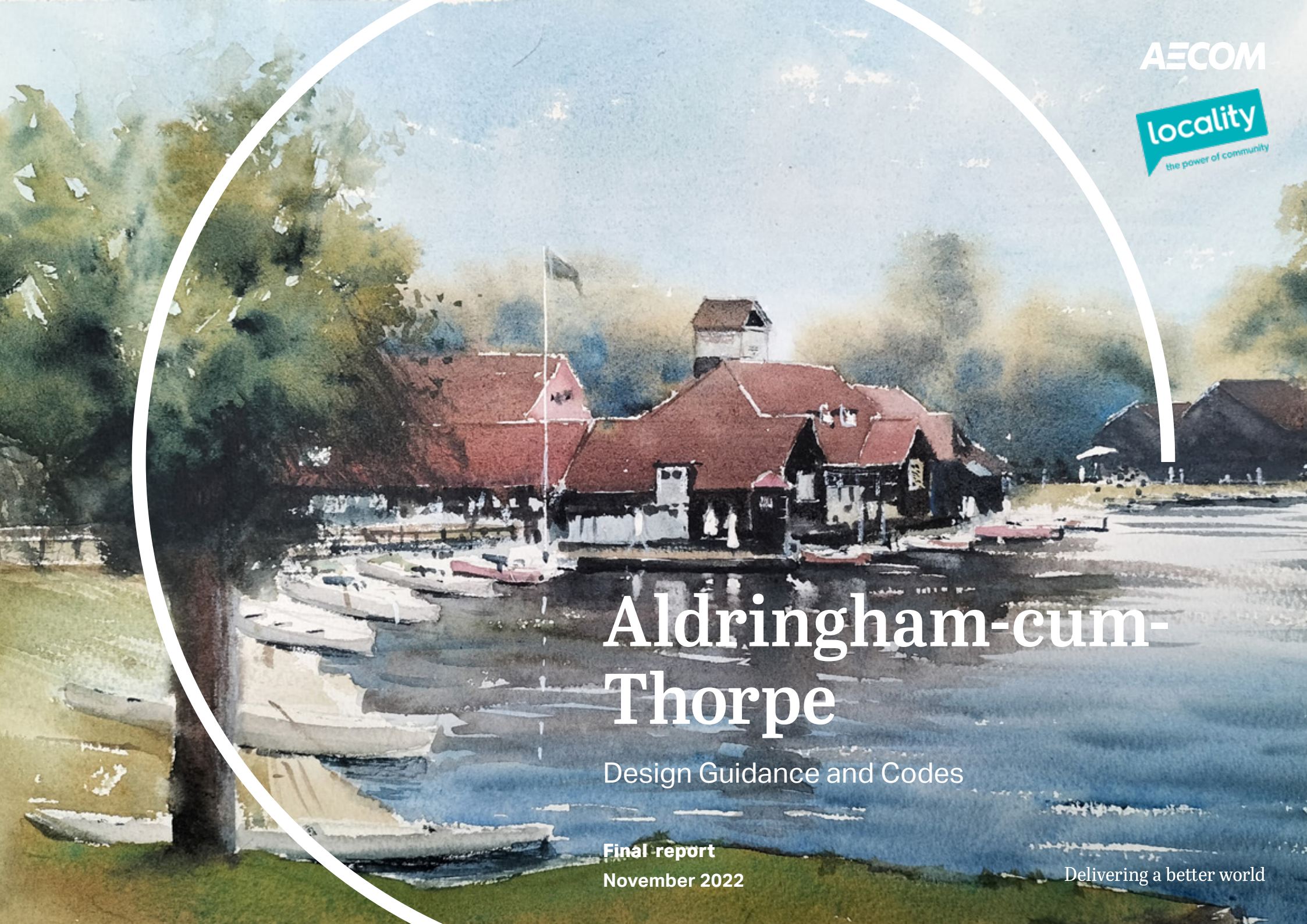

Aldringham-cum-Thorpe

Design Guidance and Codes

Final report
November 2022

Delivering a better world

Quality information

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Revision History

Issue no.	Issue date	Details	Issued by	Position
1	31.10.2022	Draft Report	Angus McNeill Peel	Urban Planner
2	18.11.2022	Draft Review	Eric Atkinson	Chair, Aldringham-cum-Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
3	20.11.2022	Draft Review	Chris King	Design Champion & Specialist Services Manager, East Suffolk Council
4	23.11.2022	Final Report for Locality Review	Angus McNeill Peel	Urban Planner
5	06.12.2022	Locality Review	Annabel Osborne	Neighbourhood Planning Officer, Locality
6	07.12.2022	Final Report	Angus McNeill Peel	Urban Planner

Contents

Introduction

01

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 Aldringham-cum-Thorpe Parish Council. The support is intended to provide design guidance and codes based on the character and local qualities of the area to help influence residential developments.

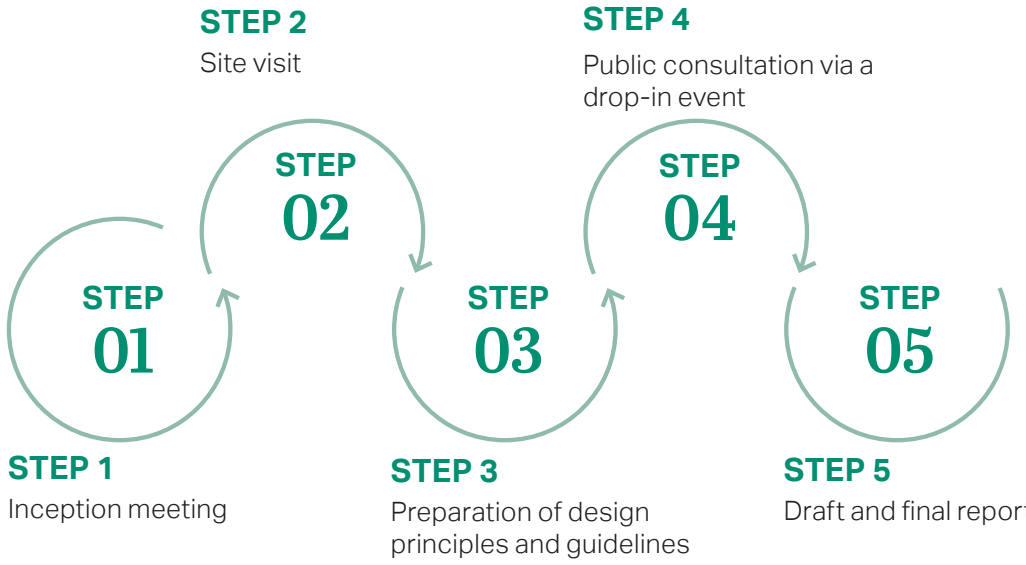
1.1 Objectives

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has sought to develop a set of design codes guiding any future development in the villages.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; 2021, paragraph 127) states that "Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.".

1.2 Process

The following diagram outlines the steps undertaken to produce this document:



1.3 Area of study

The parish of Aldringham-cum-Thorpe encompasses some of the finest architecture and nature on Suffolk's tranquil eastern seaboard. Its two communities, Aldringham and Thorpeness, are substantially different in character, but both have a consistently rural and vernacular Suffolk feel. Aldringham is a historic village located some distance inland from the sea, near to the market town of Leiston. It is a dispersed village with one main cluster but some more isolated dwellings scattered among the surrounding heaths.

Thorpeness lies by the sea and is both a planned garden village and coastal resort dating from the Edwardian and Interwar periods. Thorpeness is a destination for holidaymakers and visitors, attracted by its unique coastal character, resplendent with open spaces, its beach and well preserved early 20th century architecture.

The parish includes some of the most important nature conservation sites in Suffolk, and is around two thirds covered by the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which runs parallel to the North Sea coast. The parish contains the Leiston Aldeburgh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Sandlings Special Protection Area (SPA) and the North Warren RSPB Reserve. There are also heritage designations including the Suffolk Heritage Coast, 3 Scheduled Monuments, numerous listed buildings and a Conservation Area covering most of Thorpeness.

Aldringham is a community benefitting from a village pub, tearooms, close proximity to Knodishall and Leiston and their services, and a church, some distance to the south east, St Andrew's. It also has access to a network of public footpaths into the open countryside. Some dwellings are scattered between Aldringham and Thorpeness. Thorpeness has many services for a village of its size, partly catering to visitors. These include cafes, a pub, hotel, golf club, country club, car parks, a conference centre and boating facilities at The Meare. The beach draws crowds in summer.

Figure 01: The Meare and the landmark House in the Clouds in Thorpeness.

Figure 02: Distinctive houses built by the Ogilvie family in Aldringham close to St Andrew's Church.

F.3 **Figure 03:** Map showing the Aldringham-cum-Thorpe Neighbourhood Area and its environs.

1.4 Planning policy and guidance

As the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 126) notes, "good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".

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 Aldringham-cum-Thorpe. The following documents at a national level have informed the design guidance within this report:

2021 National Model Design Code
DLUHC

This report provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide. This guide should be used as reference for new development.

2020 - Building for a Healthy Life
Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the new (2020) name for Building for Life, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The new name reflects the crucial role that the built environment has in promoting wellbeing.

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.

2021 - National Planning Policy Framework DLUHC

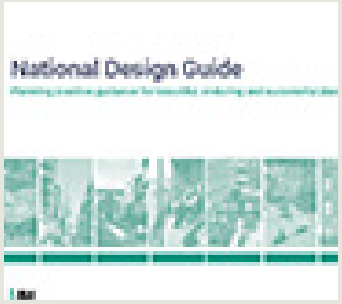
Development needs to consider national level planning policy guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). In particular, NPPF Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places stresses the creation of high-quality buildings and places.

2021 - National Design Guide
DLUHC

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

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.



1.4.1 Local planning policy context

Local planning policy can provide design guidance that is tailored to the context of the development and supported by analysis that is taken directly from the area. Therefore, it is vital local policy is considered when developing in Aldringham-cum-Thorpe.

2022 - East Suffolk Walking and Cycling Strategy
East Suffolk Council

This document aims to create safe, coherent, direct, comfortable and attractive cycling, walking and wheeling environments.

2022 - Suffolk Design: Streets Guide
Suffolk County Council

The latest guidance for streets in Suffolk to support well designed-places.

2014 - Suffolk Guidance for Parking
Suffolk County Council

Guidance to support good parking design.

2020 - East Suffolk Local Plan
East Suffolk Council

This document sets out the long-term vision for the local authority of East Suffolk, which was recently formed by merging the authorities of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney. Thorpeness is designated as a small village and Aldringham is considered part of the countryside. Development in small villages will be delivered both by site allocations in the Local Plan or through Neighbourhood Plans. Thorpeness is partly within a Coastal Change Management Area. The Local Plan supports locally distinctive and high quality design. It affords additional protections to Conservation Areas. Land has been allocated for the development of 40 dwellings in Aldringham with the development fulfilled.

There are also some Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that may be relevant, such as Historic Environment, Housing in Clusters and Sustainable Construction (2022).

Neighbourhood area context analysis

02

2. Neighbourhood area context analysis

This section outlines the broad physical, historic and contextual characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area

2.1 Introduction

The parish of Aldringham-cum-Thorpe encompasses a variety of landscapes, from beaches, to woodlands, to heaths, to marshes. The layout of the parish is strongly defined by the North Sea coast to the east, forming a hard edge, and a marshy estuary running east west in a gently meandering pattern to the south of the main road, the B1353, between Aldringham and Thorpeness. Aldringham is surrounded by some farmland and heaths, on slightly higher land. Thorpeness gently slopes upwards from its lowest point to the south between The Meare and the sea with steadily higher cliffs to the north of the village.

2.2 Settlement pattern

Aside from the two main settlements of Aldringham and Thorpeness, the parish is sparsely populated with scattered farmhouses and some large villas. An exception is a cluster of buildings located around St Andrew's Church, some distance away from Aldringham.

2.2.1 Aldringham

Today, Aldringham is an elongated village with a linear pattern, however, along several routes, rather than one. The village originally clustered around the crossroads at its centre, but has subsequently grown, especially towards the south and south west, and to a lesser extent, the north. Over time, Mill Lane has become one of the main concentrations of properties in the village, and Leiston has grown much further to the south along Aldeburgh Road. Recently, there has been development northwards in Aldringham, on the east side of Aldeburgh Road. Linear development along the west side of Aldeburgh Road stretches south almost as far as Aldeburgh itself.

F.4

Figure 04: Map of Aldringham in 1883, showing the cluster of buildings around the crossroads of Aldringham Lane and Aldeburgh Road.


F.5

Figure 05: The focal point of Aldringham remains the crossroads, where the historic village pub is to be found.

2.2.2 Thorpeness

Prior to the Ogilvie family developing the resort of Thorpeness, there was a small fishing village at Thorpe consisting of some farmhouses, cottages and a coastguard station. In 1910, Glencairn Stuart Ogilvie, the owner of the family estate at that time, imagined a holiday village which would appeal to visitors. The village was renamed Thorpeness and a development company began to turn the isolated area into a planned resort.

The settlement structure of Thorpeness does not in fact follow a regimented plan upon closer inspection, as one might expect. Rather, it incorporates patterns and features from the pre-existing village, and developed gradually over time. Perhaps the most dramatically planned feeling early 20th century routes are the sweeping curve of The Winlands leading into The Haven opposite The Meare, and the grand and suburban feeling Lakeside Avenue running to the west. These routes are more reminiscent of the garden city movement, rather than a Suffolk village, which is part of what makes Thorpeness feel very different indeed to any other village in the county. Westgate and The Sanctuary create somewhat of an interrupted grid structure, which establishes a modern planned settlement pattern in this area.

There are other elements which make Thorpeness feel less planned and more organic, these include the informal feeling open spaces, and gaps between properties leading to the beach, and the unpaved gravel tracks. This informal element of the public realm is of the utmost value to Thorpeness and helps to foster its genteel, serene atmosphere. Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of the modern 20th century planning of Thorpeness is that it created a place which feels quite timeless and at one with its coastal setting.

Another key feature of Thorpeness' settlement pattern is how it faces the sea, with coastal cottages afforded views directly onto the water, and many footpaths encouraging access to the beach.

F.6

Figure 06: The village of Thorpe in 1905 was dispersed prior to its development into the resort of Thorpeness. Many of the original buildings of Thorpe remain to this day

F.7

Figure 07: A map of the same area in 1951 after much of the development of Thorpeness had taken place, although large gaps still remained, for example The Sanctuary and Church Road have not yet been fully built out.

