

Botesdale and Rickinghall Design Support Document

R.01 DRAFT

July 2018

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Quality information

Project role	Name	Position	Action summary	Signature	Date
Qualifying body	Botesdale and Rickinghall Steering Group	Rickinghall Parish Council	Review		25.06.2018
Director / QA	Mark Hughes	Technical Director	Revision and Approval of Draft Report	Mark Hughes	15.05.2018
Researcher	Simona Palmieri	Urban Designer	Research, site visit, drawings	Simona Palmieri	08.05.2018
Project Coordinator	Mary Kucharska	Project Coordinator	Review		

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Introduction

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Programme, administered by Locality, AECOM has been commissioned to provide Design support to the Botesdale and Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan (BRNP). The support is intended to provide design guidelines and a commentary on the character of Botesdale and Rickinghall.

The Botesdale and Rickinghall Steering Group (BRSO) is making good progress in the production of its Neighbourhood Plan and has requested technical advice in respect of design guidance for future developments within both the villages.

1.2. Objective

The main aim of this report is to provide design guidance in respect of future residential-led development in Botesdale and Rickinghall. This design guidance should be considered as a point of reference for developers intending to deliver residential-led development in the two villages. The aim is that this design guidance should support the delivery of high quality development that is appropriate in terms of scale, design and character in such a way as to preserve the existing quality of place in Botesdale and Rickinghall.

1.3. Process

Following an inception meeting and a site visit, AECOM and BRSO members carried out a high level assessment of the villages. The following steps were agreed with the group to produce this report:

- Initial meeting and site visit;
- Village-scape and design analysis;
- Design principles and guidelines to be used to assess future developments;
- Draft report with design guidelines; and
- Final report.

1.4. Area of Study

Botesdale and Rickinghall are two villages in Mid Suffolk. Rickinghall is divided between two parishes, Rickinghall Inferior and Rickinghall Superior, which have blended with Botesdale to create one built-up area.

Botesdale and Rickinghall (Inferior and Superior) form a ribbon of built development along a 2km main road (which starts as Bury Road and becomes The Street and Diss Road). This conjoined built-up area is located along the southern edge of a valley formed by a stream known locally as the Swimming Ditch. The built-up area is located to the south of the network of interlinked drainage ditches that emanate from the Swimming Ditch, with open countryside on all sides. Botesdale and Rickinghall are 6 miles (10km) south west of Diss, 25 miles (40 Km) south of Norwich and 16 miles (26 Km) north east of Bury St Edmunds. In the 2011 census, Rickinghall Inferior civil parish had 187 households and a population of 449 inhabitants; in Rickinghall Superior the population was 719 inhabitants; and Botesdale had 905 inhabitants.

There are a couple of Grade I listed buildings:

- St Mary's Rickinghall Inferior characterised by a circular tower below and octagonal above;
- St Mary's Rickinghall Superior;

In addition, there are a number of Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings, including:

- St Botolph's Church, built in late 15th century;
- Church Farm Cottage;
- Street Farmhouse (Grade II*)

- Botesdale, Redgrave and Rickinghall War Memorial;
- Honister House;
- Bridewell House;
- Tollgate House.

Currently, the villages of Botesdale and Rickinghall retain some local services and amenities, including shops and public houses as well as a primary school, St. Botolph's CEVCP in Botesdale. The Botesdale After School Club is located in the village hall, along with a pre-school facility. Local services include:

- a Co-op local store;
- a Health Centre;
- Botesdale Dental Practice;
- The Bell Inn Pub;
- The Greyhound;
- A Chinese take-away;
- A Fish and Chip shop;
- Estate agent; and
- Hairdressers.

The Post Office closed in autumn, 2016, and the loss of this facility has been a major concern for local businesses (and was identified as such in a survey of local business carried out in September 2017).



Figure 1: St Botolph's Church



Figure 2: Tollgate House



Figure 3: St Mary's Rickinghall Inferior

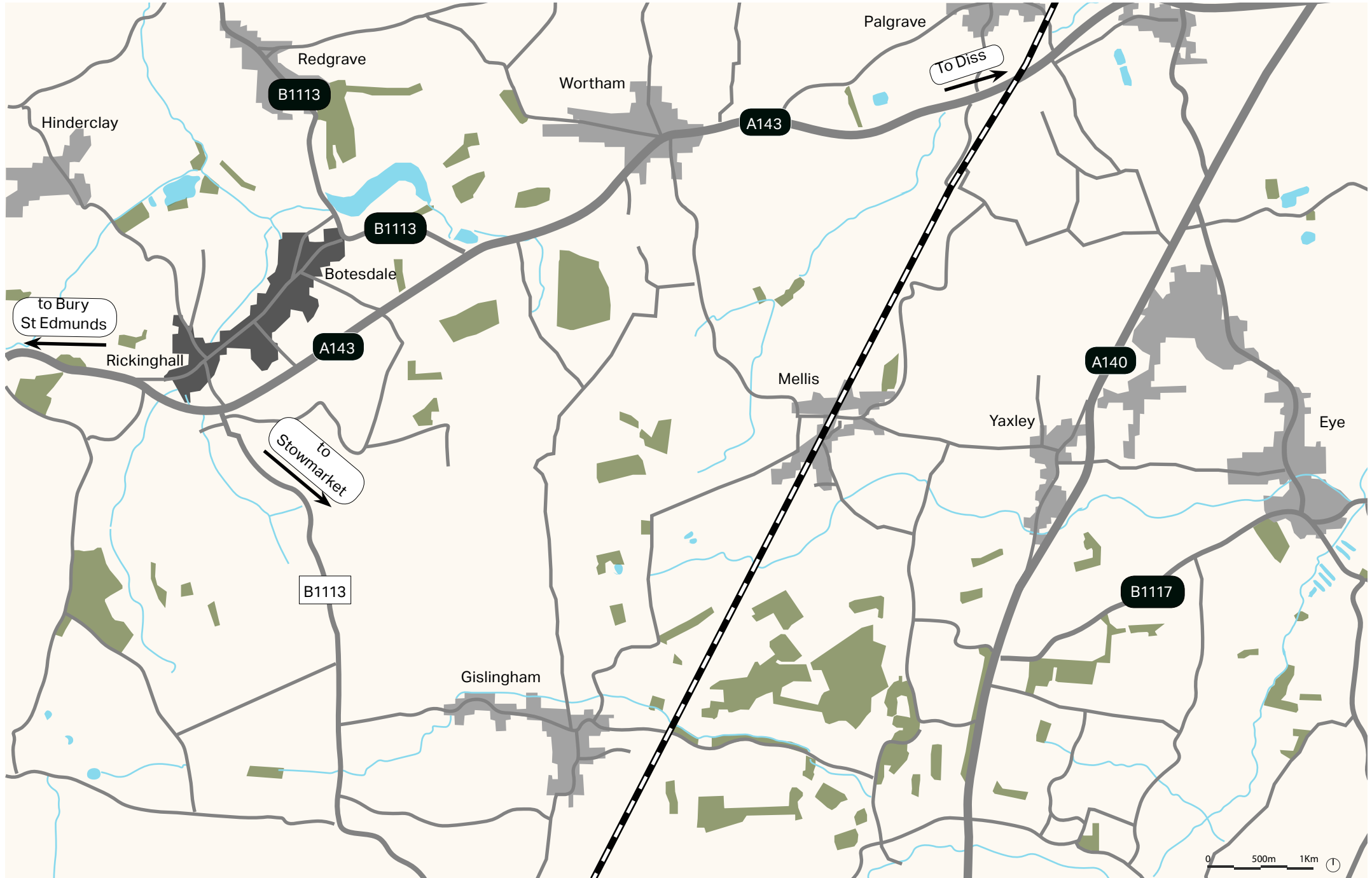


Figure 4: Plan showing Rickinghall and Botesdale within the local context



Local Character Area

02

2. Local Character

This section outlines the spatial and contextual characteristics of Botesdale and Rickinghall. It analyses the pattern and layout of buildings, hierarchy of movement, topography, building heights and parking. The information is interpreted both at a descriptive level and represented through images from the village. The features outlined in this section are used as the basis for the design guidance. Images in this section have been used to portray the built form of Botesdale and Rickinghall.

