detailing



Render Plaster and PVC weatherboarding on a 1960's home



Clay tiles and timber sliding sash windows

Land use, levels of activity and parking

Marden Ash is a predominantly residential area with only a few community assets: Chipping Ongar Primary School which moved from Chipping Ongar Town Centre within the last 30 years to the western edge of Marden Ash and St James's Church on St James's Avenue. There are also a small number of commercial ventures close to the junction leading to Chipping Ongar including a builders yard and a public house.

The majority of houses have driveways integrated into or replacing front gardens. In many instances the driveway leads to a private garage integrated / protruding from the dwelling. On street parking is also common, especially older streets with shallower front gardens which cannot accommodate a driveway e.g. Cloverley Road. In some locations there is damage to the grass and or curb where cars park on the green verge.

On the primary roads e.g. Brentwood Road or Coopers Hill, driveways are integrated into the deep front gardens.

Heritage Assets

There are 9 listed buildings within Marden Ash dating from the 17th to 19th centuries and these include three Georgian mansions. This illustrates the early origins of the village prior the 20th century suburban extension.



Positive aspects of character

There are a number of positive aspects of character which should be sustained, reinforced or enhanced. These relate to:

- Well connected to Chipping Ongar, Greensted and other settlements to the south;
- Within the residential areas there are generally wide streets with green verges, simple, uncluttered front gardens / driveway layouts, low boundary treatments, a sense of openness and natural surveillance;
- Gaps in detached / semi-detached properties allow for views between of back gardens or of the surrounding rural landscapes;
- Dwellings are largely consistent or sympathetic in terms of design, scale, density and roof style.

Issues to be considered in design guidelines

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management.

- Infill developments with cul-de-sacs reduce connectivity;
- Narrow streets lack green verges or have smaller / no front gardens creating a more enclosed urban character and are out of character with the settlement;
- Front gardens which have been paved for parking and have a more urban character; and
- Back gardens which back onto the street scene include taller more intrusive boundary treatments which enclose the street and are out of character.





Design guidelines

04

4. Design guidelines

4.1. Introduction

Building upon the character assessment, this section outlines the design guidelines applicable to the urban area of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area. This chapter is divided into three parts, the first (section 4.2) outlines and describes general design guidelines applicable to all of the urban area. Specific design guidelines are then provided in section 4.3 for each of the three urban character areas and collectively for the rural area covered by the four LCAs identified in the Epping Forest Landscape Studies Landscape Character Assessment.

4.2. General Design Guidelines

The general guidelines outlined below aim to apply to all character areas and have been derived from current urban design best practice. These guidelines advocate the use of context for design cues. It is context that provides the design process with elements that can make their way to a design proposal. In this sense it is expected that a design proposal will make reference to different design elements such as layout of buildings, building envelope, materials, building forms, colours, roofs and fenestrations to mention a few.

Reference to context does not mean to copy or use pastiche solutions. It means using what is around as inspiration and influence and it could be a contemporary solution that is in harmony with the surroundings. This guide will outline the elements that make an important reference point.

The guidelines below are a general approach to layout and other built elements that apply to all character areas.

In conjunction with an understanding of the localised area The Essex Design Guide is a widely adopted approach and should be considered. For further detail see The Essex Design Guide: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/>

Townscape structure

- Within the identified urban area, gaps between the settlements of Shelley, Chipping Ongar and Marden Ash should be preserved to prevent the settlements merging into one another and protected as green open space and maintain separate, distinctive identities.
- The settlement boundary around the urban area should be maintained to check unrestricted sprawl of development and safeguard encroachment into the surrounding countryside.
- Streets must meet the technical highways requirements as well as be considered as a 'social space' to be used by all, not just motor vehicles e.g. following the principles of "Home Zones" which use design, surface materials and spatial arrangement to indicate to motorists that "they are guests in a pedestrian environment, and should drive accordingly."
- New development should include streets that incorporate needs of pedestrians, cyclists and if applicable public transport users.
- Access to properties or driveways should be from the street where possible.
- Streets should tend to include gentle meandering providing interest and evolving views.
- Where possible create residential streets which either loop or connect through to other streets to improve connectivity and reduce the reliance of cul-de-sacs.
- Where cul-de-sacs are employed they should be relatively short, open in nature to increase natural surveillance and include pedestrian links through the development.

