Nether Alderley

Design Codes and Guidance

Draft Report

2024

AECOM

locality
the power of community

Delivering a better world

Quality information

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Revision History

Issue no.	Issue date	Details	Issued by	Position	Comments /sign-off received	Approved by	Position
1	16/01/2024	Draft document to working group	Elliot Joddrell	Senior Urban Designer	15/02/2024	David Naylor	Clerk to Nether Alderley Parish Council
2	02/04/2024	Revised draft to working group	Elliot Joddrell	Senior Urban Designer	15/04/2024	David Naylor	Clerk to Nether Alderley Parish Council
4	15/05/2024	Final draft to working group	Elliot Joddrell	Senior Urban Designer			

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Contents

Introduction

01

1. Introduction

Nether Alderley Parish Council requested support through Locality to establish a design code and guidance document to influence the character and design of new development within the neighbourhood area.

This document sets out design codes and guidance across the neighbourhood area. This document aims to help empower the local community to deliver attractive, sustainable development that meets the needs of local people.
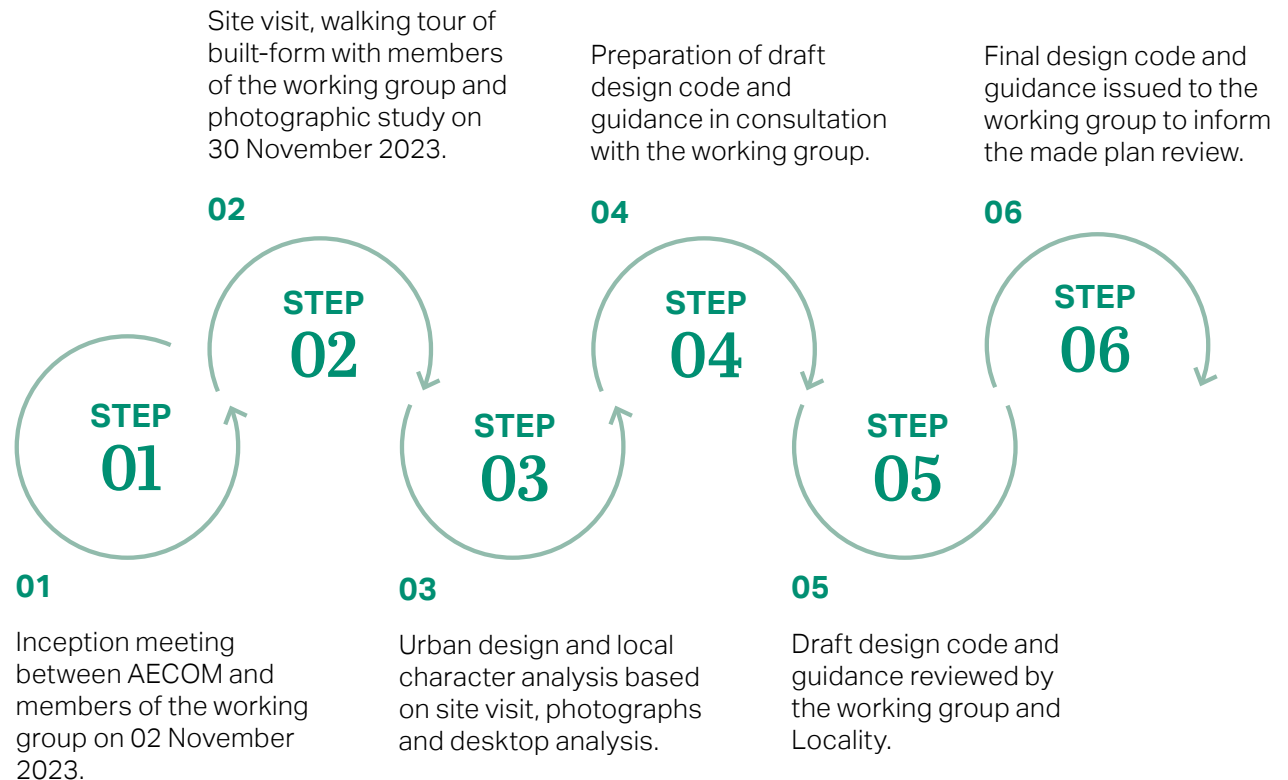
1.2 Design vision

The following vision statement is taken from the Nether Alderley Neighbourhood Plan 2023:

'Nether Alderley will be a welcoming and distinct semi-rural community that enjoys an attractive countryside setting, but with excellent links to nearby settlements. The character of Nether Alderley will be maintained and enhanced through preserving the parish's historic environment and attracting the best of the new to ensure that it is an attractive place to live, work, and visit'.

1.1 Design aims

- To preserve the special character of the neighbourhood area, particularly within the Conservation Area.

- To enhance the existing settlement pattern, 'sense of place' and quality of the built and natural environments.

- To identify and protect the key views to, from and within the neighbourhood area.

- To ensure that development is of a high quality and conforms with the neighbourhood area's rural identity.

- To provide design guidance and clarity to ensure the highest quality sustainable development.

- To preserve and protect the neighbourhood area's green routes and spaces.

02
Site visit, walking tour of built-form with members of the working group and photographic study on 30 November 2023.

STEP 02

04
Preparation of draft design code and guidance in consultation with the working group.

STEP 04

06
Final design code and guidance issued to the working group to inform the made plan review.

STEP 06

STEP 01

STEP 03

STEP 05

01
Inception meeting between AECOM and members of the working group on 02 November 2023.

03
Urban design and local character analysis based on site visit, photographs and desktop analysis.

05
Draft design code and guidance reviewed by the working group and Locality.

1.3 Design objectives

To successfully achieve the aims of the design codes and guidance, several objectives were integral:

- to understand the wider landscape character context of the neighbourhood area;

- to implement a place analysis approach to assess the settlement pattern and urban form across the neighbourhood area;

- to review planning policy and existing strategies and appraisals covering the neighbourhood area;

- to undertake characterisation work based on the analysis and the existing strategies and appraisals;

- to review the identity of the Conservation Area and other local designations;

- to produce design codes relating to the village's built form to be used in all types of new development.

1.4 Neighbourhood area

The neighbourhood area falls within the borough of Cheshire East. It is located approximately 1 mile south of Alderley Edge and 5 miles west of Macclesfield.

The neighbourhood area covers approximately 1,125 hectares and comprises housing along series of rural lanes, large rural mansions and scattered farms. The remaining area is predominantly rural and includes clusters of woodland and tree-bound fields. The neighbourhood area follows the boundary of the Parish of Nether Alderley.

This document focuses predominantly on the built environment within the main settlement Nether Alderley.

The 400 acre Alderley Park is located centrally within the Parish and is being transformed by Bruntwood SciTech into a world class life sciences research and development campus. Whilst the Alderley Park site is located within the z, it is also identifed as a strategic allocation in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy known as 'Site LPS61, Alderley Park Opportunity Site'. It is allocated for the delivery of a major life sciences campus. It is home to 200 businesses employing 2500 people. There are also 350 homes on the site
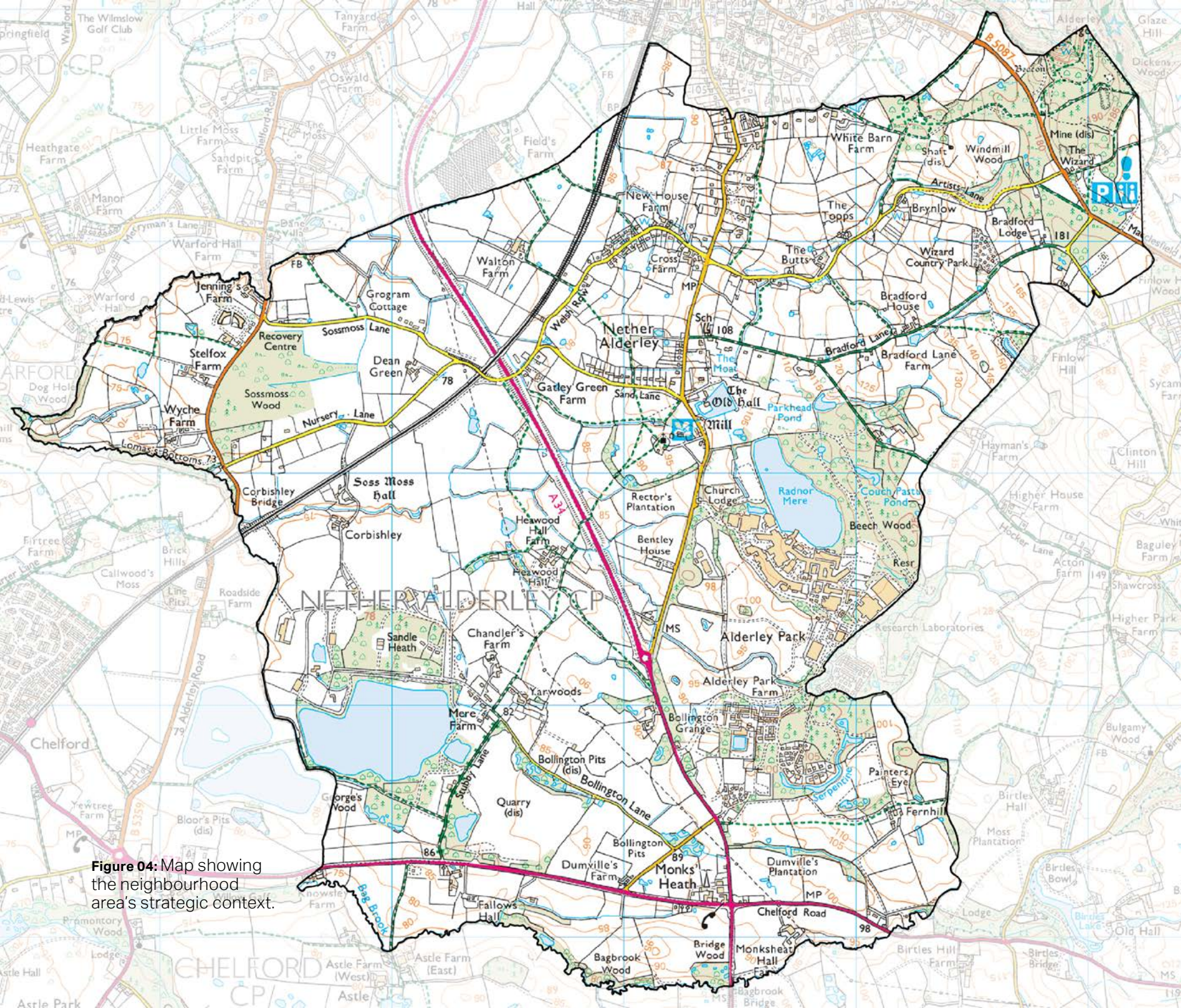

Figure 01: St Mary's Church

Figure 02: Nether Alderley Mill

Figure 03: Nether Alderley Parish Hall

Figure 04: Map showing the neighbourhood area's strategic context.

Using the design code and guidance

This document is a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development. It will be used differently by different people in the planning and development process (see Table 01, opposite).

This document will be effective when used as part of a co-design process, actively involving key stakeholders, to establish local preferences and expectations of design quality.

Through active participation and conversation, key stakeholders can use the guide to shape the key issues and ways to adequately respond to them in future development.

A design code and guidance alone will not automatically secure quality design outcomes, but it will help to prevent poor outcomes by creating a rigorous process that establishes expectations.

This document raises the standards and expectations for design quality in order to ensure that Nether Alderley remains a place in which all stakeholders can be proud.

Potential users	How they will use the design guidelines
Applicants, developers, and landowners	As a tool to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty. They will be expected to follow this document as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, to help assess planning applications. This document should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application meetings.
Parish Council	As a tool to help structure comments on planning applications, ensuring that this document is complied with.
Community groups and local residents	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.

Table 01: Potential users.

1.5 National Planning policy and design guidance

Several national planning policy and guidance documents were referred to in the development of this document. Most notably the National Design Guide and its 10 Characteristics of a Well-designed Place and Homes England's adoption of Building for a Healthy Life (formerly Building for Life), which helped to frame the requirements of good design for high quality places.
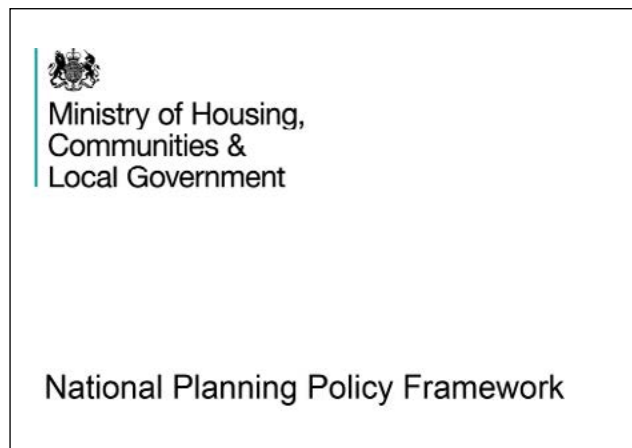
1.5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (revised December 2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the UK Government's overarching economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. It is a high-level document that attempts to make good design pivotal and to put communities at the heart of planning.

