

6.1 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Development Framework Plan outlines a series of proposals for up to 4.05 hectare residential development, accommodating approximately 130 dwellings at a density of 32 dwellings per hectare (dph).

Access to the Site is provided via Coopers Elm and the neighbouring development, a primary route connected to a network of secondary routes and private drives. Along the primary route, key focal points enhance the local character and sense of place by incorporating doorstep public spaces, framed views of key buildings, and wayfinding elements.

The mature vegetation surrounding the Site is retained and enhanced, particularly along the eastern boundary, to establish a strong settlement edge. Additional tree planting is proposed to further screen longer views. To the south, a new landscaped area is proposed to serve multiple functions, including amenity space, water mitigation, and ecological enhancement. This area will also integrate with the existing open space and play area to the southwest.

Pedestrian links will be provided around the Site and to the adjoining informal footpath west of the development, which allows easy access to the village centre and the recreation ground.

Proposals

- The Site
- Residential Development
- Open Space
- Streets
- Pumping Station
- Movement**

 - Existing PRoW
 - Proposed Primary Route
 - Proposed Secondary Route
 - Proposed Private Drives
 - Proposed Leisure Route
 - Proposed Shared Surface

Landscape

- Existing Vegetation
- Existing Ponds
- Proposed Native Thicket
- Proposed Trees
- Proposed Meadow
- Proposed SuDS
- Indicative Bench Location
- Context**

 - Existing Area of Play
 - Pirton's Conservation Area
 - Listed Buildings



Fig.33: Development Framework Plan

6.2 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The illustrative masterplan presents a potential layout that reflects the core design principles of the scheme, and illustrates how 130 dwellings could be accommodated on the Site. It demonstrates how perimeter blocks can define the main route and public open space, establishing a clear street hierarchy and promoting an outward-facing character.

A varied building line, particularly along the countryside edges, introduce an appropriate transition to the surroundings and creates an attractive settlement edge. Private drives ensure a low-traffic housing edge, reinforcing the edge-of-village context.

Focal points are accentuated through shared surfaces and planting, creating a pedestrian-friendly environment whilst softening the built form and aiding legibility. Key buildings and tree planting frame the access point, creating a gateway into the neighbourhood.

The well-defined open space in the south benefits from natural surveillance and contributes to a strong sense of place. The landscape is further enhanced by new thicket and tree planting, complementing the retained vegetation and enriching the ecological value.



6.3 USE AND AMOUNT

The proposed framework includes a residential development of up to 130 dwellings within a 4.05-hectare developable area, resulting in a net density of 32 dwellings per hectare.

While this density aligns with local precedents and is appropriate given the Site's characteristics and constraints, the NPPF encourages higher densities and the efficient use of land. Concentrating the housing within a smaller footprint allows for more usable open space, enhancing community benefits by providing recreational opportunities and facilitating meaningful ecological improvements.

A total of 2.40 hectares of green infrastructure is proposed, forming a green corridor around the new homes and extending southward. The development exceeds policy requirements for open space provision, further enhancing its environmental and community benefits. The proposed open space provision exceeds the 2016 Open Space Standards requirement for multi-functional open space plus provision for children, which equates to 0.8ha for 130 dwellings. Part of the open space will be designed for amenity and recreation, while other parts will be designed to be semi-natural areas. Formal sports provision and allotments are not proposed to be provided on the Site, due to the small scale of the development, and necessary contribution could be made to off-site facilities.

The Site lies adjacent to an existing children's play area, and therefore no Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) is proposed on the Site. Instead, contributions could be made to enhancing the existing play area adjoining the Site, to accommodate the increase in use. A smaller, Local Area for Play (LAP) could be provided within the development, with its location agreed at the Reserved Matters stage. The proposed areas of public open space offer the opportunity for informal recreation, as well as encouraging interaction with nature and walking, via the proposed recreational route.

-  The Site **6.65ha**
-  Residential Development **4.05ha**
-  Green Infrastructure **2.39ha**
-  Pumping Station **0.01ha**
-  Existing Road Infrastructure **0.20ha**



Fig.35: Use and Amount Framework Plan

6.4 BUILDING HEIGHT & DENSITY

The development will be at an average density of 32 dph. It will comprise 2 storey dwellings, with taller buildings located within the centre of the development. The variation will create distinct character and enhance the Site's legibility.

