North Leigh

Design Code

2026

Community First Oxfordshire

Acknowledgements:

The North Leigh Design Code has been developed by Community First Oxfordshire in collaboration with Di Carlo Creative Studio.

This Design Code has been shaped by the input of members of the North Leigh Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Committee - we would like to thank all contributors for their advice, support, and feedback.

Contents

Contents

Design Guidance: individual sub-areas:

Introduction

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) has been commissioned by North Leigh Parish Council to prepare a Design Code in support of the North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan (NLNP).

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) rooted neighbourhood planning at the heart of the drive for quality development, Paragraph 132 stating:

"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. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development."

Why a Design Code for North Leigh?

This Design Code will provide guidance on design matters that are specific to the village of North Leigh and outlier settlements within the parish. It will inform any future applications for development.

Also of relevance here is the West Oxfordshire Design Guide (adopted in 2016), which covers all forms of settlement within the wider district from urban to rural. However, all places are different and have their own qualities. Therefore, an overall guide at District level cannot necessarily bring out all the issues of importance to local people, hence the need for a bespoke Design Code.

In support of the Neighbourhood Plan, the North Leigh Character Assessment has also been prepared. This identifies those features that contribute to identity, character and sense of place.

The Neighbourhood Plan policies provide a hook for more detailed design guidance. A Design Code is able to address design considerations in major developments. These are sites of over 0.5 ha or more than ten dwellings, including any District Plan allocations. A Design Code is also relevant to any infill developments in the parish and the design of individual buildings and spaces. It also reflects the aspirations to maintain a living countryside around North Leigh and offset the potential threat from infrastructure pressures across the wider parish.

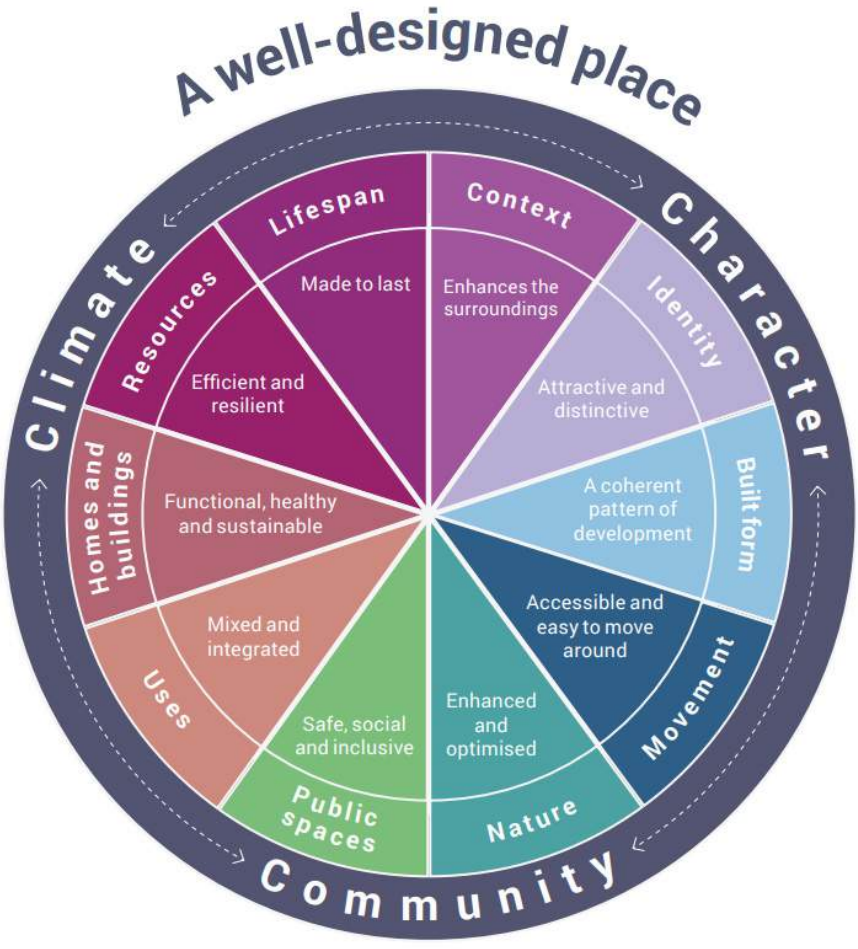
A design code is therefore a tool to:

- **add to and support existing policy and guidance**
- **clarify what is expected from local developers**
- **raise the quality of housing development**
- **prevent inappropriate development**
- **deliver locally distinctive development**

Effective Design Codes are “simple, concise, specific and rely on visual and numerical information rather than detailed policy wording” (National Model Design Code Guidance). The vision for the place needs to be aspirational and set the context for the subsequent development of the code covering matters such as:

- **an appreciation of the existing area or site**
- **its natural, topographical, historical and heritage features**
- **its character and appearance, including patterns of development and density**
- **the mix of uses and facilities**
- **the amount of green infrastructure and character of green space**
- **the way in which it deals with traffic, parking, public transport, walking and cycling**
- **sustainability including energy efficiency, net zero alignment, and climate resilience**

The National Model Design Guide shows how good design and place making can be achieved by consideration of the 10 characteristics:



Design Code Approach & Methodology

Process – Building on the North Leigh Character Assessment

The Design Code builds on the separate North Leigh Character Assessment, which identified specific character areas across the communities.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee identified volunteers to lead the Character Assessment process. This group was advised by NLNP consultants Community First Oxfordshire (CFO). CFO held community briefing sessions and a walkabout in order to introduce the Character Assessment process in combination with a 'Placecheck' approach.

These sessions explored different areas of the village and facilitated discussion about the choice of character areas in relation to the patterns and layout of the built environment and its different build and design eras. Beyond the main village there are outlying areas such as East End, Wilcote, and New Yatt, which comprise small hamlets in the open countryside. These places have their own history and identity, meriting separate assessment of character. In addition, a summary of important community views in and from each character area is included in a separate section of the Character Assessment.

Discussion established a final list of **six character areas:**

- **Area A – The Village Centre**
- **Area B – Church Road and Kingston Heights**
- **Area C – Main Roads and attached side roads**
- **Area D – Windmill Road and associated streets**
- **Area E – East End, Wilcote, and the wider parish**
- **Area F – Industrial and commercial outliers**

Figure 1. North Leigh Character Areas

Design Code Approach & Methodology

The character assessment group then undertook research of each character area using the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit. Using this primary research, CFO then drafted the analysis of each assessment area, with the content subsequently reviewed and refined by the volunteer group. Historic England's conservation principles, policies and guidance also guided the assessments, in particular:

- **Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.**
- **Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – it tends to be illustrative or associative.**
- **Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.**
- **Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.**[1]

1 Historic England (2008) *Conservation principles, policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment*: https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/conservationprinciplespoliciesandguidanceapril08web/

Wider Context and Identity

As noted above, the West Oxfordshire Design Guide is a very useful document for scene setting and references the landscape and geology in which the various settlements are located. It notes that North Leigh is a linear settlement within the Limestone Wolds to the east of the District.

The geology here is dominated by the more crumbly combrash limestone often used in building materials. Other hamlets exist within the parish. The south of the parish is occupied by Eynsham Hall and its historic parkland, one of many that characterise this part of the county.

The settlement is situated on high ground on a ridgeline east of Witney and to the north it overlooks former areas of the Wychwood Forest and the Cotswold AONB, now a National Landscape. Whilst largely agricultural, the area has some notable areas of lowland heath – now a relatively rare type of habitat nationally.

North Leigh Common is one such area of great importance for biodiversity and is maintained by West Oxfordshire District Council. The parish has been inhabited for many centuries, with remains of a Roman Villa to the north of the main settlement and even older scheduled monuments such as Grims Ditch to the west of the settlement.

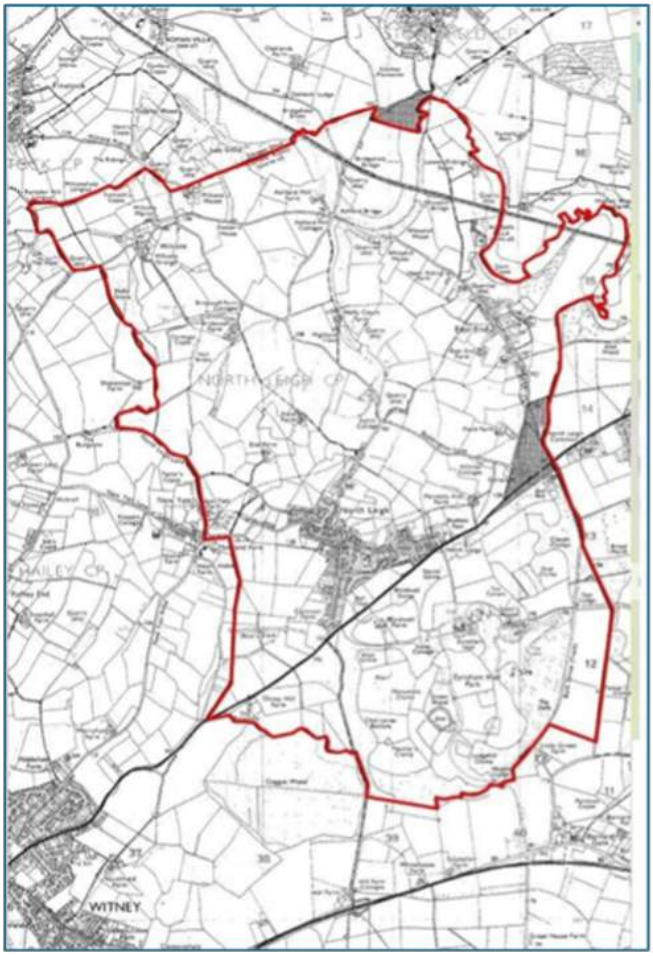


Figure 2. North Leigh parish boundary

Design Code Approach & Methodology

With regard to Grims Ditch, a West Oxfordshire District Council Officer's report on planning application for proposed housing west side of North Leigh (reference 24/03100/OUT) states the following:

'The north Oxfordshire Grims Ditch is a series of discreet linear earthworks of Iron Age or Romano-British date which together make up at least one segmented circuit, situated between the valleys of the Rivers Evenlode, Glyme and Windrush in an area of the eastern Cotswolds. The ditch provides evidence of how the landscape was managed and divided. And confirms the view that it served to define an area which was of particular significance to its builders. All sections surviving as visible earthworks, and sections identified by aerial photography which are integral to a general understanding of the nature and extent of Grims Ditch, will normally merit statutory protection. The section of Grims Ditch west of Common Farm survives well, while limited excavations have confirmed that it will contain archaeological and environmental evidence relating to its construction and the landscape in which it was built.'

Around the settlement there are examples of ridge and furrow from the pre-enclosure era of open field strip farming and, in general, much of the settlement is within walking distance of open countryside.

However, as the settlement has expanded in recent decades, a number of green spaces or former farmland are now isolated in places from the surrounding countryside or are so fragmented that they no longer can be regarded as part of agricultural units. This presently forms part of the character of the area, the largely linear form of the settlement binding in the dispersed more recent areas of development. However, these remaining open land areas within or close to the settlement boundary are at risk of further infilling, which would potentially impact overall character. The Design Code will need to consider how best these areas can be contribute to the ideal form and function of the village.

Design Code – Important Considerations

In terms of street scene, landscaping, and access, important questions are: first, what are the most valued features of the parish that we would like to encourage in future planning applications? Second, how can the urban grain of the historical core and successful features of subsequent developments inform future development?

Key points include:

- Future development should protect and enhance North Leigh parish as a special place and enable new residents to feel they are part of the village. New developments should not be oversized, sprawling and suburban. They should avoid any coalescence.
- Although there has been infilling with development over time the village would not suit so called back-land development which enables plot occupancy to be intensified with more building. The outcome of a loss of spaciousness would be detrimental to character.
- In general, the principle will apply that any new development will follow the pattern of development in the individual sub-area and also embrace the design of the existing, adjoining properties. This should not preclude high-quality, modern design but should ensure the use of an appropriate mix of materials that is in keeping with and positively complements the above.
- New development should include diversity of housing design and building materials; and avoid regimented lines of similar housing. Traditional Cotswold building styles should be employed where relevant and wherever possible, avoiding uniformity of materials and more varied articulation (e.g. dormer windows, lintels, door porticos, pediments) - ***this was a key finding from the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey.***

Design Code Approach & Methodology

- Developers are encouraged to maximise ecological and climate sustainability in design and construction, such as applying Leti Net Zero Carbon Building Standards[1] and taking innovative approaches to the construction or redevelopment of zero carbon homes and community buildings. These should demonstrate sustainable use of resources, maximise opportunities for the use of renewable and low carbon forms of energy (such as air source/ ground source heat pumps and solar panels, and achieve high energy efficiency and water conservation (e.g. greywater harvesting). Examples of sustainable construction could include, and are not limited to, modular Passive Haus homes, earth sheltered, rammed earth, or straw bale construction.
- New developments should be designed so they are 'close', meaning a pedestrian scale of layout that reflects village character and identity. There should be non-vehicular connectivity such as pedestrian walkways and cycle tracks to and from all areas of the village (including local community hubs, retail areas and to the main centre), building on the concept of the 200m village.[2]
- Vehicular traffic should be routed whenever possible onto the main peripheral roads. Existing side roads may be overloaded already with private cars and vans parking on pavements and so it is very important to reduce these forms of congestion to enable more efficient use of roads and greater safety for residents. In part, the remedy may be one in which employment areas are expanded for local businesses to be able to operate. For example, to park vans and have more purpose-built premises rather than home working where this has an adverse impact on neighbours.
- Nature restoration and biodiversity net gain (BNG) are crucial to the streetscape and overall 'feel' of developments. The Windmill meadow also offers opportunities for BNG. Tree and hedge planting should be included in the plans of all new developments partly to help screen such schemes from surrounding lower lying land. Impermeable barriers should not be erected between gardens to prevent wildlife getting through. Provision of, or easy access to, green open spaces should also be facilitated – ***this was a key finding from the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey.***

2 LETI (2025), Net Zero Building Standards: https://www.leti.uk/uknzcbs

3 No new housing should be more than a 200m walk from the nearest public footpath through a green open space. This does not include green spaces incorporated within a new development, but instead refers to the open countryside.

