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Section 1:
About this document
The purpose of this document

This document has been produced to support the spatial strategies and design policies in the Wessington Neighbourhood Development Plan. It should be read in conjunction with the Plan document, along with the documents outlined in the appendices of this guide.

The intention of this document is to enable design teams to make their proposals specific to the Plan area, and to help avoid some of the common pitfalls associated with new development. It also provides guidance on how to manage change in the village, including how the existing built form and townscape can inform new development should it come forward.

The guidance within this document is not exhaustive, and we encourage design teams to undertake further studies should they wish to develop schemes within the villages.

Finally, appendices are included that sets out general design guidance that reflects best practice and national policy, with key principles that all development should follow established. Readers should note that, whilst every effort has been made to ensure this document is understandable by all, it is primarily intended to be a tool for designers looking to work within the village. Therefore, to help those unfamiliar with the terms used in this Guide, a glossary of useful terms is also included in this section.

Structure

The document is set out in the following sections:

Section 1 sets out how to use the document, introduces the Plan area and explains the rationale behind the information contained within this Guide.

Section 2 explores the form of the settlement as a whole, looking at the way topography influences its morphology, how the village is set out, and how it has changed over time.

Section 3 looks at the details of the village, examining the aspects that make up its character and identity. This analysis is then translated into useful principles for future development, suggesting ways in which designers can ensure their proposals support rather than erode local distinctiveness.

Section 4 details the landscape character of the area and explains how this influences the character of the village. It examines how the landscape has influenced growth and change in the area, and sets out useful principles for managing future change should it occur.

Section 5 provides appendices, setting out suggested further reading and providing a glossary of useful terms and definitions. It also includes general design principles. It looks at nationally accepted place making design best practice, and established design approaches that should apply to all places, with some Plan area-wide recommendations. It also demonstrates how design is embedded in national policy and guidance, giving weight to the need to secure high quality design through the planning process.
Neighbourhood Plan Area

The Neighbourhood Development Plan area takes in the village of Wessington, within Wessington parish, which sits between Matlock, Mansfield and Chesterfield and within Derbyshire.

The village has a population of approximately 600, although significant new housing development within the village will see this increase when completed. There is a school within the village, as well as a large and recently refurbished public house called the Horse and Jockey. There is also a great deal of common land, a nature reserve and good views out across the countryside, especially to the south and east.

Key:
Neighbourhood Plan Area
Area within Brackenfield Parish
Section 2: Structure and growth
This section of the study aims to understand how the general character and identity of Wessington is formed. To do this, we examine how the village relates to its topography, how the extent of the built up area can be defined, and what pattern the village has formed.

We then examine how the village has changed over time, and chart the evolution of the built environment of Wessington to see what lessons earlier growth has for the future.

We map the type and distribution of dwellings throughout the village, and then examine how dwellings sit in relation to the main lines of movement in the area. Finally, we character areas within the village.

This section is arranged as follows:

- Existing built up area
- Settlement pattern
- Change over time
- Evolution of the village
- Dwelling types
Existing built up area

Wessington is a small, compact village that is mostly clustered around the main streets in the area. Matlock Road is the main spine of the village, and most development sits close to this street on side and back roads. Some development extends along Matlock to the north west, but generally, development does not extend along the streets as they lead away from the village. This makes Wessington compact and walkable, which in turn helps to promote sustainable modes of transport.

Most villages transition to open countryside through “soft” edges such as back gardens that are green and which fade into the wider landscape setting. This is true of Wessington, where development such as that on Park Street, Hill Crest Avenue and Spring Gardens present their rear boundaries to open countryside. It may be that the rear boundary is formed of hard materials, but these generally have green behind them and when viewed from afar do not encroach into the landscape in the way that a building front does. Where the village greens occur, these are generally fronted onto by development, allowing for good overlooking of these spaces.

Management:

- Effort should be made to keep the village compact and walkable, with development extending along the main routes resisted. Instead, infilling between the main routes should be explored.

- Transitions between built form and the open countryside that surrounds Wessington needs careful consideration; new development that has a relationship with the open countryside at the village edge should, where possible, maintain the transitioning approach common to the village.
Historic Wessington is a predominately nucleated settlement - meaning it clusters around a defined centre - and its shape has a strong relationship with the underlying topography of the area. The main streets to the north of the village run parallel to the ridge lines, and the whole village sits on the edge of a hillside. This is likely because Wessington is a ‘spring line’ village, with a local water source present that made settling in the area feasible. Indeed, the name ‘Wessington’ translates from the Anglo Saxon term ‘Wistanestune’ or ‘Wet Town’.

Some lineation - stretching along the streets as they leave the village - has begun to occur along the Matlock Road to the north, but as can be seen from the diagram, this is unusual in terms of the form of Wessington. Instead, Wessington is dense, compact and walkable, with tight-knit streets opening out onto green spaces to the core.

The figure ground diagram (right) shows that most streets are well ‘constituted’ by buildings; that is, the lines of the streets are clearly discernible from how the buildings define their edges and buildings present their fronts to the public space within the street. Backland development does occur, but is not commonplace. This is an important lesson for new development should it occur; buildings having a discernible relationship with their street is a key feature of the village.
Wessington is an old settlement, mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The following sequence of plans show how Wessington has grown over time, where new development has occurred and how the shape of the settlement has evolved as new buildings have been added to the village.

