

Hitcham

Design Guidelines and Codes

Final Report
January 2025

Quality information

Prepared by

Giuseppe Verdone
Principal Urban Designer

Checked by

Sunayana Ramanand
Graduate Planner

Approved by

Ben Castell
Director

Jack Wilton-Cooley
Graduate Planner

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6	29.01.2025	Final Report following reg 14 comments	Jack Wilton-Cooley	Urban Planner

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Introduction

01

HILL HOUSE

1. Introduction

Through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Hitcham Parish Council in support of the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan. The support is intended to provide design guidance and codes based on the character and local qualities of the parish to help ensure future development, particularly housing, is consistent with Hitcham’s existing character.

1.1 About this document

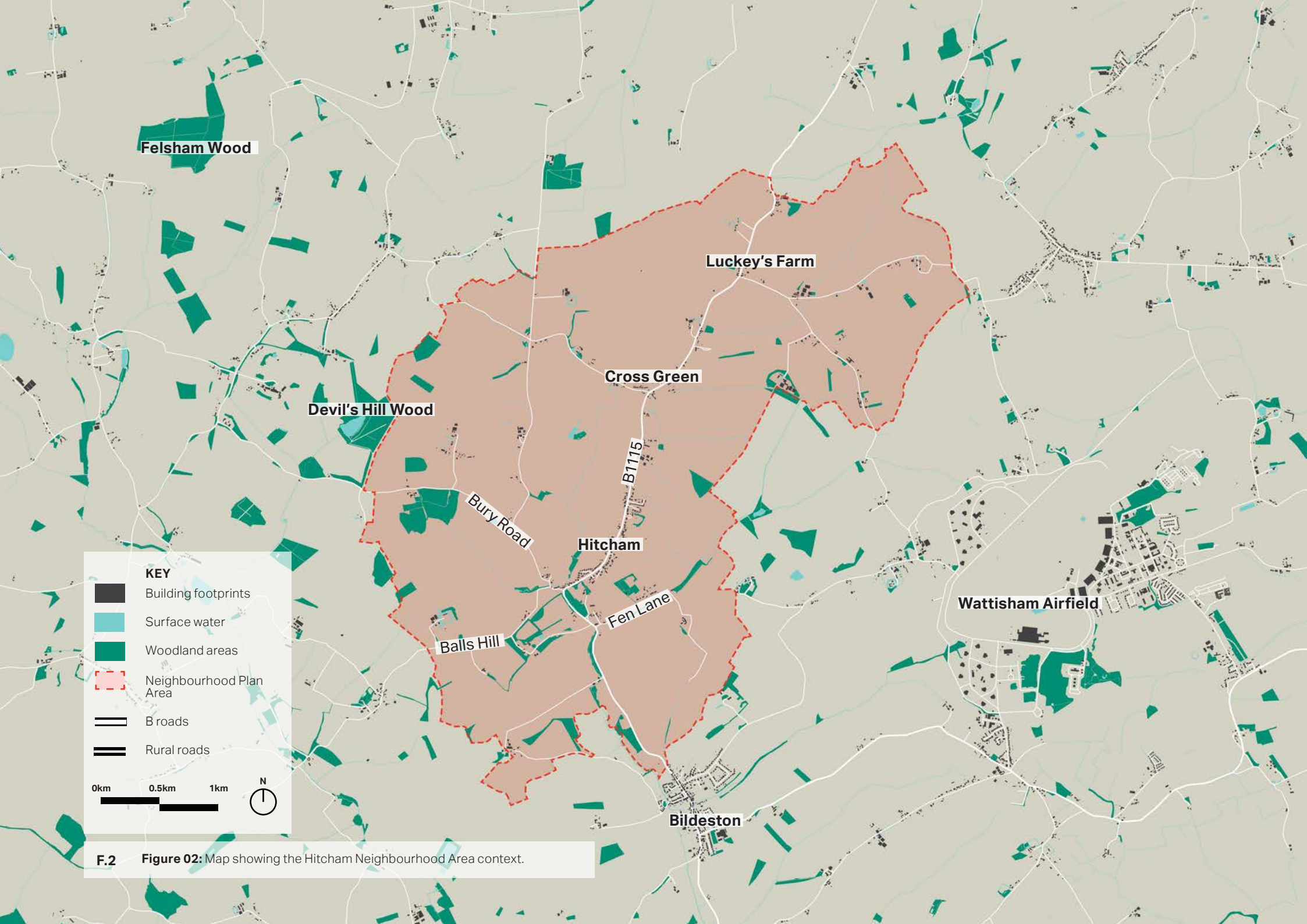
Design Codes are written in order to meet a key development and design objective of the Neighbourhood Plan, one of five objectives alongside themes on environment and landscape, access and parking, business and employment, and community infrastructure.

The Design Code Report does this by describing the existing character of Hitcham and setting out the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group’s analysis of geographical sub-areas within the parish. Secondly, the Design Code sets out codes and guidance for the whole of the parish. Codes are to be understood as specific requirements for new development proposals while guidance refers to general advice.



F.1

Figure 01: Steps undertaken to produce this document



KEY

- Building footprints
- Surface water
- Woodland areas
- Neighbourhood Plan Area
- B roads
- Rural roads

0km 0.5km 1km

N

F.2 Figure 02: Map showing the Hitcham Neighbourhood Area context.

1.2 Overview of Hitcham

Hitcham Parish is in Suffolk, within the district of Babergh. The village is located between Bury St. Edmunds to the Northwest (approx. 13 miles), and Ipswich to the Southeast (approx. 15 miles).

