Witley Neighbourhood Plan

B - WPC Design Guidelines

WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Design Guidelines

April 2019

AECOM

Quality information

Project role	Name	Position	Action summary	Signature	Date
Qualifying body	Parish Council Clerk	Witley Parish Council	Review		22.03.2019
Director / QA	Ben Castell	Technical Director	QA		10.04.2019
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1. Introduction

AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to Witley Parish Council through the Ministry of Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, led by Locality. The support is intended to provide design guidelines based on the character and special qualities of the villages in the parish.

1.1. Objective

This document is intended to be appended to the Neighbourhood Plan. Its purpose is to add depth and illustration to the Plan's policies on design and housing, offering guidance regarding the community's expectations. A number of sites around Milford in particular are in the process of being allocated for housing development and it is important to existing and future residents that a high standard of development is achieved. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; 2018, paragraph 125) states that "neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development"; this document does that for the Parish of Witley.

1.2. Process

The following steps were undertaken to produce this document:

- Initial meeting with members of the Witley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and site visit;
- Further site visits and urban design analysis;
- Access analysis of potential development sites by specialist transport planners;
- Preparation of design principles and guidelines to be used to assess future developments;
- Draft report with design guidelines; and
- Final report.

1.3. Area of Study

Location

Witley is a rural parish in the Borough of Waverley in Surrey, centred around the villages of Milford and Witley and the hamlet of Enton in the east and the settlements of Brook, Sandhills and Wormley to the south.

The heathland and woodland of the National Trust's Witley and Milford Commons lie to the west, skirted by the A3 dual carriageway road which bypasses Milford to the north west.

The parish is served by two railway stations on the London-Portsmouth Line: Witley station, situated to the south in nearby Wormley, and, to the north, Milford station, albeit some way out of the village centre.

Population

At the 2011 census the population of Witley Parish was 8,130 people.

Figure 1: Local context plan

2. Local Character

1.1. Introduction

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of Witley and Milford, the parish's two main villages. The features introduced in this section are later used as the basis for the design guidelines.

1.4. Local Character Analyses

Witley	
Streets and Public Realm	Witley, which has developed organically and has evolved from historic routes, natural features and topography, initially grew out of Petworth Road. More recently built areas are largely cul-de-sac developments that tend to have two main types of building layout: a) strong linear arrangements of buildings facing the streets or b) organic arrangements of buildings creating residential enclaves.
Pattern and Layout of Buildings	There is a good mix of housing in Witley. The most frequent are detached buildings, but there are also bungalows as well as semi-detached and terraced houses. Buildings tend to face the road to which they align and usually have front gardens or some kind of landscaping between the building and the public realm. Cul-de-sac developments are present throughout the village.
Building Heights and Roofline	Building heights typically vary between one and three storeys. Typically, the roofline is either pitched or hipped and most buildings have chimneys, and gabled dormers on the roofs.
Car Parking	There are different approaches to car parking within Witley. A characteristic of the village is garage parking either on the plot or on adjacent plot shared with other properties. Other means of parking include parking in the front garden, parking on the side of houses and on-street parking.