2.1. Built Form

The historic settlements of Botesdale and Rickinghall have been built along a road called Bury Road/The Street on the side of a shallow valley, bordered by a network of streams to the north and a mixture of fields and woodland on all sides providing a landscape context for the built-up area. Bury Road/The Street functions as a local distributor road with the following main characteristics:

- The historic village settlement faces the main road in a traditional manner creating strong frontages with direct access to the highway;
- Limited setback space between the back of the footway and the building line along the principal route;
- The alignment is characterised by a sequence of buildings, landmarks, change in topography and subtle variations of street alignment;
- Historically, development focused around key focal points, extending along the main street, occupying the lower valley slopes overlooking the floodplain to the north, but rarely beyond the 43m AOD contour;
- Extending off the main street and frequently at right angles are narrow rural lanes, in some cases providing access to lanes running parallel to The Street;
- Development in the latter half of the 20th century and early 21st century departed from this traditional pattern, located on higher land extending onto the upper valley slopes and plateau and introducing uncharacteristic cul-de-sac layouts.

Essentially, the historic settlement shows a strong linear arrangement of buildings facing the principal highway, while post-1950 development has more small residential enclaves. There is a well distributed mix of house typologies in Botesdale and Rickinghall.

Figure 5 shows that the most frequent typologies include semi-detached houses, detached houses and terraced houses. These have a degree of agricultural influence in their architecture details and materials, which shows the intimate relationship between the historic settlements and the rural hinterland. The undeveloped fields around the village reinforce the character of both villages with historic buildings having direct access to the countryside beyond. There is also a mix of scattered development between the historic settlement and the valley bottom due to the presence of wetlands and the flood risk area.



Figure 5: Pattern and layout of buildings

2.2. Hierarchy of Movements

The main road through Botesdale and Rickinghall connects the village settlements to the A143 which carries on to Bury St Edmunds to the south-west, Diss to the north-east and Eye to the east; Rectory Hill at the southern edge of Rickinghall leads to Stowmarket (see Figure 6).

Bury Road and Hinderclay Road are the primary routes from the north-west into Rickinghall, while Rectory Hill accesses the village from the south. Bury Road is the main entrance from the A143 to Rickinghall; Hinderclay Road connects the village to Hinderclay to the north-west.

The B1113 and Back Hills are the primary routes from the east into Botesdale, while the village is accessed from the south-east through Mill Road. The B1113 is the main entrance into the village, while Back Hills provides an alternative route, although narrow, out from it towards Redgrave.

The principal highway (Bury Road/The Street) has a footpath on both sides for the majority of its length, whereas the other roads such as Rectory Hill, Cherrytree Lane and Back Hills have no, or partial, pedestrian paths.

Three circular walking tours (Figure 6) have been identified by Botesdale and Rickinghall Parish Councils as following:

- A Breath of Fresh Air. This is the shorter walking tour with a distance of $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles ($4\frac{1}{2}$ Km) and duration of 1 hour.
- High Point Walk. This is a medium walking tour with a distance of $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles ($8\frac{1}{2}$ km) and a duration of 2 hours.
- Millennium Walk. This is the larger walking tour with a distance of $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles (15 km) and a duration of 3 hours.

These walking routes mainly follow existing public rights of way, with some short elements alongside or crossing roads. These routes take advantage of the landscape setting within which the two villages sit. The paths vary in their character, with a range of intimate to more open, exposed experiences for walkers, often with medium to long distance views out over the villages and the wider countryside.