The current settlement has evolved from the early Anglo-Saxon period. The name 'Hitcham' was first recorded in AD992 and in the Domesday Book of 1086. Hitcham Hall, Wetherden Hall, and Loose Hall are prominent farms and homesteads which date from 13C, which led to the creation of scattered hamlets across the parish at Bird Street, Cross Green, Cooks Green, Water Run. The parish church in its current form, All Saints Church, dates from 14C.

The nearest railway station is at Stowmarket (7.3 miles northeast) on the Great Eastern Main Line, with trains between London Liverpool Street, Ipswich and Norwich, as well as Cambridge and Peterborough. The village is also served by few private bus companies offering weekday connections to Ipswich, Stowmarket and Bury St

Edmunds, but there are no services on Sundays or any evenings.

The B1115 north to south road is the main highway through Hitcham and has a 30mph speed restriction on most of its length.

There are a number of local facilities and services in the Parish, including the Village Hall, the Hitcham Parish Church, as well as a combined Post Office and village shop.



Figure 03: Linear development on the B1115.



Figure 04: All Saints Church. © Copyright Adrian S Pye.



Figure 05: Gravel laneway to the rear of The Causeway Estate.

1.3 Signpost to other documents

National and local policy documents can provide valuable guidance on bringing about good design and the benefits accompanying it. Some are there to ensure adequate planning regulations are in place to ensure development is both fit for purpose and able to build sustainable, thriving communities. Other documents are more technical and offer specific design guidance which can inform Design Codes and masterplanning activities.

Applicants should refer to these key documents when planning future development in the Hitcham Neighbourhood Area. The following documents have informed the design guidance within this report.

NATIONAL LEVEL

(2020) Building for a Healthy Life

Homes England

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

(2007) Manual for Streets

Department for Transport

Development is expected to respond positively to the Manual for Streets, the Government's guidance on how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets. It promotes streets and wider development that avoid car dominated layouts and promote active travel.

(2021) National Design Guide

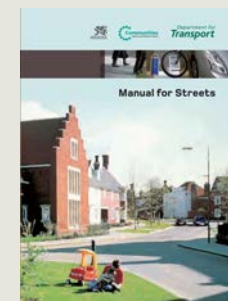
DLUHC

The National Design Guide (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, DLUHC 2021) illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

(2021) National Planning Policy Framework

DLUHC

Development needs to consider national level planning policy guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). In particular, NPPF Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places stresses the creation of high-quality buildings and places.



(2022) Suffolk Streets Design Guide

Suffolk County Council

The purpose of this guide is to assist the delivery of well-designed places in line with the National Design Guide as well as the National Model Design Code, and as part of the Suffolk Design initiative, enabling a positive contribution to the spaces and places of Suffolk.

This document focuses on providing design guidance for streets, particularly for new residential developments, but also to inform works within existing streets where constraints are greater. In addition it can also act as a reference for commercial developments and urban regeneration schemes.



(2014) Rural development & Core Strategy Policy CS11 Supplementary Planning Document

Babergh District Council

Provides guidance on the interpretation and application of Policy CS11 of the Babergh Core Strategy (adopted on 25th February 2014). The SPD was adopted on 8th August 2014 and has the status of a material consideration when planning applications are determined. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy sets out a new and flexible approach to housing provision in rural areas. It provides for proposals for development of Core Villages and Hinterland villages to be approved together with sites elsewhere where they satisfactorily address matters set out in the policy and score positively against criteria set out in Policy CS15.



(2006) Babergh Local Plan 2011-2031

Babergh District Council

The Core Strategy & Policies provides a high-level, strategic plan for Babergh for 20 years from 2011-2031. The policies are intended to be broad and general, overarching policies outlining the strategy for growth and steering growth to sustainable locations.

(2025) EMERGING Joint Local Plan

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council

A new Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out the revised timetable for the production of the JLP, was approved by Babergh District Council on 25 October 2022 and Mid Suffolk District Council on 27 October 2022. The LDS outlines a Part 1 and a Part 2 Joint Local Plan, as well as introducing nine Supplementary Planning Documents. An updated programme for revisions to the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedules is also set out.

1.4 How to use this document

The Design Codes will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development within Hitcham. They will be used in different ways by various actors in the planning and development process.

What follows is a list of actors and how they will use the design guidelines:

Actors	How they will use the design guidelines
Applicants, developers, & landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
Babergh District Council, Suffolk County Council (when consulted)	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The Design Guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Hitcham Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are complied with.
Local Hitcham organisations	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

1.5 Engagement

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan development, an initial community drop-in consultation event followed by a household survey were carried out by the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The results have been used to inform this Design Code report.

The following is a summary of the key topics as identified by the Hitcham Steering Group:

Key results

- The village currently follows a linear pattern of development. It is recognised that this may change in the future.
- Protect Hitcham's variety of architectural styles.
- Suffolk vernacular details such as vibrant colours and architectural features are important to Hitcham's identity.
- Taller development should be discouraged.
- Adaptable lifetime homes are needed.
- Landscape views and visual amenity should be protected.
- Green networks should be enhanced and green edges protected.
- Rural and agricultural environment should be protected.