F.8 **Figure 08:** Map showing historic designations within Aldringham-cum-Thorpe.

2.3 Green and blue infrastructure

2.3.1 Open space, marshes, woodlands and heaths

Both Aldringham and Thorpeness benefit from several open spaces the community can use. Aldringham has an attractive and historic village green at the west side of Mill Lane. A public footpath extends southwards from Mill Lane providing access to the River Hundred and woodlands to the south. A complex network of footpaths, lanes and tracks extend across the parish, enabling access to isolated properties and the remote St Andrew's Church. Thorpeness has excellent access to open space, including the common, sports ground, golf club, The Meare and beach, along with a network of public footpaths extending inland.

The Suffolk coast's low lying topography and underlying geology of quaternary sands and gravels deposited by several periods of glaciation leads to a gently undulating but largely flat landscape of wide estuaries and slightly higher ground. The villages of Aldringham and Thorpeness are situated on the higher land above a small stream, the Hundred River. Human influence and demand for food production resulted in the draining of marshes and mudflats across Suffolk, and there is evidence of draining ditches near Aldringham. There are important wildlife habitats along the marshy estuary which leads to the wetlands at The Meare. To the north, there are large patches of woodland interspersed with farmland and heaths.

2.3.2 Statutory environmental protections

The parish includes some of the most important nature conservation sites in Suffolk, and is around two thirds covered by the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which runs parallel to the North Sea coast. The parish contains the Leiston Aldeburgh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Sandlings Special Protection Area (SPA) and

Figure 09: Isolated property in an area of mixed heaths and woods characteristic of most of the parish.

Figure 10: Example of one of the many tranquil lanes, tracks and paths which criss cross the area.

the North Warren RSPB Reserve. There is also a Local Nature Reserve at The Haven, Aldeburgh, which although not in the parish, restricts access to an especially important area of lagoons and reedbeds to the south of Thorpeness. The Leiston Aldeburgh SSSI was established because of the complex mosaic of habitats in this location, including extensive reedbeds, mudflats, lagoons, shingle, woodland and heath. The site supports the largest continuous stand of reed in England and Wales and contains a rare ecological transition zone between brackish and fresh water marshes. This supports nationally scarce plant species, invertebrates and birds. It is an important stopping point for migratory birds and is a breeding ground for many bird species.

2.3.3 The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB

The eastern half of the parish falls within the AONB. This means that part of the parish is afforded additional protections from inappropriate or obtrusive development by national and local planning policy.

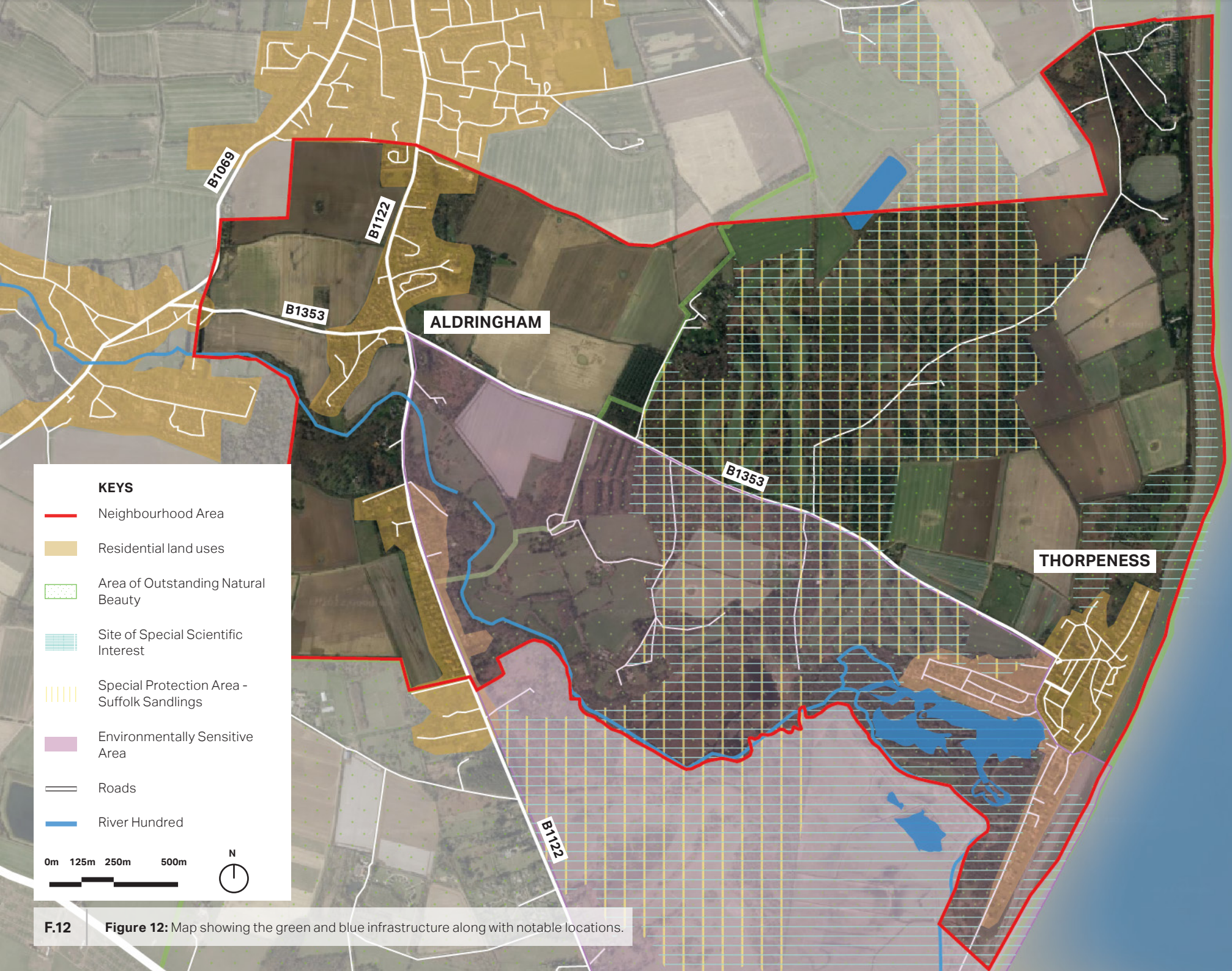
2.3.4 Topography and coastal flood risk

This part of the country is low lying, and the coastal reaches of Suffolk are especially flat and liable to coastal flooding. The landscape has been changed heavily by human activity, and many of the broad estuaries which would have been liable to flooding at high tides and during storms have been drained and protected by flood defences. Coastal defences have been reinforced in places, especially after the damage caused by the great flood of 1953.

The area also experiences significant coastal erosion issues, as cliffs are composed of soft material, mostly sands and gravels deposited by melting ice sheets during interglacial periods. Thorpeness in particular experiences erosion to its northern cliff face, resulting in the loss of the Red House at the northern end of North End Avenue in September 2022 and a continuing imminent threat to neighbourhood properties.

Thorpeness beach faces a high risk of coastal flooding, and the area of The Meare has a low risk of coastal or fluvial flooding thanks to the bank of slightly higher land separating it from the sea. However, there is a long term concern, an over 30 year horizon, that the sandbank between Thorpeness and Aldeburgh will fail and the sea will flood the Meare and Aldeburgh Marshes.

Figure 11: Thorpeness beach.



F.12 **Figure 12:** Map showing the green and blue infrastructure along with notable locations.

2.4 Movement pattern

2.4.1 Routes and public transport

Roads are important for transportation in the parish owing to the relative lack of public transport. The nearest railway station is located in Saxmundham and requires car transport to reach. It is around a 5 miles drive to the west. A derelict rail line runs through the parish which used to connect Aldeburgh, Thorpeness and Leiston to the East Suffolk Line at Saxmundham. Passenger services ran between 1860 and 1966. Train services from Saxmundham offer connections to Halesworth, Ipswich, Lowestoft and Woodbridge. From Ipswich, fast services to London and Norwich are available.

There are bus services in the parish, the 521 bus between Halesworth and Aldeburgh services both Aldringham and Thorpeness. The 64/65 and 521/522 service Aldringham. Taken together, Aldringham has regular bus services and Thorpeness has intermittent bus services.

2.4.2 Pedestrian and cycle connectivity

The parish is criss crossed by several Public Rights of Ways. These enable access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders to the countryside. Aldeburgh is accessible via a footpath running parallel to the coast road between Thorpeness and Aldeburgh. There are several footpaths which run between Thorpeness and Aldringham via the route of the Hundred River valley, and past St Andrew's Church. Aldringham additionally has access to Leiston, Coldfair Green and Knodishall, and footpaths extending to the countryside to the south west of the village.

Thorpeness itself is a pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists by virtue of its atypically urban layout, with clear block structures and calm lanes, alongside many paths which provide connections to the beach, or between properties. However, particularly at weekends or during holiday periods, the roads can become busy with traffic reducing the quality of the pedestrian and cyclist experience.

Figure 13: Cars are an important aspect of life in rural Suffolk but they can detract from the quality of the visual scene, and need to be incorporated carefully into the public realm.

Figure 14: Public car parking spaces in Thorpeness.

Character study

03

3. Character study

This section shows the character analysis of the Neighbourhood Area represented by its two distinct settlements, Aldringham and Thorpeness.

These two character areas are distinguished by their general style and period of development, as well as details such as layout, street types and architectural features.

This character study will help to ensure that development within these areas conforms to the local character. This chapter will inform the design codes in chapter 4.

3.1 Character area overview

The two character areas are the two settlements of Aldringham and Thorpeness. This chapter will define the key characteristics of each respective settlement and reflect their unique qualities.

3.2 Aldringham

3.2.1 Settlement pattern

The area follows a scattered pattern of development which is loosely clustered at the intersection of Aldeburgh Road, Aldringham Lane, and the B1353. Housing is generally arranged on cul-de-sacs which are accessed via the primary thoroughfares. The Parrot and Punchbowl public house, a grade II listed structure, marks the centre of the area and provides a landmark. The approach to the village from the east is marked by modest residential dwellings arranged in a linear fashion, transitioning from open farmland to a more built up area of dwellings. Elm Tree Farm and its land holdings take up the north-eastern core of the locality, the farmhouse is listed.

To the north, development stretches toward Leiston with dwellings set back from the road. Aldringham Court care home to the south marks the end of the main part of the village, with linear development further along Aldeburgh Road to the south.

3.2.2 Green space, access and streetscape

Aldringham has a mostly undefined street edge as dwellings typically do not address the road and are spaced at alternating distances in a rural fashion. Pedestrian routes begin at the central junction and stretch northwards toward Leiston. There is a lack of pedestrian connection between the various cul-de-sacs and a general lack of cycling infrastructure. There are small pockets of open greenspace located on Chandlers Way and on Mill Hill, which includes a children's playground. Aldringham Green makes up the south-eastern area of the district and houses two neolithic bowl barrows of archaeological significance. In addition to this, the area is bordered by some woodland to the south.

3.2.3 Building line and boundary treatment

Building lines are changeable across the area, although generally buildings are well set back from the road. This changes at the junction of Aldeburgh Road and Aldringham Lane where several structures are located almost immediately at the roadside. The developments of Oak Drive and Chandlers Way create semi-enclosed streetscapes with dwellings addressing each other to the front. Boundary treatments are generally informal and alternate across properties. Hedges, fencing, and low masonry walls are utilised across the area with some properties employing no boundary features. Roadways are bordered by a mixture of grass verges, low walls and hedgerows.

3.2.4 Building heights and roofline

Buildings are of a modest scale, typically not above two and a half storeys in height. Bungalows and dormer bungalows are evident across the area. Both gable and hip roofs are common, with red and brown clay pantiles used. Roof angles generally follow a gently pitched slope. Single storey outbuildings such as garages and sheds are located alongside many properties. The structures of Elm Tree Farm reach to approximately 2 storeys at their highest and are not clearly visible from the road.

3.2.5 Architecture

The area has a modest and simple style of vernacular Suffolk architecture with humble redbrick facades, some painted in pastel colours. Much development dates from the later 20th century with modern developments evident across the locality. Schemes such as Oak Drive and Chandlers Way follow traditional styles utilising sash windows and decorative timber detailing.

3.2.6 Land use, levels of activity and parking

Land use is predominantly residential and agricultural in the area. On plot parking is the most common form of parking with driveways located to the front and side of dwellings. The area experiences moderate traffic due to its location at the junction of minor roads but is generally quiet with little activity on the roadside.

3.2.7 Positive aspects of character

The quiet nature of the district must be protected as well as the cohesiveness of the scale of development. Buildings generally follow a similar style and form which adds to a strong sense of place.

Figure 15: Older property in Aldringham, demonstrating the clay pantiles seen in the area.

3.3 Thorpeness overview

3.3.1 Settlement pattern

The village has a denser layout more representative of continental European hill villages or small towns with structures tightly clustered around narrow laneways and streets. It diverges from typical dispersed or linear Suffolk village settlement patterns owing to its early 20th century planning. The built landscape is also given a sense of generosity alongside this density with large open spaces and clear vistas toward the sea and The Meare. Development becomes denser on the approach to The Sanctuary at the heart of the village, transitioning from open countryside to a vibrant village setting. The village is made up of a main nucleated cluster with some further development extending north, south and west in three main arms. The development to the north and south runs parallel to the coast. The western arm extends towards the House in the Clouds and windmill, along the northern side of The Meare.

3.3.2 Green space, access and streetscape

Numerous greens and recreational facilities are interspersed throughout the village. The most prominent of these is the open space with tennis courts located to the west of Thorpeness Country Club.

The village is surrounded by natural landscapes which provide a host of informal and formal open spaces. The village benefits from the Ogilvie Pavilion and Sports Ground to the north west, and Golf Club to the west. There is also pleasant amenity open space by The Meare. The beach is accessible via many paths which invitingly lead to the sea.

The character of the streets within Thorpeness shifts from open and informal such as on Old Homes Road to fine grained and compact on Westgate. This street has a distinct feeling of enclosure and is bookended by the tower on one end, creating a unique atmosphere within the village. Thorpeness is at once a relaxed resort and a playful town planning vision.

Figure 16: The informality of Thorpeness' public realm contributes to its peaceful resort qualities.

Figure 17: Some of Thorpeness is quite dense with the whimsical mock Tudor, English cottage and arts and craft style architecture of the early 20th century.

