GRAFTON UNDERWOOD

Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide

FINAL REPORT

October 2020

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
Jing Yuan	**Ben Castell**	**Ben Castell**
Senior Urban Designer	Director	Director

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
2	October 2020	Review	Alastair Wildgoose	Grafton Underwood Parish Council
1	September 2020	Review, site visit	Ben Castell	Director
0		Research, site visit, drawings	Jing Yuan	Senior Urban Designer

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1. Introduction

1.1. 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 Grafton Underwood Parish Council.

The Steering Group is making good progress in the production of its Neighbourhood Plan and has requested access to professional advice on design guidelines for future development within the Parish. This document should support Neighbourhood Plan policies that guide the assessment of future development proposals and encourage high quality design. It advises on physical development helping to create distinctive places integrated with the existing village.

1.2. Objective

The main objective of this report is to develop design guidelines that any potential development in Grafton Underwood should follow in order to retain and protect the rural, tranquil character and historical beauty of the area. The public spaces, as well as the built heritage, are also assets that the Parish seeks to retain and enhance. New development should not threaten the character of Grafton Underwood as a small, historic, linear village that is open to the surrounding countryside and landscape.

1.3. Process

Following an inception meeting and a site visit, AECOM and Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan steering group members carried out a high level assessment of the village. The following steps were agreed with the group to produce this report:

- Initial meeting and site visit;
- Urban design analysis;
- Preparation of design principles and guidelines to be used to assess future developments;
- Draft report with design guidelines; and
- Final report.

1.4. Area of study

Location

The Parish of Grafton Underwood is located in the Kettering borough of Northamptonshire. It lies about 5 km east of Kettering, 8 km south of Corby and 30 km west of Peterborough. The Parish shares borders with the parishes of Brigstock to the north, Cranford to the east and south, and Warkton to the west. The Parish includes the village of Grafton Underwood and a number of dispersed farmsteads. The nucleus of main settlement is located in the central area of the Parish and laid out along the Alledge Brook.

Grafton Underwood has a good local road network linking to Kettering and Corby, and is served by the A14 which bypasses Cranford to the Midlands and East Anglia. The nearest railway station is Kettering which has a direct service to London via the Midland railway main line.

Population

At the 2011 census, the population of Grafton Underwood was 146.

Figure 1: Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan area.

Local Character Analysis

02

2. Local Character Analysis

2.1. Introduction

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan area. Character assessment is used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a place. It is used to identify recognisable patterns of elements or characteristics that make one place different from another. The features introduced in this section are later used to inform the design guidelines.

2.2. Settlement pattern

The village is one of a small group of former estate villages. It has a linear layout, which was a planned settlement of the Medieval Period. The majority of the settlement is set to the east and west of the main village street which runs along the eastern bank of the Alledge Brook. Buildings are laid out informally along the main street and also along Geddington Road running westwards.

Entry to the village is mainly along the main street, Brigstock Road and Geddington Road. There are no distinctive gateways to Grafton Underwood as the rural landscape gradually merges into the village. The open space, enclosed by the Dukes Arms Farmhouse and Barn and Stable, can be recognised as a centre of the village.

There has been no significant expansion since the village was formed. The extent of the village today is almost the same as it would have been in early medieval times. Therefore, the settlement remains strongly linked to its wider rural landscape and fields.

Figure 2: Main Street

Figure 3: Brigstock Road

Figure 4: Alledge Brook

Figure 5: Geddington Road

KEY

- Conservation Area
- Road network
- Alledge Brook
- Significant open space
- Significant planting
- Listed buildings: Grade I
- Listed buildings: Grade II
- Important views
- Focal point
- Ridge & Furrow fields
- Footpath

0 100 200 400m

Figure 6: Local context map

2.3. Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

Roads in the village are narrow and meandering with irregular layouts. The absence of pavements along most of the road network reinforces the informal rural character of the settlement. Roads are typically enclosed by attractive, low limestone walls with hedgerows, grass verges, front gardens, buildings and mature trees providing a pleasing character.