Higher housing will be concentrated along the primary route at the centre of the development. This will establish stronger, more continuous building frontages that frame the streets and public spaces, emphasising these areas as the heart of the development.

On the periphery, the housing will be lower in height, allowing for an appropriate transition between the built environment and the surrounding open spaces.

Overall, the proposal balances efficient land use with consideration for the Site's edge-of-village setting.

-  The Site
-  Higher Density and Height (Up to 2.5 storeys)
-  Lower Density and Height (Up to 2 storeys)



Fig.36: Building Height Framework Plan

6.5 GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed residential development is set within a framework of open spaces which form the Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) on the Site.

The GBI is focussed towards the outer edges of the Site, and will surround the new homes, although smaller areas of open space will also be located amongst the houses.

The existing hedgerows in the west and north of the Site will be retained, and a 12m deep area of open space will be provided along these hedges. Within this open space, additional structural vegetation will be planted, including native thicket and tree species, to strengthen the existing vegetation belts. Wildflower meadows and areas of amenity grass will also be located in these areas, and they will form part of a wider recreational resource, which will include a new walking route around the houses.

Within the east of the Site, a deeper green corridor is proposed, which will include the retention of the existing hedgerow, as well as new native thicket and tree planting alongside it so further mitigate views of the development from the east. A drainage swale will lead through this corridor, and will transfer surface water run-off to the drainage basin further south, as part of the SuDS. The swale will be planted with marginal vegetation and wildflowers to create an attractive feature that enhances the wildlife habitats on the Site. The recreational path will lead through this area, allowing easy access from all homes.

The southern area of open space will include a drainage basin within the east as part of the SuDS. The basin will be designed to compliment the character of the existing basin to the west of the Site, and will be an attractive landscape feature which will benefit wildlife. The existing hedgerow along the southern Site boundary is proposed to be gapped up and strengthened to form a strong habitat corridor, while filtering views of the development from the south. Denser areas of new tree planting will be incorporated in the south east of the Site, in order to filter the new homes in views from the longer distance to the south east, thereby ensuring an appropriate edge between the settlement and the countryside beyond. Within the south west of the Site, the landscape will be designed to create an area for informal recreation adjacent to the existing children's play area west of the Site. New tree planting and amenity grass will be included in this area, as well as planting to create an attractive park.



Fig.37: Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework Plan

6.5 GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan shows how the new areas of open space could be treated to create an appropriate transition between the settlement and the countryside, whilst ensuring an attractive environment for residents which also benefits wildlife.



Fig.39: The drainage basin will be planted and be attractive



Fig.40: Green corridors will provide recreational spaces



Fig.38: Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan

6.6 ECOLOGICAL STRATEGY

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) is submitted with the application. It assesses the impact of the construction phase of the proposed development comprising of a removal of a section of hedgerow from H3 (c. 10m) for vehicular access, construction of c. 130 residential dwellings and associated infrastructure and open space.

The proposed development has sought to minimise effects on existing ecological habitat features at the Site through sensitive design, maintaining and buffering the majority of green corridors currently present at the Site, including the on-site hedgerows. These existing habitats are to be incorporated into green corridors within the proposed Public Open Space, as shown on the Development Framework Plan. The proposed development will create of a greater variety of habitats and structures than currently present at the Site, which will provide benefits to a range of species. The Site is not located within the Impact Risk Zone for any Site of Special Scientific Interest and no direct impact pathways have been identified between the Site and these designations. There is also a Local Nature Reserve and a number of Local Wildlife Sites in the vicinity of the Site. Given distances and connections to these features, effects from recreation are unlikely to be a significant impact and no mitigation is required. The EcIA proposes a number of enhancements for flora and fauna including planting of native species, structural planting, integrated ecological niches such as swift ‘S-bricks’ and other bird boxes, bat boxes, bee bricks, log piles and hedgehog gaps.

In the absence of any mitigation measures, the proposed development would have the potential to result in negative effects significant at up to the Local level. However, with the implementation of some straightforward mitigation and precautionary measures as proposed here, the development is not anticipated to result in any significant residual negative effects on important ecological features.

The Development Framework Plan demonstrates the potential to deliver net benefits for wildlife in the form of additional habitats, with the opportunity to provide additional biodiversity enhancement measures alongside the new housing.