3.3.3 Building line and boundary treatment

Dwellings are spaced most frequently at a medium setback from the road's edge. This is exhibited by the various homes which have mature front gardens. Whereas narrower lanes such as Beacon Hill have frontages which come up to the roads edge. Houses have a gently undulating aspect and mostly face toward the street edge. The village has a generally open and inviting feel due to the use of low and unobstructed boundary treatments. These consist of short hedges, picket wooden fences, and stone walls. Clusters of buildings are interrupted by open spaces allowing views outward to the sea and The Meare. Front gardens are generally well maintained with attractive planting. They are often lush, creating soft property boundaries, while in informal places they tend to have simpler sandy lawns with little evidence of a property boundary. It is not possible to assign a consistent boundary treatment but high walls or railings are out of character.

3.3.4 Building heights and roofline

The village predominantly has low rise dormer bungalows as well as two storey dwellings. However, this is contrasted by the 3-storey apartment building on Admirals Walk, as well as the 6-storey former water tower on The Sanctuary, for example, which rises above its neighbours to form a focal point at the centre of the village. Gable roofs are commonly used across the village with gentle slopes, alongside dormer windows. The rooflines remain harmonious across the village with only minor differences in height.

3.3.5 Architecture

The area boasts an extraordinary array of older venacular properties, traditional revivalist architecture styles as well as contemporary homes. Thorpeness is the village in Britain to visit for early 20th century architecture. Mock-tudor features can be seen across the area as well as early 20th century cottages and terraces. Properties frequently feature black timber façade details such cladding and trim. White render can be seen alongside masonry and timber facades. Red pantile roof tiles are the

Figure 18: Example of attractive front garden and boundary treatment of a low wall and gate.

Figure 19: Rooflines viewed from the coast showing the generally consistent use of gables, pitched roofs and dormer windows.

most common in the area. This combination creates a warm natural, coastal feel to the material palette of the village.

The earliest properties in the village date from the former isolated dwellings, cottages and farmsteads of its days as a small rural fishing village of Thorpe. These buildings demonstrate typical local Suffolk venacular styles with red brick, dormer windows and clay pantile roofs, and also include a remarkable thatched barn on Old Homes Road. The Coast Guards are a group of terraced properties built for the Coastguard Station. There is also a fine working windmill in the west of the village, dating from the early 19th century and restored in 1977.

The buildings dating from the planning and development of Thorpeness as a resort demonstrate a host of early 20th century revivalist styles, influenced by the arts and crafts movement, and English cottage aesthetics popular at the time. They include a frequent use of mock Tudor timber beams, traditional materials and details such as flint, brick and white render. The Church of St Mary dating from 1937 is an unusual example of neo-Norman architecture. The Ogilvie Almshouses dating from 1926 are a splendid example of mock Tudor architecture with a spectacular continuous two storey range with a central gateway and projecting end pavilions.

The houses on Westgate and the Whinlands are particularly fine examples of interwar housing. Some of the houses on Westgate use eccentric stone detailing with York and Ketton stone, alongside arches and porches designed to achieve a medieval vernacular effect. The row of detached houses on the Whinlands are among the first of the planned resort, and demonstrate a genteel cottage architecture, with pantile roofs slightly recessed ground floors creating small verandas.

Landmarks are important to Thorpeness. The House in the Clouds, originally servicing as a water tower and now a house, is a unique example of mock Tudor and Jacobean style, combining practicality with eccentricity.

3.3.6 Land use, levels of activity and parking

The area is made up mostly by modest residential buildings as well as leisure uses such as inns, guesthouses, and small hotels. Activity is concentrated at manicured open green spaces throughout the village with a low volume of traffic. Traffic can increase considerably owing to day trippers and holidaymakers on weekends and during holiday periods. There are no large car parks within the centre of the village, parking is often at the roadside, with parallel parking along the main thoroughfares such as The Haven. There is a small car park next to the beach near The Meare. Overall, there is a tranquil atmosphere reinforced by slow movement patterns.

3.3.7 Positive aspects of character

Thorpeness' character is unique, warm and colourful. The planned nature of the settlement creates a strong sense of local identity and the geographical location between The Meare and the sea allows for beautiful views and a tranquil setting.

3.4 Thorpeness Conservation Area

The Conservation Area was designated in 1976 and subsequently extended in 2022. It covers the bulk of the settlement, except for some northern reaches of the village. It extends as far north as the buildings on the north side of Old Homes Road. The Conservation Area is supported by a Conservation Area appraisal. In this area, proposals must especially take account of their heritage context and nearby buildings which make a contribution to the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area Appraisal notes that the most positive buildings include the listed buildings, original row of homes dating from the 1910s along the eastern side of The Haven and the Whinlands, buildings along the seafront and cliffs, many of the homes along Uplands Road and several other buildings scattered throughout the area.

Figure 20: Early properties from the planned development of Thorpeness on The Haven.

Since the Conservation Area covers nearly all of Thorpeness, most of the village is protected by it. This emphasises the integrity of the existing built environment and importance of situating proposals sensitively within it. Development in the Conservation Area should be of a particularly high standard of design in order to preserve or enhance its character.

Thorpeness is afforded a Conservation Area not only because of its heritage, but because of its national significance. Ogilvie's vision is a quirky and daring vision for an early 20th century garden village set within a coastal landscape.

For the purposes of the Thorpeness Character Area, the Conservation Area underlines the need for proposals to reflect on their heritage context, avoiding impacts on buildings which are listed or make a positive contribution to the village.

Figure 21: The Grade II listed windmill on Uplands Road.

3.5 Thorpeness: The Seafront

The seafront area of Thorpeness represents a gentle transition from the built up area to the open sea. This is achieved by several gaps allowing for views out to the sea from within the settlement, and by extensive open spaces and vegetation, which creates an open and inviting space for visitors and residents. Thorpeness was designed with access to the sea at its heart, and the many paths leading down to the beach are an important element of this area's specific character within the wider village.

Figure 22: One of the many paths leading down to the beach.

Figure 23: Colourful apartment buildings known as Headlands overlooking the sea.

Proposals close to the seafront should consider the special atmosphere of this part of the settlement, historic buildings should be preserved, especially within the Conservation Area, and the humble, often understated yet eccentric nature of the architecture should be reflected. Proposals should also consider the risk of coastal flooding and coastal erosion which affects this area.

Figure 24: Low rise seaside cottages are an important feature of the low lying south part of the village and Conservation Area.

Figure 25: Scenic views along and towards the coastline are created by intermittent gaps between gently spaced properties

3.6 Thorpeness: The Meare

The Meare is also a particularly important setting within Thorpeness and creates a unique public space. Proposals in this location should take special care to avoid detracting from the existing visual scene and impacting on views to and from The Meare, landmarks such as The House in the Clouds and the Boat House, and properties along The Haven, all of which together sit in harmony with one another. Commercial premises contribute to the activity in this location.

Figure 27: View of The House in the Clouds.

Figure 28: The Kitchen cafe and shop.

Figure 26: Sailing boats on The Meare.

Existing commercial premises have an unobtrusive, informal and relaxed atmosphere, with outdoor picnic tables and traditional building materials contributing to the rural, seaside feel of this area. Modifications to these premises should avoid adding visual clutter and modern signage.

Figure 29: The Boat House.

3.7 Thorpeness vernacular

The architecture of Thorpeness does not follow one consistent style, but it tends to reflect a certain vernacular. This vernacular is eccentric, English, and at times Suffolk in its flavour, coastal and sometimes truly whimsical. The architecture it creates is profoundly special because it is so unique to Thorpeness, and this design philosophy has been followed across the decades since the 1910s when the first homes were built as part of the planned settlement.

Standard or identikit housing design does not fit into Thorpeness and would immediately look out of place and unsympathetic to its context.

Whilst future proposals do not have to follow one specific style, they should demonstrate an acknowledgement of the themes articulated - eccentricity, English or Suffolk inspired, and coastal.

The preservation of existing architecture is of the utmost importance and modifications to existing buildings should avoid detracting from their features.

Figure 30: A recent development showing a good understanding of Thorpeness vernacular.

Figure 31: The Thorpeness Country Club.

Figure 32: The Headlands.

Figure 33: Mock Tudor architecture is a key feature of Thorpeness' eccentric traditional English styles.

Design Guidelines

04

4. Design guidelines

This section sets out the principles that will influence the design of potential new development and inform the retrofit of existing properties in Aldringham-cum-Thorpe. Where possible, local images are used to exemplify the design guidelines and codes. Where these images are not available, best practice examples from elsewhere are used.

4.1 Introduction

The following section describes a set of design codes that have been put together based on the existing context of Aldringham-cum-Thorpe. These codes will aim to guide any changes or development within the Neighbourhood Area to ensure the local character is respected whilst still allowing space for innovation within the built environment.

The Neighbourhood Plan has an expectation that development should conform to the principles set out in the National Design Guide (2021). Where the Neighbourhood Plan Design Codes state specific guidance, this then takes priority. This collectively provides an overarching approach to design.

The design codes have been split into four categories. The first three sections are relevant to the whole Neighbourhood Area while the final section introduces design codes by character area and as such, codes in this section may not be applicable to the whole of the parish. More detail about this structure is provided in section 4.1.3.

4.1.1 The importance of good design

As the NPPF (paragraph 126) notes, "good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".

Research, such as for the Government's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (now part of the Design Council) has shown that good design of buildings and places can:

- Improve health and well-being;
- Increase civic pride and cultural activity;
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour; and
- Reduce pollution.

This document and the following design codes seek to harness an understanding of how good design can make future development as endearingly popular as the best of what has gone before.

4.1.2 Placemaking and design codes

These design codes are underpinned by a set of placemaking principles that should influence the design of future development areas, public realms, homes and green spaces, and the interfaces between them.

What designers and planners call 'placemaking' is about creating the physical conditions that residents and users find attractive and safe, with good levels of social interaction and layouts that are easily understood.

The placemaking principles set out in the following pages should be used to assess the design quality of future development or regeneration proposals. These key principles should be considered in all cases of future development as they reflect positive place-making and draw on the principles set out in many national urban design best practice documents including the National Design Guide, Building for a Healthy Life and the Urban Design Compendium.

The guidelines developed in this part focus on residential environments. However, new housing development should not be viewed in isolation, but considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context.

The local pattern of lanes and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural environment should all help to determine the character and identity of a development.

It is important with any proposal that full account is taken of the local context and that the new design embodies the 'sense of place'.

4.1.3 Structure of the design codes

Based on the understanding gained in the previous chapters, this section will identify design codes for future development to adhere to. As identified in the diagnostic report, the following design codes have been created to apply to the whole Neighbourhood Area save for the last code which is split into the character areas analysed in chapter 3:

- **4.2:** Built form general rules
- **4.3:** Energy and environment
- **4.4**: Mobility and parking
- **4.5:** Character area codes

Within the six character areas, some codes may relate or mirror that of other areas though the policies are generally specific to the area to which they are assigned.

BF Built Form general rules

EN Energy and environment

MP Mobility and parking

CA Character area codes

Theme	Guideline	Title
Built form general rules	BF.01	Provide meaningful connections to amenities
	BF.02	Buffer settlement from valued landscapes
	BF.03	Gaps and views of the Suffolk countryside, marshes and the North Sea
	BF.04	Incorporating coastal features in Thorpeness
	BF.05	Overlooking open space and the beach
	BF.06	Turning the corner
	BF.07	Suffolk vernacular - active and eccentric frontages
	BF.08	Landscaping and native trees
	BF.09	Boundary treatments
	BF.10	Household extensions
	BF.11	Architectural details, materials and colour palette
Energy and environment	EN.01	Biodiversity in an area of international importance for nature conservation
	EN.02	Features in dwellings
	EN.03	Building fabric
	EN.04	Adaptability
	EN.05	Sustainable drainage
	EN.06	Rainwater harvesting
	EN.07	Renewable low carbon energy solutions
	EN.08	Waste storage and servicing
Mobility and parking	MP.01	Legibility and wayfinding
	MP.02	Creating a safe walking and cycling environment
	MP.03	Car parking
	MP.04	EV charging points
Character area codes	CA.01	Aldringham
	CA.02	Thorpeness

4.2 Built form general rules

The following section outlines principles that should be considered by applicants when creating new development or infilling within the Aldringham and Thorpeness Neighbourhood Areas. Some of the following guidance is directed at development on existing plots such as extensions though many can be applied to both new and existing development.

In general, future areas should be developed in a coherent form with modern best practice. That is, there should be a proportional relation between size of plot, dwelling and spaces between dwellings.

The structure of the following codes generally starts with policies on a larger scale and subsequently moves to codes related to specific built form details.

BF.01

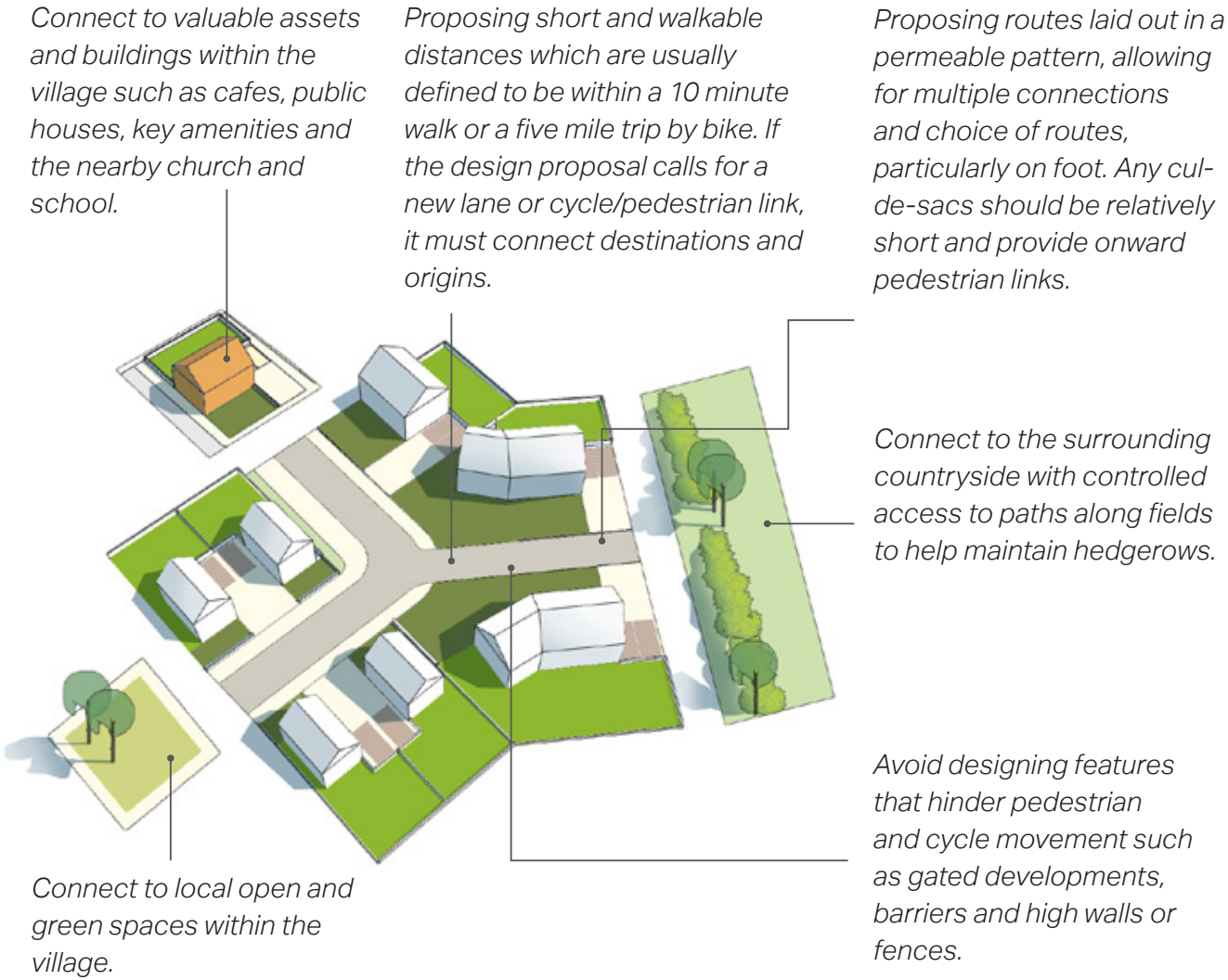
4.2.1 Provide meaningful connections to amenities

Both Aldringham and Thorpeness have pockets of open space and are surrounded by natural landscapes, though they lack extensive walking networks to maximise this asset.