Geographical area
descriptions

02

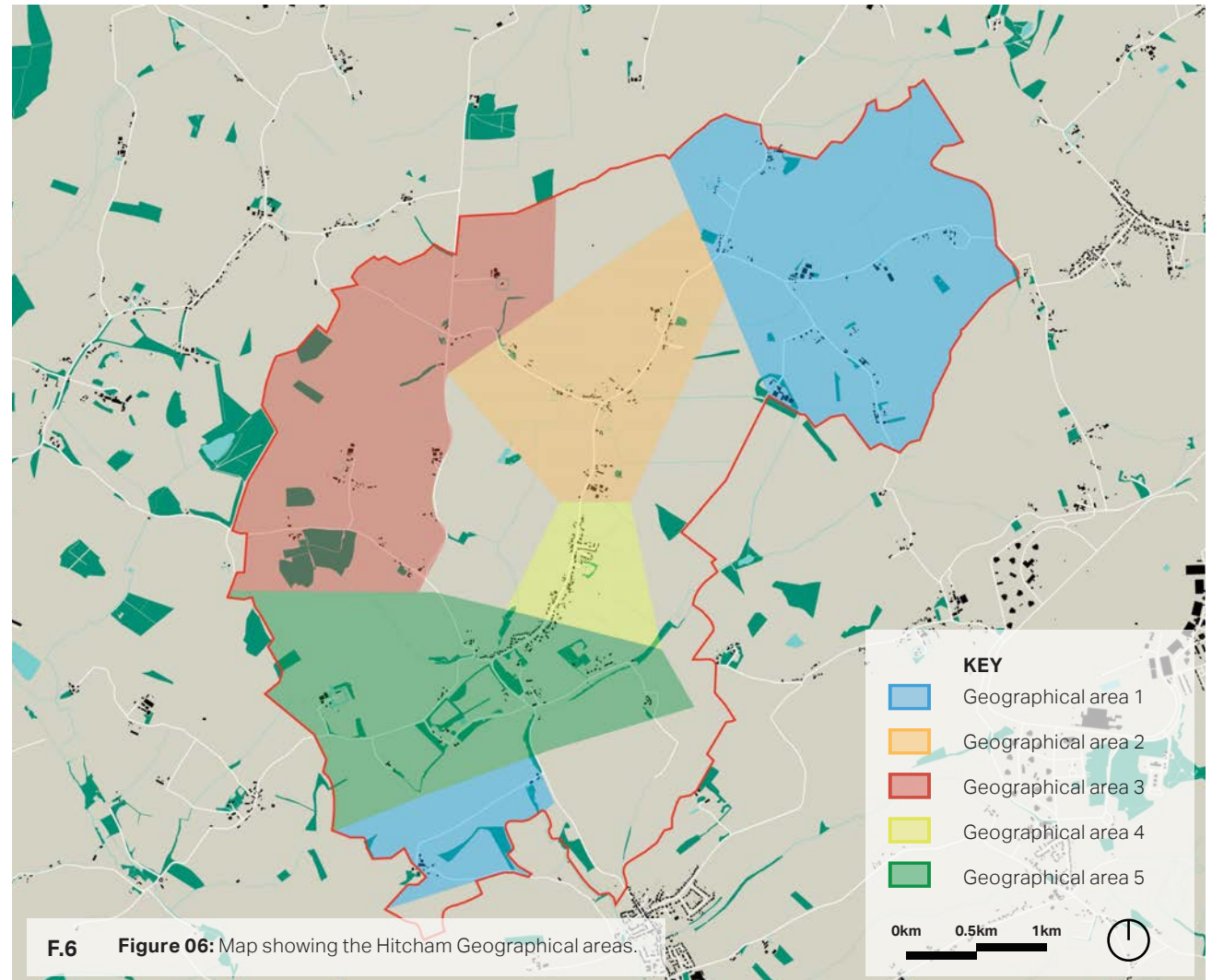
THE BEAST
COTTAGE

2. Geographical area descriptions

The following section outlines an analysis of five geographical areas provided by members of the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for description purposes.

2.1 Overview

The following analysis is intended to set out a high level description of the overall parish area by dividing it into sections and providing individual descriptions of each. This analysis aims to identify the positive characteristics and common features across each area and acts as the basis for the Design Codes which follow in chapter 2.





2.2 Geographical area 1

Introduction

The area is split between two locations to the northeast and southwest of the parish boundary. The B1115 runs north-south connecting both locations which are separated by the village centre.

Use and layout

The area has a very low population density, made up primarily of residential and agricultural uses with natural landscapes of woodland, meadows, and fallow grassland.

Dwellings tend to be generously spaced with large setbacks from the road, sometimes positioned on long driveways. There is a large amount of historic and contemporary agricultural buildings, some of which have been converted to residential use.

Roads and streets

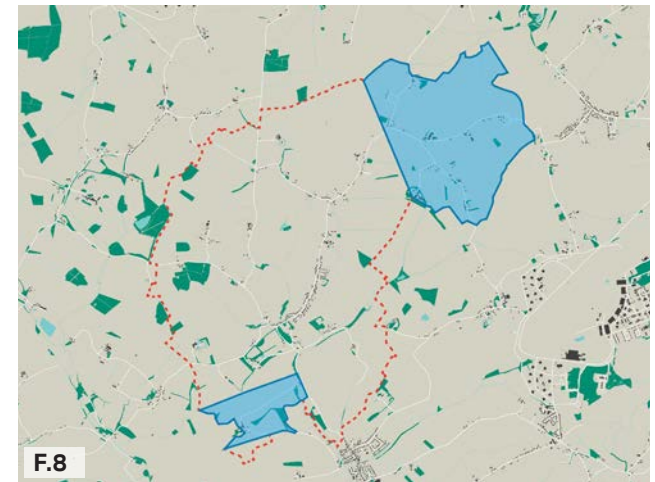
Consisting mostly of single lane rural roads, there are sporadic passing spaces for vehicles located at the entrances to various properties.