1880 plan

In 1880, the main street pattern of the village can be seen essentially in place. Buildings sit clustered around the main junctions of Matlock Road and Back Lane, and around the junction with Brackenfield Lane. Some linear development extends to the west and to the south. Plots are compact and clustered, with buildings generally close to the streets.
By 1910, small numbers of new dwellings have been added to the village. These are modern in approach, with regular plots, development sitting close to the street and arranged in clusters. No significant additions have been made at this stage.

By 1960, the large-scale additions to the village such as Coronation Street and Riley Avenue are complete. From this period until the present day, most additions to the village are through plot subdivision and infill, although more significant development on Birch Close appear.
Between the 1960's and 1980, very little changes; the village remains essentially development free, although some building replacement may occur.

1980 plan

Between 1980 and the present day, large-scale additions on Hill Crest Avenue and Spring Gardens are made. These additions are still relatively close to the village core, reinforcing the compact nature of the village, although Hill Crest Avenue is further out than any other development to the east.

2017 plan
Evolution of the village

When tracking the evolution of Wessington over time, distinctive patterns of development emerge. The original village extended from the junctions, buildings clustering in loose grained plots and having a relationship with the street visible. Small scale infill development was added next, and then came the more significant development of the 1960s which tended to create new streets and use a more modern plot structure.

Later, infill development clustered around dead-end streets can be found. This type of development is typical of the mid-90's era of housebuilding.

Right: The village growing over time, with the main eras of development highlighted.

Note that within these areas, a degree of building replacement has occurred, so whilst an area might have been urbanised in one period, the actual buildings might be from a later period.
Dwelling types

The housing stock within Wessington is predominantly detached or semi-detached, although a modest number of terraced dwellings are also present.

Of particular note is how dwelling types are distributed, with similar dwelling types clustered into distinct groups rather than dispersed throughout the village.

Beyond these clusters, most of the development in the village is loose and fragmented, with larger buildings towards the edge of the parish.

This fragmented development set within large plots is more common on the as you move away from the village core, helping to soften the impact on the landscape setting beyond.
Character Areas

Most of the character of Wessington can be usefully defined by development era, with buildings and spaces picking up on key characteristics of their time based on when they were built rather than on particulars of the location.

The village core is more vernacular, with local materials and styles and buildings arranged around generous green spaces.

The character areas defined here form the basis of the next section.
Section 3: Character appraisal
This section of the study aims to understand how the various elements that make up settlements combine to form a built environment of different characters. Much is made of the value of settlement character and identity, and a criticism often levelled at new development is that it lacks a distinctive character and does not speak "of its place", instead looking much like anywhere else. Character and identity informs our experience of different places and helps us to differentiate one from another. The various elements that make up this image of a place are often shared between settlements, but with subtle but important variation. Variation within a settlement helps us to understand how a place is put together, which parts might be of interest for social and economic activities, which for more private living etc and affects the quality of experience when moving between each.

As previously discussed, at the larger scale, settlement character is informed primarily by the landform and the landscape setting in which it sits. Topography, watercourse and other natural elements help define the shape of the settlements, and how settlements interact with these elements is a key "first step" in developing a distinctive character. How lines of movement relate to underlaying natural features is the next "morphological layer" that defines character. How streets, lanes and linear green elements work with or against the landform changes between places and can generate distinctiveness.

Commonalities in design between places exist at all levels, with shared spatial and detailing relationships giving a feeling of familiarity and "readability" even for new places. At the scale of plots and buildings this is especially true, but boundary detailing, materials, architectural styles and "special" spaces all combine to distinguish one place from another, or more commonly, one region of the country from another. Local materials and detailing are especially important in this regard, with vernacular elements usually defined by locally sourced building materials and design flourishes at the building level.

The areas within the village have features which distinguish them from one another and the aim of this section is to distil those to enable new development to maintain and enhance the feeling of character. To do this, each of the main design aspects is analysed to break down its character-forming elements, so that new development can draw inspiration from local types and forms to embed the character of Wessington into their design approach.
1. Birch Close

Birch Close sits adjacent to the historic core of the village and is made up of ‘estate’ type housing, built as part of a single development, and as such the housing in the area is very similar. The development sits along a dead-end street arranged around a turning head, with a footpath connecting out onto the village green on the north side of Matlock Road.

Future management

The key character forming elements of this area are the regular relationship between the buildings and the street, the way that similar buildings cluster together, and the way greenery within private gardens adds to a sense of greenery on the street. The narrow range of materials and detailing help street work together to generate character. Short, intimate sight-lines along a simple street give this part of the village a distinctive feel. Repetition is critical in generating character, although more could be made to reference local materials and detailing. New development should maintain the sympathetic material colours and simple detailing, whilst making a more direct reference to the vernacular style of the wider village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Streets</th>
<th>Plots</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Buildings</th>
<th>Detailing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local access only, with only pedestrian connections to the wider network of spaces.</td>
<td>Rectangular, with short front gardens and the balance of land to the rear.</td>
<td>Small trees in private plots, green boundaries to some plot.</td>
<td>Generally domestic in scale, detached houses with garages.</td>
<td>White barge boards, brown or white windows, some porches and bay windows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Sensitivity to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple, winding, footpaths on both sites.</td>
<td>Standard highways dimensions. 1.8m footpaths and 5m carriageway ending in a turning head.</td>
<td>Low, with a single treatment to the whole street. Kerbs to footpaths.</td>
<td>Simple, asphalt surfaces and concrete kerbs, some textured.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Around 12m frontage width, with most around 30m deep, although bigger on corners.</td>
<td>Hedge and other planting generally to around 1m, but some trees up to 5m with small canopy spreads.</td>
<td>Low, with the same plot type repeated.</td>
<td>Boundaries open, with either low landscape edges or mown grass.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Around 9m to ridge height, and around 10m built frontage width.</td>
<td>Mainly two storey with front-projecting gables. Entrances on the face to one side.</td>
<td>Low, with the same unit type repeated along the street.</td>
<td>Buff brick, with clay pantile roofs in brown.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Image Study

Where greenery is visible in private gardens, it adds a great deal to the street scene. Front gardens are an important component of any residential area as they allow for personalisation.

