

# Development Management Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)



October 2021



# Contents

1	Introduction
2	Design principles
3	Residential development in the countryside
4	Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings
5	Employment and commercial development
6	Extensions to dwellings, garden extensions and working from home
	RESIDENTIAL EXTENSION DESIGN PRINCIPLES
	GARDEN EXTENSIONS
	WORKING FROM HOME
7	Agricultural, equestrian, and structures in the countryside
8	Addressing climate change
9	Conversion of redundant and disused buildings
10	Landscaping and development
11	Shop fronts and advertisements
	PART 1: SHOP FRONTS
	PART 2: ADVERTISEMENTS
	Endnotes

Fig. 2.1 Minimum distance of 14 metres between a blank elevation and an elevation containing a principal window

Fig. 2.2 Minimum distance of 21 metres between facing elevations containing principal windows serving habitable rooms

Fig. 2.3 Distance Separation

Fig. 2.4 Example of windows

Fig. 3.1 Sensitive countryside boundary treatment

Fig. 5.1 Harborough Innovation Centre

Fig. 5.2 Landscape and planting at employment developments

Fig. 6.1 The 45 degree guideline

Fig. 6.2 Example of appropriate and inappropriate garden extensions

Fig. 6.3 Boundary treatments of garden extensions

Fig. 6.4 Boundary treatments of garden extensions

Fig. 8.1 Harborough District Emissions 2017

Fig. 8.2 Comparison of per capita carbon emissions 2005-2017

Fig. 9.1 Example of redundant buildings

Fig. 10.1 Information requirements summary

Table 2.1 New development principles

Table 2.2 Distance separation between different storey buildings

Table 5.1 Normal maximum parking standards (non residential) in Leicestershire (from

Table DG11 Leicestershire Highway Design)

# 1 Introduction

1.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides additional guidance to assist with the interpretation and implementation of Harborough Local Plan Policies particularly:

- GD1: Achieving sustainable development;
- GD3: Development in the countryside;
- GD8: Good design in development;
- BE1: Provision of new business development;
- CC1 to CC3: Climate change;
- HC1: Built heritage;
- H4 & H5: Specialist Housing, self build and custom housing;
- RT3: Shop fronts and advertisements.

1.2 Harborough Local Plan policy GD1 reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states clearly that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area, taking into account any local design standards or style guides.

1.3 Harborough Local Plan policy GD3 sets out for what purposes development will be permitted in the countryside.

1.4 Harborough Local Plan policy GD8 sets out that development will be permitted where it achieves a high standard of design.

1.5 Harborough Local Plan policies CC1 to CC3 set out support to development which adapts to climate change and helps to reduce the District's carbon emissions.

1.6 Harborough Local Plan policy HC1 sets out that development affecting heritage assets and their settings will be appraised in accordance with national policy; and be permitted where it protects, conserves or enhances the significance, character, appearance and setting of the asset.

1.7 Harborough Local Plan policies H4 and H5 apply in part to specialist housing, self-build and custom housing.

1.8 Harborough Local Plan policy RT3 sets out circumstances and considerations in allowing new shop fronts and advertisements.

1.9 This SPD will be taken into account as a material consideration when appropriate as the Council makes decisions on planning applications. The National Design Guide (October 2019) and National Design Code (July 2021) is taken into account and similarly applies as a consideration.



## 2 Design principles

### EXISTING DESIGN IN THE DISTRICT

2.1 Harborough Local Plan policy GD8 sets out that a high standard of new development will be sought in recognition of the importance of good design and built heritage of the District.



2.2 In appreciation of the existing quality and heritage of the District 62 Conservation Areas have been designated. The Grand Union Canal is also a Conservation Area.

### NEW DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

2.3 In order to determine the existing character of an area (and thereby understand the need for design to complement existing development), it is necessary to consider how the appearance of buildings is influenced by a number of key characteristics as follows:

**Table 2.1 New development principles**

Form	Relates to the layout and shape of built development
Massing	Focuses on the building itself (i.e. the solid shape or bulk)
Scale	The overall size of a building, in relation to human activity and its surroundings
Proportion	Concerns the balance, symmetry, rhythm and features of a building
Style	A collection of identifiable elements that relate the building to a particular epoch or fashion; 'the aesthetics'
Amenity	Have a harmonious relationship with neighbouring uses without adversely affecting amenity such as by way of overlooking, loss of light or over-bearing impact
Materials	Have a significant impact on the overall appearance and often have a role in visually binding together disparate designs

2.4 The layout of development including houses should aim to create a sense of place by relating buildings to each other in groups, having regard to site characteristics and the type of housing proposed. New development should not be viewed in isolation but should have regard to neighbouring buildings and the townscape and landscape of the wider locality. Judgements have to be made having regard, for example, to the viewpoint of those who may view the development from outside. Development layouts which produce a 'hard edge' to the countryside must be avoided.





## SEPARATION DISTANCES BETWEEN DWELLINGS AND BUILDINGS

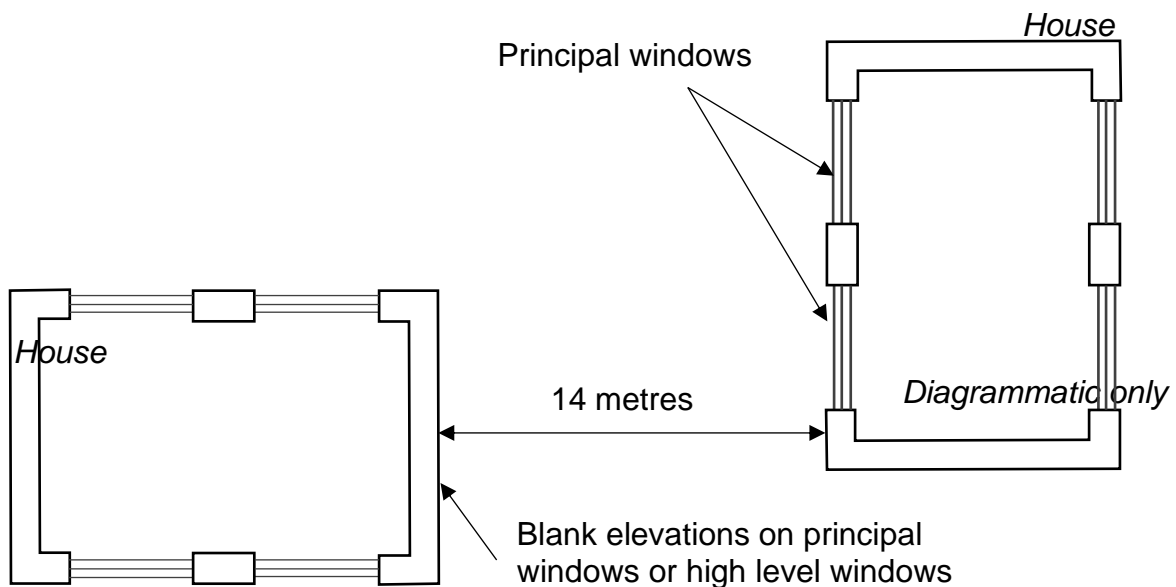
2.5 The requirements for daylight, sunlight, privacy and prevention of overshadowing for existing and proposed dwellings need to be considered. Where proposed development adjoins existing housing, the outlook of existing and future residents should usually be addressed. It is important that making efficient use of land is done in parallel with providing good residential amenity. Over many years the Council has provided guidelines on separation distances. Their successful application attests to their helpful value and relevance.

2.6 In general, the Local Planning Authority will require a minimum distance of 21 metres between facing elevations containing principal windows<sup>1</sup> serving habitable rooms and a minimum distance of 14 metres between a blank elevation and an elevation containing a principal window (see Fig 2.1 and Fig 2.2, below). These standards will be applied flexibly depending on the individual merits of each site and factors including:

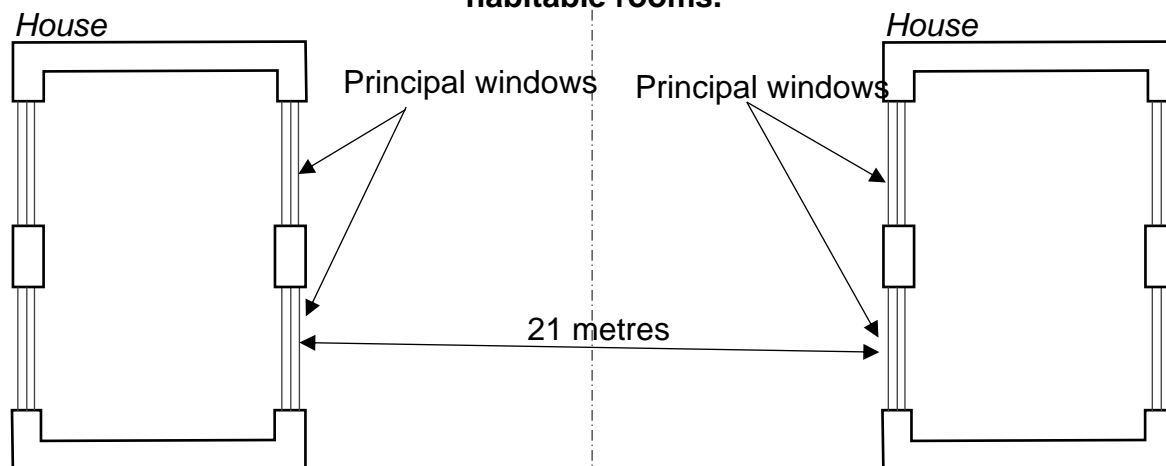
- building at a lower level than neighbouring property: The overall height may reduce the impact of an extension.
- Orientation and especially minimising impact of development south of neighbouring property.
- the existence of substantial boundary treatment: high walls or fences can sometimes mean that single-storey extensions will not significantly add to existing levels of overbearing or enclosure.

- window arrangements: where the room of the affected property benefits from other window(s) providing significant outlook or the window affected is 'secondary' within the room.
- Building scale: A different impact is likely from single or three storey development adjoining two storey building.

**Figure 2.1 Minimum distance of 14 metres between a blank elevation and an elevation containing a principal window.**



**Figure 2.2 Minimum distance of 21 metres between facing elevations containing principal windows serving habitable rooms.**



## **DISTANCE SEPARATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT STOREY BUILDINGS**

2.7 The impact of new building is also significant where it directly faces windows of rooms in existing dwellings and building of different size and stories. Table 2.2 below shows the distance separation standards which the Council will apply in such circumstances:

**Table 2.2 Distance separation between different storey buildings**

Ground floor windows of habitable rooms to two - storey structure	14m	See Fig. <b>2.3</b>
Ground floor windows of habitable rooms to three - storey structure	18m	See Fig. <b>2.3</b>

These standards will also apply between developments having the same overall difference in height e.g. first floor windows to three storey development would require a separation of 14m (the difference in height being one storey).

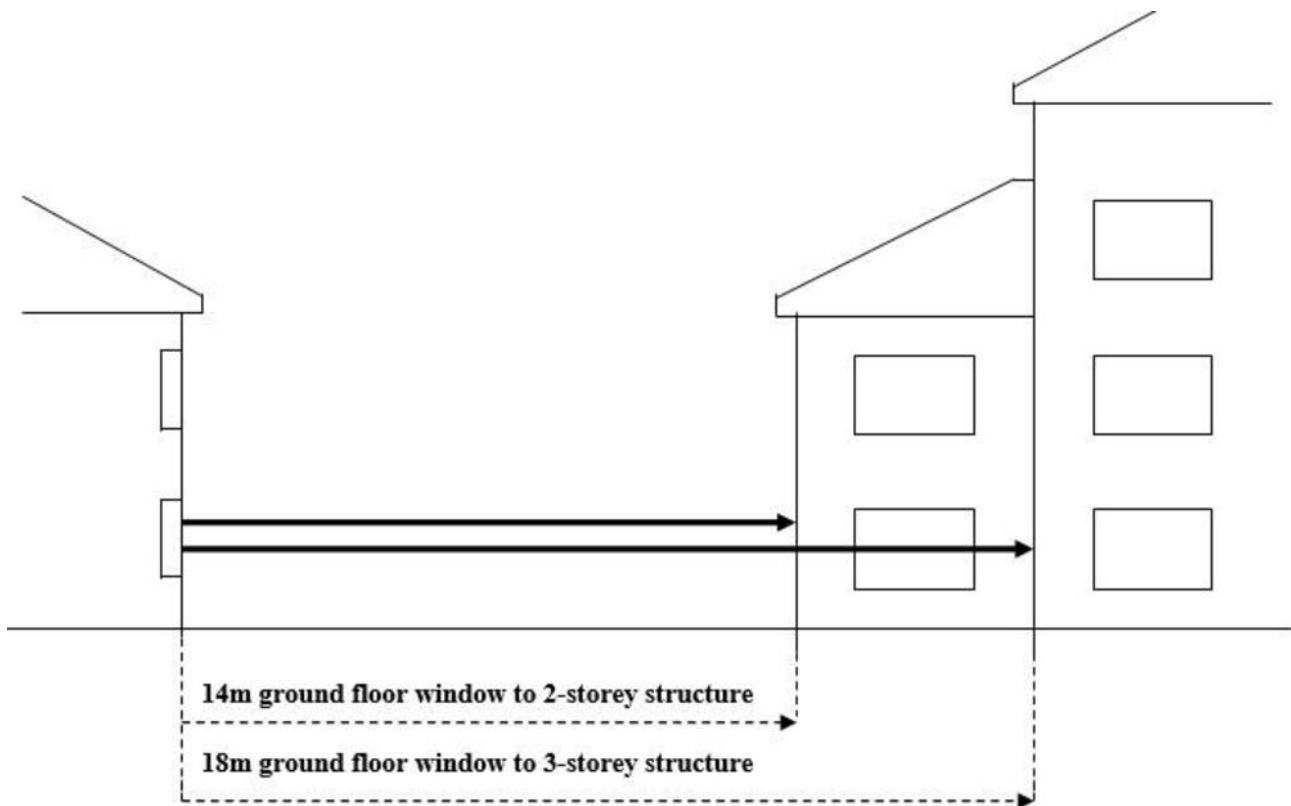


Fig. 2.3 Distance Separation

## OFF STREET CAR PARKING

2.8 The Leicestershire Highway Design Guide (LHDG) produced by Leicestershire County Council gives the normal maximum vehicular parking standards for development. The LHDG is a 'live' document hosted on the LCC website which should be checked against for any current updates.

2.9 Car parking provision should take into account:

- the control of on-street parking in the area;
- the development's exact nature and likely use;
- its geographical location;
- the standard of the surrounding road network and the traffic and parking conditions on it; and
- how accessible the development is using other methods of transport, including public transport, walking or cycling.

2.10 For residential development of 1 to 5 houses the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide gives the following standards<sup>2</sup>:

One space for each dwelling:

- where car ownership may be low, such as town centres and other locations where services can easily be reached by walking, cycling or public transport.

Two spaces for each dwelling:

- in urban locations with poor access to services and poor public transport;
- for three-bedroom dwellings in suburban or rural areas; and
- in other locations where car ownership is likely to be higher than locations that are better served by public transport.

Three spaces for each dwelling:

- for four-bedroom dwellings in suburban or rural areas; or
- other locations where car ownership is likely to be higher than locations that are better served by public transport.

2.11 Residential off-street parking should be close to the dwellings served to make sure that they are fully used. This will minimise the possibility of on-street parking problems. Separate parking areas which are remote from some or all of the properties that they serve, and which cannot be easily observed should be avoided. These can result in on-street parking problems and also crime, anti-social behaviour and maintenance problems which discourage their use and affects the overall quality and appearance of a development.

2.12 Anecdotal experience with some developments is that residents make little or no use of parking courts. As general guidance to avoid potential problems, remote parking areas if unavoidable should normally:

- be located near to the main entrances to the properties that it serves, with as short and direct a walking route as is possible between the parking court and the property;
- be secure, including enjoying good natural observation from neighboring buildings and not be surrounded by blank walls or close-boarded fences and so on;
- be well lit;
- limit planting to low ground cover only;
- be suitably surfaced and drained, and you will be expected to provide clear details of future maintenance responsibilities;
- have clearly-designated spaces for individual dwellings; and
- have open pedestrian routes to the parking area where possible.



2.13 Traditional buildings usually have garages detached from the dwelling, provided as ancillary buildings within the curtilage of the dwelling house. Such an arrangement may be preferable to integral garages which are a characteristic of estate development and can sometimes be out of scale and keeping with local character.

### **PORCHES**

2.14 Well-designed porches can enhance and add individual character to a dwelling. Porch design should be simple and the materials should be sympathetic to the dwelling and surroundings. Both flat roof and pitched roof canopies can be acceptable if handled sensitively. Canopies which are a continuation of the garage roof and large, enclosed porches to the front of the dwelling are often out of keeping with traditional buildings and should be avoided.

### **WINDOWS**

2.15 The size, proportioning, number and position of the windows should be sympathetic to the design of the dwelling to provide a satisfactory and well-proportioned appearance. The design of the windows and treatment of window surrounds should incorporate features that are a characteristic of the surrounding area (for example, arched brick lintel and brick cills). Over detailed window designs and large dormer windows should be avoided.



