

# Halesworth Design Guide

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## Quality information

### Prepared by

**Tom Beck**  
Senior Landscape Architect, AECOM

### Checked by

**Ben Castell**  
Technical Director, AECOM

### Approved by

**Ben Castell**  
Technical Director, AECOM

## Revision History

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# 1.0 Introduction

# 1. Introduction

AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funded Neighbourhood Planning Programme, led by Locality.

This Design Guide has been produced to inform new development proposed in the area. It presents a summary of the key characteristics of Halesworth Neighbourhood Area, which make this a special place to live and visit. This information is then used to inform specific design guidelines to promote sustainable development.

The approach set out here is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which encourages local authorities to consider using design codes, or in this case guidelines, to help deliver high quality outcomes for new development. It is important however, that guidance finds the balance between promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and allowing for innovation and originality. The NPPF suggests that *'design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics'* (NPPF, 2019).

The NPPF also emphasises that *'the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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'* (NPPF, 2018). It is therefore important that planning policies and decisions should address the connection between people and places and how any new development will respond to and integrate successfully into the natural, built and historic environment.

## 1.1 Objectives

The main objective of this document is to establish principles so that new development is designed and planned with regards to the existing character and context of Halesworth neighbourhood area. It sets out a series of design guidelines related to residential, mixed-use, employment and commercial development complimented by appropriate infrastructure. These objectives will aim to improve the housing, economic prosperity, transport connections, infrastructure and

environmental sustainability within Halesworth neighbourhood area. The group also looks to protect existing green spaces and identifying new green spaces for the local community.

The document initially provides context to the design guidelines including strategic issues identified during the consultation carried out by the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The aspirations by the communities involved, although not strictly design issues, need to be considered in the context of any design proposal.

This should be read in conjunction with the Housing Needs Assessment produced by AECOM for Halesworth Neighbourhood Group.

## 1.2 Process

The following steps were undertaken to produce this document:

- Meeting with members of the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and site visit;
- At the site visits character assessment and urban design analysis was carried out;
- Preparation of design principles and guidelines to be used to assess future developments;
- Draft report with design guidelines issued to the group; and
- Final report.



# 2.0 Context

## 2. Context

Halesworth is a small town in the northeast corner of Suffolk. The town is located 10 miles west of the Suffolk coastline and is well connected by rail, road and cycle links. It lies centrally within the East Suffolk Council area (formerly Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils).

### 2.1 Location and area of study

Halesworth is a nucleated historic market town located within the rural landscape of northeast Suffolk. It is located on Town River, a tributary of the River Blyth, 10 miles west of Southwold. The neighbourhood area mainly consists of the built-up area of Halesworth with a small number of fields to the edge of the settlement in the south, east and west. The boundary has developed over time and largely follows the edges of landownership boundaries through the fields adjacent to the town. The population was 4,726 in the 2011 Census.

Norwich Road (A144), B1123 and Wissett Road are the primary routes into the town creating connections with the larger surrounding roads such as the A12 and A143 which provide connectivity across the region. In addition to these routes, a finer grain of historical lanes and roads provide accessibility around the historic market town. Halesworth train station is run by Abellio Greater Anglia which delivers connections to Ipswich (with direct links to London Liverpool Street) and Lowestoft.

The Thoroughfare forms a central point for the town and hub of activity. Cycle routes through the town include Cycle Network Route 1 linking Fakenham to Harwich which is part of the national cycle network. A small number of public rights of way connect the town with the neighbouring countryside.

#### Approaches

Halesworth is easily approached from all directions and access to the Town Centre and its associated car parks is direct and user friendly. The principal circulation route for traffic using the town, or passing through it, is along Saxons Way, which has landscaped margins and no dominant architectural features. On its eastern side, this road also borders the Town Park and an overgrown section of land adjoining the Millennium Green. It is in effect predominantly green in contrast to the

quaintly rural urbanity of the Thoroughfare and Market Place.

The primary approach from the nearest arterial road, (the A12), is from the South along Bramfield Road and is distinguished by the gracious parkland setting of South Lodge. Opposite, there is a post war housing development with tree-lines streets, behind a landscaped margin beside the road.

There are three roads into Halesworth from the West. Walpole Road crosses rolling agricultural fields until it meets an abrupt change, marked by the backs of the houses in Dukes Drive. This is partly moderated by rather sparse hedgerow trees and a planted landscaped margin separates and screens the housing behind from the road into the town. Chediston and Wissett roads follow the valleys of their respective streams, both arriving at the outer perimeter of the town centre. Their watercourses bisect the town, and flow through the Town Park into Millennium Green. At present, they are accorded little significance in the public realm but present an important and necessary opportunity for improvement in townscape quality and hydraulically.

Approach from the North along Norwich Road is characterised by modern industrial and commercial ribbon development, to some extent alleviated by a few surviving hedge trees and the open site of the former Middle School. Over the past two years, some relatively small-scale infill housing development has taken place and the overall effect is visually incoherent. The descent from the bridge over the railway offers a welcoming prospect of the Town Centre with its dominant church tower, and verdant wetlands of the Town Park and Millennium Green.

From the East, Holton Road has a more suburban character with individual detached houses of varied design standing behind well stocked gardens. The overall effect is predominantly leafy and pleasant with interest added at Castle Hill, where there is a small green space opposite the architectural presence of Georgian Castle House. Thereafter, more urban development leads to the 'portal' provided by the low railway bridge and the elegant terraces of Quay Street.

Halesworth has a railway link comprised of a branch line from Ipswich to Lowestoft, the journey to each taking 55 minutes and 33 minutes respectively. For many visitors, the approaches to the railway station from the north or south is the first impression they will have of the town, rather than by way of a road. The views from either direction is pleasant apart from the final section leading into the station, from the south.



**Figure 1 Halesworth Neighbourhood Area**

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## 2.2 Historical development

**650AD – 850 AD:** Modern Halesworth was founded during the Saxon period.

**11th century:** A settlement known as Healesurda (enclosure of a man called Haele) or Halesworde (corner of land with water on both sides) had been established in the area. Halesworth is mentioned in the Domesday Book and more specifically, Ulf the Priest who was in charge of the parish of Halesworth. Following the invasion of England from William the Conqueror, the Argentein family became lords of the manor of Halesworth. Although the family did not live in the area, they had a strong influence on the town.

**1220s:** By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Halesworth had developed into a small market town.

**16th century:** Halesworth was famous for its apothecaries (forerunners of modern health practitioners). Carved beams at a doorway, include the carvings of a pestle and mortar suggest a connection with this trade.

**1686:** The Old Almshouses (now art gallery; Grade II\*, NHLE 1224060) at Steeple End were built with money left in the will of William Carey, a local benefactor.

**18<sup>th</sup> century:** From the early 18<sup>th</sup> century until as recently as 1980, malting and brewing were major industries in the town. Industrial scale malting and brewing began in the early years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when there were small maltings and breweries associated with the inns in the town.

**1756:** The improvement of the Blyth Navigation shaped 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Halesworth, contributing to its prosperity. The navigation of the River Blyth improved the accessibility of the producers of East Suffolk to the port at Southwold and the availability of raw materials, including the importation of coal, iron and lime for malting, brewing, iron working and brick making in Halesworth.

**1854:** The railway arrived in Halesworth. In 1859, the station moved to its present position as the line is extended to Lowestoft.

**1882:** Patrick Stead Hospital opened in 1882. Patrick Stead was a successful Scottish merchant who bought the maltings and Brewery House in Halesworth in 1824. He encouraged the extension of the navigation between Halesworth and

Southwold. Upon his death, he left a large amount of money to provide for the building of a hospital for Halesworth.

**1942-6:** Halesworth Airfield opened in 1942 and closed down in 1946. There is a memorial museum on the site of the airfield.

**1958:** Norwich Road railway bridge opened, providing an alternative to the level crossing by the station with its moveable platform gates.

**1989:** Saxons Way (A144) opened, providing a new link road, allowing through traffic to avoid the narrow, twisting Thoroughfare.

**1991:** Following the establishment of Saxons Way, the Thoroughfare became a pedestrian friendly area.

## 2.3 Cultural Associations

Halesworth has a rich cultural history which is centred around the Hooker brothers who lived in Halesworth from the early nineteenth century. Sir William Jackson Hooker and Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker are both described as ‘two of Kew’s most illustrious Directors’ (quote from Christopher Mills of The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew). The Hookers were plant collectors and they carried out expeditions across the globe in search of rare species, which they donated to Kew Gardens seed collection. Joseph Hooker was a published author producing the ‘Handbook of the British Flora’ and a close friend of Charles Darwin. The two frequently compared notes on the results of their botanical expeditions. However, he was not just a botanist, Joseph Hooker had many skills as he was a qualified doctor, a geographer, meteorologist and cartographer as well as a skilled writer and artist.

The New Cut Maltings represents an important part of Halesworth’s history as it was one of many local maltings. Various owners have developed the premises and added storeys and architectural details up until 1967 when the building was closed. It reopened in 2003 after being converted into a multi-functional arts space. Other examples of converted maltings, mainly for residential use, include those at River Lane.