On-plot parking with garages keep cars out of the street scene, which helps integrate cars into the development and make parking accessible from the dwellings they serve.

Repeated elements help to build character, such as the front-projecting gables shown here.
2. Village Core

The historic core of the village is unusual in that most of it is open space with buildings arranged in small clusters around common land. Most villages have a dense core that supports retail, while as in Wessington, it is the open space as much as the built form that generates its character. This part of the village is home to some of the oldest buildings in Wessington, and their details represent the local vernacular well.

Future management

The key character forming elements of this area are the way small clusters of buildings frame open spaces and the way trees are clumped together into distinct groups. The visual connectivity between the greens is also a key aspect of the area. The narrow range of materials and detailing help the various building typologies work together to generate character.

Any new development in the area should respect the simple palette of materials, the plain building detailing and the general proportions used. Boundaries and landscape are critical, as is a positive relationship with landscape to the outside of the plot.

### Streets
- A main street and some back lanes, with formality to the main street and a rural feel beyond.
- Very varied, with a particular emphasis on orientation for overlooking spaces and solar gain.
- Large trees arranged in distinctive clumps, green boundaries to plots over low walls. Village greens.
- Generally domestic in scale, houses of semi-detached, some detached and some terraces. Halls and churches.
- Distinctive stone coursing flat-laid. Chimneys and windows with vertical emphasis.

### Plots
- Gentle deflections but good sight lines.
- Varied, with some arranged with their garden spaces adjacent to the street edge.
- Greens generally triangular with edges to most streets. Trees sporadically placed, but highly visible.
- Mainly cottage-style housing with chimneys and simple arrangements.
- Flat-laid stone and rubblestone, pitched roofs with some projecting gables.

### Landscape
- Wide for the main street with footpaths to both sides, narrow for the lanes with less formality.
- Ranging from around 12m to 25m wide, some as deep as 40m but most around 25m deep.
- A range of heights but remaining at a domestic scale to eves. Some buildings with more vertical emphasis.

### Buildings
- Low, with a relatively uniform approach to street treatments. Kerbs to footpaths. Open spaces to edges.
- Reasonably wide, but with similar plots grouped together. Some more fragmented plots to the south.
- Low, native planting, with forest trees and some hedges. Mown grass and meadow planting.
- Low, with similar styles and detailing present across building types.
- Reasonably narrow, with similar buildings grouped together and coherent roofscapes.

### Detailing
- Simple, asphalt surfaces and concrete kerbs, some textured.
- Boundaries delineated by low walls in rubble stone or brick topped by hedges.
- Mostly Derbyshire Gritstone with some red brick. Some render, although uncommon.
- Wood frame windows, red clay pantile roofs with some slate, extensive Gritstone.

### Sensitivity to change
- | Streets | Plots | Landscape | Buildings | Detailing |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Generally</td>
<td>Distinctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asphalt</td>
<td>varied</td>
<td>trees</td>
<td>domestic</td>
<td>stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surfaces</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>in scale,</td>
<td>coursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>distinctive</td>
<td>houses</td>
<td>flat-laid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concrete</td>
<td>particular</td>
<td>clumps</td>
<td>of semi-</td>
<td>chimneys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kerbs,</td>
<td>emphasis</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>detached,</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>boundaries</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>textured.</td>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>to plots</td>
<td>terraces.</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>for</td>
<td>over low</td>
<td>halls and</td>
<td>vertical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>overlooking</td>
<td>walls.</td>
<td>churches.</td>
<td>emphasis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example images:
Flat-laid blocks of stone are commonplace, giving the buildings a fine-grained texture and linking them to the local geology.

Clumps of trees visible from the street define the character of the area, here creating a landscape gateway as you enter the village from the south.

Many buildings have a horizontal emphasis and are arranged overlooking green spaces.

Course rubble stone walls are used extensively for boundaries.
### 3. Hill Crest Avenue

Hill Crest Avenue is a small estate of mainly 1990’s housing arranged around a short cul-de-sac. It sits to the east of the village, forming the westernmost boundary to the urbanised extent of Wessington. There is a footpath connection from Hill Crest Avenue through to the village green opposite the nature reserve.

#### Future management

Whilst the approach to design in this space is not especially representative of the style found in this part of Derbyshire, there are components that work well. These include the narrow range of materials, the way buildings respect a consistent building line and the way parking is integrated into the plot structure. Where landscape within gardens occurs, it adds a great deal to the street scene. Linking this part of the village to the green for pedestrians helps it remain integrated into the wider settlement and the spaces within it.