**Fig. 2.4 Example of windows**

### **FASCIA BOARDS AND BARGEBOARDS**

2.16 Sensitive brick detailing below the eaves is preferred to fascia boards. If required, the amount of fascia board used should not be excessive. Bulky bargeboards and soffits are a modern technique and are almost always inappropriate in a traditional or historic setting. Where fascia/bargeboards are used, the use of a dark brown paint is normally more in keeping and less prominent than white paint.

### **CHIMNEYS**

2.17 Chimneys are a traditional feature of the existing settlements and wherever possible, should be incorporated into design to enhance the overall appearance. Chimney stacks, usually rectangular in proportion and on the ridge line have always been important features on older buildings. Whenever possible the opportunity to create a chimney on

new buildings or building extensions should be taken even if they contain flues to boiler and heating appliances. The chimney should be integral with the house design.

## **MATERIALS**

2.18 Materials should generally reflect the surrounding buildings in terms of colour and texture. Excessive mixtures should be avoided. Red/orange brick is common throughout the District but the use of ironstone and render is also characteristic of certain areas. The selection of materials should be related to the character of the area. The roof material should be of a similar type and colour as adjacent properties and should complement the colour and texture of the walls. In dealing with applications, including discharge of conditions, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) may refuse any submission not complying with this guidance.

## **WASTE COLLECTION AND STORAGE**

2.19 The style and layout of the development should provide storage space for waste collection and recycling bins. Harborough District Council operates up to a three bin collection system and encourages maximum recycling from each property. To maximise this service requires a minimum storage area for three x 240 litre wheeled bins at a new build property. The standard (average) dimensions of a 240 litre wheeled bin are height 1075mm, length 580mm and width 725mm.

## **OPEN SPACE**

2.20 The layout of new residential developments should take account of the need to provide public open space. Further advice on the amount, location and type of open space may be found within Harborough District Council (HDC) document: Provision for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2015).

## **CRIME PREVENTION AND DESIGN**

2.21 Crime prevention measures should be included at the initial design stage of any development, be it for housing, shops, business areas, schools, play areas, open spaces, footpaths, roads or car parks.

2.22 Proposals should avoid creating isolated development, such as groups of houses, away from natural security and surveillance. Footpaths should be wide and attractive enough to use. This means that generally they should be short, direct, open to view and lit either directly or indirectly. Footpaths passing along the rear boundary of properties should be avoided.

2.23 Carefully designed and maintained planting can enhance the appearance of an area and used well it can also protect buildings and spaces. Used unwisely it can create hiding spaces and hidden areas.

2.24 Security shutters are rarely attractive. Solid roller shutters invariably result in a 'dead' appearance, attract graffiti and contribute to a hostile environment if repeated along a street frontage. Open grill shutters are more acceptable environmentally and enable intruders to be seen by passers-by. Unattractive shutters can deter the public from using such areas and the benefits from passing surveillance are lost.

### **SELF BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING**

2.25 As Planning Authority the Council has a duty to plan for a range and mix of housing to meet needs. The Government is keen to support diversification of the house building market and in particular those who wish to build or commission their own homes. Under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 the Council has a duty to maintain a register of those individuals and groups wishing to build their own homes- the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register ([www.harborough.gov.uk/self-build](http://www.harborough.gov.uk/self-build)).

2.26 Policy H5 of the adopted Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 supports proposals for self-build and custom build housing in locations suitable for housing. Information relating to the Council's Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register is kept under review and updates on the level of need for serviced plots, and developments that have helped to meet that need, will be published in the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The latest AMR will therefore represent the most recent published information on the need for self and custom build plots. However, as people can apply to join or leave register at any time, potentially more up to date information will be available from the Strategic Planning Team.

2.27 Where developers are required to provide self-build plots as part of a wider development, the minimum standards for a serviced plot will be expected to reflect the 2015 Act (further clarified by the Self-build Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016). This defines a serviced plot of land as a plot of land that has access to a public highway and has connections for electricity, water and waste water, or can, in the opinion of the local planning authority, be provided with those things before planning permission expires. The Council also considers that broadband connection at the plot boundary should be made available.

### **OLDER AND DISABLED PERSONS HOUSING**

2.28 The Council encourages early discussions with both Development Management and Housing Strategy/Enabling Officers for any application for housing aimed specifically at

older and/or disabled people. An applicant should also seek early input from other key stakeholders, for example Leicestershire County Council Adult Social Care, and feed their advice into the proposals. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on Housing for Older and Disabled People was published in June 2019. The PPG recognises that there is a range of different types of specialist housing designed to meet the diverse needs of older people, which can include age-restricted general market housing, retirement living or sheltered housing, Extra care housing or housing-with-care, and residential care homes and nursing homes. This is not a definitive list. The PPG notes that there is a significant amount of variability in the types of specialist housing for older people and that any single development may contain a range of different types of specialist housing.

2.29 The PPG also notes that it is for the local planning authority to consider within which Use Class a development for specialist housing for older people falls (i.e. C2 [Residential Institutions] or C3 [Dwelling houses]). The Council recognises the increasing diversification of products within the specialist housing field. Depending on the nature of the development which is proposed, additional information to help support the Use Class of the proposal may be required. This is likely to be particularly important for schemes where a range of housing types and/or products is being provided and/or a range of disabled and/or older person's needs is being met.

2.30 Harborough Local Plan Policy H4 is clear that well-designed specialist forms of accommodation will be supported in appropriate locations, taking into account housing demands and needs. It would, therefore, be helpful for proposals to include reference to the specific older and disabled persons' needs which are proposed to be met (for example, is it age-restricted housing alone, or is it targeted at frail elderly people, or people needing care). It will be important to show how any specific identified needs will be met and how this will be secured through the planning process; usually via Planning Condition or Section 106 Agreement. For example, if the scheme is seeking to provide housing for those in need of care, how will the need for care be assessed and how will the care package be secured. It will also be important to link the location and the demand/need, including setting out how the location of the proposed development will meet the needs of future residents.

2.31 The Council recognises the benefits of single-level housing options (apartments and bungalows) for older and disabled people. Similarly, the Council recognises that additional financial costs may be incurred with specialist housing, for example higher build specifications for particular groups - such as hoists or specialist glass, specific features such as extra wide doorways and/or larger rooms to allow for wheelchair turning, or the inclusion of treatment/therapy rooms. The need for overnight staff accommodation and/or



the provision of communal spaces, and/or disabled buggy parking and charging facilities within extra-care and other specialist housing developments may impact on scheme design and financial viability of the scheme. For a scheme to work effectively from a resident and/or housing management perspective, there may also be a minimum or maximum number of units depending upon the target group. Therefore, when negotiating the size, type and tenure of specialist housing, the Council will adopt a pragmatic and flexible approach if required, informed by evidence of need, demand, locational sustainability criteria, viability and deliverability/management needs, as appropriate.

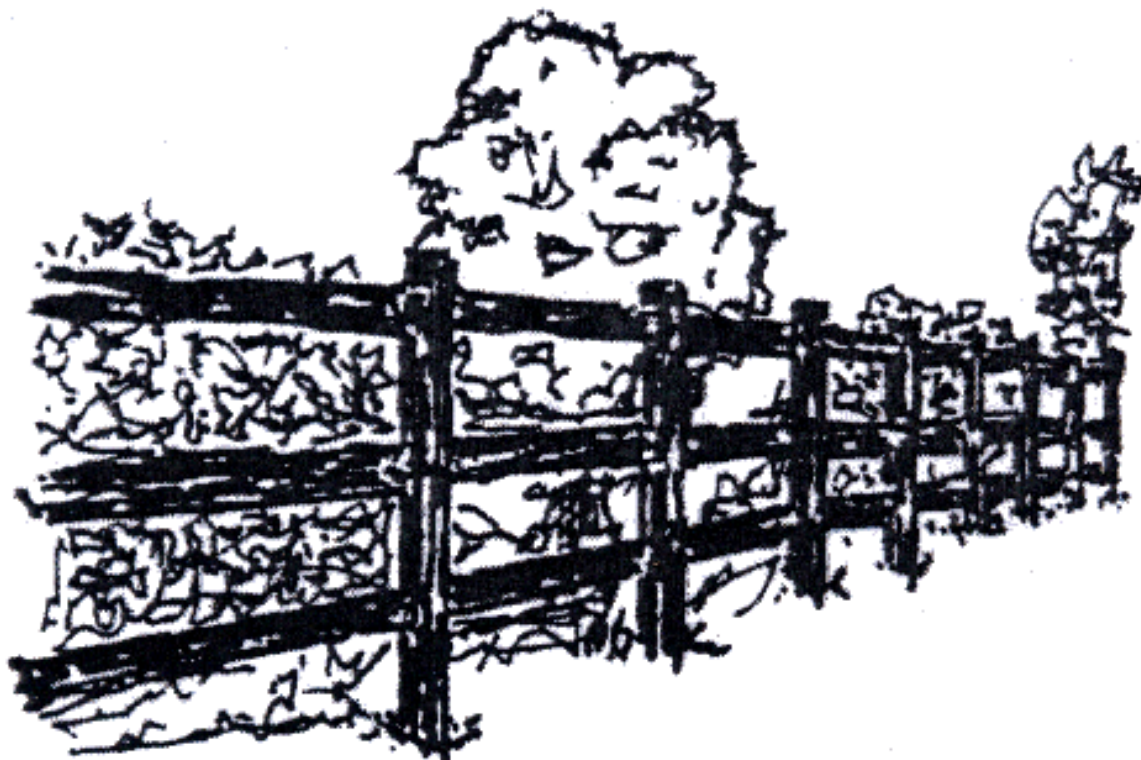
## 3 Residential development in the countryside

3.1 Local Plan Policy GD3 states that the amount of new development that can be carried out in the countryside in Harborough District, outside the towns and villages, is strictly controlled. Policy GD4 gives exceptional circumstances in which new housing in the countryside may satisfy planning policy.

3.2 There may be instances where special justification exists for new dwellings in the countryside. For example, associated with agriculture and other rural based enterprises. In these cases, the enterprise itself, including any development necessary for the operation of the enterprise, must be acceptable in planning terms and permitted in that rural location, regardless of the consideration of any proposed associated dwelling.

### **REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

3.3 Any replacement dwelling proposals must satisfy Local Plan policy GD4 and preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the countryside. In general terms any replacement proposals should reflect the size and scale of the original dwelling and not result in a dwelling that is disproportionately larger than the one it is replacing in order to maintain countryside character and appearance. The impact of any proposed replacement dwelling, including ancillary buildings and sensitive boundary treatment **Fig. 3.1**, if of similar size and scale to existing building is therefore unlikely to be more visually prominent or intrusive in the countryside. Any proposed replacement dwelling should be on the site of the original dwelling to reduce its potential impact and avoid proliferation of buildings.



**Fig. 3.1 Sensitive countryside boundary treatment**

## 4 Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

4.1 Local Plan Policy HC1 confirms heritage assets within the district, and their setting, will be protected, conserved and enhanced. The character of Conservation Areas often comes from the inter-relationship and grouping of buildings developed over several centuries. This includes the form and massing of the buildings, their design and detailing, and the construction materials. The inter-relationship and grouping also involves the spaces created between and around buildings, and the streetscape.

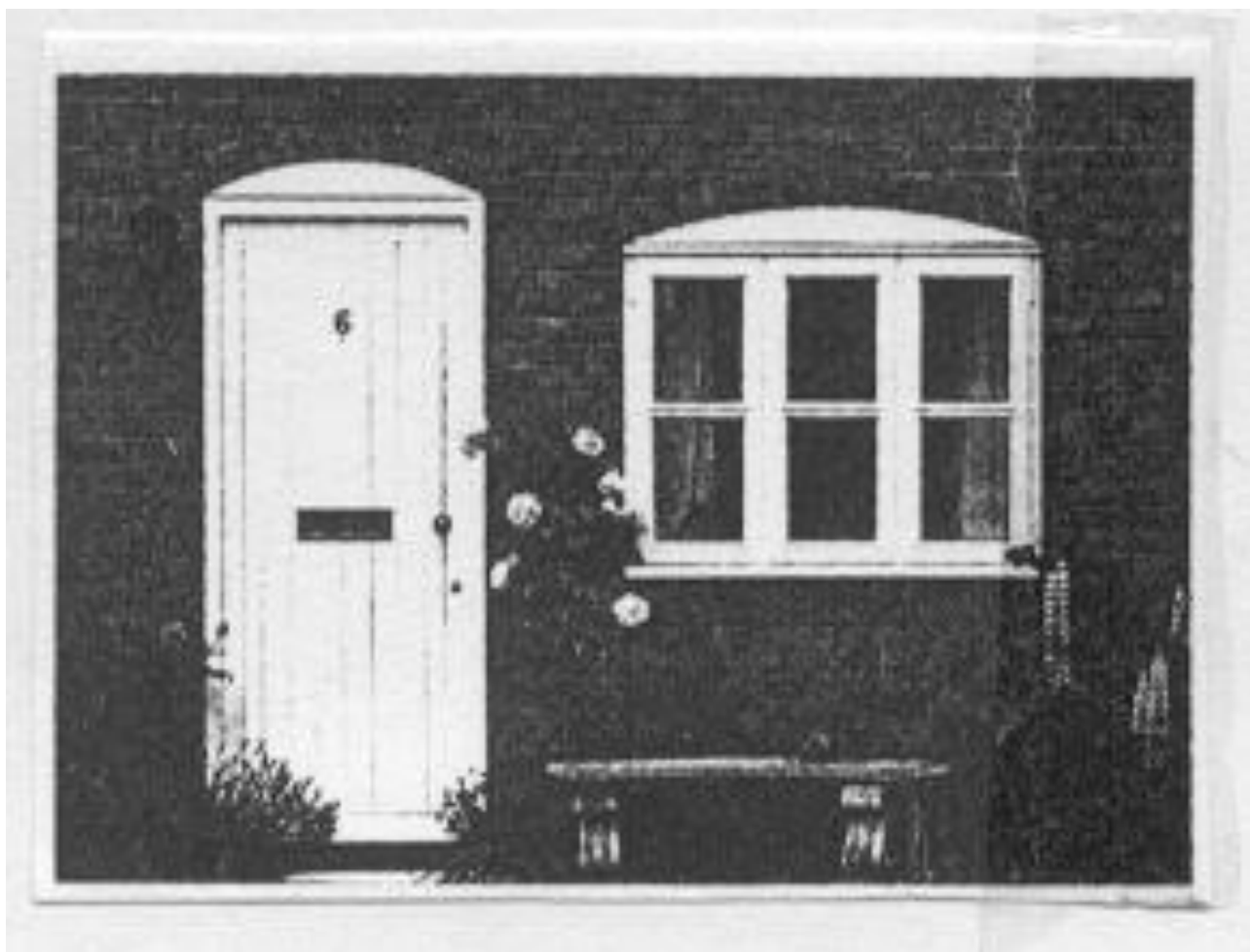
4.2 A heritage asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, and non-designated heritage assets.

4.3 All new development must fit comfortably within the existing built form. New build must respect the form and massing of the area, traditional building materials and the layout and form of the settlement. Where the form of the settlement is a continuous street line, then this line should be respected. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 section 66 & 72 imposes a special duty to consider the setting of conservation areas and listed buildings when taking planning decisions.

4.4 Many of the buildings which make up original settlements are domestic in appearance and use. They are often built-in terraces and sited hard up to the back of the pavement and highway. Their form is fairly simple with high pitched roofs in slate or tile, and brick or painted render walls. The use of ironstone is found mainly in the east of the District, with brick increasing westwards. Welsh slate is found throughout the District as are Swithland slates. A few Collyweston slates remain in the east. Many villages consist of a single main street having detached and contiguous buildings interspersed with terraces and groups of buildings. A church or churches form a feature of the original settlement and many villages contain open areas.

4.5 Attention to detail can do much to make a new building fit into its Conservation Area and / or respect the integrity of a listed building. Details range from the proportion of a proposal to the size of doorway and window openings, window cill design and the treatment of door and window arches, where the modern brick on edge design often looks

awkward and out of place. Double glazing on new build is acceptable, but the use of double glazed small pseudo “Georgian” panes is generally out of place; larger panes are better with double glazing, such as two panes per light in a two or three light window. Joinery details are significant. UPVC doors and windows often look heavy and clumsy and so out of proportion, particularly when replacing older windows designed for their buildings.



4.6 Within Conservation Areas natural materials are best. Real slate or clay tiles are encouraged to be used for the roof and a good brick used for the walls. Stone may be appropriate, but the type of stone, the shape of the individual pieces of stone and how they are laid are important. Artificial materials are not advisable for sensitive locations generally found in Conservation Areas. A natural material will continue to look good with time, whilst an artificial material will visually deteriorate.



## 5 Employment and commercial development

5.1 Local Plan Policy BE1: Provision of new business development confirms economic and employment development will be enabled within Harborough district.

5.2 When making an assessment as to whether a new or extended employment use would be appropriate issues such as compatibility with existing surrounding land uses (including potential impact on neighbouring amenity), access arrangements, impact on the character and appearance of the area shall be taken into account.



Fig. 5.1 Harborough Innovation Centre

5.3 Harborough district's good communication links and location make it a good area for distribution and logistics (warehousing) development. This is most obviously typified by the successful Magna Park off the A5.

