Consett : Design Guidance & Code

December 2025

Delivering a better world

Quality information

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Introduction

01

1. Introduction

This document aims to empower the local community to influence the design and character of their neighbourhood, and deliver attractive, sustainable development that meets the needs of local people.

1.1 Background

Through the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM has been appointed to provide design support to the Consett Area Neighbourhood Forum (CANF) by preparing this Design Guidance and Codes document.

Consultants at AECOM prepared this report between October 2024 and November 2025 in conjunction with key members of the NPSG. The finished document forms part of the evidence base for the review of the Consett Area Neighbourhood Plan on design-related issues.

1.1.1 Aims

The aims of this document are to:

- positively influence the character and design of new development within the Neighbourhood Area (NA);
- set out clear analysis of the local context, focusing on topics where improvement is most needed;
- benchmark how these opportunities should be delivered, such that they are factored into considerations at site procurement, and the downstream design response.

The report cannot influence the quantum, location or type of development; other tools in the Neighbourhood Plan and County Durham Plan cover these.

Figure 01: Design related issues: Fawcett Park

1.2 What is design coding?

Design coding involves setting out clear and specific guidelines for the determination of planning applications. These codes are intended to ensure that developments contribute positively to their surroundings in terms of aesthetics, functionality and sustainability. They can provide greater assurance for communities and clarity for developers about the design of new development.

1.2.1 Comply and justify

If a planning application deviates from the requirements of this Design Code document, applicants should submit factual evidence to support their proposed variations. They should demonstrate that the built result will be visually coherent and of the highest quality consistent with goals of this design code.

1.2.2 Reading guidance and codes

Both design codes and guidelines are contained within this document, highlighted within dark blue boxes as shown here. The difference between codes and guidelines is summarised below:

Design codes: Design codes are mandatory requirements for design issues and are expressed with the word **Should.**

Guidelines: Guidelines set out aspirations for design that is expected to be delivered and are expressed with one of two words:

- **SHOULD** reflects design principles that are strongly encouraged.
- **COULD** reflects design principles that are suggestions.

1.3 Who should use the guidance and codes?

This document will be used differently by different people in the planning and development process, as summarised in the adjacent table.

A valuable way codes and guidance can be used is as part of a process of co-design and involvement that seeks to understand and takes account of local preferences for design quality. As such the codes and guidance can help to facilitate conversations to help align expectations, aid understanding, and identify key local issues. The resulting design codes and guidance can then set out how to adequately respond to these issues in future development.

Design codes and guidance alone will not automatically secure quality design outcomes, but they will help to prevent poor outcomes by creating a rigorous process that establishes expectations for design quality.

Potential users	How they will use the design guidance and codes
Applicants, developers, & landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the codes and guidelines as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The design codes and guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forum	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the design codes and guidelines are complied with.
Community groups & local residents	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

Table 01: User groups and how they will use the codes and guidance.

1.4 Process, site visit, and engagement

This document has resulted from a collaborative effort between the Consett Area Neighbourhood Forum (CANF) and AECOM, reflecting the priorities of local residents. The design coding process includes the following steps (see adjacent).

An initial meeting with representatives form the Forum took place on the 30th September 2024, with an initial site visit took place on 18th October 2024 , commencing with an in-person meeting between AECOM and representatives of the Consett Neighbourhood Forum (CANF). The purpose of this meeting was to explore the group's key aims and objectives and to address any initial concerns or queries. This was followed by a tour of the Neighbourhood Area (NA).

This activity allowed consultants to appraise local character and the features informing its sense of place, such as heritage and landscape features. The exercise also provided valuable local insight into the area's design issues or opportunities. This investigation helped to create the evidence-base for this document.

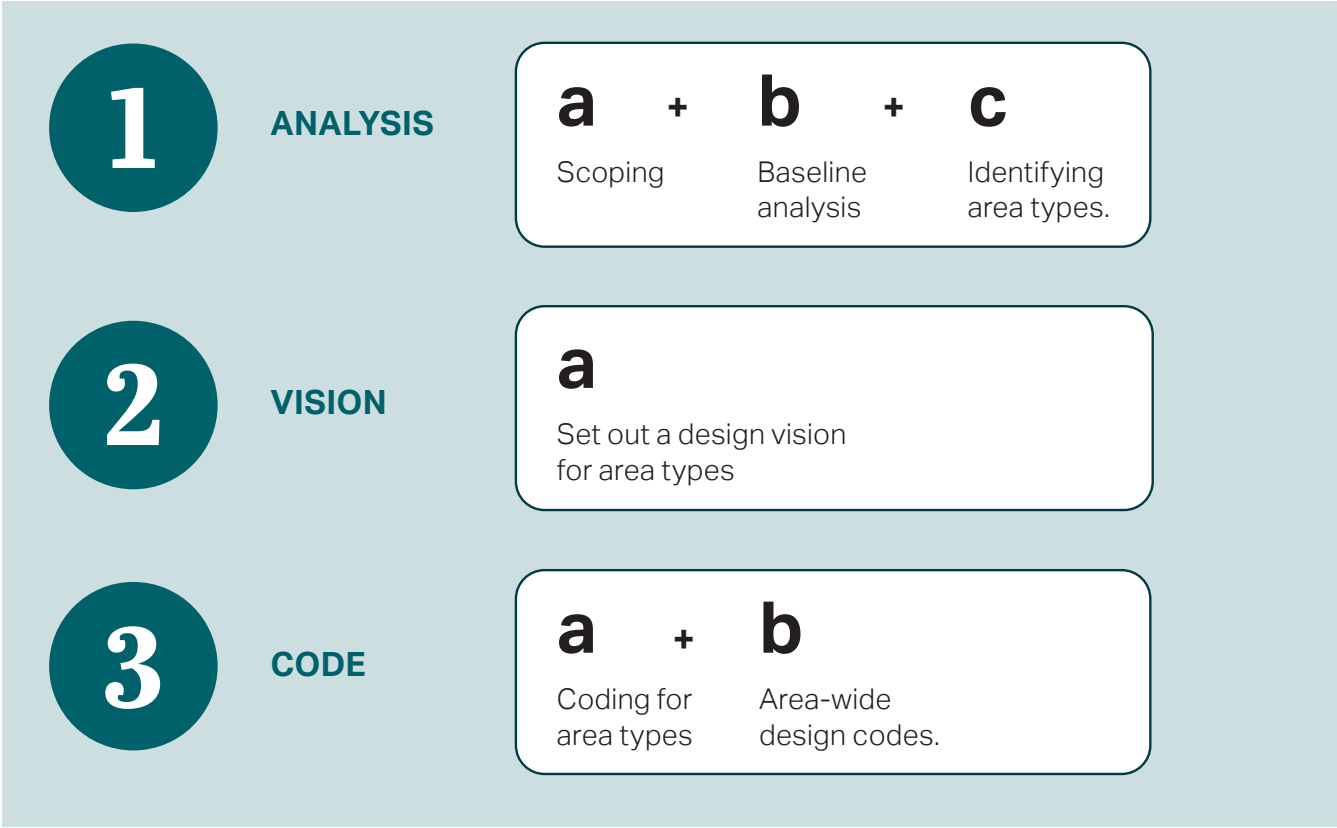


Figure 02: Diagram highlighting the design code process for the Neighbourhood Area (adapted from National Model Design Code).

1.5 Area of study

The town of Consett and surrounding villages including Benfieldside, Consett North, Consett South, Delves Lane, Leadgate, and Medomsley in County Durham. Consett was famously known for its steelworks, which were one of the largest in the country alongside this numerous coal mines operated in the area. Consett Steelworks, founded in the late 19th century, closed in 1980 with all the local coal mines closed before the end of the 20th century. Both these historic industrial uses have left an indelible legacy on the look and feel of the area.

The transition from heavy manufacturing to other sectors has not been without difficulties. There is pressure to attract new industries, create jobs, and revitalise the town centre. High-tech industries, including the green energy sector (such as solar power and wind), and innovation hubs focused on advanced manufacturing are anticipated. These industries should provide cleaner, more sustainable jobs, but should not compromise the amenity of current and proposed housing.

There are permissions and allocations for new housing developments to accommodate the growing population. The Consett Neighbourhood Plan outlines potential areas for residential development, aiming to balance economic growth with maintaining the town's character and green spaces.

By far the largest conurbation is the town of Consett and the immediate surroundings, including: Hamsterley Mill, East Law, Benfieldside, Bridgehill, Blackhill, Templetown, Delves, Crookhall.

Circled around this are the villages of: Benfieldside, Blackhill, Bridgehill, Crookhall, Delves, East Law, Hamsterley Mill, Templetown, The Dene.

The broader landscape context is shaped by the dramatic form of the Derwent Valley, which cuts a deep, green corridor around the northern and western edges of Consett. Steep, wooded slopes, pockets of ancient

Figure 03: Derwent Business Park: Werdolh Way

Figure 04: Consett Business Centre

woodland, and the open upland plateau create a strong transition between the town's built edge and the surrounding countryside.

The River Derwent acts as a defining natural spine, with its associated cloughs, pastures, and recreational routes forming a continuous green/blue network. This valley setting both contains the settlement visually and creates a layered backdrop of ridgelines, tree canopies, and long views.

The urban areas are a mix of development types and dates and create a complex urban pattern, this contributes to a degree of discord in terms of the neighbourhood design. On the whole, where large scale development has been built out, these are typically less successful in respect of space standards and attractive streets. And are largely based on a repeatable house types and layouts not deemed good practice today. Small zones from the smaller and historic settlements in the NA tend to be more responsive to the setting and placemaking.

The site of the former steelworks has been the focus of Project Genesis, circa 315.2 Ha of land for the creation of:

- Around 2,000 houses already delivered on the site;
- Retail developments, such as Tesco and Starbucks and the creation of a new Farmfoods;
- Industrial units and workshops, including extensions to existing units and new facilities, to provide local employment opportunities. Much of this is still to be developed;
- A new replacement Shotley Bridge Hospital at Derwent View. Detailed planning permission for the hospital was gained in 2023;
- Public parks (Fawcett Park, The Urban Park), wildlife ponds, and the facilitation of access to the Coast-to-Coast cycle route;
- Consett Steelworkers Memorial.

All the notable planning context is outlined on page 13. It is significant that there is a large amount of employment opportunity outlined for the area.

Figure 05: Thomas Street: Blackhill

Figure 06: Queen Street: Near Derwent Park

Key

Neighbourhood Area (NA) boundary

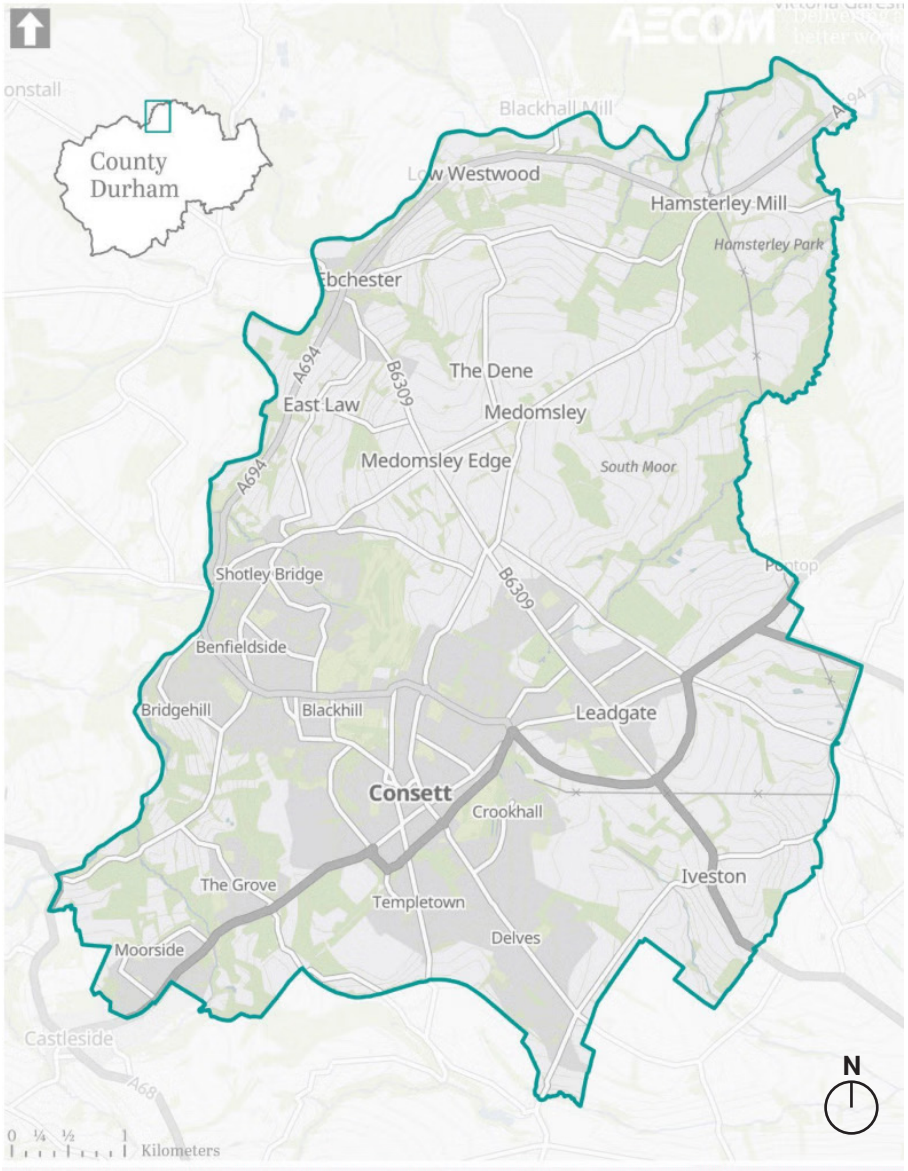


Figure 07: Consett Area Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

Figure 08: Handley Cross Medomsley

Figure 09: Parkside near Consett Park

1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan vision and relationship to design quality

At the time of writing, the vision statement within the Consett Area Neighbourhood Plan describes the overarching aim for the future of local development. This report intends to support this vision as it relates to design, namely:

- Availabilty of quality homes for everyone; tenure and typology blind;
- A mix of homes to suit all types of households;
- Enhancing the town centre environment through more attractive and co-ordinated design;

"By 2040 the Consett Neighbourhood Area will have benefited from appropriate and sustainable development, which recognises the needs of the locality and where vibrant economic growth, supported by investment and infrastructure, and the preservation of our distinctive environment go hand in hand.

It will be a place where the whole community thrives, where our young people are able to access education, employment, leisure activities, services and homes they can afford, to encourage them to remain in the area and support the future sustainability of our town.

Visitors to the area are welcomed, with the potential of the visitor economy realised as a result of our rich heritage and natural beauty, which will be protected and enhanced for future generations."

Consett Area Neighbourhood Plan Vision

1.7 Planning context: relevant to the codes

The Consett Neighbourhood Plan Area lies within the Durham County Council Local Planning Authority Area.

Key documents which should be reviewed alongside this Design Codes are listed in Table 02.

This code is designed to site under the Authority wide Durham Design Code, both documents should be used together to guide design quality.

Local planning policy and design guidance		Notes	Adoption date
County Council	County Durham Plan : Key policy noted in table in appendices		2020
	County Durham Plan Policies Map		2020
	Building for Life (useful checklist)	Currently adopted SPDs	2019
	Residential Amenity Standards (min. standards)		2023
	Parking and Accessibility		2023
	County Durham Design Code (including settlement study for Consett/ Leadgate/Hamsterley Mill/ Castleside (including Moorside and The Grove/Shotley Bridge)		2024 (settlement studys under review likely Jan 2026)
	Conservation area appraisal: Shotley Bridge	CAAs	2009
	Conservation area appraisal: Ebchester		2009
	Conservation area appraisal: Blackhill		2009
Neighbourhood Forum	Consett Area Neighbourhood Plan (CANP)	Currently under review	XXXX
	Consett Housing needs assessment (CANP evidence)	Currently under review	2025

Table 02: Summary of planning policy, guidance and evidence documents

1.8 Development context

The County Durham Plan allocates 670 homes through 5 site allocations around The Consett Area along with 10.8 hectares at Hownsgill Industrial Estate for general employment land to enable the renewal and regeneration of the area (see Figure 13 overleaf).

Employment sites (allocations):

- Hownsgill within Project Genesis.
- Leadgate Industrial Estate small site in the business park: 1.6Ha
- Villa Real (Consett Business Park) (Consett Business Park): 0.8Ha
- Delves Lane (South), small site in business Park: 0.6Ha
- 3no small site within Number One Industrial Estate.

Other

Project Genesis: 315.2 Ha including House site noted above. It is identified as having potential for mixed use development'

Future for development:

Residents wish the Neighbourhood Plan to influence the design of these sites for additional homes and employment. There have been 1137 dwelling completed in Consett between 2011 and 2024 The Neighbourhood Forum Group have identified several missed design opportunities which should have been identified and factored into the overall design impacts on appearance and more importantly for quality of life. These are explored in more detail in Section 1.9.

Figure 10: Number One Industrial Estate. Some distinct plots for development within the estate.

Figure 11: Leadgate industrial estate, small plot.

Figure 12: Knitsley Lane, Project Genesis employment zone.

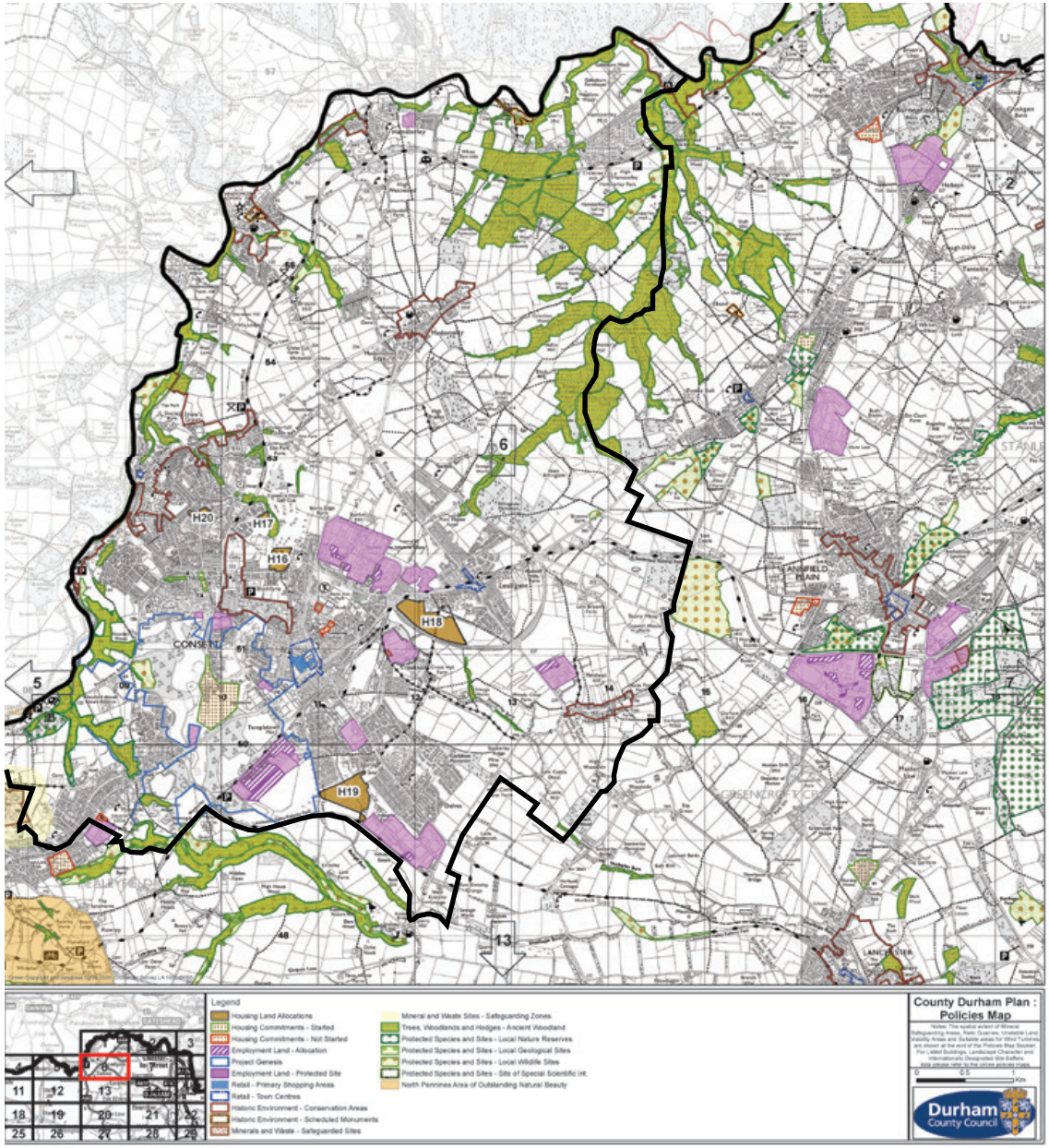


Figure 13: Extract from the County Durham Policy Plan.

1.9 Targeting design quality issues

Neighbourhood Plan design codes align with the national planning policy requirement for taking account of local design preferences. This involves communities in early discussions about the design of new homes and other development in their area.

Framing the objectives

The NFSG were asked for feedback on the priorities for the Consett Area Design Code. A questionnaire was issued to the group and the findings are summarised adjacently, organised under five themes:

- **A** **Context**
- **B** **Connections**
- **C** **Built Form**
- **D** **Nature**
- **E** **Resilience**

Four themes have been taken from Locality's 'Place Assessment Toolkit', which simplifies the '10 Characteristics of a well-designed place' as set out in the National Design Guide (NDG), with Resilience added as a fifth important feature.