Thorpeness and Aldringham have intermittent pavements but footways or lanes provide links within both villages. These connections can be improved by enhancing the routes to encourage walking and cycling. Good practice favours a well connected layout that makes it easier to travel by foot, cycle, and public transport.

A connected pattern creates a 'walkable neighbourhood' which links meaningful places together. New development in Aldringham and Thorpeness should seek to connect to the existing villages and create easy direct routes to existing services and amenities.

Connections can also be visual and relationships between buildings, lanes and the natural environment. These connections, such as key views, should be preserved and enhanced.



F.34 **Figure 34:** Illustrative diagrams showing meaningful connections in the area.

BF.02

4.2.2 Buffer settlement edges from valued landscapes

Aldringham is surrounded by an arable agricultural landscape, whilst Thorpeness is set within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and bordered by a Special Protection Area. These delicate landscapes are highly valuable in establishing a sense of place.

Settlement edges in the outer parts help with the transition between built areas and the countryside and help preserve this rural character. In addition, these edges are particularly important when new settlement is proposed. Desirable features are:

Make new buildings face outwards towards the countryside to create a positive outlook. When the edge is adjacent to open countryside houses should positively address the countryside by orientating the buildings to face out over it. Rear garden fences facing the countryside should be avoided as this creates a hard edge and a safety risk.

Create back to back development where new development meets existing buildings. The aim should be to complete blocks.

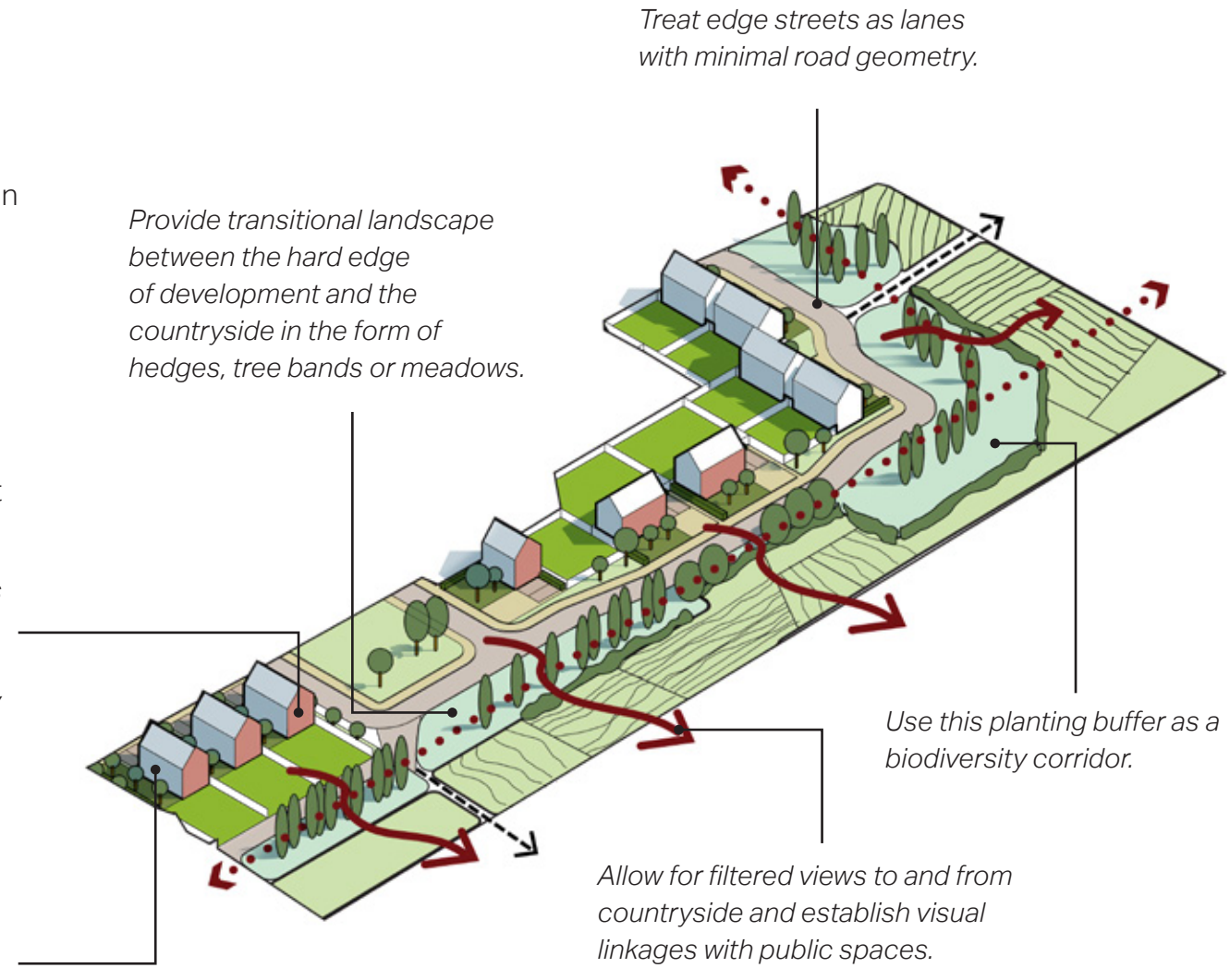


Figure 35: Diagram illustrating settlement edges buffering.

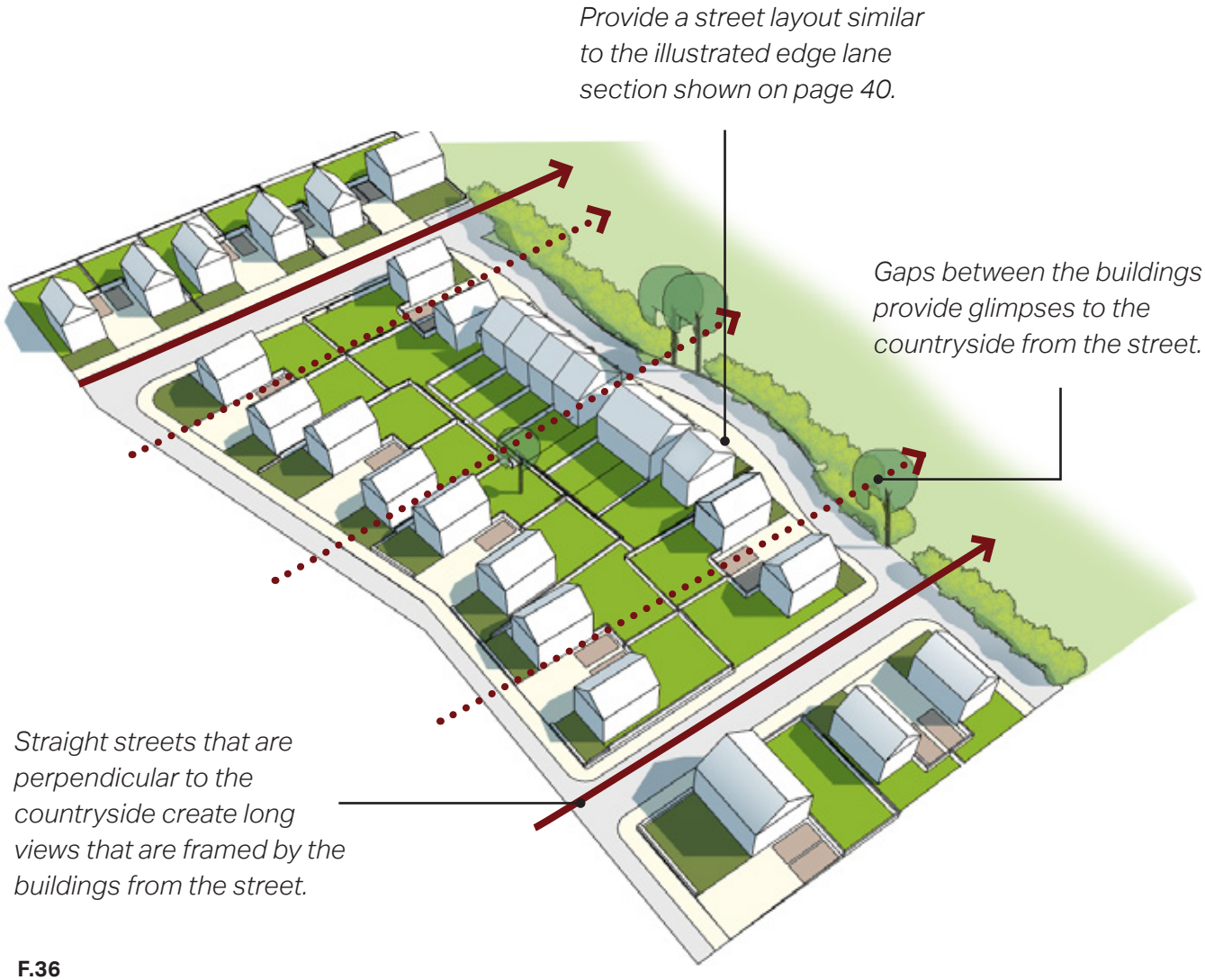
BF.03

4.2.3 Gaps and views of the Suffolk countryside, marshes and the North Sea

Views are important as they provide framed moments within the built environment of either landmarks or the open countryside. The Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (2018) lists specific special qualities and features of the area which should inform proposals for development.

New development should not affect the sensitive views of these features and should have consideration of scale and local context. Generous gaps between buildings should be created to provide glimpses and filtered views to the countryside beyond.

This will connect people with nature and contribute to the general feel of openness. Streets should be orientated to make the most of key views and Natural landmarks. This allows everyone to enjoy the countryside views and enhances legibility by allowing people to orientate themselves in relation to the open space.



F.36

Figure 36: Illustrative diagram of the gaps and views in a residential area.

BF.04

4.2.4 Incorporating coastal features in Thorpeness

Thorpeness is defined by its relationship to the Suffolk Coast. The resort village is immersed in its beachside location through the use of site-specific architectural flares and materials. Beachside dwellings feature timber cladding or beams, apex rooflines, balconies, and sheltered porches which combine with the use of relaxed and natural soft landscaping to create a coastal feel. This aesthetic helps to relay a sense of place and the distinct local character. New development proposals should seek to incorporate coastal design features to maintain the local vernacular style.

Houses should reflect the plot coverage of the immediate context with ample gardens between the beach and the dwelling. Bungalows should reflect the single storey wooden cottages, whilst larger homes should reflect the two storey villas. Rooflines are steeply pitched and often apex in style, with varying rooflines achieved by dormer windows, gables and chimneys. Cladding should be timber, either painted white or black, or timber beams in a Mock Tudor style.

Very contemporary or modern styles that 'stand out' are not suitable for the coastal area of Thorpeness which is mostly within the Conservation Area and of great heritage merit. Thorpeness' distinctiveness as an early 20th century coastal resort relies on existing homes not being redeveloped into or surrounded by luxury glass properties which are seen in other coastal areas.

Therefore any proposal in the coastal area that does not take its inspiration from the existing features of the buildings along the coast would not be supported. Creativity within a similar architectural language is however encouraged.

Figure 37: Example of a characteristic seaside property in Thorpeness incorporating timber beams and an apex roofline with a front gable and balcony.

Figure 38: Properties should consider using black painted timber as this is frequently used along the seafront.

Figure 39: Properties should use apex rooflines with dormer windows and red pantile roofs to fit in with the surrounding properties by the beachfront.

BF.05

4.2.5 Overlooking open space and the beach

Openings and fenestration can be used thoughtfully to allow for engagement with the surrounding landscape. Where possible, openings should be arranged to create visual connection and access to nearby or adjoining open space.

Dwellings along the Admirals Walk and North End Avenue are arranged to maximise the benefit of their beachside location. Buildings tend to be positioned parallel to the coast with glazing facing eastward to maximise ocean views, bay windows and dormers are common across the village.

Dwellings often feature direct access to the beach through gated openings and timber walkways. External views should be positioned to overlook the coast where possible to reinforce the connection to the outside.

Figure 40: Photo of dwellings overlooking the beach and their private gardens.

Figure 41: Photo of dwelling overlooking The Meare.