5.4 The proportion, massing and scale of industrial and commercial buildings calls for particular care to ensure that they contain visual interest and relate satisfactorily to their local environment and adjacent buildings. The choice of materials and their colouring will be particularly important aspects in the design of such buildings. The use of dark colours on roofs for example can make a building appear less intrusive. Similarly gradated light grey and blue cladding has been successfully implemented at Magna Park on large buildings.

5.5 Service areas and other ancillary features should normally be bounded by screen walls and/or planting, and positioned adjacent to parts of the main building where their impact will be minimised.

## **LANDSCAPE AND PLANTING**

5.6 The treatment of the boundaries of the development will require careful examination. Wherever possible existing natural vegetation within and on the peripheries of the sites should be retained and incorporated within landscaping proposals. This is particularly important given that the majority of the employment sites are located on the edge of settlements in semi-rural locations.

5.7 Landscaping should be viewed as an integral part of the development and should complement building design. A high standard of landscaping will be essential to the effective development of employment sites. This should include both the retention of existing landscape features and the creation of new ones, where appropriate. Wherever possible suitable native species should be used and consideration should be given to seasonal changes and vegetative cover. Large areas of planting should be linked to open spaces designed to have some nature conservation value.



Fig. 5.2 Landscape and planting at employment developments

## CAR PARKING AND SIGNAGE

5.8 Car and cycle parking to be provided in accordance with Leicestershire Highway Design Guide (the current Guide to be referred to for any updates to table below) :

Table 5.1 Normal maximum parking standards (non-residential) in Leicestershire (from Table DG11 Leicestershire Highway Design)

Use	Normal maximum parking standard based on one space for every square metre (m <sup>2</sup> ) of gross floorspace unless otherwise stated	Threshold for applying the standard (gross floorspace)
Food retail	One space for every 14m <sup>2</sup>	1000m <sup>2</sup>
Non-food retail	One space for every 20m <sup>2</sup>	1000m <sup>2</sup>
B1 Office	Urban town centre or edge of centre: One space for every 60m <sup>2</sup> Rest of urban town: One space for every 35m <sup>2</sup>	2500m <sup>2</sup>

	<p>Rural town centre or edge of centre: One space for every 40m<sup>2</sup> Rest of rural town: One space for every 30m<sup>2</sup> Out of any town One space for every 30m<sup>2</sup></p>	
B1 Non-office and B2 General industry	<p>Urban town centre or edge of centre: One space for every 130m<sup>2</sup> Rest of urban town: One space for every 80m<sup>2</sup> Rural town centre or edge of centre One space for every 90m<sup>2</sup> Rest of rural town: One space for every 65m<sup>2</sup> Out of any town One space for every 55m<sup>2</sup></p>	2500m <sup>2</sup>
B8 Warehousing	<p>Urban town centre or edge of centre One space for every 300m<sup>2</sup> Rest of urban town One space for every 180m<sup>2</sup> Rural town centre/edge of centre One space for every 200m<sup>2</sup> Rest of rural town One space for every 150m<sup>2</sup> Out of any town One space for every 120m<sup>2</sup></p>	2500m <sup>2</sup>
Cinemas and conference facilities	One space for every five seats	1000m <sup>2</sup>
D2 (other than cinemas, conference facilities and stadia)	One space for every 22m <sup>2</sup>	1000m <sup>2</sup>
Higher and further education	One space for every two staff plus one space for every 15	2500m <sup>2</sup>

	students	
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5.9 Signage should be considered as an integral aspect of the design of buildings and the plot. Thoughtful use of individual lettering or other appropriate design solutions will be encouraged. They should relate to the scale of any building and surrounding and not create clutter from a preponderance of advertisement.

5.10 Whilst signs are an integral part of any company's corporate identity, they should not become dominant within the environment of individual industrial areas. The number of signs and adverts must be kept to a minimum to avoid confusion and clutter.

5.11 In certain circumstances the use of flag poles will be permitted, especially where they would add visual interest and vitality to the industrial area concerned. General advertisement hoardings, pillars and posters will not be permitted.



## **6 Extensions to dwellings, garden extensions and working from home**

6.1 Local Plan Policy GD8 includes criteria that development should be well planned. It should be, amongst other things, of a scale and design that would not damage the quality, character and amenity of an area. Extensions, outbuildings and garages should be subordinate to the main building.

6.2 The Harborough District is a desirable place to live. Harborough District Council needs to achieve the delivery of new development whilst protecting or enhancing the qualities that make the Harborough area so attractive. Development pressure and housing needs should never be an excuse for poor design.

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) stresses that “The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and the development process should achieve” and “Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this” (paragraph 126). “Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents” (paragraph 134).

6.4 The guidelines aim to show you the best way to provide extra accommodation and to assist you in getting the design of your extension right the first time. The principles in this guide are relevant whether you need permission for your extension or not.

6.5 As the District is diverse and varied in character, with many different types, styles and sizes of property, this guidance cannot reflect every individual situation. It does, however, indicate the most common planning and design considerations which should be taken into account by people wishing to undertake development.

6.6 As well as providing advice to applicants, this guide will also be used by the Local Planning Authority in the determination of planning applications. The guide will be used to resist poor design if necessary. This guide clearly defines what is considered to be appropriate in the ‘majority of cases’, leaving the opportunity and scope for innovative design. The guide should be used to assist you in making a positive change to your

dwelling and (if necessary) a successful planning application. All schemes will be assessed based on their own individual merit.

### **Garden extensions**

6.7 Guidance is provided on the main considerations that will be taken into account in determining applications for the extension of gardens onto other land. Such land is often in agricultural use and subject to countryside protection policies.

### **Working from home**

6.8 Guidance is provided on the planning issues surrounding the carrying out of various types of business from home. The guidance provides information on whether planning permission is likely to be required for a business to be run from home.

### **HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

#### **Do I need permission?**

6.9 Some smaller residential extensions and outbuildings to dwellings do not require an application for planning permission. They benefit from deemed planning permission under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), granted by Parliament (and not by the Local Planning Authority). Such development is often referred to as 'permitted development', or taking place under 'permitted development rights'. Further guidance and help is available such as [www.planningportal.co.uk](http://www.planningportal.co.uk) including its interactive house.

6.10 Even if your house extension or alteration does not need an application for planning permission, we always want to encourage good design.

6.11 Good design is important and can enhance the value and saleability of your property and this guide can help you to achieve that.

6.12 Further information on planning permission and permitted development rights can be found on the Government's Interactive Planning Portal website: [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

6.13 If your development does NOT come under 'permitted development' then you will need to apply for planning permission. This can be submitted online through the Planning Portal or by downloading the relevant forms from our website:  
<https://www.harborough.gov.uk/planning>

## **PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT AND CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS**

6.14 As indicated above, under Permitted Development legislation you can undertake certain extensions and other development to your house without needing to apply for planning permission.

6.15 Permitted development rights do not relate to flats or maisonettes, except for the installation of solar panels. Commercial properties have different permitted development rights to residential dwellings.

6.16 If you wish to obtain formal confirmation that your proposal does not require an application for planning permission you can submit an application for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) to the Local Planning Authority:

[https://www.harborough.gov.uk/info/20001/planning\\_applications/9/when\\_planning\\_permission\\_is\\_needed/3](https://www.harborough.gov.uk/info/20001/planning_applications/9/when_planning_permission_is_needed/3)

## **TALKING TO YOUR NEIGHBOURS**

6.17 Before applying for planning permission it is a good idea to speak to your neighbours or other interested parties. This can resolve any potential issues or conflicts at an early stage. It can also help to reduce the number of objections made to a planning application.

## **OTHER CONSENTS AND REGULATIONS**

6.18 Other consents and/or specialist advice may also be required before any works are undertaken. For example and not exhaustively, this can include consent in relation to:

- a. Listed Buildings;
- b. Conservation Areas;
- c. Building Regulations.

### **a. Listed Buildings**

6.19 Any (internal or external) work that has an impact on the special interest of a listed building requires Listed Building Consent. The fact that the work may be permitted development (does not require an application for planning permission) does not negate the need to obtain Listed Building Consent.

6.20 Special care and attention is required when extending, altering or repairing a listed building. You should always ask a heritage professional for specialist advice. In addition, for further advice you can contact the Conservation Officer at Harborough District Council and we strongly advise you to discuss your proposals with the planning department at an early stage via the Council's pre-application planning service: [planning@harborough.gov.uk](mailto:planning@harborough.gov.uk)

6.21 We will look at the proposal in terms of its impact on the building's special interest and the impact on its setting (which may include any curtilage listed outbuildings, walls and structures), which will be different in each case.

6.22 You can check if your building is listed by searching the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) here: [www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list)

### **b. Conservation Areas**

6.23 If you live in a conservation area then a number of extra restrictions on development may apply.

6.24 Planning permission is required for the following in all conservation areas:

- Insertion of dormers to a roof slope;
- Installation of satellite dishes on a wall fronting a highway;
- Any chimney, or building of more than 15 metres in height;
- cladding of any part of the exterior of the dwellinghouse with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles;
- Demolition of a boundary treatment (e.g., wall) which is more than 1 metre high adjacent to a public highway.

### **c. Building Regulations**

6.25 Most building work will also need Building Regulations approval, which relates to the building and safety aspects of development.

6.26 This is to ensure that building work meets the minimum standards contained in the Building Regulations; for example including structural safety, fire safety, drainage measures and thermal insulation requirements.

6.27 For further details please visit our Building Control webpage:

<https://www.harborough.gov.uk/building-control>

## **RESIDENTIAL EXTENSION DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

6.28 The Council seeks a high standard of design to house extensions and alterations, to ensure that proposed new work is appropriate to the character and appearance of an existing property and to the streetscene and landscape around the property. Design Principles set out at 2 Design principles of this SPD should be adhered to and the following guidance.

## **Form**

6.29 Any proposed development should be positioned so that it does not dominate the streetscene. It should complement the existing house.

6.30 New extensions should generally respect building lines and the pattern of buildings and spaces in a locality.

6.31 The loss of space between properties can create the impression of a continuous building frontage, leading to what is known as a 'terracing effect'. This can harm the character and appearance of the streetscene. Where there may be scope for a side extension to a property, generally this should not alter the character of an area by creating an impression of a continuous building frontage facing the street.

6.32 Creating and maintaining a meaningful 'gap' between properties will often help to reduce the terracing effect created by buildings being too close together. Creating a gap by setting away from boundaries, and/or by setting back and/or setting down an extension can all help to minimise the extent to which an extension results in a continuous and unbroken frontage and roofscape.

6.33 In some instances, it may not be possible to design an acceptable extension due to the sensitivity of the site, limited space, or the relationship with neighbouring houses and gardens.

## **Massing and Scale**

6.34 The scale of an extension should be subordinate to, and/or harmonious with, the existing building. An extension should not dominate or subsume the original dwelling if this results in an undesirable visual affect, particularly at the front of a dwelling where this will have an impact on the streetscene.

6.35 An extension should not harm the amenities of neighbouring properties by being dominant or overbearing, by leading to a harmful sense of enclosure, or by causing excessive loss-of-light or loss of privacy.

6.36 Along with the positioning of walls, the roof is a key feature that defines the shape and massing of a building. Extensions should have a roof that is in keeping with the character of the existing building. Flat roofs on two storey extensions will usually be unacceptable where they are visible from the public realm (e.g., streets and public rights of way). Flat roofs are more likely to be acceptable on single storey extensions, but this depends on location and visibility – for example, a single storey flat roof extension that is publically visible on a character property in a conservation area may not be acceptable.

## **Proportions, Style and Materials**

### **Proportions**

6.37 Proportions should generally respect and reinforce those of the existing building in order to appear harmonious.

### **Architectural detailing**

6.38 The architectural style and detailing found on a residential house often contributes to its individual character and appearance and, in turn, to the character and appearance of the street scene and locality. Dwellinghouse development should, where appropriate, reflect architectural detailing on the existing building. Such detailing could include, but is not limited to, decorative brick or stone plinths, dentil courses and corbelling, cills and lintels, quoins, barge boards, fascias, decorative tiling and finials.

6.39 Innovative or interesting designs of good architectural merit which address the objectives of the guidance and enhance the design and character of the building are also encouraged.

### **Windows and doors**

6.40 When introducing new window openings (including rooflights) or doors, careful attention must be given to their sizes, proportions and styles, as well as the materials used.

6.41 In general, all windows or doors should be the same as the existing windows or doors, or complementary to them. The positioning of windows or doors within an elevation should 'line up' with existing openings – have a balanced spacing, proportional widths and aligned sill and lintel heights.

6.42 The installation of new openings should not compromise a neighbour's residential privacy by introducing high levels of overlooking. Therefore, habitable room windows, roof terraces, balconies (including Juliet balconies) that significantly compromise residential privacy will not be permitted. The use of obscure glazing to avoid overlooking may be permitted when used in non-habitable rooms but should be avoided for a primary window in a habitable room (e.g. a bedroom).

### **Materials and finishes**

6.43 To ensure that an extension does not detract from the appearance of a house and the character of the local area, it should be constructed from building materials that match or complement the main building.



6.44 In some instances, materials and finishes that are different to the original property may be acceptable, for example, where they are of high quality, complement the original materials, provide an interesting contrast and are well suited to the site context.

### **NEIGHBOURING AMENITY IMPACTS**

6.45 It is important to make sure that your extension or alteration does not adversely affect the amenity of your neighbours.

6.46 There are three main ways that development can impact on neighbouring properties:

- a. Loss of privacy
- b. Loss of light (both in terms of direct sunlight and overall daylight levels)
- c. Overbearing – a sense of being overly enclosed, hemmed in, walled in by oppressive building work.

#### **a. Loss of privacy**

6.47 Your extension should not result in significant loss of privacy to neighbouring dwellings and gardens, specifically habitable room windows and key outdoor garden areas. In general terms, the more direct the angle of overlooking and the closer the overlooking relationship, the more harmful it is likely to be.

6.48 Generally, the most sensitive garden area is the private rear garden, in particular that which is immediately outside the rear windows/doors to a house. These are often patio areas. In large gardens, the entire garden is usually not equally attributed the same degree of protection from overlooking. However, there is not one fixed rule as a neighbour may have invested in an important amenity space or facility at the top of their garden, such as a summer house or swimming pool. This can affect how harmful it may be to introduce overlooking.

#### **b. Loss of light (daylight & sunlight)**

6.49 Care should be taken in the design of new residential extensions and alterations to ensure that adequate levels of natural light and sunlight can be achieved to both existing and new buildings.

6.50 Your extension must not significantly reduce the amount of daylight and sunlight available to neighbouring properties, specifically habitable room windows and key outdoor garden areas.

### **c. Overbearing - The 45 degree guideline**

6.51 Where buildings are located adjacent or close to one another, the 45 degree guideline is a useful tool for assessing whether a significant loss of light or overbearing impact to neighbours might result from a development proposal. This guideline is generally applied to neighbouring windows which serve habitable rooms, both at ground floor and above, as they may relate to a proposed extension (be that extension single or double storey and to the front, side and/or rear).

How to use the 45 degree guideline?

1. Locate the mid-point of the nearest window (or patio doors or bi-fold doors) serving a habitable room in the neighbouring property;
2. Draw a line from the mid-point of the window at an angle of 45 degrees towards the proposed development (on an overhead plan, e.g., proposed site layout plan);
3. Does the proposed extension cut across this line?

6.52 If an extension interrupts the 45 degree line, this indicates that the proposal is likely to cause significant harm to the neighbouring property in terms of loss of light (and perhaps also overbearing). A proposal which breaches a 45 degree line is more likely to be refused. However, sometimes proposals which do not breach a 45 degree line may still result in an unacceptable amount of loss of light and/or overbearing to neighbouring property and also be refused.



- ✓ Extension which sits WITHIN the 45 degree line (as above) is likely to be acceptable.
- ✗ Extension which sits outside/overlaps the 45 degree line is likely to cause overshadowing and have adverse impact on the neighbouring property.

Fig. 6.1 The 45 degree guideline

6.53 However, the degree of impact on other aspects of the property must also be considered in the balance, for example outdoor amenity spaces. If a large amount of key outdoor amenity space sits within a 45 degree line (and would be subject to significant loss of light and/or overbearing) a proposal may also be resisted.

6.54 Other factors affect the level of impact which an extension may have in terms of loss-of-light, for example:

- Orientation in relation to the sun path (generally east to south to west);
- Levels;
- Permanent boundary treatments (including what could be erected under Permitted Development rights);
- Foliage, particularly protected trees (trees in conservation areas which are worthy of retention and trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders);
- Distance separation along the 45 degree line;
- The design of the extension. For example, lowered eaves and hipped roofs are likely to have less impact;
- Materials – darker materials absorb more light than lighter materials;
- A balanced assessment of cumulative amenity impacts, including overbearing and loss of privacy, on all neighbouring windows and outdoor amenity spaces.

## **FORM OF EXTENSIONS**

- a. Front extensions
- b. Rear extensions
- c. Side extensions
- d. Roof extensions and alterations
- e. Garages and other outbuildings

### **a. Front extensions**

6.55 Front elevations are the most important components in defining the character and appearance of a street scene. Any extension proposed to the front of a house, especially those that project forward of an established building line, should be designed to make a positive contribution to improving the character and appearance of the street scene.