A number of significant open spaces and their distinctive attendant views have been identified in the Conservation Area report. The most distinctive open space feature of Grafton Underwood is formed by the Alledge Brook, which offers a highly attractive green space framed by houses on one side and the brook on the other. It is well maintained, consisting of lawn with pedestrian routes and street furniture, accented by ornamental tree planting and enclosed by native hedge. Distinctive trees and groups of mature trees are present and these contribute strongly to the well-vegetated character of the public realm.

There are public footpaths from Grafton to Warkton and from Grafton to Slipton and Twywell. These footpaths complement the sparse road network and connects the village to the surrounding countryside.

Figure 7: The focal point in Grafton Underwood

Figure 8: Access to open space

Figure 9: Rectory Paddock

Figure 10: Streetscape

2.4. Views and landmarks

The gently undulating landscape enables wide panoramic views from the edges of the village towards the countryside. Distinctive blocks of ancient woodland, farmland, mature hedgerows and dispersed trees are present in views. Part of the landscape has retained ridge and furrow character. This contributes to the considerable scenic value of views of the open countryside.

There are glimpsed views of the village experienced from the countryside. Within the village there are a range of short distance views. The Grafton Underwood Conservation Area report identified multiple important views as shown in Figure 6. One of the most distinctive is the view of the St James Church. It is also a landmark that announces the presence of the village. Other short distance views are less distinctive and represent the uniform street character.

Figure 11: View to St. James Church

Figure 12: Main Street facing north

Figure 13: Main Street facing south

2.5. Pattern and layout of buildings

Grafton Underwood is a linear settlement. The form and extent of the village were formed in early medieval times. Buildings were organised along both sides of the Alledge Brook, which add a distinguishing character to the village.

Most buildings in the village front either side of Main Street in a one-plot deep configuration and back onto the open countryside. However some buildings are at right angles to the street so that the principal elevations face south. The predominance of detached and semi-detached buildings, at various building orientations, as well as attractive green spaces, enable frequent views into the countryside from Main Street.

The village has a mix of houses from various historic periods and styles. There is wide variety in plot sizes as well as building massing and setbacks that results in informal and dynamic building lines and façade rhythms.

2.6. Building line and boundary treatment

Overall, buildings face the roads and lanes with a wide range of setbacks. For the majority of 17th and 18th century cottages and farmhouses, buildings directly adjoin the rear of the pavement with no setback, or only have a small front garden or planting strip of insufficient size to include vehicle parking. However houses built in the 19th and 20th century generally set back from the street with generous gardens. In some locations houses are arranged in groups away from the street.

The boundary structure is diversified in terms of height, materials and type. There are low, limestone rubble walls, hedgerows and picket fences which are sympathetic in materials and size, strongly contributing to the rural character of the village. Low boundary features also allow for garden vegetation to enrich the streetscape. Open plan front gardens make the streetscape spacious.

2.7. Building heights and roofline

Grafton Underwood mainly consists of two-storey buildings creating a lower level of roofline, which enables the settlement to sit below the mature tree canopy and integrate it into the surrounding landscape, with the steeple of St James Church standing out as an easily visible landmark.

Most of the cottages are two storey, some with decorative brick chimney stacks, attics and dormers. Plain, steep pitched roofs are the most common, however cross-gabled and parapet gable roofs also appear in the settlement. The overall character of the roofline is consistent and creates a low settlement.

The village exhibits the widest array of roof shapes, orientations, fenestration, and materials – the most common of which are straw thatch, slate, and clay tiles. The dynamism of the roof line is reinforced by the informal layout of buildings.

Figure 14: Example of a detached house oriented to face the street.

Figure 15: The irregularity of the roofline adds visual interest in the informal and rural character of Grafton Underwood.