Figure 2 Halesworth Location Plan

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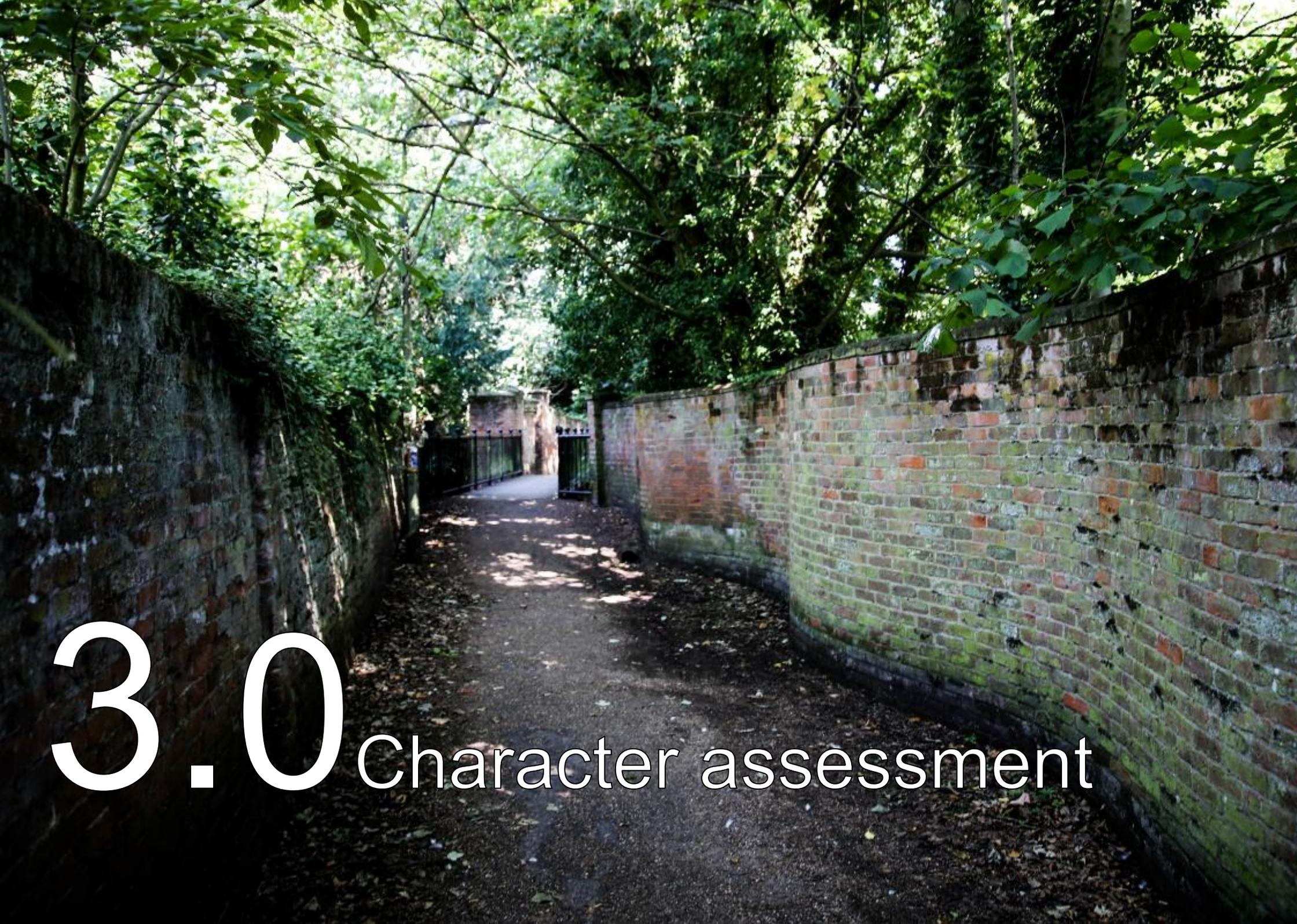
## 2.4 Designations

The following designations were identified in Halesworth Neighbourhood Area:

- Halesworth Conservation Area, containing a large number of listed buildings;
- Unlisted buildings which make positive contributions to the character of Halesworth can be found in Appendix 1 on page 25 of the “*Halesworth Conservation Area Appraisal*”;
- 1km east of the neighbourhood boundary lies Holton (SSSI);
- St Margret’s Chapel Mells, in Holton, is a scheduled monument 1km east of Halesworth; and
- Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 1.



- Halesworth's importance as a thoroughfare and market town for the surrounding agricultural region has informed the street layout and design of the historic core, this has been later complemented by the railway station servicing the town and surrounding villages;
- Parking issues with on street parking in central areas;
- Open space is limited but highly valued;
- Opportunities and threats of continuing change through development;
- Halesworth NPSG need to identify sites for additional housing to meet targets set by central government; and
- Views from the surrounding rural landscape and arrival into the town through identified gateways on the edge of the settlement form valuable characteristics of Halesworth.



# 3.0 Character assessment

## 3. Character assessment

### 3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of the Halesworth neighbourhood area. The Character Assessment is used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a place. It is used to identify recognisable patterns of elements or characteristics that make one place different from another. This report is focussed on the character of the urban townscape and its rural landscape context. The features introduced in this section are later used to inform the design guidelines.

### 3.2 Existing character assessments and design guidance

Waveney District Council Landscape Character Assessment identifies Halesworth neighbourhood area as falling within Joint Character Area Suffolk Coast and Heath. These are detailed below and Halesworth falls into two character areas: B2 Blyth Wang Valley and H6 Blyth Tributary Valley Farmland.

#### 3.2.1 Blyth and Wang Valley (B2)

The B2: Blyth and Wang Valley character area contains the following key characteristics:

- *A broad, shallow valley with subtle landform variation and definition.*
- *A landscape of wetland meadow.*
- *Landscape structure provided by mixed native hedgerows and hedgerow trees including oaks which, in addition to the ditches create a rectilinear field boundary network of often an intimate scale.*
- *Blocks of coppiced willow and alder carr woodland are distinctive. In addition to lines of alders along ditch boundaries creating further variety and texture in a predominantly pastoral landscape.*

#### 3.2.2 Blyth Tributary Valley Farmland (H6)

The H6: Blyth Tributary Valley Farmland (P157) character area with the following key characteristics:

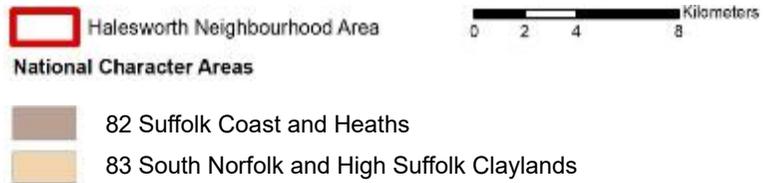
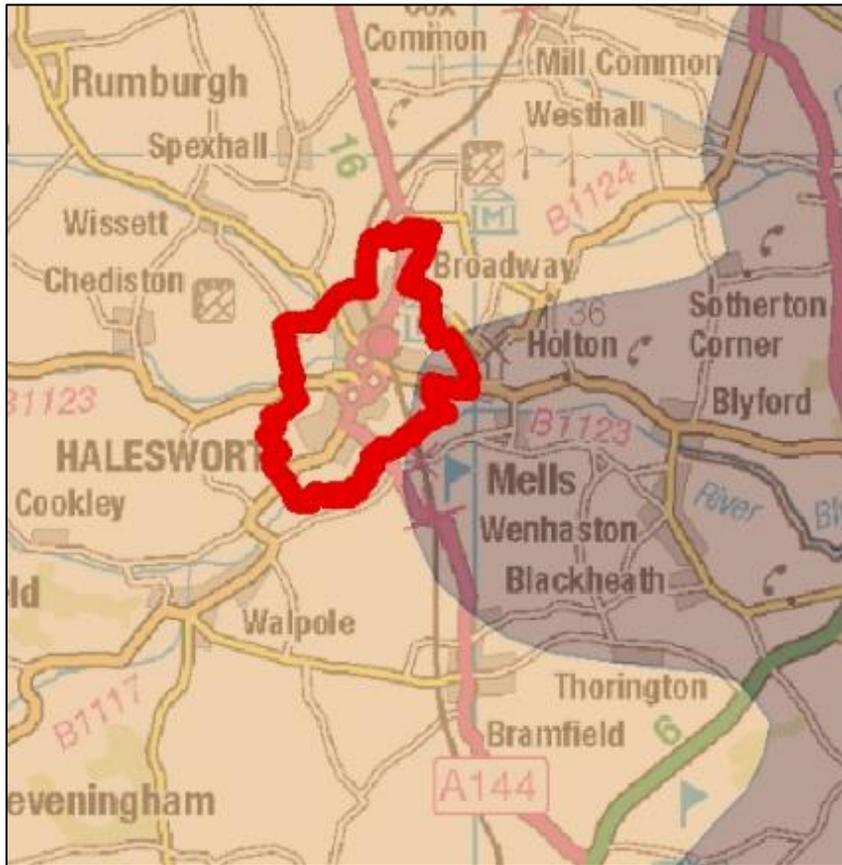
- *A broad, shallow valley with subtle landform variation and definition.*
- *Low key small scale historic settlement pattern which persists outside of Halesworth.*
- *The strategic objective for this character area is to conserve and enhance the landscape network of tributary valleys that thread through the farmland, to conserve and reinforce the wetland character associated with these minor watercourses and to create stronger connections with the adjusted landscape of Blyth Valley. The very contained visual character of the area and low key influences of settlement should be conserved.*
- *Conserve the low key, historic pattern of settlement linked by narrow rural lanes which persists outside of Halesworth. Conserve the sense of separation between settlements, notably the rural landscape between Halesworth and Holton. Conserve and enhance wooded settlement edges, using native planting to integrate settlements with their landscape, notably the extended edge of Halesworth. Avoid the introduction of further elements such as road signage and traffic calming measures, within this very rural landscape, which could begin to urbanise settlement character. (Waveney LCA, 2008.P163)*

### 3.3 Character Assessment

Waveney District Council Landscape Character Assessment identifies Halesworth neighbourhood area as falling within Joint Character Area Suffolk Coast and Heath. The character area H6 Blyth Tributary Valley Farmland contains the following description of the urban character of Halesworth.

*H6.10 This is a landscape of settled character, with the nucleated valley town of Halesworth which has extended upslope effectively dividing the area in two. A variety of settlement patterns are represented, including the small scale, linear hamlet at Wissett which is centred on the church, and the compact, nucleated village of Holton, centred on a small village green at the confluence of a number of minor tributaries. Settlement edges are often integrated with the wider landscape by woodland. Settlements are linked by a narrow rural road and lane network, which is*

often of semi sunken character, although the A144 bisects the area north south through Halesworth, as does the Ipswich-Lowestoft railway line. (P161)



**Figure 4 Landscape Character Area Overview**

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### 3.3.1 Townscape structure and Settlement pattern

Halesworth shows evidence of a historic linear settlement layout central to London Road with a number of roads radiating out from this central point. This development has created a southern and northern part of the town separated by the Town River. Networks for smaller roads lead from London Road and Norwich Road (A144), typically culminating in cul-de-sacs, meaning wayfinding can be challenging. Often these developments have come about as a result of the expansion of the town over a number of decades, extending the settlement boundary south and north west. Central to the town lies Thoroughfare, the main shopping street, which provides a variety of services from the pedestrian focused street. This street is served by a number of narrow historic footpaths and covered access points allow permeability into car parks and side streets.

Ribbon development has expanded on the eastern edge of Halesworth along Holton Road linking with the western edge of Holton forming a continuous line of built form between the two settlements. The settlement grew around the Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II\*, NHLE 1267069) and a manor house that was located near the site of Church Farm. By the 13th century, Halesworth had developed into a small market town. The medieval manorial plan, street pattern and property boundaries are still evident in the present layout of streets and boundaries. The buildings in Steeple End, Market Place, London Road, Chediston Street and the Thoroughfare continue in their original use as shops, workshops and dwellings. The majority of the buildings have retained their historic alignment and are built in the local vernacular style. Georgian and Victorian buildings were added, respecting the historic open spaces and illustrating the different phases of development of the town. Apart from the larger terraces that were built at the edge of the town in the 19th century, other Victorian buildings include prominent bank buildings as well as fashionable houses for merchants, maltsters and brewers. Secondary streets retain buildings associated with the various industries of the town including multi-storey maltings.