These themes have been used to guide the structure of guidance and codes later in the report.

Context

To ensure the NA's character, heritage, conservation value, and local features are preserved in new development, a coordinated and sensitive approach is essential. New design should respond to context, using materials and forms that echo its historic architecture. Community input is key to shaping developments that feel authentic and locally grounded.

Historic buildings and forms should be preserved where possible, maintaining their character while serving modern needs. Heritage should be celebrated through the building attribute of traditional neighbourly places, with space at the heart of communities to meet and be together and spaces on streets to stop be that on the street or in the garden to chat. These elements help embed history into the everyday experience of the area.

Green infrastructure and public realm improvements can enhance these assets, while landscape-sensitive design ensures new buildings sit comfortably within the surrounding terrain.

Together, these actions support growth that respects the Consett Area's identity and strengthens its sense of place.

Residential amenity, such as green and community areas, should be located strategically to be quicky and easily accessible to residents.

Connections

A well-connected street network supports a legible and walkable layout, reinforcing the area's structure and making it easier for people to navigate. Streets should be designed not just for vehicles, but as multi-functional public spaces that encourage walking, cycling, and social interaction. Retaining and enhancing historic street patterns where possible helps maintain a sense of continuity and place.

Pedestrian and cycle paths, are vital connectors between neighbourhoods, green spaces, and key destinations. These routes should be integrated into new developments to promote sustainable travel and ensure permeability across the urban fabric. Wayfinding, lighting, and landscape design can enhance their usability and safety.

Green infrastructure, including parks, tree-lined streets, and natural corridors, plays a dual role in movement and placemaking. It provides attractive, healthy routes for active travel while also supporting biodiversity and climate resilience. Linking green spaces through greenways and linear parks can create a coherent network that encourages movement and strengthens the town's visual and ecological identity.

Built form

New development should respond to the prevailing scale and massing of the Consett Area's built environment. The town's traditional family housing and modest commercial buildings create a human-scale setting that should guide future proposals. Larger buildings, where appropriate, should be broken down into smaller volumes to maintain visual continuity and avoid overwhelming the streetscape.

Boundary treatments—such as walls, railings, hedges, and fences—help define the edge between public and private space. In The Consett Area, with the exception of traditional terraced housing there are usually low brick walls and iron railings. These should be echoed in new development, using materials and detailing that are consistent with the local vernacular.

Nature

The Consett Area's landscape should be celebrated as a defining feature of its identity. The surrounding upland terrain, ridgelines, and valleys offer dramatic views and a strong sense of place. New development should work with this topography, not against it—preserving key sightlines, integrating natural features, and using planting to soften built edges. Landscape design should reflect the local ecology, using native species and sustainable management practices to create a sense of continuity with the wider countryside.

New developments should include well-integrated public spaces that connect with existing green assets and contribute to a wider network. These spaces should be designed with long-term stewardship in mind, ensuring they remain safe, clean, and well-used over time.

Resilience

To ensure the Consett Area is resilient and future-ready, new development should integrate sustainability through orientation, drainage, energy, and transport infrastructure.

Building orientation should maximise natural light and solar gain, especially in winter, while reducing overheating in summer. South-facing façades are ideal for solar panels and daylight, supporting energy efficiency and comfort.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), like swales, rain gardens, and permeable paving, should be standard. These manage surface water, reduce flood risk, and enhance biodiversity, while also improving the quality of public spaces.

Renewable energy should be embedded in development, with solar panels on homes and public buildings. Community energy schemes can boost local energy security and reduce emissions, supported by energy-efficient building design.

EV charging infrastructure should be widely available, with on-street and rapid chargers integrated into new developments and public areas. This supports the shift to cleaner transport and future-proofs the town's mobility network.


HARRINGTON BROWN

Place analysis and area types

02

2. Place analysis and area types

This chapter presents a place analysis of the Consett Neighbourhood Area (NA), setting out ten area types. This helps to inform a series of design guidelines that are both sensitive and responsive to local context, landscape setting, and character.

2.1 Understanding place

Achieving quality development starts with a comprehensive understanding of place. Places have a clear and strong identity and character. They are a combination of their physical form, their activities and their meaning to people. The adjacent diagram shows how these factors come together to create a successful place.

All new development should undertake its own comprehensive analysis of place to understand a proposals broader context and establish aspirations and place-specific responses to the location, siting and design of new development.

For the purposes of this document, the analysis contained within Section 2 helps to illustrate the variation in character, and thus the sense of place across the Consett NA.

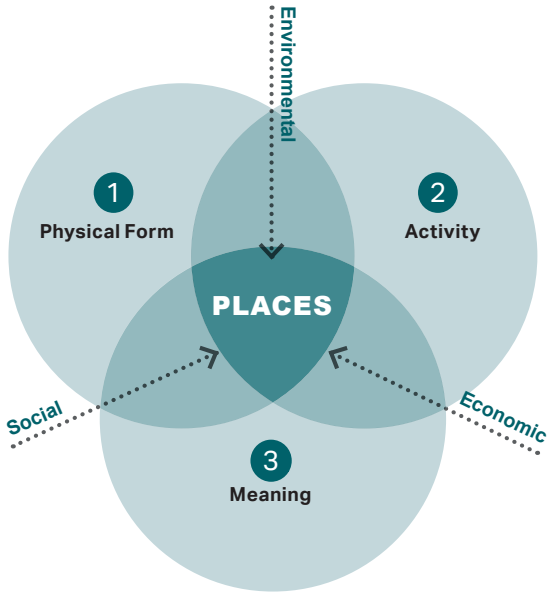
Seven of the 'area types' have been identified with further analysis showcasing what makes each area type special and distinctive and elements of good design can be highlighted for future development needs.

It is clear from the assignment of area types and the mapping in Figure 16 on page 24 that the Consett area is a patchwork quilt of different smaller developments. This aligns with the industrial growth of the town.

Therefore new developments should take note of the surrounding area types for context, and agree with the Local Authority which area type is most appropriate to take reliance on. In this special and mixed landscape.

There is also the opportunity to look to a new area type for the Consett Area. Included in these Design Codes is an area type for modern sustainable residential development, benchmarking specific sustainability standards.

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) outlines the use of area types as a means of grouping places that share similar character, key features or distinctive attributes across the Neighbourhood Area (NA).



1. Physical conditions of existing built development including layout, form, scale, appearance, landscape character, waterways and flood risk.
2. Use, vitality and diversity, including community facilities and local services.
3. How a place is perceived, including local heritage, views inwards and outwards and social histories.

Figure 14: A diagram showing how different factors come together to form a sense of place.

2.2 Identifying Consett Areas, area types

2.1.1 What are Area types?

Area types are broad categories that group together areas with similar characteristics. These can include residential, commercial, industrial, or mixed-use areas. Area types seek to provide guidance and codes to enable and support future development and ensure it is of sufficient quality.

Through desktop studies, site visits, observations, analysis and mapping exercises, area types have been identified for the Consett Area. For each a design vision is established setting out what the design considerations for each area should be. As there are some areas where the historic development wouldn't confirm to today's best practice and space standards these are sometime flagged and the positive attributes recorded for reference.

Design codes are concluded from the vision using the positive architectural references and any appropriate adaptations which would harmonise with the existing places.

This vision enabled the identification of appropriate design codes.

2.1.2 Area types in the Consett Area

For the purposes of this Design Code, the Consett area has been divided into ten area types. These have been aligned under the Durham Design Code Area Types to build on the information already developed by the Council.

This Code focuses on the area types which are most useful references for future development as noted in Section 2.1.1 above. The selected areas types are known as Settlement Focus Areas (SFAs).

Step 1. The Neighbourhood Area (NA) is divided up into area types

Step 2. Settlement Focus Areas (SFAs) are identified.

Step 3. A place analysis is undertaken for each Settlement Focus Area (SFA), and area-type specific codes are provided.

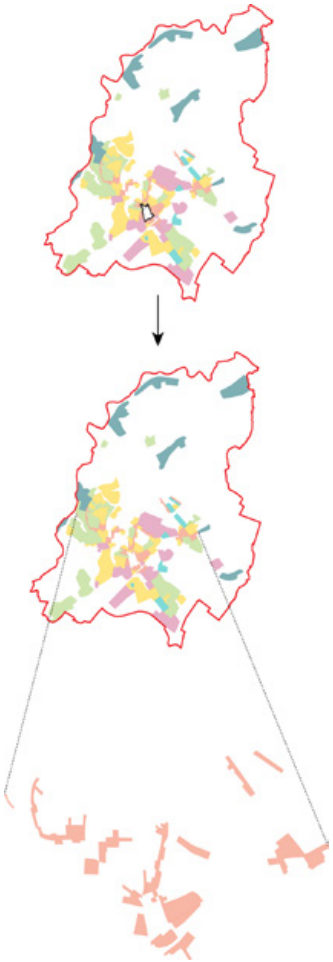
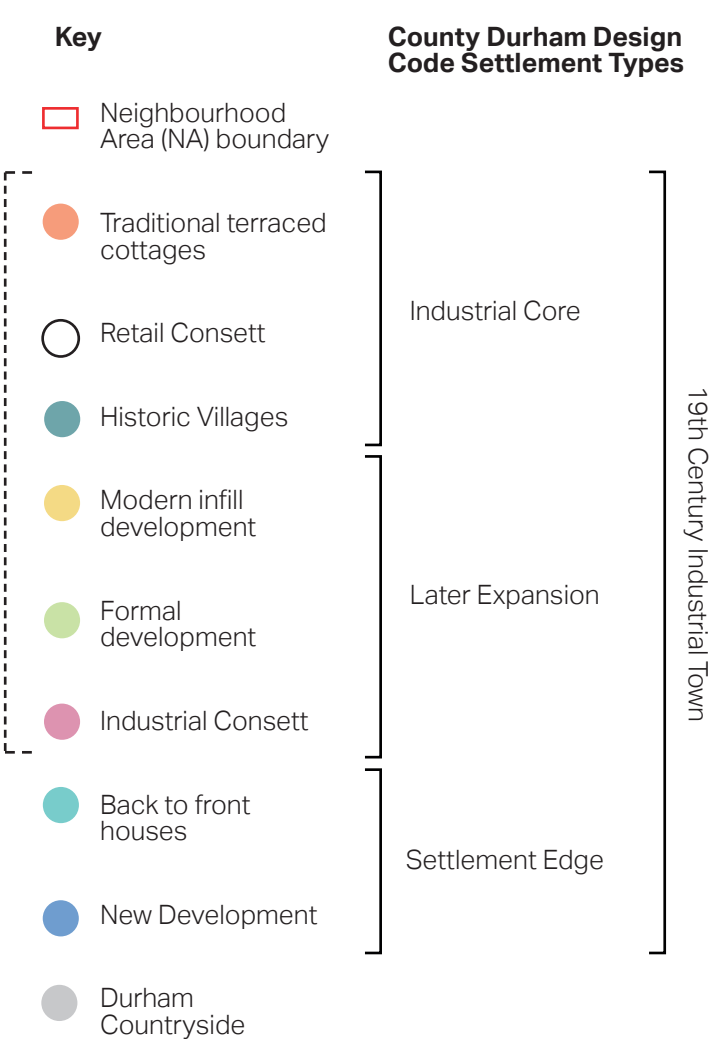


Figure 15: The process of area type application, and the how the focus of the place analysis was defined.

Area Type Durham Design Code. 2023.		Area Types identified for the Consett Area.	SFA	[Y]/[N]
19th Century Industrial Towns The core of industrial towns is characterised by tight-knit terraced plan forms. Dwellings sit at the back of pavement with yards to the rear. Occasional higher status buildings in larger plots also exist. Later expansion areas are lower density with increased private amenity space on larger plots.	Industrial Core:	Traditional terraced cottages	1	[Y] Good example of compact 2-3bd houses
		Retail Consett	6	[Y] Shop Fronts only
		Historic Villages	3	[Y] but selected good practice.
	Later expansion/ small development sites	Modern infill development	2	[Y] but selected good practice.
		House Type led development;	4	[Y] Good examples of phased development.
		Industrial Consett	7	[Y] however, good practice not local examples
	Settlement edge – medium/large development sites	Back to front houses (including the Bradley bungalows)	[8]	[N] not considered good practice. Unlikely to recreate.
		New Development	5	[Y] however, good practice examples of carbon zero homes ? not local examples
		Durham Countryside	[10]	[N] no development control required.

Table 03: The relationship between the Durham Design Code Area Types and the Area Types identified for the Consett Area.



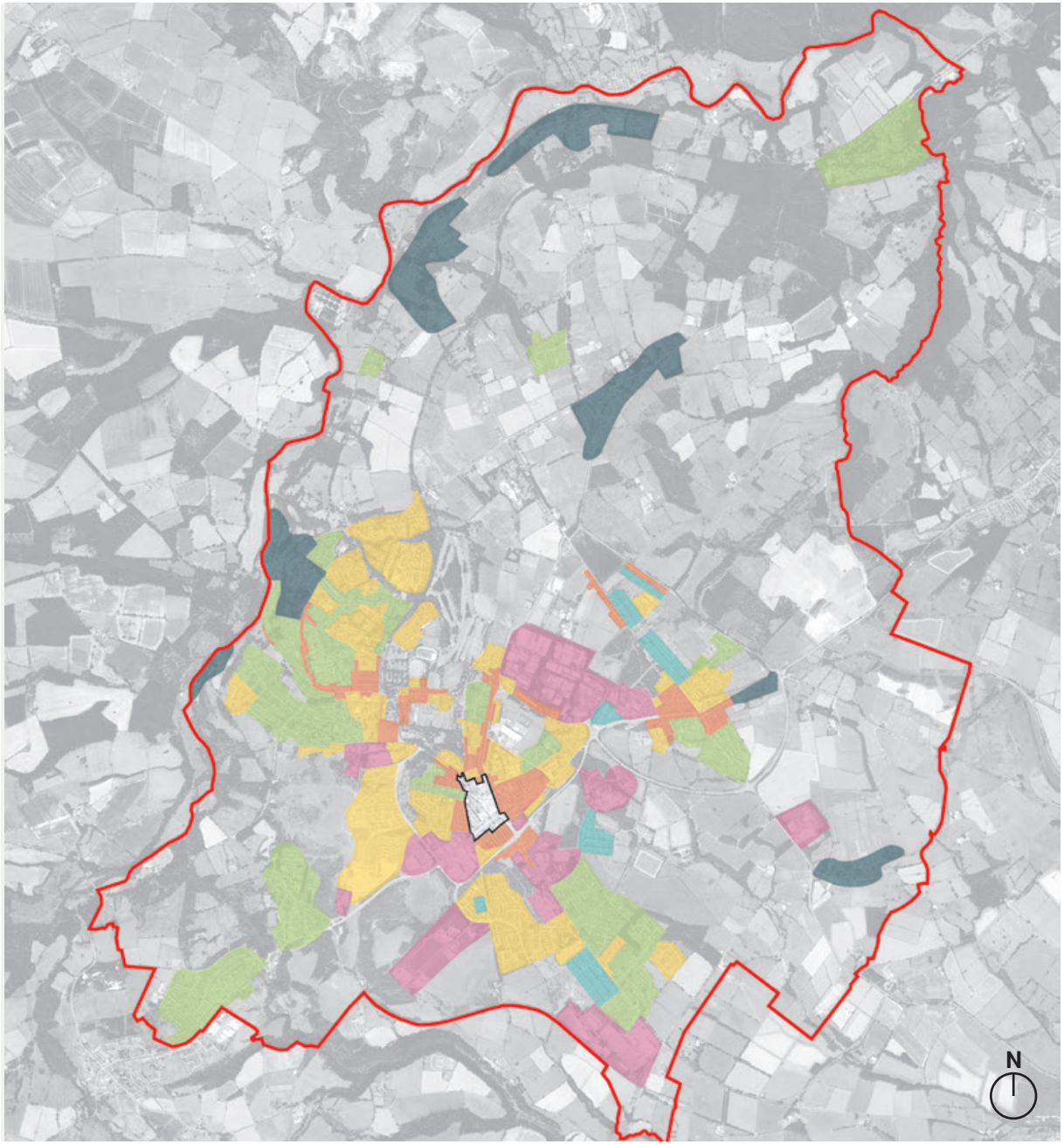


Figure 16: Diagram showing Consett's area types. Please note that area-type boundaries are generalised at this scale.

2.2.1 Area Types and new development.

As any new residential development is expected to be contained within or adjacent to existing settlements in the area, the place analysis is focused on the Settlement Focus Areas (SFAs). Each SFA has its own analysis and concludes with a design vision that outlines how the area's characteristics and distinctive features can be enhanced or maintained as developed occurs in the future.

Applicants should adhere to all guidance in Section 3 and any applicable codes or guidance in the specific area type where the proposal is located. Applicants should consider neighbouring area types when developing proposals.

2.2.2 The Area Types: Expanded descriptions

The following descriptions give a broad understanding of what constitutes a typical area type. The seven SFAs are expanded on within the following pages of analysis. Where available a reference to the appropriate Durham Design Code Area Type (DDCA) is also given.

Settlement Focus Areas (SFAs):

Area type 1 : Traditional terraced cottages

Predominantly situated in Consett Town, these traditional rubble stone cottages form the traditional terraced development. Parts of Blackhill are good examples of this.

These planned forms appear in linear rows, largely organised around a tight grid pattern. For the most part the architecture is very uniform, characterised by simple, flat front elevations broken up by modest and clearly defined window and door openings.

Due to the high density of properties in this area, there are generally no front gardens or defensible space directly onto the street. Private space to the rear is limited to small yards, however these can open onto wide alleys used for parking and servicing. Residents in this type of development would rely on access to new formal parks, such as Consett Park, or existing access to the countryside to provide any connection to nature.

Some streets were incorporated, like Aynsley Street. Larger and more prominent dwellings, usually positioned along formal open spaces or major roads, tend to be more substantial in scale and design. Their architecture often includes bay windows, ornate porch details, enhanced roof treatments, and small but clearly defined front gardens.

Both types of terraces are combined, including corner properties linking the two, to create this area type. The scale, density, and material selection are harmonised throughout.

Area type 2 Modern infill development

This type of development spans the period from the late 1970s to the present day. It predominantly represents the housing considered more aspirational when built.

These are typically modest 'executive' homes, featuring off-street parking, sizable front and rear gardens, and a small community feel.

Often comprising between 20 and 100 homes, these developments are usually built around inward-looking cul-de-sacs, typically located behind existing development or within established structural landscaping. Typically they are not part of a wider neighbourhood.

Architecturally, the style reflects the prevailing tastes of the era. However, these homes generally have decorative front facades, often characterised by an integral garage and a modern interpretation of heritage features Examples include quoins, window styles (such as cottage or early 20th-century influences), and decorative brickwork and bonding patterns.

The facing materials can vary, with more successful examples drawing inspiration from the local rubble stone vernacular.

Area type 3 Historic Villages

Around the Consett NA, there are a few historic villages, such as Shotley Bridge and Ebchester, which developed along river valleys and key roads.

These settlements often developed into stopping points, and grew to serve small farming communities. Typically, they feature a small high street (Front Street) with a few shops and civic buildings, like a church. Handsome farmhouses are often found nearby, and occasionally larger manor houses, which over time have been surrounded by more modest, urban-style dwellings – for example, the Victorian villas in Shotley Bridge – as the settlements expanded.

A common thread is the stone rubble facades and the views of lush countryside. The natural tones and rich textures of these elements combine to create a pleasant rural character.

While there's some variation in the type of development within these villages, the historic elements grouped together create the character. This aligns with detailed conservation area appraisals, which aim to control development within their boundaries and highlight the traditional features of these places, encouraging a holistic understanding.

Area type 4 Formal development (ref DDCA Settlement Edge – medium- large development sites)

These developments are characteristic of areas where well-established house types are arranged across a defined scheme. A clear example in the Consett area is Hamsterley Hall. The development comprises exclusively detached dwellings set within generous private gardens.

This repeatable or standardised housing model is primarily employed for cost-effectiveness and speed of construction.

Such developments are often planned with future expansion in mind. This is typically evident in post-war estates like The Grove, although some more recent developments, such as Fawcett Park, appear to be built around similar principles.

Where this type of development is a success the house types are carefully placed to manage scale and massing so welcoming and comfortable

environments are created. Crucially, the focus is also on well-designed streetscapes that derive a pleasant character from formal open spaces, trees, garden planting, and a minimal visual impact from parked vehicles.

Area type 5 New Development

A modern urban development characterised by a balance of contemporary architecture, sustainable technologies, and community-oriented design.

The buildings typically maintain a strong overall aesthetic drawn from the features and technology on the buildings, the landscape is usually informal and natural. Buildings often feature clean lines, large windows, and materials like timber, brick, and stone, to create a warm and natural aesthetic.

Green technologies are integrated into the design, with features like solar panels, green roofs, and rainwater harvesting systems. The focus is on energy efficiency and sustainability, with highly insulated buildings and efficient heating systems.

These developments are designed to be pedestrian and cycle-friendly, with good paths for walking and wheeling. Shared spaces, such as community centres, workshops, and allotments, encourage social interaction and a sense of community.

The overall look and feel is one of a vibrant, sustainable, and welcoming urban environment that prioritises both human well-being and environmental responsibility.

Area type 6 Retail Consett

Consett Town Centre serves the local community, so there is a very practical and community based feel to the shops. Though the traditional high street along Front Street and Middle Street still retain the majority of the units. There are cafes and small shops tucked around the town. This aligns to the fact the street pattern is quite unconventional, built up over time, there's little continuity of form and fronts and backs of properties are mixed. There are opportunities to draw everything together under a cohesive set of public realm and shop front treatments which would elevate the look of the Town Centre.