2.8. Architecture

The listed buildings within the Neighbourhood Plan area cover a 1000-year span dating from between the medieval period to the 19th century. The designation of much of the settlement as a Conservation Area is a recognition of the architectural diversity of Grafton Underwood, both in terms of construction periods and architectural styles. The Parish has 27 listed buildings and structures, including one Grade I-listed, the Church of St James.

However, there is a marked continuity in terms of materials with both the 17th century examples (Dukes Arms Farmhouse, Manor House, etc.) and the 19th century (Tudor Gothic former school and model cottages) both being limestone rubble, brick chimney stacks and casement windows.

Beyond the Conservation Area, two houses in red brick were built along Brigstock Road during the second half of the 20th century, which is the only extension to the village area since medieval times.

2.9. Land use, levels of activity and parking

Land use within the village is predominantly residential housing, with limited complementary local amenities including: the Village Hall, the Church of St James and the Post Office. Parking provision is restricted (in terms of space), due to the tight and narrow access roads around the village. The Village Hall also provides limited off-road parking at the rear. Village properties are generally equipped with off-road parking.

Figure 16: A Grade II Listed Building: The Manor House

Figure 17: A Grade II Listed Building: The Post Office

Figure 18: A Grade II Listed Building: Dukes Arms Farmhouse

Figure 19: A Grade II Listed Building: Orchard Cottage

Design Guidelines

03

3. Design Guidelines

3.1. Introduction

This section provides guidance on the design of development, setting out the expectations that applicants for planning permission in the village will be expected to follow.

The guidelines developed in this document focus on residential environments. However, new housing development should not be viewed in isolation. Considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, considering not only the immediate neighbouring buildings but also the villagescape and landscape of the wider locality.

The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural environment should all help to determine the character and identity of a development recognising that new building technologies are capable of delivering acceptable built forms and may sometimes be more efficient. It is important with any proposals that full account is taken of the local context and that the new design embodies the "sense of place" and also meets the aspirations of people already living in that area.

3.2. Grafton Underwood design principles

There are a set of design principles that are specific to Grafton Underwood. These are based on:

- The analysis of village character presented in Section 2 above;
- Feedback from the Grafton Underwood residents via the neighbourhood plan survey; and
- Discussions with members of the neighbourhood plan steering group on the site visit.

The following principles are intended to guide the design of developments and renovations:

- Patterns of growth and layout of buildings;
- Views and landmarks;
- Open space, gardens and public realm;
- Pedestrian and cycle connectivity;
- Building scale and massing;
- Roofline;
- Building line and boundary treatment;
- Fenestration;
- Architecture details and materials;
- Building modifications, extensions, and plot infill; and
- Sustainable buildings.

The objective is to provide a point of reference for design standards in Grafton Underwood. It is expected that all new developments and renovations will follow the guidelines set out in this section and applicants will be expected to demonstrate how they have taken account of them, in line with the strategic policies.

The Grafton Underwood principles are introduced in the following paragraphs.

3.2.1. Patterns of growth and layout of buildings

The Parish owes much of its character to the historical pattern and layout of its buildings and settlement. New developments should respect the particular building and open space patterns in order to contribute positively to their character. In particular:

- The village is characterised by a linear settlement pattern that should be retained where possible. Therefore, future developments in the form of in-filling within the existing settlement envelope are preferred over small or large developments spread elsewhere around the village. However, such in-filling must avoid blocking key views into the open countryside or important landmarks.
- New developments should respect the character and appearance of the buildings within the Grafton Underwood Conservation Area, the listed buildings, as well as those that contribute positively to the character of Grafton Underwood.
- Any new development in the countryside should be carefully sited to minimise negative impacts on the appearance of the landscape.
- New developments must demonstrate an understanding of the scale, building orientation, enclosure, and façade rhythm of the surrounding built environment to respect its rural character.
- New development should create a diversified building line which is used to shape views and enclosures.
- The layout of new development should optimise the benefits of daylighting and passive solar gains as this can significantly reduce energy consumption.