- Parking in new developments needs to be considered carefully and kept to a minimum where possible given the increase in size and number of cars per household over recent years. Parking solutions should take an innovative approach, considering a mix of site-appropriate options in line with expectations set out in the Oxfordshire County Council Street Design Guide.[3] It should be noted that parking provision on new development should be ALL off-road was *a **key finding from the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey***.
- Sustainability and energy efficiency measures should be embedded within plans and designs for new neighbourhoods – ***this was a key finding from the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey.***

It is felt that the creation of a Design Review Panel would help ensure developer compliance with the Design Code and, where necessary, Local Planning Authority enforcement. There is precedence for this kind of engagement for example, in recent new development around the settlement there was substantial engagement by district councillors, the Parish Council and the community.

4 Oxfordshire County Council (2021), Street Design Guide: https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s66322/Street%20Design%20Guide.pdf, pp. 36-45.

Sub Area A:

The Village Centre

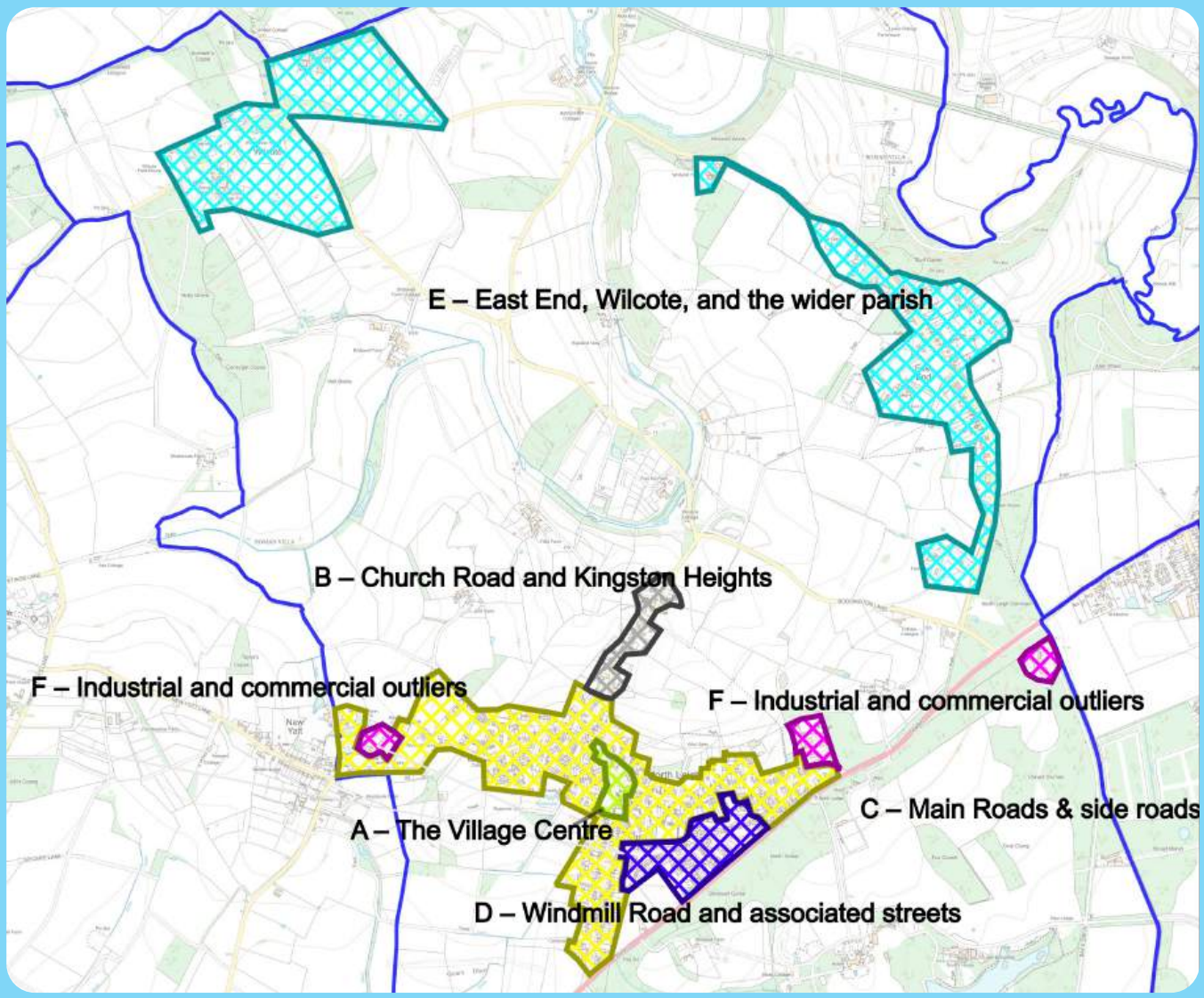


Figure 3. Village Centre Highlighted as Character Area on Parish online Map. OS Data Crown Copyright 2025.