At the east of Halesworth, the Millennium Green connects the central parts of town with the neighbouring countryside, forming a green corridor following the Town River east into the neighbouring rural landscape. The alignment of the railway line passes north south through the eastern edge of Halesworth, passing through the Millennium Green. The railway line has little influence on the layout of the settlement. However, it has formed a crucial role in the town's development.

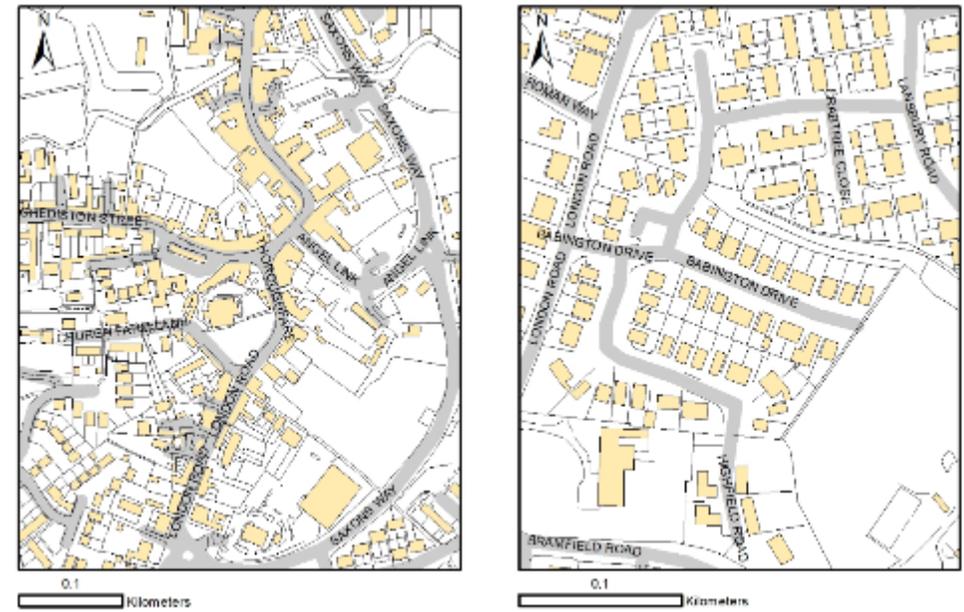
Southern parts of Halesworth have been the focus of residential development whilst northern parts of the town have been the focus of a diverse range of commercial,

industrial, recreational and educational uses. In the north, along Norwich Road, lies a large proportion of industrial development with large scale warehouses which define the character of this part of Halesworth.

Remote clusters of small farmsteads form an important part of the rural character of the outlying parts of the neighbourhood area. These remote clusters typically consist of a handful of large dwellings, often set behind mature vegetation and nestled within the open agricultural landscape.



**Figure 5 View north along footpath off Chediston Street (left) and view east off Thoroughfare to the car park behind**



**Figure 6 Higher density development (left) along Thoroughfare in contrast to lower density development (right) along Kennedy Avenue in Halesworth**

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### 3.3.2 Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

The public realm at the centre of the market town is focussed around the Thoroughfare which forms not only the historic core of the settlement but also the heart of the community. This pedestrian friendly high street central to Halesworth provides access to a wide range of facilities and services. The street offers pedestrian and cycle access from the southern part of Halesworth to the north part, with Norwich Road (A144) providing vehicular access around this central shopping street. A number of car parks can be used from this road to provide parking for shoppers. The street is wide with two and occasionally three storey buildings defining the edges of the space and creating a sense of enclosure. The public realm and street furniture use a range of local materials which enhances the sense of place. Another area of local merit is the Market Place that contributes to the public realm in the town and the historic character of the town centre. This area is of triangular shape

and much like the Thoroughfare, is defined by multiple buildings of architectural and historic interest adding to the bespoke character of Halesworth.

Additional historic open spaces include the churchyard at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, which offer some green relief to an otherwise built-up area.

The Town River passes east west along the central part of the town and connects with the River Blyth (as well as the waterway known as the New Reach) which is 1km of sandy and sediment bedrock, east of Halesworth. The valley has typical alluvium, including gravel and sand deposits. Most of the river is screened by existing vegetation with only a small number of small openings providing glimpsed views of the river.



**Figure 7 Public realm, street planting and furniture on Thoroughfare and Bridge Street**



**Figure 8 Amenity green space alongside Walpole Road**

The Town Park and Halesworth Millennium Green are large areas of connected open space linking the centre of Halesworth at Thoroughfare to the rural edge of Halesworth along the riparian River Blyth corridor (which includes the New Reach). These green spaces bring meadows, woodlands, rivers, ponds and orchards together in one area making it a valuable community asset. The Millennium Green was created in 2000 from 32 acres of grazing marsh in the flood plains of the River Blyth and the Town River. Since its origin, additional land has been added and now stretches 50 acres across the landscape towards Holton. It forms the single largest public open space in the settlement and forms an important part of the town's green infrastructure. The tree lined boundaries form a distinctive backdrop to the recreational space and provide valuable habitats for wildlife. Other valued green space includes the sports grounds at Dairy Hill and the former middle school and local charity development. Halesworth Lakes fishery enhances the diverse range of recreational spaces in Halesworth. Green spaces such as those around St Mary's Church and the sequence of places along the River Blyth, which run through the town, offering a range of recreational experiences for local residents.

Mature trees and tree groups are limited in both public and private spaces and the few which do exist make a valuable contribution to the character of the town.

A number of green spaces exist adjacent to roads which contribute to the character of their neighbouring streets. On the approach to Halesworth from the south, along Walpole Road, a large expanse of green spaces flanks the northern side of the road.

This space contains a large area of amenity grassland and mature trees, adding to the green infrastructure of Halesworth. Similarly, this feature can be seen in other locations including Castle Hill, The Avenue, Durban Close and Wissett Close.



**Figure 9 Green space and tree planting at St Mary's Church**

### 3.3.3 Pattern and layout of buildings

The town core retains its historic layout and consists of a range of historical buildings of vernacular style, with examples of Georgian and Victorian architecture. The best examples can be found around the Thoroughfare and the streets leading to it, including Rectory Street and Quay Street, Chediston Street and London Road. Most of the buildings in the centre of Halesworth have building lines which follow the pavement edge, forming an almost continuous frontage with little or no gaps between the buildings, creating a sense of enclosure. Shops at ground floor level, mostly present at the pedestrian friendly area Thoroughfare, contribute to a welcoming and lively street scene. The undulating pattern of these streets enhances varied views consisting of rows of buildings of architectural and historic interest. The centre of Halesworth has an enclosed character as built form defines the boundaries of highways and footways of often terraced housing with ground floor shop frontages. Front gardens are smaller or not present at all, creating a sense of enclosure. This design prevents views down meandering streets offering an intimate character along

a sequence of spaces through the characterful high street. The majority of buildings in Halesworth are residential, commonly two and half storeys high. A range of styles and plot sizes create a mosaic of built form contributing to the town's sense of character. Numerous focal buildings of architectural merit lie within the central parts of the town and enhance the recognisable characteristics of Halesworth and are acknowledged in the conservation area appraisal.

Detached and semi-detached housing in the periphery of the centre of town forms a large proportion of the development which took place more recently in the 1960s and 1970s. Some of these properties were constructed as infill, occupying gaps between existing buildings or residential gardens, increasing the density of development around the town centre of Halesworth.

Bungalows and lower density development form a small proportion of the built form within Halesworth. This is a distinctive quality of the outlying residential areas with their spacious and verdant qualities which enhance the character in these areas. Spaces between buildings and opposite buildings are generous and this is reflected in the lower density of development in these areas. Dwellings are larger, located in well-proportioned plots set back from the road with planted front gardens, such as those along Dukes Drive and Kennedy Avenue, and these also add to the local character.



**Figure 10 Chediston Street & walkway connecting St Mary's Church with the Market Place**

Within the rural parts of the neighbourhood area, farmsteads and agricultural buildings congregate in small clusters within the agricultural landscape. These

buildings are typically lower density and larger in size and form. Examples of this can be seen along Walpole Road.

### 3.3.4 Views, gateways and landmarks;

The topography of Halesworth is generally flat to the east and south, with the town on a gentle slope to the north along Norwich Road (A144). As a result, there are no dramatic views. However, small variations in height allow for views looking south from the top of Norwich Road including the roof tops of the buildings in the centre of town surmounted by the church and its tower. There are also views of the town at the river valley edge from the south of London Road. The tower of St Mary's Church can be glimpsed from various points around the town acting as a landmark and reference point in the Halesworth roofline, contributing to a sense of place. The Millennium Green offers a small number of glimpsed views of the roofs of residential buildings on the edge of the town with little opportunity for wider views as a result of the mature vegetation which occupies the park between Saxons Way (A144) and the railway line. Heading east along the public rights of way, beyond the railway line, open panoramic views across the rural countryside are present. These form a defining quality of the landscape and reinforce the sense of tranquillity at Millennium Green.

Entrance points to Halesworth along Walpole Road and Chediston Street create distinctive gateways, as changes in the character from rural Suffolk countryside to urban town of Halesworth are experienced. These gateways define the edge of the settlement.



Figure 11 Gateway south along Walpole Road

The character of the town derives from its surviving medieval street pattern, the pleasing human scale of the buildings and the variety of architectural styles and a few landmark buildings. St Mary's Church is a focal point for the area around Steeple End and London Road.



Figure 12 Gateway along Chediston Street



**Figure 13 View south west across Millennium Green**

The focal buildings include the modern Halesworth library which forms a positive contribution to the quality of the built form in Halesworth and lies at the northern end of the Thoroughfare. This is mainly due to the library's corner location and the contrasting materials to those used in the surrounding buildings, rather than its height and scale that is in line with the adjacent buildings.



**Figure 14 Gateway long Norwich Road heading south into Halesworth**

These focal points and focal buildings contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the area and enhance the experience of travelling through the town.

On the western edge of Halesworth, along Chediston Street, the landform to the south and hedgerow to the north contribute to the sense of arrival at Halesworth. The junction where Roman Way meets Chediston Street is at the edge of recent residential development, enhancing the focal buildings which define the threshold from rural to urban. The entry point into Halesworth Walpole Road in the south, also shares a similar sense of arrival from rural Suffolk to urban townscape. At Norwich Road, in the north, this transition is much more defined as the junction with Sparrowhawk Road creates a clear entry point into the town.