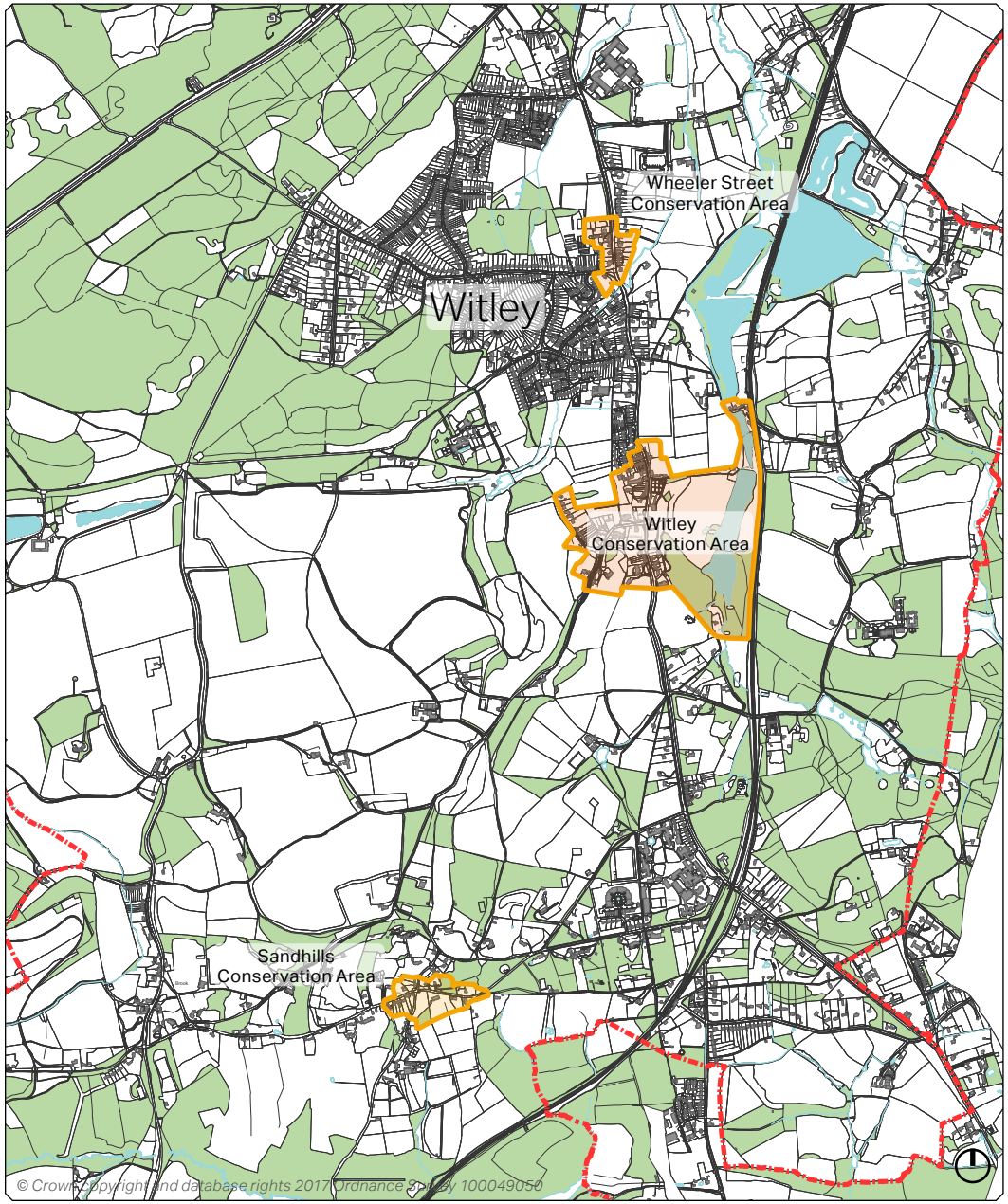

Figure 2: Witley context plan

Milford	
Streets and Public Realm	Milford has also been shaped by historic transport routes, natural features and topography. Buildings tend to front streets and spaces, thus creating a strong frontage and enclosure. Cul de sac arrangements can be found off the main streets; in these, buildings show two main patterns: strong linear arrangements of buildings facing the streets or organic arrangements of buildings creating small residential enclaves.
Pattern and Layout of Buildings	There is a good mix of housing in Milford. Most frequent are detached houses and, less frequently, semi-detached and terraced houses.
Building Heights and Roofline	Building heights vary between one and two storeys. Typically the roofline is either pitched or hipped and most buildings have chimneys and gabled dormers on the roofs.
Car Parking	There are different approaches to car parking within the village. A characteristic of the village is garage parking either on the plot or on adjacent plot shared with other properties. Other parking modes include: parking in the front garden, parking on the side of the house and on-street parking.