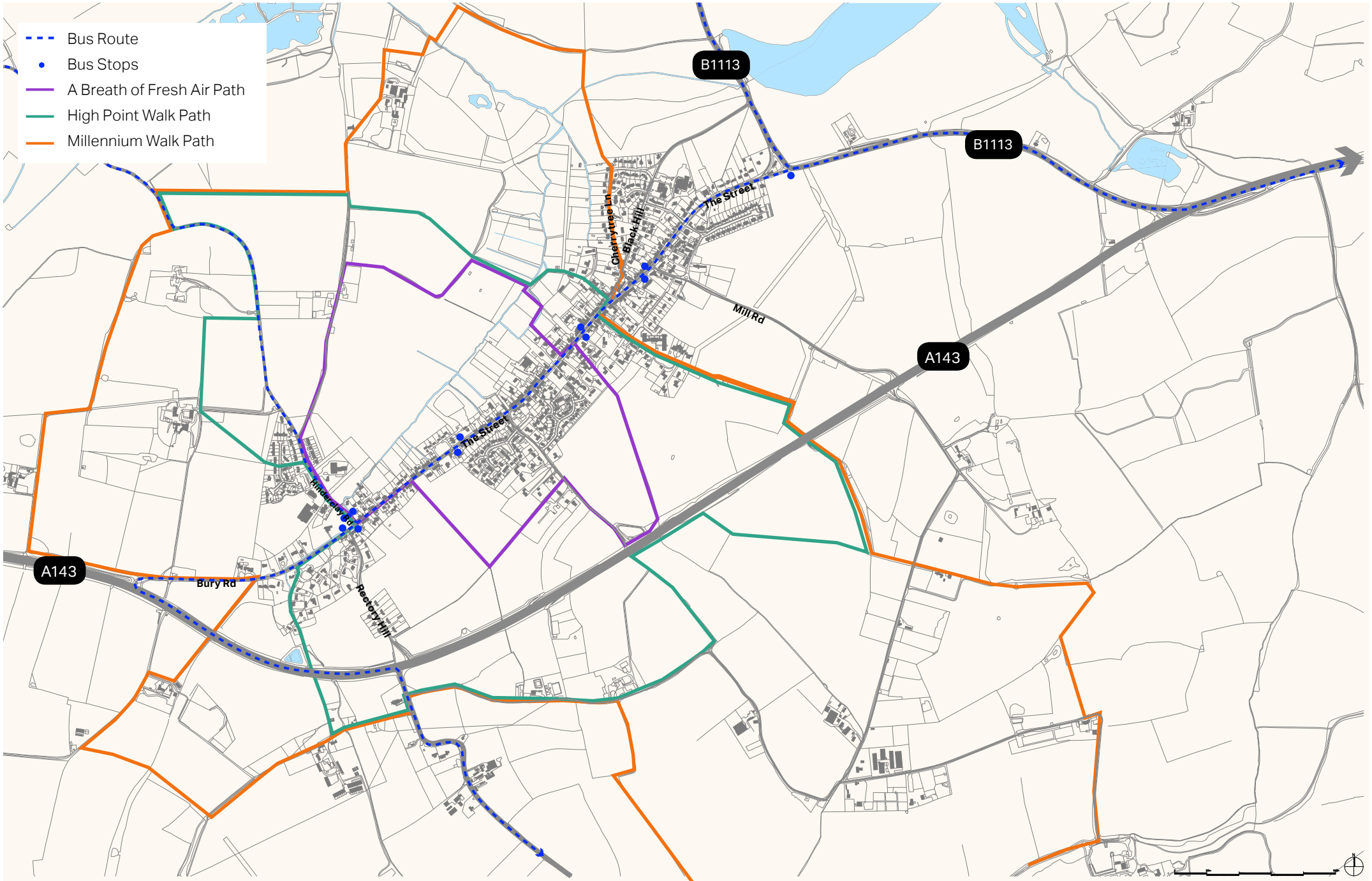


Figure 6: Hierarchy of movements

2.3. Topography

The historic settlement of Rickinghall sits in a mostly flat area along Bury Road to the western edge. The Street, from the junction with Hinderclay Road looking east, is characterised by small variations in topography before reaching a high point half way through (at a point close to Hamblyn House). The road falls away and reaches its lowest point in Botesdale Market Square; it rises again towards the Botesdale Village Hall. Figure 12, opposite, gives an indication of the topography within which the villages sit.

Beyond the village to the south-east, the land rises consistently to an area with open farmland and the village almost disappears in middle to long-distance views, although sporadic modern rooflines and the bell tower of St Mary's Inferior are still visible (Figure 7).

To the west of the village, the landscape rises from Hinderclay Road. Directly north of the village, the landscape falls away from Bury Road/The Street to the valley where a network of streams run through the former fen area.



Figure 7: View 5 towards the village from south-west



Figure 8: View 1. The Street looking west



Figure 10: View 3. The Street looking south-west



Figure 9: View 2. The Street towards Market Place



Figure 11: View 4. Walking tour from Cherrytree Lane looking north



Figure 12: Topography

2.4. Land Use & Main Constraints

Figure 13 and 14 illustrate current land use constraints, as follows:

- A very attractive network of streams offer pleasant walking tours particularly to the north and north-east part of the villages.
- Immediate proximity to the countryside.
- There are very few commercial premises; at the time of writing the following were identified: Chinese take away, fish and chip shop takeaways, estate agent and two public houses, The Bell Inn and The Greyhound.
- The principal highway - Bury Road/The Street - links the two villages and functions as the main distributor.
- Open space, green facilities and playgrounds in Botesdale and Rickinghall.
- Flood risk areas along the northern and western edges of the urban area.
- Much of the urban area of Botesdale and Rickinghall lies within a conservation area, which has consequences for how development proposals are prepared by developers and then assessed by the local authority.
- There are no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the vicinity of Botesdale and Rickinghall villages.
- An ancient woodland area is located at the south - east of the A143 called Stubbings Wood, with nearby Jacobites Wood Bisected by the A143.
- A Special Landscape Area, which is designated under the adopted Mid-Suffolk Local Plan (1998) stretches along the western side of the village and extents towards the north-east.
- There are several Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within the area. These protected trees should be retained.
- The variety of the topography within the villages opens up, allowing middle to long distance views from the villages towards the countryside and vice versa.