The policies within the NPPF apply to the preparation of local and neighbourhood plan areas, and act as a framework against which decisions are made on planning applications.

The NPPF states that a key objective of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The parts of the NPPF which are of particular relevance to this document are:

- **Part 2**: Achieving Sustainable Development;

- **Part 5**: Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes;

- **Part 8**: Promoting healthy and safe communities;

- **Part 12**: Achieving Well-designed and Beautiful Places;

- **Part 15:** Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment; and

- **Part 16**: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

Part 12 (Achieving Well-designed and Beautiful Places) highlights the need to create high quality buildings and places as fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

It sets out several principles that planning policies and decisions will consider ensuring that new developments are well-designed and focus on quality.

The NPPF notes that "development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes".

This is supported by the National Design Guide, which sets out the 10 characteristics of a well-designed place.

Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

National Planning Policy Framework

1.5.2 National Design Guide (2019)

The National Design Guide (NDG) sets the 10 characteristics of a well-designed place and demonstrates what good design is in practice. The characteristics are: Context; Identity; Built Form; Movement; Nature; Public Spaces; Uses; Homes & Buildings; Resources; and, Lifespan.

This document should be used as an overarching reference for new development where topics are not covered in local guidance. The NDG characteristics were used in the initial analysis to understand local demands and challenges.

The NDG notes that a well-designed place is unlikely to be achieved by focusing only on the appearance, materials and detailing of buildings.

1.5.3 National Model Design Code (2021)

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) sets a baseline for quality and practice. It provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes and the outlining of character areas.

The NPPF is the foundation stone to good design and the NDG sets out the 10 characteristics of well-designed places. This is developed further by the NMDC, which creates the baseline for analysing and visioning places. Design codes help development achieve the requirements of good design and for community benefit.

1.5.4 Building for a Healthy Life (2020)

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

The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed schemes, as well as useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

1.6 Local policy and guidance

Nether Alderley area falls within Cheshire East Council. The following planning documents were reviewed to understand the policy context which will influence this design code document.

1.6.1 Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CEC, 2017)

The Local Plan Strategy is the first part of the new Local Plan for Cheshire East, and it was adopted on the 27th of July 2017. This document sets out the overall vision and planning strategy for development in the borough and contains planning policies to ensure that new development addresses the economic, environmental and social needs of the area. It also identifies strategic sites and strategic locations that will accommodate most of the new development needed. At the time of writing Cheshire East are undertaking a review of the Strategic Plan to decide if updates are required.

1.6.2 Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (CEC, 2020)

This is the latest available version of the SADPD (September 2020), and was submitted to the Secretary of State on 29 April 2021. The SADPD, sets non-strategic and detailed planning policies to guide planning decisions and allocate additional sites for development, where necessary, to assist in meeting the overall development requirements set out in the LPS. It has been prepared to support the policies and proposals of the LPS by providing additional policy detail. Alderley Park, which falls within Nether Alderley's Parish area, is the subject of a separate development framework.

1.6.3 The Cheshire East Borough Design Guide (Volume 1: Setting the Scene of Cheshire East) (CEC, 2017)

This Design Guide was adopted by Cheshire East Borough Council in 2017, and defines Settlement Character Areas (SCA) in the Borough area. In detail, the following SCA are identified:

- North Cheshire Fringe
- Grit stone Edge
- Silk, Cotton & Market Towns
- Salt & Engineering Towns
- Market Towns & Estate Villages

Nether Alderley sits in the North Cheshire Fringe. This SCA is mostly rural in comparison to other SCAs such as Salt & Engineering Towns, and is unique thanks to its open views of the landscape.

1.6.4 The Cheshire East Borough Design Guide (Volume 2: Residential Guidance – Creating Quality) (CEC, 2017)

This document provides the practical guidance to implement the best practice approach to design reviewed earlier. This guidance provides a good guide to best practice development. As an authority wide document the detail is high level but forms the foundations of more detailed codes developed here.

1.6.5 Alderley Park Development Framework (CEC, June 2015)

This development framework was adopted in June 2015 by Cheshire East Borough Council and aims to guide the future development of Alderley Park considering adopted and emerging development plans.

1.6.6 Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment (LUC, May 2018)

This document was produced by Land Use Consultants (LUC) for Cheshire East Borough Council and was issued in May 2018. The Landscape Character Assessment provides an evidence base to inform policies and proposals in the new Local Plan, providing an objective description of the local landscape and a strategy to guide the landscapes of Cheshire East and their future changes. The document defines a Landscape Character classification according to which different Landscape areas are identified in the Borough Council. Nether Alderley falls within character area LCA 5b: Capesthorne Character Area, LCA 6b: Withington Character Area and LCA 7d: Marthall the description of which is the base of evolved work in this report.

1.6.7 Nature Conservation Strategy (former MBC, 2006)

Adopted in October 2006, this strategy is part of Borough Local Development Framework and was issued by the former Macclesfield Borough Council. The Nature Conservation Strategy identifies the different elements that create the natural environment of the borough and sets up policies and actions to protect, manage and enhance these resources. The main objectives of the policy are to protect, mitigate, compensate, enhance and raise awareness and understanding of the local natural environment.

1.7 Site visits and engagement

An inception call between AECOM and representatives of Nether Alderley Parish Council was undertaken on 02 November 2023 to introduce the teams, explore the working group's key aims and objectives and to address any initial concerns.

A site visit was then conducted on 30 November 2023 led by members of the working group. The visit commenced at Nether Alderley Parish Hall and covered the whole neighbourhood area including its urban and green spaces and the surrounding countryside.

The visit allowed AECOM to gather an extensive photographic survey and undertake a comprehensive place analysis which have formed the basis of this document. This document has resulted from a collaborative effort reflecting the priorities of the local community.

Figure 05: Artists Lane

Place analysis

02

2. Place analysis

Nether Alderley is a rural village of country lanes surrounded by picturesque agricultural countryside and woodland. Its origins as a rural farming community remain visible in its working farms and barn conversions. The local red brick and white with black timber framed buildings give a visual identity that is characteristic of Cheshire.

2.1 Context and identity

The neighbourhood area has a population of 910 according to the 2021 Census. The village's low density gives it a calm and tranquil feel and helps it to integrate harmoniously with the surrounding countryside.

Nether Alderley does not have a local centre but is a short distance from the centre of Alderley Edge to the north of the parish. The village has evolved through organic and scattered growth. The historic central focal point was around the church , inn and Old Hall. The landmark St Mary's Church is located centrally to the parish boundary.

The evolution of the development at Alderley Park, which appears segregated from the rest of the parish, has the potential to isolate from the wider community. There is a need for the development to further integreate into the wider Nether Alderley community.

The neighbourhood area is rural in character and there is evidence of its agricultural past in its numerous farm buildings and barn conversions.

The village has a strong visual aesthetic arising from its red brick and white washed buildings, some with black timber frames. Development styles are varied and include a mix of large detached mansion houses, more modest detached rural dwellings and newer more suburban style developments such as Alderley Park .

There are few amenities in the village due to its proximity to Alderley Edge. There is, however, the Churchill Tree pub and sports club within Alderley Park. Other key areas of activity include Nether Alderley Primary School, St Mary's Church and Nether Alderley Parish Hall.

Figure 06: Sports club and gym, Alderley Park

Figure 07: The Churchill Tree, Alderley Park

Figure 08: Commercial building, Alderley Park

Figure 09: Nether Alderley Primary School

Figure 10: White wash and black timber framed dwelling, Artists Lane

Figure 11: View towards dwellings on Welsh Row

Figure 12: A traditional village post box.

Figure 13: Large detached dwelling, Nursery Lane

Figure 14: Suburban character development within Alderley Park

2.2 Settlement origins and growth

Nether Alderley is first mentioned in 1086 in the Doomsday Book as Aldredelie, a name that suggests it began life as Aldred's Clearing. By the 1500s, Nether Alderley was a thriving farming community of around 300 people, with the inn, church and mill at its heart.

Most people farmed small pieces of land rented from the Lord of the Manor, employing other villagers as labourers.

Supporting them were a number of skilled tradesmen: blacksmith, carpenter, shoemaker and most importantly the miller. By the late 1700s, life and the village had not greatly changed, although farms now tended to be larger and more prosperous.

Figure 15: Historic mapping from 1882 showing the church, rectory, mill, inn. schools and blacksmiths

Figure 16: Alderley Mill

Figure 17: Historic Boys School

Figure 18: Historic Eagle and Child Inn

2.2.1 Settlement pattern today

The settlement pattern today typically reflects the historic development forms with dwellings running parallel with country lanes. Exceptions to this include more sub-urban development forms such as the Orchard Crescent cul-de-sacs located of Welsh Row which were originally built as affordable dwellings.

Alderley Park also exhibits more modern and higher density development including apartments and terraced housing. The estate is privately managed by Bruntwood Sci Tech. The manicured landscape, modern housing and commercial activity within the Alderley Park set it apart from the rural and historic parts of the village. Nevertheless the built form and open spaces are typically of a high quality.

Figure 19: Traditional rural character of housing along Artists Lane

Figure 22: Terraced townhouses, Alderley Park

Figure 20: Terraced courtyard block, Alderley Park

Figure 23: Apartments, Alderley Park

Figure 21: Sub-urban development character, Orchard Crescent

Figure 24: Semi-detached dwellings set back and oriented to face Welsh Row

2.3 Layout and built form

The map at figure 28 shows the relationship between built and unbuilt space in the neighbourhood area. The layout of buildings can highlight interesting urban patterns and help to identify different elements of character. Using this method, the neighbourhood area's urban spaces can be roughly divided into the following categories:

Organic scattered built form

This historic development pattern has resulted in the micro-siting of buildings scattered across the landscape. Many of these buildings are farms associated with large expanses of farmland.

Linear development

Development along Welsh Row, Sand Lane and Congleton Road exhibits various scales and styles of buildings but is linear in nature with numerous adjacent buildings and plots built oriented to and accessed from the same street.

Large-scale non-residential buildings

This includes large commercial buildings within Alderley Park as well as light industrial buildings and agricultural barns and outbuildings within the wider landscape.
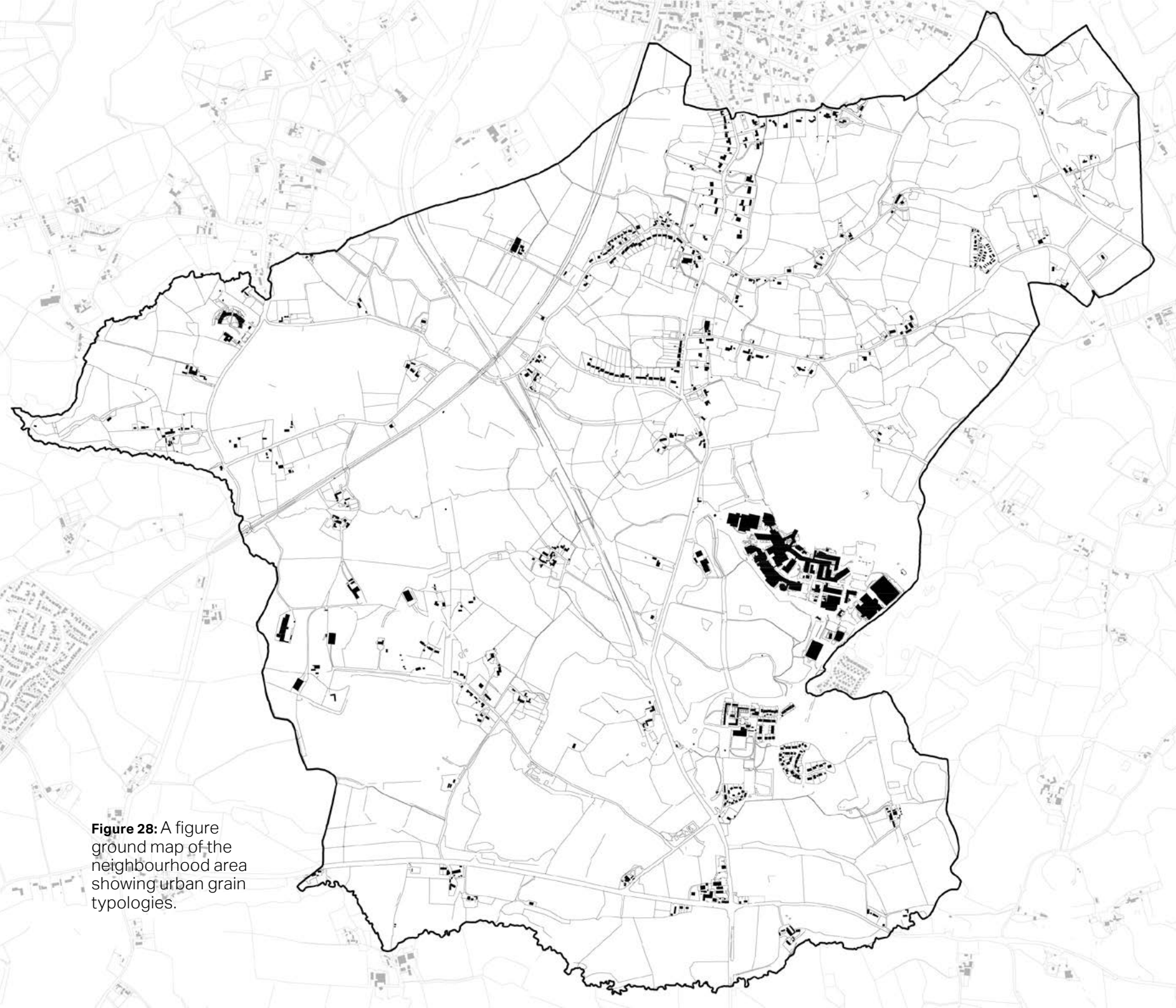

Figure 25: Formal 'planned' layout at Alderley Park.

