



## **DISCLAIMER**

This document or some parts of it may not be accessible when using adaptive technology.

If you require assistance with accessing the content of the document, please contact us and quote the document name and the web page you found it on:

- email: Forward planning – [localplan@ashfield.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@ashfield.gov.uk)
- telephone: 01623 457381



# Appendix E

## JUS-T Neighbourhood Development Plan

### Place analysis

Understanding the character and  
identity of Selston Parish  
January 2016



# Contents

Executive summary	i	Selston	6	Underwood	20
Section 1: Introduction		Character of the landscape	7	Character of the landscape	21
About this document	1	Settlement pattern	8	Settlement pattern	22
About Selston Parish	2	Streets and spaces	9	Streets and spaces	23
		Boundaries and landscaping	10	Boundaries and landscaping	24
		Plots and buildings	11	Plots and buildings	25
Section 2: Place character		Key findings and recommendations	12	Key findings and recommendations	26
Introduction	5				
		Jacksdale	13	Appendices	
		Character of the landscape	14	Appendix 1: Glossary of terms	28
		Settlement pattern	15		
		Streets and spaces	16		
		Boundaries and landscaping	17		
		Plots and buildings	18		
		Key findings and recommendations	19		

This report was produced in January of 2016 for JUS-T Neighbourhood Development Plan. It was produced by urban forward ltd. All photographs and graphics were produced in-house by urban forward ltd unless otherwise credited.

All photographs and diagrams are © urban forward, but are free to reproduce. If you do, please cite your source.





# Executive Summary

This study provides evidence to support the policies in the JUS-T Neighbourhood Development Plan that relate to the built environment. Selston Parish is home to a number of distinct townscapes and the setting of the Parish within the wider landscape helps give the area a character and identity of its own.

The character of the villages within Selston Parish is drawn from the way they relate to both the landform and their landscape setting. Visual and physical connections with the landscape are a key defining element that gives residents and visitors to the area a memorable experience.

Each of the settlements in Selston Parish have their own character, with different relationships between development and landscape, different development patterns and distinct building forms. Future growth must happen in a way that maintains this sense of the area having an overall character, but of having distinguishable parts to it, each with their own design approach.

This document explains what is special and memorable about each of the villages, offering pointers for designers looking to ensure their development adds to rather than detracts from local character. It does this through a series of Village Design Statements, and designers are encouraged to use the character-forming elements of the existing villages when developing proposals for future dwellings.

These Design Statements set out how each of the villages is put together; how each of the settlements sits on its landscape and how this influences the experience of being in them. Plots, buildings, streets and landscaping are analysed, with their roles in helping to form character assessed. Less successful design elements are noted, with a view to avoiding these in future developments. Summaries of key findings for each village are provided.

Finally, a glossary of terms is provided to help readers further understand any terms they may find unfamiliar.







FRANKLIN ROAD

# Section 1: Introduction





# About this document

This study provides the evidence to support the policies in the JUS-T Neighbourhood Development Plan relating to design and the built environment. The settlements that make up Neighbourhood Development Plan area are analysed, including how they sit in the landscape, and then this information is set out in a way that helps designers working in the area to ensure their work maintains and enhances the qualities that make Selston and surrounding settlements distinctive.

This document is arranged in three sections:

**Section 1** introduces this document, and sets out the methodologies used in analysing the neighbourhood plan area.

**Section 2** examines each of the three settlements in Selston to produce a series of Village Design Statements. These capture the important elements that help each settlement to have local character but also to be distinctive from one another.

Finally, an appendix provides a glossary should readers wish to clarify terms used in this document.



# About Selston Parish

Selston is a parish in the District of Ashfield, Nottinghamshire containing a number of settlements that together are home to around 12,000 people. It sits in an area known as the 'hidden valleys', an area of Nottinghamshire noted for its scenic and historical value.

The parish sits in a landscape of rolling hills and as such the various settlements in the parish are characterised by their landscape setting as well as their built form.



**12k**

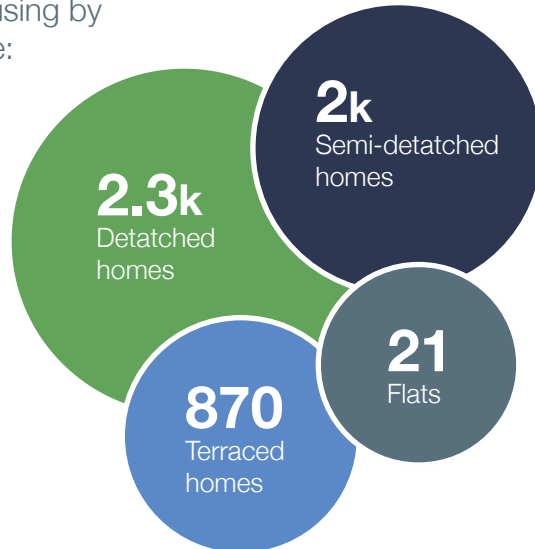
Number of people in the Parish



**5.5k**

Number of homes in the Parish

Housing by type:





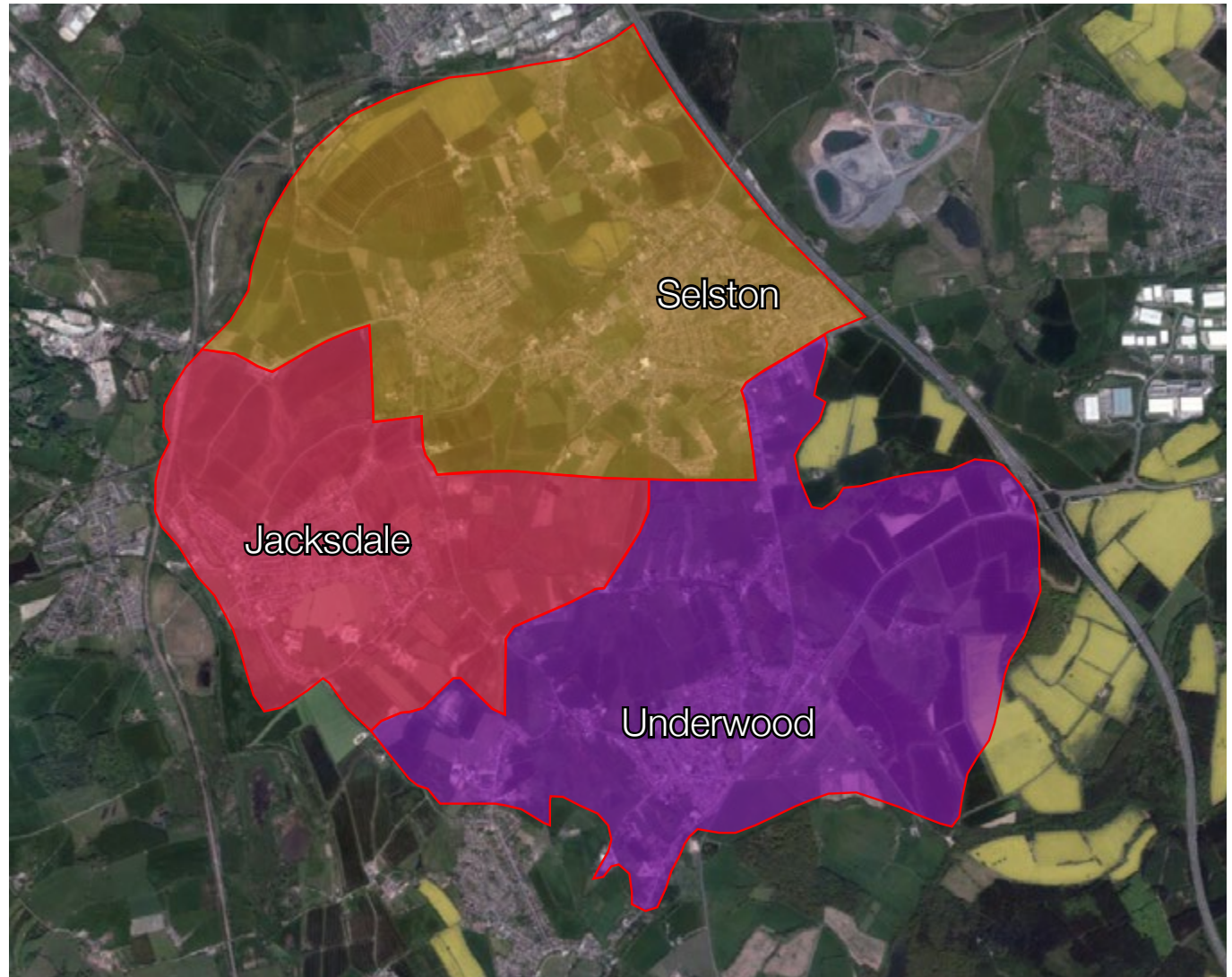
There are three main wards that make up the Selston Parish, containing three large settlements along with a number of other smaller ones. The larger ones are:

**Selston**, the largest village which is located to the north of the Parish near to the M1.

**Jacksdale**, located on the western edge of the parish near to the railway line.

**Underwood**, located to the south of the parish next to the A608 Mansfield Road.

For the purposes of this document, Bagthorpe and Westwood are not included for study. This is because they are small settlements that are not set to receive growth in the near future and so do not require settlement analysis at this time.







# Section 1: Place character



# Introduction

This section of the study aims to understand how the various elements that make up settlements combine to form a built environment that gives the Selston Parish its various characteristics. 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.

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.

For the villages in Selston, the key defining natural element is its setting in the landscape; its relationship with the surrounding topography and the views into and out of the settlements that these views afford is a key character-forming component of experiencing the place. How lines of movement relate to underlying 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 details at the building level.

The settlements within Selston Parish 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 distinct characters of each. To do this, each of the distinctive settlements is analysed in a series of Village Design Statements.

A Village Design Statement is an especially useful tool for understanding what makes a settlement distinctive, and their use in Neighbourhood Planning is recommended. There is no agreed format for a Village Design Statement, although they should all seek to capture the information needed to help guide change to ensure that it does not damage the character and identity of a place.

Natural England suggests that a successful VDS should:

- *'be developed, researched, written and edited by local people;*
- *be representative of the views of the village as a whole;*
- *have involved a wide section of the village community in its production;*
- *describe the visual character of the village;*
- *demonstrate how local character and distinctiveness can be protected and enhanced in new development;*
- *be compatible with the statutory planning system and the local planning context;*
- *be applicable to all forms and scale of development; and*
- *be about managing change in the village, not preventing it.'*

The following VDS's in this document have been prepared as a result of consultation with the communities, and are set out to cover the following:

- Character of the landscape
- Settlement pattern
- Streets and spaces
- Boundaries and landscaping
- Plots and buildings
- Materials and detailing

These elements are analysed and then suggestions for future design prompts are made.



An aerial photograph of Selston Village, England. A large area of the village, including the main residential and commercial centers, is highlighted with a semi-transparent yellow overlay. This highlighted area is enclosed by a red boundary line. The surrounding landscape consists of green fields, some industrial or commercial sites, and a road network. The text 'Selston Village Design Statement' is overlaid in white on the left side of the yellow area.