Figure 20: Informal layout of houses

3.2.2. Views and landmarks

- New development proposals should not be visually intrusive. This should be achieved through the appropriate scale and design including screening where appropriate.
- Scenic values and tranquillity of the countryside views should be retained and enhanced in future development.
- New development proposals should maintain visual connections to the surrounding landscape and long views out of the settlement. Development density should allow for spaces between buildings to preserve views of countryside setting and maintain the perceived openness of the settlement.
- Creating short-distance views broken by buildings, trees or landmarks helps to create memorable routes. Creating views and vistas allows easily usable links between places. New developments should be oriented to maximise the opportunities for memorable views.

3.2.3. Open space, gardens and public realm

- Development adjoining public open spaces and important gaps should enhance the character of these spaces by either providing a positive interface (i.e. properties facing onto them to improve natural surveillance) or a soft landscaped edge.
- Proposed green space should complement existing green space within the locality, to provide a well-structured variety of uses and facilities for residents.
- The public realm should be designed to be accessible and inclusive to all users.
- Public realm verges and/or front gardens should be incorporated with planting to soften areas of hard landscaping and built form and maintain sense of openness along streets.
- The specification of trees and other green infrastructure should be given sufficient space to grow. Species selection should be appropriate for each application and include a combination of native, to reflect local character, and non-native, to enhance climate change resilience, species.
- Street furniture should be used to define areas of public realm, increase functionality, safety and provide navigation. Materiality and placement should be carefully considered to ensure longevity and avoid cluttering the public realm.
- The village is served with a network of public footpaths. Opportunities to create or enhance theses pedestrian links with green and open spaces must be sought.

Figure 21: A footpath that runs along the Alledge Brook

Figure 22: Street furniture in the public realm

3.2.4. Pedestrian and cycle connectivity

Well-connected footpaths allow people to get closer to nature, enjoy a tranquil environment and do physical exercise through walking and cycling. The following principles should be set to protect and even improve the existing network:

- Footpaths framed by high fences must be avoided because they are unattractive and are perceived as unsafe.
- The various bridges across the Brook are a key component of the network of footpaths and enhance pedestrian connectivity in the village.
- Strategically placed signposts can assist pedestrians and cyclists with orientation and increase awareness of publicly accessible paths beyond the village. However, new signposts must respect the rural character of the Parish and avoid creating visual clutter.

Figure 23: Bridges across the Alledge Brook are a defining characteristic of Grafton Underwood.

3.2.5. Building scale and massing

- The majority of buildings in Grafton Underwood do not exceed two storeys in height. Therefore, new buildings in Grafton Underwood should be sympathetic in mass, height and scale to the existing context.
- Subtle variation in height is encouraged to add visual interest, such as altering eaves and ridge heights. The bulk and pitch of roofs, however, must remain sympathetic to the tree canopy, the local vernacular, and the low-lying character of the village. Another way to achieve visual interest could be by varying frontage widths and plan forms. The application of a uniform building type throughout a development must be avoided.
- The massing of new buildings should ensure a sufficient level of privacy and access to natural light for their occupants and avoid overshadowing existing buildings. This is important not only within the Conservation Area but also outside of it.

Figure 24: Local examples reflecting good built form proportions.

3.2.6. Roofline

Creating a good variety in the roof line is a significant element of designing attractive places. There are certain elements that serve as guidelines in achieving a good variety of roofs:

- The scale and pitch 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. Roof shapes and pitches must however employ a restrained palette on a given building; overly complex roofs must be avoided.
- Locally traditional roof detailing elements such as roofing materials, chimney stacks and edge treatments should be considered and implemented where possible in cases of new development.
- Dormers must be proportional to the mass of the building roof, be vertically aligned to the windows, and be of consistent style across an elevation.
- Front-gable and cross-gable roof can be used to add variety and interest to roofs.