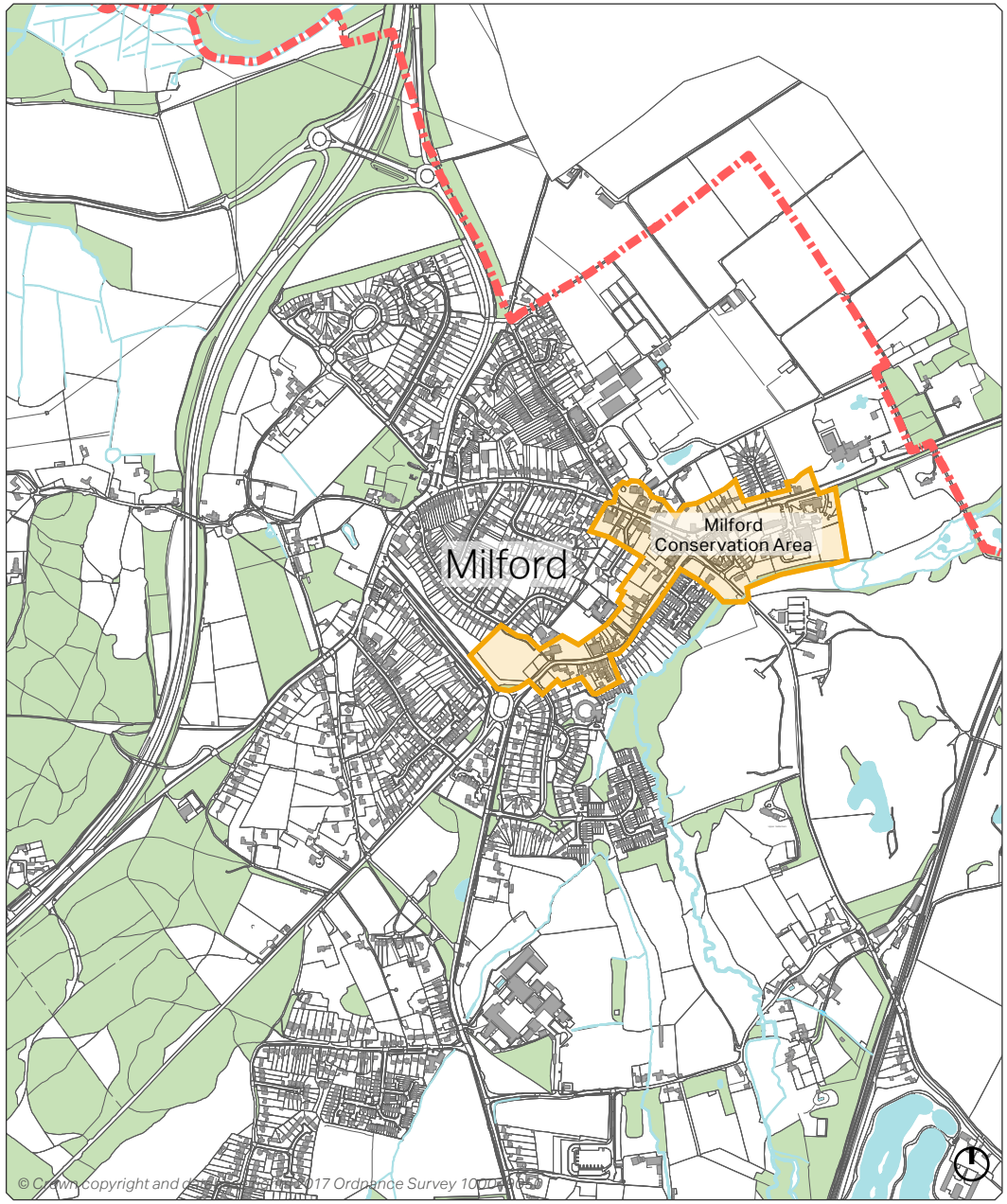

Figure 3: Milford.context plan

3. Design Guidelines

3.1. General questions to ask and issues to consider when presented with a development proposal

This section provides a number of questions against which the design proposal should be evaluated. They are based on established good practice in urban design. The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has taken into account the context and provided an adequate design solution. As a first step there are a number of ideas or principles that should be present in the proposals.

The proposals or design should:

a) Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;

b) Reinforce or enhance the established village character of streets, greens and other spaces;

c) Respect the rural character of views and gaps;

d) Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;

e) Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long distance views.

f) Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;

g) Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;

h) Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;

i) Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;

j) Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;

k) Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;

l) Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;

m) Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours; and

n) Positively integrate energy efficient technologies.

Following these fundamental principles, there are a number of questions related to the design guidelines outlined later in the document.

Street Grid and Layout

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

Local Green Spaces, Views and Character

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Has the proposal been considered in its widest context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal affect the character of a rural location?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?

Gateway and Access Features

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

Buildings Layout and Grouping

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?

- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?

Building Line and Boundary Treatment

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

Building Heights and Roofline

- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Would a higher development improve the scale of the overall area?

Building Materials and Surface Treatment

- What is the distinctive material in the area, if any?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local material?
- Does the proposal use high quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Do the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
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Car Parking Solutions

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?

Architectural Details and Contemporary Design

- If the proposal is within a conservation area, how are the characteristics reflected in the design?
- Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties? This means that it follows the height massing and general proportions of adjacent buildings and how it takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features?
- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?

Sustainability and Eco Design

- What visual impact will services have on the scheme as a whole?
- Can the effect of services be integrated at the planning design stage, or mitigated if harmful?
- Has adequate provision been made for bin storage, waste separation and relevant recycling facilities?
- Has the location of the bin storage facilities been considered relative to the travel distance from the collection vehicle?
- Has the impact of the design and location of the bin storage facilities been considered in the context of the whole development?
- Could additional measures, such as landscaping be used to help integrate the bin storage facilities into the development?
- Has any provision been made for the need to enlarge the bin storage in the future without adversely affecting the development in other ways?
- Have all aspects of security been fully considered and integrated into the design of the building and open spaces? For standalone elements (e.g. external bin areas, cycle storage, etc.) materials and treatment should be of equal quality, durability and appearance as for the main building.
- Use of energy saving/efficient technologies should be encouraged. If such technologies are used (e.g. solar panels, green roofs, water harvesting, waste collection, etc.), these should be integrally designed to complement the building and not as bolt-ons after construction?