# Selston Village Design Statement

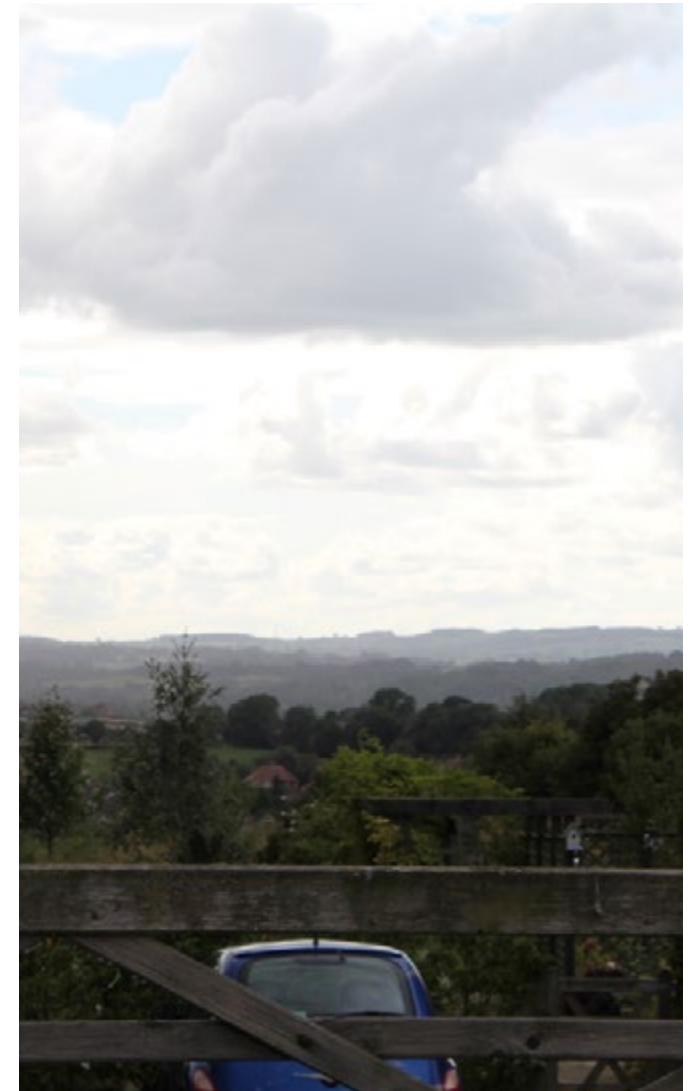


## Character of the landscape

Most of Selston village occupies sloping ground that falls from the M1 towards the west. The long, straight streets (such as Victoria Road and Nottingham Road) afford long views across the landscape beyond, and this gives Selston a feeling of being in an expansive countryside setting.

Large areas of open space are often visible between buildings - especially at the edges of the settlement - which means that residents and visitors retain a connection to the landscape.

The filtered views - glimpsed through the buildings and trees - of the horizon are of low peaks and rolling hills, and this connection with the wider landscape is a key defining feature of the area.





## Settlement pattern

The eastern portion of Selston occupies a hill that rises from the Nottingham Road towards the M1, whilst a smaller part of the village sits on a valley floor where Nottingham Road meets with Alfreton Road. This floor is its self not flat, with Church Lane in particular rising quite steeply.

Selston generally has buildings arranged in perimeter blocks, with buildings fronting the street and gardens contained to the rear. For the hillside portions of the village, development is placed along streets that run either directly down the slope of the hill, or horizontally across it.

Older development is along an interconnected grid of streets, where as some newer infill development, such as Maple Way and Penrose Court is not connected for through-movement.

Plots are generally generous, giving most of the village a low-density look and feel with space for landscaping and boundary planting. This allows buildings to be, in the main, fragmented enough to offer long views onto the distant landscape.



## Streets and spaces

Lines of sight play a strong role in defining the various characters of the streets in Selston, with major routes such as Nottingham Road, Portland Road, and Annesley Lane offering long lines of sight which reinforce their role in facilitating movement to the wider parish and beyond.

Streets for more local movement have shorter sight lines and this helps make them recognisable as having limited 'connecting power', meaning they generally do not provide access for the wider village. This pattern helps aid wayfinding, as sight lines correspond and reinforce the role of streets in helping you get around.

The spaces that contribute most to the character of Selston are often farmland beyond the built edge of the settlement, which add to the feeling of being set in expansive countryside. Local open space, such as the playing fields and skate park off Recreation Street offer amenity value, as do the small areas of common land such as land to the back of Portland Road / Victoria Road.





## Boundaries and landscaping

The approach to boundaries varies sharply in Selston; older development on the interconnected streets tend to have strong boundaries that define the street edge, either in the form of low brick walls, clipped hedges or railings.

Open frontages are more common on newer development, which tend to have less definition between the private plot and the pavement edge.

The mature trees that exist in the village are generally to be found in private plots rather planted within the public street space. Trees on and hedges on field boundaries are also important in adding greenery and landscaping to the village.