Character Assessment & Design Code

This sub-area comprises the historic core of North Leigh which occupies the high ridge, the topography dropping away steeply to the north, affording views towards Wilcote and East End. This is a central location covering the intersection of the major roads through the village: Common Road/Park Road, New Yatt Road/Church Road. It includes locations such as the Windmill, Masons Arms, Windmill House, Chapel Lane, and Windmill Field.

The particular value of the central village area derives from its historicity and by containing a green open space backed by the iconic Windmill at the intersection of the four main village roads. This provides a sense of open space, greenery, and history that is an essential element of the 'feel' of the village.

Figure 4. The Windmill and Windmill Field from Park Road

At Windmill Heights there are modern detached homes in a small close with off-road parking. These are built in pale stone with uniform window and door styles.

Although the low Cotswold dry stone walling that surrounds the Windmill Field does close the space off from public access, this is a boundary feature that is characteristic of the Cotswolds and also contributes to the feel of the space.

The Windmill and older buildings such as Forge Cottage provide evidence to historical activities that took place in the area e.g. flour milling, blacksmithing.

AREA A

The Village Centre

There are some historically significant and characterful older properties and mature trees to enjoy. The open space spirit of the area would be lifted considerably if something could be done to utilise the green space potential of Windmill Field and further renovate the Windmill itself to truly make it a village asset and something to be proud of.

The Grade II listed stone built Mason Arms Public House alongside the thatched Gable Cottage that both front the Common Road/ Park Road junction fit in well with regard to size and scale relative to the area and can be viewed as focal point buildings.

Figure 5. The Mason's Arms at the junction of Common Road and Park Road

There is no designated Conservation Area in the settlement although there are several listed buildings. Larger significant buildings include Windmill House (Georgian three-storey Grade II listed, dated 1735) opposite the Windmill Field on Park Road. It has a front garden enclosed by c.4-foot stone wall. After years of neglect the house appears to have been sold and is now being renovated. Other noteworthy structures include Forge Cottage, the Wesleyan Chapel at the end of Chapel Lane (rebuilt in 1873) Chapel Lane has a mix of c. nineteenth century terraced houses and Victorian red brick.

Figure 6. North Leigh Windmill

The Tower Windmill was built in 1833 with 4 sails and a conical cap. During the Second World War the cap was removed to make an observation post. This led to the interior of the building to fall into decay. Recently it has been recapped to make the building waterproof, but the sails have not been added.

There are also important historic green spaces that form part of the setting of the settlement, notably Windmill Field and Cuckamus green. There are views out to open countryside from the high point of the ridge, especially to the National Landscape areas towards Combe. The settlement is also visible from surrounding low-lying areas.

More recent developments include Healey Court, which is a terraced row of five, 3-storey Cotswold stone-built houses with a very small front garden area on to Park Road. It was built in the early 2000s on the site of former grocery and butcher's shops. It Is slightly out of character with its surroundings due to its height and mass.

Perrott Close consists of link detached and detached bungalows and chalet bungalows together with 5 detached houses, all varying in sizes from 2 bedrooms to 4 bedrooms, with improvements added over the years, all built of brick, some with partial rendering, some with partial cedar or UPVC cladding.

Cuckamus Green (c. 1/3 of an acre) is an open green space (previously it was the village pond, filled in during the 1950s). There are two large, mature trees in the gardens of houses adjacent to Chapel Lane, and one in the garden of Paddock House, opposite Church Road junction. The mature trees provide a nice balance to the somewhat hard landscape with regard to the roads. The Green is well maintained by the Parish Council and has the only pieces of street furniture (two seats) in the central area.

Built Form

Development layout, building lines, orientation

This sub-area comprises much of the historic origins of the settlement along the high ridge, c. 140 m above sea level. The scarp slope falls away steeply to the north towards Combe. To the south, the land slopes more gently downhill from this central location, with glimpses of distant views to the Wiltshire Downs at Liddington Hill.

The historic heart of North Leigh is located at the junction of Park Road (which runs east-west along the ridge,) Common Road and Church Road. Originally, the village grew along the ridge line with stone cottages and larger properties on both sides of Park Road. The Grade 1 Listed Building St Marys Church dates from Saxon times and is located some distance to the north from the main village down the steeply sloping Church Road, outside the sub-area.

The village was linear in form but over time has become more nucleated. There are strong building lines along Park Road and on other main routes that should be maintained. The sub-area offers a sense of spaciousness augmented by views or glimpses through to surrounding countryside which should not be prejudiced by new development.