3.2. Design Guidelines

The guidelines in this section should be applied as a starting point to all new development, regardless of location within the parish.

3.2.1. Street Grid Layout

- Streets must meet the technical highways requirements as well as be considered as a 'social space' to be used by all, not just motor vehicles. It is essential that the design of new development should include streets that incorporate needs of pedestrians, cyclists and if applicable public transport users.
- Streets should tend to be linear with gentle meandering - providing interest and evolving views. Routes should be laid out in a permeable pattern allowing for multiple connections and choice of routes, particularly on foot. Any cul-de-sacs should be relatively short and include wide and overlooked provision for onward pedestrian links.
- Access to properties should be from the street where possible.
- The distribution of land uses should respect the general character of the area and road network, and take into account the degree of isolation, lack of light pollution and levels of tranquillity.
- Pedestrian paths should be included in new developments and be integrated with the existing pedestrian routes.

3.2.2. Local Green Spaces, Views and Character

- Development adjoining public open spaces and important gaps should enhance the character of these spaces by either providing a positive interface (i.e. properties facing onto them to improve natural surveillance) or a soft landscaped edge.
- Loss of trees or woodland that will result by a proposal development must be replaced.
- The spacing of development should reflect the rural character and allow for long distance views of the countryside from the public realm. Trees and landscaping should be incorporated in the design.
- Landscape schemes should be designed and integrated with the open fields that currently border the villages.
- Native trees and shrubs should be used to reinforce the rural character of the villages.

3.2.3. Pattern and Layout of Buildings

- The existing rural character must be appreciated when contemplating new development, whatever its size or purpose.
- Properties should be clustered in small pockets showing a variety of types. The use of a repeated dwelling type along the entirety of the street should be avoided.
- Boundaries such as walls or hedgerows, whichever is appropriate to the street, should enclose and define each street along the back edge of the pavement, adhering to a consistent building line for each development group.
- Properties should aim to provide rear and front gardens or at least a small buffer to the public sphere where the provision of a garden is not possible.

3.2.4. Building Line and Boundary Treatment

- Buildings should be aligned along the street with their main facade and entrance facing it, where this is in keeping with local character. The building line should have subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions but will generally form a unified whole.
- Buildings should be designed to ensure that streets and/ or public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings. This can be ensured by placing ground floor habitable rooms and upper floor windows overlooking towards the street.
- Boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity of the building line and help define the street, appropriate to the rural character of the area. The use of panel fencing in these publicly visible boundaries should be avoided. Also, boundary treatments should not impair natural surveillance.
- Front gardens should be included where this is characteristic of the area.
- If placed on the property boundary, waste storage should be integrated as part of the overall design of the property. Landscaping could also be used to minimise the visual impact of bins and recycling containers.

3.2.5. Building Heights/ Roofline

Creating a good variety in the roof line is a significant element of designing attractive places. There are certain elements that serve as guideline in achieving a good variety of roofs:

- Scale of the roof should always be in proportion with the dimensions of the building itself;
- Monotonous building elevations should be avoided, therefore subtle changes in roofline should be ensured during the design process;
- Locally traditional roof detailing elements should be considered and implemented where possible in case of new development; and
- Dormers can be used as design element to add variety and interest to roofs.

3.2.6. Traditional Architecture

The gradual evolution of the villages over centuries has resulted in an organic character. Each building has its own individual charcteristics reflectied in variations in height, pattern of openings and detailing. This variety is balanced in several ways; the proximity of each property to each other and overall similarities in scale, width, design and materials. Buildings are predominantly two storeys and the change in roof heights and the presence of chimneys contribute to the visual attraction of the historic core.

3.2.7. Materials and Building Details

The materials and architectural detailing used throughout Witley and Milford contribute to the rural character of the area and its local vernacular. It is therefore important that the materials used in a proposed development are of a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness. Any future development proposals should demonstrate that the palette of materials has been selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment.

3.2.8. Parking

- Car parking solutions should be a mix of on street, plot and car ports.
- For family homes cars should be placed at the front or side of the property. For flats and small pockets of housing a front or rear court with quality landscaping is acceptable.
- Car parking design at all times should be combined with landscaping to minimise the presence of vehicles.
- When placing parking at the front, the area should be designed to minimise visual impact and to blend with the existing streetscape and materials. The aim is to keep a sense of enclosure and to break the potential of a continuous area of car parking in front of the dwellings by means of walls, hedging, planting and use of differentiated quality paving materials.
- Electric charging points should be incorporated into driveways.