Figure 25: Parapet gable

Figure 26: Cross gabled roof

Figure 27: Cross gabled roof

Figure 28: Open gable roof

3.2.7. Building line and boundary treatment

- Buildings should front onto streets. 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 facing the street.
- Natural boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity of the building line and help define the street appropriate to the character of the area. They should be mainly continuous hedges and low walls, as appropriate, made of traditional materials found elsewhere in the village.
- 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.
- The use of wood panel fences in publicly visible boundaries should be avoided.

Figure 29: Low limestone rubble wall

Figure 30: Picket fence

Figure 31: Low limestone rubble wall with hedgerows

Figure 32: Low hedgerows

3.2.8. Fenestration

- Fenestration on public/private spaces increases the natural surveillance and enhances the attractiveness of the place. Long stretches of blank (windowless) walls should be avoided. Overall, considerations for natural surveillance, interaction, and privacy must be carefully balanced.
- Windows must be of sufficient size and number for abundant natural light.
- Site layout and building massing should ensure access to sunshine and avoid overshadowing neighbouring buildings. New developments should also maximise opportunities for long-distance views.
- Consistent window styles and shapes must be used across a given façade to avoid visual clutter and dissonance.
- In proximity to historic areas, fenestration must reflect an understanding of locally distinctive features such as scale, proportions, rhythm, materials, ornamentation, and articulation. This should, however, not result in pastiche replicas.

Figure 33: Local examples reflecting good fenestration.

3.2.9. Architectural details and materials

Within the Parish area there is a wide variety of architectural styles and ages which contribute to the character and appearance. Key architectural features should be considered in future development proposals.

- Architectural detailing in development proposals should enhance the rural character and contribute to the sense of place.
- Any new development should use simple material palettes. Richness should be achieved through varied roofscapes, building styles and careful detailing.
- Featured architecture details should be introduced to new development in an appropriate and sustainable way.
- Any future development proposals should be based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment and demonstrate the local palette of colours and materials.
- Any new materials should be durable, sourced from eco-friendly, recycled and sustainable supplies when possible.
- Block and rubble stone is the character is most walls visible from points of public access and this should not change in new developments in the village.

This section includes some examples of building details and materials that contribute to the local vernacular within the Grafton Underwood Parish area, which could be used to inform future development. This list is not exhaustive and each design proposal should explain its material strategy and how it fits within the context of the area.

Roof materials

Straw thatch

Collyweston slate

Welsh slate

Clay slate

Parapet gable

Tall brick chimney

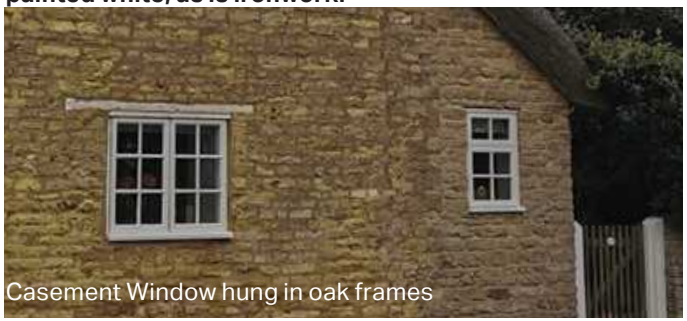
Blisworth Limestone rubble for building walls and boundary walls

Dressed stone is always Upper Lincolnshire limestone

Dressed stone for quoins

Dressed stone for window surrounds

Doors, window frames and other joinery are generally painted white, as is ironwork.