#### Streets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local access only vs a cul-de-sac.</td>
<td>Rectangular, with short front gardens and the balance of land to the rear.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### PLOTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highways standard from DB32 era, short sight lines, large corner radii.</td>
<td>Rectilinear, with the narrow edge to the street.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Around 1.8m for footpaths, 4.8m for carriageways.</td>
<td>Ranging from around 10m to 20m wide, and around 30m deep.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Buildings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low, with a relatively uniform approach to street treatments. Kerbs to footpaths.</td>
<td>Low, with many similar plots collected together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Detailing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple, asphalt surfaces and concrete kerbs etc.</td>
<td>Boundaries not delineated so open fronted. Some planting present.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitivity to change</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buff brick for bungalows with brown roofs, red brick and red roofs for houses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example images: urban forward ltd

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*Wessington: Village appraisal*
Image Study

The green verge and trees lining the main entrance to the area are especially distinctive and should be safeguarded going forward.

Long views onto the open countryside are available from Hill Crest Avenue.

Whilst there is a fair deal of variation between buildings, a consistent ridge line and building line help establish character.

Glimpsed views between buildings help maintain a connection with the wider landscape.
4. King George Street / Coronation Street / Brackenfield Lane

The area around George Street, Coronation Street and Brackenfield Lane is made up of 20th century development typical of the early post war era, with generous plots and what is now mature landscape. The area includes an important public open space with play equipment, and its position high on the ridge allows for occasional long views over the countryside beyond.

Future management

The key features of this area that need managing into the future are the landscape, and the long views onto the open countryside beyond. The buildings have important features that could inform future development, but more important is the way similar buildings and details are clustered together. Of particular importance are boundary treatments, especially green boundaries, and the loss of these should be resisted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Interconnecting lanes that form a deformed grid, with back lanes leading out into the countryside.</th>
<th>Rectangular, with often large front gardens and the balance of land to the rear.</th>
<th>Large trees in in greens and on street corners, green boundaries to plots.</th>
<th>Domestic in scale, houses of semi-detached.</th>
<th>Intricate brick bond, hip and valley roofs, central chimneys, banding and coursing.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Simple, relatively straight with good sight lines.</td>
<td>Rectilinear, with the short edge to the street.</td>
<td>Trees sporadically placed, but highly visible hedges etc.</td>
<td>Mainly early post-war, with simple detailing and a constrained palette of materials.</td>
<td>Hip and valley roofs, relatively plain building fronts, chimneys placed centrally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>Around 6m for carriageways (although narrowing for lanes) and 2m footpaths.</td>
<td>Ranging from around 15m to 25m wide, some as deep as 30m but most around 20m deep.</td>
<td>Hedge and other planting generally to around 2m, but some trees up to 25m with large canopy spreads.</td>
<td>Mainly two storey, with 45 deg pitches to roofs.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Low, with a relatively uniform approach to street treatments. Kerbs to footpaths.</td>
<td>Low, with most plots similar, especially within the same street.</td>
<td>High, native planting, with forest trees and some mono-culture clipped hedges.</td>
<td>Low, with repetitions of similar buildings clustered together.</td>
<td>Reasonably narrow, with similar buildings grouped together and coherent roovescapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Simple, asphalt surfaces and concrete kerbs,</td>
<td>Boundaries delineated by low walls in brick or local stone, hedges, or some fences.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Red brick, some tile hanging, some concrete panelling.</td>
<td>Brown clay pantile roofs, generally uPVC for windows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wessington: Village appraisal
Green boundaries in the area are particularly beneficial to the character of the area. Hip and valley roofs, with the same detail repeated along the street.

Buildings work with the topography rather than the site being re-profiled to accommodate development, and important lesson for new sites if they come forward. Glimpsed views between buildings onto the open countryside are a key characteristic of the area and should be protected.
5. Spring Gardens

At the time of writing, Spring Gardens is the newest fully built new development in the village. There are new homes of reasonable quality, but the overall approach is unreflective of the Wessington vernacular. The area is served by a short cul-de-sac and does not connect on to the lane adjacent.

Future management

Whilst the housing stock in this area is not of especially high townscape value, it does offer useful lessons for future development. Space in front gardens to allow for planting visible from the street is particularly important in embedding quality. Allowing for on-plot parking is recommended, as is keeping to a small number of material and colour choices. Shared surfaces are an appropriate choice for very quiet streets such as this, although more pedestrian connectivity to the adjacent lane would improve integration with the wider town, reducing walking distances to the greens and pub.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Streets</th>
<th>Plots</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Buildings</th>
<th>Detailing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types</td>
<td>Local access only via a cul-de-sac. Private drive to end of street.</td>
<td>Short and squat, narrow fronted with short front gardens.</td>
<td>Landscape within plots to the edge of street.</td>
<td>Domestic in scale, detached and terraced houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Highways standard design short sight lines, large corner radii except for shared surface private drives.</td>
<td>Rectilinear, with the narrow edge to the street.</td>
<td>Trees sporadically placed, but highly visible in front gardens.</td>
<td>‘Estate’ housing types, some with integral garages, others with frontage parking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>Around 1.8m for footpaths, 4.8m for carriageways. Shared surface has 25mm kerb edging.</td>
<td>Ranging from around 8m to 15m wide, and around 20m deep.</td>
<td>Most landscape low shrubs, trees up to 8m. Mown grass to some gardens.</td>
<td>Two storey with pitched roofs, either gable with ridge parallel to the street or hipped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Some, with a relatively uniform approach to street treatments. Kerbs to footpaths.</td>
<td>Low, with many similar plots collected together.</td>
<td>Low, mainly ornamental planting and flowering fruit trees.</td>
<td>Reasonable, with many different types used although all of a house builder standard type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Simple, asphalt surfaces and concrete kerbs to edge, some laid low.</td>
<td>Boundaries not delineated so open fronted. Some planting present in private gardens.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Red brick and grey concrete or clay roofs, some multi-grain brick.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sensitivity to change

![Sensitivity levels](image)
Planting in private gardens helps to improve the overall quality of the street scene and softens the impact of park cars etc.