There are generally no footpaths in the area apart from field footpaths linking back to the village near to Loose Hall. There are Public Rights of Way in the northern portion of the area by Loose Hall.

Typography

The landscape is gently undulating agricultural land with a gradient rising eastward toward Battisford.

Some properties are on elevated plots, Mill Hill Cottage is fronted by a steep bank and Chapel Farm sits elevated above the B1115. All properties have some element of planting, mainly shrubs and hedges.



F.8

Figure 08: Geographical area 1 outline map.



F.7

Figure 07: Grade II listed Wheelwrights Cottage.



Buildings and landmarks

There are numerous significant heritage buildings in the area, listed and non-listed.

Many dwellings are detached historic farmhouses from 17C or 18C, e.g., Mill Hill Farmhouse, and Chapel Farm House which is Grade II listed. These buildings are of timber frame construction with render or brick finishes, sometimes with flint detailing on facades. Buildings have tiled or pantiled roofs in grey or red, sometimes with silver grey thatch. Clay lump construction is also evident as well as slate roof tiles. Dwellings commonly have timber windows and doors, with newer buildings more often having UPVC fenestration¹.

Detached properties are most common but semi-detached cottages are also evident. Barn conversions and agricultural outbuildings are also common across the area, often with timber boarding.

¹ Fenestration refers to the openings in a building such as windows and doors.

Views

Primary views in the area are outward views toward the surrounding countryside. Views of fields and farmland are a prominent feature.



Figure 09: Entrance to Loose Hall Drive.



Figure 10: Riverside Farm.



2.3 Geographical area 2

Introduction

The area surrounding the B1115 running from Stowmarket to Hadleigh Road. Including the recognised hamlet at the junction with Brettenham Road.

Use and layout

Made up of varied residential dwellings as well as agricultural uses such as free range chicken farming and arable farming at Ennals Farm. Some employment uses facilitated by individuals working from home and by The Ranch Park residential park home.

Dwellings tend to be located directly off the B1115 or Brettenham Road with small setbacks.

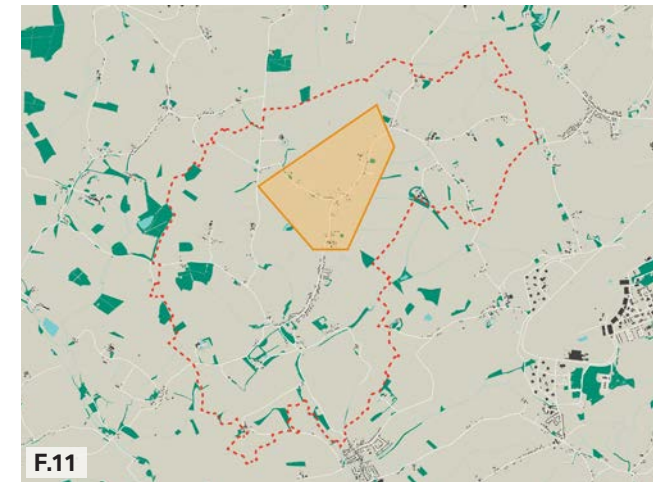
Roads and streets

There is a footpath on the B1115 stretching from Balls Hill to Causeway Estate. There are several Public Rights of Way running through the area to the north, east, and west.

A private single track road runs within The Ranch complex. There are grass verges and off-road parking found to the front of former council dwellings north of Brettenham Road.

Typography

The area consists of gently undulating countryside. Most properties benefit from rural views to their rear. Mature trees and hedgerows support the area's rural nature.



F.11
Figure 11: Geographical area 2 outline map.



F.12
Figure 12: Traditional cartlodge on Water Run.



Buildings and landmarks

There is a mix of dwelling types across the area, most are detached, with two terraces of 16C and 17C listed timber framed thatched cottages. All dwellings are two storey or less. The six ex-council houses north of Brettenham Road are some of the only semi-detached dwellings in the area.

Plains Farm House is Victorian brick with Tudor features under a peg tile roof. The surrounding farm buildings are a mix of traditional black timber clad together with modern wide span agricultural buildings.

Ennals Farm is a listed moated timber framed house from 16C with a Dutch barn and two weatherboard outbuildings.

The properties from Cross Green to Causeway Farm House are all timber framed under thatched roofs with modern extensions in timber cladding under peg or pantile roofs.

Tudor House is a classic black and white Tudor dwelling under thatch.

Views

The view of the telecoms steel lattice tower is notable, as well as the general views outwards over the surrounding agricultural landscape.



Figure 13: Ennals Farm.



Figure 14: Ex-council dwellings.



2.4 Geographical area 3

Introduction

Area to the west of the village core, stretching from Home Wood northwards to Stanstead Hall and encompassing Cook's Green. It is bordered by Dale Road on the east and Devil's Hill Wood to the West.

Use and layout

Uses range from agricultural and employment use, with several operational farms including Dale Farm and craft workshops hosted at Peppertree Farm. Leisure and hospitality uses at multiple locations, with holiday rentals at Willow Cottage and Holmwood Cottage. Some properties are let on Airbnb.