3.2.9. Public Realm and Streetscape

- High quality building and surface materials should be used across the new development. Care should be taken when selecting the materials that will be used for the paved areas.
- High quality stone, gravel, granite and bricks can provide durable and attractive hard surfaces throughout the public realm.
- More expensive materials such as sandstone and limestone could also be used to enhance further more the quality of particular spaces.

3.2.10. Sustainability and Eco Design

Energy efficient or ecological design combines all around energy efficient construction, appliances and lighting with commercially available renewable energy systems, such as solar water heating and solar electricity.

The aim of these interventions is to reduce overall domestic energy use.

Solar roof panels

Solar panels on roofs should be incorporated into the design, forming part of the design concept. Some attractive options are solar shingles and photovoltaic slates or tiles. In this way, the solar panels can be used as a roofing material in their own right.

Rainwater harvesting

This refers to the systems allowing the capture and storage of rainwater as well as those enabling the reuse in-situ of grey water. These systems involve pipes and storage devices that could be unsightly if added without an integral vision for design. Therefore, some design recommendation would be to:

- Conceal tanks by cladding them in complementary materials;
- Use attractive materials or finishing for pipes;
- Combine landscape/planters with water capture systems;
- Underground tanks; and,
- Utilise water bodies for storage.

Waste collector integrated design

With modern requirements for waste separation and recycling, the number of household bins quantum and size have increased. This poses a problem with the aesthetics of the property if bins are left without a solution. Thus we recommend the following:

- Create a specific enclosure of sufficient size for all the necessary bins;
- Place it within easy access from the street and, where, possible, able to open on the pavement side to ease retrieval;
- Refer to the materials palette to analyse which would be a complementary material;
- Use it as part of the property boundary;
- Add to the green feel by incorporating a green roof or side planting element to it; and,
- Combine it with cycle storage.

3.2.11. Passive design and insulation

High levels of insulation on walls, floors and roofs will help to reduce the need for heating in winter. A wide range of materials can be used as insulation, and it is good practice to select products that are both high-performing and environmentally responsible (i.e. not containing harmful chemicals).

Windows in new buildings should contain modern double or triple glazing; these must be carefully sized and located to allow for winter sun while avoiding glare. It is important to use careful detail design and monitor construction works closely to ensure that the building is draught-proof.

Buildings that are well-insulated sometimes carry the risk of overheating in summer, if measures are not introduced to help them cool down naturally. Designs should ensure that, wherever possible, windows can be opened to provide cross-ventilation. Materials such as stone, brick or concrete tend to absorb heat and release it slowly overnight, which can help to regulate extreme temperatures both in winter and summer. Deciduous trees should be located near south-facing windows to provide summer shade, which has extra benefits for wildlife.

Special considerations for historic buildings:

- Adding insulation, draught-proofing and blocking up old vents or chimneys reduces heat loss but can also cause issues with moisture. Specialist advice should be sought to ensure that the type of insulation used is suitable for the property, particularly if there are solid brick, stone, cob or half-timbered walls.
- In order to avoid changing the appearance of historic windows, secondary glazing could be used rather than replacing them with a new modern unit.

4. Delivery

4.1. Delivery Agents

The Design Guidelines will be a valuable tool for securing context-driven, high quality development in Witley and Milford. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table below:

ACTOR	HOW THEY WILL USE THE DESIGN GUIDELINES
Applicants, developers and landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought. Where planning applications require a Design and Access Statement, the Statement should explain how the Design Guidelines have been followed.
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are followed.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

4.2. Deliverability

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 35) emphasises that a proportionate evidence base should inform plans. Based on 'positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings' (see paragraph 15). Policies should be: 'underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals' (paragraph 31). Crucially planning policies 'should not undermine the deliverability of the plan' (paragraph 34).

Neighbourhood Plans need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the corresponding Local Plan. Where new policy requirements are introduced (that carry costs to development) over and above Local Plan and national standards it is necessary to assess whether development will remain deliverable. The principles and guidance set out in this document are aligned with national policy and non-statutory best practice on design.

The values and costs of construction between new developments and within new developments will vary based on location, situation, product type, design (architecture, placemaking etc.) and finish, and the state of the market at the point of marketing the properties. The guidelines herein constitute place making principles and guidance in order to help interpret and apply the statutory policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. Good design is not an additional cost to development and good placemaking can result in uplifts in value.

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