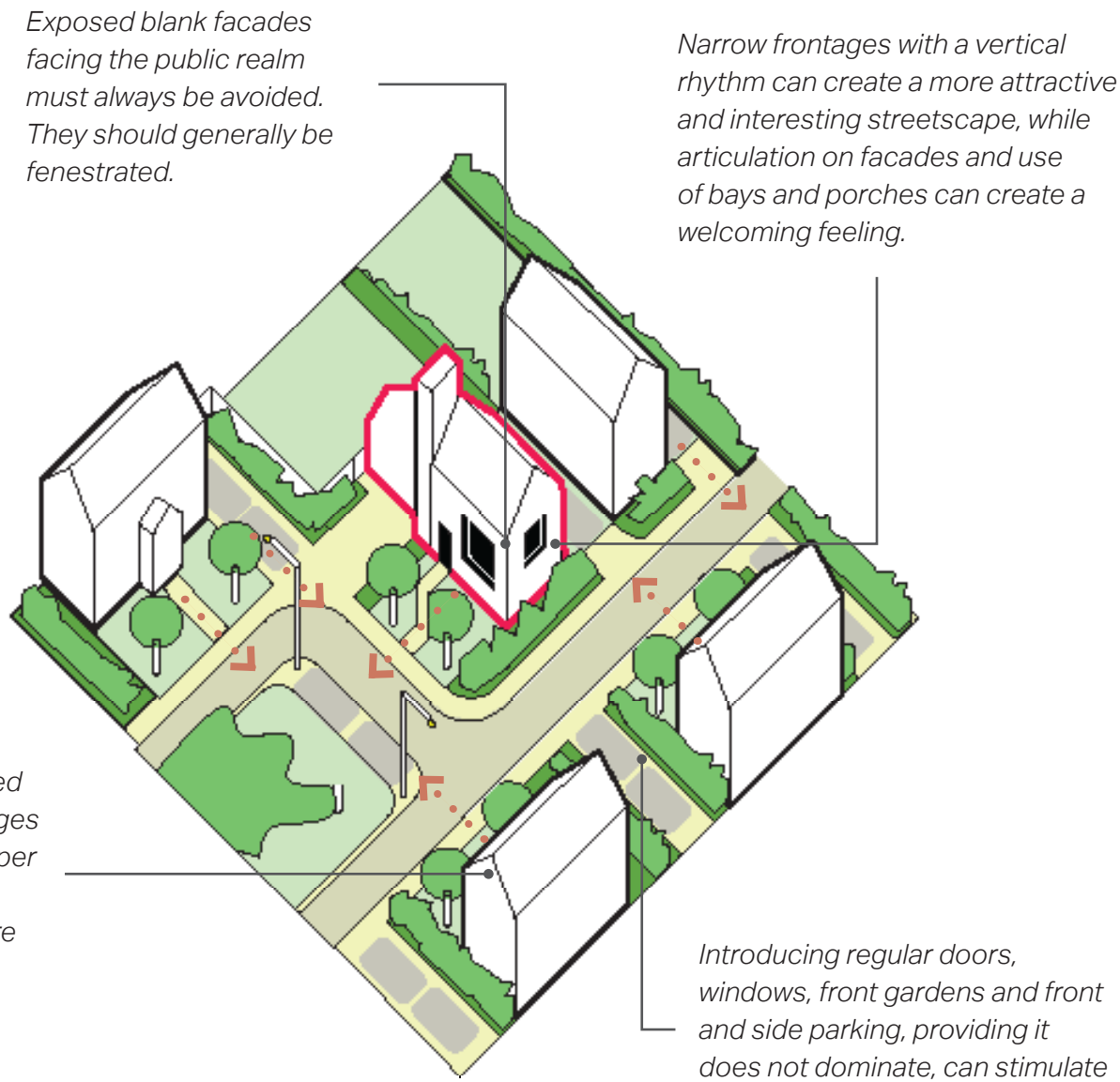
Figure 42: Photo of dwellings overlooking the beach behind open, private gardens.

BF.06

4.2.6 Suffolk vernacular - active and eccentric frontages

Active frontages bring life and vitality to street and public gathering spaces. They allow for connections between people, interest, and activity on the street while also creating surveillance onto the road. Providing more active frontages in Aldringham and Thorpeness should be an objective of each new development.

Suffolk vernacular architecture is distinct due to its use of colour, bold character, and detail. This makes for streetscapes which are vibrant and visually interesting. New developments should incorporate this local style in their design. See more detail on the vernacular in code BF.10.



F.43

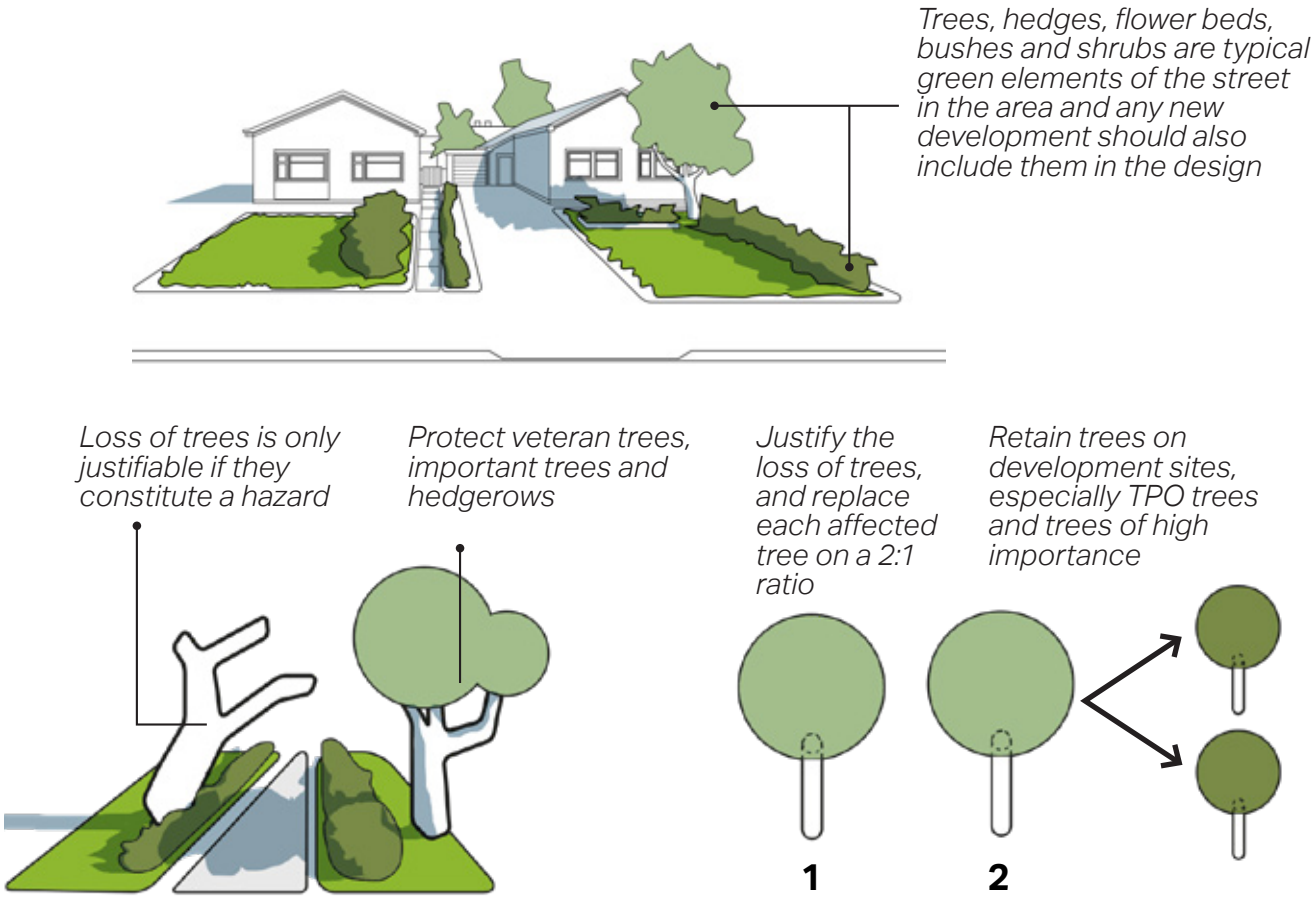
Figure 43: Illustrative example of active frontages in a residential area.

BF.07

4.2.7 Landscaping and Trees

Trees and soft landscaping are crucial to the integration of Aldringham and Thorpeness into their physical context. The neighbourhood area's rural character can be preserved or revived in places through the use of street trees and landscaping measures. New developments and any change in the physical environment should:

- Incorporate existing native trees and shrubs and avoid unnecessary loss of flora, especially hedgerows which are prominent in the area.
- Replace any tree or woodland lost to new development. Native trees and shrubs should be used to reinforce the more rural character of the area.
- Promote rich vegetation in front and rear gardens to improve the visual impact and mitigate air pollution. New and retained vegetation at the edges of new developments are particularly important for their successful integration into the wider landscape.



F.44

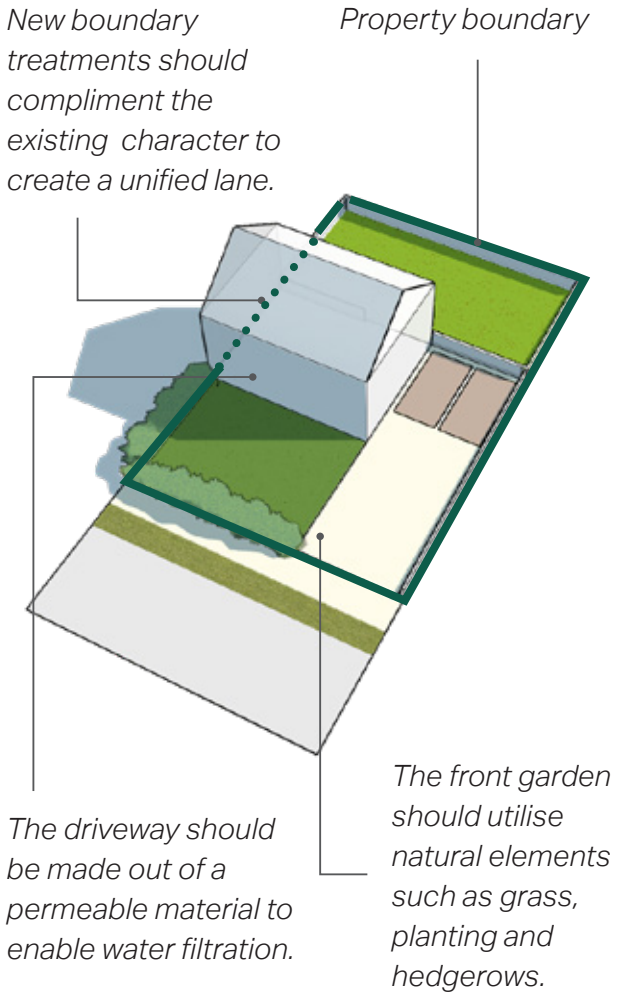
Figure 44: Diagram to highlight some guidelines related to tree preservation.

BF.08

4.2.8 Boundary treatments

Boundary treatments should be used at the plot edge to provide a sense of continuity and cohesion along the lane as well as providing separation between the public and private domains.

- Using a range of high-quality materials such as brick, hedgerows, ironmongery, planting or a combination of these along the boundary edge, can bring cohesion to the lane and the village, whilst still providing visual interest.
- The heights of boundary treatments should not intrude on neighbouring views and lighting.
- Not having a form of boundary should be avoided where possible.
- Properties should also have a front garden or privacy strip to create the desired amount of enclosure along the lane.



F.47 **Figure 45:** Illustrative diagram of the boundary treatments of a typical plot.

Figure 46: Photo of a low lying brick wall in front of a front garden with grass and vegetation.

Figure 47: Photo of a property boundary in the form of large green hedges.

BF.09

4.2.9 Household extensions

There are multiple ways to create extra space within a building using different types of extensions. Extensions must be designed to an appropriate scale and be secondary to the original building. The pitch and form of a building's roof forms part of its character; therefore, extensions should respond by enhancing the existing character. Extensions should consider the materials, architectural features and proportions of the original building and designed to complement these existing elements.

Many household extensions are covered by permitted development rights, meaning that they do not need planning permission. There are more stringent rules within Conservation Areas, such as in the one in Thorpeness.

The latest guidance is here: https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/17/extensions.

- The character of the existing building, along with its scale, form, materials and details should be taken into consideration when preparing proposals for alterations and/or extensions;
- External extensions should respect or enhance the visual appearance of the original buildings and the character of the wider street scene;
- Extensions should be subordinate in term of scale and form and shall not be visually dominant or taller than the existing building;
- Extensions should be recessed or in line with the existing building facade and shall use lower ridge and eaves levels to ensure that the length and width of the extension are less than the dimensions of the original building;
- Extensions should be designed using materials and details to match the existing building or, alternatively, use contrasting materials and details with a contemporary design approach. However, in either case extensions should create a harmonious overall composition and a strong degree of unity with the original building.
- Extensions should safeguard the privacy and daylight amenity of neighbouring properties;
- Extensions should retain on-site parking capacity and a viable garden area to meet the needs of existing and future occupiers; and
- Extensions of existing buildings should help to reduce carbon emission by complying with high energy efficiency standards and utilising low energy design.

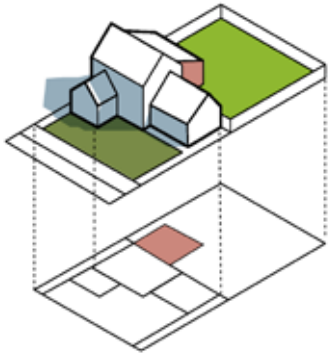
Front extensions

Front extensions are generally not acceptable. If proposed, in all cases front extensions should take the form of the existing building, mirroring the roof pitch, replicate or have lower cornice height and their ridge should be below the existing ridge height. The extension can project maximum 2 metres beyond the front facade and will not cover more than 50% of the front elevation.

Rear extensions

Single-storey rear extensions are, generally, the easiest way to extend a house and provide extra living space. The extension should be set below any first-floor windows and designed to minimise any effects on neighbouring properties, such as blocking day light. A flat roof is generally acceptable for a single storey rear extension.

Double-storey rear extensions are not common as they usually affect neighbours' access to light and privacy, however, sometimes the size and style of the property allows for a two-storey extension. In these cases, the roof form and pitch should reflect the original building and sit slightly lower than the main ridge of the building.



F.48

Figure 48: Drawing showing a rear extension

F.49

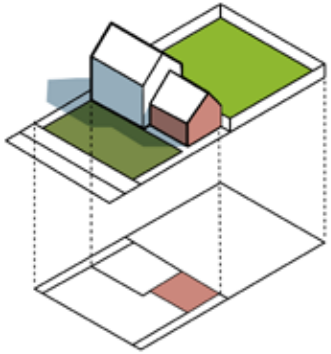
Figure 49: Photo of a sympathetic front extension.

F.50

Figure 50: Photo of a sympathetic side extension.