Figure 26: Linear development layout along Congleton Road

Figure 27: Standalone dwellings within the wider area - Soss Moss Lane

Figure 28: A figure ground map of the neighbourhood area showing urban grain typologies.

2.4 Historic assets

The Nether Alderley Conservation Area was originally designated in 1974 and covers a small percentage of Nether Alderley. The buildings within the Conservation Area include The Church and associated buildings such as The Rectory, cottages, a former inn, the mill and The Old Hall.

There are 56 listed buildings within the neighbourhood area. One of these, the Church of St Mary, is Grade I Listed. Four are Grade II* Listed. 51 are Grade II Listed. Of these, there is a clear dominance of local red brick along with white washed and black timber framed buildings with a mix of slate, stone and rosemary tiled roofs.

In addition to the listed buildings, there are 3 non-designated entries recorded on Cheshire East Councils Local List of Historic Buildings. There are also 5 scheduled monuments and the neighbourhood area falls within the buffer zone of the Jodrell Bank Observatory World Heritage site.

Figure 29: The Grade II Listed The Rectory

Figure 30: The Grade II Listed Rectory Cottage

Figure 31: The Grade II Former Stables at Eagle and Child Cottage

Figure 32: Grade II Listed Millbrook Cottage

Figure 33: The Grade II Listed Eagle and Child Cottage

Figure 34: The Grade II* Listed Nether Alderley Mill and Dam Wall

Apple House

Former Stables

The Old Hall

Nether Alderley Mill and Dam Wall

Rectory Cottage

The Rectory

Millbrook Cottage

Eagle and Child Cottage

Church of St Mary

Stanley Mausoleum

Old School

Former Stables

Figure 35: Map showing listed buildings in Nether Alderley Conservation Area

Figure 36: The Grade II Listed Stanley Mausoleum

Figure 37: The Grade II Listed Old School

Figure 38: The Grade I Listed Church of St Mary

GRADE	HISTORIC ASSET
Grade I Listed	Church of St Mary
Grade II* Listed	The Old Hall Nether Alderley Mill and Dam Wall Old School Soss Moss Hall
Grade II Listed	Yew Tree Cottage Fallows Hall Milepost 330m east of road junction at Monk's Heath Churchyard walls, gate, piers and gates Rectory Cottage Gate piers to Alderley Mill Cottage Eagle and Child Cottage Former stables at Eagle and Child Cottage Heawood Hall, Headwood House and Headwood Chase Training centre and stores at Alderley Park Tenant's Hall at Alderley Park Gate piers and gates, centre of east wall of garden at Alderley Park Dean Green Farmhouse Cross Farmhouse Yew Tree Farmhouse Wyche's Farmhouse Monksheath Hall Fernhill Lodge Barn 50m north north east of Fernhill Farmhouse The Rectory Village Cross

Table 02: Historic assets in the neighbourhood area.

GRADE	HISTORIC ASSET
Grade II Listed	Brick garden walls to Alderley Mill Cottage and The Apple House
	Gate piers and gates by Tenant's Hall at Alderley Park
	Dovecote at Alderley Park
	Entrance arch at south east corner of the walled garden at Alderley Park
	Fromer kennel House and walls of kennel compound behind Beech Tree Lodge
	Nut Tree
	Walton Farmhouse
	Gate pier, wing walls and gates to south east of Matthews Nursery
	Stanley Mausoleum in St Mary's Churchyard
	White Gate Cottage
	Flume Head
	Barn 50m east of Bagbrook Farmhouse
	Beech Tree Lodge
	The Stanley Obelisk
	Church Cottages, Millbrook Cottage
	Church Lodge
	Barn 75m south south west of Heawood Hall Farmhouse
	Ice House outside west wall of garden at Alderley Park
	Outbuilding in garden 25m to rear of Beech Tree Lodge
	Brookdene and attached cottage
	Gatley Green Farmhouse
	Former stables 45m north of The Old Hall
	Corner pier and garden wall to south west of The Old Hal
	Anne's Cottage
	Bradford Lodge Bradford Lodge Nursery
	Fernhill Farmhouse
	Churchyard Cross
	Apple House
	Gate piers, wing walls and bridge over moat to The Old Hall
	Sandhurst and Hill Cottage

Figure 39: Grade II Listed Brookdene

Figure 42: The Grade II Listed Village Cross

Figure 45: The Grade II White Gate Cottage

Figure 40: The Grade II Listed Tenants' Hall

Figure 43: The Grade II Nut Tree

Figure 46: The Grade II Listed Flume Head

Figure 41: The Grade II Listed Anne's Cottage

Figure 44: Grade II Listed Training Centre and Stores

Figure 47: Grade II Listed Dovecote

2.5 Movement networks

Please refer to the map at figure 51.

2.5.1 Pedestrian movement

There are numerous Public Rights of Way providing pedestrian connectivity across Nether Alderley and the surrounding landscape. The parish has many streets that are only paved on one side or not paved at all. Whilst this limits the space allocated to pedestrians it also contributes to the rural character of the parish and its country lanes. More recent developments such as the residential development in Alderley Park have pavements on both side of the street allowing for a degree of separation between pedestrians and vehicles.

2.5.2 Cyclist movement

There are no National Cycle Network routes within the Neighbourhood Area. However, an on-road cycle route not on the National Cycle Network runs west to east through the Neighbourhood Area along Welsh Row and Artists Lane.

2.5.3 Public transport

The neighbourhood area is served by the 130 bus between Macclefield and Manchester Airport and the 88 bus between Altrincham and Macclesfield. The nearest train stations are at Alderley Edge and Chelford which are on on the West Coast Mainline.
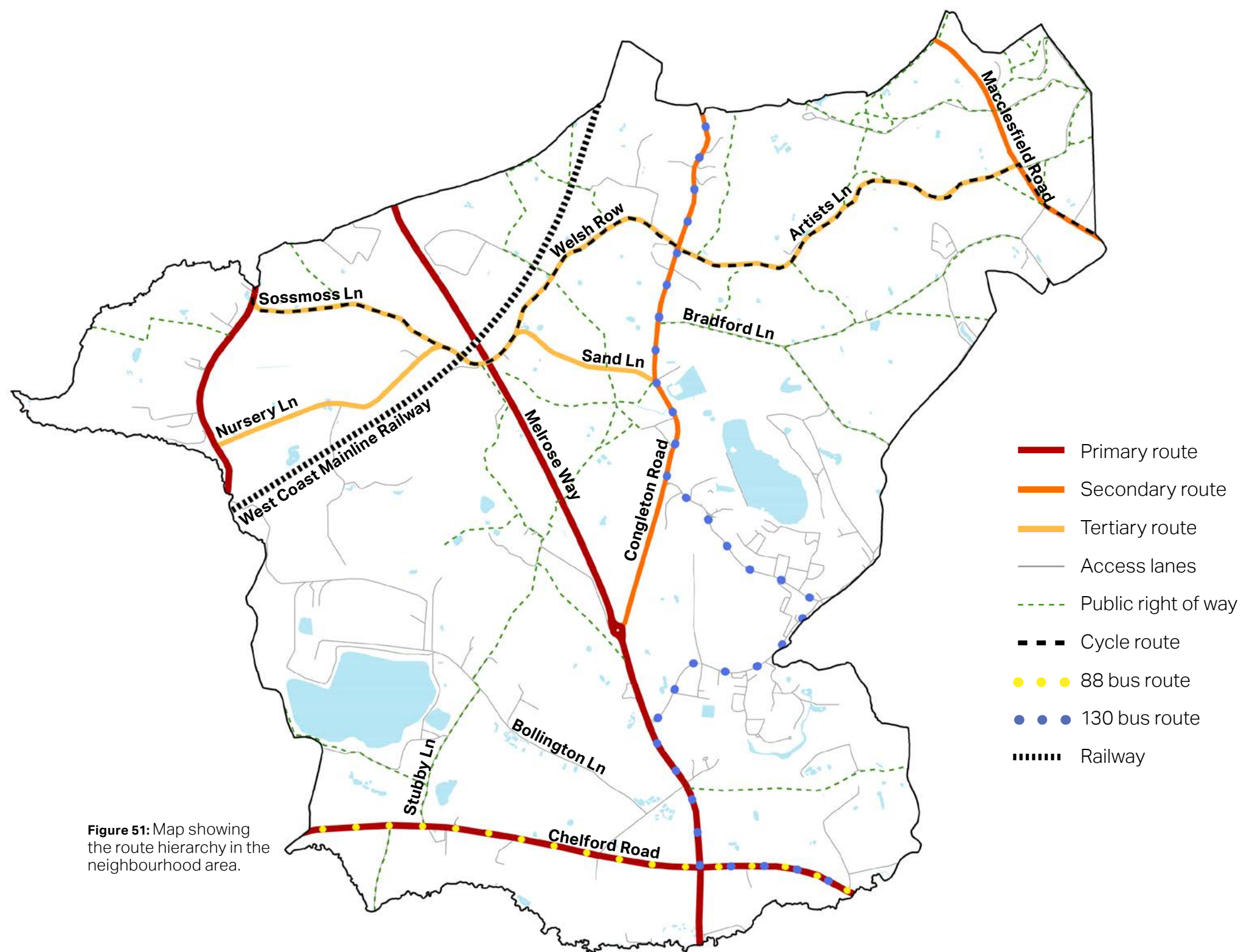
2.5.4 Vehicular movement

Several key routes run through the neighbourhood area including the A34 (Melrose Way) which is a bypass around Alderley Edge and the A537 which is a strategic route between Knutsford and Buxton, in Derbyshire. Congleton Road is another key route which runs north to south through the parish between Alderley Edge and Monks Heath

The remaining routes in the neighbourhood area comprise winding country lanes and rural tracks leading to farms and properties within the surrounding landscape.

Figure 48: Sand Lane with no pavements

Figure 49: Cyclist on Welsh Row.

Figure 50: The primary route of Congleton Road

Figure 51: Map showing the route hierarchy in the neighbourhood area.

Macclesfield Road

Artists Ln

Welsh Row

Sossmoss Ln

Bradford Ln

Nursery Ln

Sand Ln

West Coast Mainline Railway

Melrose Way

Congleton Road

Stubby Ln

Bollington Ln

Chelford Road

Legend:

— Primary route
— Secondary route
— Tertiary route
— Access lanes
--- Public right of way
- - - Cycle route
● ● ● 88 bus route
● ● ● 130 bus route
······ Railway

2.6 Landscape

The land form is relatively flat to the west of the Neighbourhood Area and rises to the east reaching its highest point at the Alderley Edge sandstone outcrop. There is a gradient change of approximately 115m from the west of the parish to the east. This has resulted in some sloping lanes that respond to the gradient as well as vantage points where views across the landscape can be appreciated.