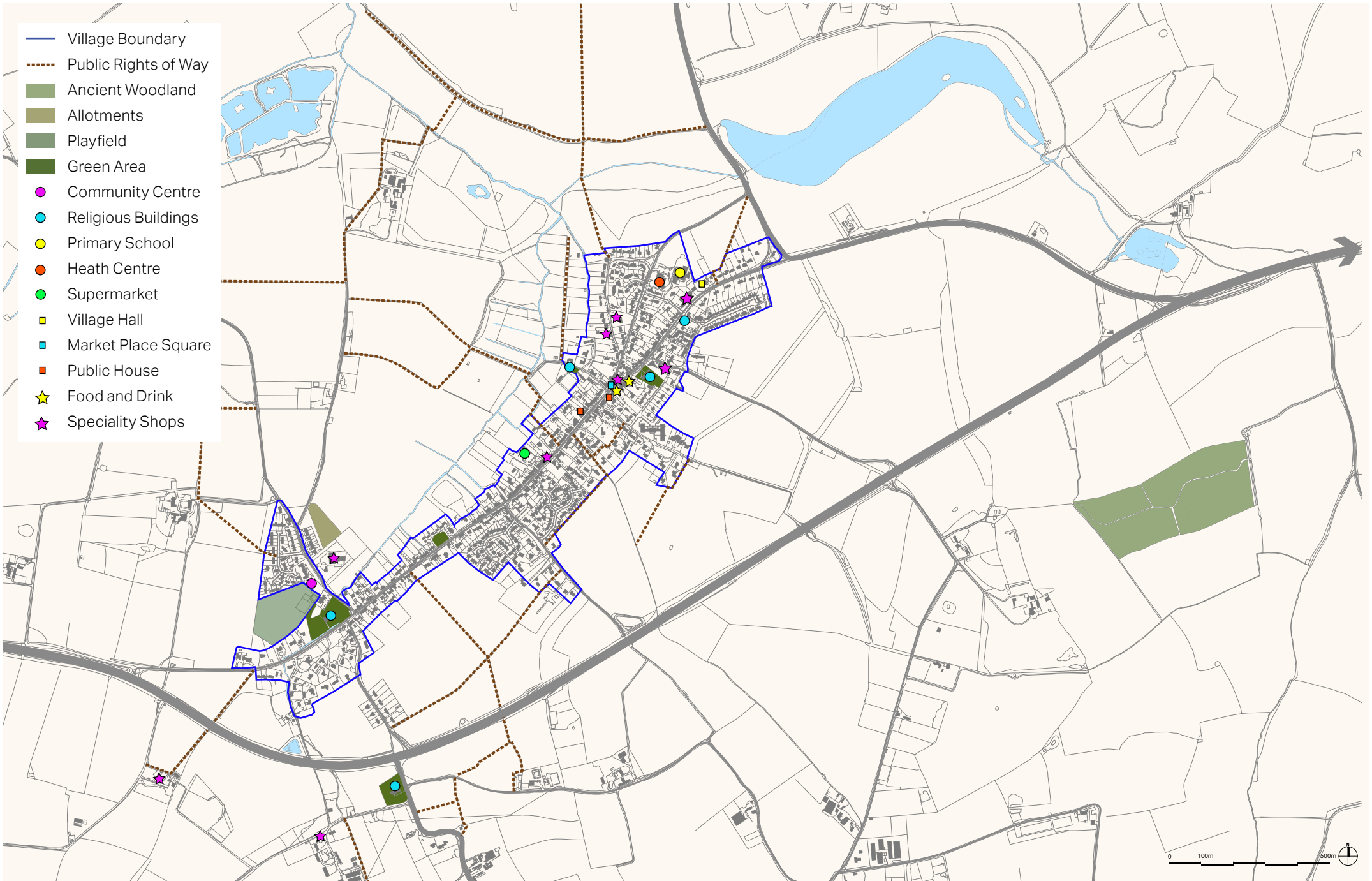


Figure 13: Land Use

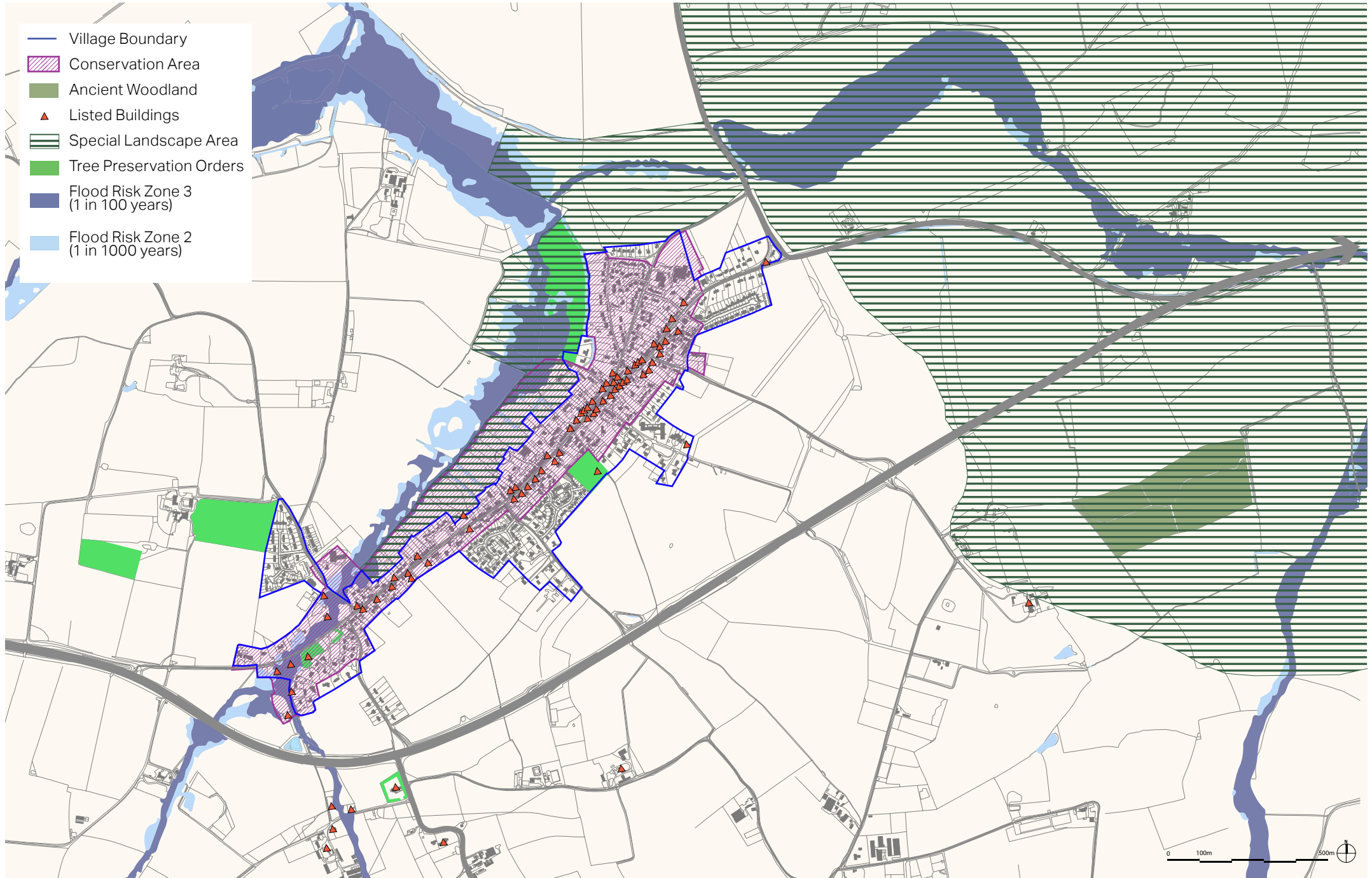


Figure 14: Main constraints

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2.5. Density

Density is a measure of how intensively a specific land use (in this case residential) uses a specific piece of land. Figure 15 illustrates the various densities which apply at Botesdale and Rickinghall and splits them into three main categories (expressed as dwellings per hectare or dph):

- < 10 dph
- 11 - 20 dph
- 21 - 35 dph

The majority of the built-up area of Botesdale and Rickinghall has an average residential density of 11-20 dph.

The post-1950 developments along Gardenhouse Lane and between Mill Road and Diss Road have the highest density (21 - 35 dph). These present a variety of terraced, semi-detached and detached properties with small and medium sized gardens clustered together in form that is very different to the 'ribbon' development of the historic villages.

The lowest density is mainly at the edge of the village and defines the transition between the village and the countryside. This includes scattered properties through the countryside at the western edge of Rickinghall. These developments are characterised by large back gardens along Cherrytree Lane, Diss Road, The Street and Gardenhouse Lane.