Side extensions

Side extensions are a popular way to extend a building to create extra living space. However, if poorly designed, they can negatively affect the appearance of the street scene, disrupting the rhythm of spaces between buildings. Single-storey and double-storey side extensions should be set back from the main building line to the front of the dwelling and complement the materials and detailing of the original building, particularly along the street elevation. The roof of the extension should harmonise with that of the original building. Side windows should also be avoided unless it can be demonstrated that they would not result in overlooking of neighbouring properties.



F.51 **Figure 51:** Drawing showing side extension

Outbuildings

Secondary outbuildings should be of a softer rustic/rural/agricultural character.

Pre-fabricated, pre cast concrete and plastic panels to be avoided.

BF.10

4.2.10 Architectural details, materials and colour palette

Informed by the local vernacular, the following pages illustrate acceptable detailing for future housing developments in Aldringham and Thorpeness.

In Thorpeness village there is a wide variety of architectural details. The resort village was mostly developed in the early 20th century and buildings feature mock-tudor details as well as coastal architectural features. Prominent facade materials found in this character area includes various types of brickwork including red and brightly painted bricks, and various types of renders and weatherboarding. The Thorpeness Conservation Area provides a diversity of architectural features which are prominent on the landmark buildings. Roofs are typically either red or black pantile while fenestration is mostly Casement windows made from timber or UPVC.

Aldringham is different in character to Thorpeness and features a higher proportion of dwellings from the late

Figure 52: Thorpeness Country Club.

Figure 53: Locally distinctive architecture.

Figure 54:
Example of an early Thorpeness development.

20th century. Modern developments are evident across the village which tend to use traditional Suffolk architectural details such as sash windows and decorative timber detailing. Brick facades are common alongside colourful render finishes, while apex rooflines mostly feature red and grey pantiles.

Architectural design in future developments must reflect these local design references in both the natural and built environment and must reflect and reinforce local distinctiveness. Any future development proposals should demonstrate that the palette of materials has been selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment.

The use of traditional construction finishes should be specified for all new development and repair work. Material specification, quality for repair, replacement and modern developments should be maintained. Any requirement for additional housing in the village should not trump architectural quality and character of the area, as standard, identikit housing would be unsympathetic.

Colour palette

Wall

Red brick

Suffolk pink render

Off-white render with timber stained banding

Painted weatherboarding

Flint and brick

White render

Fenestration

Casement window

Sash window

Diamond pattern window

Bay window

Dormer window

Roof

Red clay pantile

Grey clay pantile

Thatch

Slate

Consistent roofline

4.3 Energy and environment

The following section outlines principles that should be considered by applicants when creating new development or infilling within the Aldringham and Thorpeness Neighbourhood Areas. Some of the following guidance is directed at development on existing plots such as extensions though many can be applied to both new and existing development.

Aldringham and Thorpeness exhibit a low density with heights largely between 1 and 2 storeys and a reasonable space between dwellings. In general, future areas should be developed in a coherent form with modern best practice. That is, there should be a proportional relation between size of plot, dwelling and spaces between dwellings.

The structure of the following codes generally starts with policies on a larger scale and subsequently moves to codes related to specific built form details.

EN.01

4.3.1 Biodiversity in an area of international importance for nature conservation

The Aldringham and Thorpeness Neighbourhood Areas have rich and varied landscape characters due to their location on the border of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, there are many natural features and assets, such as lakes, trees, woodlands, hedgerows, verges, front and back gardens. They all contribute to provide habitats for biodiversity to flourish.

- Development must protect and enhance woodlands, hedges, trees and road verges. Natural tree buffers should also be protected.
- Development must avoid abrupt edges to development with little vegetation or landscape on the edge of the settlement and, instead, aim for a comprehensive landscape buffering.
- Development should seek to achieve biodiversity net gain and provide new habitats and wildlife corridors.
- It is important to ensure existing habitats are buffered. Widths of buffer zones should be wide enough and based on specific ecological function.
- Development should create wildlife corridors in the surrounding countryside by proposing new green links and improving the existing ones. This will enable wildlife to travel to and from foraging areas and their dwelling areas such as hedgehog corridors.
- Development must protect mature and veteran trees, wide green verges and species-rich hedgerows as they are essential for biodiversity. Hedgerows are a particularly good habitat for fauna and also prevent soil erosion.
- Development should show that it has considered opportunities to incorporate nature friendly ideas such as bird boxes, bee bricks, bug-houses, swift bricks or ponds. To illustrate, swift populations are in decline in the UK as more development and a move towards air-tight buildings has resulted in a loss of habitat. To encourage swifts to live and breed in the area Swift bricks should be considered as they are easily installed, fitting within a multiple of standard UK brick sizes.

Figure 55: Example of a swift brick under an eave.

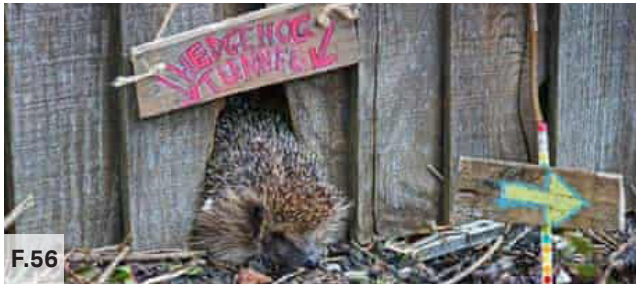


Figure 56: Example of a hedgehog corridor within in a garden fence.

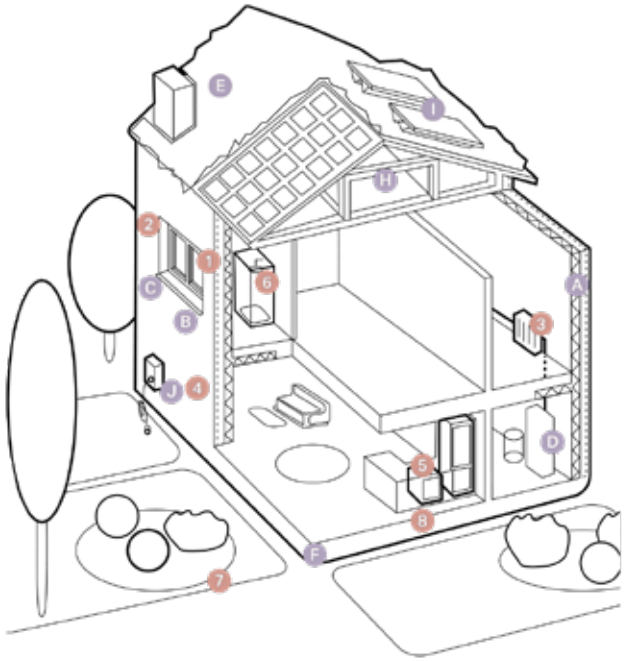
EN.02

4.3.2 Features in dwellings

The following section elaborates on energy efficient technologies that could be incorporated in buildings and at broader design scale as principles.

Use of such principles and design tools should be encouraged in order to contribute towards a more sustainable environment.

Energy efficient or eco design combines all around energy efficient appliances and lighting with commercially available renewable energy systems, such as solar electricity and/or solar/ water heating and electric charging points.



F.57

Figure 57: Diagram outlining the location of sustainable features within dwellings.

Existing homes

1. **Insulation** in lofts and walls (cavity and solid)
2. **Double or triple glazing with shading** (e.g. tinted window film, blinds, curtains and trees outside)
3. **Low- carbon heating** with heat pumps or connections to district heat network
4. **Draught proofing** of floors, windows and doors
5. **Highly energy-efficient appliances** (e.g. A++ and A+++ rating)
6. **Highly waste-efficient devices** with low-flow showers and taps, insulated tanks and hot water thermostats
7. **Green space (e.g. gardens and trees)** to help reduce the risks and impacts of flooding and overheating
8. **Flood resilience and resistance** with removable air back covers, relocated appliances (e.g. installing washing machines upstairs), treated wooden floors

Additional features for new build homes

- A **High levels of airtightness**
- B **More fresh air** with the mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, and passive cooling
- C **Triple glazed windows and external shading** especially on south and west faces
- D **Low-carbon heating** and no new homes on the gas grid by 2025 at the latest
- E **Water management and cooling** more ambitious water efficiency standards, green roofs and reflective walls
- F **Flood resilience and resistance** e.g. raised electrical, concrete floors and greening your garden
- H **Construction and site planning** timber frames, sustainable transport options (such as cycling)
- I **Solar panels**
- J **Electric car charging point**

EN.03

4.3.3 Building fabric

Thermal mass

Thermal mass describes the ability of a material to absorb, store and release heat energy. Thermal mass can be used to even out variations in internal and external conditions, absorbing heat as temperatures rise and releasing it as they fall. Thermal mass can be used to store high thermal loads by absorbing heat introduced by external conditions, such as solar radiation, or by internal sources such as appliances and lighting, to be released when conditions are cooler. This can be beneficial both during the summer and the winter.

Thermal storage in construction elements can be provided, such as a trombe wall placed in front of a south facing window or concrete floor slabs that will absorb solar radiation and then slowly re-release it into the enclosed space. Mass can be combined with suitable ventilation strategies.

Insulation

Thermal insulation can be provided for any wall or roof on the exterior of a building to prevent heat loss. Particular attention should be paid to heat bridges around corners and openings at the design stage.

Provide acoustic insulation to prevent the transmission of sound between active (i.e. living room) and passive spaces (i.e. bedroom). Provide insulation and electrical insulation to prevent the passage of fire between spaces or components and to contain and separate electrical conductors.

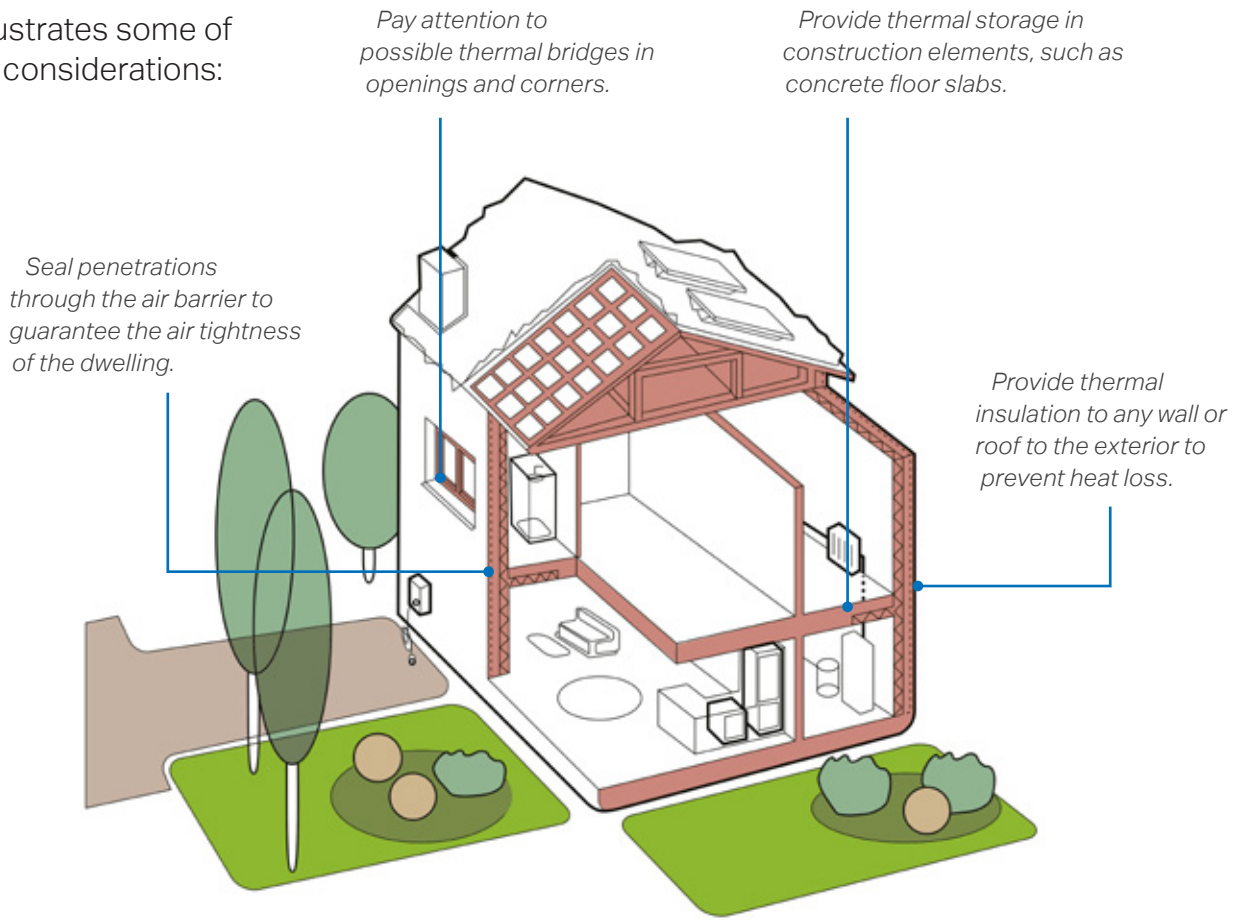
Airtightness

Airtight constructions help reduce heat loss, improving comfort and protecting the building fabric. Airtightness is achieved by sealing a building to reduce infiltration- which is sometimes called uncontrolled ventilation. Simplicity is key for airtight design. The fewer junctions the simpler and more efficient the airtightness design will be.

An airtight layer should be formed in the floor, walls and roof. Doors, windows and roof lights to the adjacent walls or roof should be sealed. Interfaces between walls and floor and between walls and roof, including around the perimeter of any intermediate floor should be linked. Water pipes and soil pipes, ventilation ducts, incoming water, gas, oil, electricity, data and district heating, chimneys and flues, including air supplies to wood burning stoves, connections to external services, such as entry phones, outside lights, external taps and sockets, security cameras and satellite dishes should be considered.

EN.04

The following diagram illustrates some of these key building fabric considerations:



F.58

Figure 58: Diagram illustrating aspects of the building fabric to be considered

EN.05

4.3.4 Adaptability

Houses should be designed to meet the differing and changing needs of households and people's physical abilities over their entire lifetime. This is an important aspect of making homes sustainable and durable.

One way to achieve this is to incorporate all the standards- M4(1), M4(2) and M4(3)- of the approved document M4 of the Building Regulations in the design of new homes and to assess whether they can be retrofitted in existing properties.

The diagram to the right illustrates the principles of inclusivity, accessibility, adaptability and sustainability in a dwelling.