6.56 Streets are often characterised by a common design based upon the repetition of an architectural style and/or a setting which establishes a distinctive building rhythm. Unless a front extension is small enough to be absorbed within the design of the building and the

street scene as a whole it will rarely be visually acceptable as it will interrupt this rhythm and have a detrimental impact on the character of the street.

#### Porches: Front

6.57 Adding a porch can have a significant effect on the appearance of your property and street. In some cases, a porch can add interest on what may otherwise be a blank elevation. A porch of poor design and quality that bears no relation to the symmetry of neighbouring properties or the terrace can however damage the character and appearance of the whole street.

6.58 It is important that a new porch reflects the design and character of your property, and it should be designed to look like a part of your original property. Proposals for porches should normally be modest in scale and reflect the style, age, materials and roof style of the original property. On semi-detached and terraced properties, it is particularly important to consider the symmetry and design of neighbouring porches.

#### Bay Windows: Front

6.59 Bay windows to the front of a property should be in keeping with the style of the house. Materiality, size, proportions of glazed areas and roof form will be looked at when assessing a proposal.

### **b. Rear extensions (including conservatories)**

6.60 Development to the rear of a house is often the most practical way to increase the size of a dwelling and its living space. Rear extensions often have little or no impact on the street scene, however, it still remains important to ensure that design quality is of a high standard.

6.61 The primary consideration for single and two-storey rear extensions is the impact on the rear amenity space and impact on the amenity of the neighbouring property.

6.62 It is important that house extensions retain adequate levels of privacy and amenity. To achieve this, a minimum separation distance of 7 metres must be retained between any part of an extension containing new windows of a habitable room at first floor or above and any facing boundary.

6.63 If a rear house extension will face an elevation of a neighbouring house with windows of habitable rooms, there should be a minimum distance of 21 metres between the extension and the original elevation of the neighbouring house.

6.64 For a house extension with habitable rooms facing a blank elevation or one with windows of non-habitable rooms, an interface distance of no less than 14 metres should be observed.

6.65 These distances may be relaxed where the design or orientation is such that the amenity of a neighbouring property is not compromised. Alternatively, these distances may be increased if there is a change in levels, which would result in an adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of a neighbouring property. For every additional 0.5m increase in height difference between properties we would add 1.5m to the expected distance between elevations.

### **c. Side extensions**

6.66 Side extensions not only impact on the setting of a house but can also have an impact on the character and appearance of the street scene. The council will seek to prevent the loss of spaces between buildings where the spaces are important in defining the character of the street scene, and where their loss would give the impression of a continuous built form, or create a 'terracing effect'. It is therefore essential that side extensions must be well designed, with building materials and styles that match or complement the original house.

6.67 To avoid the appearance of terracing the extension should be set back by at least 0.5metres. The extension should also have a lower roofline than the original building and the style of the roof of the original building should be reflected in the roof of the extension, e.g. a hipped roof property should have a hipped roof extension.

### **d. Roof extensions & alterations**

6.68 Roof conversions and alterations can have a significant effect on the appearance of a house and street scene. Careful consideration must be given to size and design of dormer windows which will need to be sympathetic to your existing and neighbouring properties.

6.69 Dormer roof extensions on the front of semi-detached properties or terraced housing are generally not acceptable, due to the unbalancing effect on adjoining houses and the general street scene. Exceptions are limited only to where an original front dormer already exists.

6.70 The following points should be considered when designing a roof extension:

- Design: Dormer roof extensions should be set down from the main ridge line and reflect the style and proportion of windows on the existing house. Extensions can have gabled,



hipped or curved roofs (subject to the criteria on position) and should normally align with the windows below. Flat roofs should be resisted.

- Window Proportions: The roof extension should not normally be wider than the window below – to retain the balance of your house.
- Overlooking: Care should be taken to ensure that the design and location of a roof dormer to minimise overlooking of adjoining properties.
- Scale: Dormer roof extensions should normally be subordinate features on the roof and should not occupy more than half the width or depth of the roof.
- Position: Dormers should not overlap or wrap around a hipped roof or rise above the ridge level. They should be at least one metre from the party wall, flank wall or chimney stack.
- Dormer Roofs: Should be sympathetic to the main roof of the house – for example, pitched roofs of dormers should be hipped at the same angle of the main roof.
- Materials: Materials should be in keeping with those on the rest of the house.

#### Dormer Windows

6.71 A 'dormer window' is vertical window(s) or opening in a sloping roof having its own roof. There are different types of dormer windows; flat, pitched or curved.

6.72 Pitched roofs on dormer windows will normally be considered more favourably than flat roofs (where permission is needed).

6.73 Generally, flat roof dormer windows will not be supported. Flat roof dormers are much harder to design and detail and will generally not be acceptable at the front of a dwelling or where the roof of the original house has a pitched roof.

#### Rooflights

6.74 Rooflights can be the best way to obtain natural light into a loft conversion or roof space and do not always need planning permission. Any rooflight should be carefully positioned in order to not impact detrimentally on the appearance of the building.

6.75 On front roofscapes, windows should be 'conservation type' windows to fit flush with the roof slope and not dominant in terms of their number. It is preferable to position rooflights on rear roof slopes if possible.

#### Balconies

6.76 Balconies overlooking amenity areas are unlikely to be acceptable.

#### **e. Garages and other outbuildings**

6.77 A garage or parking space needs to be designed to meet minimum standards set by Leicestershire County Council Highways in order for it to be regarded as a parking space for a dwelling:

- Garage – 3 x 6 metres (internal measurement)
- Parking Space – 2.4 x 4.8 metres

6.78 Garages/outbuildings in highly prominent locations which sit front of the building line will not be accepted.

6.79 Garages should be made of matching or similar materials to your home and should have a pitched roof.

## **GARDEN EXTENSIONS**

6.80 The inclusion of agricultural land within the curtilage of a dwelling or the incorporation of 'open space' landscaping strips within residential areas into a garden (notwithstanding whether you own the land) is a material change of use requiring planning permission.

6.81 Agricultural land that is used for the purposes of native species planting, formation of wildlife areas and nature conservation measures will not normally require planning permission.

6.82 In certain circumstances garden extensions may be resisted by the Council. Although the land concerned may remain 'open', in that there may be no buildings on the land, the effect of garden fences, garden landscaping and other domestic paraphernalia (e.g. chairs, benches, football goals, climbing frames, washing lines, garden ornaments, etc.) can have a detrimental effect on the natural and/or undeveloped character and appearance of the land. In some landscape settings, the enclosure of the land itself may harm the character of the area.

#### **Garden Extensions Involving Agricultural Land**

6.83 The Council will use the following criteria to assess proposals for garden extensions involving agricultural land:

Size of garden extension

6.84 A proposed garden extension should not be excessive in size. Proposals that are small-scale and involve a small amount of land take are more likely to be considered acceptable.

### Shape of garden extension

6.85 A proposed garden extension must relate well to the existing built form of the settlement. It should have an affinity with the built-up part of the settlement, as opposed to the surrounding countryside. Proposed garden extensions that involve ‘squaring-off’ a rear garden boundary to a line similar to that of neighbouring properties, or to a prominent natural boundary, are more likely to be appropriate, except where this conflicts with the Limit to Development identified in a Neighbourhood Plan.

6.86 Proposed residential garden extensions that would abut an established boundary (i.e. field hedgerow or fence) are more likely to fit into the landscape and therefore be acceptable to the Council than a proposed extension with no natural boundaries.

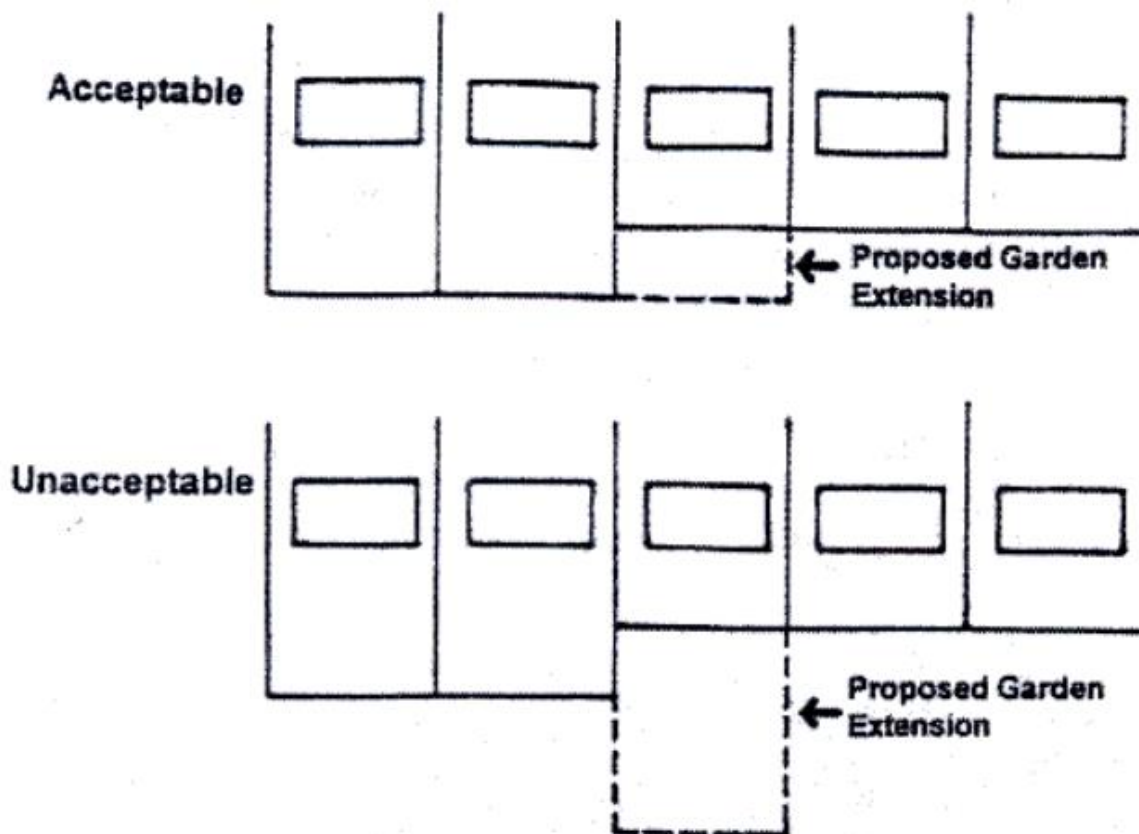


Fig. 6.2 Example of appropriate and inappropriate garden extensions

### Boundary Treatments

6.87 Where a new boundary is necessary it should reflect the landscape character of the area. In rural areas it is generally considered that a wooden post and rail fence underplanted with a native species hedgerow and/or tree mix is the most appropriate solution. The hedgerow and tree mix should reflect the composition of native hedges in the area. The Council may attach conditions to planning permissions requiring details of

the boundary treatment and proposed planting to be submitted and approved by the District Council (if these details are not submitted with the planning application). Close-boarded timber fences will not normally be appropriate, particularly where they would abut the open countryside.



**Fig. 6.3 Boundary treatments of garden extensions**





**Fig. 6.4 Boundary treatments of garden extensions**

### Permitted Development Rights

6.88 The Council may withdraw certain Permitted Development Rights on applications involving a change of use of agricultural land to residential garden. A common reason why this is done is to mitigate the impact of the development on landscape character, for example by not allowing buildings to be erected on the land which has been incorporated into the residential curtilage. Normal permitted development rights will continue to exist within the original garden area and the Council may require all sheds, structures and other domestic development to take place in these areas.

### Nature Conservation

6.89 The Council will expect proposals for garden extensions to respect land supporting protected species or displaying biodiversity importance. The Council is likely to resist the incorporation of sites of ecological importance into private garden areas, including designated sites and undesignated habitats (e.g. floodplains, field ponds etc.) if they are found to contain protected species and/or their habitats and mitigation is not an option. In circumstances where the proposed garden extension may affect a site of ecological interest the applicant will be expected to submit an ecological survey with the

application. The survey would identify the ecological interest on the site and appraise the impacts of the proposal. The survey may contain mitigation measures.

### **Garden extensions involving public open space**

6.90 In principle, the Council will resist proposals for the incorporation of open amenity spaces in residential areas into private gardens. These open spaces were usually designed into the development to benefit the public realm, to provide a sense of space, greenery and/or to benefit natural surveillance. Garden extensions which result in the loss of green and/or open spaces within residential areas are likely to detract from the openness and/or character and appearance of the area. As a general rule, areas which consist of part of an approved landscaping scheme for the area will not be permitted to be incorporated into private gardens.

6.91 However there may be circumstances in which incidental open space may be appropriately incorporated into private gardens. These are as follows:

- where the proposal would take only a small part of an incidental open space, which itself does not contribute significantly to the street scene;
- where the proposal would not result in a reduction in the overall spaciousness of the street scene;
- where the proposal would not result in a hard edge to the pavement/highway (e.g., by a wall or close-boarded fence).

6.92 In all cases, the boundary treatment erected around the extended garden area should respect the height and design of existing boundary treatments in the locality. The District Council will normally require the retention of a landscape strip of at least 1 metre on the outside of a repositioned garden boundary. It is likely that vegetation lost as part of the garden extension will need to be replaced in the remaining area of incidental open space outside the extended garden area.

### **Garden Extensions Involving Highway Land/Verges**

6.93 Proposed garden extensions which involve the incorporation of highway verges or other highway land require formal legal procedures, as well as planning permission. Applicants should contact the local highway authority (Leicestershire County Council) for guidance on this matter.



## WORKING FROM HOME

6.94 The District Council recognises that there are many advantages in working from home. In terms of sustainability, it reduces the need to travel to and from work and may reduce vehicle emissions and congestion. Reducing the need to travel to work can also increase the amount of productive time spent at work for the employee and may enable people who would not otherwise be able to work to enter the workplace. Work from home has been essential during the covid-19 pandemic.

6.95 Homeworking may also provide employment opportunities, from outworking for existing businesses, to setting up a business using modern technology. Opportunities for working from home may also help to encourage diversification in the rural economy.

6.96 There are many different types of business that can be carried out from home. Although this list is far from exhaustive, it includes using a room as an office for business purposes, childminding, using rooms for alternative therapy, hairdressing, dressmaking, music/language teaching etc.

6.97 Whilst appropriate types of home working will be encouraged by the District Council it is important that the nature of the work carried out at home is compatible with a residential environment and does not lead to problems of noise, disturbance, excessive traffic generation or have a visual impact which would be out of keeping with a residential environment.

### **The need for Planning Permission**

6.99 Planning permission will not always be required to work from home. Whether planning permission is required will largely depend on the nature and scale of the activity and whether the house retains its overall character as a home, or whether the business activities are such that it has altered.

6.99 Planning permission may be required if one or more of the following applies:

i. The home is no longer primarily used as a private residence.

In general, it is considered acceptable for one room in a house to be used for business purposes. If more than one room in the dwelling is required for use in connection with business purposes planning permission is more likely to be required.

ii. There is a marked rise in traffic or people calling at a property.

If the nature of the business means that a considerable number of people attend the property on a regular basis, planning permission is likely to be required. If an employee (in

addition to a person in residence) is required to help run the business from the premises, then planning permission is required.

iii. The business involves activities that are out of keeping with a residential area

For a business to operate from a residential area without the need for planning permission there should be no obvious signs that the business is operated from there. Once such activities become apparent, e.g. visible storage areas, ongoing car repairs, large number of callers to a property, then a material change in the use of the premises is likely to have occurred and a requirement for planning permission arisen.

6.100 It should be noted that the presence of a small commercial-type vehicle at a property, e.g. a van or taxi, does not necessarily imply that a change of use has occurred. A vehicle may have a dual purpose and its presence at a property for domestic purposes, including transport to and from a place of work, is unlikely to constitute a change of use.

### **Childminders**

6.101 Planning legislation allows for a childminder to accommodate a maximum of six children (including the proprietor's own) at any one time at a private residence without the need for planning permission. Any increase in the number of children cared for may have implications in terms of highway safety and disturbance and requires full planning permission.

### **Bed and Breakfast Accommodation**

6.102 Given the tourism potential of Harborough district, the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation will generally be encouraged. It is normally considered acceptable for one room in a dwelling to be used for this purpose without the need for planning permission. If the number of rooms used for bed and breakfast accommodation exceeds 50% of the number of bedrooms or alternatively if more than two rooms of the dwelling are used for this purpose, this will constitute a material change of use and planning permission will be required.

### **Advertisements**

6.103 It is important that any residential property used for the purposes of carrying out a business remains completely residential in character. Given that the majority of businesses carried out from home (without planning permission) will not be attracting people to call at the premises, there is unlikely to be a need to advertise the premises. It is recognised, however, that this will not always be the case, e.g. using part of a dwelling for bed and breakfast accommodation. Any proposed advertisements are likely to require Advertisement Consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)

(England) Regulations. Advertisements should be as discreet as possible. Advertisements that are considered to be detrimental to amenity or public safety are likely to be refused by the Council.