The neighbourhood area falls within 3 landscape character areas defined in the Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment. These are Capesthorne, Withington and Marthall.
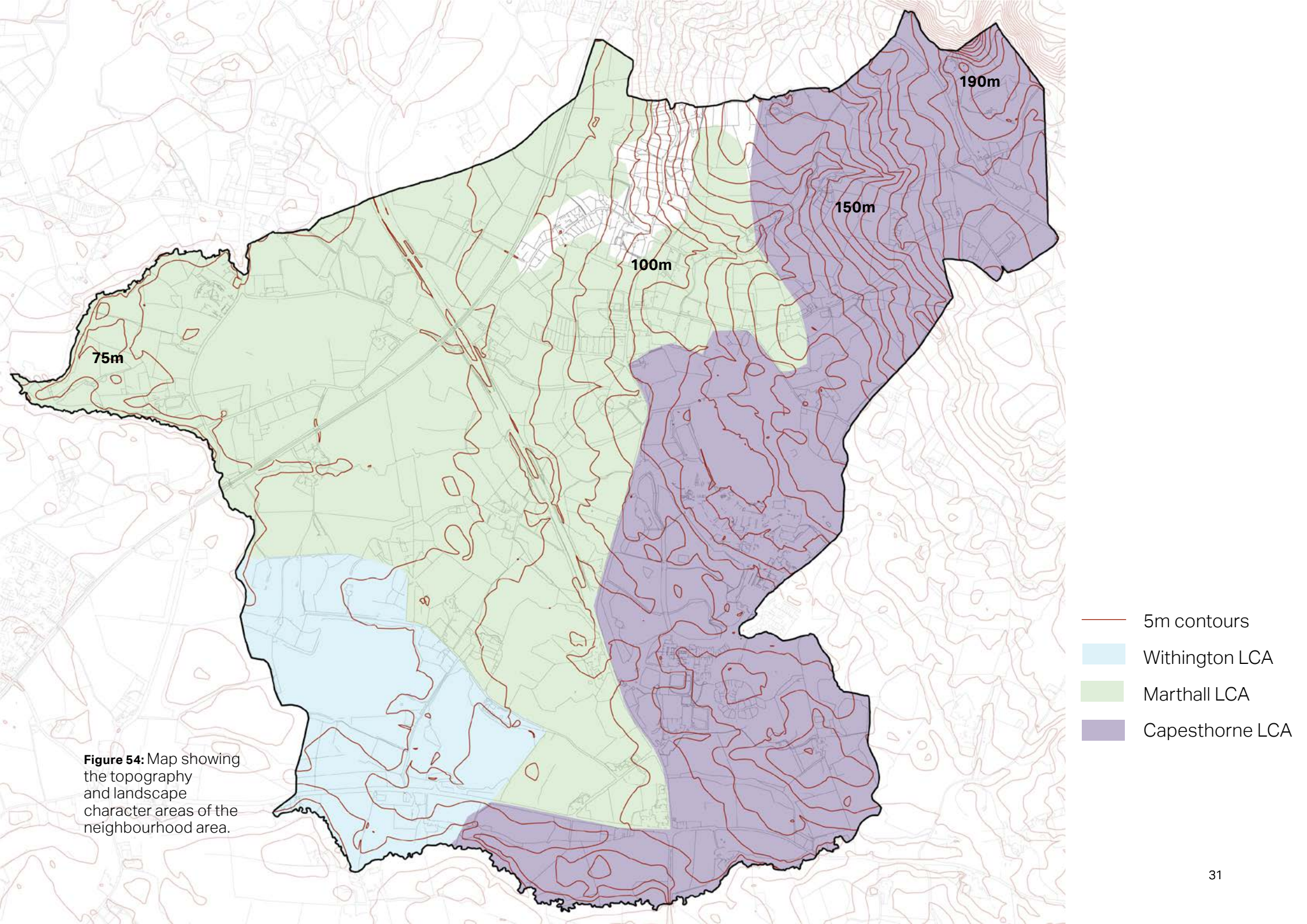
Please refer to the map at figure 54.

Figure 52: The relatively flat surrounding countryside looking west from Bollington Lane.

Figure 53: The landscape gradient becomes steeper to the east of the parish. View from Artists Lane.

190m

150m

100m

75m

Figure 54: Map showing the topography and landscape character areas of the neighbourhood area.

—— 5m contours

Withington LCA

Marthall LCA

Capesthorne LCA

2.6.1 Capesthorne Landscape Character Area

Landscape Characteristics

The topography of the landscape is undulating, becoming steeper to the north, in proximity to Alderley Edge, where a maximum elevation of 190m is reached.

Historic estates and their mansion houses (such as Birtles) can be found in the character area, as well as formal gardens, landscaped parklands, woodland and water features.

The landscape is generally well-wooded, and there are narrow and smaller-scale sunken lanes located between steep tree-lined banks and linear woodlands following watercourses, leading to a high degree of enclosure.

Areas of open land allow extensive and panoramic views of the open landscape in many directions. Other glimpsed views are framed by trees and high hedges.

2.6.2 Withington Landscape Character Area

Landscape Characteristics

There are many large, gently rolling arable fields, with evidence of field boundary rationalisation and the use of post and wire fences. Blocks of woodland, some very extensive, are visually dominant and many fields are defined on one or more boundary by woodland.

Woodland presence restricts many views, although some areas of open ground enjoy views out to the Pennine Hills.

A low density of dispersed and isolated farmsteads and properties are linked by a number of minor roads which pass between high but closely trimmed hedges.

2.6.3 Marthall Landscape Character Area

Landscape Characteristics

This landscape character area is generally flat. In the north many fields have been enlarged and there is evidence of hedgerow removal with increased reliance upon post and wire fences. This has produced a more open, larger scale landscape with more extensive views, although even here many views are curtailed in the middle distance by solid blocks of woodland.

In the north of the character area the landscape is strongly influenced by the close proximity of urban Knutsford, Wilmslow and Alderley Edge. A number of major highways traverse the area with the associated intrusion of heavy traffic, but many tranquil rural locations remain in the inter-land between these strategic routes.

Figure 55: View of landscape within Alderley Park. (Capesthorne Landscape Character Area)

3. Character analysis

Achieving quality development starts with a comprehensive understanding of place.

Places have a clear and strong identity and character. They are a combination of their physical form, their activities and their meaning to people. The diagram opposite shows how these factors come together to create a successful place. This character analysis was developed by creating a full picture of the neighbourhood area.

All new development must undertake its own comprehensive analysis of place to understand a proposal's broader context and establish aspirations and place-specific responses to the location, siting and design of new development.

A primary purpose of this document is to help generate sensitive and characterful design responses to existing settlements and their landscape settings.

This character analysis helps understand both the landscape setting and the detailed pattern of settlement growth that underpins the variety of character features across the neighbourhood area.

This analysis has been cross-checked on site as part of this study with a walking tour and photographic study guided by local residents.

Each proposal may require slightly different design detail responses depending on its specific local context within the neighbourhood area.

Alternatively, the neighbourhood area may continue to acquire new layers with design approaches and concepts that are innovative and look to meet the future challenges of sustainability and biodiversity net gain. However, these responses must still seek to tie in with the rural landscape and village form that help give the neighbourhood area its distinctive character.
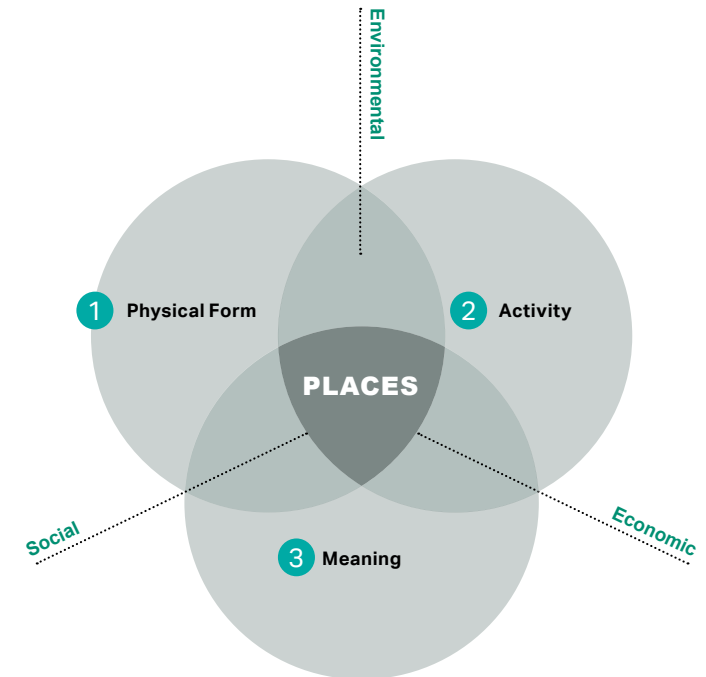

1 Physical conditions of existing built development including layout, form, scale, appearance, landscape character, and watercourses.

2 Use, vitality and diversity, including community facilities and local services.

3 How a place is perceived, including local heritage, views inwards and outwards and social histories.

3.1 Urban form

Nether Alderley has a mix of development types. These range from historic dwellings and farms scattered across the landscape to more formal linear development patterns where housing has been clustered along roads and lanes within the parish. The neighbourhood area also exhibits more contemporary development forms comprising small 'planned' housing estates.

The following section looks at a number of sample development areas from across the Neighbourhood Area in a little more detail.
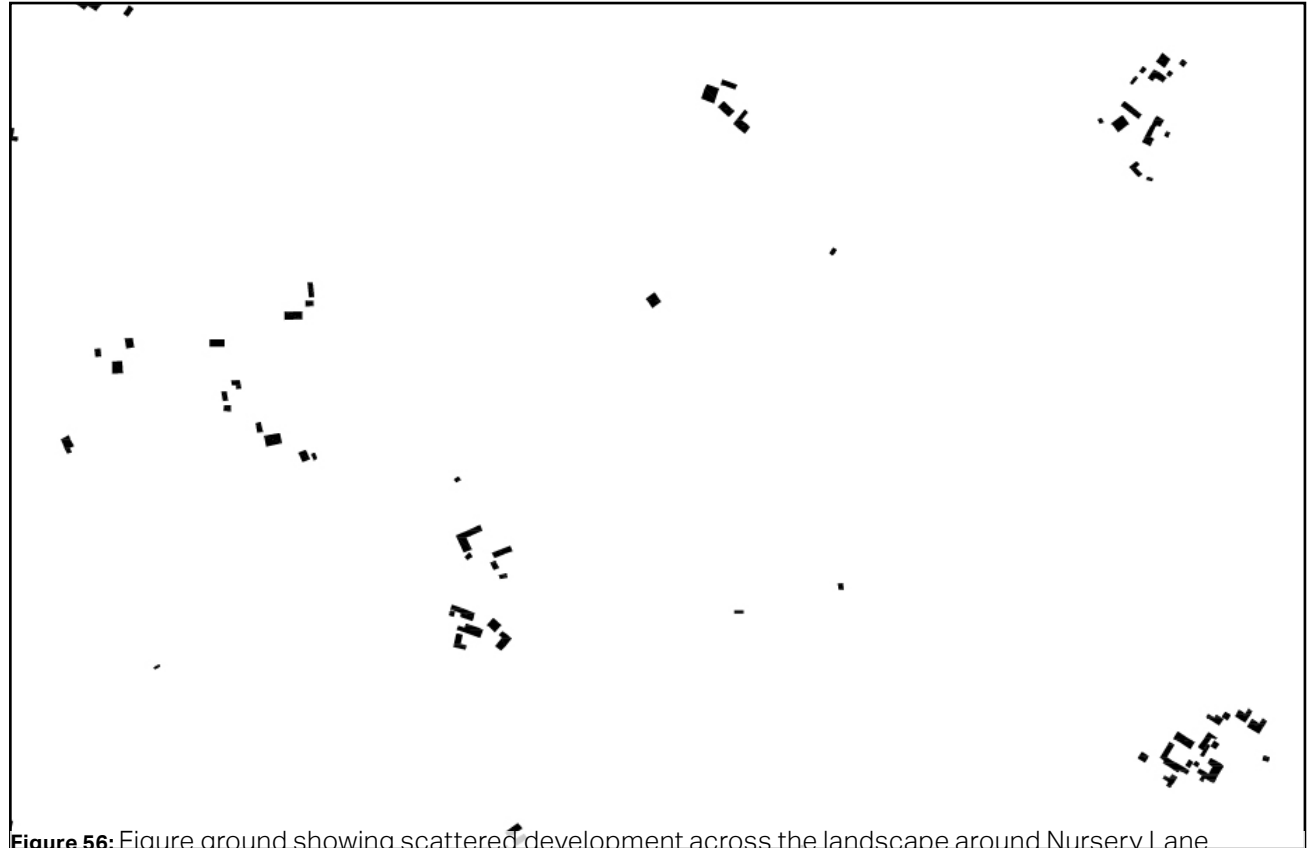
Figure 56: Figure ground showing scattered development across the landscape around Nursery Lane
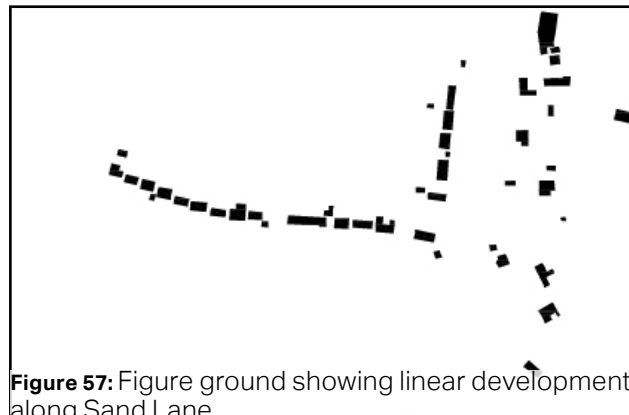
Figure 57: Figure ground showing linear development along Sand Lane

Figure 58: Figure ground showing 'planned' housing estates at Vale Crescent and Eagles Road

3.1.1 Sand Lane

Sand lane comprises a linear strip of one sided development. Dwellings are typically detached and are set back from the road within generous sized deep plots. Many measuring over 70m from front to back.

Figure 59: Sand Lane aerial photograph

3.1.2 Welsh Row

Welsh Row has a similar linear development pattern to Sand Lane although there is development on both sides of the road. Plots and dwellings tent to be more modest than Sand Lane. Orchard Crescent is accessed from Welsh Row and comprises two small cul-de-sacs of dwellings. Welsh Row also exhibits some examples of semi-detached dwellings. There is also a short terrace of three bungalows.

Figure 60: Welsh Row aerial photograph

3.1.3 Alderley Park (Residential)

The residential development at Alderley Park comprises a mix of contemporary and historic buildings. The historic buildings date back to when the park was a country estate occupied by the Stanley Family. These buildings are arranged in a courtyard layout with buildings framing an internal shared space. Contemporary townhouses have also been arranged in this fashion. Other modern housing elements are arranged in small looped estates and cul-de-sacs which are more suburban in character. Alderley Park also includes a contemporary apartment block overlooking the Water Garden.