Area type 7 Industrial Consett

The Consett Area's industrial areas, reflect modest sized business parks and industrial estates, demonstrating a blend of modest utilitarian architecture lifted with mature tree planting. Small parking areas are often well sited to minimise the visual impact of cars; however, the associated service and access roads tend to be heavily engineered and create a less welcoming appearance. Viewpoint at Derwent Business Centre stands out as the premier office offer, however, throughout business parks dotted all around the areas there is a mix of older, robust structures, alongside more modern industrial estates. The emphasis of the built form is on cost and operational efficiency. With a shift towards diverse modern enterprises, the design quality and landscape setting of such will need careful consideration to ensure the quality of the businesses moving and staying in the Consett Area.

Other area types

Area type 8 Back to front houses

During the rapid industrialisation of the 19th century, particularly in this area of England, these types of dwellings were very common. They were built to house the large influx of workers moving to industrial towns, and due to the speed of construction and the sheer number of people needing accommodation, the houses were often built quickly and offering limited space and amenities.

These houses are typically constructed in long rows sharing side walls. Front doors were entered from shared amenity space or via long front gardens, yards and streets to the rear. Their uniform height, narrow frontages, and rhythm of repeated architectural elements establish a cohesive streetscape.

These layouts were never intended to support modern parking needs. Many areas have had to adapt, often resulting in some disruption to the original character, for example, by providing vehicle access through former rear gardens, or by narrowing pavements to create on-street bay parking (as shown in Figure 19).

Over time owners have turned the houses round and located the front door to the streets and adopted the larger garden as a rear space.

Area type 9 Durham Countryside

The countryside around The Consett NA in County Durham is characterised by a beautiful and varied landscape, blending elements of rugged moorland, lush valleys, and scenic reservoirs. However, detailed analysis of this wider rural area is limited within this document, as it contains very little urban development, has minimal relevance to design coding, and lies largely within protected landscapes where opportunities for future growth are highly constrained.

Figure 17: The surrounding Durham Countryside.

Figure 18: Historic stone cottages seen in Consett's Historic Villages.

Figure 19: Traditional terraced cottages seen in the Consett NA.

2.3 Using this section of the Code.

The following text is divided into the noted area types and applicable to existing and future development within the Consett Area Neighbourhood Area (NA). These design codes should be considered in conjunction with the area wide design guidelines in Section 3 and noted in the 'Codes to cover' table.

2.4 Introduction

This section is intended for use by developers and other planning applicants as well as by the local planning authority when assessing development proposals . For each area type the following is provided:

- Overview of the existing area type;
- A table outlining what to reinforce and what to uplift in new development (note 'code must cover' element is explained in Section 3);
- Images of what "good" looks like in this area type;
- An illustration of the design intent, annotated to provide an example of how the best elements might be drawn together;
- Codes as defined in the 'codes to cover' table at the beginning of each Area Type section. These may include reference images, diagrams and tables. These codes are not appliable for extensions.

It is acknowledged that there is not always agreement on aesthetic issues and architectural tastes may vary. The following guidance therefore allows for flexibility and design innovation, whilst ensuring that any new development is appropriate and complementary to the surrounding context.

The guidance in this section is focused on topics that help designers and decision makers respond appropriately to context. To enable a clear design process, new development proposals should use the guidance to ensure that development proposals enhance the setting and sustainability of the Neighbourhood Area, while not detracting from its context, local character, and sense of place.

The goal is to promote the delivery of the best possible range of development, which will support sustainable and contextually appropriate development.

Reference to existing policy: Where there is already reference to a theme within existing local policy or guidance, this has been highlighted alongside the below icon.

Example of a existing policy

Please note:

Both design codes and guidelines are contained within this document. The difference between codes and guidelines is summarised below:

Design codes: Design codes are mandatory requirements for design issues & expressed with the word **Should.**

Guidelines: Guidelines set out aspirations for design that is expected to be delivered and expressed with one of two words:

- **SHOULD** reflects design principles that are strongly encouraged/ **COULD** reflects design principles that are suggestions.

2.5 Area type 1: Traditional terraced houses

Densely packed two storey buildings, the street pattern is strongly overlaid. Therefore houses can step down gently sloping streets. This street pattern is often orientated framing views to key buildings or long views toward open countryside or parkland. So, though urban there are good borrowed views. There is a strong character derived from the simplicity of the architecture, however the building material, ofter rubble stone provide a look of quality and permanence.

Terraced blocks	Calculations
Indicative Dwellings per Hectare (DpH)	45-75 DpH
Typical plot size range	4.5m (W) x 15m (D) 6m (W) x 25m (D)
Typical block size range	55m (W) x 45m (D) 45m (W) x 160m (D)

Table 04: Typical density, plot sizes and block sizes for this area type. **Please note:** Density calculations are based on a single sample. It is recommended that applicants undertake their own testing.

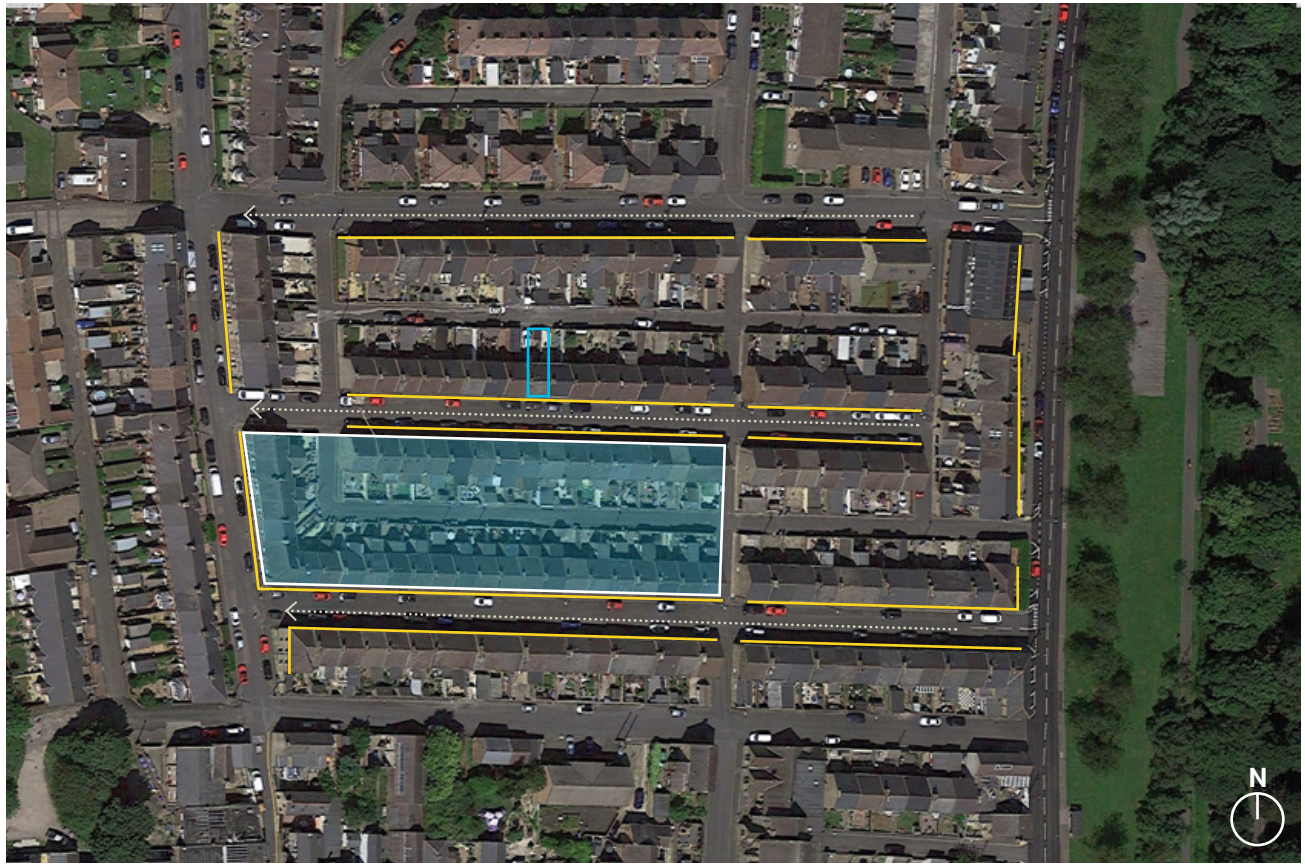


Figure 20: An annotated aerial view of traditional terraced housing in Blackhill.

- Primary frontage/building line
- Views
- Plot
- Block (perimiter block with access lane/ginnel)

Topic	Good Design characteristics	Planning issues / opportunities	Codes to cover
Context Character, Conservation, Heritage, Local features	• Strong grid layout • Distinctive blocks • Common traditional materials • Strong and simple detailing • Texture created though use of rubble stone		• Preserving the strong uniform character; • Materials and details • **Managing traditional enclosure ratio with modern standards.**
Connections: Context, urban form, layout, movement	• Good overlooked = vibrant street • Clear pavement space. • Space for parking to the front of properties. Some addition spaces in the rear streets. • Good block sizes = walkable		• Building sensitively in relationship to the street
Built form: Building massing, scale and type, blocks and plots, boundary treatments, setbacks, building lines	• Good block sizes = neighbourly sizes • Tight building line give strong built character • Max 2 storey high terraces		• Controlling block structure and size • Building line, • Controlling heights • **Balancing traditional house types /future needs;** • **Incorporating parking sensitively** • **Space standard, gardens;**
Nature: Landscape, green & blue infrastructure, open & public spaces		• Urban areas with only small yards, no tree planting or gardens to the street.	• **Allowance for nature (in an urban area).**
Resilience Orientation Materials SuDs Energy production EV charging		• Challenging to incorporate on plot energy and EV charging (on street)	• **Using sustainable materials;** • **Incorporating on plot energy;** • **Incorporating EV charging;**

Table 05: Outlining what to reinforce and what to uplift through better controls in the codes. **(Codes in bold are covered in Section 3)**

2.5.1 What good looks like

The illustration on the following page brings together various elements of 'good design' from across the Traditional terraced house area type. The images on this page have been used to inform the illustration, and highlight what certain elements of good design look like in practice.

Figure 22: A strong grid layout to streets, with tight building lines that result in a distinctive and dense built character. Buildings 'turn corners', with frontages addressing both streets - no blank facades.

Figure 24: Positive use of traditional rubble stone in terraced facades, which is locally distinctive and creates interesting texture. Uniformity of architectural materials and elements along the street.

Figure 21: Terraces that positively respond to topography with stepped or sloped rooflines. Along main routes, small setbacks with strong boundary treatments allow space for front gardens, and positive visual continuation of frontages.

Figure 23: A well overlooked residential street of 'human-scale' and comfortable sense of enclosure. Continuation of the local vernacular and architectural form on both sides create a pleasant view anchored at the church tower.

Figure 25: Modern example of terraced housing with street-facing facades make an effort to mirror tradtional form, however the large brick gable spoils the visual elusion. Blank facades and large contrasting areas (material/colour) should be avoided.

2.5.2 Design intent

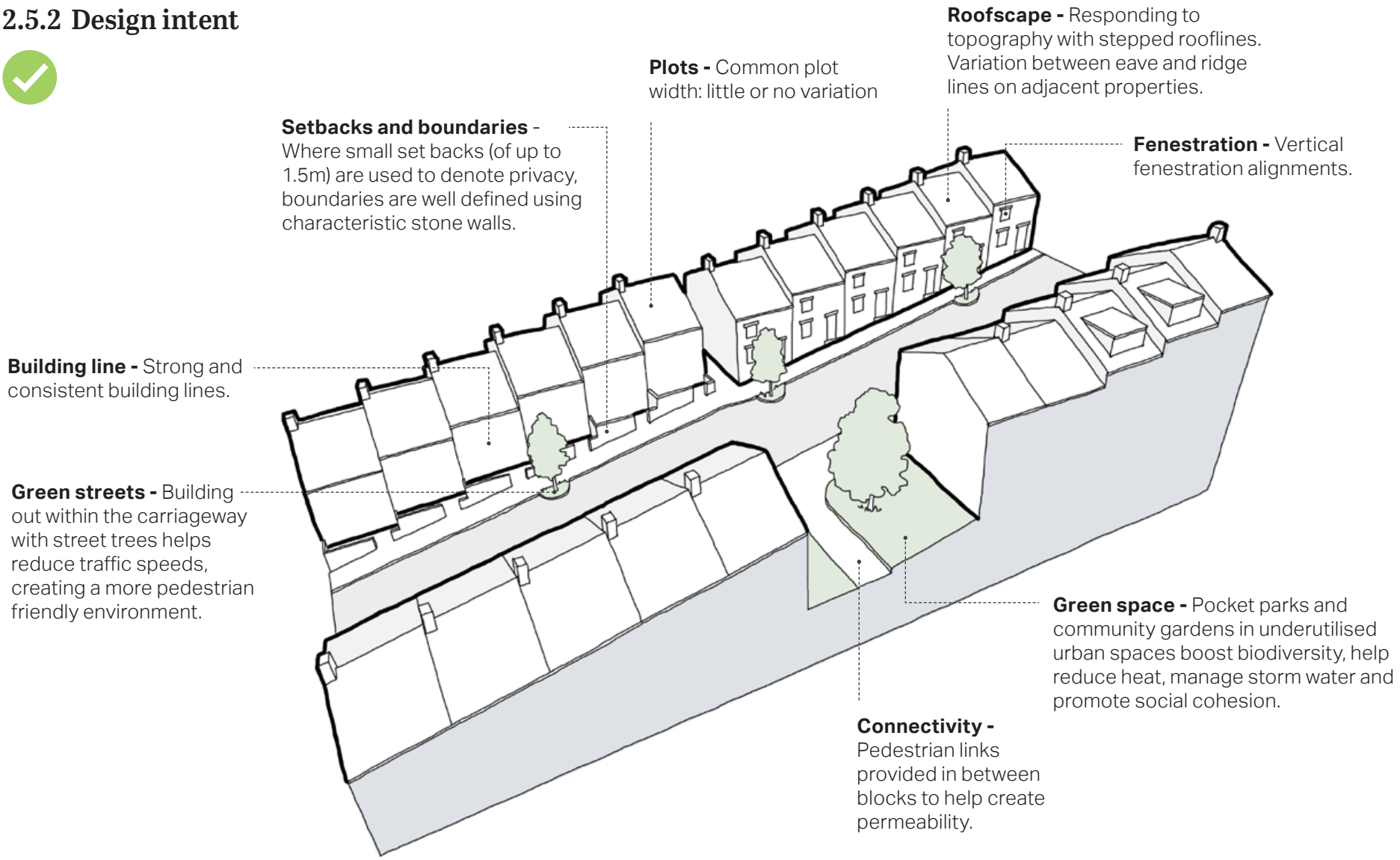


Figure 26: An annotated sketch highlighting what design aspects should be maintained, enhanced or created for this area type. **Please note:** this is not an existing streetscene, it instead brings together various elements of good design.

TT1 - Preserving the strong uniform character

The strong linear urban form seen in this area type makes the way in which buildings respond to the road a key consideration. In conjunction with the Durham Design Codes and area-wide codes and guidance set out in Section 3, all development within Traditional Terraces should:

- appear in linear rows, largely organised around a tight grid pattern;
- Roofs should maintain the characteristics ridgelines, eave lines, and pitches of street;
- feature strong vertical fenestration alignments, with doors offset to the side. Building facade and fenestration design should reflect traditional building patterns with appropriate proportion, spacing, and placement of windows and doors. Mismatched or overly large windows or doors that disrupt the building's architectural balance should be avoided;
- include detailing of windows and doorways that reflects neighbouring properties – with stone lintels and recesses encouraged to maintain architectural integrity (please ref to Figure 30)

TT1i New build interpretations

New development within this area type should recreate the proportions, appropriate roof and building lines to match the traditional terraced buildings.

Figure 27: Image of terrace house annotated with typical proportions.

Reference to: County Durham Plan (adopted 2020), Core Principle: Requiring Good Design, 5.282.

TT2 - Plot materials and appropriate detailing and decorations

Materials are integral to the overall architectural and urban design approach. A balanced response which is sensitive to the local context is paramount. To strengthen the sense of place, all development within the linear village area type should:

- Provide a study of local materials & detailing which identifies the prevailing styles & mix in the area;
- for street facing facades, match rubble stone, bonding, and style to surrounding properties;
- on side returns, where visible but not open to the street these may be rendered in one colour to match the rubble stone work.
- provide a solid wall (max 1.8m) along the rear boundary where visible. This should be either rubble stone or where damage not deemed to be an issue block, rendered in colour to match rubble stone work (ref Figure 29).
- Roof tiles should be the traditional slate tile or a similar selected to match the colour and size of this, assuming the colour represents the weathered traditional tile.

TT2i New build interpretations

New development using this area type should mirror TT2

Figure 28: On side returns, where visible but not open to the street these may be rendered in one colour to match the rubble stone work.

Reference to: County Durham Plan (adopted 2020), Policy 54: Natural Building and Roofing Stone

Figure 29: Rubble Stone to all elevations fronting the street. Use of quoins only on key junctions (cross roads). Random coursing.

Figure 30: Simple strong details to window surrounds. Include stone lintel, cill & quoins.

Figure 31: Slate grey roof tiles to match weathered traditional tile.

TT3 - Building sensitively in relationship to the street

The strong linear urban form seen in this area type makes the way in which buildings respond to the road a key consideration. All development of the Traditional Terrace area type should:

- respect and respond to positive elements of the existing layout as shown in Figure 26
- Be of a density that reflects the wider character noted in Table 06. Be no more than 2 storeys in scale to respect the existing historic scale.
- Developments should have over 90% of buildings directly abutting the prevailing building line along the street. For the small proportion of buildings that do not abut the prevailing line, minor variations are permitted, but these should not extend more than 0.5 m behind the prevailing line. Such variations should only occur at corner plots that face cross roads;
- not have front gardens, or obvious barriers to the fronts of properties;
- include front doors that open onto the street primary, unless required at a corner.

TT3i New build interpretations

New development using this area type should mirror TT3

Figure 32: Rear boundary: rubble stone wall.

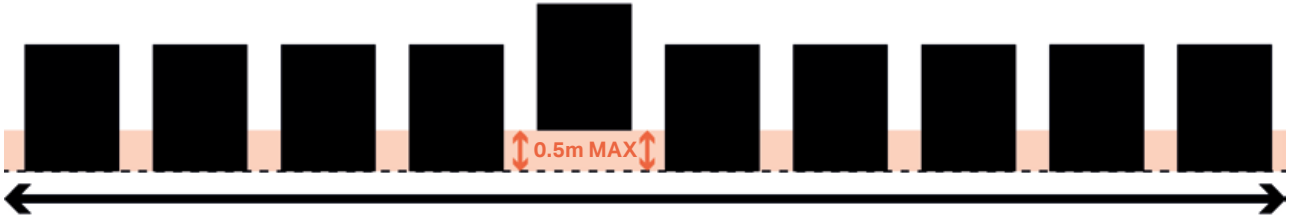


Figure 34: Variations from the prevailing building line can be 0.5m maximum.

Figure 33: Street proportions Stephen Street.

TT4: Massing, blocks and plots

The grouping of buildings is important in the organisation and arrangement of new developments of more than one dwelling. New development should respect the strong uniform terraced character of this area type by:

- Arranging dwellings so that their main facade addresses the street.
- Maintaining 2 storey building heights. Increased heights could be proposed at gateways, subject to proximity to adjacent buildings.
- Building scale and massing should be in keeping with the prevailing development pattern. Plot depths and widths should be in keeping with the typical plot depths and widths of surrounding buildings.
- Striving for the creation of a 'perimeter block' layout, reflective of the existing character.

TT4i New build interpretations

New development using this area type should mirror TT4 with the exception of the creation of the perimeter block to reflect existing.

- Block dimensions should mirror the total external block size however the traditional back streets between yards should be gated or removed and garden yards extended to increase security.

Reference to: County Durham Design Code Supplementary Planning Document), Settlement Typology: 19th Century Industrial Towns - Building form and height checklist

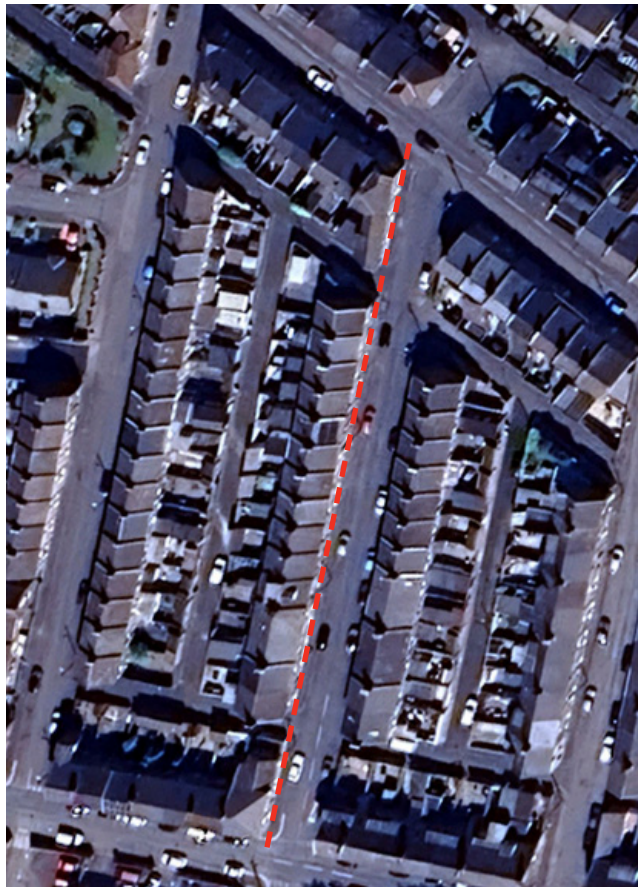


Figure 35: Tightly formed blocks at Spencer Street and environs.