The following views are important to appreciating the character of the villages and should be considered and conserved in future development:

- Arrival along Chediston Street
- Arrival along Norwich Road
- Views of St Mary's Church
- Arrival along Walpole Road
- The sequence of views within the historic core of the market town along the Thoroughfare, Market Place, Steeple End, Bridge Street
- Views along intricate walkways and secondary streets within Halesworth historic core.



Figure 15 Focal buildings along the Thoroughfare



Figure 16 Gift Shop in the Bank building along the Thoroughfare



Figure 17 Examples of buildings in Halesworth which enhance the distinctiveness of Halesworth



Figure 18 Gateway approaching Halesworth along Chediston Street

### 3.3.5 Building line and boundary treatment

In the historic core of the town, the majority of the buildings front directly onto the street, following an almost continuous building line responding to the turns and curves of the medieval street with only a few exceptions. Buildings in the Market Place and Thoroughfare define the edges of the public realm to create an intimate journey through the characterful high street. The only exceptions in central parts are where the street opens up between buildings, providing pedestrian access to the car parks behind.

Moving away from the town centre, the majority of buildings are residential and are located along residential streets set back behind gardens of varying depths, typical of suburban modern development. In some cases, for example, Dukes Drive and Princes Green, open plan front gardens make the streetscape spacious and contribute to the suburban character. Cul-de-sacs are common within modern developments, reducing permeability. Those buildings with boundary features within residential areas vary in height and quality, resulting in a wide range of styles which diminishes the unified sense of place and character within Halesworth.

The historic core is characterised by the lack of boundary treatments. However, boundary treatments, where present in the historic part of the town, are often red brick walls with coping and occasionally with railings. Modern developments use close board fencing as a typical boundary feature which does not reinforce the distinct character of Halesworth.

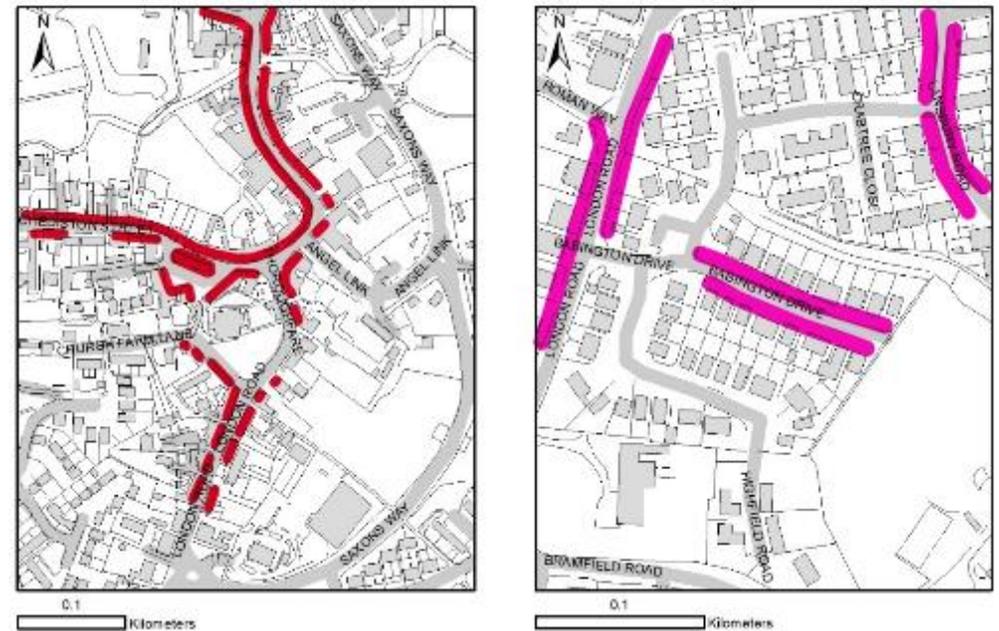


Figure 19 Halesworth Street Pattern

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Key

-  Dwellings which front straight onto the street
-  Dwellings with front gardens and boundaries



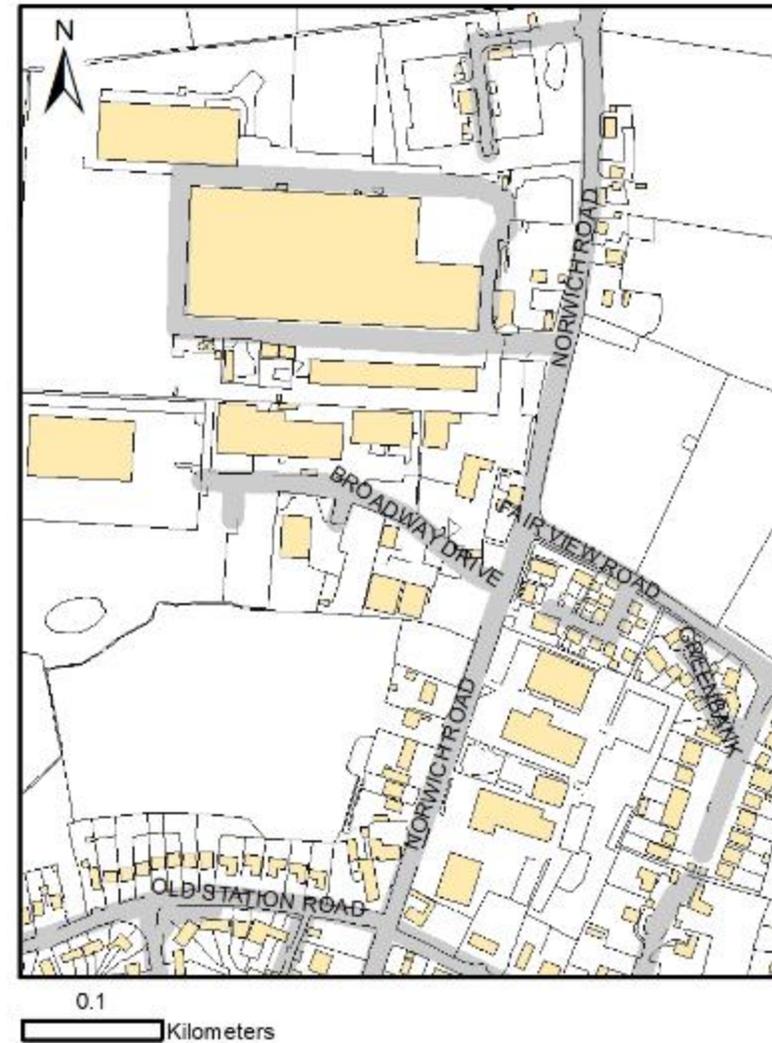
**Figure 20 Examples of brick boundary treatments from Halesworth**

Residential estates around Halesworth have been designed in groups with unified building frontages along the street scene. Central parts of Halesworth where development has been more independent and sporadic has resulted in building lines being less defined and has created a range of frontage depths and housing types.

A range of boundary treatments are evident on Rectory Lane, connecting Rectory Street with Chediston Street. These include a brick wall, incorporating a late Georgian crinkle crankle wall (also known as serpentine wall). The single brick wide structure does not require buttresses as the alternate concave and convex faces provide the stability to help resist lateral forces is structurally sound and economise on the number of bricks. There are other examples of crinkle crankle walls within Suffolk, making this element an important regional character feature which contributes to the distinctiveness of the area.

### 3.3.6 Building heights and roofline

Two and two and a half storey residential buildings comprise a common roof height across the town. There is a varied roofscape, consisting of steep pitched roofs, with chimneys located in the centre or the end gables. Black, red and grey tiles are paired with red or yellow brick chimneys. There are some exceptions, typically industrial or religious buildings, including the tower of St Mary's Church and the New Cut Maltings near the railway station. A small number of historic buildings associated with the malting industry in the area remain and retain their distinctive cowls for kiln airflows and reflect the rich industrial part of Halesworth. Roofs containing dormer windows are evident in both historic and modern buildings throughout the town.



**Figure 21 Large-scale urban grain at Halesworth Business Centre**

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**Figure 22 Maltings which have retained their original architecture**

The area of light industry on Blyth Road contains large industrial buildings with the majority not exceeding two and half storeys in height. However, there is a group of buildings at the Halesworth Business Centre where the average height is 3 storeys or more.

### 3.3.7 Architecture

Halesworth includes a wealth of historic buildings and spaces. The historic core developed in the medieval period and is defined by the Market Place, Steeple End, the Thoroughfare and Bridge Street. This area also coincides with the commercial centre of the town. The buildings along these streets are still used as shops, workshops and dwellings. Evident on the historic fabric are the different phases of the development of the town, with some of the medieval buildings being redeveloped and adapted in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in order to respond to changing economic circumstances and fashion. The architectural styles in the historic core range from local vernacular, Georgian or Victorian. A unified appearance is retained by the similar scale of the buildings and the use of local materials.

The winding courses of the streets reflect the medieval origins of the settlement. There was substantial rebuilding in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, more specifically in Chediston Street, Market Place, London Road, and the Thoroughfare. A 1530s map (included in the Halesworth Conservation Area Appraisal) shows the buildings that survive from that time. These include, apart from the Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II\*, NHLE 1267069), the Old Rectory (Grade II, NHLE 1267067), the former Guildhall of The Brotherhood of St John the Baptist (15 and 16 Thoroughfare, Grade II, NHLE 1224419) and the Angel Hotel (Grade II, NHLE 1267074) but also other properties

around the church. Buildings in the vernacular style are timber framed, of one and a half or two storeys with steep pitched roofs and substantial chimneys. These buildings are set behind the pavement edge and follow the curves of the streets.

The next wave of substantial rebuilding in the town took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. During that time, medieval buildings were altered in order to reflect new fashion and materials including the introduction of brick facades. Georgian and Victorian buildings were built in red brick, a popular fashion statement in the Georgian period, while pale yellow gault Suffolk brick was most popular during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Apart from the fashionable shops and dwellings, buildings associated with the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries malting and brewing industry and relevant housing are also evident in the townscape. A map on the Halesworth Malt website (<http://halesworthmalt.org/the-malt-trail/>) shows the remaining buildings and other locations associated with the development of the industry. These include the New Cut maltings and the Station Yard malting.