3.1.4 Alderley Park (Commercial)

Alderley Park also includes a large area of commercial buildings. This land use was introduced in the 1950s when ICI Pharmaceuticals occupied the site, and later AstraZeneca. The site was purchased from AstraZeneca by Bruntwood in 2014. There is still commercial activity on the site today with offices, laboratories, and a conference centre and there is also a gym and sports club.

Figure 61: Alderley Park aerial photograph

Figure 62: Alderley Park historic mapping from 1882

**Figure 63:** Alderley Park aerial photograph

3.1.5 Bollington Lane

Bollington Lane comprises a small cluster of housing. These include historic farm buildings and contemporary detached dwellings. Dwellings typically have large plots. Dense tree cover in this area provides a sense of enclosure to the street and restricts views to the wider landscape.

3.1.6 Monks Heath

Monks Heath comprises a mix of uses, including a nursery, gym, petrol station, car dealership, and restaurant. This area also includes a short terrace of dwellings at the junction of Congleton Road and Chelford Road as well as detached dwellings and a bungalow.
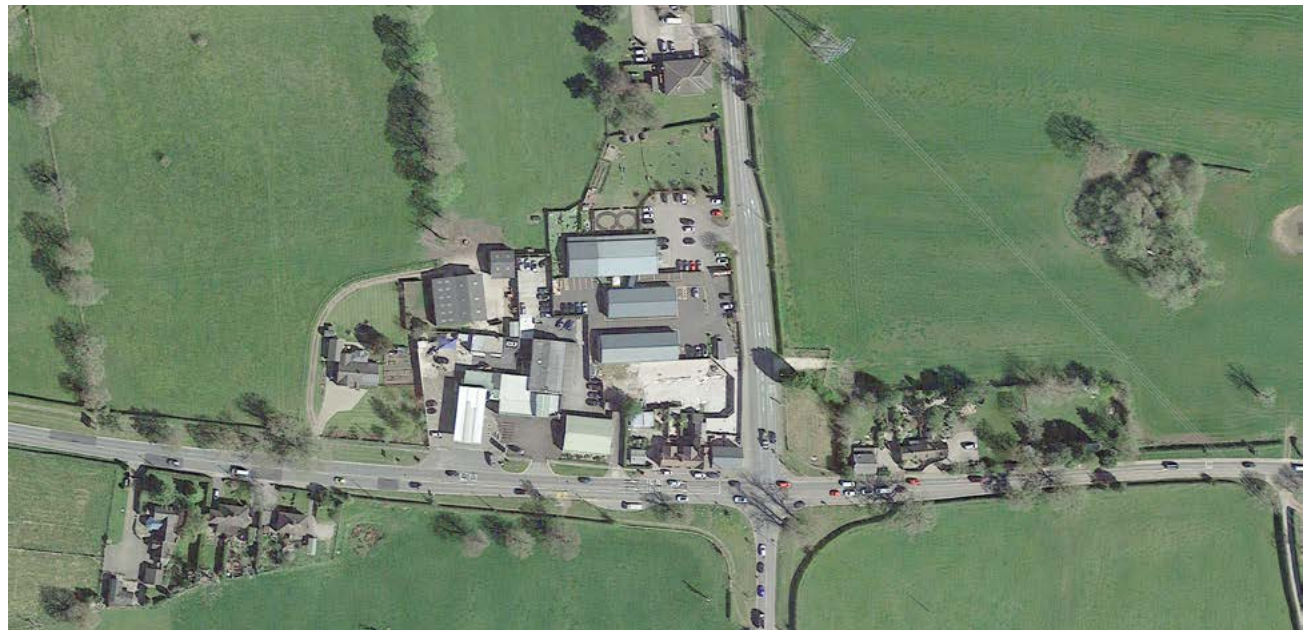
3.1.7 Congleton Road and Whitebarn Road

Dwellings along this part of Congleton Road and Whitebarn Road are typically large detached dwellings situated within generous plots. The development pattern is linear with dwellings oriented to face the road but set back behind front gardens and driveways. Dense vegetation and trees in this area result in a sense of enclosure at street level.

3.1.8 Sossmoss Lane and Nursery Lane

Sossmoss Lane and Nursery Lane are located to the west of the Neighborhood Area. Along with Chelford Road these routes surround Sossmoss Wood and a large area of farmland. The built form in this area is very low density with dwellings more scattered than other parts of the village. Dwellings tend to be large detached homes which sit within generous plots. Other elements of the built form include working farms with agricultural sheds and barns.

3.1.9 Church Lane

Church Lane is essentially the historic centre of the parish. This area includes the church, former school, rectory buildings, former public house and mill. Trees form the boundaries in the surrounding fields and there is generally a dense coverage of trees in the immediate area. This limits views to the surrounding landscape and gives this area an intimate and enclosed, rural character.

3.2 Building materials

Nether Alderley has a mixed material palette but red brick is overriding material of choice. The colours vary between reds and browns but they are generally of a rustic nature and reflective of the wider rural area of Cheshire. Some of the older buildings in the Neighbourhood Area are also constructed with sandstone.

Some of the houses are painted white or rendered. This creates a visual contrast on several of the area's streets which makes for an interesting and varied streetscape.

Within Alderley Park there are some examples dwellings constructed using a buff coloured brick which is not historically typical of the area. The dwellings at Orchard Crescent have used a mix of red, buff and Staffordshire blue bricks.

Figure 64: Historic sand stone building

Figure 65: Red brick building

Figure 66: Black and white timber frame and brick building

Figure 67: Contemporary red brick and stone building

Figure 68: Traditional red brick building

Figure 69: Buff coloured brick and render buildings at Alderley Park

Figure 70: Mixed material buildings at Orchard Crecent

Figure 71: Dark red / brown brick dwellings

Figure 72: Render and stone dwelling

Figure 73: Render and timber clad buildings

Figure 74: Contemporary brick and stone building

Figure 75: Modern glazed commercial building

3.3 Roofing

Gable roofs are the predominant roof forms within the neighbourhood area. Many of the roofs in the area feature projecting gables and/or dormer windows providing variation and texture to the roofscape.

Hipped roofs are less common though they do feature on some of the more modern buildings within the area.

Roofing materials vary across the neighbourhood area but are typically slate, clay tile or stone (generallly on older buildings). There are some roofing materials that have been used that are less frequently seen within the area. These include zinc (or other metal) sheet roofing, and ridged concrete roof tiles.

Figure 76: Historic stone slate roof

Figure 77: Modern slate roof

Figure 78: Red clay rosemary tile roof

Figure 79: Traditional salte roof

Figure 80: Zinc (or other metal) sheet roofing

Figure 81: Clay tile roof

Figure 82: Traditional thatched roofing

Figure 83: Historic stone roofing

Figure 84: Ridged interlocking concrete roof tiles

Figure 85: Contemporary slate roof

Figure 86: Natural slate roof with diminishing slate sizes

Figure 87: Traditional stone roof

3.4 Windows and doorways

Nether Alderley's windows and doors reflect the diversity of features arising from the Georgian and Victorian eras. There are several examples of sash and bay windows along with numerous buildings wityh simple casement windows. Glazing bars (both timber and lead) are a feature that is typical within the neighbourhood area. Arched window openings are also a common feature as well as windows with stone sills and lintels.

Doors are typically traditional timber panel doors and many of the dwellings within the area have a covered porch with a tiled roof.

Traditional wooden fittings are commonly seen, particularly on Nether Alderley's numerous listed buildings. These are generally painted in subtle colours that fit with the village's traditional character.

Figure 88: Traditional timber framed windows with lead glazing bars

Figure 89: TImber casement windows

Figure 90: TImber casement windows with lead glazing bars and a stone sill
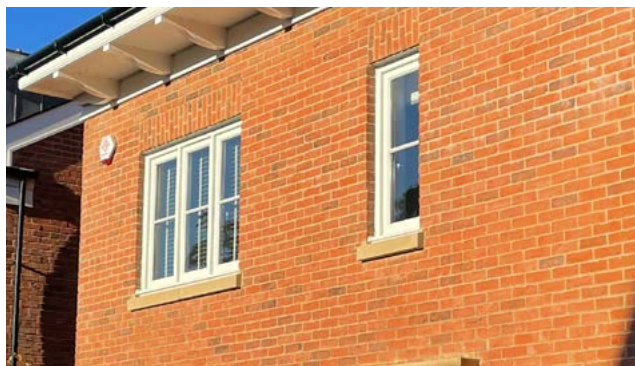
Figure 91: Arched brick lintel with a stone sill sting. Windows have timber glazing bars

Figure 92: Mock sash casement windows with glazing bars and stone sill and lintel

Figure 93: Bay window with a slate roof

Figure 94: Casement windows with stone sills and bricked lintels

Figure 95: Timber framed covered porch with a slate roof

Figure 100: Contemporary shared covered porch

Figure 96: Timber framed covered porch with tiled roof

Figure 97: Covered doorway with tiled roof

Figure 101: Timber bay windows with glazing bars

Figure 98: Casement windows with decorative panelling

Figure 99: Arched windows with glazing barts and a stone window sill string shared along upper windows

Figure 102: Casement windows with glazing bars and stone sill and lintel

3.5 Boundary treatments

Nether Alderley exhibits a mix of boundary treatments. These vary greatly in height with those that are lower in height resulting in a more active streetscape and taller boundary treatments resulting in high levels of privacy and plots closed off from the street.

Hedgerows are commonly seen which positively contribute to the neighbourhood area's green infrastructure network. Sandstone and brick walls are also seen. Sandstone walls are most typical on the historic plots.

Set-backs are varied with most buildings in the neighbourhood area set back behind front gardens and driveways. Some of these gardens are bordered by walls and some are open with lawns that directly meet the street with no hard boundary. Many plots have gated driveways resulting in high levels of privacy.

Figure 103: Drystone wall boundary

Figure 104: Dwellings arranged in a courtyard arrangement with parking and planting

Figure 105: Open front boundaries with parking and planting dividing plots
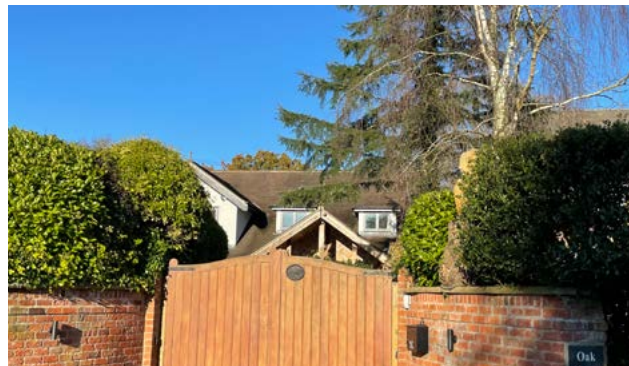

Figure 106: Stone retaining boundary wall

Figure 107: Hedgerow front boundary

Figure 108: High levels of privacy with brick walls and tall access gate

Figure 109: Contemporary timber fence and hedgerow boundary

Figure 110: Red brick wall and tall access gate with hedgerows

Figure 111: Planted building apron

Figure 112: Grass verge and hedgerow boundary

Figure 113: Metal railing front boundary

Figure 114: Brick wall and hedgerow

Figure 115: Brick and railing boundary with tall gated access

Figure 116: Open plot boundary with landscaped building apron


Figure 117: Hedgerow boundary

3.6 Streets and paths

Most of Nether Alderleys lanes are quiet with low levels of traffic due partly to the rural nature of the area. However, Congleton Road which runs through the neighbourhood area from north to south has high levels of traffic to and from Alderley Edge. This road has sections with 40 and 60mph speed limits. This detracts from the pedestrian experience along the route. Traffic levels have in part been relieved along this route by Melrose Way which bypasses Alderley Edge. There are also increased traffic levels at peak times caused by commuters to and from Alderley Park.

Some of the areas roads, such as Artists Lane, Sand Lane and Welsh Row, have no pavements or pavements along just one side of the street. Whilst this means that pedestrians must share the highway with vehicles it also upholds the rural character of the area. There are also several Public Rights of Way and footpaths that link several of the main roads and also extend into the surrounding countryside.

Figure 118: Footpath leading from Sand Lane to the Church

Figure 119: Footpaths through the wooded parkland within Alderley Park
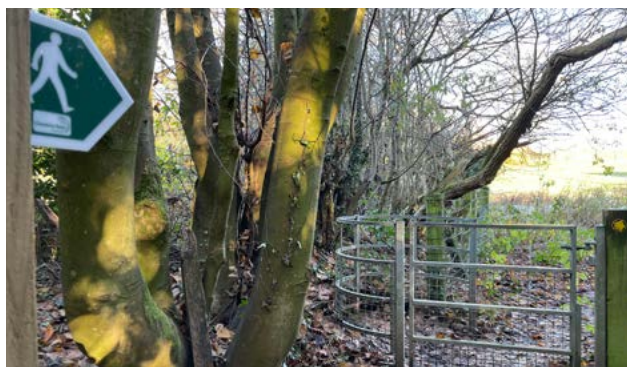
Figure 120: A Public Right of Way leading from Artists Lane

Figure 121: Road side verges and no paving along Welsh Row

Figure 122: Pavement along one side of Eagles Road

Figure 123: Pavements along both sides of Whitebarn Road

3.7 Green infrastructure

Trees and hedgerows line many of the streets throughout the neighbourhood area. There are several pockets of woodland throughour the neighbourhood area inclduing Sossmoss Wood, Beech Wood, Windmill Wood, George's Wood and more. Many of the agricultural fields also include scattered clusters of trees.