ADD TYPICAL PROPORTIONS TO THIS IMAGE FOR REFERENCE

2.6 Area type 2: Modern infill development

These homes generally have decorative front facades, often characterised by a modern interpretation of traditional forms and materials redrawn to suit modern tastes and aesthetics.

The facing materials can vary, with more successful examples drawing inspiration from the proportions, simple range of house types and clean palette of materials in the local vernacular.

Modern infill	Calculations
Typical density range in Dwellings per Hectare (dph)	25 – 35dph
Typical plot size range	10m (W) x 30m (D) 5m (W) x 25m (D
Typical block size range	80 m x 100m 55m x 280m

Table 06: Typical density, plot sizes and block sizes for this area type. **Please note:** Density calculations are based on a single sample. It is recommended that applicants undertake their own testing.

Figure 36: An annotated aerial view of Berry Edge, a new housing development to the west of Consett. Despite being an example of Area type 2, there are constraints, such as limited accessibility, small or no back gardens and limited spacing between buildings.

Topic	Good Design characteristics	Planning issues /opportunities	Codes to cover
Context Character, Conservation, Heritage, Local features		• The dwellings are often 'anywhere' in style; • Streetscenes can be poor;	• Design references taken from the site and local context;
Connections: Context, urban form, layout, movement		• Cul-de-sacs and poor connectivity is often a theme; • Walking isn't well prioritised and routes can be worsened by parked cars;	• Permeability; • Space for walking and wheeling;
Built form: Building massing, scale and type, blocks and plots, boundary treatments, setbacks, building lines	• In more recent developments, more sustainable urban block sizes have been used - promoting better walkability, connectivity, and efficient land use.	• Maximising density using large house types has led to issues with poor layout and plot sizes (back to back standards); • Plot boundaries are often poorly defined; • **Integrate parking with dwellings and landscaping to reduce the visual impact of vehicles**	• Using a mix of appropriate house types and back to back to lift density; • Defining gardens and boundaries appropriately; • **Incorporating parking sensitively;**
Nature: Landscape, green and blue infrastructure, open and public spaces		• Public open space is often not well integrated; • **Allowance for nature (in an urban area);**	• Incorporating open space;
Resilience Orientation Materials SuDs Energy production EV charging		• Lack of on plot energy options; • Lack of SuDs;	• **Using sustainable materials;** • **Incorporating on plot energy;** • **Incorporating EV charging**

Table 07: Outlining what to reinforce and what to uplift through better controls in the codes. **(Codes in bold are covered in Section 3)**

2.6.1 What good looks like

The illustration on the following page brings together various elements of 'good design' from across the modern infill development area type. The images on this page have been used to inform the illustration, and highlight what certain elements of good design look like in practice.

Figure 38: Parking to the front or sides of plots is balanced with greenery, ensuring hardstanding does not dominate. Planting or hedgerows are used to define the plot boundary.

Figure 40: New homes which have taken inspiration from The Consett Area's traditional character in their material (stone facades) and layout (the creation of a 'mews' street).

Figure 37: A change in road surface helps to demarcate the road hierarchy and parkng areas. The access lane and on-street parking bays are paved to indicate a different character/use.

Figure 39: Street trees and grass verges help to create green streets and enhance the suburban character.

Figure 41: Homes which overlook public green spaces provide passive surveillance, helping to improve feelings of safety.

2.6.2 Design intent

Blocks - Strengthened building lines help create more formal layouts and perimeter blocks.

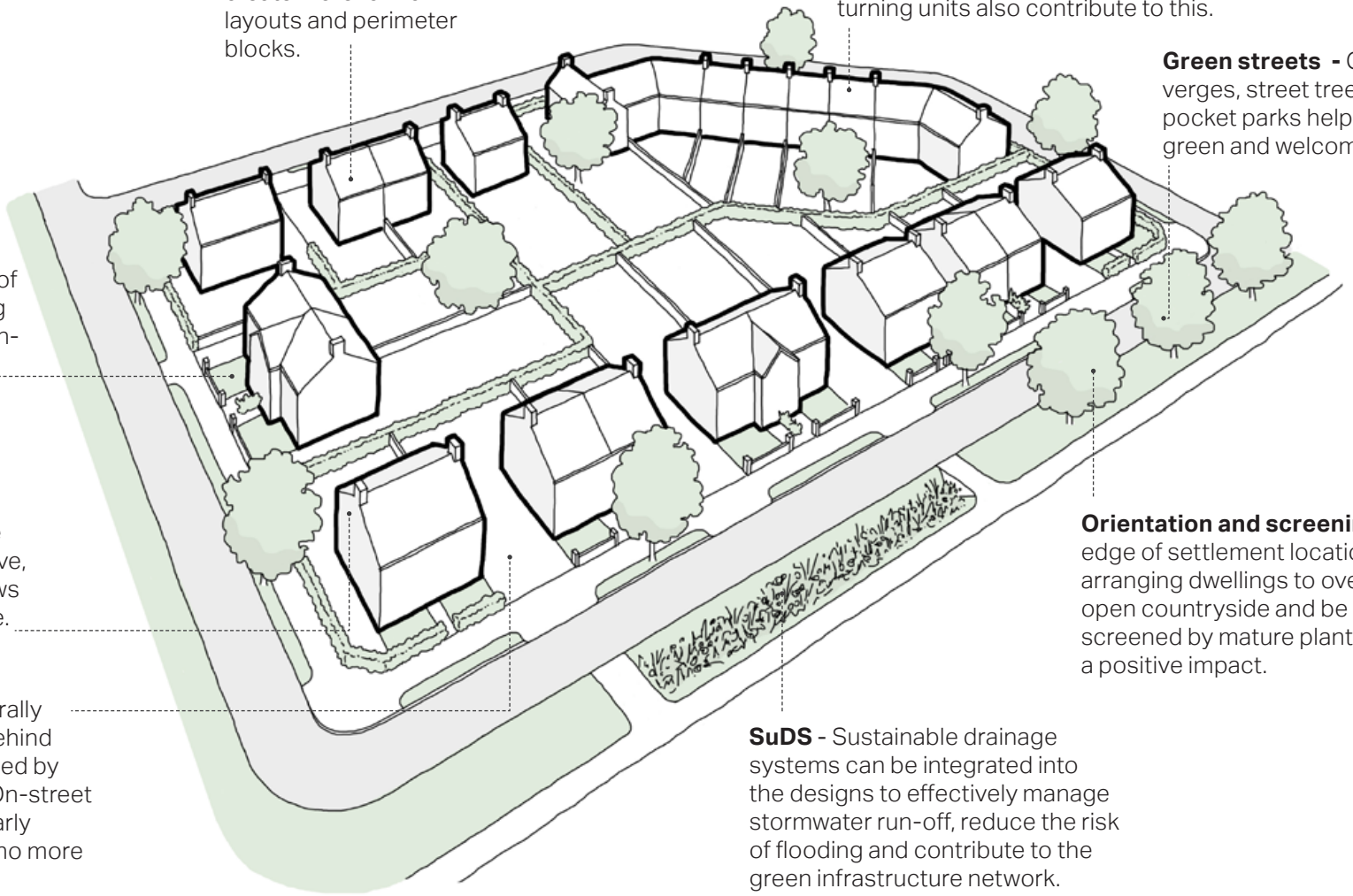
Housing typologies - A mix of homes, including detached, semi-detached and terraced provides for visual interest and variety. Corner-turning units also contribute to this.

Green streets - Grass verges, street trees, and pocket parks help to create green and welcoming streets.

Setbacks and boundaries - Most homes have a setback of between 2-8m, allowing for front gardens and on-plot parking.

Corner units - Corner units should address both streets with active frontage that is attractive, also enabling more views and natural surveillance.

Parking - Parking generally on-plot and set-back behind the building line, screened by boundary treatments. On-street parking is set out in clearly marked bays in runs of no more than 4 spaces.



Orientation and screening - In edge of settlement locations, arranging dwellings to overlook open countryside and be screened by mature planting has a positive impact.

SuDS - Sustainable drainage systems can be integrated into the designs to effectively manage stormwater run-off, reduce the risk of flooding and contribute to the green infrastructure network.

Figure 42: An annotated sketch highlighting what design aspects should be maintained, enhanced or created for this area type. Please note: this is not an existing streetscene, it instead brings together various elements of good design.

MI1 - Design references taken from the site and local context.

Where new infill is extended the layout of streets and buildings should:

- sit within the landscape (inc prevent over bearing development). Structural landscape design/ cohesion;
- respect and respond to positive elements of the existing layout and built form, see Figure 42. Ensure materials are selected to respond to the existing and wider context. A study of local materials and detailing which identifies the prevailing style in the area should be provided. This study should clearly demonstrate the positive contributing local materials and details to be referenced.
- demonstrate how materials are matched to the existing building[s] for colour, size and texture such that after a period of weathering they visually fit with the context **OR** illustrate material and finishes from a well-referenced contemporary character counterpoint. Noting the point of reference chosen should represent the high-quality context in the local study, see Figure 42;
- include brick that matches the local coursing, bonding type, and method of pointing (including mortar type, composition and colour matching);
- within streetscape and blocks; ensure materials are drawn from a cohesive palette and should not be used in a contrasting way which creates obvious house types, that appear 'thematic' in the street scene.

Reference to: County Durham Plan (adopted 2020), Core Principle: Requiring Good Design, 5.282.

MI1i New build interpretations

New development within this area type should mirror MI1 with addition of the following. New development on green or brown field land should:

- work with existing landforms, avoiding excessive cutting and filling that creates stark contrasts with the surrounding landscape;
- evidence of how the local context has influenced the design and how the proposals respond to the area's unique landscape and site specific references and characteristics

Figure 43: A thematic palette of materials has been used at Handley Cross in Medomsley. Although neighbouring houses are individual in style, a common material palette create a cohesive character.

MI2 - Making healthy streets for people to walk and wheel.

The national healthy streets indicators provide a framework for assessing and improving street environments. They include: pedestrians from all walks of life, easy to cross, shade and shelter, places to stop and rest, not too noisy, people choose to walk, cycle and use public transport, people feel safe, things to see and do, people feel relaxed, clean air.

New streets in Modern infill areas in the Consett area should:

- Avoid cul-de-sac arrangements and leave sufficient space to allow for connections to potential future streets. Linked streets are encouraged, and permeable layouts should connect with existing walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport networks within and outside of the development. See Figure 42.
- If speed restraint measures are required, they should be designed from the beginning of the process, and not introduced as an after thought. They should be justified within the DAS.
- Include street layouts and space allocation informed using swept path analysis, with efforts made to minimise the land associated to carriageways / adoption of minimum carriageway widths in favour of wider footways, provision of cycle facilities, street greening or other ancillary services which support a pedestrian friendly streetscape.

It is recommended to explore any alternative approaches with the highway authority.

MI2i New build interpretations

New development within this area type should mirror MI2

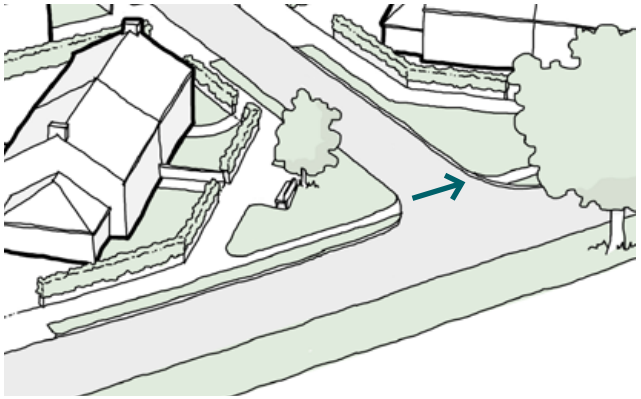


Figure 44: Healthy streets are easy to cross, include places to stop and rest and provide shade and shelter.

MI3 - Appropriate measures to lift density.

Modern infill sites have been built to a variety densities (house types and plot sizes) over the years.

In the urban areas of the Consett area where densities can be increased and acknowledging that site maximisation can balance the viability of high quality design, it is anticipated that sensitive or gentle densification may be required. The following code addresses what should be done as a minimum to ensure care is taken to retain design quality.

Development should:

- Respect local character by responding to the existing urban grain, building heights, and architectural styles of the surrounding area;
- Provide adequate private and shared outdoor space, ensuring that gardens, balconies, or communal areas are usable and well-integrated;
- Ensure good daylight and sunlight access for all dwellings, avoiding overshadowing and poor internal lighting conditions;
- Consider 'gentle' density (low to mid-rise buildings, well-connected, creating vibrant, walkable neighborhoods).

MI3i New build interpretations

New development within this area type should mirror MI3

The Residential Amenity Standards (min. standards)

Figure 45: Subtly increasing building heights at street corners and at gateway locations can help to increase density, and improve legibility. West Park Quarter, Sunderland.

MI4 - Defining gardens and boundaries appropriately.

Defining gardens and boundaries appropriately has a key part to play in defining private space, setting the quality of the streetscape and if handled well, addressing the impact of parked cars.

Boundary treatments should be designed in materials and details that respect the surrounding streetscape or area.

MI4i New build interpretations

New development within this area type should mirror MI4

Figure 47: Stone rubble boundary walls have been used succesfully at Goodwood Close. They reflect local character and respond to facade materials.

Reference to: County Durham Design Code Supplementary Planning Document), Settlement Typology: 19th Century Industrial Towns - Boundary treatment checklist

Figure 46: Metal estate fencing could be suitable in areas with a more rural character, when combined with planting.

Figure 48: Informal planting and hedgerows help to define boundaries In Medomsley.

MI5 - Incorporating open space

Providing shared public space, offers opportunities for neighbourliness, play and leisure. There has traditionally been a preference to have this directly outside dwellings, though this is not sort today, the premise of space easily accessible from the front door and with good overlooking from many properties is still a priority. It is most common that this will occur in modern infill areas. Therefore sites of over 100 units (large development scheme definition from the County Durham Plan) should:

- Create a clear hierarchy of public open spaces, comprising a central large space and a series of smaller spaces distributed throughout the development, connected by green routes. The location of the spaces should be determined by analysing existing site features, wider green infrastructure network, microclimate and views. Locally acceptable examples are given in Figure 50, Figure 51 and Figure 52.
- Create connections and contribution to existing green space, if any.

MI5i New build interpretations

New development using this area type should mirror MI5

Figure 50: A well overlooked public space on Queen Elizabeth Drive, to the west of Consett.

Figure 49: A succesful, overlooked and well managed green space off Wood Street.

Figure 51: Landscaping is central to the development at Barnsley Way, creating plesant, green pedestrian routes.

2.7 Area type 3: Historic Villages (ref DDCA Later expansion/small development sites)

These settlements often developed into ancient stopping points and grew to serve small farming communities. Their character is historic, however still strongly linked to the more recent industrial heritage of the Consett area. Typically, they feature a small high street with a few shops and civic buildings, like a church. Handsome farmhouses are often found nearby, and occasionally larger manor houses, which over time have been surrounded by more modest, urban-style dwellings – for example, the Victorian villas in Shotley Bridge – as the settlements expanded.

Historic Villages	Calculations
Indicative Dwellings per Hectare (DpH)	5-50DpH
Typical plot size range	7m (W) x 17m (D) 20m (W) x50m (D)
Typical block size range	Prominently linear in layout with few defined blocks.

Table 08: Typical density, plot sizes and block sizes for this area type. **Please note:** Density calculations are based on a single sample. It is recommended that applicants undertake their own testing.

Figure 52: An aerial view of Shotley Bridge, one of the Historic Villages of the Consett NA.

- NA boundary
- Primary frontage/building line
- Views
- Plot (lots of variation in size)
- Block (primarily linear development, although some defined perimeter blocks clustered close to the intersection)

Topic	Good Design characteristics	Planning issues / opportunities	Codes to cover
Context Character, Conservation, Heritage, Local features	• Simple 2 storey elevations, symmetrical or paired fenestration; Windows set to shared bottom line and hung low on each floor; • No porches or window projections or ornamentation. Use of heavy set stone cills and lintels; • Some use of chimneys at the gable end; • Stone rubble facades to all sides, grey slate roofs; • Occasional open and oversailing eaves	• Conversions and adaptation	• Sensitive conversion and adaptation, including extensions. • **Managing traditional enclosure ratio with modern standards.**
Connections: Context, urban form, layout, movement	• Largely based on the linear streets pattern of the historic streets.	• Pavement width can be poor.	
Built form: Building massing, scale and type, blocks and plots, boundary treatments, setbacks, building lines	• Simple linear forms, aligned to the street; • Largely presenting to the street; • Low boundary walls no gates; • Parking on plot but managed out of sight;	• Design flexibility and future adaptations;	• **Balancing a traditional house types with future needs;** • **Incorporating parking sensitively;**
Nature: Landscape, green and blue infrastructure, open and public spaces	• Good use of garden planting (small trees, low shrub planting and climbing plants). clear zone kept between the tree canopy and planting allowing leaving windows visible	• Public open space not common;	• **Additional allowance for nature (in a rural area).**
Resilience Orientation Materials SuDs Energy production EV charging		• Traditional detailing and features (including new windows could be inefficient • Blending green technology with older buildings	• **Using sustainable materials;** • **Incorporating on plot energy;** • **Incorporating EV charging**

Table 09: Outlining what to reinforce and what to uplift through better controls in the codes. **(Codes in bold are covered in Section 3)**

2.7.1 What good looks like

The illustration on the following page brings together various elements of 'good design' from across the Historic Village area type. The images on this page have been used to inform the illustration, and highlight what certain elements of good design look like in practice.

Figure 54: Here, a strong building line is maintained, with buildings fronting directly onto the pavement. This creates a strong sense of enclosure and grandeur. Retail units help to create active frontages.

Figure 56: Pavements located on both sides on the carriageway help to improve pedestrian connectivity.

Figure 53: Front gardens containing planting and mature trees help to create a pleasant, green streetscene. Boundaries are strongly defined with characteristic stone walls.

Figure 55: Variation in building orientation (with some frontages facing the street, and some rotated by 90 degrees) creates an interesting streetscene.

Figure 57: Built form is no more dominant than the treeline, with buildings nestling well into the wider landscape. Where setbacks are increased, walls and trees help define the plot.

2.7.2 Design intent

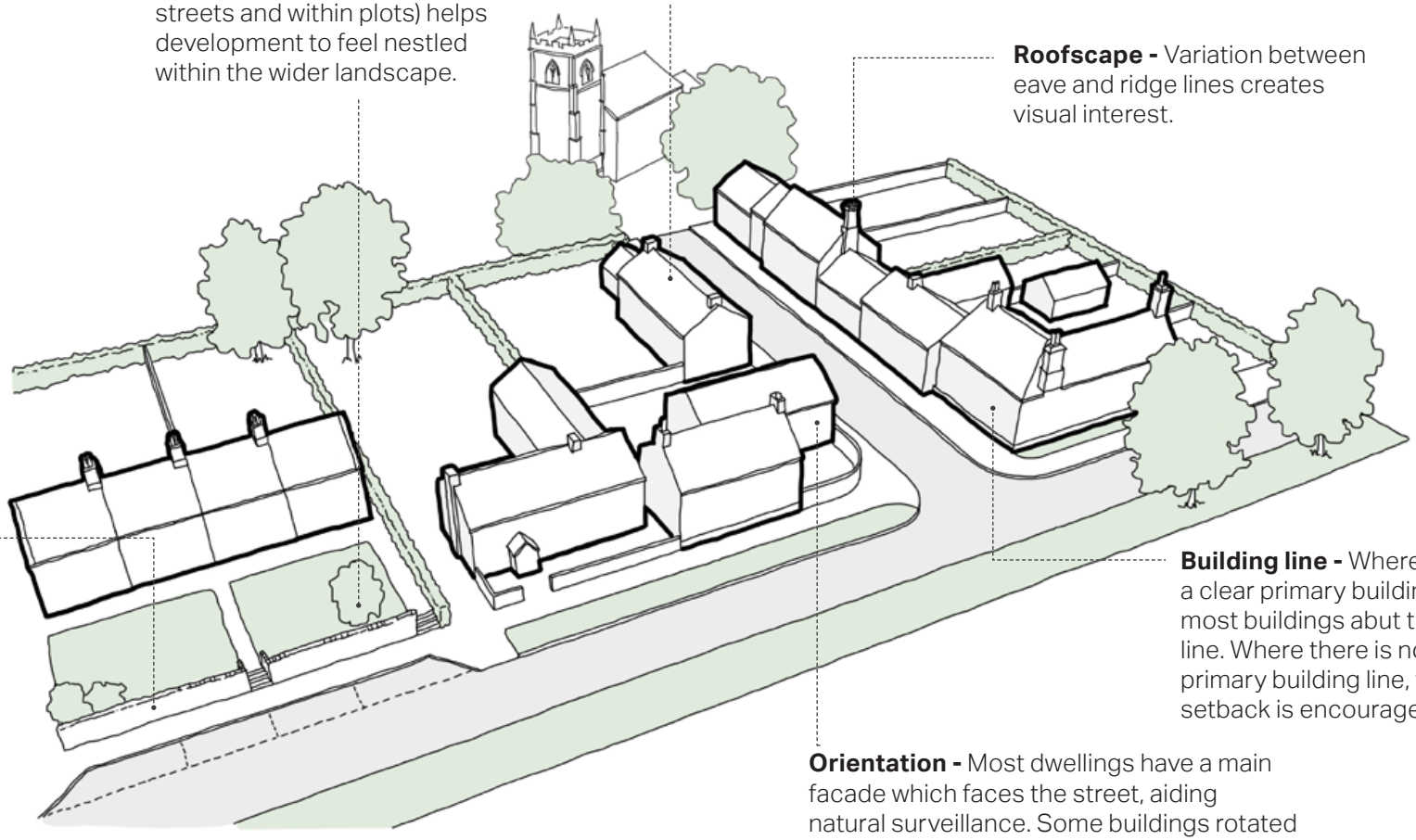


Figure 58: An annotated sketch highlighting what design aspects should be maintained, enhanced or created for this area type. Please note: this is not an existing streetscene, it instead brings together various elements of good design.