Residential use across the area as well as a functional reservoir. Several fields are used for equestrian activities, and the Home Wood is a mature wooded reserve. Dwellings tend to be widely spaced with substantial gardens and on-plot parking. Properties often have multiple outbuildings.

Roads and streets

There is a footpath which leads from Dale Farm to the village, otherwise the area has no pedestrian or cycling routes. There is a Public Right of Way on part of Ennals Farm and Lavender Cottage, as well as through the centre of the area by Blox Hall.

Carriageways are generally narrow and winding with poor visibility in parts.

Typography

The western part of the area is predominantly flat landscape sitting at 90-93 metres above sea level. This makes for extensive views and strong winds. To the east of this flat landscape is a shallow valley where Dale Farm sits.

The area is well-landscaped with prominent mature shrubs and trees.

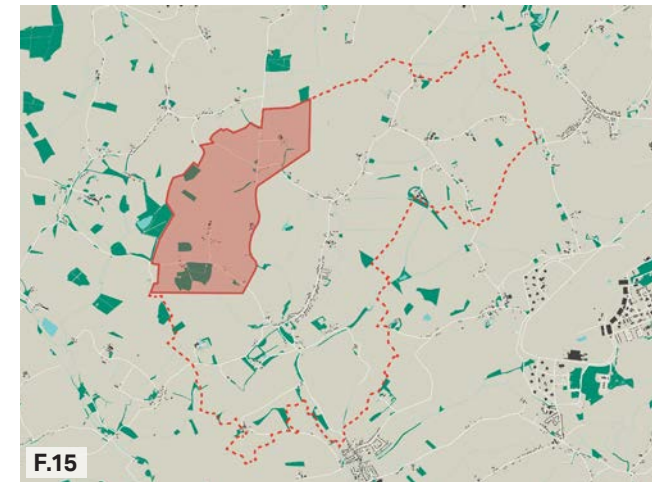


Figure 15: Geographical area 3 outline map.



Figure 16: Thatched house on Cook's Green © Adrian S Pye.



Buildings and landmarks

The area is mixed with bungalows, dormer bungalows, and two storey dwellings. There are several noteworthy historic buildings in the area.

Dale House is a Grade II listed traditional farm house with a timber frame, thatched roof and a render finish. Dale Cottage is a timber framed summer house built in 20C with UPVC fenestration.

Stanstead Hall is of brick construction under a tiled roof with timber windows.

The majority of properties are detached with pitched roofs.

Views

The elevated nature of the landscape facilitates near panoramic views across the surrounding landscape. Many homes have rear views towards open countryside. There is also the view of Home Wood to the south of the area.



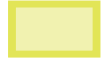
Figure 17: Home Wood © Michael Garlick.



Figure 18: Dale Farm © Keith Evans.



Figure 19: Hares Road © J Thomas.



2.5 Geographical area 4

Introduction

The northern area of the village centre, encompassing some of the village civic core. This area is situated solely along The Causeway/ B1115 where it runs north-south connecting Cross Green to Hitcham Parish Church.

Use and layout

The area is mostly residential, surrounded by agricultural land. There are community uses such as the village hall, and the Bethel Free Church as well as several small businesses.

Many dwellings have deep gardens with on plot parking. Some dwellings have short setbacks from the road and utilise on-street parking. The area is mostly linear in pattern, but there are several more contemporary cul-de-sac developments such as Sewells.

Roads and streets

Road widths range from medium to narrow in some cul-de-sacs, preventing on-street parking on both sides. The Causeway is tarmacked with pavements alongside, while Sewells is a narrow gravel roadway with no footpath. The area is generally well served by pedestrian networks connecting various housing developments.

There is a Public Right of Way running east to west through the area.

Typography

Area is relatively flat, landscape falls gently to the west, creating views to open countryside from dwellings along the B1115.



Figure 20: Geographical area 4 outline map.



Figure 21: Linear development at Oxford Meadow.



Buildings and landmarks

The area has a variety of dwelling styles, most are detached and two storeys tall but there are also bungalows on Browns Close and one three storey dwelling in Syers Orchard. The Causeway Estate development has brick facade finishes and was constructed post WWII in the 1950s. The estate has 20 semi-detached homes and three bungalows.

Other contemporary dwellings have a variety of rendered finishes as well as weatherboard. Pantile pitched roofs are common across the area.

Views

Many dwellings have far reaching views across the rolling farmland of the Hitcham Dale to the west, and towards Wattisham to the east.



F.23

Figure 23: Free standing garage and on-plot parking at Barley Lodge,



F.22

Figure 22: Bungalows on Browns Close.



F.24

Figure 24: Salmon rendered dwelling at Sewells.



2.6 Geographical area 5

Introduction

This area includes one house on The Causeway continuing downhill the road becomes The Street (the B1115 towards Bildeston). There are roads running off the B1115 to the left, Fen Lane and right, the remaining part of The Street running into the beginning of Bury Road and to the left, Balls Hill. Church Lane runs from the Church Green to the beginning of Fen Lane. Church Lane is a no through road.

Use and layout

Use is primarily residential with leisure such as holiday accommodation, as well as agriculture.

Along The Causeway and The Street which is on west side plots are small but are divided by footpaths leading to open agricultural land behind the houses. Fen Lane has bungalows on large plots with scrub land on the right hand side of the lane. Brick House Farm on Bury Road has

barn conversions which were formerly part of the farm next door to it. On the eastern side of The Causeway there is a footpath that leads to Hitcham Hall and All Saints Church. Church Lane is a no through road which starts at the graveyard. Balls Hill is a left-hand turning off The Street which extends to Kettlebaston with large plots with fields behind.