Repeated elements in the roofscape help generate a rhythm along the street.

Shared surfaces such as this work well for very lightly trafficked areas, and enable the street to be a more social space.

Where private boundaries to the back and sides of plots meet public spaces, high-quality hard materials such as this wall are encouraged to help maintain a quality look and feel.
Section 4: Views and open spaces
Green spaces

Key to Wessington’s character is the abundance of green spaces in and around the village. Many of these spaces are village greens and common land, occupying prominent locations within the village core. This is unusual, and is an important characteristic that should be protected to maintain the identity of the village. The way buildings frame these spaces is likewise critical to how they work for residents, providing good overlooking without crowding the views. Protecting and enhancing these green spaces is of paramount importance, and care should be taken to ensure they are well maintained and easy to access.

Another key aspect to the character of the spaces is that they are, generally, inter-visible from each other, so that as you move through the village one space leads you to another via the footpaths that connect them. This helps each space form part of a network, allowing for pleasant walks around the village and access to the countryside beyond.

Left: Visual connections between spaces helps to link them together as you move through village.

Left: Moving through the core of the village feels like passing through the village green, with green space rather than buildings defining the edges.
Green Spaces

Left: The nature reserve to the west of the village, which is an important informal open space and dog walking area.

Right: The story telling area in the woods near to the school, which provides a secluded spot still close to the centre of the village.

Left: More formal kick about space near the school, which links across Matlock Road to the network of greens heading east.

Right: The central green on Coronation Street, with formal play equipment and open space framed by housing. Note the long views out to the east.
Trees

It is not just the green spaces themselves that influence the character of the village; how they are composed is of critical importance. A defining characteristic of the greens within the village is that most of them contain dense clumps of trees rather than single large trees in open space. This again is unusual, and helps to add visual interest, shelter, ecology and micro-climate management to the spaces in the village.

Protecting the trees within the village, including and management program for replacement as needed, should be considered as part of the overall management of the character of Wessington. Blocking views onto trees across the greens should be avoided, and should new green spaces be developed, then they should have space to accommodate clumps of trees as seen elsewhere in the village.
Trees

Left: Stands or clumps of trees visible across the greens are part of the character of the village.

Right: Often, the trees are positioned to the edge of the space, providing a green backdrop.

Left: Dense tree planting in public spaces provides shade, manages wind and helps to add quality to the street scene.

Right: Trees work together with buildings to frame spaces, allowing for filtered views through the understorey to built form beyond.
Key views

Wessington occupies a small plateau on a hill side that climbs to the north, and as such has long views over lowland available from many spots within the village. These views are both expansive panoramas with a wide field of view and glimpses through buildings to ridge lines or valleys beyond.

The feeling of being in a dramatic landscape with pronounced topography all around you is a key characteristic of the village, and managing this important relationship is critical in maintaining a connection between the village and its landscape.

The views shown on the plan (right) show key locations where views into and out of the village can be enjoyed, but there are many other views within the village that need to be protected. Of special importance are views that change as you move, and managing these dynamic views should be considered along with static views.
Views images

Left: The view along Matlock Road out to the south, showing the landform starting to fall away and with the landscape visible in the far distance. See viewpoint 1, previous page.

Right: The entry to the village is framed by common land, here viewed from the south. See viewpoint 2, previous page.

Left: Long views into the village as your approach from the north. The new housing closes in to the street, whilst the older parts of the village sit back behind greens and commons. See viewpoint 3, previous page.

Right: Drone image of Brackenfield Lane looking south, showing the importance of open space to the character of the village. See viewpoint 4, previous page.
Views images

Left: The view north across Brackenfield Lane.
See viewpoint 5.

Left: The view west along the A615 as you head out of the village.
See viewpoint 6.
Section 5: Appendicicies
Appendix I: The importance of good design

Although the primary purpose of this document is to examine the character and identity of Wessington Parish, it is important that any new development, should it occur, addresses every aspect of design best practice.

Good design is about more than just aesthetics; well-designed places let people have better lives by making places safe, easy to move through, economically and socially vibrant, and robust against climate change. Although this document focuses primarily on landscape in terms of how it informs local distinctiveness, all elements of good design best practice should be considered together.

Design has a role to play in all aspects of how a place functions; it influences the movement economy (the economic activities that rely on footfall and passing trade), the level of walking and cycling, the way in which people can meet and socialise, where people can take recreation and leisure activities and the levels of crime within any given area.

How a neighbourhood is connected to its surroundings is an extremely important factor when determining the likelihood of residents from that area walking and cycling. Research has shown that poorly connected neighbourhoods have far lower walking and cycling trips than those that integrate well with local shops and other facilities, which in turn leads to more traffic, poorer air quality and higher health problems for people living there.