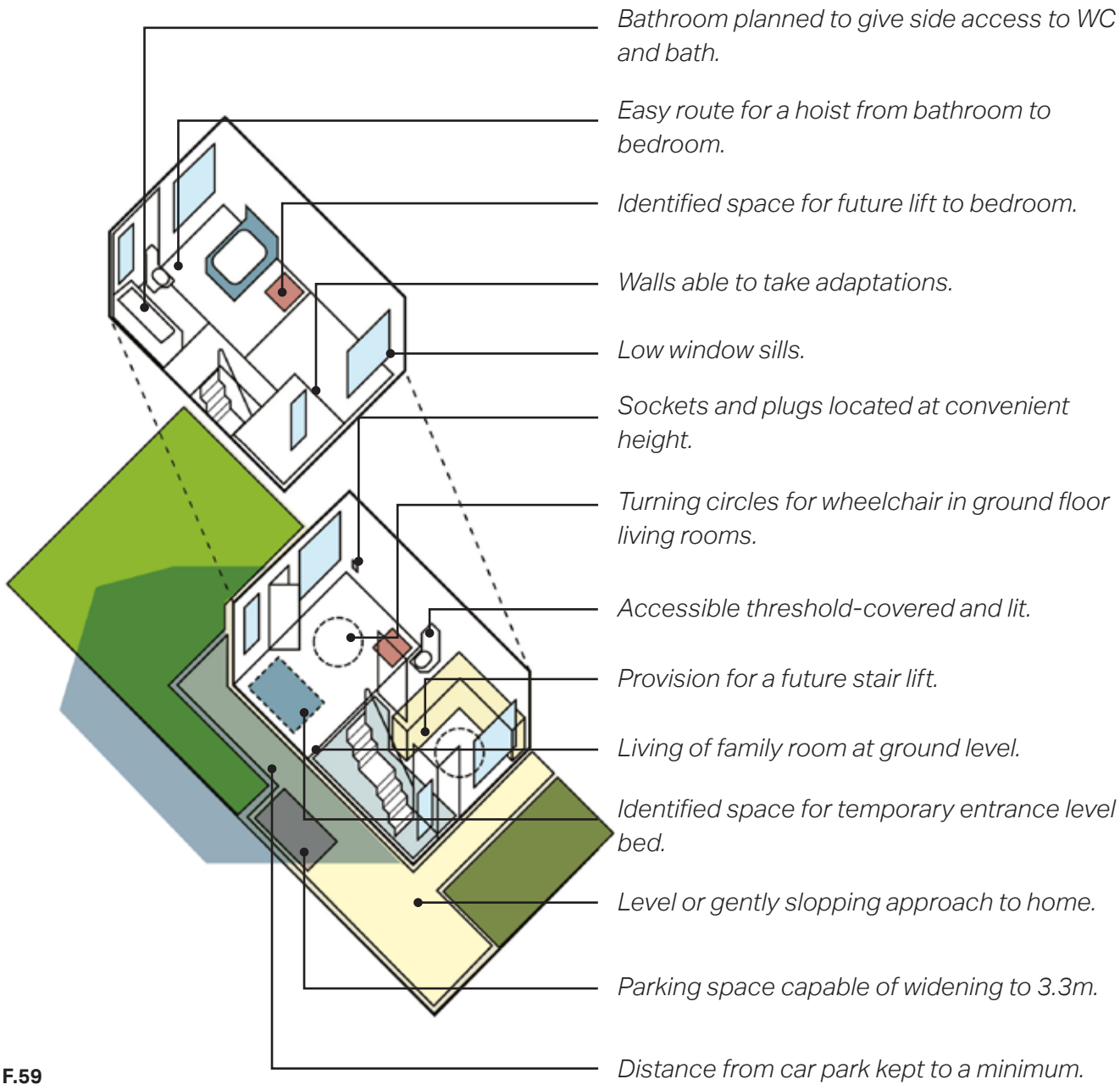


Figure 59: Diagram illustrating adaptability traits within a dwelling.

EN.06

4.3.5 Sustainable drainage

Sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs) are key tools to manage both water quantity and quality within the village while supporting biodiversity.

SuDs cover a range of approaches to managing surface water in a more sustainable way, reducing flood risk and improving water quality as well as providing additional amenity benefits.

Where reuse of water is not possible there are two alternative approaches to using SuDs.

The first is infiltration which allows water to percolate into the ground and eventually restore groundwater.

The second is attenuation and controlled release. This holds back the water and slowly releases it into the sewer network. The overall volume entering the sewer system is the same, however the peak flow is reduced which reduces the risk of the sewers overflowing. Attenuation and controlled release options are suitable when either infiltration is not possible or where infiltration could be polluting.

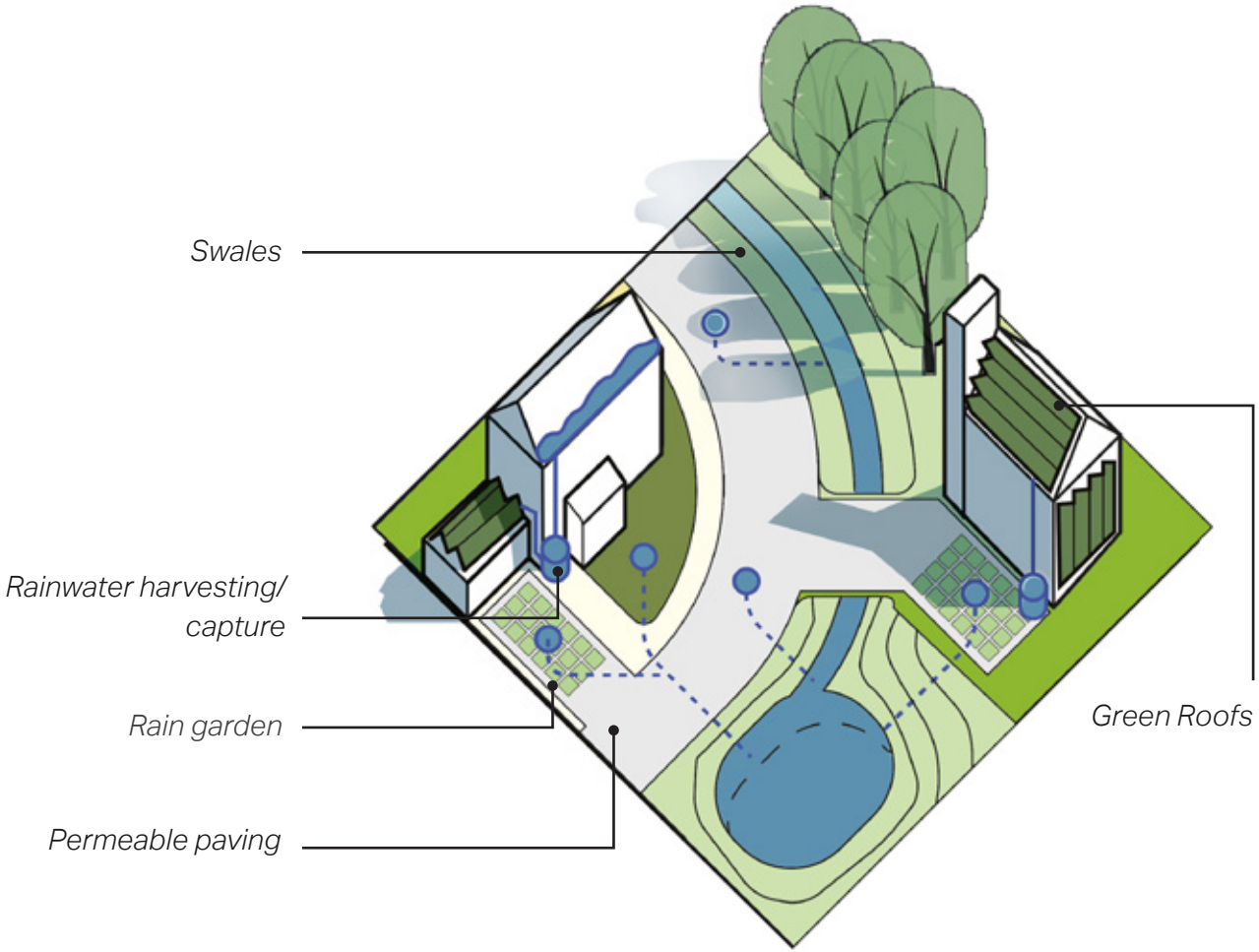
The most effective SuDs are site-specific and are integrated at the beginning of the design process. They are also well maintained ensuring that the system remains functional throughout the year. This can be an issue with standard drains where root growth results in blockages. Maintenance can alleviate issues within the system.


F.60

Figure 60: Example of sustainable drainage along footpath within parkland.


F.61

Figure 61: Example of SuDs incorporated into a back garden design.



F.62

Figure 62: Illustrative diagram of sustainable urban drainage systems in a residential neighbourhood.

F.63

Figure 63: Example of sustainable drainage incorporated into the street scene.

F.64

Figure 64: Example of sustainable drainage incorporated into a housing development.

EN.07

4.3.6 Rainwater harvesting

Rainwater harvesting refers to the systems allowing the capture and storage of rainwater, as well as those enabling the reuse in-site of grey water. Simple storage solutions, such as water butts, can help provide significant attenuation. To be able to continue to provide benefits, there has to be some headroom within the storage solution. If water is not reused, a slow release valve allows water from the storage to trickle out, recreating capacity for future rainfall events.

New digital technologies that predict rainfall events can enable stored water to be released when the sewer has greatest capacity to accept it.

These systems involve pipes and storage devices that could be unsightly, if added without an integral vision for design.

Therefore, some design recommendations would be to:

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

Figure 65: Example of a rainwater harvesting tank in the shape of a bee hive

Figure 66: Example of a modular water tank

EN.08

4.3.7 Renewable low carbon energy solutions

Solar panels

Solar panels should be designed to have a minimal visual impact on the roof of a building. New builds should incorporate solar panels from the beginning and form part of the design concept. Some attractive options are solar shingles, photovoltaic slates or tiles. Solar panels can also be used as a roofing material in their own right.

When retrofitting existing buildings the proportions of the roof and building should be considered to identify the best location and sizing of the panels. Tiles or slates of different colours can be added to the roof to better integrate the solar panels.

In Conservation Areas, solar panels cannot be deployed on a listed building and cannot be fitted to a wall that faces a road.

Ground heating systems

District heat networks may play an important role in the transition to low carbon energy. Heat pumps involve using a system to capture heat from outside the home and move it inside. Electricity is used to do this though the quantity of heat generated is greater than the quantity of electricity used to power the system. As a heat pump captures heat that is already present in the environment, the system itself emits no carbon dioxide emissions.

Figure 68: Integrated photovoltaic tiles have a much lower visual impact than panels being added to the roof.

Figure 67: Example of a ground source heating system.

EN.09

4.3.8 Waste storage and servicing

With modern requirements for waste separation and recycling, the number of household bins that need to be stored has increased. It is important that these are accommodated in ways that allow convenient access, and without increasing street clutter or harming the appearance of new buildings.

- Servicing arrangements should have a specific and attractive enclosure of sufficient size for all the necessary bins, this avoids the blocking of pavements with bins and makes the public realm more attractive.
- The illustrations on the right show some successful design solutions for accommodating bins within the plot.

Figure 69: Examples of successful storage design solutions for accommodating bins and bicycles at the front of buildings.

4.4 Mobility and parking

Increasing the number of residents and visitors walking and cycling around the Aldringham and Thorpeness Neighbourhood Areas is an important part of improving people's wellbeing and the quality of their experience. With the abundance of open spaces, large and small in the area, active travel should be encouraged.

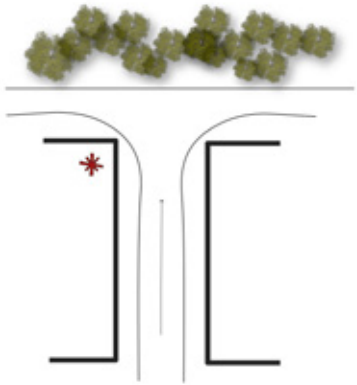
Parking should be well designed to be as visually unobtrusive as possible, and avoid conflicting with the appearance of the public realm.

MP.01

4.4.1 Legibility and wayfinding

A legible and well signposted neighbourhood area is easier for the public to understand as people can orientate themselves with visual landmarks and direct routes. Being able to navigate around a place makes people feel safer and creates a more pleasant living environment. While there are existing signposts and public maps to help with wayfinding, further measures can be incorporated:

- Use opportunities such as corners and junctions to incorporate landmark buildings, gateways and focal points so that each part of the development is visually distinct and recognisable;
- These gateways and nodes should incorporate distinctive and characterful architectural elements which nod to Aldringham and Thorpeness's diversity of built heritage;
- New developments should closely consider their relationship with each of the designated character areas and foster a contiguous sense of place for each respective character area;
- Signs should avoid cluttering the public spaces and can be an opportunity for attractive and distinct features which complement the neighbouring properties rather than detract from the visual scene; and
- Street and development names should seek to reflect relevant local history.

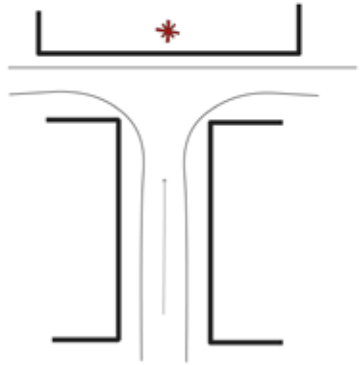


F.70

Figure 70: A view terminating at a wooded area with a landmark building located on the left

F.71

Figure 71: Photo of an information board used in a community effort to clean the beach.



F.72

Figure 72: A landmark building located at the termination of the view.

MP.02

4.4.2 Creating a safe walking and cycling environment

- Where there is a choice, new development in Aldringham and Thorpeness should be selected where they would generate the least amount of car movements and be within a comfortable distance of local services. This will help to promote active travel, an important feature in 'livable' neighbourhoods.
- New development should ensure that pedestrian and cycle routes are incorporated into new designs ensuring that the option to travel on foot or by bike is incentivised.
- These routes should link to key services and other existing routes to form a network of walkable and rideable areas.
- Users of public and private space are varied and include disabled users, parents/carers with buggies and young children. It is important for these users to be catered for when designing new development.
- Walking and cycling routes along a roadway should provide safety from vehicles on the road. This requires a footway, grass verge or pavement that is wide enough to ensure pedestrians do not conflict with vehicles.
- In addition, walking routes should not pass through hazardous areas such as fields with large animals, dykes, ditches or areas of flooding.

Figure 73: Photo of a walkway leading from the street onto the beach.