Roads and streets

The B1115 runs through the village. Fen Lane/Church Lane to the west and the continuation of The Street running into Bury Road with Balls Hill to the east. On the western side of the B1115, there is a pavement that runs from Walnut Tree Cottage to The White Horse. There is a pavement running from opposite The White Horse to the Church. There are footpaths on both sides of the B1115 with another path running from The Street to Kettlebaston and a further path running from the end of Fen Lane to the back of Causeway Estate.

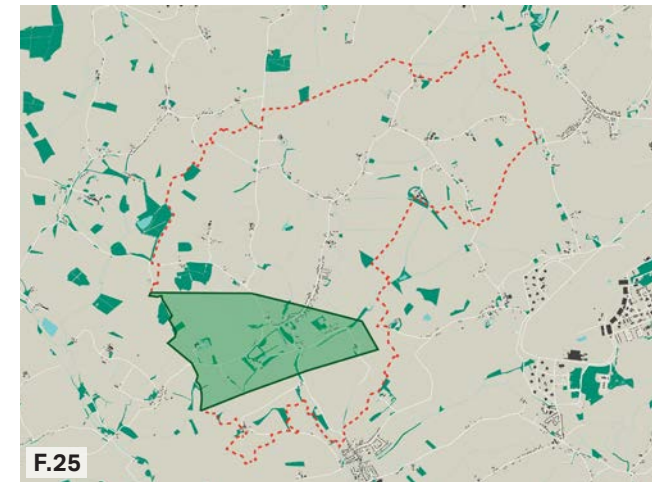


Figure 25: Geographical area 5 outline map.

Typography

The B1115 runs downhill from 200 to 160 feet. On the western side of the B1115 houses back onto farmland as is the case in Bury Road and Balls Hill and The Street. In Fen Lane bungalows face scrub land and farm land.



Buildings and landmarks

Walnut Tree Cottage, on The Causeway, at one time three single storey dwellings dating from 18C, Traditional Suffolk tiled roof, lathe and plaster.

On Bury Road, Brick House Farm is a 17C timber-framed and plastered building erected over the remains of a large 16C red brick building and incorporating parts of it. It is said to have been originally part of a priory house built by Catherine of Aragon. A cross wing at the southeastern end has a jettied upper storey. The southeastern front has a 16C ground storey brick wall with the remains of an octagonal pier at each end and an entrance doorway with small octagonal piers.

Hitcham Hall is an early 19C gault brick building on Church Lane, the rest of the lane continues to the other side of the Church Graveyard to Church Cottage, a 16C timber-framed and plastered building with a tiled roof.

By the side of Church Lane Cottages is a driveway to Friday Lane Cottage, a Grade II listed cottage A 17C-18C timber-framed and plastered building with a thatched roof.

Hedgerows is a Grade II listed, timber-framed and plastered building originally a medieval hall house with floor and fireplaces inserted in the 16C-17C, roof is thatched.

At the end of Fen Lane the road turns right to Fen Farm with two separate dwellings on the first and ground floors in a former granary. Two barns, dated from 17C are Grade II listed as is a cart shed from the mid-19C.

Views

View from Bury Road across farmland to The Dale, from The Street across farmland, and from Balls Hill Road, across farmland.



Figure 26: Hedgerows, Church Lane.



Figure 27: Friday Lane Cottage, Church Lane.



**Codes to promote good
design in Hitcham**

03

3. Codes to promote good design in Hitcham

This section outlines the positive physical, historic and contextual characteristics of Hitcham, along with a set of related codes that align with the characteristics that are to be applied whenever development occurs in the parish.

3.1 Rural character

Hitcham’s rural character is one of its most distinctive and valuable features. The village is sited within an agricultural landscape. In the south of the parish area there is an Environmentally Sensitive Area which stretches to Chelsworth. The open and linear nature of the village affords views outward to the surrounding undulating countryside. The informal feel of the village’s architecture is created by variety in form and setback, as well as generous green verges, low density development, and lush fauna. This enforces the sense of rural informality.

Future developments should seek to reflect this character by adhering to the following codes:

Code	Implementation
RC.01 Regard for context	New developments must display regard for the characteristics of its geographical area as outlined in chapter 2.
RC.01 Informality	New developments should reflect the informal style of the village by providing gentle variety in form and roofline.
RC.02 Boundary treatment	Thresholds should be marked by natural features such as hedgerows, shrubs, and trees. Existing mature hedgerows and trees must be retained where possible. Urban boundaries such as fencing and high walls must be avoided.
RC.03 Outward views	New developments must not be oriented so that they negatively impact on valued views.



Figure 28: Example dwelling with generous setback as well as planted boundary treatment.



Figure 29: View west on the B1115.

3.2 Distinctive local vernacular

Hitcham has a strong sense of the wider Suffolk vernacular architecture. There are a great variety of architectural features and finishes to be found within the village. Brick, coloured render, and some weatherboard facades can be found across the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Many of the historic dwellings range from 17C and 18C, these structures are timber framed, with pantile or thatched roofs, timber casement windows, and render finishes. Dwellings tend to have gable rooflines, often with dormer windows, and brick chimney stacks.

Please see page 27 for an overview of the local palette of materials and features.