Designs that incorporate natural and existing site features into their layout help retain character and identity as well as helping to maintain ecology and biodiversity. If managed well and ‘designed in’, flood prevention measures can be of real amenity value to local people and a habitat for wildlife.

Buildings that do not properly manage public and private space offer poorer quality living environments for residents, and cannot provide the levels of overlooking needed to make public spaces safe to use. Public spaces which are not overlooked are often sites of antisocial behaviour and are not usable for play and leisure.

However, well designed open space increases people’s levels of exercise and gives people spaces to meet and socialise. Embedding character into new development helps an area as a whole be more recognisable, and helps to maintain links to a place’s history.

Getting things wrong is extremely costly, as many design mistakes last a very long time, having impacts that extend for decades and which can be expensive to rectify. That is why it is critical to embed good design from the outset and to make sure that all new development follows urban design best practice.

“Good quality design is an integral part of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that design quality matters and that planning should drive up standards across all forms of development. As a core planning principle, plan-makers and decision takers should always seek to secure high quality design.”

Working with the site

Working with what you have on site enables new developments to make the most of their setting, embedding existing landscape and other natural features into the design in a way that helps maintain links to the history of the area whilst retaining the character of the site.

New development in the Plan area should seek to work with the landscape, retaining important trees and other ecological features and using the topography to influence the alignment of streets.

Existing trees and vegetation should, where practical, be retained in such a way as to add visual amenity and ecological value to the development. Existing trees and hedges can give new development a mature look and feel, and this adds value. However, difficult to maintain or manage greenery should be avoided, as this has the potential to cause problems in the future.

Surface water should be managed in a way that enhances the public realm and provides habitat for wildlife. Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) have the potential to add extra character and amenity to developments but must be considered at the outset along with the design of streets and other spaces rather than retrofitted as an add-on.

“A system of open and green spaces that respect natural features and are easily accessible can be a valuable local resource and helps create successful places. A high quality landscape, including trees and semi-natural habitats where appropriate, makes an important contribution to the quality of an area.”


Images: Existing trees and water being used to generate place character and identity.

Right: Landform and watercourses influencing route structure and developable land.

(Source: Sue McGlynn)
Connecting to the neighbourhood

Movement is the lifeblood of settlements; places with well-integrated movement systems have been shown to be economically and socially vibrant, safe and energy efficient. New development in the Plan area should not shy away from making strong links with the local neighbourhood, nor should it seek to create insular and overly private enclaves within existing neighbourhoods (see Glossary for more information, especially ‘Radburn’ and ‘nested hierarchy’).

Instead, new development should make as many links with the surrounding street mesh as possible, but only where those links can be well overlooked, direct and legible. Routes that are poorly overlooked, that run adjacent to private gardens or between back fences, or that are unnecessarily indirect should be avoided.

Streets should be designed in a way that offers more than just a movement corridor for cars; they should be pedestrian and cycle friendly, have space for parking, and should slow traffic through their design rather than through retrofitted calming measures.

Internally, where possible new streets should form a grid, with as many streets offering through movement as possible. Where this is not practical, dead ends should be short and should not be connected by blind alleys. Streets should vary in character, with their role in either local or wider movement evident from their design.

All streets should be simple and uncluttered, with decent lines of sight, low speeds and space for trees. Over-engineered junction radii should be avoided, and all streets should be designed using Manual for Streets principles (see Appendix 2).

“Development proposals should promote accessibility and safe local routes by making places that connect appropriately with each other and are easy to move through. Attractive and well-connected permeable street networks encourage more people to walk and cycle to local destinations.”

Making a place

All new development in the Plan area should seek to promote local character and identity, because through doing so it is possible to protect and enhance what is already there for existing residents, and provide community and social cohesion for those new to the area.

A criticism often levelled at new development is that it ‘lacks character’, with many new developments looking generic despite the wide range of building types and materials used. Often this is due to overly standardised approaches to streets and spaces, where very little room is given for the types of innovation that allow one place to be different from another. Also, too wide a range of materials and styles can confuse the identity of new development, with the lack of a coherent approach weakening the overall visual quality and diluting the overall character.

To maintain local distinctiveness, new development should be reflective of local aspects such as:

- the local landform and the way development sits upon it
- the local pattern of streets, blocks and the dimension of plots
- development style and vernacular
- built forms, massing, details and materials (including street furniture and boundaries)

Developers should demonstrate how they have embedded local character in their Design and Access Statement.

Clockwise top left:
Active building fronts provide overlooking to the street, making it safer.
Buildings arranged in a perimeter block, with public streets and spaces to the front, and private gardens to the rear.
Perimeter blocks set up a ‘privacy gradient’, enabling active frontages whilst keeping gardens and rooms within a building private.

“Development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, local man-made and natural heritage and culture, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.”

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people."


Good design checklist

Below is a simple checklist to help designers when thinking about how to bring a site forward. It may also be helpful for other stakeholders looking at a development proposal, prompting examination of the design elements that are often left until too late in the design process or overlooked altogether. A more comprehensive checklist can be found in Building for Life 12 (see Appendix 2).

Are there existing site features of note? Can these be integrated into the development to add character and preserve site identity?

How can new routes into and out of the development help link with existing areas and make finding your way around easy? How should they cross the site?

Where should vehicles come into and out of the development?

Where should pedestrians access the site?

Are there any traffic issues to manage?

Are there any existing rights of way to consider?

Where should vehicles come into and out of the development?

Are streets designed to be pedestrian friendly so as to encourage walking?