MP.03

4.4.3 Car parking

Car parking areas should make a positive contribution to the design and setting of Aldringham and Thorpeness.

A good mix of parking typologies should be deployed, depending on, and influenced by; location, topography and market demand.

The main types to be considered are shown on this page and the next.

- For family homes, cars should be placed at the front or side of the property. For small pockets of housing a front or rear court is acceptable.
- Car parking design should be combined with landscaping to minimise the presence of vehicles.
- Parking areas and driveways should be designed to minimise impervious surfaces, for example through the use of permeable paving.
- When placing parking at the front, the area should be designed to minimise visual impact and to blend in with the existing streetscape and materials. The aim is to keep a sense of enclosure and to break the potential of a continuous area of car parking in front of the dwellings by means of walls, hedging, planting, and use of differentiated quality paving materials.

Figure 74: Examples of on-plot garage and side parking in Aldringham-cum-Thorpe.

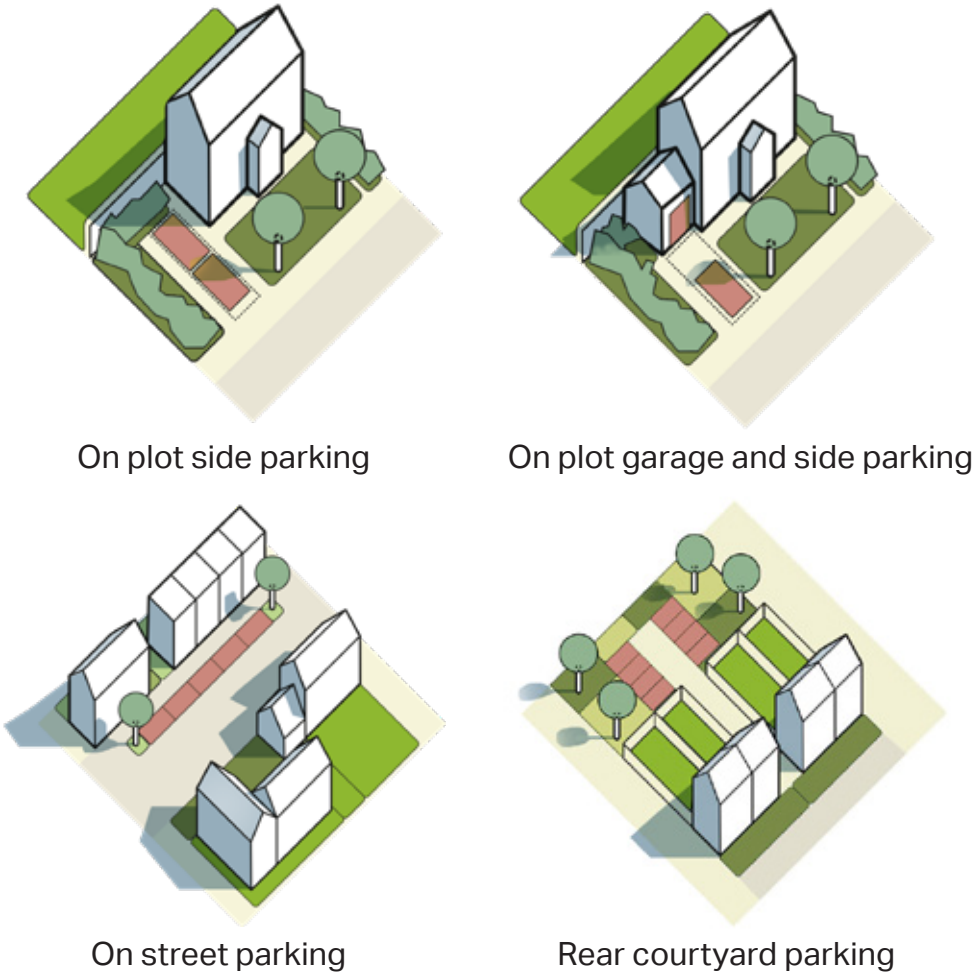
On plot side or front parking

On-plot parking can be visually attractive when it is combined with high quality and well designed soft landscaping. Front garden depth from the pavement should be sufficient for a large family car.

Boundary treatment is the key element to help avoid a car-dominated character. This can be achieved by using elements such as hedges, trees, flower beds, low walls, and high quality paving materials between the private and public space.

Driveways should be constructed from porous materials to minimise surface water run-off and flooding therefore on-plot parking should consist of permeable spaces.

Any rear parking courtyards should be small, overlooked and not be at the expense of rear gardens.



F.75
Figure 75: Illustrative diagrams showing parking typologies.

MP.04

4.4.4 Electric vehicle charging points

In general, new development should cater for electric vehicles (EV) with on-road and off-road car parking spaces.

Electric charging parking stations can be provided where new car parks are needed in the area. Most new EV charging points will be delivered in new and existing dwellings off-road and within private plots.

On-road car parking

Car charging points should be provided next to public open spaces.

Where charging points are located on the footpath, a clear footway width of 1.5m is required next to the charging point, for a wheelchair user and a pedestrian to pass side-by-side.

Charging points should be located in a way that are not blocked by petrol or diesel vehicles.

Off-road car parking

Mounted charging points and associated services should be integrated into the design of new developments

Cluttered elevations, especially main facades and front elevations, should be avoided.

Consideration should be given to how new EV charging points would impact the existing character of dwellings and effort be made to reduce this impact.


F.76

Figure 76: Photo of electric charging spaces.

F.77

Figure 77: Example of off-road mounted car charging points.

4.5 Character area codes

4.5.1 Introduction

The character area codes are designed to provide specific guidance to Aldringham and Thorpeness. These areas were set out in the character analysis undertaken in chapter 3. The specific guidance builds upon the general design codes outlined in the previous section and highlights guidelines that will both preserve and enhance the existing character of the area. These should be read jointly with the previous codes.

Applicants seeking to develop in these areas should refer to these sections when considering the street layout, placemaking and architectural features of new development.

The dotted lines show the character areas of Aldringham and Thorpeness where the character area codes apply respectively. The lines do not represent settlement boundaries or indicate where development may be acceptable or otherwise.

ALDRINGHAM

THORPENESS

4.6 Aldringham: character area guidance overview

The guidance in section address features and and issues that are specifically relevant to Aldringham.

Figure 78: Map showing a general outline of Aldringham.

4.5.2 Existing characteristics

- A rural character with green verges and some street trees
- Streets laid out in an informal structure
- Medium to large plots with sizeable front and back gardens
- A mix of detached and semi-detached housing with heights between one and two storeys
- Boundary treatments are mixed though there are plenty of fences and green hedges of varying sizes.
- Green hedges and green verges provide attractive rural boundary treatments.
- Un-marked on-street car parking in places though parking is mostly on-plot.

4.5.3 Aldringham guidance

- Developments must preserve a sense of rural and a lower density feel by accommodating front gardens of at least 2 metres depth and soft boundary treatments consisting of trees and hedges
- Future building heights should not exceed 2 and a half storeys and colour palette and materials should align with existing character which is brick or white or pastel render and clay pantiles for roofing
- Gaps and filtered views into the surrounding countryside between properties should be preserved as this contributes to the rural character
- Walking and cycling routes should be promoted where possible, existing Public Rights of Way should be carefully incorporated into any future developments
- Parking must be on plot and on side or front to avoid cluttering the narrow lanes with vehicles.

4.6.1 Aldringham: character area codes

These codes should be used alongside the general design codes outlined in the previous section along with national and regional planning policy documents.

AC1. **Green verges**
Retain existing green verges which form an important part of Aldringham's rural character.

AC2. **Front gardens**
Front gardens of at least 2 metres depth with vegetation should be provided. Paving over existing front gardens should always be avoided.

AC3. **Gaps and spaces**
Preserve gaps and informal spaces to maintain the rural sense of space.

AC4. **Materials and colour palette**
The existing character should be preserved through the use of the same materials and colour palette.

AC5. **Car parking**
Parking should be allocated for on-plot side or front parking.

AC6. **Extensions**
Extensions to the front, back or side of a dwelling are acceptable but should use the same materials and colour palette as the main building.

F.79

Figure 79: Diagram showing a typical area in Aldringham

4.7 Thorpeness character area codes

The codes in the following pages address the Thorpeness character area with codes applied to issues relevant to the area. Codes may be applicable in other areas.

Figure 80: Map showing a general outline of Thorpeness.

4.7.1 Existing characteristics

- Streets align to natural features such as The Meare and the Suffolk coast with tertiary streets laid out in an informal structure
- Buildings largely between one and three storeys with two storeys the most common
- Key landmark buildings reach heights far beyond this
- Sections of continuous frontages
- Boundary treatments tend to be vegetation in the form of hedges and trees along with brick walls and fences
- Parking is a mix of street parking on the main streets and on-plot parking in residential areas

4.7.2 Thorpeness guidance

- Development in the Conservation Area must take the utmost care to avoid impacting on any listed or landmark buildings and their context
- Retain the history and unique character of the area providing clear identifiable links between the design of a proposal and Thorpeness' architectural themes
- Avoiding obtrusive visual impacts on local natural features that form the backdrop for Thorpeness' historic and built environment such as The Meare and the beach
- Landmark buildings can exceed typical heights in Thorpeness of 2-3 storeys if the design is of an exceptional quality
- Promotion of on-plot parking rather than on-street parking to reduce congestion on streets and preserve the rural aesthetic
- Promotion of walking and cycling with places to park bicycles at key local amenities

4.7.3 Thorpeness: character area codes

These codes should be used alongside the general design codes outlined in the previous section along with national and regional planning policy documents.

TC1. **Traditional features**
Architectural features characteristic to Thorpeness should be preserved and replicated, development should reflect the village's eccentricity.

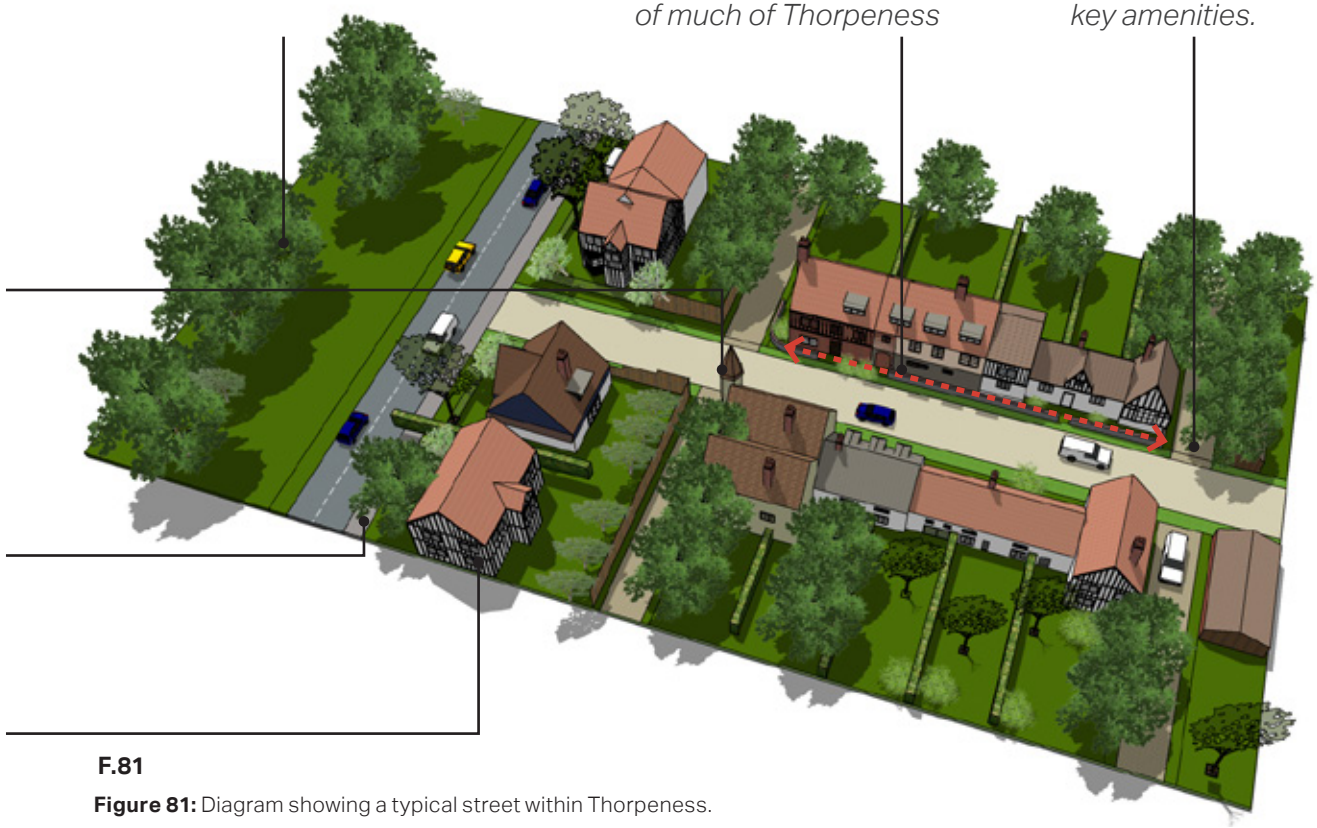
TC2. **Efficient use of space**
The existing street should be de-cluttered of unused street furniture and redundant signage.

TC3. **Materials and colour palette**
The materials and colour palette of the building should be in keeping with its surrounding context.

TC4. **Areas of transition**
Retain areas of transition between the built-up streets and the surrounding landscape.

TC5. **Continuous frontages**
Opportunities for terraced properties should be considered as these are characteristic of much of Thorpeness

TC6. **Permeability**
Pedestrian footways should connect to promote walking through Thorpeness connecting to key amenities.



F.81

Figure 81: Diagram showing a typical street within Thorpeness.

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

4.8 Checklist

Because the design guidelines and codes in this chapter cannot cover all design eventualities, this section provides a number of questions based on established good practice 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 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.

1

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;
- 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

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?

3 (continues)

Local green spaces, views & 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?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical 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 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?

3

Local green spaces, views & 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?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention e.g. permeable landscaping, swales etc.?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?

4

Gateway and access features:

- 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?

5 (continues)

Buildings layout and grouping:

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

5

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?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

6

Building line 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?

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?
- 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?

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

Building materials & 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?
- Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?

9

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?

10

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 an individual building level or through a central/ communal 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?


Delivery
05

5. Delivery

5.1 How to use this guide

The Design Guidelines will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development within the parish of Aldringham-cum-Thorpe. They will be used in different ways by different 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.
Local Planning Authority	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.
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are complied with.
Community 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.

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