HV5 - Design references taken from the site and local context.

The layout of new infill sites should:

- Sit within the historic setting through appropriate massing, building spacing and setbacks;
- Respect and respond to positive elements of the existing layout and built form, Figure 59.
- Ensure materials are selected to respond to the existing context. A study of local materials and detailing which identifies the prevailing style in the area should be provided. This study should clearly demonstrate the positive contributing local materials and details to be referenced.
- Demonstrate how materials are matched to the existing building[s] for colour, size and texture such that after a period of weathering they visually fit with the context **OR** illustrate material and finishes from a well-referenced contemporary character counterpoint. Noting the point of reference chosen should represent the high-quality. See Figure 59;
- Within streetscape and blocks, ensure materials are drawn from a cohesive palette and should not be used in a contrasting way which creates obvious house types, that appear 'thematic' in the street scene.

Figure 59: Sandstone is the predominant material in Shotley Bridge. New development should prioritise it over other material choices.

HV5 - Sensitive conversion and adaptation, including extensions.

Where buildings have a previous non-residential use and permission is being sought to convert to residential; it is important that attractive architecture details in the original building or representative of the local character are married with the functionality of the proposed use.

Designs should demonstrate:

- the original function of the farm, industrial and other traditional buildings is legible when converted, this will include the retention of the prevailing layout, massing, and frontages. Comparison layouts showing the relationship of the proposed to the original and other case studies should be provided; and
- where existing features cannot be called on for reference, contextual detail is drawn according to local character studies, these may be provided where the following are not available: conservation area appraisals. It is preferred that designs take a simple and not overly stylised interpretation of the traditional/original feature; details should be provided for approval.
- the proposal respects the traditional character and appearance of the building or group and does not substantially harm its significance or setting through:
    - the removal of trees or groups of trees, or other significant landscape features; and
    - the erections of fencing or other tall planting to create separation from the surrounding.
- the subdivision of larger buildings or groups of buildings does not result in the division of distinctive outside areas. However, where such division is considered acceptable the design of these spaces and materials for such boundaries should be carefully chosen to preserve the holistic appearance of the space;
- where new boundaries need to be created, they follow existing boundary lines and incorporate existing natural features such as hedgerows, stone walls, or footpaths;
- where the building or group of buildings form a significant local landmark, existing open views and vistas are preserved;
- the original openings including, fenestration and door positions, are incorporated within the elevation;
- where rooflights are appropriate, these are traditional in design, of low profile, and vertically emphasised. Details should be provided for approval;
- where appropriate, repairing original features should be preferred to replacing them;
- new wall and roofing materials match the existing prevailing materials; see Figure 60.

- features including lintels, key stones, block coursing and types are matched to the original features;
- any new insulation is appropriately specified to meet contemporary requirements but narrow enough to work within the fabric of the original building;
- traditional outbuildings and existing boundaries are retained, repaired, or re-used.

Extensions should demonstrate:

- development which favours modest extensions, and respects the layout of the original function such that the extension appears to be 'of the original grouping or building'. Comparison layouts showing the relationship to the historic and existing layout along with other case studies should be provided;
- the roof pitch matches the prevailing angle of building or group of buildings;
- materials reflect the parent building although glazed links may be acceptable.

Figure 61: Traditional boundary treatments include dry stone walls, often in combination with planting.

Figure 60: In areas with smaller setbacks, low stone walls in combination with railings can help to define the threshold.

Figure 62: In areas with larger setbacks, mature planting and trees help to create a defined boundary.

The Shotley Bridge Conservation Area Appraisal

The Ebchester Conservation Area Appraisal.

Figure 63: A sympathetic residential extension in Medomsley, which respects the existing form of the building and draws upon characteristic proportions and architectural features. The extension could be more sympathetic by having random rubble elevations.

Figure 64: An innovative residential extension in Ebchester, which makes use of contrasting (yet complementary) materials to mark it as different from the original structure. The extension is also subservient in form.

2.8 Area type 4: Formal development

Where this type of development is a success the house types are carefully placed to manage scale and massing so welcoming and comfortable environments are created. Crucially, the focus is also on well-designed streetscapes that derive a pleasant character from designated open spaces, trees, garden planting, and a minimal visual impact from parked vehicles.

House Type led	Calculations
Indicative Dwellings per Hectare (DpH)	30-45DpH
Typical plot size range	7m (W) x 30m (D) 8m (W) x 20m (D)
Typical block size range	80m (W) x 100m (D) 55m (W) x 280m (D)

Table 10: Typical density, plot sizes and block sizes for this area type. **Please note:** Density calculations are based on a single sample. It is recommended that applicants undertake their own testing.

Figure 65: An aerial view of 20th Century suburban development in Bridgehill.

- Primary frontage/building line
- Views
- Plot
- Block

Topic	Good Design characteristics	Planning issues /opportunities	Codes to cover
Context Character, Conservation, Heritage, Local features	• Tight and well considered suite of house type can when combined carefully create a strong co-hesive character.	• There are many examples in The Consett Area where houses type are too varied and grouped poorly.	• Designing a suite of locally appropriate house types.
Connections: Context, urban form, layout, movement	• In places there are good set pieces of public open space which add to a varied streetscape.	• Street pattern is often derived in plan taking into account topography. (pattern making or reinforcing links which are not significant on the ground) • Walking isn't well prioritised and routes can be worsened by parked cars;	• **Working with the site to create well grounded layouts.**
Built form: Building massing, scale and type, blocks and plots, boundary treatments, setbacks, building lines	• In more recent developments, block sizes that allow more permeability and accessibility have been used; • Plots are generally a good size, including outside space.	• Some issues with poor layout, long straight streets without articulation; • Plot boundaries are often poorly defined, recent additions of close boarded wooden fencing > though uniform treatment a +ve ; • **Incorporating parking sensitively**	• **Space standard for gardens;** • Defining gardens and boundaries appropriately; • **Incorporating parking sensitively;**
Nature: Landscape, green and blue infrastructure, open and public spaces		• Public open space is often not well included; • **Allowance for nature (in an urban area);**	• Incorporating open space;
Resilience Orientation Materials SuDs Energy production EV charging		• Lack of on plot energy options; • Lack of SuDs;	• **Using sustainable materials;** • **Incorporating on plot energy;** • **Incorporating EV charging**

Table 11: Outlining what to reinforce and what to uplift through better controls in the codes. **(Codes on bold are covered in Section 3)**

2.8.1 What good looks like

The illustration on the following page brings together various elements of 'good design' from across the House type led area type. The images on this page have been used to inform the illustration, and highlight what certain elements of good design look like in practice.

Reference to: Settlement Character Study - Hamsterley Mill: Hamsterley Mill Townscape Analysis

Figure 67: A well considered suite of house types have been combined carefully to create a strong cohesive character.

Figure 69: This suburban development sucessfully takes inspiration from The Consett Area's characteristic material palette, with stone rubble facades.

Figure 66: Plots are generally generous, with front and back gardens provided. Front of plot parking is generally well balanced with greenery.

Figure 68: Plot boundaries are well defined, often incorporating 'softer' boundary treatments which feature hedgerows or planting. Reference: Settlement Character Study - Hamsterley Mill.

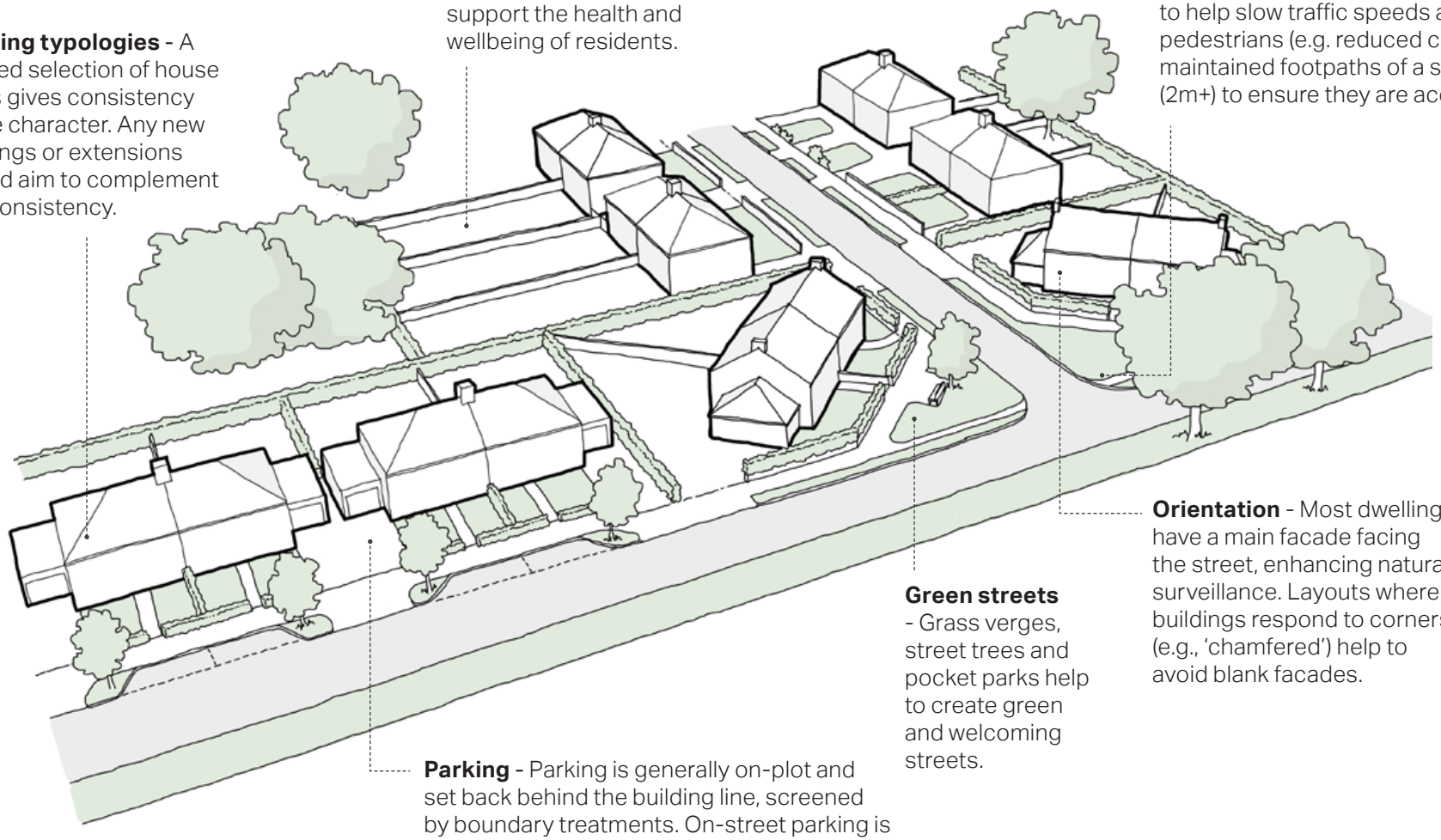
Figure 70: Strong building lines are maintained. Building have also been orientated and/or detailed to address the corner of a block.

2.8.2 Design intent

Housing typologies - A curated selection of house types gives consistency to the character. Any new buildings or extensions should aim to complement this consistency.

Plots - Plots are generally long with generous front and back gardens to support the health and wellbeing of residents.

Accessibility and connectivity - Enhanced street safety through the use of 'horizontal' traffic calming measures to help slow traffic speeds and prioritise pedestrians (e.g. reduced corner radii). Well-maintained footpaths of a suitable width (2m+) to ensure they are accessible for all.



Orientation - Most dwellings have a main facade facing the street, enhancing natural surveillance. Layouts where buildings respond to corners (e.g., 'chamfered') help to avoid blank facades.

Green streets - Grass verges, street trees and pocket parks help to create green and welcoming streets.

Parking - Parking is generally on-plot and set back behind the building line, screened by boundary treatments. On-street parking is only suitable if set out in clearly marked bays.

Figure 71: An annotated sketch highlighting what design aspects should be maintained or enhanced in the area. Please note: this is not an existing streetscene, it instead brings together various elements of good design.

FD1 - Designing a suite of locally appropriate house types.

This type of development relies on a small number of house types which are drawn from the same family or pattern book. For infill within existing house type led development, the design should:

- Reflect the proportions of the appropraite existing house type. Acknowledging that any resizing to accommodate modern standards of insulation and parking should be within these dimensions.

FD1i New build interpretations

House type examples around the Consett area are of their time and a new family of house types should be drawn driven from modern space standards and well considered consolidation of accommodation.

The following should be considered within the design:

- Minimum national space standard is just that, a minimum and not the target size.
- All house types come from a curated suite of elevations utilising a high degree of commonality. ie it is expected that the housetypes use only one colour of brick or stone.
- A study outlining the usability of the internal layout is clearly stated.
- A study stating how these houses can be combined in reference to the site context. i.e how do they work together on slopes, turning corners or where there are shallow or unusual shaped plots.

Figure 72: Repeating house type used to good effect at Ashfield in Shotley Bridge

Figure 73: Repeating house type used to good effect The Briary, Shotley Bridge

FD2 - Defining gardens and boundaries appropraitely.

Defining gardens and boundaries appropraitely has a key part to play in defining private space, setting the quality of the streetscape and if handled well, addressing the impact of parked cars.

Boundary treatments should be designed in materials and details that respect the surrounding streetscape or area. Though there are many house type led development around The Consett Area which have wooden pale fencing or no boundary, future developments should be defined with durable and clearly defined boundaries.

These could include:

- Low brick walls with hedges;
- Hedges and
- in some instances just low brick walls.

FD2i New build interpetations

New developmentwithin this area type should mirror HT2.

Figure 75: Hedges used on Woodlands Close.

Figure 74: Neat brick wall and hedge Rutland Road Moorside.

Figure 76: Hedges used at The Briary, Shotley Bridge.

FD3 - Incorporating open space

Providing shared public space, offers opportunities for neighbourliness, play and leisure. There has tradtionally been a preference to have this directly outside dwellings, though this is not sort today, the premise of space easily accessible from the front door and with good overlooking from many properties is still a priority. It is most common that this will occur in modern infill areas. Therefore sites of over 100 units (large development scheme definition from the County Durham Plan) should:

- create a clear hierarchy of public open spaces, comprising a central large space and a series of smaller spaces distributed throughout the development, connected by green routes. The location of the spaces should be determined by analysing existing site features, wider green infrastructure network, microclimate and views. Locally acceptable examples are given in Figure 78, Figure 79 and Figure 80.

FD3i New build interpetations

New developmentwithin this area type should mirror HT3

Figure 78: A succesful, overlooked and well managed green space off Wood Street.

Figure 77: Fawcett Park sits between two large developments and provides connections to the wider countryside.

Figure 79: Another overlooked and well managed green space off Barnsley Way.

2.9 Area type 5: New Development

The developments are designed to prioritise active travel, providing well-connected paths for pedestrians, cyclists, and wheelers. Shared amenities, including community centres, workshops, and allotments, promote social engagement and community cohesion. Collectively, these elements contribute to a lively, sustainable, and inviting urban setting that places equal value on human well-being and environmental responsibility.

House Type led	Calculations
Indicative Dwellings per Hectare (DpH)	20-30DpH
Typical plot size range	10m (W) x 20m (D) 20m (W) x 40m (D)
Typical block size range	50m (W) x 50m (D) 65m (W) x 100m (D)

Table 12: Typical density, plot sizes and block sizes for this area type. **Please note:** Density calculations are based on a single sample. It is recommended that applicants undertake their own testing.

Figure 80: An aerial view of new development at Victory Close. Despite being an example of Area type 5, there are constraints, such as limited accessibility and limited spacing between buildings.

Topic	Good Design characteristics	Planning issues /opportunities	Codes to cover
Context Character, Conservation, Heritage, Local features	• Building scale, massing and orientation harmonises with the specific Consett context.	• Building scale, massing and orientation don't reflect the local context, resulting in a standardised and inappropriate design.	• **Managing traditional enclosure ratio with modern standards.** • **Density**
Connections: Context, urban form, layout, movement	• The scheme is well connected and accessible to all users.	• Walking isn't well prioritised and routes can be worsened by parked cars;	• **Working with the site to create well grounded layouts.**
Built form: Building massing, scale and type, blocks and plots, boundary treatments, setbacks, building lines	• Block and plot sizes favorite permeability and accessibility. • Tight and well considered suite of house types with small variation to create interest in the design.	• Some issues with poor layout, long straight streets without articulation; • Plot boundaries are often poorly defined with recent additions of close boarded wooden fencing; • House types are too varied and do not reflect the character of the area. • **Incorporating parking sensitively**	• **Space standard for gardens;** • Defining gardens and boundaries appropriately; • Creating interest in the design of the development; • **Incorporating parking sensitively;**
Nature: Landscape, green and blue infrastructure, open and public spaces	• Green and open space is integrated with the movement network becoming a primary element in the design of the development.	• Green and open space is not well included in the design of the scheme, resulting in scarce greenery and/ or isolated green pockets.	• Incorporating green and open space with the layout of the development;
Resilience Orientation Materials SuDs Energy production EV charging		• Lack of on plot energy options; • Lack of SuDs;	• **Using sustainable materials;** • **Incorporating on plot energy;** • **Incorporating EV charging**

Table 13: Outlining what to reinforce and what to uplift through better controls in the codes. **(Codes on bold are covered in Section 3)**

2.9.1 What good looks like

The illustration on the following page brings together various elements of 'good design' from across the House type led area type. The images on this page have been used to inform the illustration, and highlight what certain elements of good design look like in practice.

Figure 82: Victory Close development, Consett: high-quality green verges are an integral part of the design, enhancing the overall quality of the scheme.

Figure 84: Worcester Place, Alnwick: buildings are two-storey high, reflecting the average building scale of the Consett Area.

Figure 81: Walter Scott Avenue, Darlington: green corridors are integrated within the design of the scheme, contributing to the quality of the development.

Figure 83: Burnlands Way, Pelton Fell: car parks are located to the side of the building.

Figure 85: Spinney Gardens, Prudhoe: buildings share similarities but include variations (materials, architectural details) to create interest in the design of the scheme.

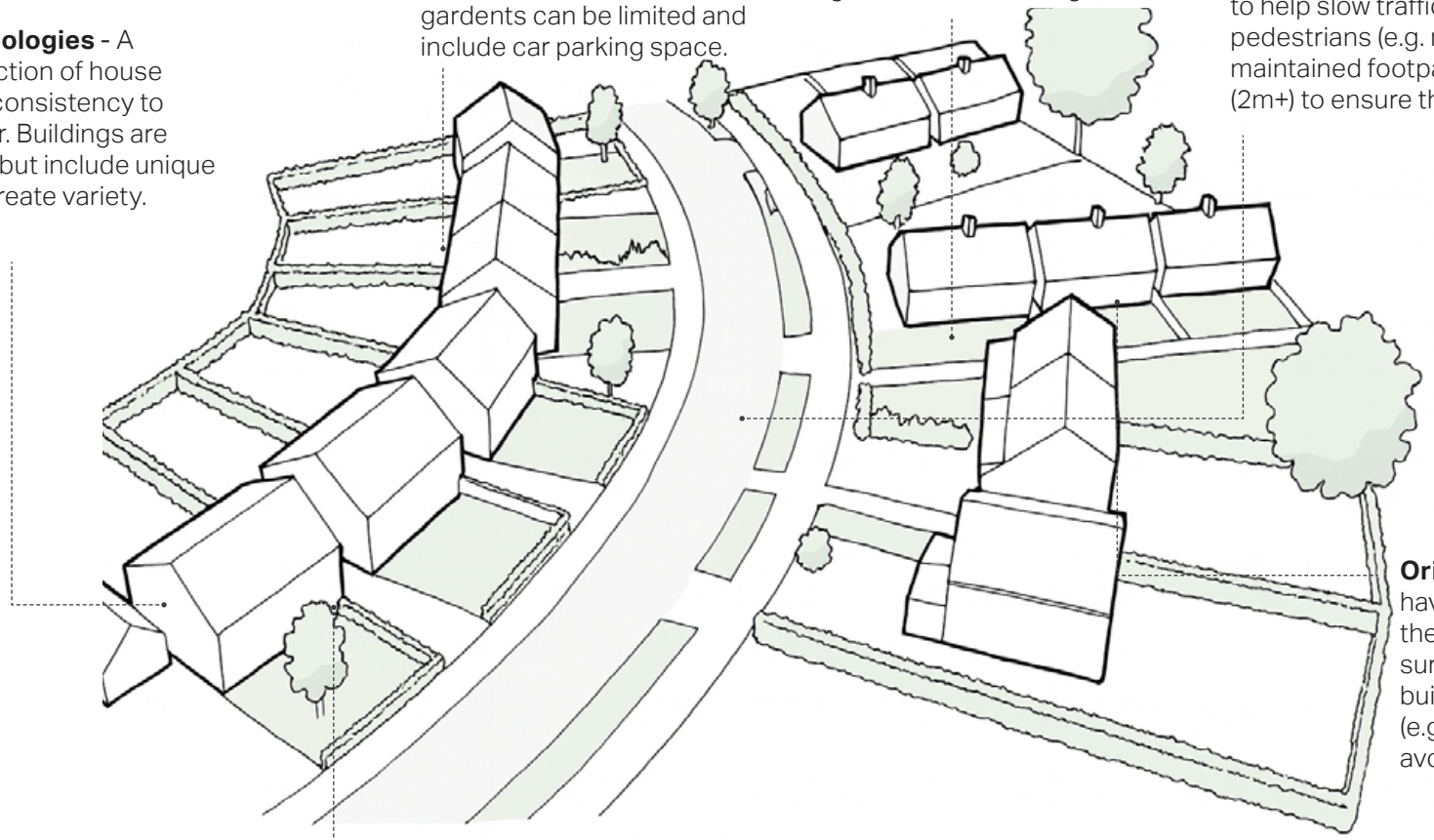
2.9.2 Design intent

Housing typologies - A curated selection of house types gives consistency to the character. Buildings are often similar but include unique features to create variety.