Many buildings are historic and reflect a regional vernacular enhanced by the use of a local palette of materials. Some of the older buildings were restored in the Georgian and Victorian periods so now host features typical of these time periods. For example, some buildings host bay windows, stain glass detailing in doorways and windows. Front gardens are defined along the boundary with iron railings. Facades have patterns in brick facades, e.g. flemish bonding, slate roofs and sash windows, all of which are typical of the Victorian period. For example, some of these features are present at No.12 Holton Road. Whereas Georgian period buildings, which are also typical of the area, have a more symmetrical form and fenestration of multiple pane windows some with transom windows over panelled front doors. Side gabled or hipped roofs are also common, with predominate or crown pilasters at the front door, cornicing details on more elaborate buildings. Visible water table course are all typical of Georgian period buildings such as No.96 and No.95 London Road.

Common features include porticos, porches, sash windows, red brick, gault brick, terracotta pantiles, dormer windows and high pitched roofs. Painted façades often include pastel blues, pinks and yellows consistent with other buildings in Suffolk.

Architectural characteristics also typical of Halesworth roofs are red clay pantiles, some black glazed pantiles and welsh slate roofs. They are often clad in colour washed lime plaster with a consistent fenestration and proportions.

Pockets of bungalows, such as those along Bedingfield Crescent, also form an important part of the housing types within Halesworth.



**Figure 23 Historic buildings along Chediston Street**

Extensive development took place in the post war period; however, this was located outside the historic core of the town, retaining the historic integrity of the town centre. A tributary of the River Blyth runs through the centre of the town, passing through a rural river valley landscape to the east and west of the town centre. The presence of the river and the valley has dictated the rather linear plan of the town with modern development concentrated to the north and south of the historic settlement, as well as to the east of the railway line, along Holton Road (B1123). Post war residential buildings form modern estates typical of 1960s-1980s development with general house types typical of large scale house building, with little reference to local vernacular. Multi-pane casement and sash windows with glazing bars are characteristic for the historic buildings while uPVC windows are present in more recent development.



**Figure 24 New builds on Roman Way with architectural detailing reflecting Halesworth character**

### 3.3.8 Land use, levels of activity and parking

The majority of land use is residential. This supports a rich mix of retail and commercial uses focussed around central parts of Halesworth. These are complimented by a range of community facilities including schools, the library and places of worship. Large industrial areas at Blyth Industrial Park and Halesworth Business Centre provide the majority of the industrial land uses within Halesworth.

The Millennium Green and Town Park combine to form a significant proportion of the recreation and leisure land use in the settlement and are the largest contributors to Halesworth's green infrastructure. The route also contains a number of play areas covering all age groups, including a skate park for teenagers located within the Town Park.

There is a hub of activity on the route from the Market Place along the Thoroughfare to the Halesworth library on Rectory Street. The space is served by a number of car parks which provide easy access for shoppers and visitors to the town. Roads

leading to this route, including London Road, have on-street parking which dramatically reduces the accessibility of the street for pedestrians and cyclists. Parking in the residential areas uses a mix of on plot parking and on street parking. Where on street parking is prevalent similar issues of accessibility are experienced.

Quieter areas of the town include Wissett Road, Chediston Street and School Lane which all lead into the countryside on the western edge of Halesworth. These areas experience tranquillity and scenic landscapes as they depart from Halesworth.

### 3.3.9 Positive aspects of character

This rich history of Halesworth and the strong heritage of the market town, with numerous historical buildings surviving to the present day, exhibit these positive character features:

- Public realm associated with St Mary's Church, Market Place and Thoroughfare provide a network of quality spaces at the heart of Halesworth;
- Access to public rights of way into the neighbouring local countryside;
- The thriving business and community of the Thoroughfare. This includes the large number of successful independent food and retail units, occupying historic shops within the centre of the high street which need to be retained and supported;
- The successful renovation of an old maltings at The Cut provides a new multi-functional space for exhibitions, theatre productions and music. This should be used as a successful case study for other derelict or poorly maintained historic or industrial buildings within Halesworth. For example, the buildings south of the railway station;
- The variety of architectural styles and local materials in the town centre, illustrating the various phases of development of the town, from the medieval period to the 20<sup>th</sup> century;
- The surviving historic street pattern of winding streets and historic open spaces such as the Market and the churchyard;
- The river that crosses through the centre of the town and the associated rural river valley landscape, contributes to the character of the area;
- Surviving building and places associated with the malting industry. Distinctive architectural features such as lucams and cowl for the kilns which reinforce

historic and industrial references make valuable contributions to the built form in the town;

- The Millennium Green provides a huge natural resource for local residents, with numerous play spaces improving wellbeing and boosting local biodiversity;
- The clear sense of community is reflected in spirit of the Millennium Green Trust which hosts fundraising activities, publicity events, wildlife surveys, and guided walks all run at the Millennium Green to provide funds for its ongoing maintenance;
- Economic diversity as industrial sites in the north and east of Halesworth are valuable contributors to the local economy;
- Halesworth's rich history and culture including its connections to Kew Gardens; and
- Halesworth railway station.

#### Opportunities

The group would favour proposals for landmark buildings in prominent locations which host superior quality in architecture and design. These buildings would need to be of exceptional architectural design and use high quality local materials, whilst reflecting the existing character of Halesworth. Opening up the Town River, ideally at the bridge on Bridge Street, is a key opportunity at a location where the local community and visitors could benefit from improved access to the river side and the Millennium Green and beyond.

The renovation of derelict or poorly maintained old industrial buildings, especially maltings, with new modern community functions is encouraged. The New Cut is a good example of where this has been done successfully, and it should be a case study for future redevelopments of historic buildings. The town would also benefit from history boards or plaques marking important streets and buildings in the history and development of the area.

#### Issues to be addressed in design guidelines

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management. These are principally related to increasing development pressure in Halesworth.

### Landscape

- Land around Halesworth is under increasing pressure for development with numerous allocations in the town;
- The underpass beneath Saxon way providing access to Millennium Green requires improvement;
- The Town River is a valuable asset to the town;
- The tranquillity of the Millennium Green should be retained; and
- The pressure of development can be seen in the infill development of rear gardens which has taken place in central parts of the town.

### Connectivity

- Limited pedestrian access to the countryside from Thoroughfare prevents public enjoyment and appreciation of the surrounding landscape of Millennium Green;
- Connectivity from Bridge Street along Thoroughfare to the Market Place: an opportunity for the shared surfacing to connect the two spaces in a unified area would see distinct benefits for Halesworth;
- Poor parking provision leading to an increase of on-street parking in central locations causes congestion;
- A community survey by the neighbourhood group identified the underpass from the Thoroughfare to the Halesworth Millennium Green to be a negative space which requires improvements; and
- Millennium Green contains access to the countryside in the east but has limited opportunities to connect with the countryside in the west, from the centre of town.

### Built Form

- The replacement of historic and traditional features such as timber windows and doors with uPVC and other modern non-traditional building materials has degraded the architectural quality of some buildings in the area;
- The lack of zero carbon developments is an issue the neighbourhood group would like to address to assist in mitigating the impacts of climate change;

- Back land infill development has taken place in central parts of Halesworth to the detriment of local character and has resulted in higher densities of development than typical of Halesworth; and
- Consideration needs to be given to buildings which are not designated but are of local architectural merit and importance, as they contribute to the character of the town.

### Sensitive assets and key characteristics:

- Listed buildings and built form within and adjacent to the conservation areas need to be protected;
- The protection of large green spaces such Millennium Green in planning policy for the benefit of the local community.
- Views within the town or from the town into the countryside need to be considered in future applications,
- The sense of arrival along Chediston Street where it meets Roman Way;
- Town River, River Blyth, New Reach and Halesworth Millennium Green are key features of the landscape and require enhancing and retaining;
- The museum, library, gallery and allotments and recreation grounds are valuable community assets;
- The abundance of shops in the centre of town and historical buildings are key to their identity and distinctiveness of Halesworth; and
- Historical timber framed shop fronts enhance the character of the Market Place and Thoroughfare.



Assembly point ←

# 4.0 Design Guides

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## 4. Design guidelines

### 4.1 Introduction

This section is divided into two parts. The first is a set of key elements to consider when assessing a design proposal. These are presented as general questions which should be addressed by developers and their design teams who should provide clarification and explanation as necessary. The second part is design guidance setting out the expectations of the Halesworth Neighbourhood Group.

It is important that full account is taken of the local context and that the new development responds to and enhances “sense of place” and meets the aspirations of people already living in that area. The aim of this section is to produce design guidelines that help to assess design quality and appropriateness in residential development proposals. Images have been used to reflect good examples of local architecture.

The guidelines developed in this document focus on residential development, considering the character of the immediate neighbouring buildings and the townscape and landscape of the surrounding area. The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural environment should all help to determine the character and identity of new development whilst recognising that new building technologies can deliver acceptable built forms and may sometimes be more relevant.

### 4.2 General Design Considerations

This section sets out a series of general design principles followed by questions against which the development proposals should be evaluated.

As an initial appraisal, there should be evidence that development proposals have considered and applied the following general design principles:

- Harmonise with and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form, movement pattern and land use.
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features.

- Reinforce or enhance the established character of streets, squares and other spaces.
- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity.
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality.
- Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness.
- Retain and incorporate important existing landscape and built form features into the development.
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing.
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details.
- 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; to provide a safe, attractive and cohesive environment.
- Make enough 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.
- Sensitively integrate energy efficient technologies within the scheme at the start of the design process.

#### 4.2.1 Key points to consider when assessing planning applications

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 overview as to whether the design proposal has considered the context and provided an adequate design proposal. Following these fundamental principles, there are number of questions related to the design guidelines which should be used to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of development proposals.

### Landscape/townscape structure or settlement pattern

- What are the essential characteristics of the existing settlement and street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- Does the proposal respect local landscape features including topography and hydrology?
- What are the important landscape or historic features within and surrounding the site? Have these features, including existing trees, been considered in the proposal?
- If located in a conservation area, does the proposal respond to the characteristics of the conservation area?
- How does the proposal relate to its setting? Are there any important links both physical and visual that currently exist on land adjacent to the site?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-de-sac models? If not, why?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the new points of access and street layout take regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

### Green spaces, public realm and street scape

- Does the new proposal respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features, including trees on or adjacent to the site?
- How does the proposal affect the character of a rural or edge of settlement location?

- In rural and edge of settlement locations does the development impact the tranquillity of the area and has this been fully considered?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been considered?
- Does the proposal positively contribute to the quality of the public realm and streetscape?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how will this be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Have all aspects of security been fully considered and integrated into the design of the buildings and open spaces?

### Pattern and layout of buildings

- What is the pattern and layout of existing buildings and have these been respected in the proposal?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of existing building layouts and their relationship with the main roads through the settlement?
- If the design is within or adjacent to a heritage asset, have the elements which contribute to their significance been considered in the proposal? (Heritage assets include listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, registered landscapes and registered battlefields.)
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting and significance of a heritage asset?