Informal verges are a common feature across Nether Alderley along the country lanes. Within Alderley Park the landscaped areas and verges are more formal and municured.

Figure 124: Woodland within Alderley Park

Figure 125: Manicured landscape within Alderley Park

Figure 126: View from Congleon Road of the agricultural landscape with wooded area and trees forming field boundaries

Figure 127: Dwellings have a wooded setting within Alderley Park

Figure 128: Trees lining the edges of Artists Lane

Figure 129: Buildings set back behind a grass varge in Alderley Park

Design guidance & codes

04

4. Design guidance and codes

This section outlines the expectations for future development. The codes prioritise the character and quality of new development and sustainable design approaches.

4.1 Introduction

This section supports decision makers and designers when producing or reviewing planning applications the fall within Nether Alderley's neighbourhood area. The primary attention is on residential development as well as mixed-use development.

It is acknowledged that there is not always agreement on aesthetic issues and architectural taste. These codes are focused on topics that help designers and decision makers appropriately respond to context.

New design proposals can use these codes to enable a clear design process to improve and enhance the setting and sustainability of the neighbourhood area while not detracting from its context and local character or sense of place.

The following topics are addressed by design codes in this section:

01. Sustainability

02. Local Character

03. Development in the Countryside

04. Green Infrastructure

Design response

The designer must respond to the character of the neighbourhood area with one of the following three approaches, considered in the following order:

1. **Harmonise** - clearly respond to existing characteristics within the neighbourhood area, street and site, including scale, form and appearance.

2. **Complement** - doing something slightly different that adds to the overall character and quality in a way that is nonetheless fitting, for example, additional high quality materials but harmonising in scale, form and positioning.

3. **Innovate** - doing something of high design quality that is different but adds positively to the built-form and character and is considered an exemplar approach for others to follow. For example, developing innovative building form and use low embodied energy and high quality materials that add to the overall design quality, sustainability and richness of the area.

Overarching aims

Development should be sensitive to its context and of a high quality design, including affordable housing within Nether Alderley. Good development will:

1. Protect residential amenity, both of new and existing occupiers.

2. Contribute to the creation of diverse communities, places and spaces.

3. Be of good design and encompass sustainability principles.

4. Respond to the context and character of the area.

5. Make efficient use of brownfield land (previously developed).
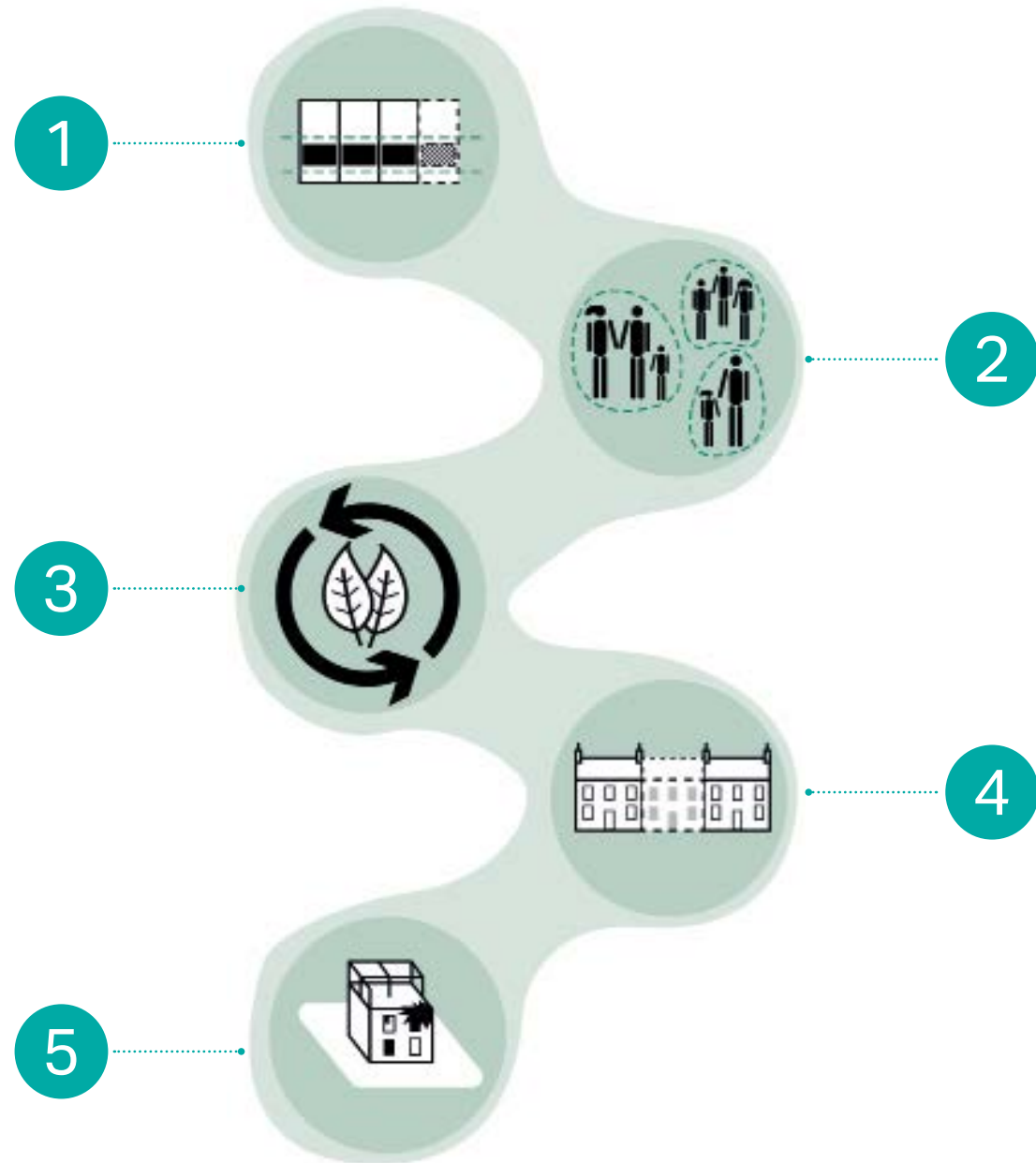
4.2 Sustainability

The climate emergency has created the need to decrease our carbon footprint towards net-zero by providing innovative solutions to transportation and the energy use of buildings.

Sustainable design incorporates innovative practices at all scales of design to achieve less impactful development footprints, whilst future proofing homes, settlements and natural environments.

Reducing the use of limited natural resources whilst increasing utilisation of local resources and sustainable natural resources can help to achieve this.
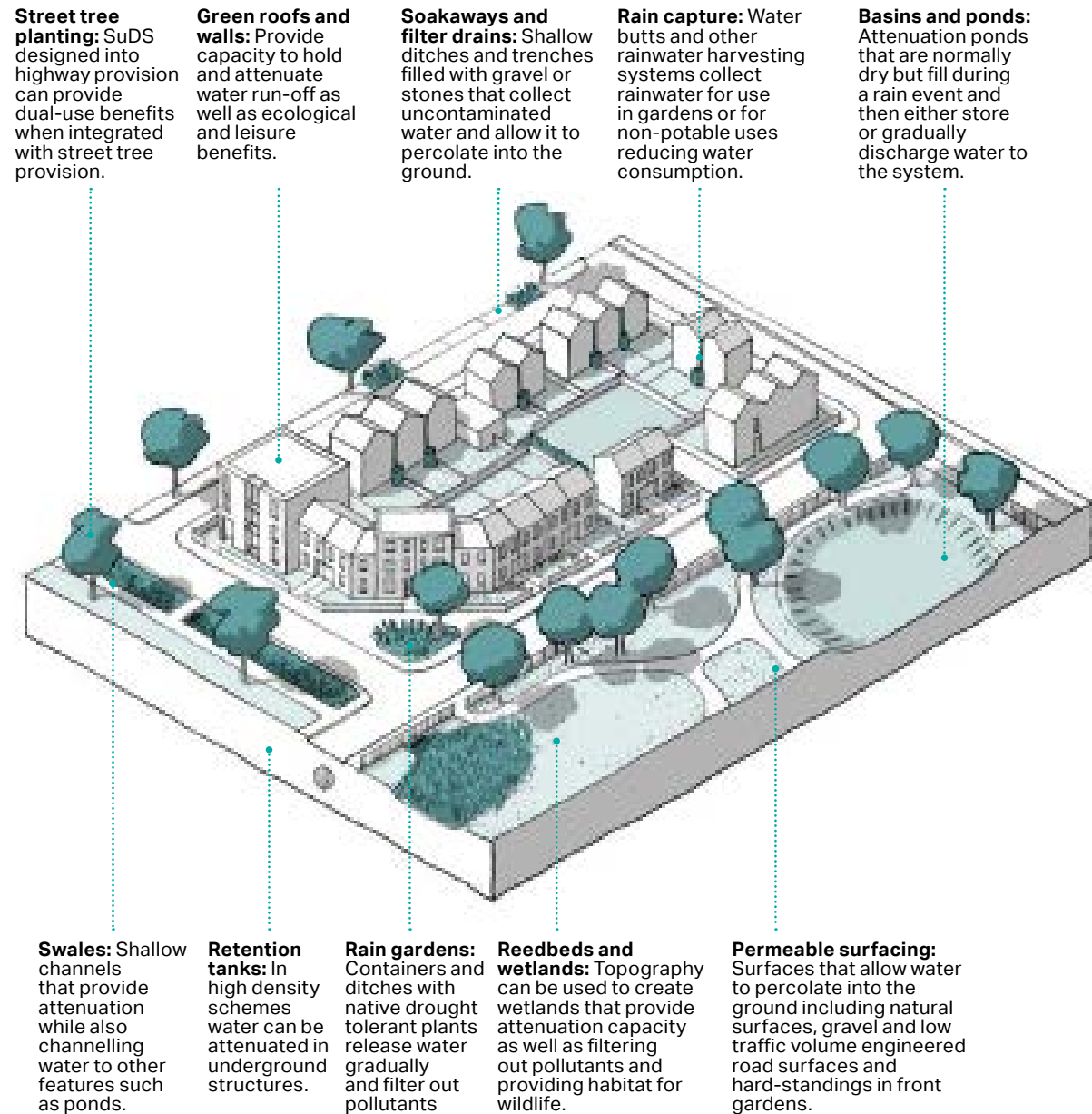

Figure 130: Alderley Park

A1 - Resilience to the climate emergency

All new development should work to moderate extremes of temperature, wind, humidity, local flooding and pollution within the neighbourhood area:

- Avoid siting homes in high risk flood areas and mitigate increased risk of storms/flooding with sustainable drainage systems. These reduce the amount and rate at which surface water reaches sewers and watercourses. Often, the most sustainable option is collecting water for reuse, for example in a water butt or a rainwater harvesting system. This reduces pressure on valuable water sources.

- Eco-systems cannot adapt as fast as the climate is changing leading to loss of biodiversity. Protecting and enhancing woodlands, watercourses and green infrastructure can combat this. Aim to increase ecology through biodiversity net-gain on major development sites. Use street trees and planting to moderate and improve micro-climate for streets and spaces.

Street tree planting: SuDS designed into highway provision can provide dual-use benefits when integrated with street tree provision.

Green roofs and walls: Provide capacity to hold and attenuate water run-off as well as ecological and leisure benefits.

Soakaways and filter drains: Shallow ditches and trenches filled with gravel or stones that collect uncontaminated water and allow it to percolate into the ground.

Rain capture: Water butts and other rainwater harvesting systems collect rainwater for use in gardens or for non-potable uses reducing water consumption.

Basins and ponds: Attenuation ponds that are normally dry but fill during a rain event and then either store or gradually discharge water to the system.

Swales: Shallow channels that provide attenuation while also channelling water to other features such as ponds.

Retention tanks: In high density schemes water can be attenuated in underground structures.

Rain gardens: Containers and ditches with native drought tolerant plants release water gradually and filter out pollutants

Reedbeds and wetlands: Topography can be used to create wetlands that provide attenuation capacity as well as filtering out pollutants and providing habitat for wildlife.

Permeable surfacing: Surfaces that allow water to percolate into the ground including natural surfaces, gravel and low traffic volume engineered road surfaces and hard-standings in front gardens.

Figure 131: Sustainable drainage systems as set out in the National Model Design Code.

A2 - Assessing alternative energy sources

Where practicable future development should be inline with the ideals for net zero by:

- Optimising solar orientation of streets and buildings. Aim to increase the number of buildings on site that are oriented within 30° of south (both main fenestration and roof plane) for solar gain, solar energy and natural daylighting.