Future developments should seek to reflect this character by adhering to the following codes:

Code	Implementation
DV.01 Materials	New developments should seek to utilise and complement the existing outlined material palette across Hitcham.
DV.02 Asymmetrical fenestration	Fenestration in new development should take reference from the asymmetrical treatment of surrounding dwellings.
DV.03 Rooflines	Rooflines in new developments should generally reflect the surrounding roof angles.
DV.04 Architectural variety	New developments should seek to provide architectural variety to the streetscape, and variety in the case of multi-dwelling development.
DV.05 Visual integration	New development should show consideration for visual integration with neighbouring properties.



Figure 30: Grade II listed 17C dwelling with later thatched addition to the rear. The Causeway.



Figure 31: Grade II listed 18C dwelling with L shaped plan, dormer window, and distinctive gable chimney stack.

Fenestration



Solid porch



Casement window



Dormer window

Roof



Thatched roof



Red pantile



Chimney at gable end

Walls



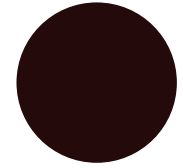
Weatherboard



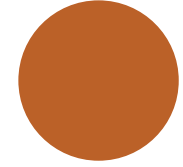
Red brick



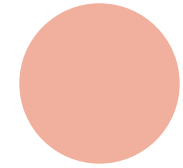
Coloured render



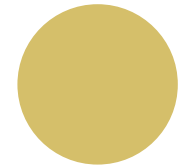
Black



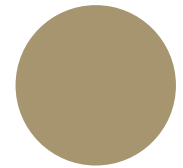
Terracotta



Suffolk pink



Ochre



Grey brown

Colour range

*For descriptive and guidance purposes only.

3.3 Sitting within the landscape

Hitcham is enhanced by its relationship to the surrounding undulating landscape.

Development is generously spaced allowing for outward views to the Suffolk landscape. Deep green verges and lush mature planting help to create a soft transition between the village and the open countryside.

Green and natural features such as woodland, shrubs, and water courses, drainage ditches and farmland ponds serve to reinforce the village’s connection to the landscape.

Future developments should seek to reflect this character by adhering to the following codes:

Code	Implementation
LA.01 Height	New development should not be higher than two storeys without justification.
LA.02 Mature trees & hedges	New developments must retain mature trees and hedgerows.
LA.03 Protect outward rural views	New development must be positioned in a way to retain and enhance valuable sight lines to rural views and should be generously spaced to create views in-between dwellings.
LA.04 Planting	New development should integrate into its surroundings through the use of planting and soft landscaping. Hedges and flower beds may be used at the property edge to mark the private domain.
LA.05 Farmland ponds	New developments should retain farmland ponds where possible.
LA.06 Front gardens	New developments must include provision for planting space in front gardens. Complete hardscapes (paving) must be avoided in new dwellings to prevent urban features.



F.32

Figure 32: Example of hedge as boundary treatment at Oxford Meadow.



F.33

Figure 33: Example of farmland pond in Hitcham.

3.4 Connected layouts

A well-designed and connected network gives people the maximum choice in how to make their journeys. This includes by public transport, walking, cycling and by car.

To support ease of movement within the village core of Hitcham as well as outwards to the surrounding landscape, pleasant routes must be created which facilitate walking and cycling.

Future developments should seek to reflect this character by adhering to the following codes:

Code	Implementation
CL.01 Active travel	New developments which are large enough to create new streets and routes must prioritise active travel by walking and cycling.
CL.02 Direct connections	New developments should seek to provide direct connections to nearby valuable assets such as community buildings, bus stops, or Public Rights of Way.
CL.03 Choice of routes	New routes should create multiple connections and therefore a choice of routes where possible.
CL.04 Barriers	Features such as gated developments, barriers, and high walls or fences should be avoided to prevent separating new housing from the established village.
CL.05 Landscape connections	New routes should include connections outwards into the surrounding landscape.
CL.06 Parking	New developments should provide adequate car parking spaces to prevent on-street parking and facilitate visitor parking, this must not include car garages in place of external parking spaces.



Figure 34: Public footpath at Causeway Estate.



Figure 35: Hitcham Village Hall, a community asset in Hitcham.

3.5 Sensitive infill

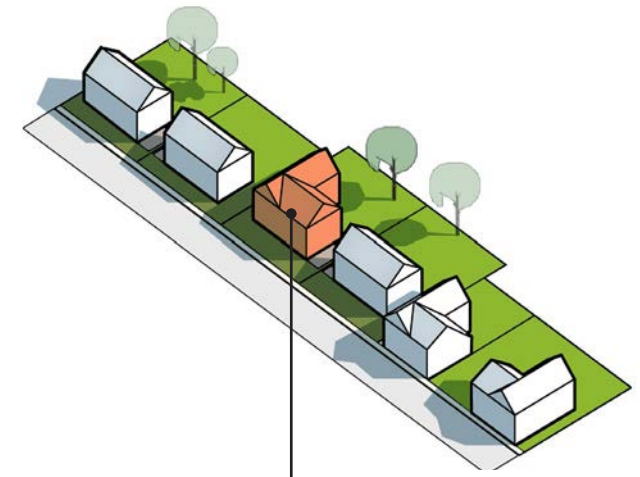
Due to the linear nature of the settlement, as well as the generous spacing of buildings, Hitcham presents numerous opportunities for infill, as well as modification and reuse.

Backland development or plot infill is development on land of an existing dwelling or gap between existing dwellings. There is a risk that this sort of development could avoid respecting its context and adversely impact the historic features of the village.