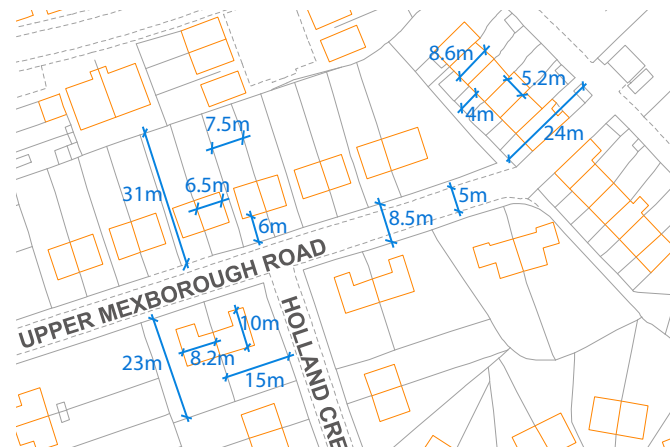
## Plots and buildings

A great range of building and plot types exist in Selston, which makes defining the character of the village through reference to its built form difficult.

More historic development within Selston uses a narrow range of plots with a simple palette of materials - red brick, slate or pantile roofs, with some stone window headers. Roofs tend to run parallel to the street, although some gables are visible. Chimneys feature on most buildings, adding interest to the skyline. Development is predominantly two storey development in older parts of Selston.

There is more variety in both style and scale for newer development. Buff brick, weatherboarding and painted wooden facias, concrete roof tiles and bungalows can be found in Selston's minor streets.

There is more consistency between older and newer development at the plot level, with the majority of plots falling within a narrow range of widths, with buildings that are set back from the pavement edge but which face the street. Most have either on-plot or on-street parking to the front.





## Selston: key findings and recommendations

Selston is a settlement defined in the main by its relationship with the wider landscape. Long views onto open countryside can be experienced from most streets, and this characteristic should be protected.

**New development should seek to maintain this relationship by allowing for views between buildings and by aligning streets to give long views out to the wider landscape.**

Perimeter blocks are the predominant arrangement in Selston, with buildings arranged to present their front to the street, with building backs and gardens contained within the blocks. On-plot and on-street parking is common. **New development should look to replicate this, both in order to reflect the local character but also to ensure that public spaces are well overlooked.**

The pattern of the settlement is characterised by interconnected streets with long sight lines for main routes and shorter, more truncated views along back streets. Back streets are less well interconnected, but nested hierarchies (branch-like street systems) are not common. This gives the overall settlement a deformed grid-like structure with streets closely related to the

underlying topography. **New development should seek to reinforce this street pattern, rather than introduce new forms of streets that would erode the character of the settlement.**

Older development uses clearly defined boundaries, with low walls, clipped hedges and railings delineating public and private space. In newer areas, there are more open frontages which tends to erode rather than build character, as it reduces the presence of greenery in the street and makes development look more generic.

Large trees set in private plots define the near skyline, and the general feel of Selston is reasonably green when looking down the street. **New development should ensure that space is allowed within the curtilage of private dwellings so that hedges and trees can be planted to add character to new streets.**

Whilst a wide range of building styles can be found in newer parts of Selston, the predominant form is two storey brick-built houses set in short terraces or semis with slate or pantile roofs and chimneys. Bungalows can be found on back streets, but these and the houses on these streets tend not to reflect local character by introducing a wide variety of materials. **New development should draw inspiration from the older parts of Selston that use a narrow range of styles and materials to help build a consistent character.**



An aerial photograph of a rural area with a red boundary line highlighting a specific region. The boundary encloses a mix of green fields and some built-up areas. The text 'Jacksdale Village Design Statement' is overlaid in white on the left side of the red-shaded area.

# Jacksdale Village Design Statement





## Character of the landscape

Much of Jacksdale sits on a hill, allowing for long views to the rolling hills and low peaks to the west. The village centre sits low in the western valley near to the river, where views can still be glimpsed across the river valley between the buildings.

The connection to the landscape is clearest on the longer streets such as Wagstaff Lane and Dixie Street, but the relationship is less obvious than in Selston village, with more streets feeling enclosed and not offering long views to the wider landscape.



## Settlement pattern

The streets of Jacksdale are arranged in a deformed but predominantly rectilinear grid, with straight streets that intersect at acute angles rather than long, sinuous curves and wiggles. Streets run either directly down the hill or are aligned with the ridge, and this gives the overall development pattern of Jacksdale a strong connection to the underlying topography.

Buildings are arranged in perimeter blocks with a clear relationship between the placement of the building and the alignment of the street.





# Streets and spaces

The streets in Jacksdale are generally straight and have sight lines of 100m or more; very short streets are not commonplace and do not reflect the predominant character and geometry. Older streets have forward visibility far in excess of 100m, and this aids wayfinding and reinforces route hierarchy.

Where streets intersect, they tend to do so at either T-junctions or acute angles; winding, sinuous streets do not regular feature in Jacksdale, which makes the specific geometry of the streets a powerful character-forming element in Jacksdale.

There are several small but important public open spaces in Jacksdale, including the pocket park and public square near the river at the junction of Main Road and Wagstaff Lane. Larger open spaces can be found along Rutland Road, behind Main Road in the river valley, and in Parlmerston Street. The space behind Main Road connects through to a linear green corridor that runs along Pye Hill Road and which contains play spaces and a good quality foot and cycle way.



## Boundaries and landscaping

There is no consistent boundary treatment in Jacksdale; newer development nearer to the high ground uses open frontages, low shrub planting and occasional walls to delineate plot boundaries, whereas older parts of Jacksdale have hedges and low brick walls.

On tighter streets such as Dixie Street and Sedgewick Street, there is very little landscaping to the street, due in part to the small front gardens that do not offer space for significant tree or hedge planting. On more open streets such as York Avenue and Wagstaff Lane, trees in private plots add greenery to the street and interest to the skyline.