## 7 Agricultural, equestrian, and structures in the countryside

7.1 Local Plan Policy GD3 confirms that only development for the purposes of agriculture and similar rural based activity will be appropriate in the countryside. In general, new agricultural buildings in the countryside will be permitted where they are required in connection with agriculture and provided that they do not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside.

### **AGRICULTURAL AND EQUESTRIAN BUILDINGS**

7.2 In general, new agricultural and equestrian buildings in the countryside will be permitted where they are required in connection with agriculture and equestrian activities provided that they are necessary for those purposes and do not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside.

### **Siting, Scale & Design**

7.3 Wherever possible, new agricultural and equestrian buildings should be located adjacent to an existing complex of agricultural or other buildings, or sited in a location which minimises their intrusiveness and prominence in the landscape. A location in the most sheltered part of the field will provide the best protection for the horses. However, this needs to be balanced against choosing the least prominent location within the wider landscape. Locations close to residential properties will not be permitted where they are likely to be the source of disturbance to neighbours in terms of noise, smell or loss of privacy.

7.4 The proposed building should be of appropriate massing and scale for its use and location. Particular attention should be given to the required scale and height of the building to ensure that the impact on the landscape is kept to a minimum.

### **Materials**

7.5 Careful attention must be given to the materials proposed for the agricultural building. Colours such as dark green, dark brown and dark grey are encouraged and preferred to lighter colours. Stables in the open countryside should be of a wooden construction so it blends in with the rural surroundings. Caravans and other forms of storage should be avoided. The most appropriate roof colour will normally be a dark grey, brown or black and usually made of onduline material. Stables in the open countryside

constructed of stone, brick or blockwork will be resisted due to their visual impact and incongruous nature in the rural scene.

### **Landscaping**

7.6 A landscape scheme will serve to enhance and soften the appearance of the development. Attention should be directed to the impact of the building from surrounding viewpoints and screening provided where appropriate. Indigenous species of trees and shrubs appropriate to the local area should be planted. Coniferous trees and hedging is alien to the countryside and should be avoided.

### **Outdoor Storage**

7.7 Planning permission will not normally be required for grazing a horse in a paddock. However, when show jumps and related equipment are kept on the land for more than 28 days in any calendar year, it may be considered that a change of use has taken place for which planning permission would be required.

7.8 Jumps and other equipment relating to equestrian activities can be unsightly and therefore the District Council encourages the provision of separate storage for jumps and other equipment when not in frequent use.

### **Lighting**

7.9 External lighting is not normally permitted, in particular column lighting for maneges will be resisted due to the adverse visual impact upon the rural area. Where lighting is appropriate and justified particular care should be taken to ensure that the lighting is not excessive and intrusive in the countryside.

### **Use of land**

7.10 The division of land into pony paddocks for recreational purposes may not require planning permission, but can have an adverse effect on the appearance of the countryside. If the sub-division of land is necessary, any fencing erected should be kept to a minimum and be of a uniform design and materials and should be well-maintained.

7.11 Care should be taken to ensure that the erosion of land (through the grazing and exercising of horses) is kept to a minimum. Planning permission will be required for the construction of an exercise area or manege on agricultural land. The location of a manege should be given careful consideration to ensure that it is not in a prominent location and does not become a source of disturbance to neighbouring properties. Consideration should also be given to the surface materials used for maneges and exercise areas in particular the colour to ensure that such uses do not have an adverse impact on the character of the landscape.

## **SPORT AND RECREATION BUILDINGS**

7.12 With the increasing popularity of, and involvement in sport and recreational activities amongst the population, pressure on the countryside can be expected to grow. A number of sport and leisure uses need and benefit from a location in the countryside due to the amount of land take required and the activities involved. Many such uses can be successfully integrated into the countryside provided that proposals are handled sensitively.

### **Ancillary Buildings**

7.13 Many sport and leisure uses in the countryside require ancillary buildings, i.e. clubhouses, changing rooms, for the efficient operation of the activity. Where required, new buildings should be sympathetically designed to integrate with their surroundings and careful consideration should be given to the massing and scale of such buildings. Where possible, buildings should be sited near to existing landscape features and in a position which minimises their impact on the landscape. The number of buildings required should be kept to a minimum.

### **Lighting**

7.14 It is recognised that outdoor lighting is often required to extend the hours of use of sporting activities. The majority of lighting installations proposed for playing fields, golf ranges, tennis courts, equestrian activities etc. will require planning permission. The amount of lighting required should be kept to a required minimum. Lighting should be directed solely to the area it is required to illuminate and glare and spillage kept to a minimum. The lighting should be switched off when not required. The impact of the lighting columns on the landscape also needs to be considered and careful siting and design is required.

### **Advertising**

7.15 A number of sport and recreational uses seek to place advertisement boards within the site, for example, around the perimeter of sports pitches. Whether express advertisement consent is required or not will depend on a number of factors such as the nature of the site, the position, size and purpose of the advertisements, and the siting of the advertisement(s) within the site. If advertisements are required, the number proposed should be kept to a minimum and sited in a position that is well screened and not prominent in the surrounding landscape.

### **Access and Car Parking**

7.16 A satisfactory access and adequate parking provision shall be provided within the site to serve the development. Careful consideration should be given to the layout of the

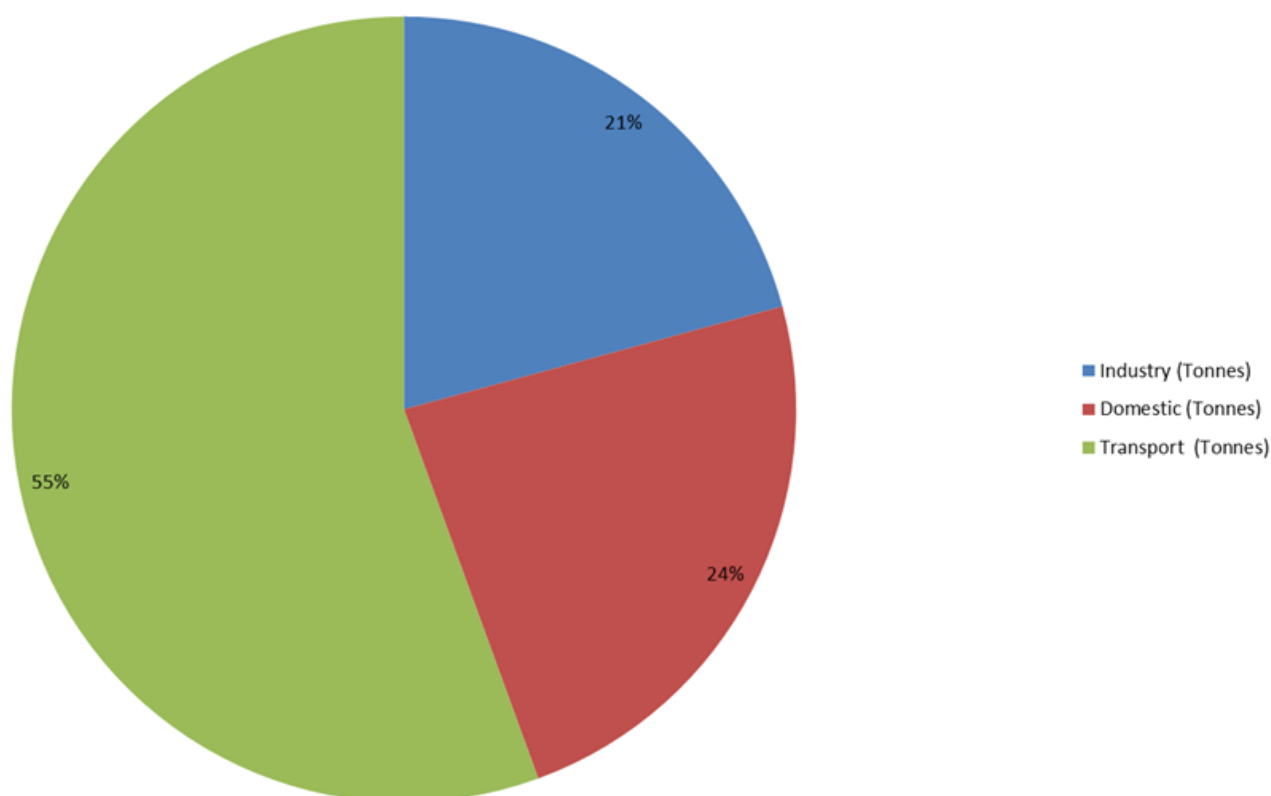


car park and to the materials proposed for the surfacing of the parking area to ensure that it remains in keeping with the character and appearance of the countryside. Effective boundary treatment and planting in car parks can help soften the impact on the countryside. Rights of Way including bridleways should not be impacted by proposals. With respect to bridleways applicants are encouraged to liaise with the British Horse Society should any proposals have effect on a bridleway.

## 8 Addressing climate change

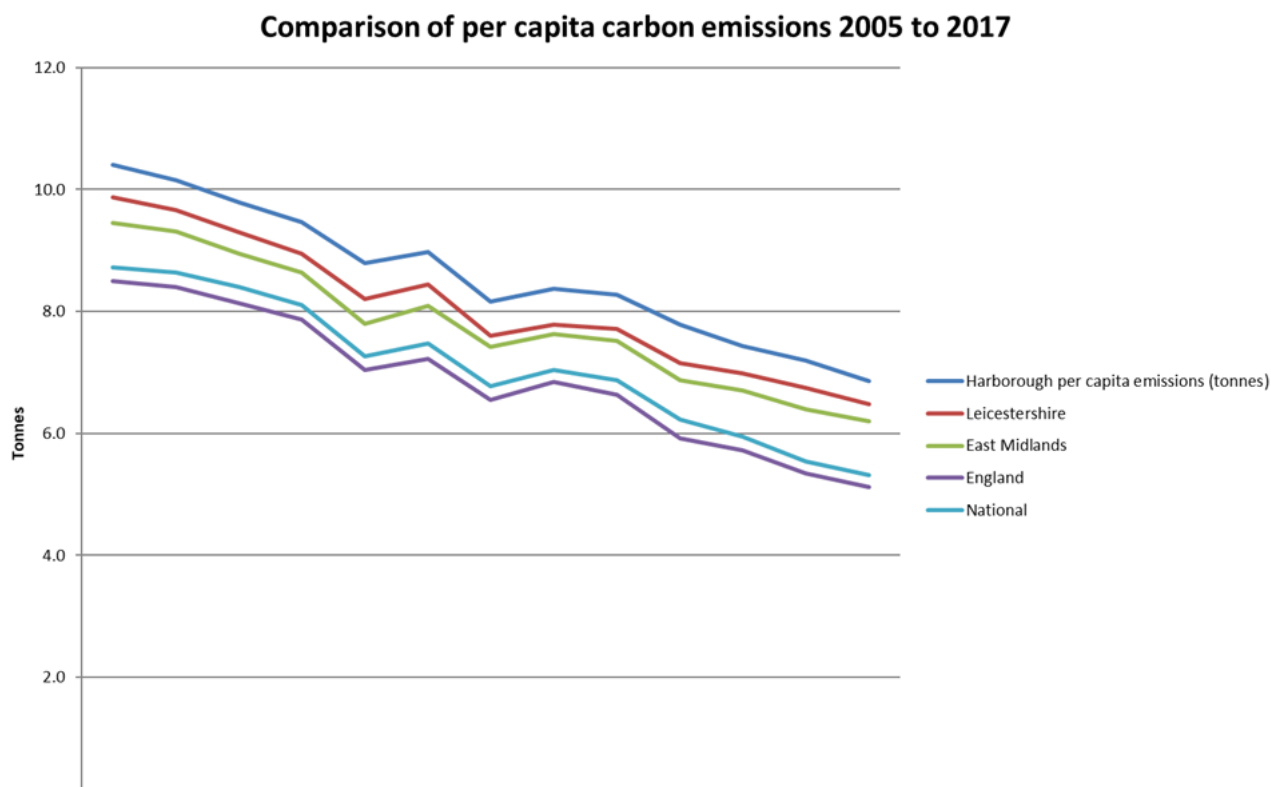
8.1 Local Plan Policies CC1, CC2 and CC3 recognize the risks associated with climate change and that new development should reduce carbon emissions. Harborough District currently has a 6.9 tonne carbon footprint per person, higher than the England, County and Regional per capita amount and primarily due to the rural nature of the District and the dependency on motorised transport.

**Harborough District Emissions 2017**



**Fig. 8.1 Harborough District Emissions 2017**

8.2 A projection of our emissions shows that we will only reach carbon neutrality by 2042. Harborough District Council has declared a Climate Emergency (June 2019) with the aim that all council functions and decision-making should lead to the Council being carbon neutral by 2030. Other material considerations are the Climate Change Act 2008, the Harborough District Council Climate Local Action Plan 2015, Greenhouse Gas (GHG), and not least the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 153ff).



**Fig. 8.2 Comparison of per capita carbon emissions 2005-2017**

8.3 The Harborough District Local Plan was adopted 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and covers a plan period from 2011 to 2031. The vision for the District includes improved resilience to the impacts of climate change and sustainable development, including low carbon design techniques and technologies. Policy CC1 of the Local Plan sets standards for major development, requiring evidence of reduction in carbon emissions according to the energy hierarchy (paragraph 10.1.3), renewable energy technology, energy efficiencies, minimal carbon emissions during construction, justification for any demolition, and carbon-neutral building cooling if appropriate. Policies CC3 and CC4 require Sustainable Urban Drainage systems for major development, and the siting of all development in areas of lowest risk of flooding, taking into account the potential future risk due to climate change.

8.4 It is up to the developer to provide up-front information with their submission, showing that the proposal complies with these policies and is carbon neutral. Similarly, if the scheme cannot be carbon neutral, the onus is on the developer to demonstrate why this isn't possible.

### **Before you start – site constraints and opportunities**

8.5 When designing a scheme, it is important to work with the properties of the site in order to create a design which maximises the site's opportunities, addresses the various

needs of the new development and reduces climate change. A comprehensive understanding and assessment of the site's existing constraints and opportunities should be undertaken prior to beginning to draw up any proposals. As a minimum, you should research:

- Topography
- Flood risk and existing drainage (including natural drainage)
- Surface water flooding
- Orientation
- Existing shading, or lack of
- Prevailing wind direction
- Existing built form and its energy efficiency
- Existing landscaping and the extent to which it provides shade, shelter, mitigation against climate change (e.g. trees using CO<sub>2</sub>), restful/tranquil space, public open space, screening, wildlife habitat and beauty

### **Points to consider**

8.6 Using the information garnered from your research, you should apply the energy hierarchy to your design. This requires that the design of any development should consider use of the following energy options in priority order:

- Passive design considered first as a means to reduce emissions;
- Then the energy efficient design of building services, including decentralised energy networks;
- And finally, including renewable energy at building or site level

8.7 Landform, layout, building orientation, massing tree planting and landscaping should all minimise energy consumption (c.f. 39 ff of TCPA/RTPI report, listed below). Buildings should be orientated to maximise levels of passive solar gain, daylight and natural ventilation. Wind tunnels or uncomfortable micro-climates/overheating should be avoided by siting buildings in a sheltered location, protected by landform or planting where necessary. Designs should avoid urban heat islands where density and built form (including potential future built form created by Permitted Development) can create very warm areas/overheating, leading to negative impacts on human health.

8.8 Highway layout and design should provide electric/other vehicle charging, facilities for electric bikes and, to promote sustainable transport, cycle storage can be positioned closer to the entrance of the site, or closer to facilities than the car (other than disabled spaces).

8.9 With housing development, internal rooms should be designed to allow for different uses (e.g. home office); energy-efficient lighting, solar shading (brise soleil) and renewable energy technology provided; provision for ultra-fast broadband made; drying space for clothes should be provided to reduce use of tumble-driers etc.; and all buildings should be orientated to maximise solar gain.

8.10 Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) including straw bales, cob etc. should be used. Can new construction materials be recycled? How will carbon emissions during construction be minimised? What is required to improve the energy efficiency of retained buildings?

8.11 Green infrastructure can deliver towards renewable energy targets with woodlands managed and harvested for fuel (coppicing, meadow cutting). Allotments, orchards and edible landscaping can all be designed with the community to promote cohesion and reduce the need for travel for food. Seating under/near trees for shade can be provided in public open space/communal areas. Areas of wildflower planting can encourage bees and create habitat for protected species. It is important to demonstrate retention of all methods of climate reduction in perpetuity: landscape management, SUDs management, decentralised energy networks for example.

8.12 The following list may prove useful, but is not exhaustive:

How are you reducing carbon emissions from the buildings?

- Have you made the fabric as energy efficient as possible?
- Have you looked at passive design and zero heating?
- Can you reach an Energy Performance Certificate of A?

How are you reducing consumption of fossil fuels?

- Have you looked at alternatives to gas for heating? (Biomass heating, heat pumps etc.)
- Are you including renewable energy and perhaps battery storage?
- Have you considered district heating?
- Are you including electric charging points for vehicles?
- Is your site laid out to increase sustainable transport choices?

Is the house/building resilient to future climate change?

Have you included rainwater management, such as green roofs, rainwater harvesting, permeable paving at the building scale?

Is the building resilient to overheating, through the use of tree planting, building shading and building design?