- Site Boundary

Temporary grass and clover leys (c1b)

Developed land sealed surface (u1b)

Native hedgerows (h2a)

Non-native and ornamental hedgerows (h2b)

Target note:
TN1 - mammal digging
TN2- disused mammal burrow



Fig.41: Baseline Habitats Plan

6.7 ACCESS

The proposed development will be served via an extension to the existing Coopers Elms, which will maintain its current width of 5.5m along the entire length into the Site.

The adjacent northern and southern footways will also be extended as a result of this access arrangement, with a 2m width provided on both sides.

An informal dropped kerb and tactile paving crossing point will be provided across the proposed access arrangement to facilitate pedestrian movements along the existing footway, which runs on the western edge of the site boundary.

This proposal will provide a safe and suitable access to the development.



Fig.43: Coopers Elms Access



Fig.42: Vehicular Access Plan

6.8 MOVEMENT HIERARCHY

The proposed development features a well-defined hierarchy of streets, consisting of a primary route, several secondary streets, and private drives/mews providing access to all dwellings. The street hierarchy also reflects the local character including narrow lanes and radiating streets.

The proposed primary route will include a 5.5 metre-wide carriageway, flanked by 2.0-metre-wide footways. Additionally, there will be opportunities for 2.5-metre-wide planting areas and on-street parking. The primary route also incorporates shared surfaces at key locations, which are designed to serve as focal points within the development.

-  The Site
-  Holwell Road
-  Primary Route
-  Secondary Street
-  Drives/Mews
-  Shared Surfaces