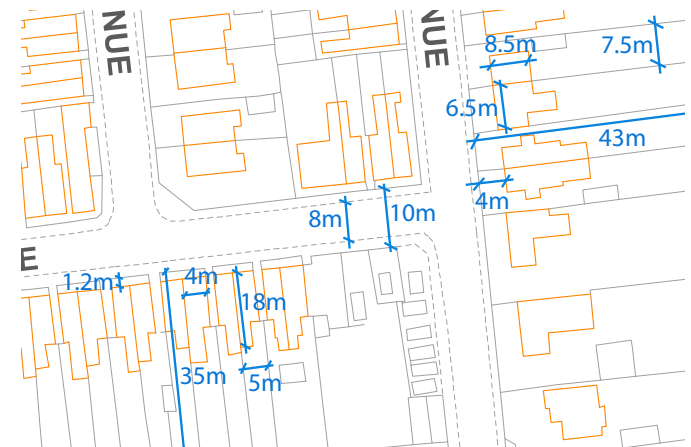
# Plots and buildings

Jacksdale has a reasonably distinctive range of plot types, although almost all are arranged in perimeter blocks with buildings that present their fronts to the street.

Small building setback can be found on the tighter streets that define the village core - for example Dixie Street, Albert Avenue and Edward Avenue - giving the village centre a very different feel to the more suburban arrangements to be found to the west.

As you head into the streets on higher ground, such as Rutland Avenue and Westdale Road, setbacks and plot widths increase, although as in the more dense parts of Jacksdale, buildings tend to occupy nearly the full width of the plot.

Buildings tend to be made of red brick with concrete roof tiles, and the roofs generally pitch with the eaves running parallel to the street. However, this relationship is broken in certain parts of Jacksdale, such as the short run of houses at the eastern end of Wagstaff Lane, which inject some variation into the street scene and add local distinctiveness with their projecting gables and rendered fronts. Similarly, distinctive mansard roofs can be found at the junction between Westdale Road and Rutland Road.



## Jacksdale: key findings and recommendations

Jacksdale has a distinct relationship with its landscape, with view onto the surround hills visible from most of the main streets. **New development should seek to incorporate far views where possible to help retain this relationship.**

The settlement pattern of Jacksdale is highly reflective of the underlying topography, with streets aligned either along the ridges or directly down the hill slopes. The resulting block structure is highly rectilinear, with long thin perimeter blocks typical. **New development should seek to emulate this arrangement to help tie in with the local pattern of development.**

The streets in Jacksdale are distinctive in that they are generally straight, intersecting at either T-junctions or acute-radius (tight) bends. Sight lines are longer on more interconnected and high-order streets, but all streets tend to have long sight lines. **New development should avoid overly sinuous streets or streets that have truncated sight lines.**

The tighter, more urban streets that typify the more urban core of Jacksdale have low walls hard up against the edge of the footpath defining the boundaries between public and private space. More hedges and green boundaries can be found on the long approaches to the village. The more suburban development on the higher ground tends to have low shrub planting or open frontages, although plots with open frontages tend to look more sparse and the streets look bare. **New development should ensure that public and private space is clearly delineated using either boundary planting or low walls. Open frontages should be avoided.**

Whilst a reasonable range of building styles exist in Jacksdale, buildings tend to run to near the full width of the plot with roofs that pitch parallel to the street. Where variation on this exists, it creates local variation and distinctiveness. **New development should ensure that building styles are used in sufficient clusters to produce a level of consistency, but should also draw upon pockets of variation to reflect locally distinct building styles.**





# Underwood

An aerial photograph of a rural area. A large, irregularly shaped region in the center is shaded in a semi-transparent purple color. This purple region is enclosed by a thin red line that follows its perimeter. The surrounding landscape consists of green fields, some yellow fields, and a small cluster of buildings on the left. A road or railway line runs diagonally on the right side of the image.



## Character of the landscape

Underwood sits on relatively flat ground and as such, long views onto the countryside beyond are not as prominent as for other villages in the Parish. There is a slight rise in landscape heading north from Main road, but it is not enough to afford views onto the hills for all but the highest properties on streets such as Palmerston Street and Church Lane.

There are longer views to the north as you crest the hill, with Hankin Avenue and the northern portion of Church Lane offering views out to the hills beyond the village.