- Where possible improve connectivity, particularly non-vehicular, between the settlements.
- If practicable, incorporate gateway features to entrances and exits to settlements such as a decorative town sign or focal point.
- Pedestrian paths should be included in new developments and be integrated with the existing pedestrian routes.
- Ensure developments in Chipping Ongar do not compete with the The High Street that runs through the settlement in terms of hierarchy and commercial functions.
- Where possible maintain a sufficient road width to accommodate parked cars on the road so vehicles won't need to park on the green verge. Where this is not possible discourage vehicles from parking on the green verge by use of planting or in keeping bollards.
- Preserve a strategic corridor for a future bypass to decrease traffic concentration within the settlements
- Where possible front gardens should feature planting and maintain established structure of an existing street scene.
- Diversity of building types should reflect the surrounding streets; where existing development varies an increased variety of sympathetic proposed development will be encouraged; whereas, in proximity to streets with regular development sympathetically consistent proposed building types with subtle variation will be favourable.
- Sufficient parking should be integrated into the development where possible; either, in an internal



garage or included as part of a vegetated front garden to lessen the impact parked cars have on character.

Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

- Green infrastructure relating to planted areas and blue infrastructure relating to water bodies or waterways should be incorporated into any proposed development and linked to the existing blue and green infrastructure network.
- Development adjoining public open spaces and important gaps should enhance the character of these spaces by either providing a positive interface (e.g. properties facing onto them to improve natural surveillance) or a soft landscaped edge.
- Loss of shrubs, trees and woodland should be avoided in any proposed development. Any losses must be replaced and additional trees and shrubs should be planted where possible.
- Grass verges should be retained, protected and enhanced where they contribute to the character and appearance of the area.
- Surface water runoff from any proposed development should be discharged to ground infiltration via a combination of different Sustainable Urban Drainage System components (SuDS). SuDS components should be incorporated into the green infrastructure network to provide interest and increase green infrastructure benefits.
- Native trees and shrubs should be used to reinforce the rural character of the villages and sympathetic non-native species should be considered to provide biodiversity and climate change resilience.
- Front gardens, where these are characteristic of the area, should incorporate planting and where possible include a planted hedgerow as a boundary treatment to soften the street scene.
- Developments should incorporate greenspaces within them with sufficient surveillance from surrounding dwellings.
- Sufficient allotments should be provided proportional to the scale of the development.
- Planted boxes should be included in frontages along the High Street where front gardens are not appropriate.
- Back gardens should be sufficiently large to prevent overlooking of adjacent plots and where possible located adjacent to one another to develop ecological corridors.
- Street furniture such as seats and benches should be designed as an integral part of the street. Seats should be located in places of interest or activity.
- Traffic signals and street lighting in new development should be used only where necessary and should be grouped together in order to share the same supports.
- Historic street furniture that contributes to the area's distinctiveness should be retained and incorporated into new development.



Pattern and layout of buildings

- Density of dwellings should be preserved within the development so to maintain the small town character with glimpsed views to the countryside beyond.
- Development schemes should be designed to preserve and fit within the existing field pattern maintaining the hedgerows and rural pattern where possible.
- Proposed development should be sympathetic to the existing development patterns of the immediate context in terms of for instance; building size, building line and orientation to the street.
- In areas where neighbouring streets have a largely uniform housing type; proposals should be sympathetic to the massing and density whilst including Essex vernacular architectural design details to create subtle diversity.
- In areas with established architectural diversity, proposed developments should incorporate architectural complexity and avoid buildings which appear too similar so to continue the coarse urban grain.