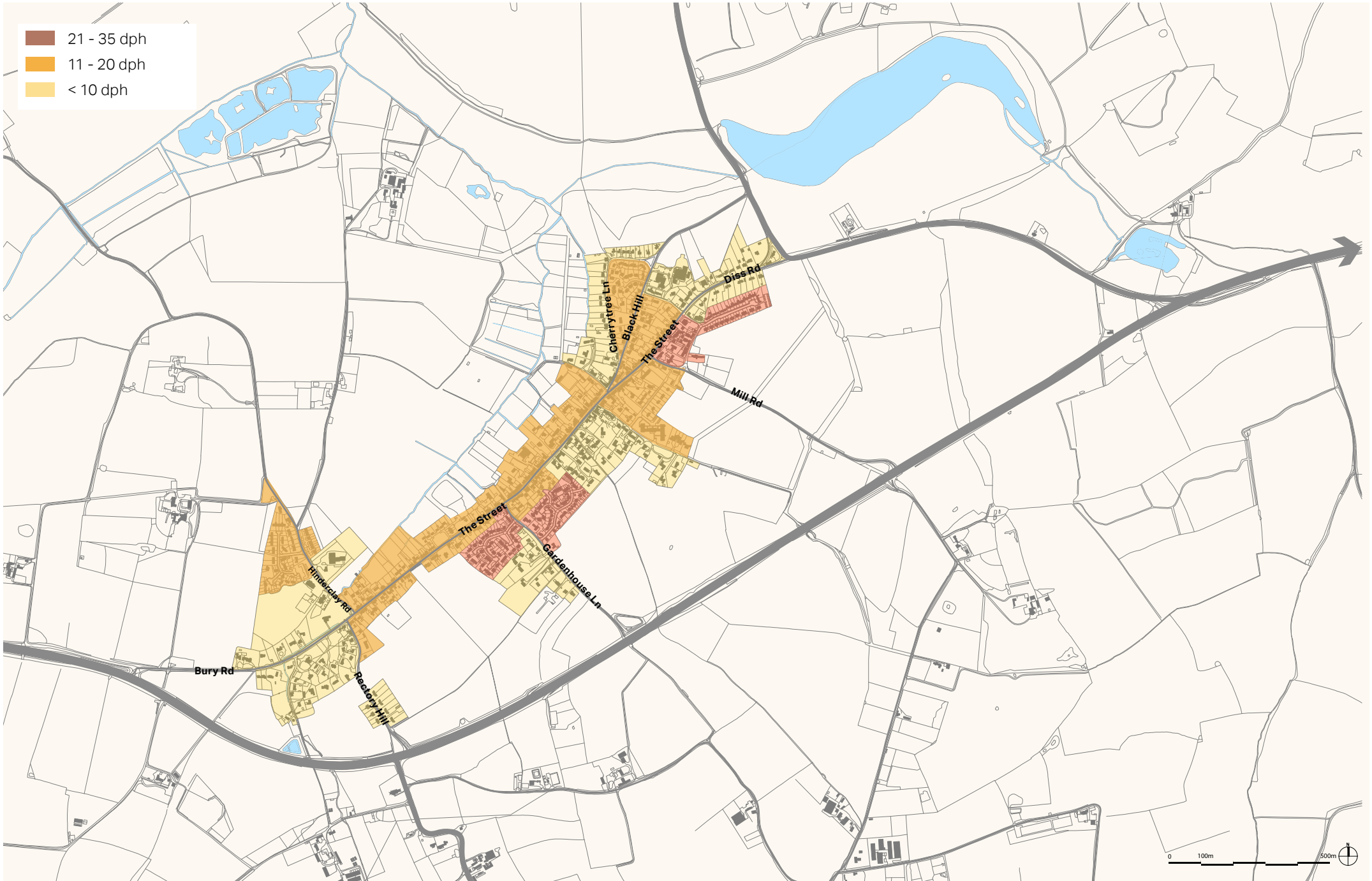


Figure 15: Density

2.6. Building Heights

Building heights vary mainly between one and two storeys, in Botesdale and Rickinghall, with a few isolated examples of three storey buildings.

Typically, the roofline is either pitched or hipped with most buildings having chimneys. However, other roof types are also present in the village at a lower frequency, such as crossed hipped and dormer.



Figure 16: Local examples of building heights

2.7. Car Parking

There are different approaches to car parking within the villages. A characteristic of the village is garage parking either on the plot or adjacent to the plot and shared with other properties. Other parking modes include parking in the front garden, parking to the side of the house and also parking on the street, the latter proving increasingly problematic as car numbers increase.



Figure 18: Garage and parking in the front garden



Figure 19: Parking on the street



Figure 20: Garages on plot



Figure 17: Garage parking on adjacent plot shared with other properties

2.8. Proposed development

This section identifies the figure ground plan of Botesdale and Rickinghall and the new development boundaries of both sites with planning permission and those awaiting a decision. The figure ground plan shows a linear spine of development along Bury Road/The Street with clear connections to secondary and tertiary roads leading from it.

The proposed developments with outline or full planning permissions granted are primarily located along the secondary roads to the southern side of the village and along The Street, as follows:

1. 4 detached dwellings at The Limes, The Street, Botesdale
2. 3 dwellings at land adjoining Jubilee House, The Street, Rickinghall
3. 10 dwellings at Garden House Lane, Rickinghall
4. 10 dwellings at Rectory Hill, Rickinghall
5. 5 dwellings at Rectory Hill, Rickinghall

The sites awaiting a decision are:

6. 40 dwellings at land at Back Hills, Botesdale
7. 42 dwellings at the land adjacent Greenacres, Rickinghall
8. 69 dwellings at land south of Diss Road, Botesdale