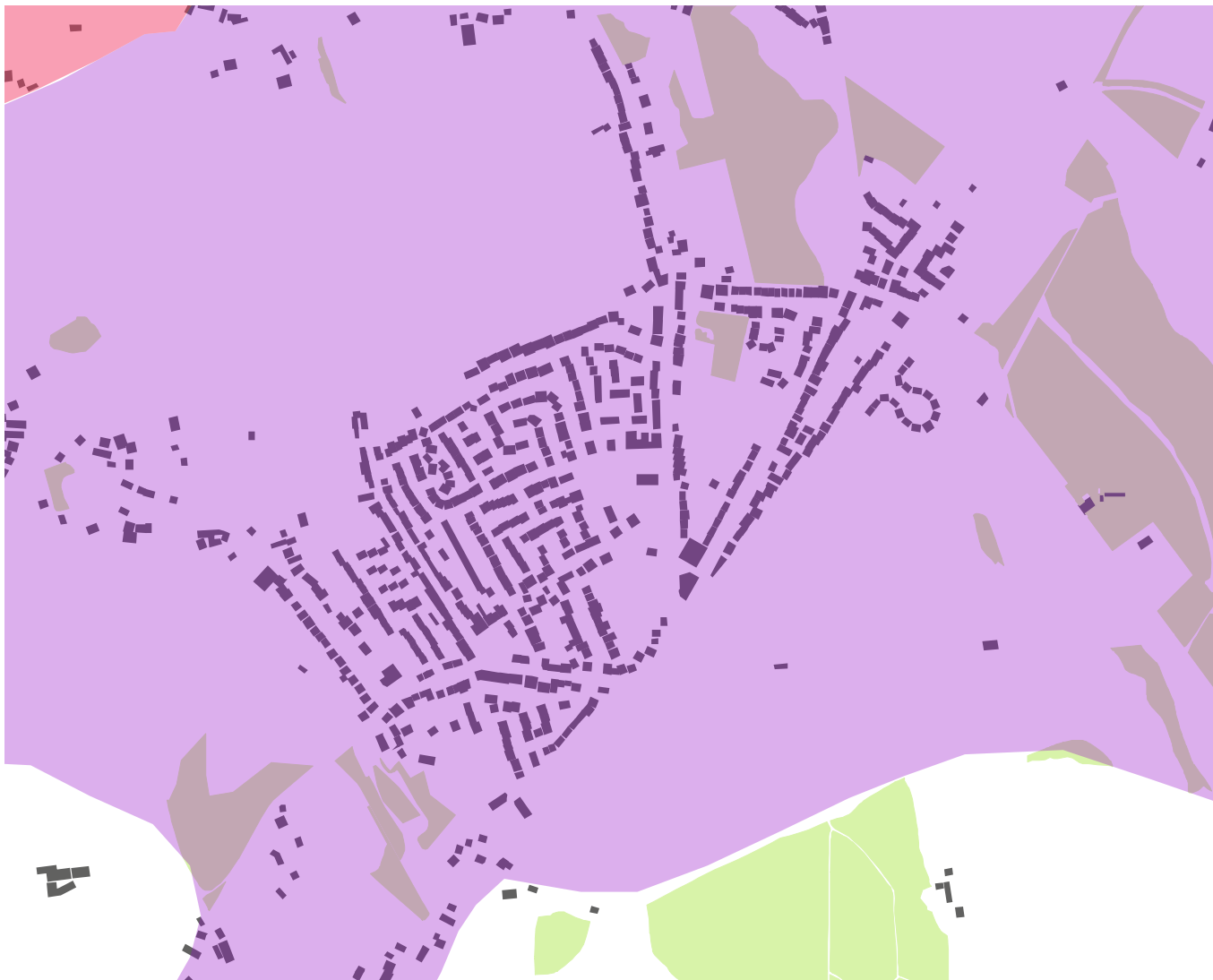


## Settlement pattern

Underwood has rectilinear development blocks set on streets that are generally straight and which intersect at angled T-junctions. The level of inter connectivity between the streets is lower than for other villages in the Parish, with many of the streets ending in dead-ends.

Whilst streets are generally straight, there are some instances - for example Old Chapel Lane and Fairview Avenue - where streets have small curves and deflections. Sight lines remain relatively long however, with very few streets offering forward visibility less than 90 meters and many offering far in excess of that.

Whilst most development forms perimeter blocks, there are exceptions; the development to the east of Hankin Avenue uses a 'Radburn' style layout, with a confused relationship between buildings and their street.



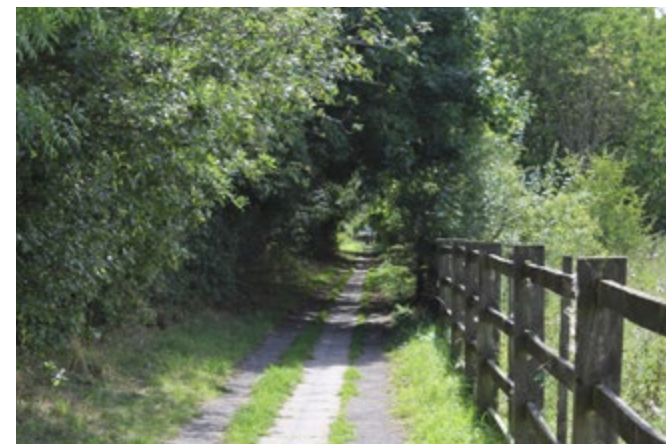
## Streets and spaces

The main routes in Underwood - Alfreton Road, Church Lane, and Main Road - are long and straight, with very little variation in width along their length. All the main streets have footpaths to both edges, although these tend to be narrow and should cars park 'wheels up' they could restrict pedestrian movement along the street.

Moving into development to the north, sight lines reduce but are still significant. Streets remain very uniform along their length, with few variations in width or treatment.

The main spaces in Underwood are the park that runs between Church Lane and Alfreton Road, and the cricket pitch at the bottom of Church Lane.

More informal open space, including a local nature reserve, can be found off Winter Closes, with walks linking this area to Cordy Lane to the south. Allotments can be found at the southern edge of the village along Willey Lane.





## Boundaries and landscaping

Most of the streets in Underwood have plot boundaries that are delineated by either low walls in brick or stone, or by hedges and shrub planting. Open frontages do exist, but they are not overly common and are generally found on streets where most other plots have boundary delineations.

Underwood lacks large trees either in the street or visible along the skyline. Rather, small trees in front gardens are common place and add a great deal to the street scene in terms of greenery and character.

A noticeable exception are the trees in the church yard along Church Lane, which are large and visible as they are on high ground. Also of note are the larger than average trees along Alfreton Road near to the junction with Mansfield Road.



## Plots and buildings

With the exception of the small area of Radburn-style development adjacent to Hankin Avenue, most of the development in Underwood is arranged in simple perimeter blocks with buildings that front on to the street. Setback varies, with buildings sitting closer to the edge of the plot on the streets nearer to Main Road, and more generous front gardens for streets higher up to the north.