Area of architectural diversity



Area of architectural uniformity

Views and landmarks

- Key views identified through a View Study should be protected and if possible enhanced within any proposed development
- Existing views within the area with heritage significance, to or from landmarks should be maintained and where possible enhanced.
- Views of surrounding countryside should be maintained where possible, particularly between settlements to prevent the loss of distinctive identity.
- Views of countryside surrounding and between settlements should be maintained to preserve the historic setting of the settlements, namely Chipping Ongar and prevent the merging of settlements.
- Levels of natural surveillance should be maintained or enhanced.
- The location and density of development should reflect the rural character and allow for glimpsed, long distance views of the countryside from the public realm.
- Trees and landscaping should be incorporated in the design; including back gardens to reduce views of backs of adjacent plots and create an in keeping verdant backdrop.
- Gaps between (and over) buildings should be preserved where possible to allow views of verdant background and maintain perceived openness of settlements.
- Proposed development should preserve or enhance views with an established rhythm such as an avenue of trees along a street, for instance St James' Avenue.



Building line and boundary treatments

- Buildings should be aligned along the street with their main facade and entrance facing it, where this is in keeping with local character. The building line should have subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions but will generally form a unified whole.
- Buildings should be designed to ensure that streets and/ or public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings. This can be ensured by placing ground floor habitable rooms and upper floor windows overlooking towards the street.
- Boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity of the building line and help define the street using materials or vegetation appropriate to the character of the area.
- The use of panel fencing in these publicly visible boundaries should be avoided. Also, boundary treatments which interrupt views along streets or which impair natural surveillance should be avoided.
- Front gardens should be included where this is characteristic of the area.
- If placed on the property boundary, waste storage should be integrated as part of the overall design of the property. Landscaping could also be used to minimise the visual impact of bins and recycling containers.



Building heights and roofline

- The roof pitch is an important local characteristic and should be sympathetic to existing traditional development.
- Types and materials of roofs should reflect or be sympathetic with the existing materials palette vernacular of the surrounding context.
- Scale of the roof should always be in proportion with the dimensions of the building itself;
- Monotonous building elevations should be avoided, therefore subtle changes in roofline should be ensured during the design process; particular consideration should be given along The High Street where roof complexity is a key characteristic;
- Building height should be appropriate for its context and not deviate from the existing typical building height of the location;
- Chimney type should be congruent with the typical chimney of the surrounding developments;
- Locally traditional roof detailing elements should be considered and implemented where possible in the case of new development; and
- Dormers and chimneys, where these are characteristic of the area, can be used as a design element to add variety and interest to roofs.



Building modifications, extension and plot infill

- Infill development could be integrated provided the design and layout of the new buildings respect the traditional street scene and character of the settlement.
- Replacement dwellings in historic locations, including the historic core of the settlements, should be carefully designed not to alter the character of the settlement.
- The mass, scale and height of infill development should be in keeping with the existing building line and surrounding properties as well as the surrounding area where the new development stands.
- In urban locations, extensions to existing dwellings should be carefully designed so not to alter the character. Reference should be taken from the local vernacular to determine the most appropriate proportions for the extension.
- Provision of secure cycle parking enables sustainable transport without cluttering the public domain. The design of cycle storage should be simple and the materials robust so that they require little or no maintenance. Where possible, new units should form a 'unity' with other local street furniture, including railings by using similar materials and finishes.
- Solar panels on roofs should be avoided on historic properties and within conservation areas. Where solar panels are to be used, they should be located to maximise solar gain whilst minimising visual intrusion into the street scene.



Example of private secure cycle storage



Example of solar panels minimising visual intrusion

Architecture

- Development should respect the character of each settlement and in sensitive areas, such as the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area, should use a similar design language and high quality materials to integrate with the surrounding townscape.
- Masterplans should reference elements such as materials, layouts, massings, forms, details, or colour palettes of heritage assets to reinforce a strong sense of place;
- Alterations and extensions within the conservation areas should retain or where possible enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- Alterations and extensions of historic buildings should respect the host building.
- Extensions should be appropriate to the mass, scale and design of the main buildings.
- Statutory listed buildings and their setting should be preserved and where possible enhanced.
- Innovative design solutions that complement and respect the existing character could be appropriate if carefully designed.