Are vehicle speeds low and are there places to meet and socialise?

Are buildings and spaces designed to be safe? Do buildings face the street and are their gardens secure? Are public spaces well overlooked and do they have a clear use?

How are bins and recycling to be dealt with?

Where are bins stored? Can people put bins away after waste has been collected?

Open frontages to plots should be avoided, instead use rubble stone or hedges.

Where brick or block is used, it should reference local hues and finishes.

Frontage parking should be avoided, instead cars should be integrated into the plot.

Narrow footpaths should be avoided. A more rural character can be found in the best parts of the village.
Appendix II: Manual for Streets


It puts well-designed residential streets at the heart of sustainable communities. For too long the focus has been on the movement function of residential streets. The result has often been places that are dominated by motor vehicles to the extent that they fail to make a positive contribution to the quality of life.

MfS demonstrates the benefits that flow from good design and assigns a higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists, setting out an approach to residential streets that recognises their role in creating places that work for all members of the community. MfS refocuses on the place function of residential streets, giving clear guidance on how to achieve well-designed streets and spaces that serve the community in a range of ways.

MfS updates the link between planning policy and residential street design. It challenges some established working practices and standards that are failing to produce good-quality outcomes, and asks professionals to think differently about their role in creating successful neighbourhoods.

It places particular emphasis on the importance of collaborative working and coordinated decision-making, as well as on the value of strong leadership and a clear vision of design quality at the local level.

Research carried out in the preparation of Manual for Streets indicated that many of the criteria routinely applied in street design are based on questionable or outdated practice.

For example, it showed that, when long forward visibility is provided and generous carriageway width is specified, driving speeds tend to increase. This demonstrates that driver behaviour is not fixed; rather, it can be influenced by the environment.

MfS addresses these points, recommending revised key geometric design criteria to allow streets to be designed as places in their own right while still ensuring that road safety is maintained.
Appendix III: Building for Life 12

Building for Life 12 is the industry standard, endorsed by government for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods that local communities, local authorities and developers are encouraged to use to help stimulate conversations about creating good places to live.

The 12 questions reflect our vision of what new housing developments should be: attractive, functional and sustainable places. Redesigned in 2012, BfL12 is based on the National Planning Policy Framework and the government’s commitment to not only build more homes, but better homes - whilst also encouraging local communities to participate in the place making process.

The questions are designed to help structure discussions between local communities, local planning authorities, developers and other stakeholders.

BfL12 is also designed to help local planning authorities assess the quality of proposed and completed developments; it can be used for site-specific briefs and can also help to structure design codes and local design policies.

BfL12 comprises of 12 easy to understand questions that are designed to be used as a way of structuring discussions about a proposed development. There are four questions in each of the three chapters:

- Integrating into the neighbourhood
- Creating a place
- Street and home

Based on a simple ‘traffic light’ system (red, amber and green) we recommend that proposed new developments aim to:

- Secure as many ‘greens as possible,
- Minimise the number of ‘ambers’ and;
- Avoid ‘reds’.

The more ‘greens’ that are achieved, the better a development will be. A red light gives warning that a particular aspect of a proposed development needs to be reconsidered.
Appendix IV: Glossary of terms

Shortened extracts from *By Design* (ODPM/CABE, 2000) and *The Dictionary of Urbanism* (Streetwise Press, 2003)

**accessibility** The ease with which a building, place or facility can be reached by people and/or goods and services. Accessibility can be shown on a plan or described in terms of pedestrian and vehicle movements, walking distance from public transport, travel time or population distribution.

**adaptability** The capacity of a building or space to respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions.

**amenity** Something that contributes to an area's environmental, social, economic or cultural needs. The term's meaning is a matter for the exercise of planners' discretion, rather than being defined in law.

**appearance** Combination of the aspects of a place or building that determine the visual impression it makes.

**area appraisal** An assessment of an area's land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics.

**authenticity** The quality of a place where things are what they seem: where buildings that look old are old, and where the social and cultural values that the place seems to reflect did actually shape it.

**background building** A building that is not a distinctive landmark.

**backland development** The development of sites at the back of existing development, such as back gardens.

**barrier** An obstacle to movement.

**best value** The process through which local authorities work for continuous improvement in the services they provide. Local authorities are required to challenge why a particular service is needed; compare performance across a range of indicators; consult on the setting of new performance targets; and show that services have been procured through a competitive process. Councils are subject to independent best value audits by the Best Value Inspectorate, an offshoot of the Audit Commission.

**block** The area bounded by a set of streets and undivided by any other significant streets.

**brief** This guide refers to site-specific briefs as development briefs. Site-specific briefs are also called a variety of other names, including design briefs, planning briefs and development frameworks.

**building element** A feature (such as a door, window or cornice) that contributes to the overall design of a building.

**building line** The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street. The building line can be shown on a plan or section.

**building shoulder height** The top of a building's main facade.

**built environment** The entire ensemble of buildings, neighbourhoods and cities with their infrastructure.

**built form** Buildings and structures.

**bulk** The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Also called massing.

**character appraisal** Techniques (particularly as developed by English Heritage) for assessing the qualities of conservation areas.

**character area** An area with a distinct character, identified as such so that it can be protected or enhanced by planning policy. The degree of protection is less strong than in a conservation area.

**character assessment** An area appraisal emphasising historical and cultural associations.

**conservation area** A published document defining the special architectural or historic interest that warranted the area being designated.