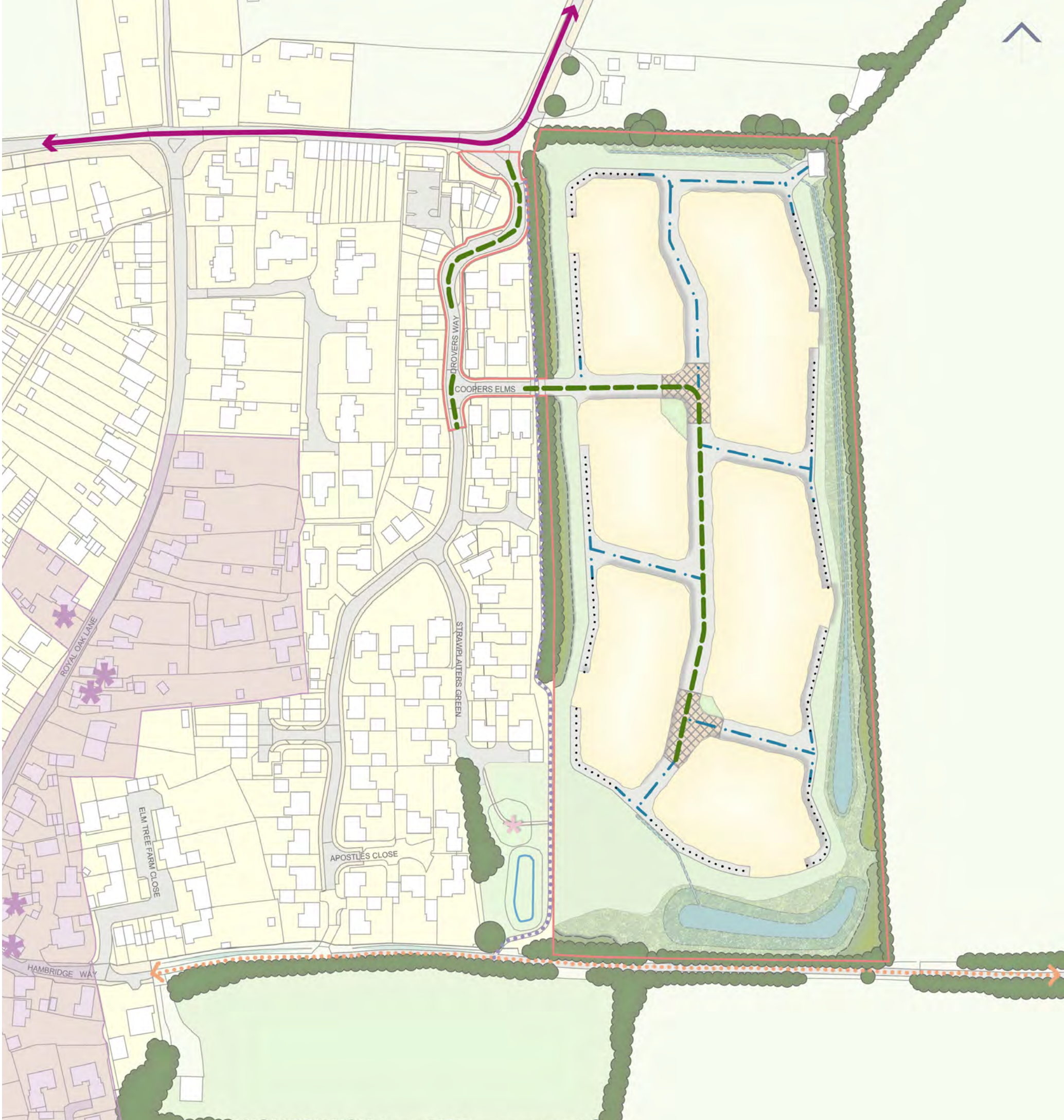


Fig.44: Movement Hierarchy Framework Plan

6.9 PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

The development aims to create a walkable neighbourhood through a network of streets and footways that prioritise pedestrian movement within a safe and welcoming environment.

New footways will be provided along the primary route and secondary streets, while private drives will follow shared surface principles, accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles in a low-traffic, quiet setting.

A looping recreational route will encircle the new homes, offering both amenity space and access to the surrounding landscape, as well as connections to the wider network of footpaths beyond the Site.

-  The Site
-  Pedestrian Movement within Development
-  Pedestrian Movement in Open Space



Fig.45: Pedestrian Movement Plan

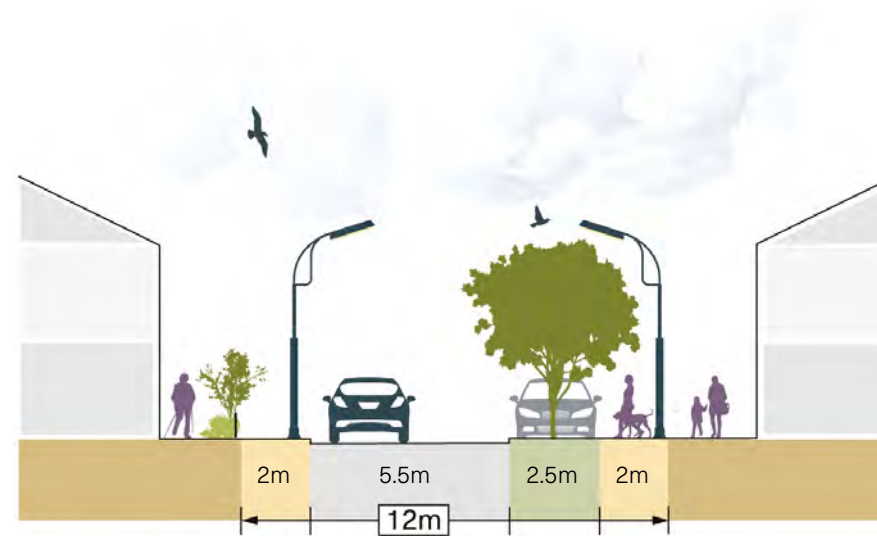
6.10 STREET TYPOLOGY

Primary Route

Typology: Access Road

Description: a street type applicable to all sites on the outskirts of main towns or in fill sites within existing suburban areas and generally serves 50 to 300 dwellings.

- + Carriage width not necessarily constant (min. carriage width 4.8m).
- + Opportunity for boulevard or avenue planting.
- + Target speed: 25mph.