Plots - Plots are generally long with generous back gardens to support the health and wellbeing of residents. Front gardents can be limited and include car parking space.

Green streets - Grass verges, street trees and wide green corridors help to create green and welcoming streets.

Accessibility and connectivity - Enhanced street safety through the use of 'horizontal' traffic calming measures to help slow traffic speeds and prioritise pedestrians (e.g. reduced corner radii). Well-maintained footpaths of a suitable width (2m+) to ensure they are accessible for all.



Orientation - Most dwellings have a main facade facing the street, enhancing natural surveillance. Layouts where buildings respond to corners (e.g., 'chamfered') help to avoid blank facades.

Parking - Parking is generally on-plot, either in front of the building or set back behind the building line. On-street parking is only suitable if set out in clearly marked bays.

Figure 86: An annotated sketch highlighting what design aspects should be maintained or enhanced in the area. Please note: this is not an existing streetscene, it instead brings together various elements of good design.

ND1 - Defining gardens and boundaries appropraitely.

In new developments, plots are often open (no boundary treatments). The following codes help a stronger definition of private spaces.

- Use subtle spatial cues: define garden extents using changes in ground surface, plant massing, or shifts in layout rather than fences or walls.
- Maintain permeability between plots: Gardens should visually flow from one to another, preserving openness and avoiding enclosed edges.
- Personalisation of front gardens should be promoted to create variety in the streetscape.

If needed, boundary treatments should be designed in materials and details that respect the surrounding streetscape.

ND1i New build interpetations

New development within this area type should consider HT2 as design inspiration.

Figure 87: Good examples of garden personalisation through the use of planting, benches and different materials.

ND2 - Designing a suite of locally appropriate house types.

Contemporary developments often showcase standardised designs across the scheme, which can lower the quality of the scheme. To combat this, new developments in Consett should include sensible variations, whilst still reflecting the local features and character of the NA. The following codes provide some guidance to make sure a successful balance is achieved:

- Within a street or block, homes should share an overall visual language while offering variation in:
  - Gable positions
  - The use of lintels
  - The use of quoins
  - The use of gibbs surrounds
- Material changes are also acceptable to articulate architectural interest. Appropriate combinations include:
  - Brick with stone detailing
  - Brick in two complementary tones to define volume
- Design variations should be located in key locations, such as corner buildings, gateways or junctions, to contribute to the overall legibility of the development.

ND2i New build interpetations

New development within this area type should consider HT2 as design inspiration.

Figure 88: Use of stone detailing and multi-tone brick in a development in Ashington.

ND3 - Incorporating green and open space with the layout of the development

Green spaces are at the heart of creating high-quality developments that promote healthy lifestyles. The following codes explore solutions to create successful green networks that are integrated with the design of new developments.

- The layout must begin with a primary green corridor network that determines block structure, street alignment, and movement
- These corridors should connect key destinations (local centre, bus stops, schools, parks) before plot lines and roads are fixed.
- If appropriate, the green network should include water features like ponds and SuDS.
- Green spaces should be multi-functional, including a selection of uses, including gardens, pocket parks, green walks, allotments, and play areas.
- Streets should frame green corridors rather than cut across them unnecessarily.
- Pocket parks should be located at corners, path junctions, or as focal points in quieter residential pockets.
- Greens must have clear sightlines from surrounding homes. Avoid hidden or isolated pockets.
- Greens should include seating, natural play elements, accessible paths, and open lawns for informal activity.

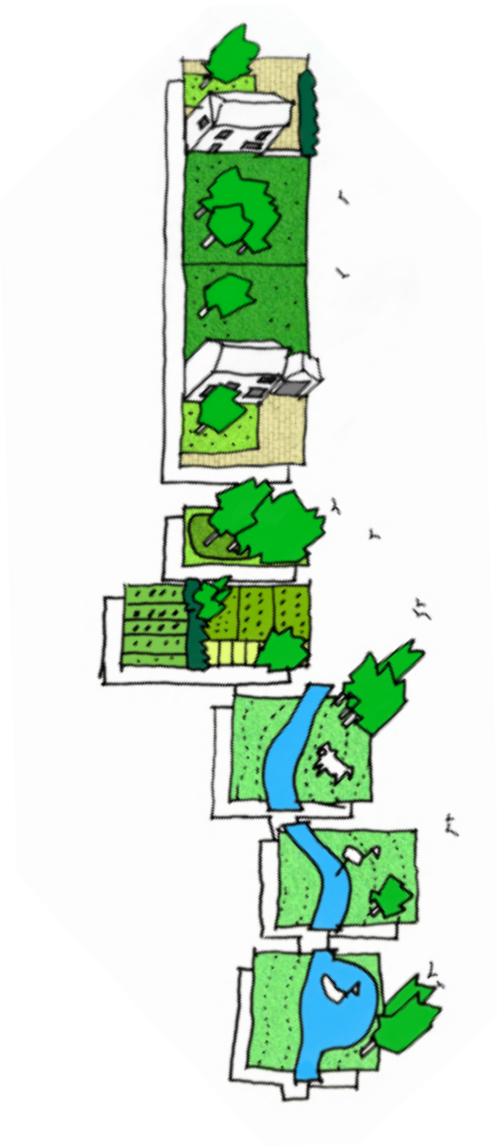


Figure 89: Linking and consolidating multi-functional green network sketch

2.10 Area type 6: Retail Consett

Consett Town Centre serves the local community and visitors, so there is a very practical and community based feel to the shops. Though the traditional high street along Front Street and Middle Street still retain the majority of the units. There are cafes and small shops tucked around the town. This aligns to the fact the street pattern is quite unconventional, built up over time, there's little continuity of form and fronts and backs of properties are mixed. There are opportunities to draw everything together under a cohesive set of public realm and shop front treatments which would elevate the look of the Town Centre.

Figure 90: Example of the complex series of signboards seen along the 'high' street in Consett.

Topic	Good Design characteristics	Planning issues /opportunities	Codes to cover
Context Character, Conservation, Heritage, Local features	• Some notable buildings including along Middle Street, Consett Industrial, the traditional public houses and many	• Mix of signage styles and types look untidy • Shutters on the front of properties look untidy • There are lots of occasions where the service yards and rear of properties open onto the street and look untidy.	• Approach to curating signage and security to front; • Approach to service yards seen from the street;
Connections: Context, urban form, layout, movement	• There are some elements of the old street pattern, including cross roads at Middle Street and Victoria Road with Church Street Front Street, and Middle Street itself.	• Street pattern has been decayed over time, though additional of bus station and associated development.	• Continuation and uplift of public realm treatments;
Built form: Building massing, scale and type, blocks and plots, boundary treatments, setbacks, building lines	• There are stretches of co-orientated building form.	• Largely the building form is ill defined, a mix of layers of development added but not harmonise into holistic approach	• Using signage and public realm as a unifying treatment;
Nature: Landscape, green and blue infrastructure, open and public spaces	• Some positive public realm treatments, in selected areas;	• There a small spaces created by positioning of buildings, dominated by roads or lower quality planting.	• Incorporating opportunities for nature and planting in the Town Centre;
Resilience Orientation Materials SuDs Energy production EV charging		• Lack of options for EV charging;	• **Using sustainable materials;** • **Incorporating on plot energy;** • **Incorporating EV charging**

Table 14: Outlining what to reinforce and what to uplift through better controls in the codes. **(Codes in bold covered in Section 3)**

2.10.1 What good looks like

The illustration on the following page brings together various elements of 'good design' from across the 'Retail Consett' area type. The images on this page have been used to inform the illustration, and highlight what certain elements of good design look like in practice.

Figure 91: One of the traditional public houses

Figure 92: Fun facade in The Consett Area.

Figure 93: Artist impression of traditional shop front installed in The Consett Area

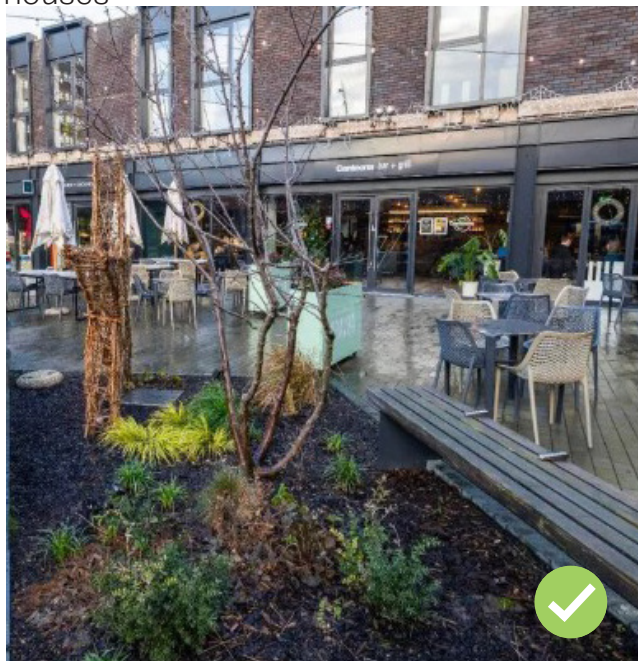


Figure 94: Simple modern fascias and pilasters in uniform colours: Sale Manchester

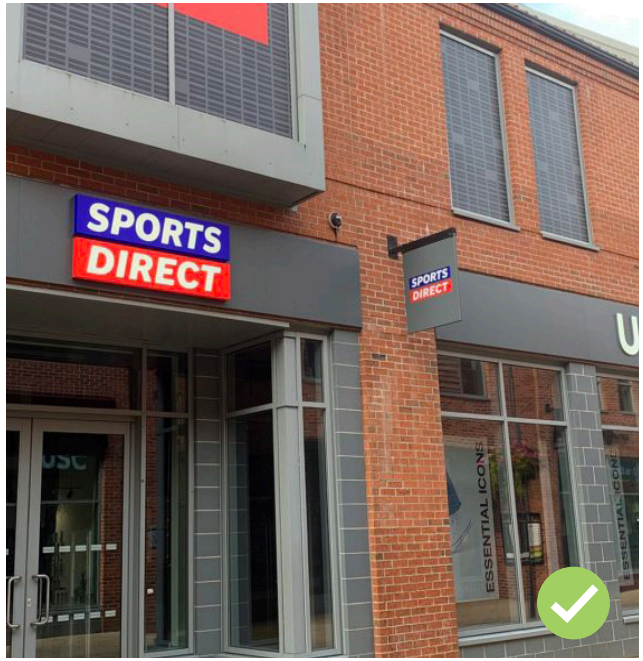


Figure 95: Simple modern fascias and swing board. Logos and signage constrained to a zone in the middle of the fascia.

2.10.2 Design intent

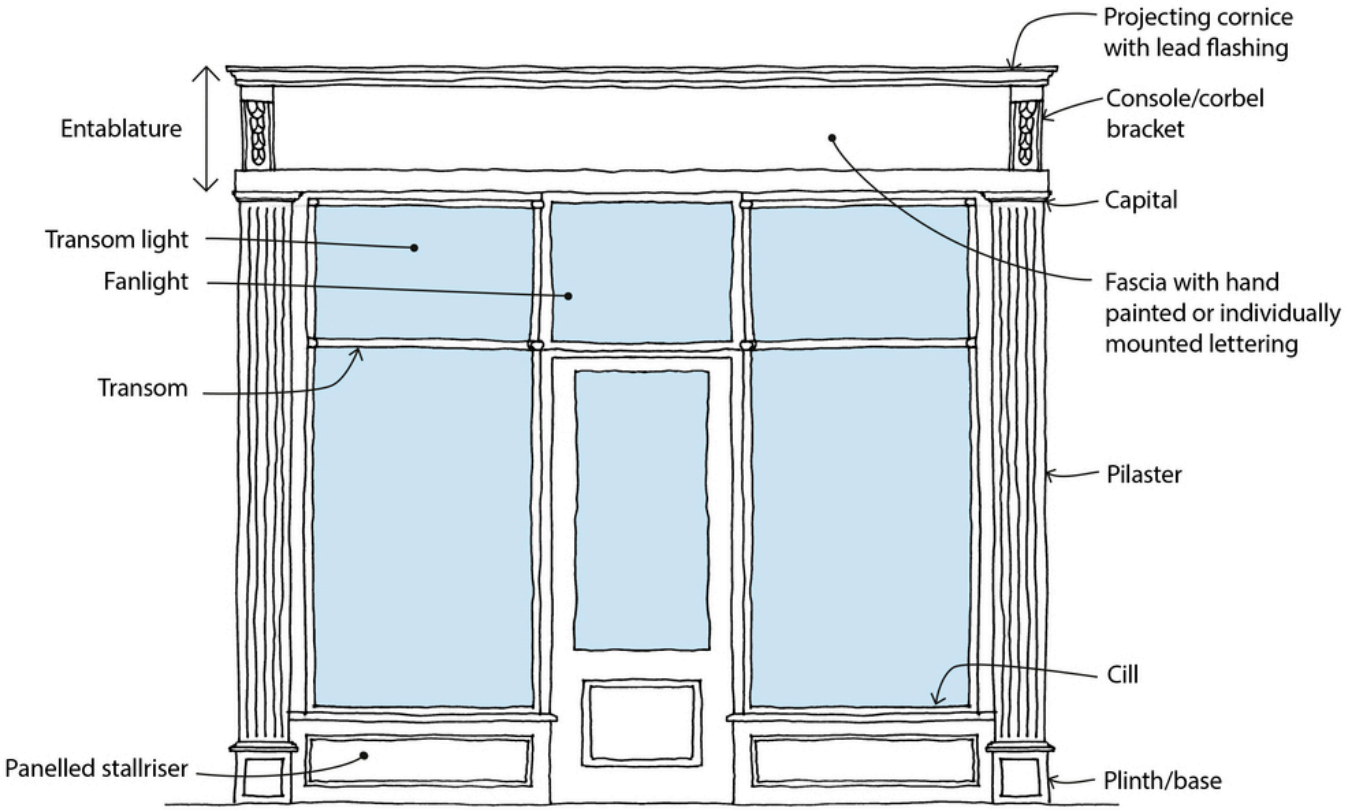


Figure 97: Shopfront positive example on Front Street

Figure 96: An annotated sketch highlighting what design aspects should be maintained or enhanced in the area.

RC1 - Approach to curating signage and security to front;

The design of shop fronts has a significant impact. The preference is introduce traditional proportions and features of typical shop fronts.

For materials the design development should demonstrate:

- a presumption in favour traditional materials such as wood, stone, plasterwork and glasswork; and
- illuminated units and UPVC signs (or equivalent) are preferably not used.

For fascias and signs the design development should demonstrate:

- the depth of all fascia's is proportionate to shop front - not more than a quarter of the total height of the shop front;
- the top line of the fascia board/sign is aligned to the underside of an upper floor sill or other prominent architectural feature OR a space between such is at least two brick courses, to allow for visual separation;
- the depth of signage should not be greater than the depth of the fascia;
- that the content of signs is kept to a minimum and any lettering and/or graphics should be:
    - justified centrally, or to one side;
    - in proportion to the dimensions of the fascia board; and
    - not reduce the appearance of the streetscape in terms of use of non-standard materials (see above for materials), harsh lighting, or the application of busy or complicated graphics.
    - only one fascia sign per shop; and
    - hanging signs are promoted and line through with the fascia of the shop-front and project no more than 0.75m forward of the shop-front.
- For windows and stalls the design development should demonstrate:
    - there are windows to all floors ie. blank facades are not permitted at upper levels;
    - a presumption in favour of paneled glazing in shop windows, including transom and fan lights to create interest on occasional buildings;
    - that the primary windows is vertically proportioned and fixed between the stall riser and the transom bar or fascia;
    - that the primary windows are sash where this is in keeping with the function of the building, i.e. none retail;
    - shops have a clear door access within the shop window, there is a preference for this to be recessed in line with traditional arrangements, at least 800mm, allowing for a door to open outwards; and
    - stall risers under shop windows are between 200-900mm in height and an obvious and integral feature of the elevation.

- For shutters the design development should demonstrate:
    - security shutters are internal and grill/mesh to maintain an element of night-time vibrancy and an active retail frontage.

RC2 - Approach to service yards seen from the street;

As Consett town centre has evolved there are occassions where service yards and back of property face the street. This can downgrade the appearance of some streets, and is unfortunate where there is a mix with some good quality buildings fronting the street.

There may be opportunties to embed art into these area to enliven these streets, also in some locations it might be appropraite to allow some activity from these yards.

County Durham Plan (adopted 2020), Policy 29, Signage, Adverts, Street Furniture and Public Art

New build interpretations

Any new retail development, should not present long blank facades to the street, including service yards.

Figure 99: Mix of poor quality fronts and backs on Raglan Street.

Figure 100: Mix of poor quality fronts and backs on Nile Street

Shopfront Design Guide, Design Principles

Figure 101: The street mural trail in Stockport

RC3 - Continuation and uplift of public realm treatments;

Some environmental improvements have been delivered in the Town centre, including new paving, lighting and seating. These have been undertaken in a relatively small area today. There are opportunties to widen the application of this and further enhance the Town centre.

A continuation of the new and well maintained public realm should include:

- The same materials as chosen for the upgrade to Middle Street and the effective use of materials on Victoria Road, mixing natural stone for impact with a good quality hard wearing concrete product.
- The material selections should be from a simple pallete combining hues of stone grey as the examples given.
- planting selection, which offers plants with good shape chosen from a narrow pallet to create strong and unified form.
- in pedestrianised areas, lighting should be human in scale, simple modern in style, coated in a colour to match the muted greys already in use.

While these interventions will substantially improve the town centre, they may also influence the viability of future developments. Achieving an appropriate balance is therefore essential.

Figure 102: Recent improvements to Middle Street Consett

Figure 103: Simple and effective improvements to Victoria Road, are well maintained.

RC4 - Incorporating opportunities for nature and planting in the Town Centre;

Greening the Town Centre and bringing nature into urban areas can have many positive effects beyond biodiversity, including the impact on health and wellbeing. Opportunties to green the Town Centre could include:

- protecting and immediately replacing any existing diseased or damages trees;
- maintaining the planting in the permenant planters, such that these look well tended, woody and 'leggy' planting is cut back and new planting introduced;
- reclaiming low value landscape space (e,g. at junctions for example Front Street and the B6308) for biodiversity planting.
- ensuring that new street trees are planted in suitable pits with appropriate accessories;
- planting specimen street trees which are extra heavy standard or larger with a clear stem of 1.8m;
- opportunies for bird boxes in the Town Centre;
- consideration of how Sustainable urban drainage solutions incorporating plant beds can be utilised;
- green roofs on significant building and shelters (including bus stops).

Figure 104: Small street trees and planters on Front Street.

Figure 105: An opportunity missed to provide urban greening and biodiversity at Hermiston Retail Park

Figure 106: An impression of what a bus stop with a green roof might look like.

The Durham Trees, Woodlands and Hedges SPD 2024 gives details on tree planting and pits.

2.11 Area type 7: Industrial Consett

Consett's industrial areas, reflect modest sized business parks and industrial estates, demonstrating a blend of modest utilitarian architecture lifted with mature tree planting. Small areas of carparking, are often sited well to reducing the prominence of the car however, servicing and access roads are strongly engineered and give a less attractive welcome. The emphasis of the built form is on cost and operational efficiency. With a shift towards diverse modern enterprises, the design quality and landscape setting of such will need careful consideration to ensure the quality of the businesses moving and staying in the Consett Area.

Employment	Calculations
Building footprint range in hectares (Ha)	0.05- 1.1Ha
Typical plot size range	125m (W) x 165m (D) 45m (W) x 90m (D)
Green space % within plots	0-40%

Table 15: (adjacent) Typical sizes for this area type. **Please note:** Calculations are based on a single sample. It is recommended that applicants undertake their own testing.

Figure 107: Aerial view of industrial buildings to the north of Consett, part of the Number One industrial estate.

- - Building line/inactive frontage

Topic	Good Design characteristics	Planning issues /opportunities	Codes to cover
Context Character, Conservation, Heritage, Local features	• Some +ve examples including View Point at Derwent Business Park	• Most of the employment development is lower quality sheds and older office space	• Consideration of architectural details and materials.
Connections: Context, urban form, layout, movement	• Some well laid out existing infrastructure, based on well defined grid and including mature planting.	• Employment areas often don't include provision for wheeling (including cycling)	• **Working with the site to create well grounded layouts.**
Built form: Building massing, scale and type, blocks and plots, boundary treatments, setbacks, building lines	• Some business parks incorporate mature planting to create good screening for large buildings; • Some business parks have units clustered to create small sub areas in the development;	• The transition between employment and housing needs to be managed though massing and scale; • Boundaries to employment zones and entrances to these need consideration; • Parking and serving needs consideration;	• Transition between employment and housing; • Boundarys to employment; • **Incorporating parking sensitively;**
Nature: Landscape, green and blue infrastructure, open and public spaces		• Though some business parks are well greened, more biodiversity could be considered;	• Incorporating open space; • Incorporating space for nature;
Resilience Orientation Materials SuDs Energy production EV charging		• Sustainability standards set Policy 29 of the CDP – including requirement for a Sustainability Assessment tin support of larger scale development	• **Using sustainable materials;** • **Incorporating on plot energy;** • **Incorporating EV charging**

Table 16: Outlining what to reinforce and what to uplift through better controls in the codes. **(Codes in bold are covered in Section 3)**

2.11.1 What good looks like

The illustration on the following page brings together various elements of 'good design' from across the Industrial Consett area type. The images on this page have been used to inform the illustration, and highlight what certain elements of good design look like in practice.