### Views and landmarks

- What are the existing key views and visual landmarks in the area and have these been retained and enhanced in the proposal?
- Where long distance views exist, how are these respected in the design?
- Are new views and visual connections with the existing settlement and surrounding area incorporated into the proposal?

- Are new landmarks to be formed within the proposals?

#### Building line and boundary treatment

- Does the proposal respect the existing building line and harmonise with the adjacent properties?
- Have the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?
- Building heights and roofline
- Does the proposed development compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens?
- Has careful attention been paid to height, form, massing and scale of new buildings? Is it appropriate to reflect the adjacent scale or could a taller development be considered?
- If a proposal is an extension, is it subsidiary to the existing property so it does not compromise its character?

#### Architectural details and materials

- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?
- What are the distinctive materials in the area, if any? Do the proposed materials harmonise with the local vernacular?
- 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?

#### Parking and utilities

- Has adequate provision been made for car and cycle parking both private and public?

- Has sufficient provision for electric car charge points been made?
- Do the proposed private car and cycle parking locations complement the existing provision or introduce new approaches? If new, do these new approaches change the character of the street?
- Has adequate provision been made for bin storage including facilities for waste separation and recycling?
- Is the location of the bin storage facilities appropriate in relation to the travel distance from the collection vehicle?
- Has the impact of the design of bin storage facilities been considered, including quality of materials and location on the whole development? Could additional measures be incorporated to help integrate facilities into the development?
- Has the location of utilities including appropriate maintenance access been integrated into the proposal?
- Is the use of energy saving/efficient technologies encouraged and maximised? Are these technologies integrated into the proposal and not 'bolt on'?
- Has the lighting scheme been designed to avoid light pollution?

## Design principles

The principles in this section should be applied as a starting point to all new development, regardless of where it is in the parish. These principles form guidelines in order to achieve character-led design which responds to and enhances the existing townscape. Reference to context does not mean to copy or use pastiche solutions. It means responding to what is around as inspiration and influence, and it could be a contemporary solution that is in harmony with the surroundings.

### 01 Townscape structure and Settlement pattern

The town is made of a network of historic streets linking the central parts of the town. Modern development has resulted in an increase in cul-de-sacs and residential estates which lack walkable and cyclable connectivity. Future development should enhance the character of the built form within the settlement. This includes acknowledging the contribution made by clusters of small farmsteads in rural parts of Halesworth. Connecting the Thoroughfare and the Market Place with a single shared surfacing treatment would unify the central public realm of the town. A number of small pedestrian routes link the central parts of the town with the outlying residential areas.

#### Design principles:

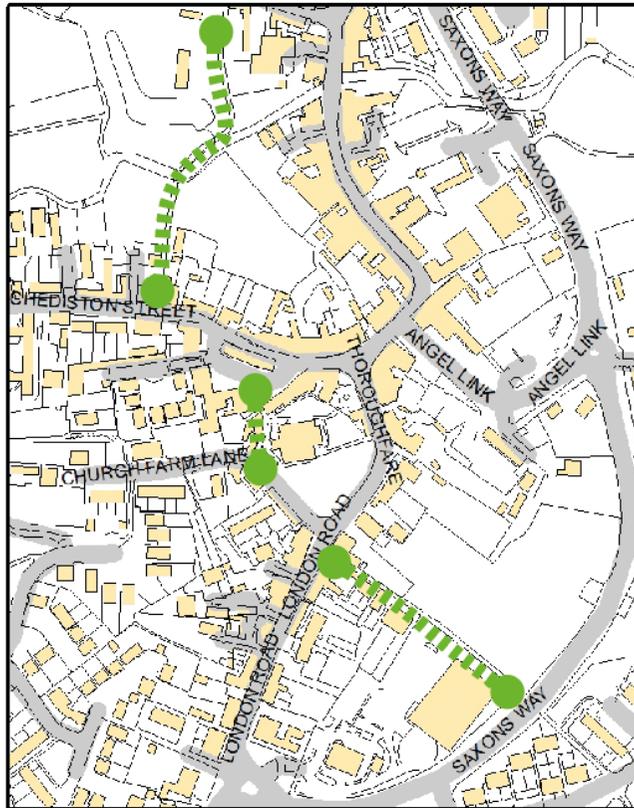
- Future development should reflect the current mix of housing of various housing types, layout and sizes typical of Halesworth. Please refer to the “Housing Need Survey Results Report for Halesworth (July 2019)”;
- Roads should be laid out in a permeable pattern allowing for multiple connections and a choice of routes to avoid congestion in central parts of the town centre;
- The integration of proposed development with the existing public rights of way and Sustrans National Cycle Network route 1 to enable sustainable travel;
- Cul-de-sacs should be short and where possible provide permeable cycle and pedestrian access between neighbouring cul-de-sacs;
- Signage should include black painted historic metal signs and bollards to emphasise the historic character of the centre of the town;
- Long linear streets should curve and bend gently to provide interest and a sequence of views through the town replicating and enhancing the character of the central streets of Halesworth;



**Figure 25 Pedestrian route connecting St Marys Church with the Market Place**

- New development proposals should be responsive to the historic layout of the town including plot widths, proportions, density, building lines and positions within the plots. Future development should consider modern needs including power charging units for on street parking areas;
- New development should provide off-street car parking to reduce congestion;
- Development proposals in the Conservation Area or adjacent to Listed Buildings should consider the setting and context within which the application site is set. The proposals should complement the local character and show evidence of the incorporation of these design principles;

- Development proposals east of Halesworth should avoid coalescence, or the perception of coalescence, with the neighbouring settlement of Holton to the east; and
- Improved pedestrian access along the Town River, connecting The Millennium Green with the Thoroughfare.



0.1  
Kilometers

Figure 26 Potential pedestrian access in Halesworth

Existing pedestrian links

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## 02 Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

Millennium Green, recreational fields, allotments, school playing fields and other areas of open space are fundamental to the success of Halesworth. Future development needs to ensure proposed public realm uses high quality materials, is diverse and well connected to these existing green spaces and enhances local biodiversity and habitat provision. Proposed schemes should include a diverse planting palette whilst enhancing the local landscape character.

### Design principles:

- Existing trees, tree belts and woodlands should be retained as far possible. Arboriculture assessments should accompany all applications affecting existing trees (including those not protected by any statutory or non-statutory designations), as they are significant contributors to the character of Halesworth, in particular at the Millennium Green;
- Halesworth would benefit from an improved public realm and an increase in the range of open space provision, ensuring it is appropriate to the location and relative to the size of the development;
- Trees in both public and private spaces make valuable contributions to the street scene;
- New open spaces should be well connected to existing vegetation and add to the existing network of informal and formal spaces through the town;
- Existing recreational spaces should be retained and enhanced, such as those at Millennium Green, as this space is at the heart of the community. Planting should focus on a mix of native supplemented with non-native species to increase resilience to climate change and biosecurity risks. Proposals should also draw upon those species already prevalent within the town;
- Use of a sustainable urban drainage system should be included where appropriate;
- Future development should consider opening up the Town River to provide access along the river side from Bridge Street/Thoroughfare to Millennium Green;
- Natural surveillance is critical to creating safe environments for play and recreation, meaning open space should be overlooked by neighbouring properties to deter offenders from committing criminal activity. This is the

design of the built environment to avoid creating areas which cannot be overlooked and increasing visibility therefore reducing the opportunity for anti-social behaviour;

- A number of residential streets on the periphery of Halesworth would benefit from more street tree planting;
- New development which includes the provision or contributes to allotments within the neighbourhood area for food growing is encouraged;
- New development should maintain and enhance the Town River, River Blyth, New Reach and the Millennium Green as an important feature of the landscape;
- Green space containing a large area of amenity grassland and mature trees, adjacent to roads in residential areas, would be encouraged to inform the setting and character of the street. This allows development to be set back from the road and would be in keeping with the existing street scenes evident in locations such as Castle Hill, The Avenue, Durban Close and Wissett Close;
- All new open space should include a commitment to long term management to ensure the success of the design objectives are met; and
- Development should consider the impacts on ecological areas in and around the town especially in areas which have been identified as priority habitat areas.



Figure 27 Green space and set back houses along Walpole Road

### 03 Pattern and layout of buildings

Houses in the central parts of Halesworth have frontages which define the edges of public realm whereas houses further out are set behind front gardens. The intricate network of streets and pedestrian routes within the historic core create interesting views and a varied street scene. Future built form in these areas, if appropriate, should follow the existing pattern of development. A range of densities, house types and plot layouts exist throughout Halesworth, which is a typical characteristic of a historical market town. These aspects of design should reflect those identified in the character assessment of these Design Codes in chapter 3.

#### Design principles:

- The location of bin storage and the parking of bicycles should be considered as part of the design and be located in convenient but discrete locations;
- The conversion of front gardens to driveways should be avoided;
- Long linear streets should curve and bend gently to provide interest and a sequence of views through the town;
- Good design should include adequate off-street parking which does not dominate the front of the dwelling but is complimented by ample planted front garden space;
- An intimate journey throughout the historic areas of Halesworth include the archway into the courtyard at 25 Market Place, Swann Lane and several pedestrian links providing access to Thoroughfare; and
- Car parking should be located outside of shared surfaced areas, junctions and access points to private driveways. This will create safer streets better for wayfinding.



Figure 28 Public realm at Market Place in the centre of Halesworth



Figure 29 Pedestrian along Town River (left) and Chediston Street courtyard (right)

#### 04 Views, gateways and landmarks

The underlying landform, the existing trees and woodland to Halesworth's periphery and the enclosed character of the settlement limits the number of views within the neighbourhood area. The remaining views therefore require careful consideration in future development. Halesworth would benefit from additional landmarks so long as they complement the existing landmarks and focal buildings of the town.

##### Design Principles:

- Visual assessments should be included as part of any application and consider the impacts of the proposals and suitable mitigation methods;
- Enhancement of views from and to the surrounding rural landscape should be taken into consideration in future development proposals;
- Scenic elements and the tranquillity of the countryside views should be retained and enhanced in future development;
- Future development proposals should incorporate landmarks where appropriate and be of exceptional architectural design and high quality materials;
- New development proposals should not be visually intrusive. This should be achieved through the appropriate scale and design including screening where appropriate;
- New development where building heights exceed that of existing development and alter the skyline should be accompanied by an assessment of the impact of the development on the skyline and views of the town; and
- New development in Halesworth should respect views of the tower of St Mary's Church, which is a distinctive local landmark.