Future infill development should be controlled by the following codes:

Code	Implementation
SI.01 Consider views	Infill development should carefully consider and seek to limit obstruction of any views.
SI.02 Tandem¹ Development	Tandem development should not disrupt the settlement pattern and must have sufficient off-road parking and garden space for the new development.
SI.03 Scale & height	Infill development should not overwhelm neighbouring dwellings and should be of a similar scale and height to adjoining properties.
SI.05 Setback	Plot infill should respect the existing setback if there is a standard street edge.
SI.06 Street edge	New development should have minor setbacks where appropriate and provide a street addressing facade.

¹ Tandem Development is a form of infill where a new dwelling is placed immediately behind an existing dwelling and is serviced by the same vehicular access.



Example of an infill dwelling which complements the street scene while retaining appropriate gaps and setback.

F.36

Figure 36: Indicative diagram of infill site.

3.6 Sympathetic conversions

Hitcham’s agricultural identity is evident through the many historic farm buildings spread across the parish area. These structures vary in age, with some stretching back to 15C. Some contemporary dwellings can also be seen to mimic this barn conversion style through the use of low rectangular footprints and weather boarded facades.

The design integrity of original structures must be retained in the event of conversion or extension. The previous agricultural use of the building must also remain evident in its form and composition.

Future developments should seek to achieve this by adhering to the following codes:

Code	Implementation
SC.01 Subordinate alterations	External additions should be subordinate in scale to the original or primary form of the building.
SC.02 Materials	Extensions should be designed to complement the existing facade material of the structure.
SC.03 Sympathetic modification	Modifications must retain evidence of a structure’s previous use where possible.
SC.04 On-plot parking	Extensions should retain capacity for on-plot parking as well as viable garden space.



Figure 37: Example of barn conversion in Hitcham.

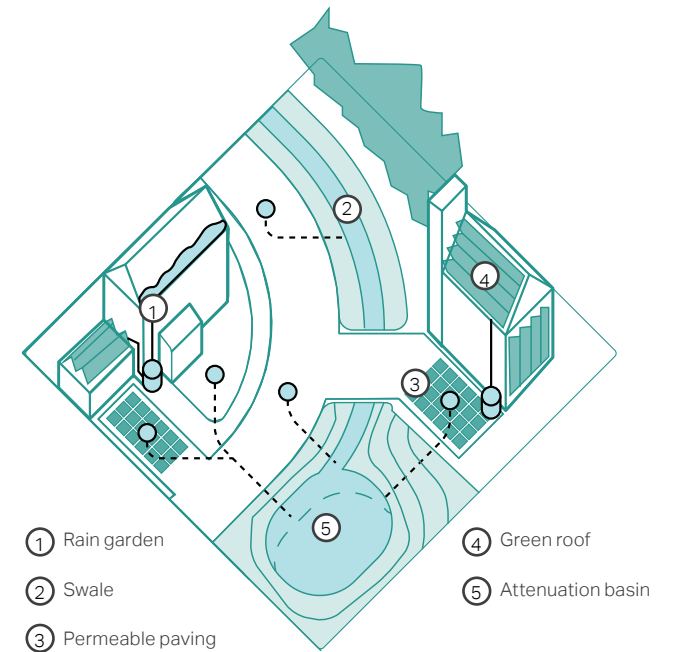
3.7 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

The term SuDS stands for Sustainable Drainage Systems. It covers a range of approaches to managing surface water in a more sustainable way to reduce flood risk and improve water quality whilst improving amenity benefits. Hitcham Parish Council want SuDS to be integral to the design of Green Infrastructure to improve climate change resilience.

SuDS work by reducing the amount and rate at which surface water reaches a waterway or combined sewer system. Usually, the most sustainable option is collecting this water for reuse, for example in a water butt or rainwater harvesting system, as this has the added benefit of reducing pressure on important water sources.

Future developments should seek to achieve this by adhering to the following codes:

Code	Implementation
SU.01 Flood risk and water quality	As standard, SuDS should reduce runoff rates by facilitating attenuation, storing water to slow its flow so that it does not overwhelm watercourses or the sewerage system.
SU.02 Biodiversity	SuDS should be designed sensitively to augment the landscape and improve biodiversity locally. Including suitable vegetation will slow water runoff, clean the water naturally, and therefore increase biodiversity value.
SU.03 Amenity	SuDS should integrate into the development and improve amenity through early consideration in the process, following good design practices.



F.38

Figure 38: Diagram showing the best use of harvesting water systems rain garden, swales, permeable paving, green roofs.



**Checklist for new
development**

04

1

4. Checklist

This section provides a number of questions based on established good practice against which design proposals in Hitcham should be evaluated. Not all questions will apply to every development.

As a first step, there are a number of ideas or principles that should be present in all proposals. These are listed under 'General design guidelines for new development'. Following these ideas and principles, a number of questions are listed for more specific topics.

General design guidelines for new development:

- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
- Reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
- Relate well to 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;
- Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;

1 (continued)

General design guidelines for new development:

- 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;
- Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind; and
- Seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation), before specification of energy efficient building services and finally incorporate renewable energy sources.

2

Local green spaces, views and character:

- 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?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?

3

Building line, access and boundary treatment:

- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?
- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

4

Street grid and layout:

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

5

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?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now, or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over-shading?

6

Building materials and surface treatment:

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

6 (continued)

Building materials & surface treatment:

- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.
- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced? E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

7

Buildings layout and grouping:

- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles, with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night? This is to reduce peak loads. And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?
- 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 streetscape?
- 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?

8

Household extensions:

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

9

Car parking:

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