Character Assessment & Design Code

Most buildings are 2-2.5 storeys in height and there should be limited scope for raising roof lines above this level.

As it expanded southwards down Common Road and into surrounding locations, larger detached houses with drives may be found with varying styles, roofscapes, and orientation, with large front gardens, verges and dry stone walls to the roadside - some properties were formerly parts of farms and may be 200+ years old. The sense of enclosure is not strong, houses being set back from roads, whilst pavement and verges vary in width and quality.

In this sub-area, there are no purpose-built flats and these should be discouraged, especially as this sub-area has the highest heritage quality and might be suitable for designation as a Conservation Area. In addition, there is a strong presence of bungalows in side roads, which are out of keeping with character.

Design of new development should reflect density, a mix of dwelling types and other issues identified above in any planning statement. Any infill development should be limited to gaps in frontage to avoid a significant change in the overall open character of the area.

Figure 7. View across Windmill Field from the west

Roofs

Gabled roofs will need to achieve some variation in roofscapes in new development to avoid uniformity of design. Village roofscapes should be applied to new development including extensions in the sub-areas and the wider parish including:

- Steeply pitched roofs typically 40 – 45 degrees.
- Roof covering with slate, e.g. Stonesfield slate.
- Scale including height should reflect sizes of existing properties in the vicinity.
- Buff brick chimneys should be provided in new infill.

Figure 8. Typical 19th Century cottage with rendered dormer windows and Stonesfield slate roof.

Doors and windows

In keeping with many of the traditional properties in the village, new development should have dormer windows with render. Doors, windows, chimneys, gates, and boundary walls should all demonstrate continuity with village styles from the pre-twentieth century.

Figure 10. Cotswold dry stone boundary wall of the Windmill Field

Boundaries

Proposed development should retain key features such as high boundary stone walls, gate posts, verges and lower-level dry stone wall boundaries (topped with vertically arranged capstones (“cock and hen”) or other suitable methods, especially to main road frontages).

Figure 9. Thatched Roof, Cotswold stone boundary wall - cottage next to Masons Arms

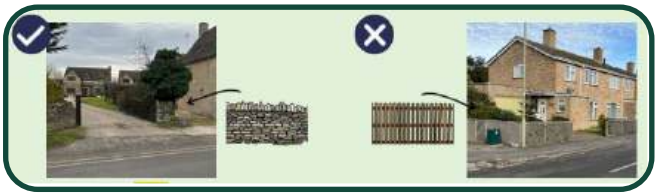


Figure 11. Examples of desirable and undesirable boundary treatments

Movement

Streets, driveways and parking

The central area is a hub for through traffic and especially commercial deliveries. The settlement does not cater well for pedestrian and cycle safety. For example, it does not employ convenient access routes, alleyways, paths with verges. Neither does it use a mix of materials to emphasise different surface treatments.

Figure 12. Footpath from Gough Close to the school would benefit from upgrading to provide all weather access

Parking provision is a sensitive issue in the sub-area, especially on side roads and new development should not overload local lanes, vistas and open spaces with on-street parking. Even the main routes are narrow through the village and leave little space for pedestrian movement.

Figure 13. Parking Examples

Within developments, garage parking should be discreetly sited behind homes with fully accessible EV charging points including for e-bikes. Garages doors must not be metal up and over doors or fibreglass due to ugly appearance and noise.

Figure 14. Electric Charging facilities for all new homes

Open style short driveways to streets will be acceptable provided EV charging points for cars and bikes are included. Driveway materials must complement acoustic management measures and attractive legacy surfacing.

Street lighting, amenity or other external lighting will not normally be permitted except possibly at accident hot spots to improve safety.

Nature And Landscape

Important areas of high landscape quality are in close proximity to the village forming part of its setting. Indeed, views to the north especially include the designated National Landscape areas of the Cotswolds.

The Public Rights of Way network connects this sub-area to all parts of the settlement and countryside beyond, offering key views that should, where possible, be protected.

Development in this northern peripheral could adversely impact this landscape and rich ecology and consequently most development has been to the south of this sub-area.

Existing natural assets

New infill developments should, where possible, retain biodiversity areas on-site to meet Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements but also encourage access through, and between, gardens through wildlife friendly barriers. Areas set aside for nature must be protected from illegal parking and dumping through landscape features (e.g. roadside ditches). Larger sites in particular should provide on-site BNG.

Pressure on wildlife should be resisted and so Veteran and Ancient trees, hedgerows and ponds should all be protected for their landscape and biodiversity value. Layout designs should incorporate them as features such as in focal points and along footpaths. Any felling of any such trees that are unprotected will require mature trees of native species to be replanted upon development being approved. Reversing key losses could include reinstatement of water areas for wildlife.