Buildings in Underwood tend to be two storey, although some bungalows are also present in places. Dwellings tend to be arranged in either semis or are detached; terraces where they do occur are short and usually no more than three properties conjoined. Where buildings are terraced, ginnalls allow access to the rear of the plot.

The materials palette and roofscape is more varied in Underwood than in other villages in Selston Parish, with examples of pyramid hip roofs, box gables and hip and valley roofs to be found throughout the village. Similarly, whilst the predominant building materials are red brick with either concrete or pantile roof tiles, some slate and render can be found, as can timber detailing and weatherboarding.





## Underwood: key findings and recommendations

Underwood sits in an area of the Parish where visual connections to the wider landscape are not as prominent as in other villages in the parish. Where opportunities for long views are available, **new development should seek to incorporate visual connections to the wider landscape.**

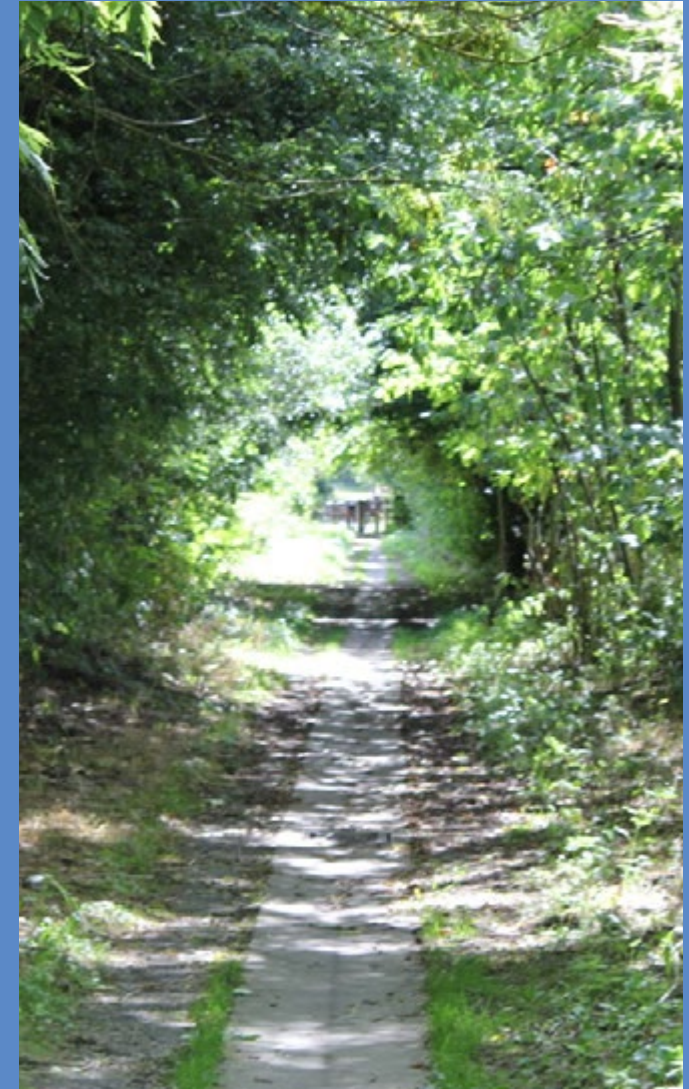
The settlement pattern shows a strong relationship with the subtle underlying topography, with streets and blocks arranged to follow contours. **New development should respect this relationship between development form and landscape, and should ensure streets and blocks reflect the underlying topography.**

The streets and spaces of Underwood are arranged in a way that reinforces the movement hierarchy; longer sight lines denote important streets, whilst more truncated views characterise local ones. **New development that is generating new streets should respect this difference and use it to create a hierarchy of streets. New development on existing streets should follow the pattern of the street to help**