Figure 109: Greencroft Industrial Park, Stanley

Figure 111: Calder Park is set in a parkland setting created by advanced planting.

Figure 108: Concept for 'Plastics Park' Cheshire, relies on structural landscaping

Figure 110: Gillmoss Recycling Centre, industrial can be architectural!

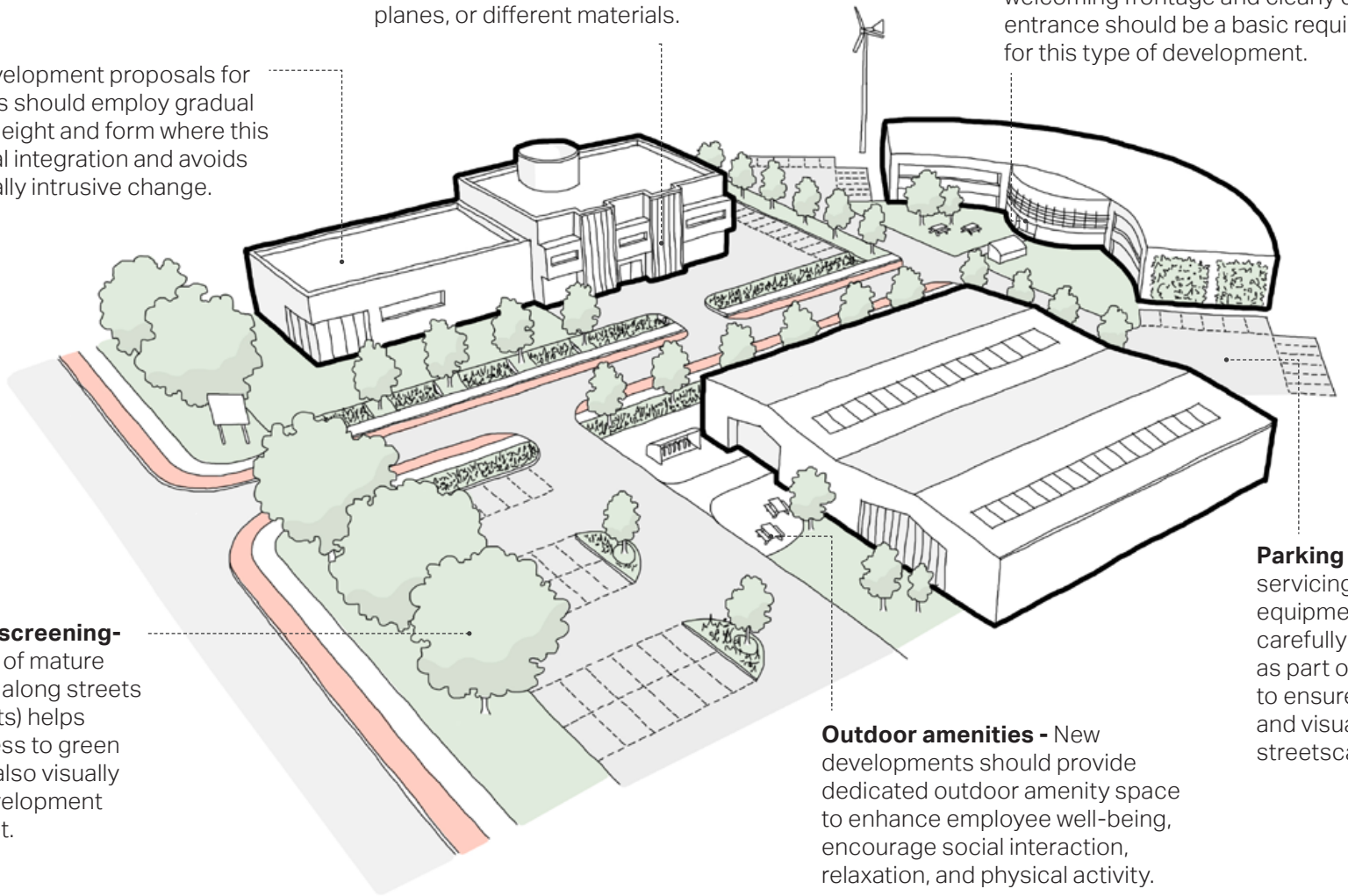
Figure 112: Speke Business Park Liverpool. Nature add much to industrial areas, ie. biodiversity, green infrastructure which settles the buildings and pleasant places to work.

2.11.2 Design intent

Architectural features - To reduce building mass and add visual interest, incorporate architectural elements such as pilasters, recessed panels, varied wall planes, or different materials.

Creating a sense of entrance - Addressing the street properly with a welcoming frontage and clearly defined entrance should be a basic requirement for this type of development.

Massing - Development proposals for larger buildings should employ gradual transitions in height and form where this supports visual integration and avoids abrupt or visually intrusive change.



Planting and screening- The presence of mature planting (both along streets and within plots) helps enhance access to green space, whilst also visually screening development from the street.

Outdoor amenities - New developments should provide dedicated outdoor amenity space to enhance employee well-being, encourage social interaction, relaxation, and physical activity.

Parking - Parking area, servicing and plant equipment should be carefully sited and designed as part of the overall layout to ensure a cohesive and visually appropriate streetscape.

Table 17: An annotated sketch highlighting what design aspects should be maintained or enhanced in the area. **Please note:** this is not an existing scene, it instead brings together various elements of good design.

IC1 - Consideration of archtectural details and materials.

The design and materials of employment buildings shape both their appearance and how they're experienced by users and the surrounding community. By using varied materials and reflecting local character, buildings can feel more human-scaled, engaging, and rooted in place.

- Large, uninterrupted elevations made of a single material, should be avoided as they can appear monotonous and overly dominant
- To reduce building mass and add visual interest, incorporate architectural elements such as pilasters, recessed panels, varied wall planes, or different materials.
- To reduce the visual impact of large employment buildings in long-range views, especially near open landscapes or skylines, use natural, muted tones—such as greens, greys, browns, or buffs—that reflect the local environment. Where appropriate, apply tonal variation, with darker shades at the base and lighter ones above, to soften the silhouette. Avoid reflective materials, stark whites, and bold contrasts, which can increase visual prominence
- Where large, blank façades face public areas, applicants should use design features—such as architectural detailing, landscaping, or integrated public art—to add visual interest. Public art, including murals, sculptures, or lighting, should be permanent, high-quality, and well-integrated. Light installations should meet all relevant lighting regulations
- All plant equipment, including rooftop units, should be visually screened to reduce their impact on the built environment

While these interventions will substantially improve the town centre, they may also influence the viability of future developments. Achieving an appropriate balance is therefore essential.

Figure 113: Architectural features have been used in this building in Calder Park (Wakefield) to help add interest and create a primary frontage.

Figure 114: Muted tones and tonal variation (with darker shades at the base and lighter ones above), can help soften the silhouette of large buildings. Calder Park, Wakefield.

IC2 - Transition between employment and housing;

Some employment allocations are located notably close to residential area in and around The Consett Area. Though it is traditional for employment and the locals employed there to be located close together, it is well understoond now that quality of life and quality of place has an overarching effect on health and the proximity to and buffer between industrial and residential needs to be carefully managed.

- Industrial uses are expected be in keeping with their proximity to residential property, and dirty, noisy or any other 'bad neighbour' should be located away on sites away from residential uses. The offset for this should be determined through indepentant technical studies verified by Council officers in agreement this the local community.
- Development proposals for larger buildings should employ gradual transitions in height and form where this supports visual integration and avoids abrupt or visually intrusive change. Where a noise barrier is required as part of acoustic mitigation measures and is visible from the street, its appearance should be softened through the inclusion of a landscaped buffer, which contributes possitively to the streetscape. This buffer should:
  - Be a minimum of 2m wide, noting that the final width should be determined based on the location of visually sensitive receptors and the height of the barrier.
  - Include layered planting with species selected for seasonal interest, visual screening and compatability with the local context.
  - Clearly define responsibility for long-term maintenance of the buffer and secure this through appropriate management arrangements.

Figure 115: Industrial buildings step down in height to match the scale of surrounding residential properties in Northallerton.

Figure 116: Industrial buildings are 'nestled' behind residential terraces in Keighley, making good use of the existing topography to help 'hide' large buildings in the valley.

IC3 - Boundaries to employment;

Where development adjoins the street, boundary fencing should be carefully designed to balance operational and security needs with high-quality design. Fencing should:

- Be visually permeable wherever feasible, using materials such as vertical metal railings or weldmesh to maintain passive surveillance and minimise visual barriers. Solid elements—such as walls—may be incorporated up to 1m in height, with railings above.
- Be set back from the street edge to create a landscaped buffer that mitigates environmental-health impacts, including noise, dust, and airborne pollutants from industrial activity and adjacent traffic routes. The buffer should use multi-layered planting (groundcover, shrubs and small trees) with species selected for pollutant interception, noise absorption, and low allergenicity. Where Environmental Health assessment identifies elevated air-quality or noise-impact levels, the width of the landscaped buffer should be increased proportionately beyond the minimum 2 metres to ensure effective mitigation.
- Be coordinated with other site infrastructure—including lighting, signage, and planting—to establish a coherent and integrated visual language.

IC4 - Creating a front door to the street;

Business and industrial units should not be designed to be inwards facing, they have an important part to place in placemaking and creating a positive impact on local character. Addressing the street properly with a welcoming frontage and clearly defined entrance should be a basic requirement for this type of development.

- Ancillary functions like offices and trade counters should be located along the main frontage facing the public highway, helping to create an active and welcoming street presence.
- At ground level, natural solutions like planting or living walls are preferred, with timber cladding used only when greenery isn't practical
- Parking area, servicing and plant equipment should be carefully sited and designed as part of the overall layout to ensure a cohesive and visually appropriate streetscape.

Figure 117: Calder Park, Wakefield - parking areas are screened by trees and planting.

IC5 - Wayfinding and signage;

Signage on business and industrial parks is often a dominant feature. Done well this can create a positive and cohesive impression.

- For new employment areas signage strategy should be prepared to ensure a unified and well-integrated visual identity and should cover signage types, typical locations, scale, materials, lighting, and how signage aligns with the overall site design.
- Loading bay and service yard signage should be clearly legible, using durable materials, consistent fonts, and high-contrast colours. Signs should be placed at key points—such as junctions and entryways—to guide movement efficiently, reduce pedestrian disruption, and limit unnecessary vehicle circulation.

Figure 118: Route marker in the Consett NA.

Figure 119: Terris Novalis telescope, Consett.

Figure 120: Sculpture at the Morrison's roundabout, Consett, which helps wayfinding in the NA.

IC6 - Incorporating open space;

The wellbeing of those working in our industrial and business parks is an important factor in building a health and reiliance for our community. Including access to open space and nature during the working day is proved to positively impact mental and physical health.

- New developments should provide dedicated outdoor amenity space to enhance employee well-being, encourage social interaction, relaxation, and physical activity.
- This space should be accessible to all users, provide seating and incorporate planting.
- Outdoor amenity spaces should be located within easy walking or wheeling distance of building entrances (within 100m) and connected by accessible, dedicated routes.
- These spaces should be designed to provide an attractive and welcoming environment for employees to enjoy. Where possible, outdoor amenity areas should be positioned away from vehicular routes and parking areas to enhance their appeal and tranquillity.
- New development should make provision for informal exercise and physical activity in outdoor spaces, such as outdoor gyms, trim trails, or even table tennis.

Figure 121: Dedicated outdoor amenity space can help to enhance employee well-being, encourage social interaction, relaxation, and physical activity.

Figure 122: New development should make provision for informal exercise and physical activity in outdoor spaces, such as outdoor gyms, trim trails, or even table tennis.

IC7 - Incorporating space for nature;

- Designs should promote access to green spaces by incorporating active travel routes and clear signage to improve visibility and ease of use. Where feasible, walking and wheeling paths should follow green infrastructure corridors—provided this doesn't conflict with biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements;
- New development proposals should be informed by a clear understanding of existing woodland, trees and hedgerows within the site to ensure that opportunities for their retention and integration into the layout are optimised.
- Opportunities to enhance retained features should be considered and could include provision of complimentary planting alongside or contiguous with retained features.

Figure 123: The incorporation of waterways and ponds at Calder Park in Wakefield creates space for wildlife.

Figure 125: Where feasible, walking and wheeling paths should follow green infrastructure corridors.

Figure 124: SuDS and planting create a pleasant green route in Calder Park, Wakefield.

Area-wide design codes and guidance

03

3. Area-wide design codes and guidance

This chapter presents a series of area-wide design codes, applicable to future development within the Consett Neighbourhood Area (NA). These design codes should be considered in conjunction with the area type specific design guidelines in Section 2.

3.1 Introduction

This section supports developers and other applicants when producing or reviewing planning applications within the Consett NA. The featured guidelines and codes apply to the whole NA, including any future allocated sites, infill development, and windfall development.

The guidance in this section is focused on topics that help designers and decision makers respond appropriately to context. To enable a clear design process, new development proposals should use the guidance to ensure that development proposals enhance the setting and sustainability of the Neighbourhood Area, while not detracting from its context, local character, and sense of place.

The goal is to promote the delivery of the best possible range of residential development, which will support sustainable and contextually appropriate development.

These design codes ensure that all developments across the Consett NA reflect good design principles. For more detailed requirements, refer to the Area Type-specific design codes outlined in Section 2.

Reference to existing policy:

Where there is already reference to a theme within existing local policy or guidance, this has been highlighted alongside the below icon.

Example of a existing policy

Please note:

Both design codes and guidelines are contained within this document, highlighted within dark blue boxes as shown here. The difference between codes and guidelines is summarised below:

Design codes: Design codes are mandatory requirements for design issues and are expressed with the word **Should.**

Guidelines: Guidelines set out aspirations for design that is expected to be delivered and are expressed with one of two words:

- **SHOULD** reflects design principles that are strongly encouraged.
- **COULD** reflects design principles that are suggestions.

The adjacent table presents the Design Codes featured in this chapter, organised into the five following topics:

- **A Context**
- **B Connections**
- **C Built Form**
- **D Nature**
- **E Resilience**

Design codes and guidance		Page number
A: Context	A1 - Managing traditional enclosure ratio with modern standards.	83
	A2 - Density	83
B: Connections	B1 - Working with the site to create well-grounded layouts.	84
C: Built form	C1 - Balancing a traditional house type with future needs;	85
	C2 - Incorporating parking sensitively	85
	C3 - Space standard for gardens.	86
D: Nature	D1 - Allowance for nature (in an urban area).	87
E: Resilience	E1 - Using sustainable materials;	88
	E2 - Optimising solar gain	88
	E3 - Intergrating photovoltics (PV)	89
	E4 - Incorporating air source heat pumps (ASHP)	89

Table 18: Individual design codes and guidance are grouped by topic, and can be found using the above page numbers.

A Context

3.2 Context

To preserve the Consett Area's character and heritage, new development should take a coordinated, sensitive approach that reflects the town's industrial legacy through appropriate materials and forms. Community involvement is vital to ensure designs feel authentic and locally rooted. Historic buildings and traditional layouts should be retained where possible, with shared spaces that foster social connection and embed heritage into daily life. Enhancing green infrastructure and designing in harmony with the landscape will help new buildings integrate with their surroundings, supporting growth that respects and strengthens the Consett Area's identity.

A1 - Managing traditional enclosure ratio with modern standards.

The strong linear urban form seen in this area type makes the way in which buildings respond to the road a key

- Respect and respond to positive elements of the existing layout and built form as detailed on page 50.

- Plot and building depths and widths should be in keeping with the typical sizes within the surroundings. Character area specific typical plot and block size ranges should be agreed with the local community through officers and referred to and inform proposed plot and block arrangements, based on the surrounding context.

A2 - Density

The existing density samples shown in section 2 suggests that new development within the Consett Area can be relatively high the village and town centres and traditional terraced block.

- A blanked density isn't promoted however densities are raised using these traditional forms it should be done respecting appropraite layout reflecting the traditional use of these. I.e. terraced block, rather than pepper potted terracing, and the use of more highly urban solutions only in the centres or gateways to development again to avoid pepperpotting this form across a layout.

B Connections

3.3 Connections

A well-connected street network promotes walkability, legibility, and social interaction by treating streets as multifunctional public spaces. Preserving historic street patterns and integrating pedestrian and cycle routes enhances connectivity, supports sustainable travel, and ensures permeability. Green infrastructure—like parks, tree-lined streets, and greenways—strengthens movement networks while boosting biodiversity, climate resilience, and placemaking.

County Durham Building for Life Supplementary Planning Document, Connections

B1 - Working with the site to create well-grounded layouts.

Applicants should undertake a site appraisal identifying and analysing the physical and environmental features of the site. This information should be unbiased, balanced and factual. This is to be used to ensure new layouts work with the existing site features and opportunties to retain those positive spatial factors which ground the development as being of The Consett Area. These will include:

- Visual connnections to the wider area, and should focus on those positive medium and long views to the countryside.
- Opportunties to enhance existing green and blue infrastrucutre corridors and to align [where appropraite] movement corridors to benefit from these existing conduits.
- Where located in existing urban areas applicants should demonstrate how a positive existing urban grain has been extrapolated to shape the proposed. Where the existing layout reflects poorer connnectivity ie cul-de-sacs, proposals should seek to mend the urban grain and could take reference from local historic street patterns.

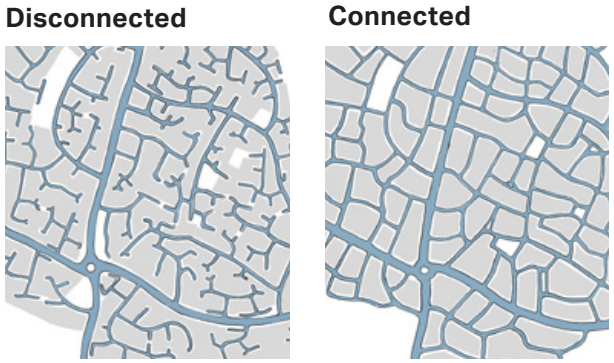


Figure 126: The differences between a disconnected and connected network of streets as illustrated in the National Model Design Code. Connected streets help to reduce walking distances and set a long-lasting framework for movement.

C Built form

3.4 Built form

New development should reflect The Consett Area's human-scale character, shaped by traditional housing and modest commercial buildings. Larger structures should be broken into smaller volumes to maintain visual continuity. Boundary treatments—like low brick walls and iron railings—should echo local styles, using materials and detailing consistent with the town's vernacular.

C1 - Balancing a traditional house type with future needs.

There are many traditional workers terraces and cottages in the Consett area. By today's space standards some of these would not be acceptable for the size and make up of modern families. Though the building envelop should reflect the propotions the the traditional, in particular as they present to the street, there should be scope to accomodate the following internally:

- a dedicated work area that comfortably fits a desk and chair, receives natural light, and has access to a double power socket. While the UK's Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) and the County Durham Plan do not specify a formal minimum size for home offices, a practical guideline is that this space should be at least 5m²
- Ground floor dwellings and single-aspect north-facing homes should have higher ceiling heights of at least 2.5 meters.
- Higher ceilings to improve natural light distribution, enhance spaciousness, and support better air circulation—helping to create more comfortable and inviting living spaces despite limited sunlight or exposure.
- Roofs designed with future adaptability in mind, allowing for potential conversion into habitable spaces. This involves constructing roofs and ceilings at a suitable pitch, typically a minimum of 30 degrees, to facilitate future loft conversions.

C2 - Incorporating parking sensitively.

Car parking should be considered as an integral part of the overall design of a scheme, and not considered as an "add-on" or a detailed issue to be left to the end of the design process. Designated parking locations should be convenient for residents, and visible from their homes.

- There should be a mix of parking options used across development. This can include on street parallel bays, tandem parking bays between homes, detached garages , and in addition the occasional use of integral garages and on plot in front of property bays.
- Bays should be readily accessible from the front or back door of a property.

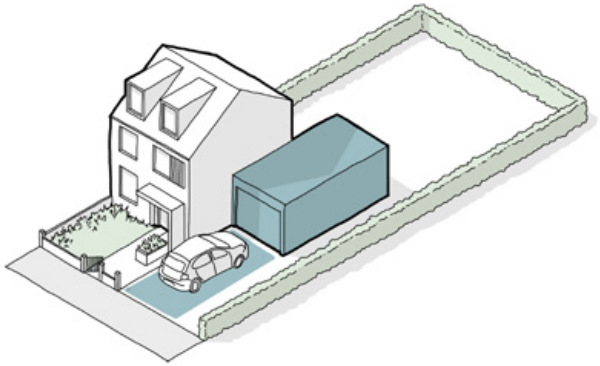


Figure 127: Example of on-plot parking, combined with a garage.