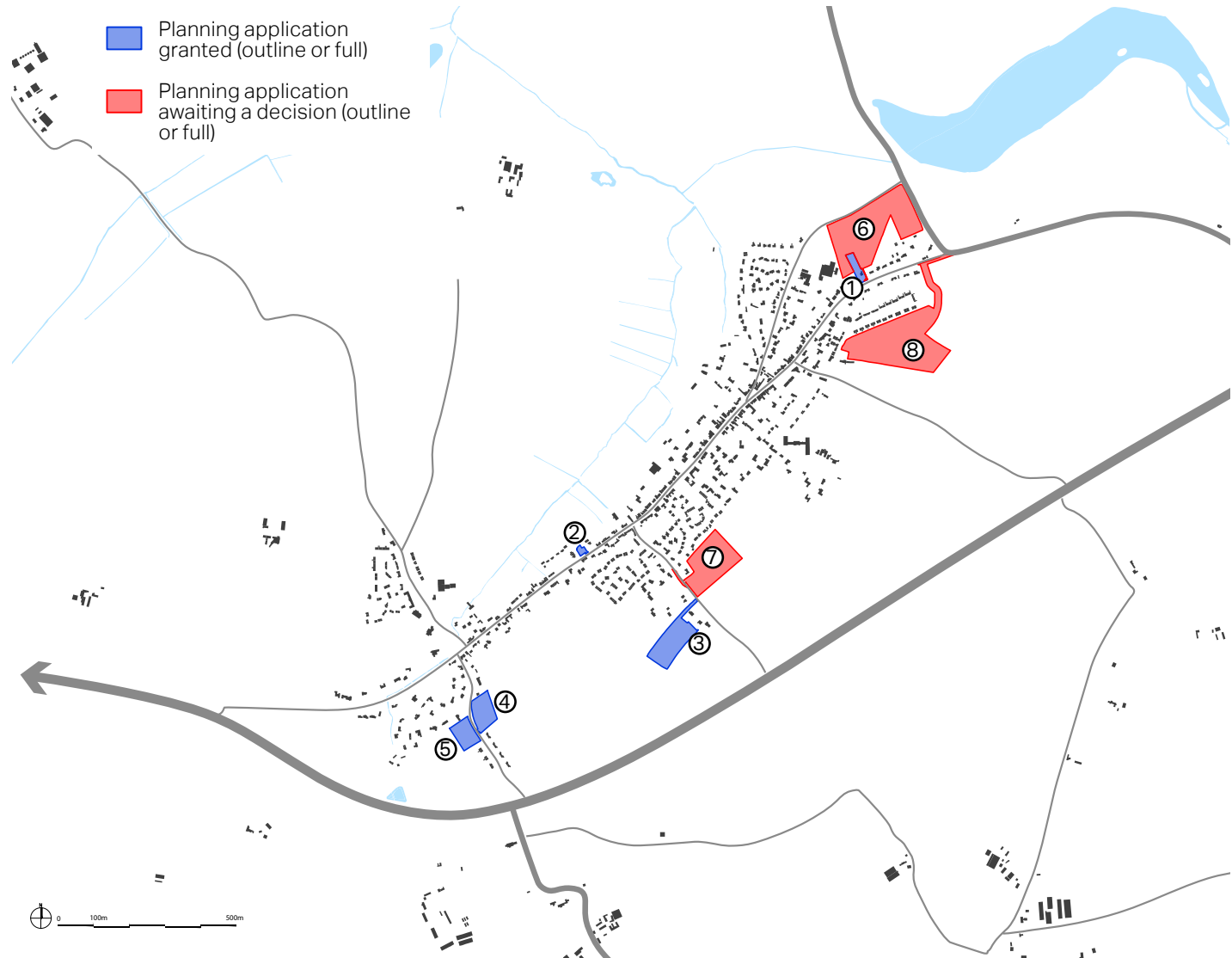


Figure 21: Map showing proposed developments



Design Guidelines

03

3. Design Guidelines

This section is divided into two parts. The first is a set of key elements to consider when assessing a design proposal. These are presented as general questions which BRSG should address to developers (and their design teams) for them to provide clarification and explanation, as necessary. The second part is design guidance setting out the aspirations of BRSG. The guidelines developed in this document focus on residential environments. However, new housing development should not be viewed in isolation. Considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, considering not only the immediate neighbouring buildings but also the townscape and landscape of the wider locality. The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and ecology should all help to determine the character and identity of a development recognising that new building technologies are capable of delivering acceptable built forms and may sometimes be more efficient. It is important with any proposals that full account is taken of the local context and that the new design embodies the “sense of place” and also meets the aspirations of people already living in that area. The aim of this section is to produce design guidelines that help to assess design quality and appropriateness in residential development proposals. Images have been used to reflect good examples of local architecture.

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. The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has 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.

3.1.1. Design Proposals should:

- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
- Reinforce or enhance the established village character of streets, squares and other spaces;
- Maintain the rural character of views and gaps;
- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
- Protect local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long distance views;
- Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
- Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;

- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
- 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 amenity of neighbours.
- Positively integrate energy efficient technologies.

Following this, there are number of questions related to the design guidelines outlined later in the document.

3.1.2. Street Grid and Layout

- Does it favour accessibility and permeability 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?

3.1.3. Local Green Spaces, Rural 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 will this be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?

3.1.4. 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?

3.1.5. 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 pattern of development emanating from the principal route through Botesdale and Rickinghall?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?

3.1.6. 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 patterns and solutions that are typical of Botesdale and Rickinghall?

3.1.7. 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?
- Is the choice of materials, unit size and colour tone appropriate to Botesdale and Rickinghall?

3.1.8. Corner Buildings

- Are the buildings in block corners designed to have windows addressing both sides of the corner?

- Have blank walls been avoided?
- Are landscape and boundary treatments enhancing the corner of a block?

3.1.9. 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 details been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Do the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?

3.1.10. 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?

3.1.11. Architectural Details and

Contemporary 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.
- If a proposal is an extension, is it subsidiary to the existing property so as not to compromise its character?
- 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 quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?

3.1.12. Sustainability, Eco Design, waste and services

- What effect 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 the lighting scheme been designed to avoid light pollution?
- 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

3.2.1. Street Layout

- Streets must meet the technical requirements as well as be considered as a 'space' to be used by all, not just vehicles. The design of new development should include streets that incorporate needs of pedestrian, cyclists and public transport users.
- Streets must be identified by a hierarchy of movements (primary, secondary and tertiary roads) and have a specific character linked to the scale of the development .
- Streets must tend to be linear with gentle meandering - providing interest and evolving views.
- Routes should provide a permeable and connected pattern, creating different travel options, particularly for pedestrians. A number of post-1950s developments in Botesdale and Rickinghall villages do not have convenient pedestrian and cycle linkages and present cul-de-sacs which specifically prevent permeability. If culs-de-sacs are proposed, it is recommend that they should be relatively short and include connection for onward pedestrian links.
- It is suggested that new developments provide attractive and direct walking and cycling connections to the existing neighbourhood and local facilities.
- Walking and cycling within both of the villages is to be encouraged by wayfinding elements, such as built or natural elements that are distinctive and memorable in their nature. These elements, unique in their aspect, define clear routes and help people to orientate themselves.

- Streets to be defined by the character of the buildings around them and access to properties should be from the street, wherever possible.
- The distribution of land uses in new developments must consider the existing rural character of the village and take into account the degree of isolation and levels of tranquillity.
- Pedestrian paths to be included in new developments and be integrated with the existing pedestrian routes and give access to the walking routes in the countryside.



Figure 23: View of The Street at the entrance of Rickinghall



Figure 22: Street layout of southern part of Rickinghall



Figure 24: The Street showing a gentle meander and a change of levels

3.2.2. Open Spaces & Green Spaces

- Development adjoining public open spaces should enhance the character of the space by arranging main building façades and entrances facing onto them. This helps create a sense of place, improves natural surveillance and fosters social interaction.
- Loss of trees or woodland, as a result of development, must be replaced with new woodland planting that meets or exceeds the spatial extent and quality of the woodland that has been lost.
- The existing quiet and peaceful atmosphere of Botesdale and Rickinghall should be preserved and new development should allow for long distance views of the countryside.
- Landscape schemes, using native trees and bushes, should be designed and integrated with the open fields. This reinforces the rural character of the village and creates a continuity with the surrounding.
- Ensure that tree and landscape planting have sufficient space to grow and they do not obstruct views. Use green features as focal point in the wider townscape.
- Preserve the rural character of the roads by maintaining grass verges and hedgerows.
- Open spaces should offer a variety of uses related to the surrounding activities and buildings. Where play areas are required, ensure that they are not isolated, locate them within short walking distances of housing and promote natural surveillance with buildings overlooking them.
- Materials used in the public realm shall be selected to complement the character of the building and street, keeping the number and type of materials to a minimum. Selected materials must be locally characteristic, durable and easy to maintain.



Figure 25: Local pocket garden



Figure 26: Market Place in Botesdale. The site of the War Memorial used to be a hub of activity.



Figure 27: Typical layout of buildings that allow for long distance view



Figure 28: Playground in Rickinghall. Photo courtesy of Peter Alfredson

3.2.3. Gateway & Access Features

- Gateway features, such as built elements and high quality landscape features, that reflect the local rural character should be used to highlight access to and 'arrival' at Botesdale and Rickinghall.
- Gateways should act as visual guide and make the place unique and recognisable.
- Proposed building should be designed to respond to view corridors and reinforce existing views.
- Access to new development sites should be improved creating a barrier free environment considering change of levels, openings and boundaries.



Figure 29: Local examples of traditional houses acting as gateways

3.2.4. Pattern & Building Layout

- The existing rural layout must be appreciated and enhanced in designing new developments. Whilst contemporary design is encouraged local heritage and setting must be considered.
- Properties should be clustered in small pockets showing a variety of typology that reflects the existing fabric of the two villages. There should be no use of a repeating type of dwelling along the entirety of the street.
- 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 have rear gardens, as well as a front garden and be sympathetic with surrounding properties.