Casement Window hung in oak frames

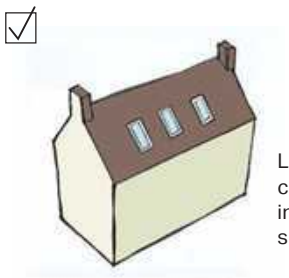
Casement windows in dressed stone surrounds

3.2.10. Building modification, extension and plot infill

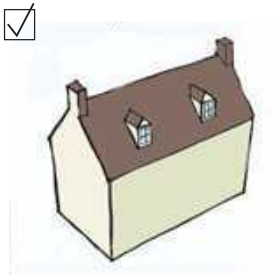
There are a number of principles that residential extensions and conversions should follow to maintain character:

- The original building should remain the dominant element of the property regardless the amount of extensions. The newly built extension should not overwhelm the building from any given point.
- Extensions should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling.
- Designs that wrap around the existing building and involve overly complicated roof forms should be avoided.
- The pitch and form of the roof used on the building adds to its character and extensions should respond to this where appropriate.
- Extensions should consider the materials, architectural features, window sizes, and proportions of the existing building and recreate this style to design an extension that matches and complements the existing building.
- In the case of side extensions, the new part should be set back from the front of the main building and retain the proportions of the original building. This is in order to reduce any visual impact of the join between existing and new.
- In the case of rear extensions, the new part should not have a harmful effect on neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing, overbearing or privacy issues.
- Many household extensions are covered by permitted development rights, and so do not need planning permission. These rights do not apply in certain locations such as Conservation Areas.
- Any housing conversions should respect and preserve the building's original form and character.
- Where possible, reuse as much of the original materials as possible, or alternatively use like-for-like materials. Any new materials should be sustainable and be used on less prominent building parts.

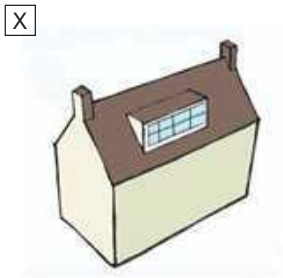
Design treatment in the case of loft conversion:



☑ Loft conversion incorporating skylights.

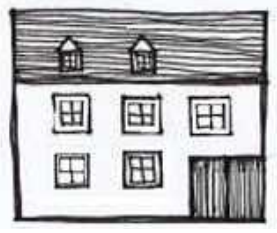


☑ Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.

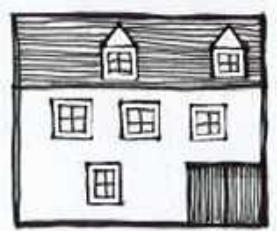


X Loft conversion incorporating a long shed dormer which is out of scale with the original building.

Original roofline of an existing building.



☑ Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.



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

3.2.11. Sustainable building

Rainwater harvesting

Rainwater harvesting refers to the systems allowing the capture and storage of rainwater as well as those enabling the reuse of in-situ grey water. These systems involve pipes and storage devices that could be unsightly if added without an integral vision for design. Therefore some design recommendations would be to:

- Conceal tanks by cladding them in complementary materials;
- Use attractive materials or finishing for pipes;
- Combine landscape/planters with water capture systems;
- Underground tanks; and
- Utilise water bodies for storage.

Solar roof panels

The aesthetics of solar panels on a rooftop can be a matter of concern for many homeowners. Some hesitate to incorporate them because they believe these diminish the home aesthetics in a context where looks are often a matter of pride among the owners. This is especially acute in the case of historic buildings and Conservation Areas, where there has been a lot of objection for setting up solar panels on visible roof areas. Thus some solutions are suggested as follows:

On new builds:

- Design solar panel features from the start, so that they form part of the design concept. Some attractive options are solar shingles and photovoltaic slates; and
- Use the solar panels as a material in their own right.

On retrofits:

- Analyse the proportions of the building and roof surface in order to identify the best location and sizing of panels;
- Aim to conceal wiring and other necessary installations;
- Consider introducing other tile or slate colours to create a composition with the solar panel materials; and
- Conversely, aim to introduce contrast and boldness with proportion. For example, there has been increased interest in black panels due to their more attractive appearance. Black solar panels with black mounting systems and frames can be an appealing alternative to blue panels.