- Assessing ground conditions to accommodate loops for ground source heat and space for air source heat pump units.

- Where the points above have been satisfied, provide air source heat pumps and integrate solar panels.

- Utilising local estates for sustainable coppicing, harvesting or recycling of biomass fules.

- Understanding local wind speed and direction for micro-generation wind turbines.

- Collaborating with utilities, highway authorities, telecoms companies and other stakeholders when designing and delivering projects to minimise energy usage and disruption during the construction stage.

Figure 132: Contemporary solar panel design can be subtle by integrating with a traditional roofscape.
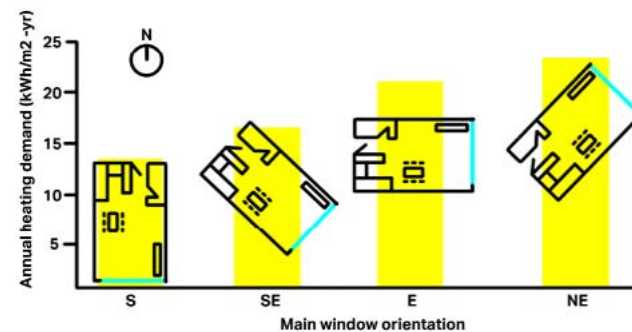
Figure 133: Building orientation influences the annual heating demand.

SOLAR ENERGY

RAIN WATER

AIR / GROUND SOURCE HEAT

WIND

BIOMASS
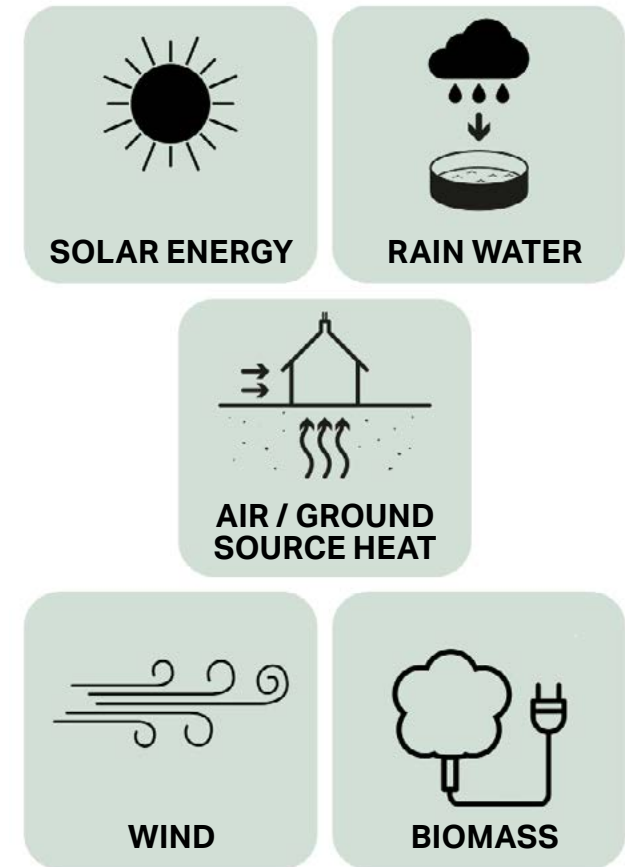
Figure 134: Some key alternative natural energy resources.

A3 - Electric vehicle charging

Current transition to electric vehicle technology and ownership comes with related issues that must be addressed by new development. Two key areas are explored below - public parking areas and private parking for homes.

Design issues to address for public parking:

- Provision of adequate new charging points and spaces, and retrofitting existing parking areas.

- Serving remote or isolated parking areas.

- Retrofitting existing public parking and upkeeping design quality of streets and spaces (attractiveness and ease of servicing and maintenance).

- Integrating charging infrastructure sensitively within streets and spaces, for example, by aligning with green infrastructure and street furniture.

- Sensitive integration of charging infrastructure within Nether Alderley Conservation Area.

Design issues to address for parking at the home

- Convenient on-plot parking and charging points close to homes integrated within the development to minimise the visual impact.

- Potential to incorporate charging points under cover within car ports and garages.

- Integrate car parking sensitively within the streetscene. For example, parking set behind the building line or front of plot spaces lined with native hedgerow planting.

- Consider visitor parking and charging needs.

- Existing unallocated and on-street parking areas and feasibility to provide electric charging infrastructure not linked to the home.

- Potential for providing secure, serviced communal parking areas for higher density homes.

Figure 135: A public electric vehicle charging point

Figure 136: Home electric vehicle charging point located at the side of the dwelling to minimise the visual impact.

A4 - Energy efficiency measures towards net-zero carbon

It is paramount that new development strives to achieve a high energy efficiency performance rating through the governments Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) calculation process. Development should adopt a fabric first approach in line with the Government's emerging Future Homes Standard and Part L of the UK Building Regulations in order to attain higher standards of insulation and energy conservation.

- Reducing energy demand further by employing passive design principles for homes is desirable and may make some forms of development more acceptable to the community (window orientation, solar gain, solar shading, increased insulation, ventilation with heat-recovery).

- Maximise on-site renewable energy generation (solar, ground source, air source and wind driven).

- Consider building form and thermal efficiency: terraced / semi-detached / detached all have different energy efficiency profiles. This must be balanced with local design preference and character considerations to ease acceptance for development.

Figure 137: Air source heat pump unit.

Figure 138: Air source heat pump housing covers the unit and harmonises with the building aesthetic.

Figure 139: Cut-through diagram of an energy efficient home and its features.
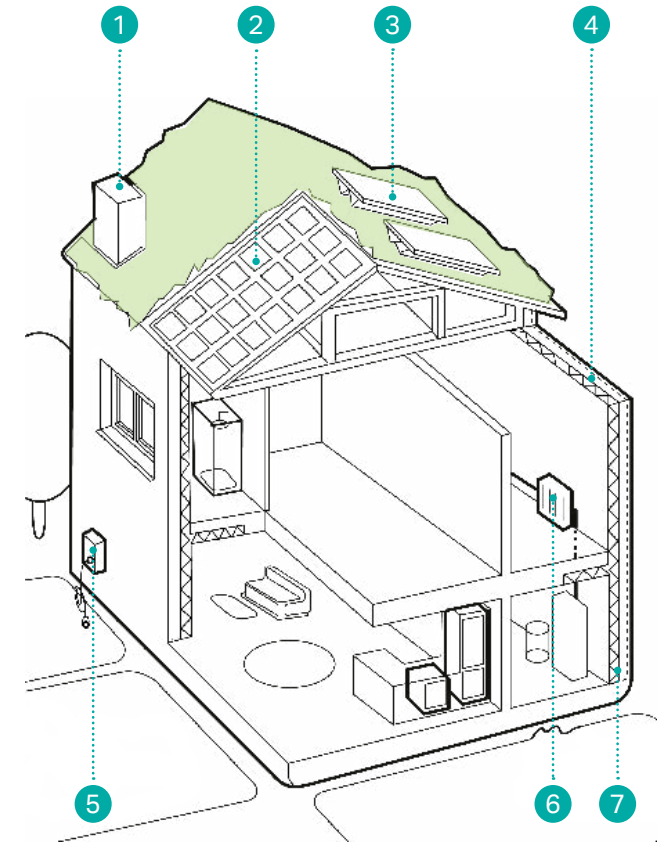
1. Mechanical ventilation system.

2. Integral solar tiles.

3. Solar panels.

4. Green roof.

5. Electric vehicle charging point.

6. Efficient utilities and appliances.

7. Wall insulation.

B Design Code B: Local Character

4.3 Character

Nether Alderley is a rural and traditional part of Cheshire and, as such, the preservation of local character is of the utmost importance. The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural environment should help to determine the character and identity of a development. Responding to the context means recognising existing positive design solutions or using existing cues as inspiration.

Any new development should acknowledge, respect and enhance these features in order to create harmony and to ensure that future generations have the same level of admiration for their home.

The design codes in this section set out how to respond to the character features set out in section 3. These responses help formulate and review design proposals in line with other local policy.

Figure 140: Bollington Lane

B1 - Response to local context

- Designers must set out a clear and positive response to the area in which development is sited or adjacent to.

- The planning application should explain how the local context has been analysed and has informed the design.

- Designers are not required to mimic the existing design period of the neighbourhood area in the form of pastiche (especially 'bolt-on' elements). However, this approach is not ruled out if done authentically to carefully respond to its context (this approach is likely to be expensive and most suitable for listed building development).

B2 - Preserve and enhance character features

- Development must be harmonious with local character features such as red brick or lightly rendered walls, clay tile or natural slate roofs, pitched gables and chimney stacks.

- These local character features must be preserved and enhanced wherever possible within the neighbourhood area by responding to the development's landscape context, street relationship and building materials.

C2 - Design principles

The following design principles apply to development that may come forward within the neighbourhood area:

- Building scale and massing should be in keeping with the prevailing development pattern and not be overbearing on existing properties or deprive them of light, including over-looking or over-shadowing of both windows and amenity space.

- The building line should reflect the street and be set back no more than a maximum of 1.5m from adjacent buildings unless additional landscaping or tree-planting is being introduced to the street scene. Where buildings are set back from the pavement, boundary features should define the plot and link up to the adjacent buildings (for example, hedgerows, railings or brick walls).

- Building scale and positioning on plot should help to define and enclose the space within the street corridor to an appropriate degree based on the existing street section (building to building)

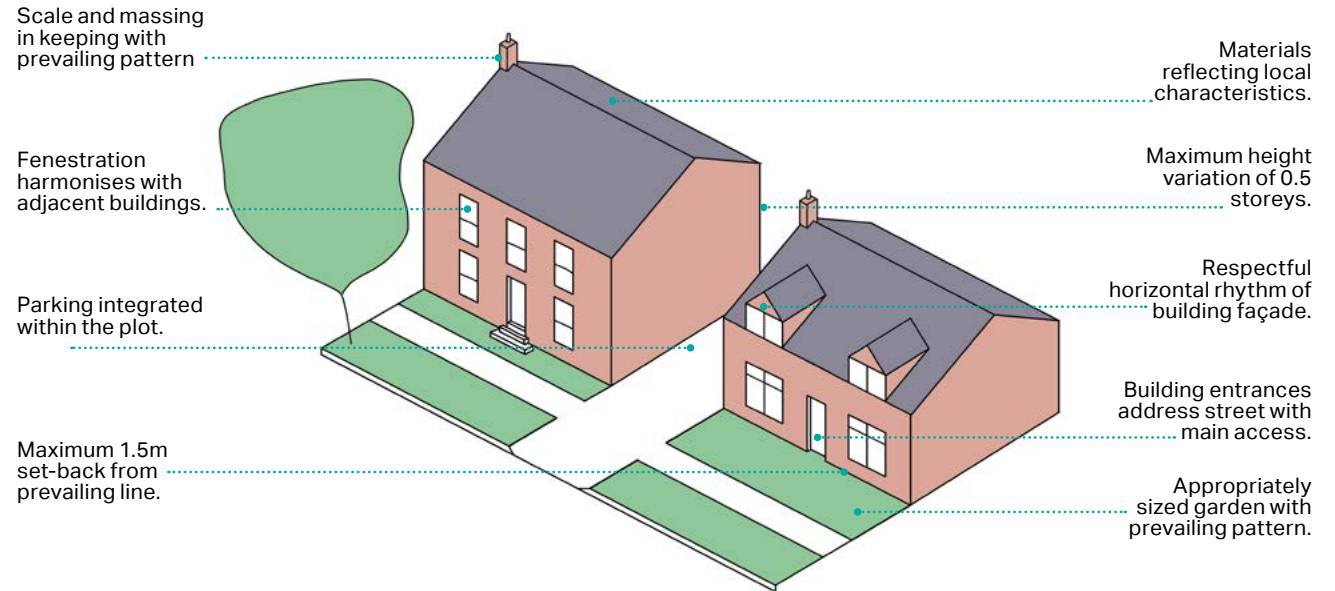and level of enclosure (ratio of street width to building height).

- Materials should reflect positive local characteristics and harmonise with adjacent buildings with matching or complementary materials, subject to the degree of variety in the settlement, area or street.

- Building fenestration and pattern should be in keeping with the predominant positive building character on the street or harmonise with adjacent buildings of good character.

- Other than courtyard developments such as barn conversions and farmstead housing, building entrances should address the street with a main access and main fenestration.

- Building façade design should respect the horizontal rhythm of plots and building subdivisions on the street in order to integrate and maintain visual continuity or add to the visual interest where required.

- Building heights should vary from 1.5-3 storeys depending on

adjacent plots. A variable eves line and ridgeline is allowed to create interest but variation between adjacent buildings should be a maximum of 0.5 storeys in general.

- Front of plot areas and rear gardens should be of sufficient size and landscaped appropriately to fit in with prevailing planting pattern or to enhance to the green character of the area.

- Access and storage for bins and bicycles should be provided and bin stores should be designed to be integrated with plot boundaries.