Figure 30: Local example of traditional rural building layout

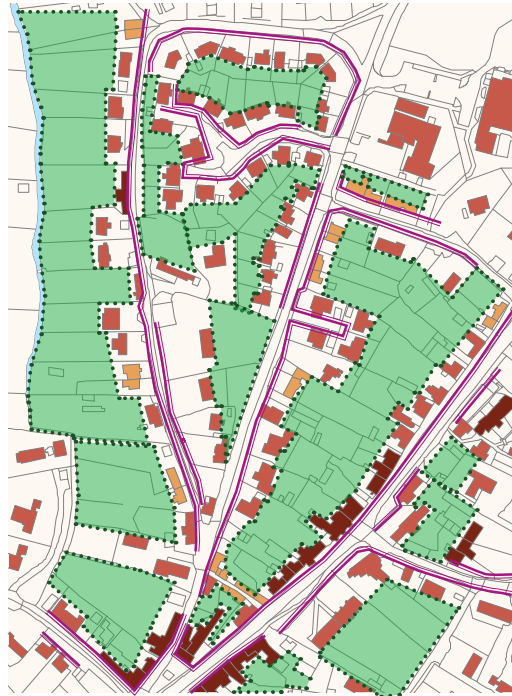


Figure 31: Example of houses typologies and pattern layout in Botesdale

- Terraced Houses
- Semi-detached Houses
- Detached Houses
- Back Gardens
- Front Gardens



Figure 32: Local examples of good boundary treatment and front garden

3.2.5. Building Line & 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.
- 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. For example, they could be low walls made of brick and cobbles, which is typical of Botesdale and Rickingham, hedgerows or iron railings.
- Front gardens or small 'pocket parks' 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. Such containers are to be visible only when required for collection.

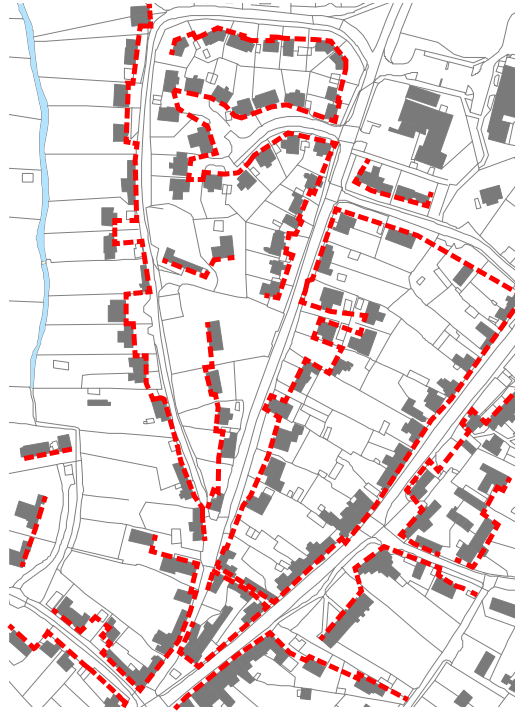


Figure 34: Diagram showing building line in Botesdale



Figure 36: Traditional building line



Figure 33: Local example of hedgerow



Figure 35: Traditional boundary treatment in Suffolk



Figure 37: Image showing contemporary boundary treatment that uses traditional materials

3.2.6. Building Heights & Massing

- Heights of buildings should not generally exceed two-and-a-half storeys and the typical height should be one to two storeys, with some variation within the new developments. The heights and roof forms should allow for glimpses of the surrounding countryside and long distance views where appropriate.
- The existing roofline of adjoining properties should be respected to create a consistent roofline and rhythm along the street. Roof pitches should match existing/adjacent roof pitches (taking into account variation as a result of the materials used).

- The layout of new development should follow the arrangement of adjacent buildings where possible.
- New development should be designed with balanced composition, which does not necessarily mean a symmetrical design.
- The scale, massing and heights of new development should relate to the width of the street or the extent of the open space. A well balanced proportion should be achieved between the verticality of the buildings and the street or open space.



Figure 38: Local example showing rooflines with variety



Figure 39: Residential roofline with variety and interesting change in topography

3.2.7. Corner Buildings

- Corner buildings should have an animated facade with high quality design on both façades of the corner.
- Corner buildings should address placing windows and entrances facing the street and/or public open spaces.
- It is not considered good practice to leave blank façades on one side of a corner building.

High quality landscaping and boundary treatment

Ornamental window

Variety in facade materials

Gabled dormer window

Façades enhancing elements, such as brick chimney, windows and planting



Figure 40: Example of a corner building with positive treatment and animated facade



Figure 41: Local example showing positive treatment for corner building

Active façades with windows and entrances on both sides

Triple casement window

Brick chimney



Figure 42: Local example showing positive traditional corner building

3.2.8. Car Parking Solution

- Parking can be accommodated on plot and on street according to the location, topography and typology of buildings.
- Car parking solutions on plot should be designed to minimise visual impact using landscape and planting elements to keep a sense of enclosure.
- A side property garage should complement the design of the building. It is possible to integrate the garage at the ground floor of the building



Figure 44: Car parking on the street



Figure 43: Local example of positive car park arrangement, treatment and detail



Figure 45: Local example of garage parking on the side of the building

3.2.9. Traditional Architecture

Botesdale and Rickinghall contain examples of vernacular architecture. The materials used are varied and are considered in more detail in section 3.2.11 below. The most common construction materials and traditional building features are:

- Pitched roof with thatching straw; historic pitched roof covered with tiles, both pantiles and plain tiles;
- Brick chimney.
- Pre-19th century timber frame covered in render and painted.
- Red brick façades; some brick buildings are rendered or painted.
- Flint stone used for the Parish churches and the majority of boundary treatments.
- Traditional small bay window
- Traditional use of red bricks with cobbles for boundary treatment and building façades.



Figure 46: Hamblyn House with red brick facade and timber structure



Figure 47: Local example of typical flint stone used in the traditional facade of St Botolph's Church



Figure 48: The Greyhound public house with brick facade and traditional windows



Figure 50: Typical architectural building with thatched roof, flint and red brick facade and ornamental windows



Figure 49: Local example of traditional architecture with porch and ornamental windows



Figure 51: Building presenting local character with thatched roof and gabled dormer windows



Figure 52: Local example of typical architectural detailing with timber structure

3.2.10. Architectural Details

- It is beyond the scope of this report to provide a comprehensive set of architectural detail solutions. Yet it is expected that the future development will make reference to historic building and the traditional materials and details.
- Proposed building facade should indicate the importance of each storey using composition of materials and architectural details.
- It is recommended that contemporary architectural solutions should be considered, but they must be well considered, high-quality designs which use local materials, forms, massing and detailing to reflect the existing built fabric of Botesdale and Rickinghall.

These are examples of building materials and details that contribute to the local vernacular architecture of Botesdale and Rickinghall and could be used to inform future development.

It should be noted that these materials are not prescriptive and there is opportunity for innovative and creative material suggestions in new buildings, restorations and extensions that may complement what already exists. However, when buildings are designed, local heritage of building materials should be taken into consideration.



Figure 53: Typical ornamental porches



Figure 54: Typical door detail



Figure 55: Shed Dormer Window



Figure 57: Skylight



Figure 59: Typical pitched roof



Figure 60: Solar panel on shallow hipped roof



Figure 56: Gabled Dormer Window



Figure 58: Brick chimney on pitched roof



Figure 61: Typical sash windows with masonry details



Figure 62: Casement window details



Figure 63: Typical bay window

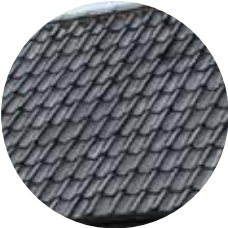


3.2.11. Materials & Colour Palette

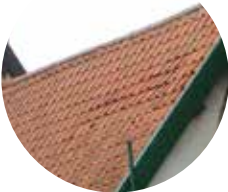
The materials and colour palette used throughout Botesdale and Rickinghall contribute to define the rural character of the area and the local vernacular.