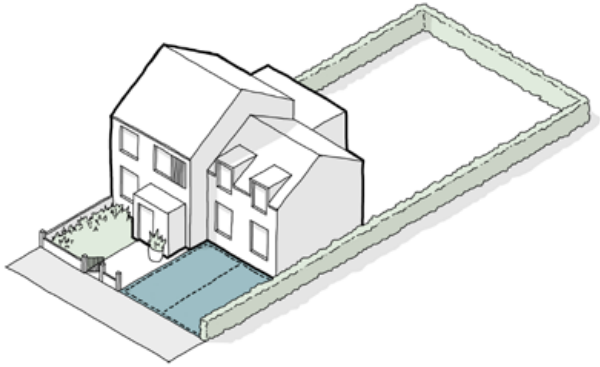


Figure 128: Example of on-plot parking space for two cars. This should be balanced with greenery, so hardstanding does not dominate the frontage.

C3 - Space standards for gardens.

Providing good outdoor space for residents is vital. Every home should have usable and appropriate space to the type of house.

- Family homes, should include an appropriate garden space, it should be well defined, offer privacy and provide space for permenant play equipment, e.g trampolines, slides swing sets etc to be kept outside with out disrupting neighbours views.
- Private gardens for new houses should have a minimum length of 10m to ensure sufficient functional outdoor space for play, planting, and relaxation.
- For north-facing gardens, a greater minimum length (typically 12 m) is recommended. This compensates for reduced sunlight, particularly in winter months to ensure that the garden remains usable and pleasant.
- Exception: In higher-density contexts or where site constraints limit available space, a reduced garden length may be acceptable with appropriate justification.

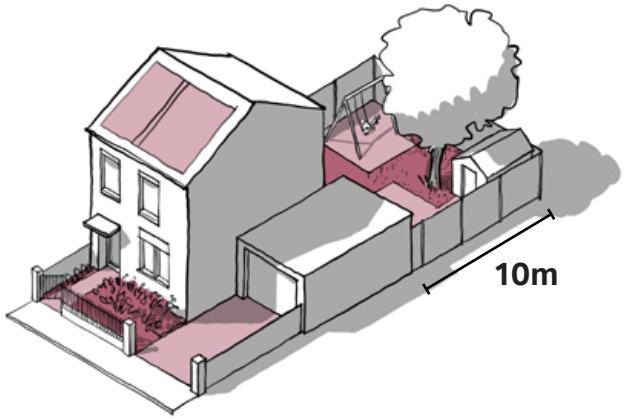


Figure 129: Private gardens for new houses should have a minimum length of 10m to ensure sufficient functional outdoor space for play, planting, and relaxation. Image credit: National Model Design Code.

County Durham Design Code Supplementary Planning Document, Open space and landscaping checklist

County Durham Building for Life Supplementary Planning Document, External storage and amenity space

D Nature

3.5 Nature

The Consett Area's dramatic upland landscape is central to its identity and should shape new development. Proposals should work with the natural topography—preserving key views, integrating existing features, and softening edges with native planting. Public spaces should connect to green assets and be designed for long-term care, ensuring they remain safe, welcoming, and well-used.

D1 - Allowance for nature (in an urban area).

The strong linear urban form seen in this area type makes the way in which buildings respond to the road a key

- For major new developments or any proposed development located near an ecologically sensitive site, a perimeter exercise loop should be provided. This route will offer residents opportunities for walking and cycling, promoting health and well-being while helping to divert recreational pressure away from protected areas. The loop should connect seamlessly with existing public rights of way and nearby active travel networks. Wherever feasible, it should be designed as an off-road or segregated route, avoiding areas shared with motor vehicles to enhance safety and usability.

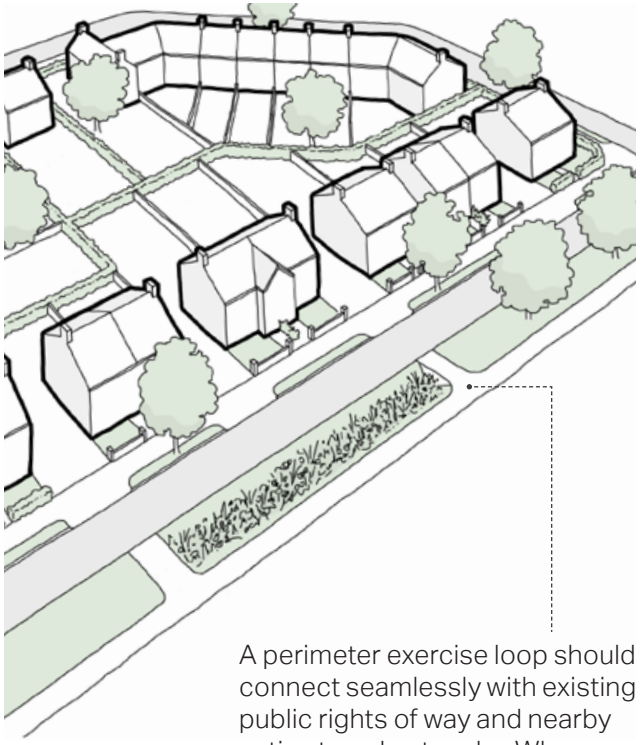


Figure 130: Diagram showing a perimeter exercise loop as part of new development.

Resilience

3.6 Resilience

To future-proof The Consett Area, new development should embed sustainability in building orientation, drainage, energy, and transport. Designs should maximise natural light and solar gain while minimising overheating, with south-facing façades ideal for solar panels. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) like swales and rain gardens should manage water and boost biodiversity. Renewable energy and community schemes should be integrated, alongside energy-efficient buildings. EV charging infrastructure should be widely accessible to support clean transport and long-term mobility needs.

County Durham Plan (adopted 2020), Policy 29, Sustainable Design

E1 - Using sustainable materials;

Development proposals should look to incorporate nature based solutions into the fabric of buildings. Applicants should include measures which contribute to the optimisation of the relevant local Urban Greening Factor. Relevant information on the use of the Urban Greening Factor to evaluate the quality and quantity of urban greening is included in Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework - Principles and Standards for England.

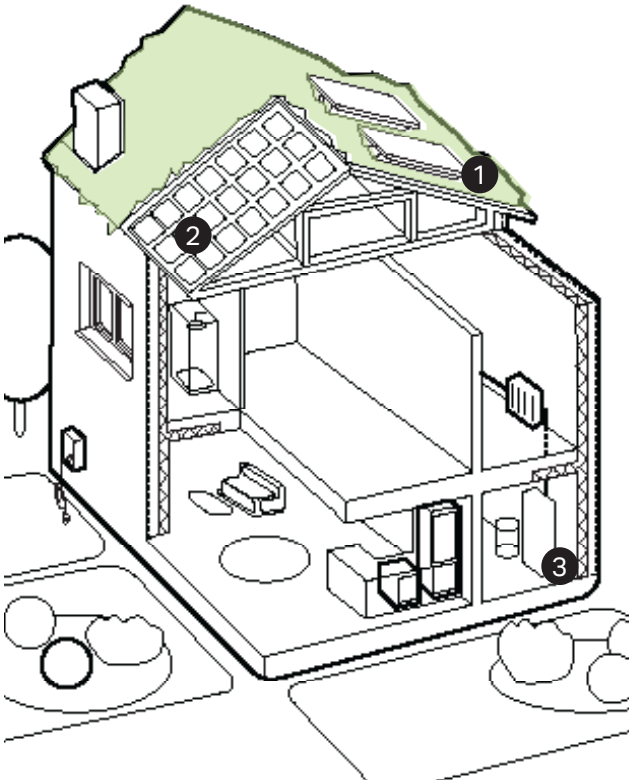
Carbon emissions from the construction of new buildings should be minimised using standard Whole Life Carbon Assessment (WLCA) methods, such as those set out in the RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment for the Built Environment (2nd Edition) or BS EN 15978:2011.

Upfront carbon (modules A1–A5) should be assessed against recognised benchmarks, such as the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard (2025) or LETI targets for 2025 and 2030.

E2 - Optimising solar gain

Layouts should optimise passive solar gain to reduce energy use for heating,. This should look to maximise the number of buildings on site that are orientated to within +/- 30° of south. In addition, south-facing facades for living spaces should be prioritised (where possible) to maximise passive solar heating in winter.

However, when applying these measures, the risk of overheating should also be considered, in alignment with Buildings Regulations Approved Document Part O. According to this document, measures should be taken to limit excess solar gains in the summer and remove heat from within the building where neccessary. Compliance with overheating limits can be demonstrated by using approved calculation methods such as the Simplified Methodology or CIBSE's TM59 Dynamic Thermal Modelling methodology Passive measures to limit overheating should be prioritised, and may include fixed shading, glazing design (such as the window g-value), and building design (such as shading from balconies and landscaping of the surroundings.



1. Solar panels.
2. Integrated solar tiles
3. Battery storage

Figure 131: Some of the possible sustainability measures that could be employed in regards to integrating photovoltaics.

County Durham Plan(Adopted 2020),Energy and Resources, 5.296

E3 - Intergrating photovoltaics (PV)

- Photovoltaic panels (PV) should be used where possible. PV arrays should be orientated to maximise solar exposure - typically south-facing or east/west facing where appropriate, ensuring minimal shading from nearby trees or buildings.
- A battery could be installed alongside the PV to optimise the use of the array's power output, however the cost of this is recognised.
- When using PV's aesthetics as well as function should be reviewed. It is preferable to locate PVs on roof pitches outside the publically visible areas and to use PV's which are either integrated as part of the tile bond or embedded into the roof plane such that they don't project or stand proud the of the main roof,

E4 - Incorporating air source heat pumps (ASHP)

ASHP's can be a good way of renerating on plot energy and should be one of the mechanisms used on developments to provide residents with this. They are often large and unsightly, therefore the following should be considered.

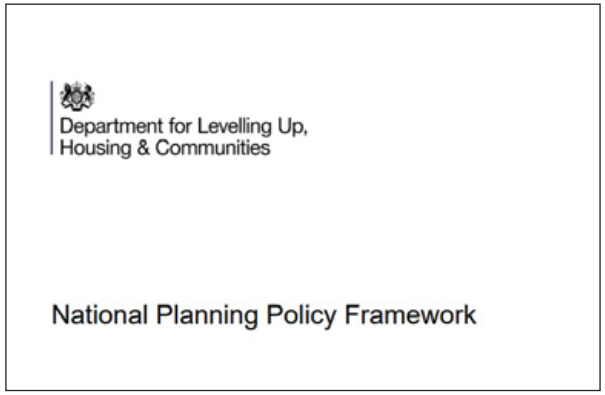
- ASHP's should be located so as to minimise their visual prominance. Position units on side or rear elevations, avoiding principal facades or elevations that face a public street or highway. Rear gardens, enclosed service yards, or inner courtyards are preferred locations.
- Where an ASHP is located on an elevation which fronts the street, appropriate screening should be provided (timber, low wall, evergreen planting) to minimise visibility (ensuring that such measures do not impede airflow or maintenance access).

Appendix

Appendix A: Policy context

Appendix A outlines the national and local planning policy and guidance documents that have influenced the development of this document.

It is recommended that future development refers to the following policy and guidance, and subsequent updates, to supplement and support guidance described in this design codes and guidance document. The following text identifies relevant planning policies and guidance at both the national and local level.



National Planning Policy Framework (revised December 2024)

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the Government's overarching economic, environmental, and social planning policies for England. The policies within the NPPF apply to the preparation of Local and Neighbourhood Areas, and act as a framework against which decisions are made on planning applications. The NPPF notes that, 'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes'.

The sections of the NPPF that are of particular relevance to this Design Code are:

Part 2: Achieving sustainable development;

Part 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;

Part 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities;

Part 12: Achieving well-designed places, emphasises the need to create high-quality buildings and places as fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It sets out a number of principles that planning policies and decisions should consider ensuring that new developments are well-designed and focus on quality;

Part 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and

Part 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

National Planning Policy Framework (revised December 2023)

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the Government's overarching economic, environmental, and social planning policies for England. The policies within the NPPF apply to the preparation of Local and Neighbourhood Areas, and act as a framework against which decisions are made on planning applications. The NPPF notes that, 'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes'.

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Part 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and

Part 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

National Model Design Code (2021)

MHCLG

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) sets a baseline standard of quality and practice. The NMDC provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes and the outlining of character areas. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the NDG.

The NMDC and NDG are companion documents setting out characteristics of well-designed places. The guides are expected to be used by local authorities, applicants and local communities to establish further design codes and guidance (such as this document) that can deliver in line with local objectives.

National Design Guide (updated January 2021)

MHCLG

The National Design Guide (NDG) sets the 10 characteristics of a well-designed place and demonstrates what good design is in practice. It supports the ambitions of the NPPF to utilise the planning and development process in the creation of high-quality places.

The NDG should be used as an overarching reference for new development where topics are not covered in local guidance. The NDG characteristics were used in the initial analysis to understand local demands and challenges. The NDG notes that a well-designed place is unlikely to be achieved by focusing only on the appearance, materials and detailing of buildings.


Closed consultation

The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: 2023 consultation

Updated 4 March 2024

Applies to England

Contents

1. Scope of consultation
2. Acronyms
3. Introduction
4. Performance requirements for new buildings
5. Metrics
6. Updated guidance and

The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: 2023 consultation on changes to Part 6, Part L (conservation of fuel and power) and Part F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations for dwellings and non-domestic buildings and seeking evidence on previous changes to Part O (overheating)

Building for a Healthy Life (2020)

Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the Government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The name reflects the key role that the built environment has in promoting wellbeing.

The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed (and completed) developments. It also provides useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

3.6.1 Local planning policy & guidance

Consett is a town in the County Durham district. The following planning and design documents were reviewed to understand the policy context under which this document has been produced. These include key documents such as the area's Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).

Local planning policy and design guidance		Notes	Adoption date
County Council	County Durham Plan : Key policy noted in table in appendices		2020
	County Durham Plan Policies Map		2020
	Building for Life (useful checklist)	Currently adopted SPDs	2019
	Residential Amenity Standards (min. standards)		2023
	Parking and Accessibility		2023
	County Durham Design Code (including settlement study for Consett/ Leadgate/Hamsterley Mill/ Castleside (including Moorside and The Grove/Shotley Bridge)		2024 (settlement studys under review likely Jan 2026)
	Conservation area appraisal: Shotley Bridge	CAAs	2009
	Conservation area appraisal: Ebchester		2009
	Conservation area appraisal: Blackhill		2009
Neighbourhood Forum	Consett Area Neighbourhood Plan (CANP)	Currently under review	XXXX
	Consett Housing needs assessment (CANP evidence)	Currently under review	2025

Table 19: Summary of planning policy, guidance and evidence documents

County Durham Plan

The County Durham Plan (Adopted 2020) sets out a strategic framework for guiding development to 2035, aiming to strengthen the county's economy, deliver high-quality homes, and protect valued landscapes. It promotes sustainable growth by focusing development in the most accessible locations, improving infrastructure, and supporting town centres, rural communities, and the visitor economy. The Plan emphasises environmental stewardship, including Green Belt protection, climate resilience, sustainable transport, and conserving heritage assets such as Durham Cathedral and Castle. It outlines major housing and employment allocations, including transformative projects in Durham City, and ensures minerals and waste needs are met responsibly. Through its vision, objectives, and detailed policies, the Plan seeks to raise prosperity, enhance wellbeing, and create resilient, vibrant communities across County Durham.

Building for Life (useful checklist)

The SPD adopts the 12-point Building for Life 12 criteria to guide residential development across County Durham, aiming for high-quality, sustainable neighbourhoods that fit their surroundings. It sets out detailed guidance on designing connections, access to facilities and public transport, housing mix, local character and context, legible street patterns, pedestrian-friendly layout, parking integration, and the provision of private and communal amenity space. The document defines assessment frameworks for planning applications (full, reserved matters, outline), ensuring developments are reviewed for design quality before approval. In doing so, it helps embed consistent, context-sensitive design standards in the local planning process across the county

Residential Amenity Standards (min. standards)

The County Durham Residential Amenity Standards SPD (adopted January 2023) provides detailed guidance for residential extensions, alterations and new development to protect amenity, privacy and design quality across Durham County Council's area. It replaces the 2020 version and builds on the policies in the County Durham Plan (especially Policy 29 – Sustainable Design). The SPD covers guidance on home-owner works (extensions, roof conversions, conservatories, garages, driveways, fences, drives, balconies, etc.) as well as minimum privacy/separation distances, acceptable garden/amenity-space standards and external space requirements for new dwellings. It aims to ensure that developments enhance and complement existing areas, safeguard living conditions, and raise overall design and amenity standards across the county.

Parking and Accessibility

The Parking and Accessibility SPD 2023, adopted by Durham County Council to support Policy 21 (Delivering Sustainable Transport) of the County Durham Plan, provides detailed guidance on parking provision and accessibility considerations for new development across the county; it updates and formalises previous guidance to help developers and planners assess appropriate levels and types of car parking, cycle parking, disabled parking and electric vehicle charging infrastructure, defines what constitutes an accessible location, and encourages designs that support sustainable travel modes (walking, cycling and public transport) alongside managing demand for private vehicle use, making the SPD a material consideration in planning decisions.

County Durham Design Code

The County Durham Design Code SPD sets out a framework to foster design excellence across the county by ensuring new development responds to and enhances local character, heritage and sense of place. It defines a typology-based approach to settlements, helping recognise different settlement types, historic villages, post-industrial towns, 20th-century suburbs, etc. and encourages developers to analyse site context before designing layouts, building forms, materials and landscape, not simply replicate generic styles. The SPD supports the relevant policies in the County Durham Plan and clarifies what constitutes high-quality, locally distinctive design. Rather than prescribing fixed densities or plot-sizes, it offers guidance and flexibility, enabling developers to tailor design responses appropriately to context, scale and setting.

Conservation area appraisal: Shotley Bridge

The appraisal defines Shotley Bridge's conservation area (originally designated 1975, boundary amended several times) and analyses its "special architectural or historic interest" to guide planning and preservation efforts. It reviews the village's long history, from medieval agricultural and industrial origins (mills, sword-making, paper- and metal-working) to its affluent Victorian transformation. The report divides the area into multiple character zones (village core, former industrial sites, terraced streets, spa & park grounds, etc.), describing building materials (notably local stone and slate roofs), traditional layouts, and historic features like boundary-walls, mill-races and the riverside setting. It highlights the variety of building types, from grand Victorian villas to simple stone cottages, as essential to the village's distinctive character, and outlines management proposals to conserve this diversity while guiding future development sensitively.

Conservation area appraisal: Ebchester

The appraisal describes the historic and architectural significance of Ebchester, a village in County Durham lying beside the River Derwent on the site of the Roman fort Vindomora. The conservation area, first designated in 1975 and amended since, encompasses the village's core of buildings from the 17th–19th centuries, including former mill-related structures, traditional houses and historic street-scape layout. The appraisal traces Ebchester's development from Roman times through industrial mill activity to its rural village character today, emphasising features such as stone construction, historic boundaries, narrow lanes and the riverside setting. It identifies the mix of building types and materials, surviving historic fabric, and the natural landscape around the village as essential to its special architectural and historic interest, forming the basis for planning and preservation guidance.

Conservation area appraisal: Blackhill

The appraisal defines a 21-hectare conservation area on the outskirts of Consett, the suburb of Blackhill, identifying its special 19th-century Victorian character as worthy of protection. It highlights key features including landscaped open spaces such as Benfieldside Cemetery and Blackhill and Consett Park, uniform rows of Victorian terraces south of the cemetery, grand Victorian houses along avenues, and prominent buildings such as St. Aidan's Church. The document situates Blackhill's development in the context of the iron-town growth of Consett, underlining the area's historic layout, architectural materials and streetscape as central to its identity. It aims to provide a robust framework for planning decisions, ensuring any change respects Blackhill's historic character and setting.

Appendix B: Checklist

Appendix B sets out a general list of design considerations by topic for use as a quick reference guide in design workshops and discussions.

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

1

General design considerations for new development:

- Does new development integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity to allow accessibility and connectivity?
- Is there an opportunity to reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets and other spaces?
- Does the proposal harmonise with and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use?
- Does the proposal relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views?
- How can the local architecture and historic distinctiveness be reflected, respected, and reinforced?
- Have important existing features been retained and incorporated into the development?
- Does the proposal adopt contextually appropriate materials and details?
- Have surrounding buildings been respected in terms of scale, height, form and massing?
- Are all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space well related to each other?
- Has adequate open space been provided for the development in terms of both quantity and quality?
- Does the proposal incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features?
- Has management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities been considered by the proposal?

1 (continued)

General design considerations for new development:

- Are energy efficient technologies (for example ground or air source heat pumps, rainwater harvesting, biomass and solar energy) positively integrated where appropriate?
- Does the proposal make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape, or the amenities of neighbours?
- Is there an opportunity to implement passive environmental design principles (for example, site layout being optimised for beneficial solar gain, techniques to reduce energy demands and the incorporation of renewable energy sources)?

2

Street grid and layout:

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?
- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

3

Local green spaces, views & character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? I.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?

3 (continued)

Local green spaces, views & character:

- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how will this be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention e.g. permeable landscaping, swales etc.?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

4

Gateway and access features:

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

5

Building line and boundary treatment:

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

6

Buildings layout and grouping:

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the villagescape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?
- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles, with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night? This is to reduce peak loads. And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?

7

Building heights and roof-line:

- What are the characteristics of the roof-line?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now, or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over shading?

8

Household extensions:

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

9

Building materials & surface treatment:

- What is the distinctive material in the area?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?
- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Do the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?
- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.
- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced? E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

10

Car parking:

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?
- Can electric vehicle charging points be provided?
- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/ communal facility where appropriate?
- If covered car ports or cycle storage is included, can it incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels or a bio-diverse roof in its design?

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