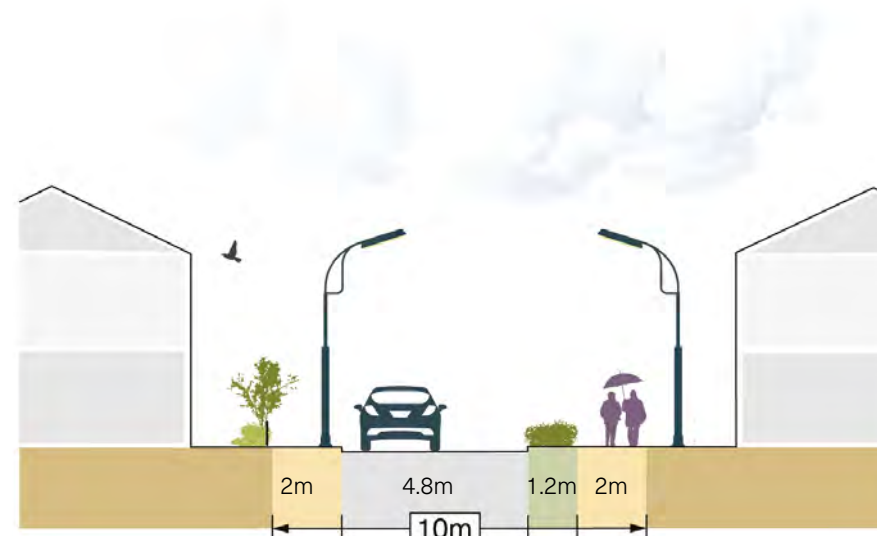


Secondary Street

Typology: Minor Access Way

Description: a road type applicable to all sites on the outskirts of main towns, infill sites within existing suburban areas and sites adjacent to, or within, large or small village centres and generally serves up to 50 dwellings

- + Carriage width not necessarily constant (min. carriage width 3m).
- + Opportunity for shared surface.
- + Target speed: 20mph.

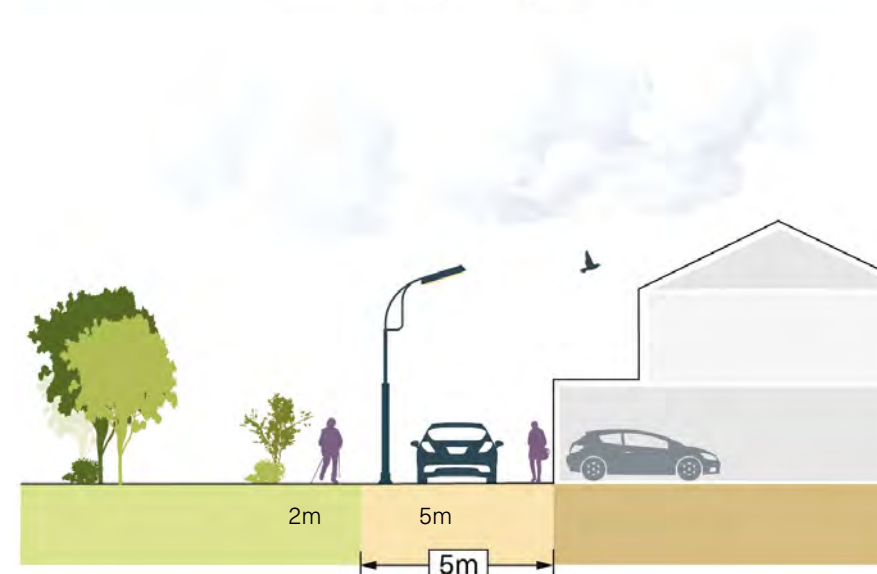


Private Drives

Typology: Shared Private Drive/Mews/Homezone

Description: Appropriate in all types of residential areas including suburban, urban and village areas and can be surrounded by terraced, semi-detached and detached houses

- + Serves only essential traffic with direct access to dwellings.
- + Residential areas in which the living environment clearly predominates over provision for traffic. The aim is to promote neighbourliness, quality of life and social interaction.



6.11 PARKING STRATEGY

In North Hertfordshire, parking standards for residential developments are guided by the Vehicle Parking at New Developments Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

These standards aim to ensure that sufficient off-street parking is provided to meet the needs of new residents while also encouraging the use of sustainable transport methods where feasible.

The SPD adopts a minimum standard approach for residential parking, based on local car ownership levels and the need to reduce overspill parking onto surrounding streets. These standards apply to both allocated (private) and unallocated (shared) spaces and vary depending on the number of bedrooms in a dwelling.

Typical residential parking requirements include:

- + 1-bedroom dwellings: 1 allocated space, plus 1 unallocated space per 3 dwellings
- + 2-bedroom dwellings: 2 spaces per dwelling (can be a combination of allocated and unallocated)
- + 3-bedroom dwellings: 2 spaces per dwelling
- + 4 or more bedroom dwellings: 3 spaces per dwelling
- + Cycle storage: 1 secure, covered space per bedroom

In addition to these residential standards, the policy also encourages the provision of visitor parking, typically at a rate of 1 space per 4 dwellings, and supports the inclusion of garages or carports provided they meet minimum dimensions and usability criteria.