It is essential that the proposed developments are of a high quality and reinforce the local distinctiveness of the area. The palette of materials should be selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment.

Roof Materials



Pantiles



Clay Pantiles



Slate



Tatch

Facade Materials & Colour Palette



Red bricks



Flint cobbles



Timber painted



Red bricks & flint cobbles



Timber structure



Painted bricks



Painted bricks



Painted bricks



Pantone 8360 C



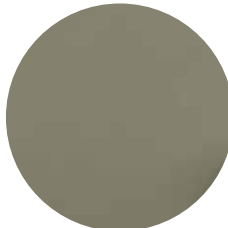
Pantone 8380 C



Pantone 8440 C



Pantone 8381 C



Pantone 8520 C



Pantone 8005 C

3.2.12. Contemporary Architecture

- Contemporary interpretations of local traditional architectural forms should be explored.



Example of contemporary architecture in Birdbrook. Sustainable house constructed to Passivhaus standards. Designed to be self-sufficient with a wind turbine, rainwater collection, reed-beds for sewage treatment and natural ventilation. RIBA East Building of the Year 2011. Photo courtesy of Modece. Source: <http://www.modece.com>



Example of contemporary architecture in West Stow, Bury St Edmunds. The image shows use of traditional features and materials in a contemporary design, such as a red brick chimney, the use of white render and red bricks and timber in the facade. Photo courtesy of Jack Hobhouse. Architects: Project Orange. Source: <http://www.projectorange.com>



**Next Steps and
Recommendation**

04

4. Next Steps and Recommendations

4.1. Next Steps

The recommended next steps for how to use the outcomes of this design options study are to:

- Embed the guidelines in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan;
- Engage with the District Council to develop policies supporting the guidelines; and
- Engage with potential developers/applicants to seek support for ensuring the implementation of the guidelines in upcoming applications.

4.1.1. Embed the guidelines in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan

The objective of this report is to develop a series of design guidelines for development possibilities in Botesdale and Rickinghall. The neighbourhood plan can only include land use policies that guide applications that constitute ‘development’. Where public realm improvements require planning permission the neighbourhood plan can include criteria-based policy and principles that guide future change within the neighbourhood area. The design guidelines can form part of such criteria.

The report can be used as evidence to support the forthcoming neighbourhood plan (and its draft policies) where the analysis highlights relevant issues and opportunities that can be influenced by land use planning interventions.

The focus of this report has primarily been on important local character assets and urban design guidelines to be considered in future development proposals. These suggestions should

be considered alongside other non-design interventions, such as exploring opportunities for supporting or restricting certain types of development/land uses and allocating the key sites identified for development. Any policies put forward must be capable of meeting the basic conditions² (e.g. having regard to national policies and general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan).

Specific proposals could include:

Built environment design guidelines - The neighbourhood plan can include urban design policy where specific local circumstances demand a more nuanced design approach. The plan could transpose many of the urban design guidelines within this document into statutory land use planning policy where the Local Plan or National Planning Policy Framework does not provide a similar or sufficiently detailed steer on design matters.

Land uses - The plan could specify what uses would be preferred in particular locations or set out design-based policies such as a general residential design guidelines, which could provide a hook to a more detailed residential design guide that sits within the plan as an appendix. The appendix could detail the basic principles and criteria that would be expected within the neighbourhood area.

Community use buildings - The neighbourhood plan could potentially use site allocations (or a separate Neighbourhood Development Order) to de-risk and incentivise the delivery of new social infrastructure. The plan may also detail what use classes would be acceptable and the most conducive to local needs locally e.g. community café, sports facilities, meeting/leisure spaces etc. Flexibility and a mixed use approach is likely

to be required but this will need to be considered in the context of complementary Local Plan policies that address strategic matters such as the retail hierarchy and treatment of existing commercial floorspace.

Open spaces/local green space designations policy - This document provides an indication of how green space and open space might be arranged to provide benefit for new development and the wider village. Existing green space should also be considered for the Local Green Space Designation where they are locally valued and can be incorporated into future redevelopment of the area thus ensuring sufficient green infrastructure is retained.

4.1.2. Engage with the Council to develop policies supporting the proposals

The inputs from the District Council’s policy and development management specialists would be invaluable in advance of formal consultation and submission. The Steering Group should consider how our recommendations can be transposed into policy through discussions with the District Council and use of the best practice guidance from Locality to prepare draft policies for consultation. Locality’s ‘Writing Planning Policies’³ guidance sets guidance on how different planning policies are designed to achieve different things. The guide describes the three most common policies as:

Generic - a simple policy which applies universally to development across the entire neighbourhood area;

Criteria based - a policy with a series of requirements that should be met by development proposals. These can be set out as separate bullet points; and

Site specific - this is where a policy applies to particular areas of land. One of the most powerful tools for a neighbourhood plan is to allocate land for a particular type of development. As well as allocating land you can use your plan to set out the principles which need to be followed in developing a particular site. This might include specifying what needs to be covered in a design brief to accompany any planning application. If you have site specific policies then you need to include a clear map showing the location and boundaries.

Site specific allocations include associated policy related to land uses, quantum of development, configuration and design. The Steering Group should request a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening opinion from the District Council as soon as the objectives and nature of the plan are firmed up. SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental effects of a plan before it is made. Masterplanning and allocating sites will typically trigger a requirement for SEA. An SEA will provide objective information for local residents and businesses on the positive and negative environmental effects of your plan and wider policy proposals.

In addition, the Steering Group should check with the Local Planning Authority that their emerging preferred options are planning matters (i.e. suitable for inclusion as land use planning policy). Those that are not can be considered as community projects or neighbourhood infrastructure to be included within a delivery and implementation section of the neighbourhood plan (see Section 5 of the Writing Planning Policies guidance).

4.1.3. Engage with developers to seek support for the proposals

In order for the neighbourhood plan to be effective, any design and character-focused policies will require close liaison and co-operation with the Local Authority, landowners, and developers. Co-operation between and among these bodies can be used initially to ensure the proposed policies and strategy are robust and future proofed. At a later date, these discussions will help refine proposals leading to future planning applications.

Consulting with these key stakeholders in advance of formal consultation will help to establish buy-in to the broad objectives.

Footnotes.

1. Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
2. Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 065 Reference ID: 41-065-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014). Accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#basic-conditions-for-neighbourhood-plan-to-referendum>.
3. Writing planning policies: A guide to writing planning policies which will address the issues that matter to your neighbourhood plan (Locality, 2014) Accessed at: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/write-planning-policies-neighbourhood-plan/>

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Contact**Mark Hughes**

Technical Director

T +44 (0)20 7798 5987

M +44(0)78 2512 2759

E mark.hughes@aecom.com