**conservation area character appraisal** A published document defining the special architectural or historic interest that warranted the area being designated.
context (or site and area) appraisal A detailed analysis of the features of a site or area (including land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics) which serves as the basis for an urban design framework, development brief, design guide, or other policy or guidance.

country-side design summary A descriptive analysis explaining the essential design relationship between the landscape, settlement patterns and buildings. From this analysis the document draws principles that can be applied to development in the area and sets out the implications of the choices open to designers. As supplementary planning guidance prepared by a local authority, the summary can encourage a more regionally and locally based approach to design and planning. It can also provide the context for individual communities to prepare village design statements.

defensible space Public and semi-public space that is ‘defensible’ in the sense that it is surveyed, demarcated or maintained by somebody. Derived form Oscar Newman’s 1973 study of the same name, and an important concept in securing public safety in urban areas, defensible space is also dependent upon the existence of escape routes and the level of anonymity which can be anticipated by the users of space.

density The mass or floorspace of a building or buildings in relation to an area of land. Density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial development); homes or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); site coverage plus the number of floors or a maximum building height; space standards; or a combination of these.

design code A document (usually with detailed drawings or diagrams) setting out with some precision the design and planning principles that will apply to development in a particular place.

design guidance A generic term for documents providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the planning and design policies of a local authority or other organisation.

design guide Design guidance on a specific topic such as shop fronts or house extensions, or relating to all kinds of development in a specific area.

design policy Relates to the form and appearance of development, rather than the land use.

design principle An expression of one of the basic design ideas at the heart of an urban design framework, design guide, development brief or design code. Each such planning tool should have its own set of design principles.

design statement A developer can make a pre-application design statement to explain the design principles on which a development proposal in progress is based. It enables the local authority to give an initial response to the main issues raised by the proposal. An applicant for planning permission can submit a planning application design statement with the application, setting out the design principles adopted in relation to the site and its wider context. Government advice (Planning Policy Guidance Note 1) encourages an applicant for planning permission to submit such a written statement to the local authority.

design-led development (or regeneration) Development whose form is largely shaped by strong design ideas.

desire line An imaginary line linking facilities or places which people would find it convenient to travel between easily.

development appraisal A structured assessment of the characteristics of a site and an explanation of how they have been taken into account in drawing up development principles.

development brief A document providing guidance on how a specific site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed in line with the relevant planning and design policies. It will usually contain some indicative, but flexible, vision of future development form: A development brief usually covers a site most of which is likely to be developed in the near future. The terms “planning brief” and “design brief” are also sometimes used. These came into use at a time when government policy was that planning and design should be kept separate in design guidance. The term “development brief” avoids that unworkable distinction.

development control The process through which a local authority determines whether (and with what conditions) a proposal for development should be granted planning permission.

development plan Prepared by a local authority to describe the intended use of land in an area and provide a basis for considering planning applications. Every area is covered either by a unitary development plan or by a development plan comprising more than one document (a structure plan and a local plan, and sometimes also other plans relating to minerals and waste). The development plan sets out the policies and proposals against which planning applications will be assessed. Its context is set by national and regional planning policy guidance.

development Statutorily defined under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as ‘the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land’. Most forms of development require planning permission.
eyes on the street People whose presence in adjacent buildings or on the street make it feel safer.

dade The principal face of a building.

fenestration The arrangement of windows on a facade.

figure/ground (or figure and ground diagram) A plan showing the relationship between built form and publicly accessible space (including streets and the interiors of public buildings such as churches) by presenting the former in black and the latter as a white background, or the other way round.

fine grain The quality of an area’s layout of building blocks and plots having small and frequent subdivisions.

form The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

grid (street pattern) A street system in which streets connect at both ends with other streets to form a grid-like pattern. Grids can be regular or deformed; regular grids have junctions that meet at crossroads, whereas deformed grids have their junctions offset from one another.

in-curtilage parking Parking within a building’s site boundary, rather than on a public street or space.

landmark A building or structure that stands out from the background buildings.

landscape The appearance of land, including its shape, form, colours and elements, the way these (including those of streets) components combine in a way that is distinctive to particular localities, the way they are perceived, and an area’s cultural and historical associations.

layout The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

legibility The degree to which a place can be easily understood by its users and the clarity of the image it presents to the wider world.

live edge Provided by a building or other feature whose use is directly accessible from the street or space which it faces; the opposite effect to a blank wall.

local distinctiveness The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

massing The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. This is also called bulk.

mixed uses A mix of complementary uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. “Horizontal” mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. “Vertical” mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

movement People and vehicles going to and passing through buildings, places and spaces.

natural surveillance (or supervision) The discouragement to wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to see out of windows. Also known as passive surveillance (or supervision).

nested hierarchy (layout) A type of layout common from around 1950 that, instead of traditional interconnecting grids of streets, uses a tiered order of streets, each with only one function (commonly distributor road, access road, cul-de-sac).

node A place where activity and routes are concentrated.

performance criterion/criteria A means of assessing the extent to which a development achieves a particular.

‘Radburn’ (layout) A type of layout developed in America for a scheme in New Jersey which used a segregated footpath network to separate cars from pedestrians. Commonly used in the UK in the 1960’s, these types of layouts are identifiable by their garage parking to the rear of properties, often maze-like network of footpaths running along back fences and between buildings, and areas of “left over” space with no obvious use.
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