Include water efficiency for residential developments and water re-use measures for major developments

Is the building resilient to surface water flooding following intense rainfall?

Is water efficiency aim at the optional target of 110 l/h/d as detailed in building regulations part g.

Is the site reducing emissions during construction?

- Have you considered low carbon materials?
- How are you reducing transport emissions?

### **Farming and Climate Change**

8.13 The District has a large and varied agricultural industry and heritage. Climate change scientists have highlighted that certain intensive farming methods and high numbers of livestock are a major contributor to greenhouse gases and climate change. The planning system could be a useful tool in encouraging more sustainable farming practices, such as encouraging farmers to plant more trees, hedgerows and enhanced field margins to create a carbon store and improve biodiversity. In addition, the encouragement and support for more renewable and/or cleaner methods of on site power generation such as solar, wind, biomass and the use of ground source heat pumps.

NFU – British Livestock and Climate Change: Beyond Meat and Methane.

NFU – Delivering Britain's Clean Energy from the Land

Farm Carbon Toolkit

### **What about minor and householder applications?**

8.14 Whilst the Local Plan policies relate specifically to major applications, mitigating the effects of climate change and providing sustainable development is important for all proposals. For example, SuDS can be adapted for minor development of 9 or fewer dwellings, and solar panels fitted to suitable roof slopes of extensions. Information is available from the Committee on Climate Change giving suggestions for adapting existing properties.



## 9 Conversion of redundant and disused buildings

9.1 Local Plan Policy GD3 confirms that only development for the purposes of agriculture and similar rural based activity will be appropriate in the countryside. Local Plan policy GD8 includes criteria that development should be well planned to be, amongst other things, of a scale and design that would not damage the quality, character and amenity of an area.

9.2 Many of the buildings that contribute to the character of Harborough District, its towns, countryside, villages and conservation areas, were erected in previous times for economic and social conditions that no longer exist, or have changed. NPPF paragraph 79 similarly confirms isolated new homes in countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances such as re-use of redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

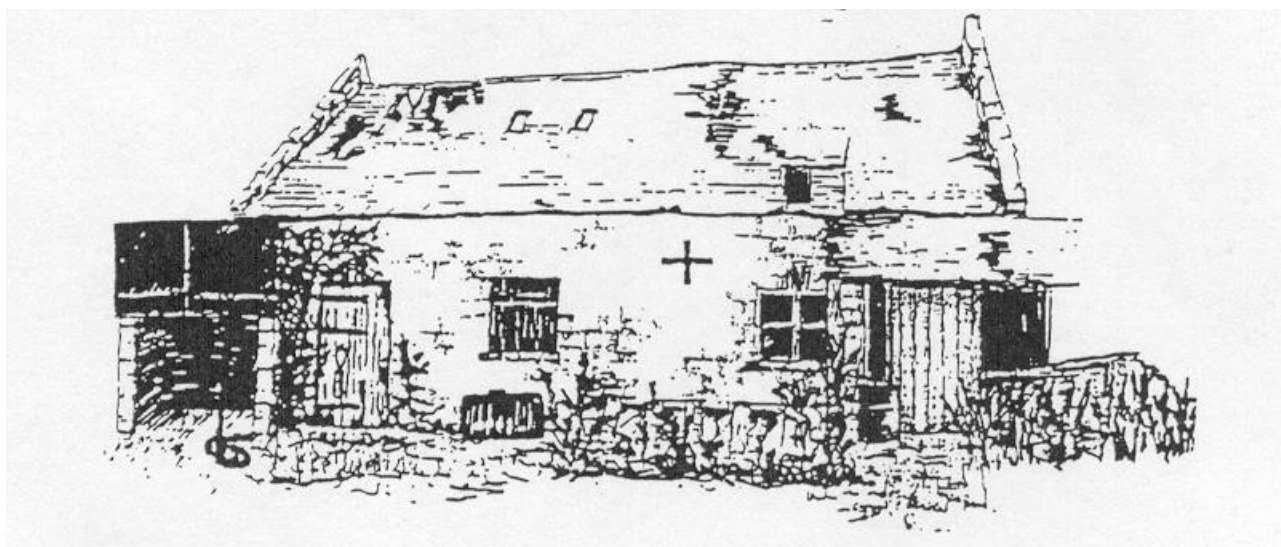


Fig. 9.1 Example of redundant buildings

### THE CHALLENGE OF REDUNDANT BUILDINGS

9.3 Economic changes have rendered obsolete many buildings (both agricultural and non-agricultural) which now have potential for re-use. Many of these date from the 18th and 19th centuries or earlier and were built of traditional materials in the vernacular style; they contribute greatly to the character of the District, as do many buildings of the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. The retention of traditional buildings is important to the District as they impart a special character to their environment. New uses can allow the buildings to continue to

impart distinctiveness to their village, countryside or town. New uses can also contribute to the economy of the rural area.

9.4 Buildings with large interior spaces, such as barns and chapels, could lend themselves to leisure or community use, or for restaurants, storage or light industry. The advantages of these uses are, generally, that they contribute to the rural economy, and that minimal alterations to the building are required thus retaining the building's spatial qualities, character and appearance. A conversion to residential use can, because of the demands of modern living accommodation, be more destructive of a building's character than those uses which require large internal spaces. Successful residential and business conversions can nevertheless, be achieved to provide these buildings with a sustainable future. Uses which provide employment and diversification of the rural economy will be encouraged, in preference to a residential conversion; the former usually involves fewer alterations to the building.

### **CRITERIA FOR CONVERSION**

9.5 Buildings to be converted must be of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction. Buildings of good traditional quality which contribute, or would contribute when restored, to the character of their areas should be restored and their demolition resisted. The 'conversion' of a redundant building does not mean erecting a substantially new building on the footprint of the old, nor the alteration of the old building such that its original form is destroyed or rendered unrecognisable. 'Conversion' means the adaptation of an existing building to a new use involving minimal alterations which retain the visual character form, structure, materials, and massing of the original.

9.6 Criteria for conversion involve both planning and architectural design considerations. For this reason, as much information as is available about the history of the building and the survival of original features should be submitted by the applicant with their application.

9.7 A Buildings Assessment may be requested to be submitted with any Planning Application, to assess the impact of the development upon the building.

9.8 Planning criteria are detailed below:

#### **Internal Spaces**

9.9 The internal spaces of large buildings (such as barns and chapels) should be respected in order to retain the character of the traditional buildings, and part, at least,

should remain open from floor to roof in order to achieve this. Inappropriate planning of the internal space can have a knock on effect on the exterior, including for example the need for new windows.

9.10 Internally, the large spaces and the roof timbers of a structure impart the greatest character to an agricultural building. The sense of height and space should be retained. Roof timbers and trusses should be left exposed. The use of galleries can be a way to indicate and retain the original spatial quality of the building. Internal subdivisions should be minimal and should reflect the form of the building. Living spaces can be open to the roof, rather than having ceilings inserted.

### **Barn Doors**

9.11 The large door was a feature of the barn. Its height was sufficient to allow a laden corn wain to enter. The doors opposite were often lower, sufficient for an un-laden wain to pass; the floor between was used for threshing. Large barn doors are therefore the most characteristic feature of the outside of the barn.

9.12 Traditional barn door openings should be retained. The openings should be treated to emphasise their original size and form, by totally glazing the whole opening. They should not be partially or completely blocked or infilled. Glazing to large areas should be set back in a reveal to retain the character of the opening. By filling the opening with glass much light can enter an otherwise dark building. Such glass should not be “multi-paned”, but rather be of large panes separated by bold protruding mullions and transoms. Doors can be incorporated within this glass wall.

### **Window and door openings**

9.13 Existing openings should be respected and retained. Openings are important to the character of farm buildings. Their size and position differ according to the use of the building. Most agricultural buildings were designed without windows. The emphasis was on facilitating access and ventilation. All existing (original) openings should be retained to keep the rhythm of the original, which is often in a random pattern. It may also in some instances be appropriate to re-open infilled or blocked up openings.

9.14 In a barn the openings are generally in the form of ventilation slits, or of honeycombed brick work. Fixed glazing can be put in the slits and behind the honeycombs which would allow light to filter to the inside and would retain the characteristic pattern of the exterior. Honey combing must be retained externally.

9.15 Cowsheds and stables had wide doorways, with arched architraves and wide door jambs. The width is important. Wide doorways can have half doors, retaining the existing hinges. Door and shutters can often be tied back as a wall feature or retained in working order to provide privacy. If light is required inside, then the top half can be glazed; the top door could still be retained as an external shutter. Doorways often had narrow horizontal overlights. These should be retained as they let more light inside.

9.16 New fenestration should generally be avoided and be kept to an absolute minimum when required. Bathrooms and WCs can be mechanically vented internally rather than have new window openings inserted.

9.17 New window openings disrupt the original rhythm, or can be intrusive in what were intended to be plain walls. Too many windows destroy the form of the original building. New openings should never be planned in a regular or symmetrical pattern, as this is overly domestic.

9.18 Where windows must be inserted they should replicate existing proportions, construction, cill and lintel treatment and placed into an appropriate reveal.

9.19 All doors and windows should be of painted wood and of a design appropriate to the building.

9.20 On traditional buildings UPVC and similar synthetic materials should not be used. Joinery was traditionally painted green or brown, and such traditional colour schemes and treatment should be respected. Simple boarded doors should be used. Panelled doors with glass panes, doors with dropped fanlights, and stained wood are alien and discordant to old buildings.

### **Rooflights and dormer windows**

9.21 The roof of an old building can often be the most visually prominent parts of the building. A key characteristic feature is a long, unbroken roof profile.

9.22 Dormer windows should be avoided as they are domestic in appearance and can significantly alter the shape and profile of the roofline.

9.23 Rooflights, whilst less intrusive, can still visually undermine unbroken roof slopes. Rooflights should be used sparingly, and discretely located, so they are not a feature in the landscape. They should be conservation type, and fitted flush with the roof plane.

9.24 Roofing materials vary by place but common local examples include thatch, clay tiles and slate. These should be retained and re-used wherever possible and/or replaced on a like for like basis.

### **Chimneys**

9.25 Chimneys should be avoided in most traditional buildings as they are largely domestic and alien features. Possible exceptions are smaller servicing buildings attached to a main barn which have included, in some circumstances, tall chimneys. Metal flues with a matte finish may be appropriate additions. However they should be discrete in size and siting. They should generally be sited away from the principal elevations and low on the eaves.

### **Features of Interest**

9.26 Internal and external features of interest should be retained and exposed. Such as mounting blocks, threshing floors in barns, ventilation slits, tethering rings, loft door ways, slaughter house wheels, outside stair cases or dog kennels. The retention of the threshing floor, if it survives, or the use of a different flooring material in its location (between the large doors of a barn) is appropriate. Dog kennels were often incorporated into mounting blocks or outside staircases.

### **Rainwater Goods and Plumbing**

9.27 Implementation of these features should be minimal and discrete. They should be simple in design and located away from the principal elevation if possible. Gutters and downpipes should wherever possible be of cast metal, not UPVC. UPVC is a modern synthetic substance out of keeping with traditional buildings and their materials.

9.28 Soil pipes from bathrooms and WCs should be internal. External soil pipes and soil vent pipes look incongruous on old buildings. Because they are only functional objects their impact should be minimal.

### **Extensions**

9.29 Substantial additions to existing buildings should be avoided.

9.30 In general, all the accommodation requirements for conversion should be found inside existing buildings. If any extensions are necessary they should be small, subservient to the original, and simple. They should follow the traditional form such as a lean-to outshot and should not depart from the linear form (for example at right angles to a particular wall) of the buildings. Extras such as aerials, satellite dishes, garden sheds, gas cylinders etc. can look cluttered and unsightly. If they are required, provision should be



made which is not visually detrimental. With permitted development rights removed many of these will require planning permission.

9.31 Porches should be avoided. Porches are alien features to agricultural buildings. Their use would create external additions which would conflict with the simplicity and design of the original agricultural building. Any protection required should be made internal.

### **Car Parking and garages**

9.32 Provision of parking and garaging must harmonise with the site. Adequate car parking provision is required for all development in the district. This can be provided by setting aside land for parking or by providing garages. Garaging must harmonise with the existing buildings in style and material. A garage range can be constructed in the form of a range of open fronted cattle shelters or cart sheds with wooden or brick piers, and a slate or clay tile roof. Doors may be fitted to some of the open front sections.

### **The Setting**

9.33 Attention should be paid to both the grouping of existing buildings and of any proposed additions. This is to ensure that the original form and massing of the buildings is retained. Integral parts of the original grouping should not be removed.

### **Curtilage Features**

9.34 External features such as yard surfacing and boundary walls should be respected.

9.35 The original paving of agricultural yards is often a feature and worthy of retention. Yards in Harborough District often had river cobbles for a hard surface. Some have been covered in the past with concrete, but these can be reinstated.

9.36 The boundary walls of agricultural yards are frequently of significance. Where these walls are of physical or visual interest they should be retained. New walls should reflect their character in size, design and materials. The coping of walls is a significant feature. The retention of original copings and use of traditional coping forms on new walls is to be encouraged. In general close boarded fencing is considered inappropriate, although a post and rail fence (which may be under-planted with a native hedge mix) can give a softer boundary treatment, which is desirable in some instances.

9.37 The new use should not require the construction of additional structures, including extensions, walls, fences, garages and storage areas, which could adversely affect the character and setting of the existing building, or the massing of its group.



### **Lighting**

9.38 Security and other lighting should not be excessive and must be sympathetic to the location, particularly in rural areas and in the open countryside; any installations should be designed to minimise light pollution. Lighting should provide an adequate level of illumination to reduce the fear and incidence of crime and allow for the safe passage of pedestrians and motor vehicles. Requirements for any external lights and for ancillary structures need to be taken into account at the same time as conversion proposals are considered.

### **Permitted Development Rights**

9.39 These will be withdrawn from residential conversions to allow the Authority to retain control over further extensions and alterations to the converted building. Subsequent applications for alterations to converted buildings, e.g. barns converted to residential use, will be treated in the same way as proposals to erect extensions to that building prior to its conversion. Alterations or extensions should therefore follow the traditional form, be small scale, subservient to the original building and simple.

## 10 Landscaping and development

10.1 Local plan policy GD8 amongst others things requires development to be well planned to reflect the landscape or streetscape in which it is situated and include an appropriate landscaping scheme. It is essential to identify and understand the elements that form the existing landscape both in relation to the site itself and its immediate surroundings. Protection of existing landscape features and design of new landscape, whether hard or soft features, are fundamental to the successful integration of a new development with its surroundings and should therefore be designed as part of any proposals.

10.2 For the purposes of this SPD, "landscape" includes all visual features that make up the appearance and composition of the natural environment. From country parks and gardens, to woodlands and meadows, through to street planting and community orchards. All of these make up the landscape that surrounds us and contribute to the distinctive character of our towns and villages.

10.3 The maintenance and enhancement of existing green spaces within the landscape through development is key to the creation of high quality areas which are used and enjoyed by residents and visitors. Quality landscape provision within new developments relies on good design and planning.

10.4 For the purposes of this document, the term "green space" will refer to areas such as parks, gardens, street planting and play spaces etc. All of which make up the wider landscape that surrounds us.

### **WHY IS LANDSCAPE DESIGN IMPORTANT?**

10.5 Well designed, planned and maintained green spaces can be the making of a new development and can have a positive impact on the areas where we live and work. The benefits of well designed green spaces range from increased economic investment through to cultural, social and environmental benefits. Well designed green spaces can also:

- Reduce the predicted effects of a warming climate, particularly in urban areas.
- Improve the health and well being of residents and visitors.
- Reduce crime and provide a "sense of place".
- Significantly increase local biodiversity.
- Increase the value and attractiveness of an area.

10.6 Conversely, green spaces that are poorly planned, have no clear use, and are inappropriately planted and maintained can become underused and run down, often leading to anti-social behaviour. Green space which results from the leftovers of development can become a maintenance and financial burden, offering no real benefit to the surrounding area.

## **LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND PLANNING PROCESS**

10.7 Landscape provision and green space design is an integral part of the planning process. Where early consideration is given to landscape matters, new developments tend to have a stronger sense of place and character and a feeling of increased quality.

10.8 When submitting a planning application for development, the Council will expect to see evidence that landscape provision and green space design have been clearly considered as part of the site design.

10.9 The following questions should be used as a prompt when designing a site and also by the Local Authority as a guide to green space design:

### **1. Does the site sit comfortably within the surrounding landscape?**

10.10 All sites form part of the wider landscape and have the potential to impact (positively and negatively) on their surroundings. For all developments, an assessment of the surrounding landscape character should be made and the site layout designed in such a way to ensure that it complements its surroundings. In addition, the potential for the site to "link" into the surrounding landscape should be explored.

10.11 For larger scale developments, the district wide and settlement based landscape character assessments should be consulted to ensure that the intended use of the site does not detrimentally impact on the surrounding landscape.