- Parking should be integrated on plot and, where possible, with parking spaces set behind the building line, generally to the side of the plot being advisable. For narrow dwellings it is preferable to retain a small front garden with a boundary wall, as opposed to an open hard surface parking space. Where parking is required to the front of the plot it should be accorded sufficient space and should utilise hedgerows to screen cars laterally from the street. On-plot parking should

always be preferred to on-street parking. The number of car parking spaces should be in line with Cheshire East Council's Parking Standards.

- Porous surfaces and green parking spaces (for example, grasscrete) are preferable to impermeable parking spaces. Garages are likely to be used for storage rather than parking vehicles and should therefore be set behind the building line or to the rear of the plot.

- The neighbourhood area has its own unique character. Development should avoid resulting in further coalescence with the neighbouring settlement of Alderley Edge through ribbon or other forms of development.

Scale and massing in keeping with prevailing pattern

Fenestration harmonises with adjacent buildings.

Parking integrated within the plot.

Maximum 1.5m set-back from prevailing line.

Materials reflecting local characteristics.

Maximum height variation of 0.5 storeys.

Respectful horizontal rhythm of building façade.

Building entrances address street with main access.

Appropriately sized garden with prevailing pattern.

Roof — Grey slate, red clay tiles and pitched roofs with chimney stacks are the most characteristic roof styles.

Façade — Rustic red brick, sandstone and light rendering are the most characteristic frontage treatments for the neighbourhood area.

Boundary — Red brick and/or sandstone walls, black railings and hedgerows are the most characteristic boundary treatments.

D Design Code D: Development in the countryside

4.4 Development in the countryside

Green Belt washes over the Neighbourhood Area to protect the openness of the surrounding landscape.

A large part of the neighbourhood area consists of farmland, woodland and open countryside. Many of Nether Alderley's streets and lanes have views into the countryside.

Any development within the neighbourhood area will have a visual impact on the open countryside's rural character.

The following design principles will support good designs that repond to their context.

D1 - Design principles

- The conversion or re-use of existing buildings in the open countryside should be encouraged. External works to any conversion should be largely cosmetic and have a minimal visual impact on the landscape in which it relates.

- Proposals should be positioned behind natural screening (i.e. trees and other planting) so as not to obstruct views of the surrounding landscape. Additional screening should be incorporated into any given proposal where necessary.

- Agricultural or commercial proposals should refrain from using materials and colours that contrast with the surrounding landscape. Muted and contextual colour palettes are encouraged so as not to disturb the local landscape character.

- Sustainable-led proposals such as renewable energy infrastructure should be considered on the grounds of its positive legacy. Small-scale renewable energy sources should be encouraged for providing power to rural developments. However, such infrastructure should be screened or integrated within developments in order to mitigate visual impact on the open countryside.

- Innovative and sustainable screening methods include green roofs and plant walls. Such screening will help outbuildings to blend into natural surroundings such as a domestic garden or open space.

- Proposals showcasing exceptional and innovative architectural styling (i.e. contemporary) may be considered where they can provide harmony with the character of the surrounding open countryside, as well as showcasing high quality sustainable design.

- Any lighting or illumination of a development must consider its necessity, as well as its impact on surrounding properties, particularly where powerful lighting is being proposed. Any lighting infrastructure must balance its necessity with that of the power, scale and orientation being proposed. This it to avoid overly powerful lighting that can impose on the amenity of other plots, as well as mitigate undue light pollution in the open countryside.

- The southern edge of the the Neighbourhood Area falls within the Jodrell Bank Observatory Buffer Zone. Any future development within this area should avoid increased levels of radio interference at the Observatory.

Figure 141: View from Sossmoss Lane

E | Design Code E: Green infrastructure

4.5 Green infrastructure

There are several open spaces around Nether Alderley including Alderley Park and Alderley Edge as well as the wider landscape that are connected by footpaths.

New development can create and integrate new green infrastructure networks, which add to the aesthetic appeal of the neighbourhood area whilst also boosting the area's sustainability.

The following codes set out how to consider the retention, provision, amount, type and locations for trees and other planting as a critical part of new developments.
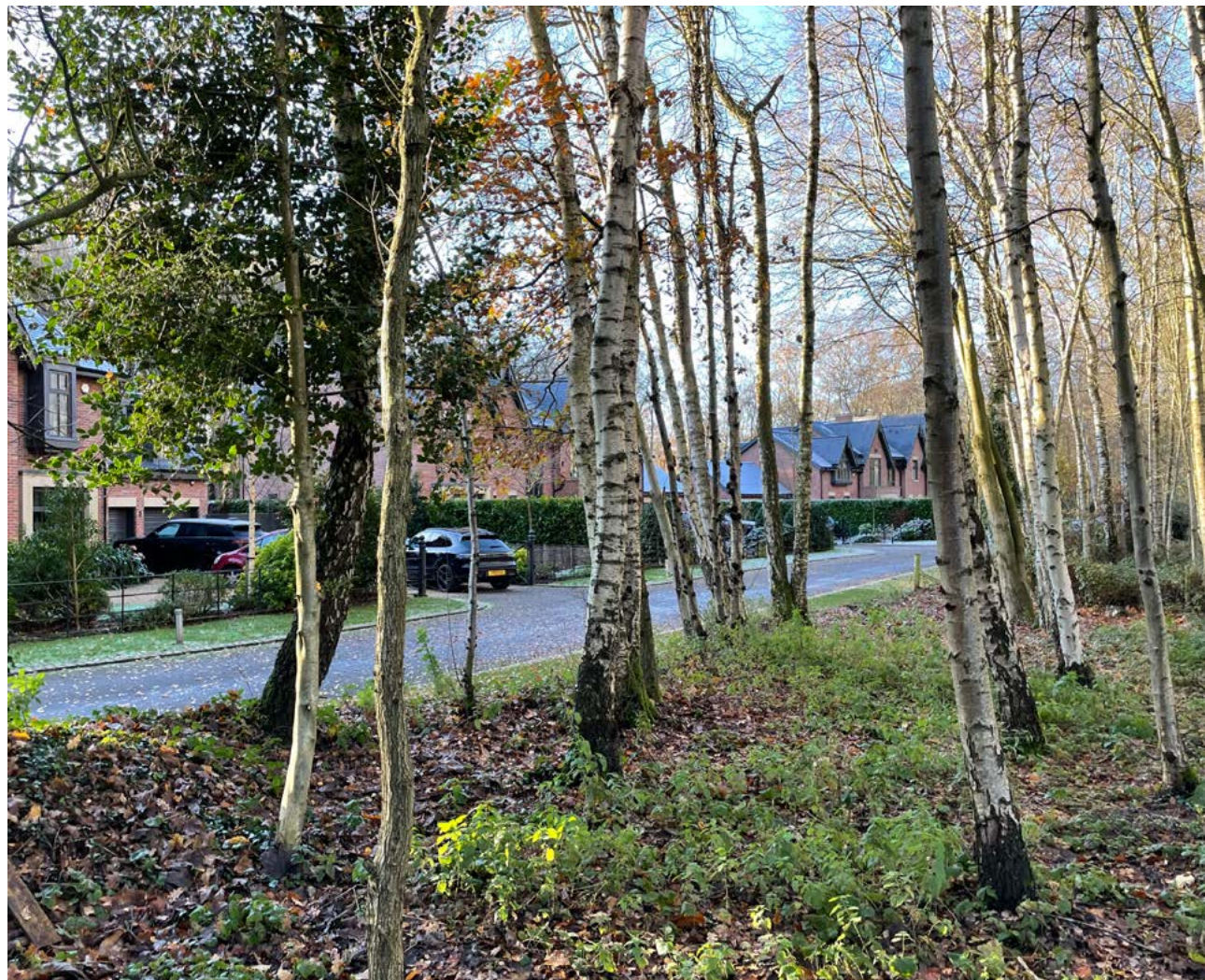
Figure 142: Bollington Lane

E1 - Retain, replace, improve

The National Design Guide and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) put great emphasis on tree-lined streets and integrated green infrastructure design to provide 'green islands' and connected corridors which contribute to localised cooling and provide habitats and public amenity.

Retain

Tree surveys and impact assessments should be provided which highlight the trees on a site which are to be retained and those which are to be removed. It is preferable to retain a good quality tree than to replace it.

- Where significant trees are located on site, independent surveys to assess the development impact must be completed. This should inform the local community and could lead to objections where significant trees are impacted.

Replace

Ensuring trees removed from development land are proportionately replaced is important to maintaining current levels of canopy cover and green infrastructure. A common misconception is that replacing on a 1-for-1 basis is proportional. This is not the case. 1-for-1 replacement can reduce canopy cover, green infrastructure habitat and public amenity.

- Where trees are to be replaced, consider using a proportionate scale to determine numbers of replacement trees required based on the size of tree removed.

Improve

To just replace removed trees or do nothing if trees are not removed is commonly misunderstood to be acceptable. However, the NPPF requires 'improvement', 'enhancement' and 'net gain'.

- Where new trees are to be introduced these should be selected based on how they can improve local biodiversity and wildlife corridors.
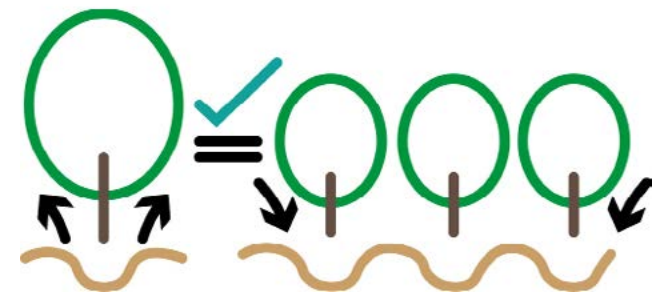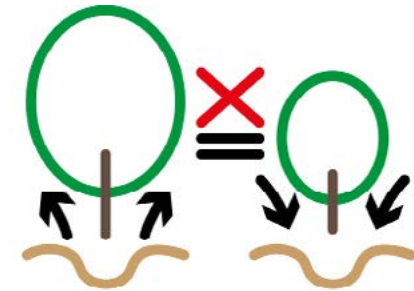
Figure 143: Replacing trees on a 1-for-1 basis is not proportional because of the reduction in the canopy cover, habitat and public amenity.

E2 - Right tree, right place

The overall aim should be to plant trees and other soft landscaping. How appropriate a tree is for any given location must also be determined based on space requirements.

This may simply be stated as:

- Small to medium trees for small spaces such as front gardens and narrower streets.

- Larger trees for avenues and more open environments such as parks, grass verges and landscaped areas.

- Other native or suitable planting to soften the appearance of plots and buildings.

A significant challenge is finding species that provide similar habitats for native birds, bats and insects.

- For now, native UK trees should be preferred or non-native trees where a specific reason exists.

- Native UK trees are preferred but non-native types could be incorporated which are suitable for the biodiversity of our native species. The climate emergency will change the environment over the next 50-100 years and we may need further qualities of resilience that our native trees cannot provide.

LARGER TREES
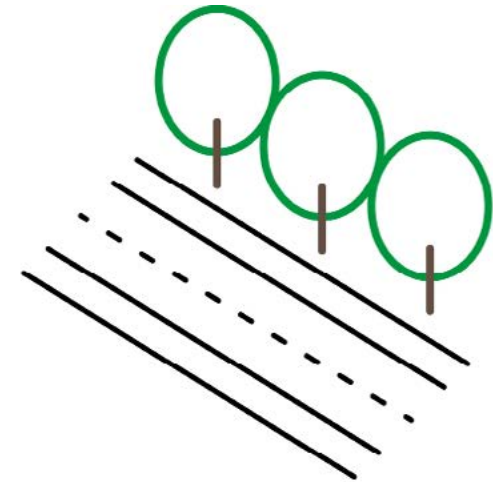
SMALL TO MEDIUM TREES
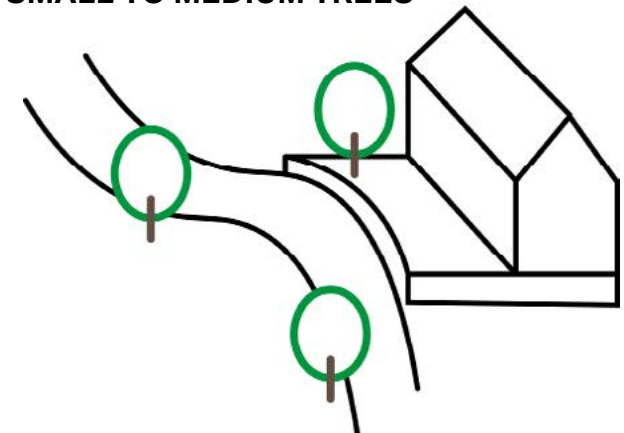
Figure 144: Infographic about tree positioning depending on size.

Figure 145: Landscape within Alderley Park

E3 - Connecting with the natural environment

Nether Alderley has numerous Public Rights of Way providing recreational routes for local residents and visitors to explore the surrounding landscape. These resreation routes should be protected and enhanced.

Concerns were identified in a community workshop in 2019 over the potential for the development at Alderley Park to result in a lack of cohesion in the local community.

Where opportunities arise in the future the natural landscpae within Alderley park should provide connectivity to the existing recreational network. Potential routes to achieve this are identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Furthermore, where locations permit, any future development in other parts of the neighbourhood area should provide onward connectivity to local Public Rights of Way.

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