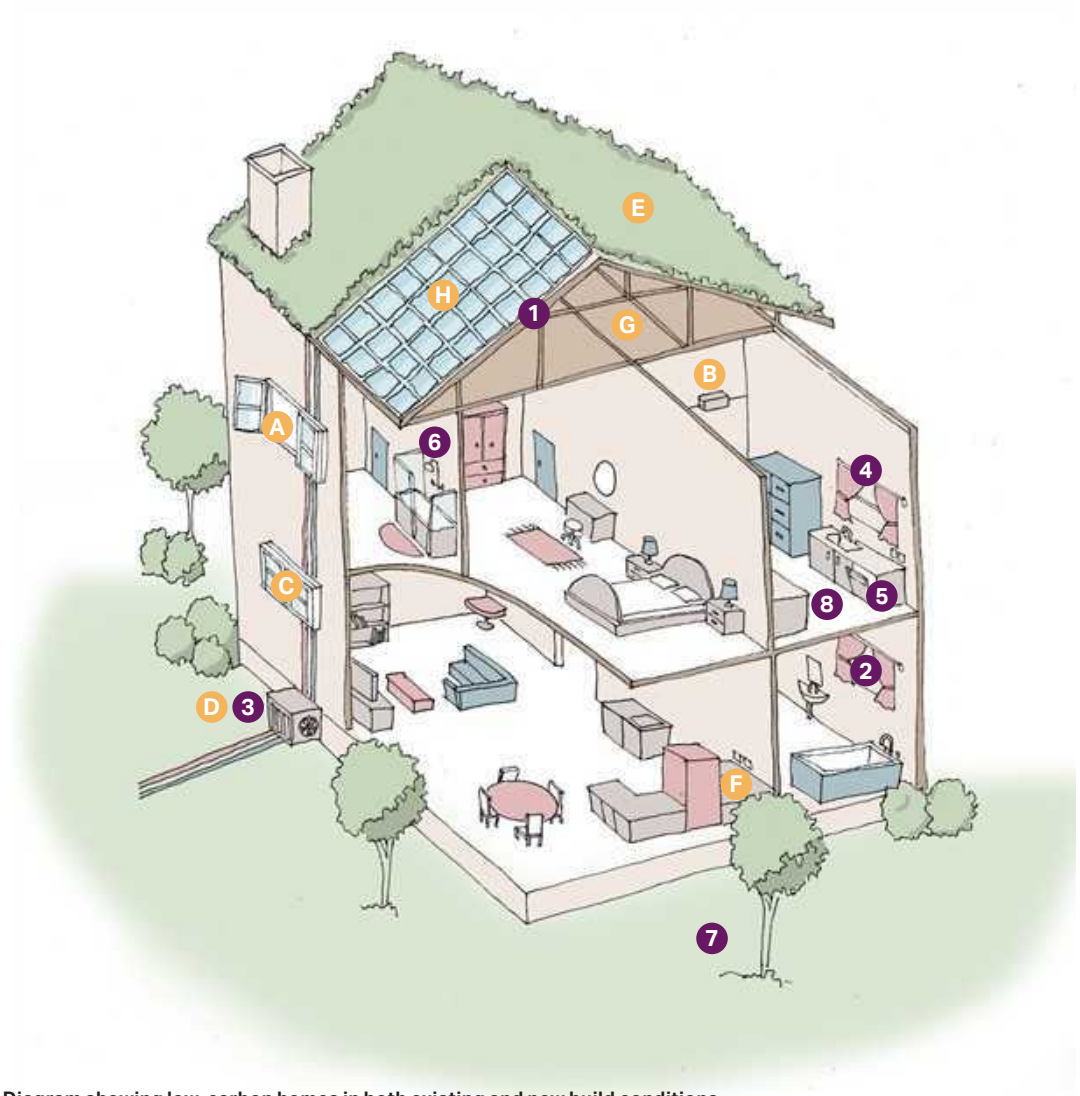
Green roofs

Green roofs are increasingly accepted and often can be seen integrated in new building design. Whether the roof is partially or completely covered with vegetation, their design should follow some design principles such as:

- Plan from the start;
- Easy to reach and maintain; and
- To complement (where applicable) the surrounding landscape.