10.12 These assessments included an identification of Landscape Character Areas and a detailed analysis of the sensitivity of land around the edge of settlements and capacity to accommodate future development principally in landscape terms:

- District wide Landscape Character Assessment (September 2007)
- Market Harborough Strategic Development Area Landscape and Visual Assessment (June 2012)
- Leicester PUA Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study (September 2009) and Scraftoft Addendum (2016)

- Lutterworth and Broughton Astley Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study (December 2011)
- Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment (April 2009)
- Rural Centres Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study (July 2014) and Houghton on the Hill Landscape Capacity Assessment (April 2016)

Further general information on landscape character assessments can be sourced from Natural England.

## **2. Does the site layout incorporate a clear green infrastructure?**

10.13 Green infrastructure (G.I) is a network of green spaces and environmental features that link together within the surrounding landscape.

10.14 While isolated landscape features (such as parks, woodlands and allotments etc) can provide a range of benefits, where they are strategically connected to other nearby features, these benefits to the environment and the local community are significantly increased.

10.15 Not only should early consideration be given to linking useable green spaces within the development, but also to how these green spaces link to any wider G.I in the surrounding area. A G.I network should not simply stop at the site boundaries but create opportunities to link into the surrounding area.

## **3. Are existing site features protected and enhanced within the proposed layout of the development?**

10.16 The value of retained natural features is significant, and existing features such as wooded areas, trees, hedgerows and watercourses can contribute to the character of a new development and create a sense of early maturity. Where practical, existing features should be retained and incorporated into the layout of the site. The following should be considered:

- Does the existing topography of the site provide interesting viewpoints? *Consider how these could be incorporated into the site layout.*
- Does the site contain wooded areas, mature trees and hedgerows? These can add significant value to the character of a development site and the design should seek to plant new trees where possible.
- Does the site have existing ecological value or certain habitats which need to be protected and enhanced as part of the development?

- Can existing watercourses be utilised as part of the landscape design? Where appropriately incorporated, these can add significant interest to open space areas.
- If a neighbouring site contains existing natural features, consider how these can be linked to new “green features” in the proposed development.

#### **4. Is the open space well designed and usable?**

10.17 If there is a requirement for the provision of more formal green space within the site, such as play areas, parks and sports facilities, they should be of high quality design. Where these spaces are not appropriately designed, they can often be to the detriment of the surrounding area.

10.18 When designing a formal open space, the following should be considered:

- Does the area have a clear purpose and use? It is important to consider what type of open space is being designed and what its intended use will be. Areas that do not have a clear purpose or use are often underused. Areas marked as "open space" which do not have a clear purpose, use and design are not considered to be acceptable.
- Does the open space contribute to the character of the surrounding area?  
Understanding the existing character of the surrounding area is the first step in designing a green space that contributes to the distinctiveness and identity of the area. Regardless of the end use of the space, it should reflect and enhance the character of its surroundings, or where this is not possible, create a new character for the development.
- Is the open space multi functional and sustainable? All types of open space should have an element of multifunctionality and sustainability. Consider how a sports pitch might be used as part of a sustainable drainage system? Could the park be used for community events and celebrations? Are gardens designed to encourage wildlife and add to the biodiversity of the area?
- Does the area have a clear circulation? How people move within and access an open space is key to creating a successful design. Consideration should be given to how users might want access the open space initially and also how they would walk or cycle around it. Areas should have clear routes that enable access for all.
- Is play equipment is required? Areas of open space often are required to contain an element of play equipment for varying age groups. In these situations, the incorporation of “natural play” elements should be used where possible. Large play boulders, mounds and tunnels can add significant value to the appearance and enjoyment of play areas in open spaces.

## **5. Does the proposed street layout and design incorporate appropriate tree and shrub planting?**

10.19 Some of the most effective landscaping associated with new development is achieved through appropriate road layouts and street design. This is often where the character of the development can be clearly emphasised and key routes through the site can be highlighted.

10.20 Street trees should be included as part of the landscape design for all developments. Not only can this type of planting help to enclose the roadway and give a feeling of quality, it can also help to create valuable shade areas in the summer months, improve air quality and increase the biodiversity value of the area.

10.21 The appropriate use of tree planting to create avenues and planted parking areas can help to give a sense of direction and place within a development, especially when used on the key routes.

10.22 The provision of individual front gardens (rather than just paving and hard surfacing) in the street not only contributes to the character and distinctiveness of an area, but also allows new residents to express their individuality and can significantly contribute to the habitat and wildlife potential of the site as a whole.

## **6. Do the planting and street furniture details reflect the overall design?**

10.23 Even where the overall design of the green spaces and networks for a site is well considered and designed, its quality can be significantly reduced by not selecting appropriate planting, furniture and surfacing etc. To ensure that the overall design is not diminished, the following should be considered:

- The planting choice through the site should clearly reinforce the overall design of the green spaces. Trees and plants should be selected that are appropriate for their intended surroundings, and, where appropriate, native species (of local provenance) should be chosen.
- Interest can be added to a scheme by using surfacing and materials in an imaginative way. Consider how furniture choices could impact on the use of a space, is formal seating needed? Could shaped boulders be utilised? Could standard bollards and railings be replaced by more creative structures?



## **MAINTENANCE OF LANDSCAPE**

10.24 The success of new landscape features and green spaces not only depends on high quality design, but also appropriate and continued management. Regardless of the quality of a particular design for newly landscaped areas, if inadequate provision has been made for ongoing maintenance they can become unattractive and underused. The most common causes of failure in landscaping and planting schemes include:

- Poor ground preparation - Trees and shrubs planted into compacted and nutrient poor soil are unlikely to thrive and may die.
- Soil contamination and weed growth - Contaminants within the soil and heavy weed growth can have a significant affect on newly planted areas, preventing establishment and inhibiting growth.
- Competition for water and nutrients - New planting can become over dominated by existing grasses and shrubs, even well kept grasses around new trees will reduce the growth rate of new trees.
- Animal damage - Unless new planting is protected, animal damage can result in huge planting losses. Methods of protection should be appropriate to the surrounding area, for example, where deer are known to be present the protection level will be significantly increased.
- Mechanical damage - Trees which are unprotected by guards around the base of the trunk can be easily damaged by strimming and mowing.
- Poor aftercare - All elements of newly planted landscapes can fail if appropriate aftercare is not received.

10.25 Where developments require the provision of new landscaping, a maintenance plan should be submitted with the planting details, providing site specific details for each new planted area. The period of time to which any maintenance plan applies will depend on the site conditions and proposed planting, and will be set via the associated planning conditions for the development. Applicants are advised that planning conditions generally require replacement planting where plants have failed to become established within the first five years. Maintenance details should be submitted with all landscaping schemes.

10.26 To ensure that all new landscapes are appropriately managed from the outset, identification of who will manage each area should be established during the planning process.

## **TREES/HEDGEROWS AND DEVELOPMENT**

10.27 Trees and woodlands are considered to be some of the most visually significant landscape features that define the character of our towns and villages. Trees are a key part of our distinctive area.

10.28 Existing trees can significantly contribute to the setting of new developments, and can give the impression of early maturity and increased design quality by creating intrinsic character. Because of their importance, local planning authorities in the UK have a duty to consider tree protection and planting when assessing planning applications for development.

10.29 Without appropriate consideration, existing trees and hedges can be easily damaged and lost through development. Damage can occur to trees through thoughtless construction practices such as vehicle collisions and root severance, as well as through more indirect factors, such as changes in the surrounding ground levels, compaction of the soil structure and contamination. One movement of a heavy vehicle over a tree's roots is enough to cause irreparable damage, while trenching and compaction causes excessive damage to trees all too frequently.

### **A Guide to BS5387:2012**

10.30 British Standard 5837:2012 (BS 5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations) provides clear guidance on how trees and hedges should be accounted for as part of developments to ensure appropriate retention, protection and management. It is the key document used by the Council when assessing planning applications where trees and hedges are a material consideration and its requirements should be closely followed by applicants.

10.31 Where trees and hedges are a consideration, a number of tree specific reports and surveys will be required at various stages of the planning process. These cover all stages of a development from the initial site and tree survey, through the construction of new buildings, to future planting and landscape maintenance.

10.32 **Fig. 10.1** outlines the tree based information that may be required at each stage of the planning process, depending on the size of the site, tree cover and overall complexity. Further clarification can be sought from the Council regarding the level of detail required for a particular application prior to submission. The remainder of this chapter provides a brief description of each of the reports and plans listed below.

Planning stage	Minimum arboricultural detail required.
Pre-application	Tree Survey Draft tree retention / removal plan
Full Planning Application	Tree Survey Finalised tree retention/removal plan Tree Protection Plan Retained trees and root protection areas shown on proposed layout plan Strategic hard and soft landscape design, including species and location of new planting Arboricultural impact assessment
Matters that may be dealt with by planning conditions. (However this is dependant on the site complexity and these reports / plans may be required as part of the initial submission documents.)	Detailed Arboricultural Method Statement Alignment of utilities and services (including drainage), including details of installation methods where required. method Dimensioned Tree Protection Plan Schedule of works to retained trees, e.g. access facilitation pruning Detailed hard and soft landscape design Arboricultural site monitoring schedule

Fig. 10.1 Information requirements summary

### Tree survey

10.33 The starting point in producing a successful design is the gathering of good baseline information. A tree survey should be undertaken as part of the initial site investigations, and should record all relevant information for trees on and adjacent to the site. This may include details of habitats and protected species contained within the trees where appropriate.

10.34 As a result of a Tree Survey, the existing trees will fall within one of four categories (A, B, C or U) depending on their quality. Those in category A are considered to be the most desirable to retain, with those which are clearly dead being recorded as U. BS5837: 2012 provides clear guidance on the use of these retention categories.

10.35 The baseline data collected in the survey should be made available to all relevant parties in the planning process at an early stage as it forms an important part of the evidence base underpinning the Design and Access Statement. The classification of the trees should be based on the condition and value of the trees at the time of the study, and not a preconceived layout for the site, and may also include (where relevant) details of any nearby veteran and/or ancient trees.

### **Tree Retention plan**

10.36 A plan showing trees proposed for retention and removal should be submitted in draft during any pre application discussions with the Council, or as a finalised version when submitting a planning application. It should be to a recognisable scale and record all onsite trees. It should show the following:

- Trees to be retained: marked with their survey numbers and circled with a continuous line.
- Trees to be removed: marked with their survey numbers and circled with a dashed line or similar.

### **Tree Protection Plan**

10.37 A Tree Protection Plan shows how the retained trees and hedges will be physically protected during site clearance and construction of the development. It should be superimposed over a final site layout drawing and clearly indicate the precise location of all protective barriers and proposed hard surfacing.

10.38 The location of protective barriers around retained trees should be based on the required Root Protection Areas (RPAs) rather than an area which fits comfortably around the construction. BS 5837:2012 sets out a specific method for the calculation of RPA's, however this can be simply translated for single stemmed trees, by multiplying the diameter the trunk of each tree by 12.

10.39 Any required ground protection or commentary on alternative protection should also be noted on the Tree Protection Plan. Areas designated by the protective fencing as construction exclusion zones (CEZ's) should not be altered or disturbed without the prior agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

10.40 RPZs should be denoted on site by the use of securing "herras" style fencing which is clearly signed as a "Construction exclusion zone". The use of chestnut paling or plastic mesh is not appropriate. The protective fencing should be erected prior to any onsite works and remain in place until the completion of the development. Where full Root

Protection Areas are not possible due to the constraints of the site, alternative methods of ground protection should be used.

### **Arboricultural Impact Assessment**

10.41 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) should draw on all of the baseline tree information and the proposed site layout, and provide an evaluation of the direct and indirect impacts of the development on the nearby trees.

10.42 It should take account of any required tree loss to facilitate the layout, discuss the elements of the proposals that could have a damaging arboricultural impact and propose, where appropriate, mitigation measures. An AIA should include copies of the Tree Survey, the Tree Retention / Removal Plan and provide details of any required facilitation pruning.

### **Arboricultural Method Statement**

10.43 The Council may also ask for the submission and approval of an Arboricultural Method Statement. These statements detail how the development will actually take place around any retained trees.

10.44 While the level of detail required in a Arboricultural Method Statement will vary from site to site, they generally cover the same basic topics such as how demolition will occur, where any materials will be stored and how the development will be phased. The Council can advise applicants on the content of the method statement, should this be required.

### **Designing with trees**

10.45 While it is recognised that many factors will need to be taken into consideration when designing the layout of a new development, tree retention has the potential to significantly contribute to the site's character and needs to be accounted for at an early stage.

10.46 Following the completion of the surveys and analysis of the site described in paragraphs above; consideration should be given to which trees are the most suitable for retention. Trees of the highest quality (those categorised as A and B trees in the Tree Survey) should be retained as part of the proposed layout, as they are likely to have the most positive contribution to their surroundings.

10.47 Trees of moderate and low value (category C and below) should not automatically be considered for removal, as they may play a useful role in site screening, or as an important habitat feature. As part of the design the following factors should be considered:

- Physical dimensions of retained trees

The physical size and shape of the trees is likely to be the first factor to be considered. The crown shape and spread, along with the root area should be considered as part of the design.

- Current and future relationships

A realistic assessment of the current and future relationships between the existing trees and new structures should be made. Retained trees that are inappropriately incorporated into site layout can become a nuisance, often leading to pressure for them to be removed. Larger trees might be better suited to areas of open space or more extensive private gardens where conflict is less likely to occur. The potential impact of the shading caused by tree canopies should be considered, and situations where dense shading could be problem should be avoided. Seasonal problems such as Honeydew and leaf drop might also need to be considered.

- Roadways and surfacing

Access into a site is often one of the first issues to be considered when a development is planned, and can have a significant impact on existing trees. Traditional road construction and surfacing does not allow water and nutrients to percolate through to the soil (and roots) beneath. Also the excavation and compaction required to construct an access can easily damage the soil structure and the root areas of retained trees. To avoid this type of damage, main access driveways and other hard surfaces should fully avoid the RPA's of retained trees. Where this is not possible, the use of alternative, porous road, "no dig" construction techniques should be used.

- Alternative construction techniques

On particularly constrained sites, the use of alternative foundations may be required. These should be discussed with the Council during the planning process.

- Services

Requirements for above and below ground services should be considered. Underground services should not cut through the required root protection areas for retained trees. Where there is no alternative route, specialist installation methods should be considered.

### **Construction and aftercare**

10.48 In addition to the design and layout of a development, the physical practicalities of developing the site should be considered as part of the Arboricultural Method Statement. Significant time may have been taken to formulate an appropriate site layout, taking full



account of any onsite trees, and yet they can be easily and significantly damaged at all stages of the construction.

10.49 While the Arboricultural Method Statement may include details of construction phasing, protection and pruning that may be required to allow the development to take place, this information is often not passed on to site clearance and construction contractors.

10.50 To ensure that all parties are aware of the arboricultural factors of the development and understand the importance of the construction exclusion zones, full details of protected areas and works likely to affect the trees should be made available. All protected areas should be appropriately signed, and regular meetings held at key stages of the development with the appointed Arboricultural Consultant. In some cases, the Council may wish to monitor the progress of the site, especially where trees may be particularly sensitive or the site is very constrained.

# 11 Shop fronts and advertisements

## PART 1: SHOP FRONTS

### **Why are shop fronts important?**

11.1 Harborough District Council is committed to maintaining and improving the District's shopping streets and centres. Policy RT3 of the Harborough Local Plan recognises that shop fronts play a key role in creating attractive and vibrant areas which people want to live in and visit. Shop fronts serve a number of purposes - they provide an attractive display for goods and they also advertise the presence of the shop and therefore project an image for the business inside. Shop fronts have a significant impact on the character and attractiveness of a town centre. Many successful and popular shopping areas today are those which offer an attractive, pleasant shopping environment and good quality shop front design helps to enhance this, which in turn can help encourage investment and spending bringing benefits to all commercial interests. This design guide is aimed to help retailers by highlighting more detailed design considerations that should be taken into account for any businesses who may wish to alter to change their shop front.

Diagram of terms and example of a well-designed shop front.



### Retention of Shopfronts

11.2 Where an existing shopfront contributes to the character and visual amenity of the building or area, it should be kept and not replaced. Existing features on traditional shopfronts such as pilasters, fascias, cornices should be retained and restored where possible.

11.3 Alterations to shopfronts on Listed Buildings will only be permitted where the alterations preserve the special architectural or historic character of the building and setting. Similarly, proposals to alter traditional shopfronts in Conservation Areas will need to demonstrate an appreciation of the significance of the Conservation Area and serve to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that area.

### New/Replacement Shopfronts

11.4 In certain cases, new/replacement shopfronts may be necessary or even desirable. Shops and other uses such as offices and industrial buildings must provide for an active frontage which means lots of windows facing onto the public realm, this creates an active and lively place and also helps surveillance. Inactive frontages in the form of solid walls or dummy windows/facades will not normally be acceptable in most locations.

11.5 If a decision is made to install a new/replacement shopfront to an existing building, the main point to bear in mind is that the shopfront must relate to the whole building of which it is an integral part, including the upper storeys and the shopfront must respect the

proportions and architectural detailing of the building. As well as considering the original building itself, a shopfront's proportion, materials and detailing should also respect the character and the hierarchy of existing buildings along the street. This is particularly important where a number of different shopfronts are found within a single façade or in a particularly uniform street scene. New shopfronts should neither dominate the street scene nor detract from the character of historic buildings or other buildings in the immediate vicinity.