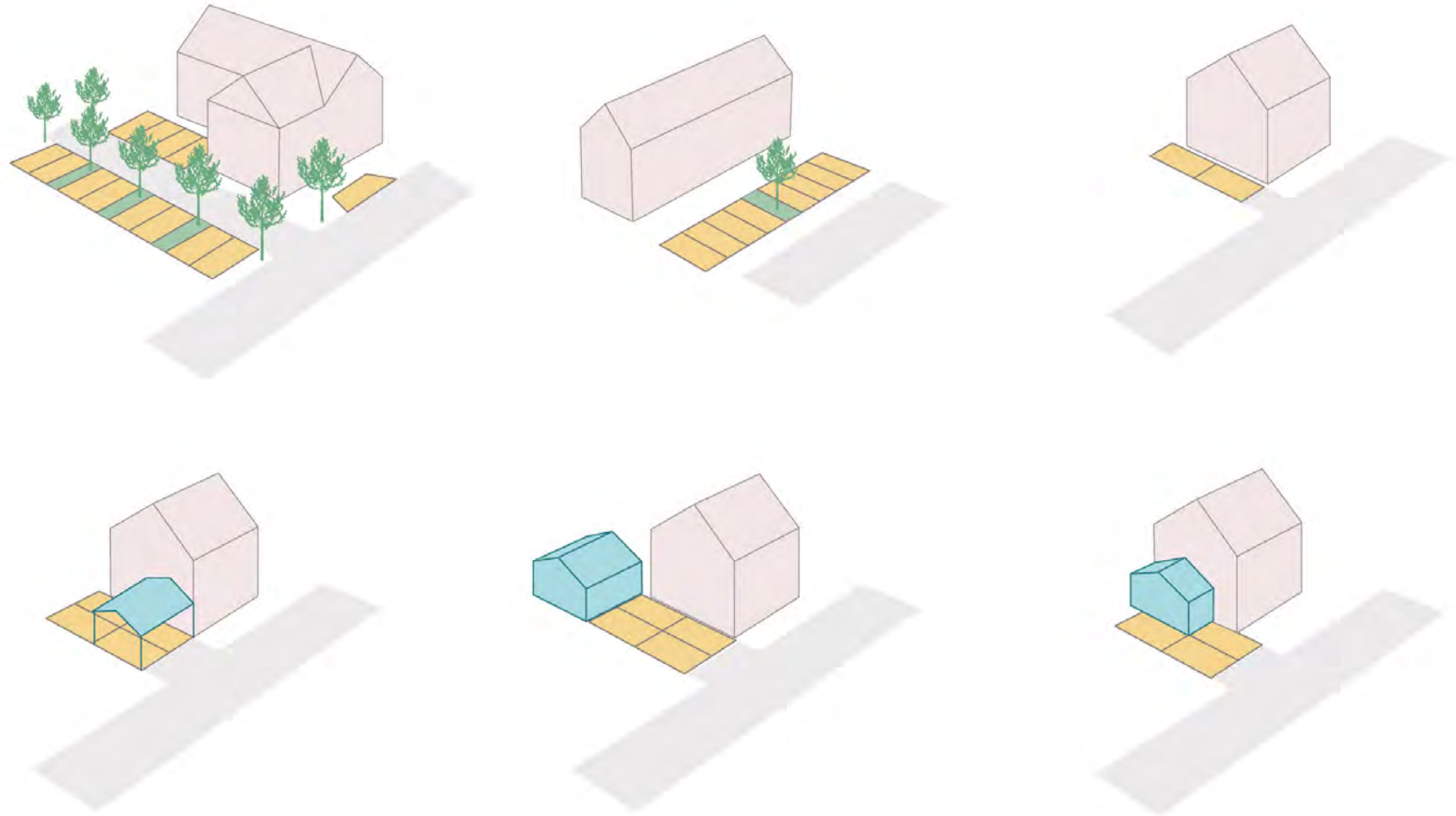


Fig.46: Parking Type Examples



6.12 CHARACTER AREAS

Anchored in its edge-of-village location and shaped by the rich surrounding landscape, the proposed development at Pirton is designed to respect its setting while offering a distinct, high-quality living environment.