Hedgerows should be maintained and enhanced where these form a boundary to a development area or a corridor through the village out to the open countryside, including areas outside the settlement boundary. These hedgerow/field boundaries are wildlife havens and where they exist already should be expanded and strengthened. These corridors should encourage active travel, creating or linking into heritage trails and public footpaths. Stone boundary walls or garden walls should provide very small gaps to allow biodiversity and movement.

Figure 15. Retain and enhance natural landscape features

Swift boxes and other amenities for bird and bat species should be incorporated into new homes. Greywater collection should provide some facilities to top up ponds in dry weather to support biodiversity.

The settlement would benefit from an overall Landscape and Ecology Management Plan being established for the settlement which would also inform planning applications and protect valued green spaces.

Public Spaces

As noted above, even small infill developments within the village may adversely impact character as much as larger peripheral schemes. Therefore, it is important that they protect elements of green space including permeability for walking to connect footpath networks and maintain views.

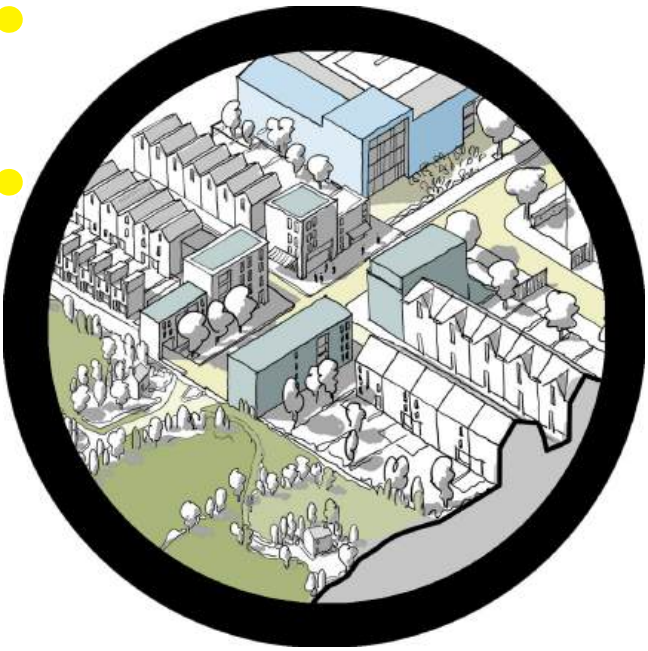
Public spaces, including public realm and green infrastructure within the sub-area such as play areas, parks, gardens and allotments, all contribute to character and identity and must be maintained as accessible to all.

Any new green and open spaces/ green infrastructure etc. forthcoming via new development should be subject to stewardship arrangements (long term maintenance) which set out funding provision for long-term management and maintenance.

Planting along footpaths and in parks should avoid non-native species or high maintenance species that can spread rapidly. Plants that are listed as pests or are invasives such as Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, and even Rhododendron, should be monitored and removed as soon as identified.

In maintaining open spaces both formal and informal use of toxic sprays using classified chemicals such as neonicotinoids, glysophates etc. will not be permitted by contractors or volunteers.

Uses

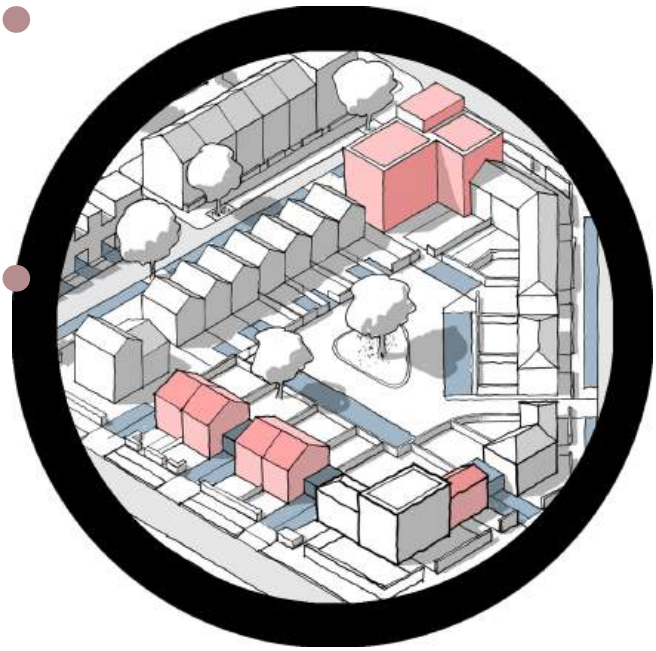


Maintaining vitality and strength of the village amenities requires opportunities to be realised such as direct safe walking routes to shops, to the pub and other facilities.

Where relocation is an option for say a community hub, these should be associated with green space such as playing field, plus parking space and scope for additional facilities such as café, meeting room etc.