Architectural details

- Shop front design and signage / street lamps and street furniture accents on the High Street should employ materials, proportions and aesthetic in keeping with the existing features within the historic area.
- The degree of complexity and variety in roof shape and decoration should reflect the existing roof complexity, variety and decoration (or lack thereof) of the surrounding built form.
- Particular attention should be paid within proximity to the historic areas of Chipping Ongar where more traditional materials and details have been employed for instance timber sash and leaded diamond windows.
- Employing traditional architectural details should be considered in proposals particularly in feature plots or extensions to buildings which already feature such ornamentation.
- Replacement of historic and traditional features, such as timber windows and doors with uPVC and other modern non-traditional building materials should be avoided.
- Windows of proposed built form should be consistent with or sympathetic to the surrounding development's use of traditional materials, ornamentation, shape, form, size and colour where possible with subtle variations. Front doors of proposed development should be considered to reflect the size, position, degree of ornamentation and associated lintel or porch of the surrounding development.



Materiality and aesthetic of shop fronts, shop signs, street lamps and street furniture should be preserved

Materials

- High quality materials should be used to reinforce the local distinctiveness of the area.
- Traditional facing materials include red, yellow stock and white gault bricks, smooth rendering and black- or white-painted horizontal weatherboarding.
- Traditional roof materials include plain clay tiles, clay pantiles, slates and thatch.
- Materials for alterations and extensions within the historic core of the settlements should be of high quality and retain or if possible, enhance the character and appearance of the host building or the surrounding area.
- Natural, local paving materials should be preferred to manmade alternatives where possible. These can be used to reinforce the identity of different types of environment that can be historic and modern, urban and rural.
- Historic paving where it survives, should be maintained and restored. New development should adapt local designs to address new needs.



4.3. Specific Design Guidelines

This section provides a number of design guides specific to the character areas identified in the report.

Shelley

- Access and permeability between and from cul-de-sacs should be improved through signage and opening up of footpaths and cycleways.
- Consistent boundary treatments, ideally of hedges and low brick walls should be protected and enhanced. Similar boundary treatments should be encouraged in new developments.
- Loss of boundary treatments and front gardens particularly for driveways should be discouraged. If access is provided, part of the boundary treatment should be preserved and enhanced to maintain characteristic consistency of boundary treatments.
- Decreased off-set from the street should be avoided in new developments.
- Alternative forms of transport should be encouraged to reduce the demand for parking. Measures should be taken to discourage parking where it interrupts pavements and green verges.
- Opening up of pedestrian and cycling routes to form a network of accessible routes linked to improved crossings across busy roads (A414 and B184) and access to the countryside should be created in existing developments and connected to proposals in new developments. This should help to improve legibility and connectivity within Shelley and reduce severance with Chipping Ongar.

Chipping Ongar

- Connections with the residential areas running parallel with the High Street should be improved by: opening up footpaths and cycleways between the residential areas, by improving signage, and where required adding crossing points on the High Street reducing the dominance of vehicles.
- Speed of traffic and volume of traffic along the High Street should be reduced by introducing measures to interrupt flow and create a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Varied skyline and building height, characteristic of Chipping Ongar should be respected in new developments.
- Diversity in built form, materials and architectural details should be displayed in new developments. Uniformity should be avoided.
- Boundary treatments, building line stepped back from the street and front gardens should be encouraged in new developments away from the High Street.
- Views along the High Street and from the High Street out into the countryside, particularly towards Greensted and the Crispey Brook should be protected in new developments.
- Strategic green gaps between Chipping Ongar, Marden Ash and Shelley should be preserved and enhanced to avoid coalescence of settlements and protect the distinct character of each settlement.

Marden Ash

- Streets with green verges and front gardens should be created in new developments.
- Infill developments should maintain and improve connectivity by opening up new footpaths and cycleways and signage. Cul-de-sacs should be avoided.
- Boundary treatments should be retained and encouraged in new developments. The boundary treatments should be installed and maintained at a height level to reduce intrusive enclosure to the street.