Figure 30 Approaching Halesworth from the countryside via the gateway on Chediston Street



Figure 31 Public rights of way provide access across the Millennium Green

## 05 Building line and boundary treatments

Building lines in the centre of town are clearly defined and should be retained in all future development proposals. In contrast, the building lines in residential developments on the periphery of Halesworth are reinforced by boundary treatments such as low walls, railings or hedgerows. The building lines to these buildings are set back from the kerb and contain gardens or driveways. Future development in these areas should continue to provide a mix of boundary treatments in line with the existing character of Halesworth.

### Design Principles:

- The ratio of building to garden in proposed development should reflect that of the existing dwelling. For example, where front gardens are present on residential areas at the Paddock's it should be replicated in new neighbouring developments;
- New developments should use boundary treatments which are common (including modern and innovative designs) as long as they are complementary to the neighbouring streets and enhance the character of the town;
- The materials proposed for new boundary treatment should be of high quality, respond to the character of the buildings in the area and have strong attention to architectural detailing in both modern and traditional materials;
- Active frontages outside independent shops and cafes along Bridge Street and Thoroughfare should be retained and enhanced;
- Modern materials that complement the street scene may be appropriate where they enhance the local character;
- Boundary treatments should reinforce the continuity of the building line along a street such as those at Roman Way; and
- Proposed street furniture needs to enhance the character and complement the existing historic street furniture including the lighting, seating and signage.



Figure 32 Shows active frontages along the main high street



Figure 33 Terraces along Quay Street

## 06 Building heights and roofline

Building heights vary across Halesworth creating a diverse range of roof heights and pitches resulting in a characterful skyline across the town. Future developments should retain and enhance this aspect of Halesworth skyline. Taller buildings are present in the centre of town with none exceeding three storeys and two storey residential developments are typical throughout the rest of Halesworth.



**Figure 34** Roofline to buildings along London Road

### Design Principles:

- Building heights should be limited to two and a half storeys unless through assessment it can be demonstrated that taller buildings will preserve or enhance the local character. Any identified impacts to the setting or neighbouring buildings should be mitigated;
- Applications for new development or extensions of existing buildings should respect the setting of historic buildings and preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Halesworth Conservation Area;
- The setting of the conservation area should also be considered and respected by any future development;
- Roofs should respect the existing roofscape that consists mostly of pitched and hipped roofs;

- Dormers should not be out of proportion with the original building. Materials and architectural detailing should respond to the type and scale of the host building; and
- A diversity of frontage, scale and form of development will be the best way to creating a well-integrated development which fits into the existing urban fabric and compliments the existing character of Halesworth.



**Figure 35** Semi-detached houses at School Lane

### Building modifications, extension and plot infill

Modifications of the existing buildings should preserve or enhance the local character through appropriate design and use of appropriate materials. The following design principles would achieve this:

- Redevelopment of rear plots or infill development should be avoided where it will have a negative impact in the area. Where it is considered appropriate, it should follow the design principles within this document;
- Extensions are more likely to be successful if they do not exceed the height of the original building. Two storey extensions should be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof; and
- Solar panels and roof mounted services should be located in discrete locations, preferably not on the street facing side or façade of the building.

## 07 Architectural details

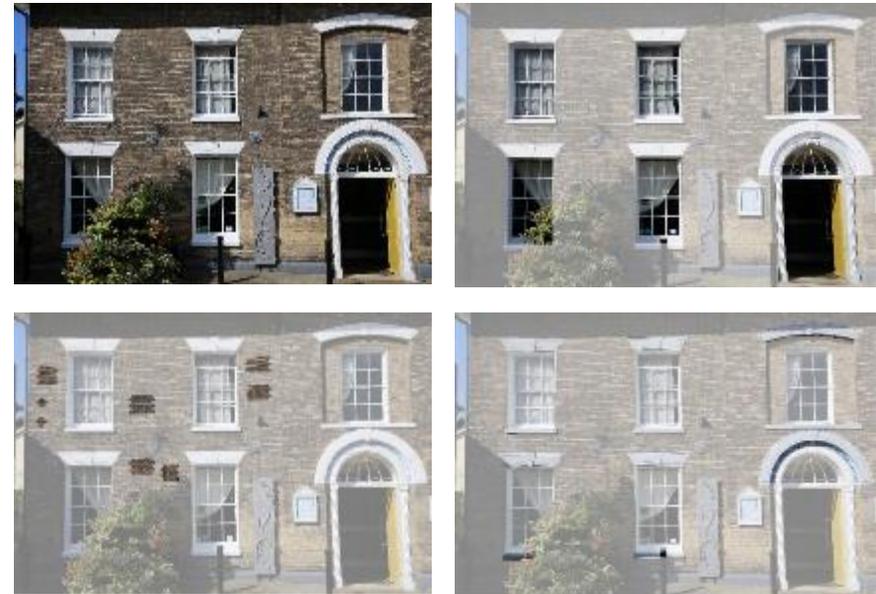
The following architectural features have been identified within Halesworth. They contribute to the local distinctiveness and character of Halesworth. These elements combine to reflect the historic market towns and architectural history, therefore should be incorporated in future development in Halesworth.



**Figure 36 Well proportioned fenestration to a house on London Road**

### Typical features

- Roofs: hipped roofs, gabled roof with chimney stacks.;
- Windows: lintels above windows, multiple paned sash windows, bay windows, bespoke fan windows, stain glass detailing in doorways and windows, symmetrical form and fenestration;
- Front door: transom windows over panelled front door, predominate or crown pilasters at the front door and timber door case with pilasters;
- Chimneys:
- Shop fronts: classical detailing including pilasters, consoles and fascia; bow windows; and
- Gardens: dwarf walls, iron railings.



**Figure 37 Architectural features of the Boarding House at the Market Place**

### Design principles:

- A strong materials palette distinctive to Suffolk should be incorporated into new proposals;
- Materials need to be of high quality and reflect the vernacular and materials inherent in Halesworth providing an authentic development which would enhance the local character and should look to include modern sustainable materials where possible. Concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows or doors should be avoided;
- Proposed housing developments should include front gardens to maintain the open character of the streets and provide space for garden trees;
- New development should provide a mix of residential, recreational and, where appropriate and feasible, commercial land uses insofar as they do not detract from the existing commercial or recreational outlets;
- New development proposals are likely to be more successful if they comprise high quality, traditional materials such as red, gault yellow/white/grey brick and timber frame; and

Future development should take the above design principles into consideration whilst not stifling innovation as far as the design enhances the character of the area.

### Historic Shop fronts



Figure 38 No. 6 Thoroughfare – Exhibiting a large carved late medieval ornamented bressumer, with brattishing and carved lions supporting a central shield

## 08 Materials

### Roof materials

- Red clay plain tiles, red clay pantiles, black glazed pantiles with some Welsh slate, red brick chimney stacks, grey-red clay plain tiles, red clay pantiles.



Figure 39 Different types of roof tile in Halesworth

### Building

- Gault brick, pale yellow Suffolk brick, red brick in stretcher bond and flemish bond occasionally with feature banding. Painted lime plaster in locally prevalent pastel colour tones, timber frame and brick noggin.

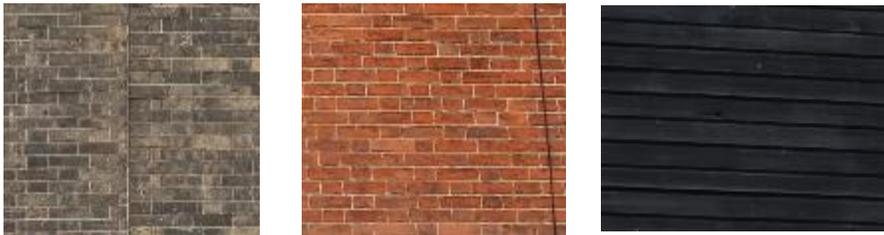


Figure 40 Types of building facades from Halesworth

#### Design principles:

- Materials need to be of high quality and incorporate local materials inherent in Halesworth, wherever possible, providing an authentic development which would preserve or enhance the local character. Concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows or doors, should be avoided;
- Proposed housing developments should include front gardens, where these are a feature of the area, to maintain the open character of the streets and provide space for garden trees;

- The use of appropriate materials so far as they do not stifle innovation as far as the design enhances the character of the area;
- Design should demonstrate an understanding of the historic context and complement the existing materials including architectural detailing;
- Development proposals should positively contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings through appropriate choice of scale, mass, height and materials. This principle should also apply to any future extension of the Conservation Areas;
- Historic shop fronts along Thoroughfare and the Market Place should be retained and enhanced where possible;
- Fenestration design should reflect the existing examples of vertical sash and casement windows;
- Proposals in rural areas should reflect the style and design of existing architecture represented in farmhouses, agriculture buildings, cottages and villas;
- A strong materials palette distinctive to Suffolk should be incorporated into new proposals;
- Redevelopment and alterations of existing buildings should be sympathetic to the surroundings and need to contribute to the distinctiveness of Halesworth;
- Architecture, massing and the form of buildings should be influenced by the regional character, of wider Suffolk, as well as local examples;
- New buildings on the edge of the town should be designed to minimise visual impacts, complementing the existing roofscape; and
- Architectural detailing in porches should be well integrated into the building to reflect the strong character and local vernacular.

## New Residential Development

This indicative plan and section brings together different elements of the Halesworth code which can relate to new residential development.



## Streets

Streets must meet the technical highways requirements as well as be considered a 'place' to be used by all, not just motor vehicles. It is essential that the design of new developments includes streets and junctions that incorporate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and if applicable public transport users. It is also important that on-street parking, where introduced, does not impede the access of pedestrians and other vehicles.

Within the settlement boundaries, streets must not be built to maximise vehicle speed or capacity. Streets and junctions must be designed with the safety and accessibility of vulnerable groups such as children and wheelchair users in mind and may introduce a range of traffic calming measures.