Figure 34: An example of concealed tanks used for rainwater harvesting

Figure 35: Green roof combined with solar panels.



EXISTING HOMES

1. **Insulation** in lofts and walls (cavity and solid)
2. **Double or triple glazing with shading** (e.g. tinted window film, blinds, curtains and trees outside)
3. **Low- carbon heating** with heat pumps or connections to district heat network
4. **Draught proofing** of floors, windows and doors
5. **Highly energy- efficient appliances** (e.g. A++ and A+++ rating)
6. **Highly waste- efficient devices** with low-flow showers and taps, insulated tanks and hot water thermostats
7. **Green space (e.g. gardens and trees)** to help reduce the risks and impacts of flooding and overheating
8. **Flood resilience and resistance** with removable air back covers, relocated appliances (e.g. installing washing machines upstairs), treated wooden floors

NEW BUILD HOMES

A. **High levels of airtightness**

B. **More fresh air** with the mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, and passive cooling

C. **Triple glazed windows and external shading** especially on south and west faces

D. **Low-carbon heating** and no new homes on the gas grid by 2025 at the latest

E. **Water management and cooling** more ambitious water efficiency standards, green roofs and reflective walls

F. **Flood resilience and resistance** e.g. raised electrical, concrete floors and greening your garden

G. **Construction and site planning** timber frames, sustainable transport options (such as cycling)

H. **Solar panel**

Figure 36: Diagram showing low-carbon homes in both existing and new build conditions.

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General Questions to Ask and Issues to Consider When Presented with A Development Proposal

04

4. General Questions to Ask and Issues to Consider When Presented with a Development Proposal

As design guides cannot cover all design eventualities, this section provides a number of questions based on established good practice against which the design proposal should be evaluated. The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has taken into account the context and provided an adequate design solution.

As a first step there are a number of ideas or principles that should be present in the proposals. The proposals or design should:

1. Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
2. Reinforce or enhance the established village or smaller settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
3. Respect the rural character of views and gaps;
4. Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
5. Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;
6. Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
7. Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
8. Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
9. Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
10. Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
11. Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
12. Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
13. 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; and
14. Positively integrate energy efficient technologies.

Following these ideas and principles, there are number of questions related to the design guidelines outlined below:.

Street grid and layout

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-de-sac models? If not, why?
- 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?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern? Are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

Green spaces, views and character

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal affect the character of a rural location?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- 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 spaces be created? If so, how will this be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?

Gateway and access features
- What is the arrival point; how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

Buildings layout and grouping
- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?

Building line and boundary treatment
- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

Building heights and roofline
- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing, and scale?
- If a higher than average building is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?

Household extensions
- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, or does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing, or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In the case of side extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?

Building materials and surface treatment
- What is the distinctive material in the area, if any?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?
- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves, and roof been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Do the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?

Car parking solutions
- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?

Architectural details and contemporary design
- If the proposal is within a Conservation Area, how are the characteristics reflected in the design?
- Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties? This means that it follows the height, massing, and general proportions of adjacent buildings and takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features?
- 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?

Implementation

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5. Implementation

5.1. Delivery

The Design Guidelines will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high-quality development in Grafton Underwood. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the below table.

Actors	How They Will Use the Design Guidelines
Applicants, developers, and landowners	As a guide to 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.
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 complied with.
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.

Contact
Ben Castell
Director
T +44 (0)20 7798 5137
E ben.castell@aecom.com

aecom.com