Greensted and rural surroundings

- Development in the countryside should respect the settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and small villages, often with prominent historic buildings. Settlement boundaries should be conserved to preserve settlement characteristics.
- Significance and setting of historic buildings should be protected and where possible improved in new development.
- Vegetation pattern of strong hedgerows with hedgerow trees, small broadleaved woodlands and meadows should be retained in new development.
- Narrow rural lanes and footpaths, enclosed by hedgerows and trees should be preserved and used to inform infrastructure of new developments.
- Access and permeability between settlements including the three main settlements of Shelley, Chipping Ongar and Marden Ash should be maintained and enhanced in any development to form a network of footpaths and cycleways throughout the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

4.4. Design Considerations

This section provides a number of design principles and questions against which design proposals should be evaluated and should be used in tandem with the Essex Design Guide. The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively considering all the design principles and questions below. Not all the principles and questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment overview as to whether the design proposal has taken into account the context and provided an adequate design solution. As a first stage, all proposals should respect the following design principles:

- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form pattern or movement 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, squares and other spaces.
- Integrate with existing paths, 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 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, heritage assets, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other, to provide a safe and attractive environment.
- Ensure sufficient provision of parking spaces can be integrated into the development or that the streets have adequate width to accommodate the required number of parked cars .
- Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours.
- Positive integration of energy efficient technologies.

Following these fundamental principles, there are number of questions related to the design guidelines

Townscape structure

What are the essential characteristics of the existing settlement and street pattern; how are these reflected in the proposal?

Does the proposal respect local topography and hydrology?

What are the important features within and surrounding the site? Have these features including existing trees been considered in the proposal?

If located in a conservation area, does the proposal respond to the characteristics of the conservation area?

Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?

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

How does the proposal relate to any important links both physical and visual that currently exists on and adjacent to the site?

Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-de-sac models? If not, why?

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

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

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

Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

Does the new proposal 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?

How does the proposal effect the character of a rural or edge of settlement location?

In rural locations and edge of settlement has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?

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

What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?

Does the proposal positively contribute to the quality of the public realm/streetscape and existing pedestrian access?

Is there adequate 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 how will it be managed?

Have all aspects of security been fully considered and integrated into the design of the building 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?

Have the elements of a heritage asset which contribute to their significance been considered in the proposal? Heritage assets include listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, registered landscapes and registered battlefields

Does the proposal affect or change the setting and heritage significance of a heritage asset?

Views and landmarks

What are the key existing 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?

Where historically significant views exist, how are these respected in the design?

Have external views towards the settlement been respected in the design?

Are new views and visual connections with the existing settlement and surrounding area incorporated into the proposal?

Are new landmarks or notable entry thresholds to be formed within the proposals?

Building line and boundary treatments

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? Is it appropriate to reflect the adjacent scale or could a taller development be considered?

If a proposal is an extension, is it subsidiary to the existing property so as not to compromise its character?

Building modifications, extension and plot infill

General principles should consider including: environmental and energy efficient solutions, electric recharging points, waste bin storage, cycle stores and other storage.

Architectural materials and details

Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?

If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?

What are the distinctive materials in the area, if any? Do the proposed materials harmonise with the characteristic local materials?

Does the proposal use high quality materials?

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



Parking and utilities

Has adequate provision been made for car and cycle parking both private and public?

Does the proposed private car and cycle parking locations harmonise with 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 the bin storage facilities appropriate in relation to the travel distance from the collection vehicle?

Has the impact of the design including quality of materials and location of the bin storage facilities been considered in the context of the whole development? Could additional measures be incorporated to help integrate facilities into the development?

Have 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 integrated into the proposal and not "bolt on"?

Has the lighting scheme been designed to avoid light pollution?



Has adequate provision been made for car and cycle parking both private and public?



Delivery

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5. Delivery

5.1. Delivery Agents

The design guidelines will be a valuable tool for securing context-driven, high quality development in Ongar. 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.

5.2. 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.

6. References

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