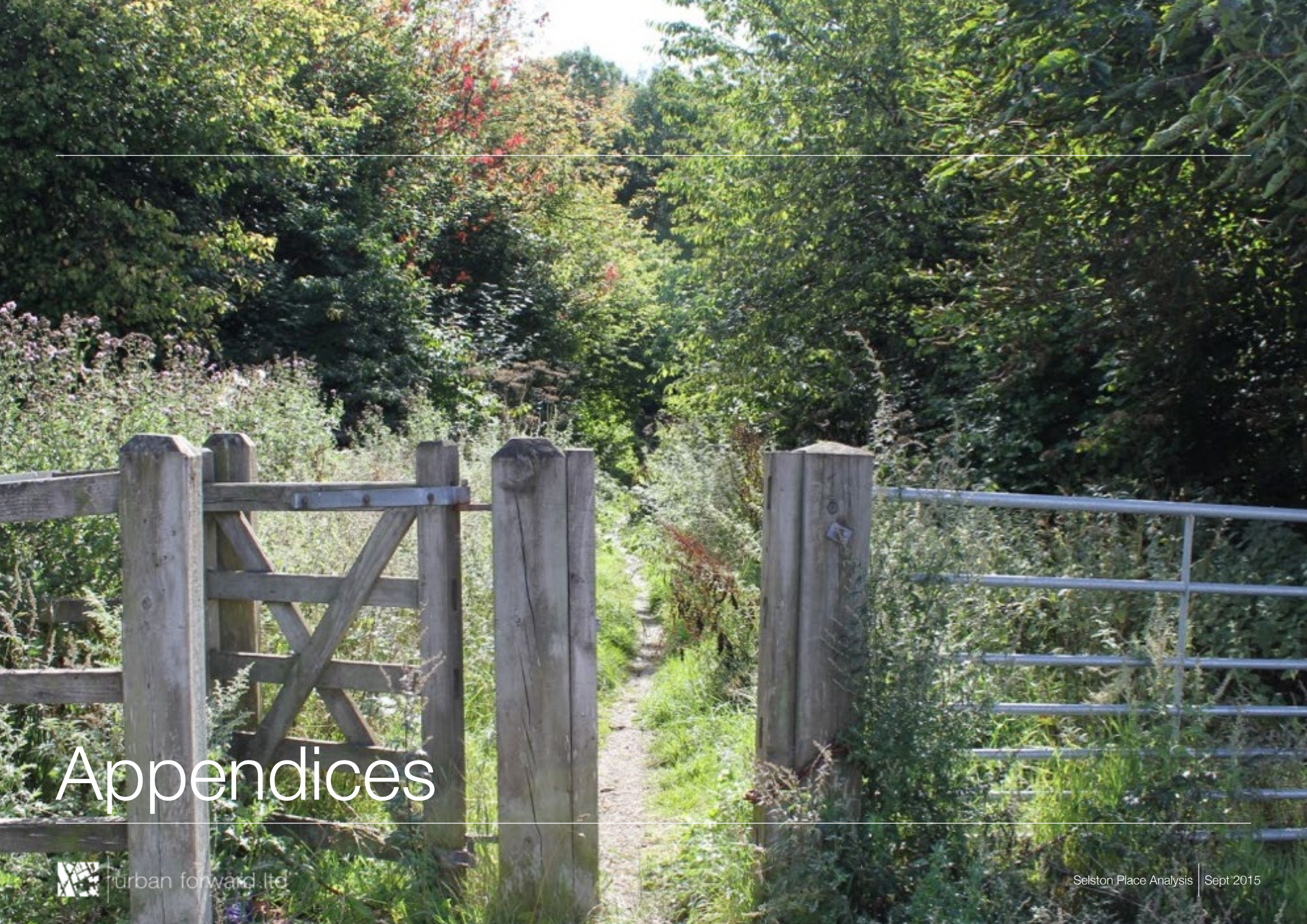
**reinforce its character. Trees and other landscaping in private plots adds a great deal to the village, and new development should ensure that there is space for planting in private plots to add richness to the street scene.**

Boundaries to the street edge area are a mix of low walls or of hedges, although some open frontages do exist. Where front gardens are more generous, tree and shrub planting adds greenery to the street scene. **New development should use this approach to tie in with the character of the village.**

Although a range of building types and scales are present, the predominant form is two storey, with buildings arranged in semis or short terraces. Bungalows can also be found. Streets tend to use a narrow range of building types within each section, which helps build consistency. **New development should use a similar approach, and should seek to replicate the key features at the building level to reflect local distinctiveness.**







# Appendices



## Appendix 1: 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.

**block** The space in between the streets, usually used for development but can also be used for parkland and open space. The shape can be regular (square) or rectilinear (longer and shorter sides).

**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 character appraisal** A published document defining the special architectural or historic interest that warranted the area being designated.  
**conservation area** One designated by a local authority under the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as possessing special architectural or historical interest. The council will seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of such areas.

---

**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.

**context** The setting of a site or area.

**countryside 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 from 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 shopfronts 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.

**facade** 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).

**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



---

functional requirement (such as maintaining privacy). This compares with a standard, which specifies more precisely how a development is to be designed (by setting out minimum distances between buildings, for example).

**permeability** The degree to which a place has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

**permitted development** Small scale, often domestic, development which does not require formal planning permission provided it complies with criteria set out in Government legislation.

**plot ratio** A measurement of density expressed as gross floor area divided by the net site area.

**public realm** The parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks. Also called public domain.

**scale** The size of a building in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person.

**settlement pattern** The distinctive way that the roads, paths and buildings are laid out in a particular place.

**sight line** The direct line from a viewer to an object.

**strategic view** The line of sight from a particular point to an important landmark or skyline.

**street furniture** Structures in and adjacent to the highway which contribute to the street scene, such as bus shelters, litter bins, seating, lighting and signs.

**topography** A description or representation of artificial or natural features on or of the ground.

**urban design** The art of making places. Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, and the establishment of frameworks and processes that facilitate successful development.

**urban design framework** A document setting out how development plan policies should be implemented in a particular area where there is a need to control, guide and promote change. Such areas include transport interchanges and corridors, regeneration areas, town centres, urban edges, housing estates, conservation areas, villages, new settlements, urban areas of special landscape value, and suburban areas identified as being suitable for more intense development.

**urban grain** The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

**urban structure** The framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely, and the way developments, routes and open spaces relate to one another.

**vernacular** The way in which ordinary buildings were built in a particular place before local styles, techniques and materials were superseded by imports.

**village appraisal** A study identifying a local community's needs and priorities.

**village design statement** An advisory document, usually produced by a village community, showing how development can be carried out in harmony with the village and its setting.



---

**urban forward ltd** is a multidisciplinary planning, design and urban design consultancy dedicated to quality outcomes for the built environment. We offer a comprehensive range of services designed to deliver the best possible results for any project, from new developments to policy and research. Our team are leaders in the field, with a wealth of practical experience to help you realise the potential of your project. We work with both private and public sector clients as well as with community groups and those in the third sector.

urban forward ltd  
The Studio  
122 Newland  
Witney  
Oxon OX28 3JQ

w: [www.urbanforward.co.uk](http://www.urbanforward.co.uk)  
e: [info@urbanforward.co.uk](mailto:info@urbanforward.co.uk)  
t: +44 7980 743523  
 @urbanforward