11.6 Where a shop occupies more than one building/plot width the shop front and display should be suitably punctuated. The shopfront should not extend across the width of several buildings without visual breaks.

11.7 Where the elevations are of different design, new shopfronts should take account of the variation of individual buildings and should not attempt to divorce the ground floor from the upper storey of the building through an overemphasis of the fascia. It should be remembered that the shopfront creates a solid visual base to the building above and therefore total removal of a shopfront to open up the frontage will be unacceptable.

11.8 If a traditional style replacement is to be used, it should be appropriate to the building and locality. Good design need not necessarily be traditional and there are many locations where a well-designed modern shopfront will be acceptable but it must be sympathetic to the building above. By their nature shopfronts are viewed from close range as well as from a distance. As a result, the design of each component as well as the overall appearance is important and the shopfront as a whole will be expected to exhibit a high standard in design and choice of materials, irrespective of whether the design is traditional or contemporary.

### **Shopfront Fascias**

11.9 Fascias separate the shopfront from the upper floors of a building. New fascias must be of a scale and design in proportion to the design of the shopfront and height of the building as a whole.

11.10 Fascias should be positioned well below first floor cills with a space in between the cills and the fascia, fascias should not encroach on any existing string course, cornice or other architectural feature. Fascias should not be extended below the head of the pilasters and not above any cornice level in an attempt to increase the area of an advertisement.

11.11 Where there are no pilasters, the fascia should be in proportion to the shopfront, the host building and any adjacent buildings - as a general rule the depth of fascia boards

should not be more than one sixth of the total height from the ground to the top of the fascia board.

11.12 Where excessively deep fascias have been introduced in the past, the overall height should be decreased in any replacement to expose the wall surface above. The existence of any former unsuitable fascia should not influence the design of a replacement and any new fascia should not be applied over the top of an existing one.

11.13 Normally only one fascia board per plot frontage will be acceptable. Shops or businesses on upper floors will not be permitted fascias above ground level. A suitable method of advertising first floor premises is the use of gold, cream or white lettering applied directly to window panes or through the shared advertising space of the ground floor trader.

11.14 Fascia boards should be of painted wood or of a matt surface. Shiny synthetic materials will not normally be accepted. Where possible street numbers should normally be shown on the fascia board. For more information of fascia board signage see Part 2.

### **Stallrisers**

11.15 The stallriser forms a plinth at ground level creating a solid visual base for a building. It completes the shopfront by providing balanced proportions, reducing the dominance of glazing and providing some protection to the shop front and window against accidental knocks.

11.16 New and replacement shopfronts in traditional buildings should incorporate a stallriser. The depth of stallriser must be cohesive with the overall design of the shopfront. In modern buildings the absence of a stallriser presents a design challenge to ensure the shopfront respects the proportion of the building as a whole. It may be beneficial to add a stallriser, especially to a shop front in a Conservation Area as this will help a new shop front to fit in and to respect the character of the area.

### **Windows, Doors and Glazing**

11.17 Extensive glazing should be avoided so that a shopfront looks structurally supported as opposed to a void supporting a substantial building above it.

11.18 Shop windows should have substantial frames, there should be flanking pilasters either side of shop windows, preferably panelled, reeded or fluted. A design with strong vertical lines will hold the customers' eyes for a longer period than those with horizontal emphasis. Therefore large areas of window glass should be sub-divided by the use of

mullions or transoms, the subdivision of windows should reflect the symmetry and proportions of the shop and/or building.

11.19 Doors may be recessed which helps break up the shopfront and provides scope for additional decoration with mosaic or tiles which provides interest, depth and relief to the shopfront. The return window or windows leading to a recessed door should be at an angle. This is a traditional feature of shop fronts and is welcoming to visitors.

11.20 Special care should be taken over the design of shop front entrances and entrances to upper floors, so that they fit together as a uniform whole below a single fascia. Where separate access to upper floors survives this is important and should be retained in any new shopfront design.

### **Materials/Colour**

11.21 The choice of materials in shopfront design is particularly important.

11.22 Historically timber has been the traditional shop front material and has proved both versatile and durable. The use of timber is still encouraged, particularly in Conservation areas or on Listed Buildings. However, the type of timber used, its quality, durability and appearance can have a considerable bearing on the visual appearance and maintenance of the shopfront and should be carefully considered at the initial stages.

11.23 Although timber is the most common and perhaps visually most successful material for shopfronts, other materials such as stone, brick, iron or more modern materials such as powder coated aluminium can also be acceptable. The main consideration in determining the exterior finish of shopfronts are location and appearance; the chosen material should be in keeping with its surroundings.

11.24 Colour for a shopfront has the power to make or mar the overall street scene. Sensitive use of colour, respecting the age and setting of a building offers scope to improve the shopping street and in general rich dark colours or those that are muted in tone give the most suitable background to highlight a window display.

11.25 The District Council accepts no obligation to perpetuate any corporate image, the Council encourages variations to corporate images/branding to protect the uniqueness of locations.

11.26 From a safety standpoint, colours, even when non-illuminated, should not hinder easy recognition of traffic signs.



### **Canopies and Blinds**

11.27 The purpose of canopies/blinds should be to provide weather protection to shoppers and to shade shop windows, they should not obstruct pedestrians or other highway users if applicable.

11.28 Canopies and blinds are unlikely to be acceptable where they disrupt the architectural rhythm of unified terraces or street facades or where they obscure architectural details. Canopies and blinds should only be sited at ground floor fascia level.

11.29 The design of blinds should complement the elevation and shopfront and overall character of the building. Canopies and blinds should be carefully incorporated into the design of the fascia. Blinds should always fully retract into the fascia and should usually cover the whole width of a shopfront or be the same width as the fascia. Neither blinds nor canopies should not be retained permanently open in order to provide additional advertising or signage.

11.30 Blinds and canopies should be constructed with traditional materials such as canvas, glossy plastic materials are likely to be unacceptable. Colours should match or complement the fascia and advertising, logos or signage should be discrete and should relate solely to the trade or name of the business. We recommended that lettering on canopies/blinds is no more than 200mm in height.

### **Shopfront security**

11.31 It is important to consider shopfront security early in the design process and not as an afterthought. Security shutters, particularly external solid metal shutters are unattractive, have an intimidating effect at night time, are vulnerable to graffiti and decrease the overall perceived attractiveness of the shopping street.

11.32 All proposals for security shutters should present supporting evidence justifying why they are necessary. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the external attachment of permanent roller shutters be considered and the external attachment of security shutters will not be acceptable within conservation areas or on listed buildings. In any application for external roller shutters, an applicant must satisfy the District Council as to why alternatives such as safety glazing; internal window security grilles; external removable window security grilles are not suitable.

11.33 Where roller shutters are acceptable, they should be confined to structural openings and window areas only and should not extend across architectural detailing.

11.34 Shutter boxes should be recessed within the structure of the building or disguised behind shop fascias. Metal shutters should have a coloured, painted finish and details of materials and colour to be used must be submitted in any application.

11.35 Burglar Alarms should be sited as unobtrusively as possible. They should never be located on architectural features such as consoles or pilasters. Where mounted on traditional joinery they should be painted in a matching colour.

## **PART 2: ADVERTISEMENTS**

### **Introduction**

11.36 The display of advertising is regulated by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. These regulations permit the Local Planning Authority to control outdoor advertising in the interests of amenity and public safety. Some advertisements benefit from “deemed consent” under the regulations, this allows the display of certain “specified classes” of advertisement without first having to make an application to the Local Planning Authority. Guidance for this can be found within the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 and also within ‘Outdoor advertisements and signs: A guide for advertisers’ (CLG:2007).

11.37 Where advertisements have deemed consent and do not require formal advertisement consent the guidance in this Harborough District Supplementary Planning Document should still be applied as a matter of good practice. Reference should also be made to guidance on shopfronts.

11.38 Outdoor advertising is essential to commercial activity, however, the appearance of a good building or area can easily be spoiled by a poorly or insensitively placed sign or advertisement, or by a choice of advertisement materials, colour, proportion or illumination which is alien to the building’s design or fabric. Policy RT3 of the Harborough Local Plan seeks to ensure that advertisements respect the character and architectural details of the buildings on which they are proposed and their surroundings.

### **What do we consider?**

11.39 The following factors will be taken into account when considering an advertisement application.

- The general character of the area (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial, countryside) and whether the advertisement is of a sympathetic size, scale, proportion, colour and design for its surroundings.
- Whether the advertisement will be visually intrusive or dominant.
- Whether the advertisement will detract from the appearance of the building it is sited on.
- Whether the addition of an advertisement would cause or contribute to visual clutter and the presence of other advertising in the area.
- Whether the removal of any other redundant signs, supports or brackets is proposed.
- Whether the sign is illuminated and if so, the type of illumination.
- The effects on the setting of listed buildings, or the character of a Conservation Area.

### **General Advertisement Guidance**

11.40 The following guidance applies to all applications for advertisement consent:

- Advertisements/signage should be of a high quality, should respect the form, fabric, design and scale of the host building and/or setting. All signs should serve as an integral part of the immediate surroundings.
- Advertisement panels and hoardings should generally not be located in a predominantly residential area or street.
- Advertisements or signs should not obscure or damage existing architectural features.
- Surplus or redundant existing signs and brackets should be removed.
- Glossy/shiny materials for advertisements and signage should be avoided. Materials should be in keeping with the locality and harsh colours for signage and lettering is best avoided. Subtle shades are likely to produce a more attractive appearance and will more readily blend with their surroundings.
- Today, it is not uncommon for multinational and national companies to have a corporate image or branding associated with the business, so they are instantly recognisable to customers. However, designers should be prepared to compromise on matters of corporate design where it would be unsuitable on a particular building or in the street, particularly on a listed building or within a conservation area.

### **Fascia adverts on shop/business premises**

11.41 The fascia sign is arguably the most important aspect of the shopfront in terms of providing an opportunity for the business to display advertising. It should convey the name and nature of the retailer or business, but without detracting from the design and appearance of the shopfront or the building of which it forms a part. Simply stating the

name of the business is usually sufficient to provide a clear and effective sign. Extraneous advertising and information on the fascia sign should be avoided.

11.42 The construction or application of the fascia itself and how it integrates with the shopfront is covered in Part 1 and should be read in conjunction with this section. However, in general terms, advertisements should be sited on the original fascia, where they exist, and should have regard to the building's architectural style and detailing. Box fascias or boards not respecting the original size of the fascia on which they are mounted on will not be acceptable.

11.43 Lettering should appear in proportion with the sign and be easily contained within the original fascia size. The choice of lettering in terms of its style/font, size and colour should be influenced by the design of the shopfront, the character and architecture of the building, the type of business and the local character and distinctiveness of the area.

11.44 Traditional shopfronts often encompass a timber fascia sign with hand painted lettering. Where a period shopfront is retained, or is to be reinstated with a timber fascia, lettering should be sign written directly onto the fascia and owners are encouraged to seek the services of a traditional sign writer. Alternatively, individual peg letters on risers could also potentially be appropriate. The use of individual lettering will be strongly encouraged within conservation areas and on listed buildings.

11.45 In the absence of a fascia panel, for example where buildings have been converted from other uses such as banks, it may be appropriate to apply individual letters directly to the wall of the building at fascia level. The height and projection of such letters should be kept to a minimum and the design kept simple.

11.46 Fascia signage should respect and be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. In Conservation Areas and/or on Listed Buildings or non-designated heritage assets the materials, colour and design of the signage must be appropriate and respect or enhance the building and the area.

### **Projecting or hanging signs**

11.47 Whilst hanging/projecting signs can add interest to the street scene they can cause clutter therefore their use should be controlled. Projecting and hanging signs should be simple and limited to the relevant information relating to the shop/business and the services provided.

11.48 No more than one projecting or hanging sign will be supported on a shop/business frontage and the cumulative effect of signage will be assessed as part of any application.

The sign must be of an appropriate scale and be designed to enhance the character of the building and street and should complement existing advertisements on the property. Projecting/hanging signs should be fixed below the level of the first floor windowsills where they will not obscure or conflict with existing architectural details.

11.49 Projecting box signs are unsightly and are generally resisted.

11.50 The style of any supporting brackets should also reflect the character of the building. In cases where an original or traditional style ornamental bracket remains these should be repaired.

11.51 Internal illumination to projecting/hanging signs is unlikely to be supported, especially in conservation areas and/or on listed buildings. In conservation areas and/or on listed buildings the design should be traditional with materials and colours appropriate for the setting. The scale and size of the projecting sign should be proportionate to the building and not overly dominant.

### **Advertising on street furniture**

11.52 Signs on street furniture will only be accepted where they would not create or contribute to visual and physical clutter or hinder movement along the pavement or pedestrian footway.

11.53 Recently more advertisements have been displayed on screens/partitions enclosing outdoor seating areas. Such partitions should be simple in design and any advertising should relate to the services and/or name of the business to which it relates. Lettering and logos should be discrete to avoid the proliferation of signage within the area.

### **Free standing advertisements and temporary advertising**

#### **a) Advance directional advertisements**

11.54 The Council is concerned at the proliferation of the display of poorly designed and located advance directional advertisements, particularly in open countryside and adjacent to major highway routes. These signs attempt to draw attention to the provision of goods and services but often harm the amenity of those areas where they are sited, especially in the countryside. Such signage also has the potential to create a hazard for highway users. Accordingly the Council will only grant express consent for the display of advance directional advertisements where it is satisfied that they:

- do not have a detrimental impact on the amenity or character of an area;
- do not create a hazard to public safety by reason of distracting road users;

- do not resemble, and are not likely to be confused with, traffic signs; and
- are sympathetically located to complement existing features including landscape and buildings.

b) A-boards, free standing flags and other items displayed on the highway

11.55 Such adverts/displays are often located on or adjacent to footpaths or paved areas, which is usually within the highway. The display of advertisements on adopted highway requires consent from the Local Highway Authority, Leicestershire County Council. If approved by the Highway Authority such signage may also require separate advertisement consent from Harborough District Council.

11.56 The Council does not seek to promote the use of A-Boards or any other stand-alone methods of advertisement which gives rise to the sense of clutter and which detracts from the general amenity of the locality. Equally, the use of stand-alone advertising which prevents an obstacle for pedestrians and other road users will not be supported by the Council.

11.57 Where such signage is proposed the Council would consider its design and appearance in relation to individual shop units, other commercial premises as well as the street/surrounding area and other signage in the vicinity. Proposals which are considering the use of A-Boards or any other sort of stand-alone advertising will be encouraged to think of alternative types of advertising methods which do not have as significant impact on local amenity.

c) Banner adverts

11.58 Typically banner adverts are displayed for temporary periods and used to draw the public's attention to a new developments/works, retail sales and/or special events. However, they can often be visually intrusive, need to be sensitively located and should be removed promptly following the temporary period.

11.59 Generally the use of advertisement banners will not be supported, except where banner advertisements are for temporary periods to draw attention to specific events or activities taking place across the District. The siting of advertisement banners upon listed buildings and in Conservation Areas however will be resisted.

11.60 In order to ensure that public and highway safety is safeguarded there is a legal requirement to ensure that all banner signs are securely fixed.



### **Digital adverts**

11.61 Digital advertisements, which can also be referred to as digital screens or digital billboards, can project video but are often used to show a still image or to cycle through a number of still images.

11.62 Digital advertisements are by design visually prominent and attention grabbing with their illuminated images, especially when they are large in size. Whilst such adverts will be assessed against the general advertisement guidance above they are generally not suitable for locating within conservation areas, predominantly residential areas, areas with a uniform heritage character or near listed buildings, where the advertisement could become the most prominent feature of the street scene and in locations which may distract highway users.

### **Illumination**

11.63 Illumination can be used to light advertisements or buildings themselves. Careful thought should be given to the need for illumination both in well-lit areas where lights are rarely required, as well as in rural locations where illumination can be highly visible and out of keeping with the character of rural areas. Lighting can also add clutter to a building during the day.

11.64 Where lighting is needed it should be provided in as discrete a manner as possible and the illumination should reflect the character of the building and area. Illumination should be low-key, not overly dominant or too bright, stationary and not harm visual amenity. Illuminated signs should not be flashing or intermittent, whether internal or external.

11.65 Externally illuminated signs are preferred but such lighting should be unobtrusively sized and sited. Spotlights and shallow trough lights offer a discrete way to illuminate signage and buildings but should be fixed and sized as discreetly as possible.

11.66 Internal illumination should be avoided, especially in Conservation Areas, and will not be acceptable on Listed Buildings. The most acceptable way of internally illuminating signage and advertisements is by internally illuminating the letters or characters rather than their background.

11.67 Within Conservation Areas and for any purpose associated with Listed Buildings, it may be difficult to accommodate the illumination of signs in a sympathetic way. Non-illuminated signs are considered most appropriate.

## Endnotes

- 1                    The term principal window refers to windows which are the main source of light and outlook within a habitable room i.e. living rooms; dining areas; kitchen/dining/breakfast and bedrooms
  
- 2                    or an option of applying an alternative Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) method based on a number of factors including car ownership levels, size and type of housing. For residential developments over 5 dwellings the Design Guide expects the DCLG method shall normally be applied .