1. Northwest Edge & Green Corridors Character Area

This area is defined by its relationship with the existing village development and the linear green corridor that marks the edge of the Site.

The key characteristics include:

- + Lower building heights to respect the adjacent residential scale and enhance visual integration.
- + Proximity to the green corridor, offering residents direct access to natural surroundings and informal open space.
- + A network of secondary streets and private drives, creating a quieter, more intimate neighbourhood feel.

-  The Site
-  Northwest Edge and Green Corridors Character Area
-  Development Core and Primary Route Character Area
-  Village Edge and Recreational Landscape Character Area



Fig.47: Character Areas Framework Plan

6.12 CHARACTER AREAS

2. Development Core & Primary Route Character Area

Serving as the heart of the development, this area centres around the primary movement corridor, with its higher levels of activity and legibility.

Key components include:

- + Dwellings of a more prominent height and massing, providing a sense of enclosure along the primary route.
- + Key frontages and corners that create visual landmarks and enhance wayfinding throughout the development.
- + Shared surface treatments at intersections, fostering pedestrian-priority environments and encouraging informal interaction.
- + Tree planting and doorstep greens, providing visual relief, improving biodiversity, and forming attractive places for casual meetings and play.

3. Village Edge & Recreational Landscape Character Area

Situated along the southern and eastern boundaries, this character area faces out onto the wider landscape and forms the development's green edge. It has been designed to offer both a sensitive response to the rural fringe and valuable recreational opportunities for new and existing residents.

Key characteristics include:

- + Dwellings oriented towards open space, offering natural surveillance and a framed, welcoming interface with the landscape.
- + Integration of green and blue infrastructure, including sustainable drainage features that also contribute to the attractiveness of the landscape.
- + A well-connected leisure route, meandering through the open space and linking key points within and beyond the Site.
- + Seating areas and informal play spaces, encouraging use by all age groups and supporting health and wellbeing.



6.13 APPEARANCE

The exact materials and design of the houses is a Reserved Matter, however, it is expected that the homes will be of a similar scale and massing to the existing houses within Pirton.

The new houses should reflect the local character, although modern, energy efficient materials and designs should be considered alongside more traditional forms and building materials, to create a development which respects and reflects its setting, but is suitable for modern and future living.

The images on this page illustrate some of the architectural qualities evident within Pirton which should be used as design cues at the detailed design stage.



CONCLUSIONS

07

7.1 CONCLUSIONS

The application is made in outline, with all matters reserved except for access. The proposed development will comprise residential development of up to 130 new homes, including 40% affordable housing, with vehicular access from Coopers Elms in the north of the Site.

The proposals have been developed by understanding the existing context of the Site and its relationship with Pirton, in accordance with best practice in urban design, and with reference to both national and local design guidance. The aim is to design a high quality development with a strong sense of place that responds well to its existing context, will stand the test of time, and meet the needs of current and future generations.

The NPPF sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. It establishes that decisions on planning applications should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take the local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

The Economic Role

- + The development would contribute to the local economy of Pirton by generating employment and tax receipts during construction.
- + In the longer term the local economy would benefit from the provision of housing for workers, investment in local infrastructure and services, and additional expenditure in local businesses.
- + Funding from the New Homes Bonus and from additional Council Tax receipts will contribute to the improvements of local services and facilities.

The Social Role

- + The development would contribute to providing new housing within the North Hertfordshire District.
- + New affordable homes to meet local needs, providing new housing opportunities for existing residents in the area.
- + The new areas of public open space, recreational routes will help to support community health and well-being.
- + The Site is located in an accessible location within reach of walking routes and buses, which provide easy links to Hitchin Railway Station.

The Environmental Role

- + The proposals facilitate the retention of the vast majority of on-site trees, hedgerows and woodland which will be strengthened with new planting and structural landscaping.
- + Well connected public open spaces comprising a new landscape area and recreational paths ensure all new homes are with easy reach of a range of high quality green space.
- + On-site biodiversity will be enhanced through the naturalistic landscaping of the open spaces, retention of existing features and creation of new habitats.
- + Sustainable drainage systems and swales will be used to avoid any adverse impacts in terms of flood risk.
- + At the detailed design stage, the new homes will be designed to meet national and local targets in respect of reducing energy demand, carbon emissions and energy efficiency.



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