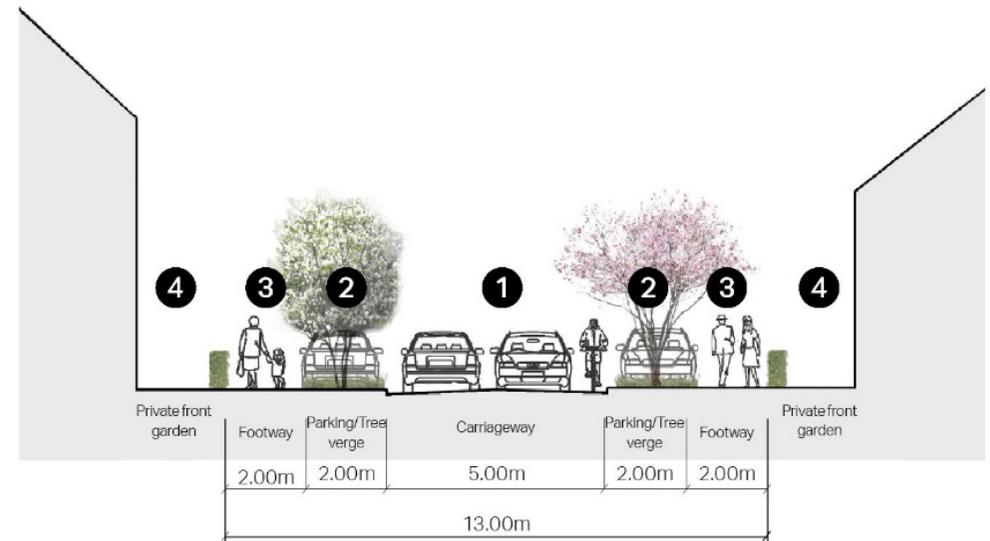
The distribution of land uses must respect the general character of the area and street network, and consider the degree of isolation, lack of light pollution, and levels of tranquillity.

Streets must incorporate opportunities for landscaping, green infrastructure, and sustainable drainage.

The next pages introduce suggested guidelines and design features including a range of indicative dimensions for street types in new residential areas.

### Residential Streets

- Residential streets should have a strong residential character and provide direct access to residences from the secondary roads. They must be designed for low traffic volumes and low speed.
- Carriageways must accommodate two-way traffic and parking bays. They may also include green verges with small trees on one or both sides. Verges may alternate with parking to form inset parking bays. These roads must also accommodate footways with a 2m minimum width on either side and must be designed for cyclists to mix with motor vehicles. Traffic calming features such as raised tables can be used to prevent speeding.



**Figure 41 Section showing indicative dimensions for residential streets. In some places tree verges may be omitted from one or both sides**

1. Shared carriageway (local access). Traffic calming measures may be introduced at key locations.
2. Green verge with small trees. The latter are optional but would be positive additions. Parking bays on both sides of the carriageway to alternate with trees to avoid impeding moving traffic or pedestrians.
3. Footway.
4. Residential frontage with boundary hedges and front gardens.

### Lanes/Private Drives

- Lanes and private drives are the access-only types of streets that usually serve a small number of houses. They must be minimum 6m wide and serve all types of transport modes, including walking and cycling, and allow sufficient space for parking manoeuvre.
- Opportunities to include green infrastructure, hedges, and/or private gardens to soften the edges must be maximised.

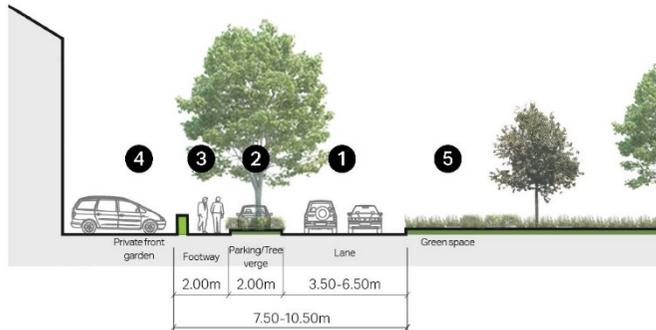


Figure 42 Section showing indicative dimensions for edge lanes. The lane width may vary to discourage speeding or provide space for parking.

1. Shared lane (local access) - width to vary.
2. Green verge with trees. The latter are optional but would be positive additions. Parking bays to be interspersed with trees to avoid impeding moving traffic or pedestrians.
3. Footway.
4. Residential frontage with boundary hedges and front gardens.
5. Green space.



Figure 43 Examples of edge lanes in Dorchester, with low-speed roads shared between motor vehicles and cyclists, and opportunities for on-street parking (note: some localities may prefer clearly defined footways and parking bays).



5.0 Delivery

## 5. Delivery

### 5.1 Delivery Agents

The design guidelines will be a valuable tool for securing context-driven, high quality development in Halesworth Neighbourhood Area Group. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table below:

Actor	How they will use the design guidelines
Applicants, developers and landowners	As a guide to the community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.  Where planning applications require a Design and Access Statement, the Statement should explain how the Design Guidelines have been followed.
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.
Town / Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are followed.
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.

### 5.2 Deliverability

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

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

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

## 6. References

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Suffolk Design Guide

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/suffolk-design-guide-for-residential-areas/>

## 7. Glossary of Terms

**Apex** the pointed top of a gable or pediment

**Arch** a curved opening

**Arts and Crafts** Style of design focusing on craftsmanship, material quality, use of local material, often reviving vernacular or traditional forms.

**Ashlar** masonry of large blocks in regular courses worked to even faces and carefully squared edges.

**Atrium** an open roofed entrance hall or central court.

**Balcony** a projecting gallery or walkway.

**Balustrade** a parapet or stair rail composed of uprights supporting a coping or rail.

**Band Course** masonry band which encircles a building wholly or in part usually un moulded.

**Bargeboard Boards** placed at the incline of a gable to hide the ends of the roof timbers, often decoratively treated.

**Bay** the vertical division of a building, often by widows or arches.

**Beam** a horizontal structural support.

**Brutalist** Architectural style appearing in the 1950s and 1960s featuring exposed concrete and emphasising bold structural forms.

**Building Line** the line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street.

**Built form** buildings and structures.

**Buttress** a mass of masonry built up against a wall to reinforce it.

**Cantilever** an overhanging projection with no support on its outside edge.

**Casement window** a window with hinged panes.

**Cement** a lime-based paste that binds together and sets hard; it is used in mortar.

**Cladding** an exterior covering.

**Column** upright structural member, usually circular in section.

**Concrete** a mixture of cement and aggregate that dries very hard, used as a building material.

**Eaves** overhanging edge of a roof.

**Edge** the boundary between two areas, these can be natural topographical features or man-made features.

**Enclosure** the use of buildings and structures to create a sense of defined space.

**Dormer** Window breaking above the eaves at wall head or set in the roof.

**Dry Stone Walling** masonry made without mortar.

**Eaves** the part of a roof that projects beyond the wall.

**Edwardian** pertaining to the reign of King Edward, 1901 – 1910 (or up to 1918).

**Elevation** any of the vertical faces of a building, inside or out.

**Façade** an exterior face of a building.

**Fenestration** the windows of a property.

**Framing** a structural skeleton in timber or metal.

**French Doors or Windows** full length casement windows opening like doors onto a balcony or terrace.

**Gable** the flat pointed end of a wall of a pitched roof.

**Georgian** English architectural style of c. 1700-1840.

**Gothic** European architectural style of c.1150-1500.

**Half-timbered** having exposed timber framing.

**Hipped Roof** a roof that is pitched at the ends as well as the sides.

**Infill** material used to fill spaces between the components of a framework.

**Jettying** building technique used in medieval timber framed buildings in which a upper floor projects beyond the dimensions of the floor below.

**Gateway** the design of a building, site or landscape to symbolise an entrance or arrival to a specific location.

**Historic Environment Record** a record held by the local authority of known archaeological sites, historic buildings, and designed landscapes.

**Land Cover** the surface cover of the land usually expressed in terms of vegetation cover or lack of it. Related to but not the same as land use.

**Landscape** an area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

**Landscape Character** a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

**Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)** landscape character areas are unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a landscape type.

**Land Use** what land is used for, based on broad categories of functional land cover, such as urban and industrial use and the different types of agriculture and forestry.

**Lintel** the beam over an opening.

**Listed Building** a listed building is one that has been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. There are three categories of listed buildings in the United Kingdom:

**Grade I** buildings, which are of exceptional interest and make up 2.5% of all listed buildings in the United Kingdom.

**Grade II\*** buildings, which are particularly important buildings of more than special interest and make up 5.5% of all listed buildings in the United Kingdom.

**Grade II** buildings, which are of special interest and make up 92% of all listed buildings in the United Kingdom.

**Mansard** four-pitch roof with a steep lower pitch and a shallower upper pitch on each side.

**Masonry** stone or brick construction.

**Medieval** the period in European history spanning c.1000-c.1500.

**Modernist** the architectural style current from c.1920 to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Mortar** a paste made of lime or cement, used in between blocks or bricks.

**Moulding** a strip with a shaped or decorated surface.

**Mullion** upright member dividing the lights of a window.

**Panelling** a decorative wooden or plaster wall covering with areas defined by mouldings.

**Parapet** the edge of a wall, projecting above roof level.

**Pediment** classical form of corniced gable used at openings as well as a termination to roof structures.

**Pitch** the slope of a roof.

**Plinth** the base course of a building, the projecting base of a wall.

**Pointing** the treatment with mortar of exposed joints in masonry or brickwork.

**Porch** a partially enclosed space in front of a door.

**Post** a vertical timber support.

**Quoins** stones larger than those of which a wall is composed, or better shaped, and forming the corners of walls or door and window openings.

**Relief**

**Render** smooth coating of cement over masonry.

**Reveal** the inward plane of a door or window opening between the edge of the external wall and the window or door frame.

**Rubble** masonry with irregularly shaped blocks.

**Ridge** the top edge of a roof.

**Rural**

Relating to, or characteristic of the countryside rather than the town.

**Rustication** treatment of masonry in which the joints are sunk, usually in a V (chamfered rustication) but sometimes square.

**Sash Window** a window with vertically (or occasionally horizontally) sliding wooden frames holding the glass panes.

**Setting** the context or environment in which something sits.

**Soffit** the underside of an architectural structure.

**Storey** a level or floor of a building.

**String Course** a raised horizontal moulding that visually divides storeys.

**Surround** a frame or an architrave.

**Terrace** a row of houses joined together.

**Tranquillity** a state of calm and quietude associated with a peace, considered to be a significant asset of landscape.

**Transom** the strengthening crossbar, above a window or door.

**Tread** a horizontal part of a step.

**Tree Preservation Order (TPO)** a Tree Preservation Order is an order made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodland in the interests of amenity.

**Tudor** the period of English history from 1485 to 1603.

**Turret** a small tower, especially one starting above ground level.

**Vernacular** the way in which ordinary buildings were built in a place, making use of local styles, techniques and materials and responding to local economic and social conditions.

**Victorian** pertaining to the reign of Queen Victoria, 1837-1901.

**Views** can be seen from an observation point to an object (s) particularly a landscape or building.

**Villa** a country house or suburban house.

**Veranda** open shelter or gallery around a building with a lean-to roof carried on verticals of timber or iron.

**Weatherboarding** form of wall cladding composed of overlapping horizontal boards on a timber framework