The Masons Arms Public House dates back to the 18th century and has ancient stone walls, Stonesfield slates and tall chimneys. The adjoining ‘Stone Cottage’ is one of a very small number of traditional Cotswold stone cottages that retains a thatched roof.

Homes and Buildings



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These should demonstrate sustainable use of resources, maximise opportunities for the use of renewable and low carbon forms of energy (such as air source/ ground source heat pumps and solar panels, and achieve high energy efficiency and water conservation (e.g. greywater harvesting). Examples of sustainable construction could include, and are not limited to, modular Passive Haus homes, earth sheltered, rammed earth, or straw bale construction.

Discreet siting and screening of refuse bins is referenced but today these considerations should also apply to greener matters such as the siting of air source heat pumps, cycle storage, and photovoltaic panels.

Retrofitting of older homes should be enabled through provision of renewable energy including photovoltaics and heat pumps. The latter should be sited discreetly with no visibility from the street or from key views such as from Cuckamus Green.

Orientation of buildings will also be important to ensure for example that PV solar panels are not visible from the street, instead being sited on south-facing (ideally) rear roof elevations.

External lighting (including street and property lighting) should be minimised in new development and reflect considerations/ recommendations set out in the OCC Street Design Guide.

Mature trees in gardens should be recorded and held on a Tree Register by the Parish Council. Where these are removed to enable infilling prior to any planning approval they should be replaced as part of any permission and maintained for a minimum of five-years until proven to be viable.

There may be space available for verges, fruit trees and hedgerow retention and these should be retained if part of the original character of the site. In larger infill schemes food growing areas such as allotments and common areas for traditional orchards might be feasible.

Figure 16. Examples of Solar Panels fitted flush within a Slate Roof

Figure 17. North Leigh Allotments

The Village Centre

Materials and Design

Due to the significance of heritage in the sub-area, the salvage and storage of original traditional materials should be a priority to enable re-use. Demolition should be resisted and where it does occur conditions should be imposed to require the stock of materials to be stored safely under supervision at the expense of the applicant. Developers should avoid styles of roof materials that conflict with local styles.

The use of traditional materials and styles should be implemented in all new developments, including treatment of hard and soft surfaces. Where brick represents a characteristic building material, it should be noted that buff brick is the most commonly used colour of brick in North Leigh.

Figure 21. Use of traditional construction materials

Where older buildings are included in new development sites every effort should be made to integrate such buildings and individual features into the scheme including homes or outbuildings/garage space.

Where this is not possible materials should be re-used in the new development. Corner buildings at junctions of streets are especially worthy of retention and re-use of features and materials.

Figure 18. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 19. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 20. preferred style of roof

Space between and around buildings

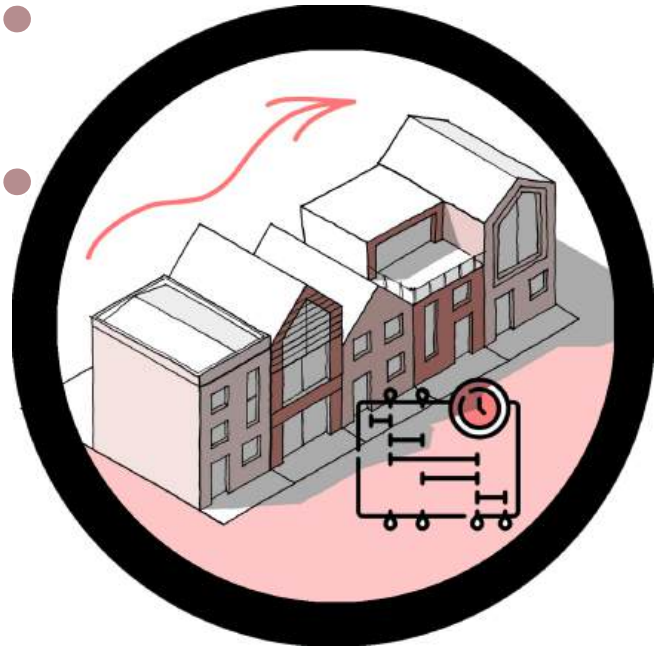
It is often the case that the sub-area may be characterized by buildings being in close proximity with small distances between boundaries – in new development this may also be relevant.

Very dense sites might allow for increases in height to create more useable internal space. Backland development will not be appropriate as in most cases this would create over development.

Extensions and conversions

In this sub-area, changes and additions to existing buildings should be limited by the current design, orientation, materials. Ideally, such changes should be modest in scale and not be visible from the street.

Lifespan



Any stewardship (management and maintenance) arrangements for green and blue infrastructure, community facilities and/or other assets in new development should be discussed with North Leigh Parish Council.

Assets of Community Value should be protected from conversion to other uses.

Sub Area B:

Church Road and Kingston Heights

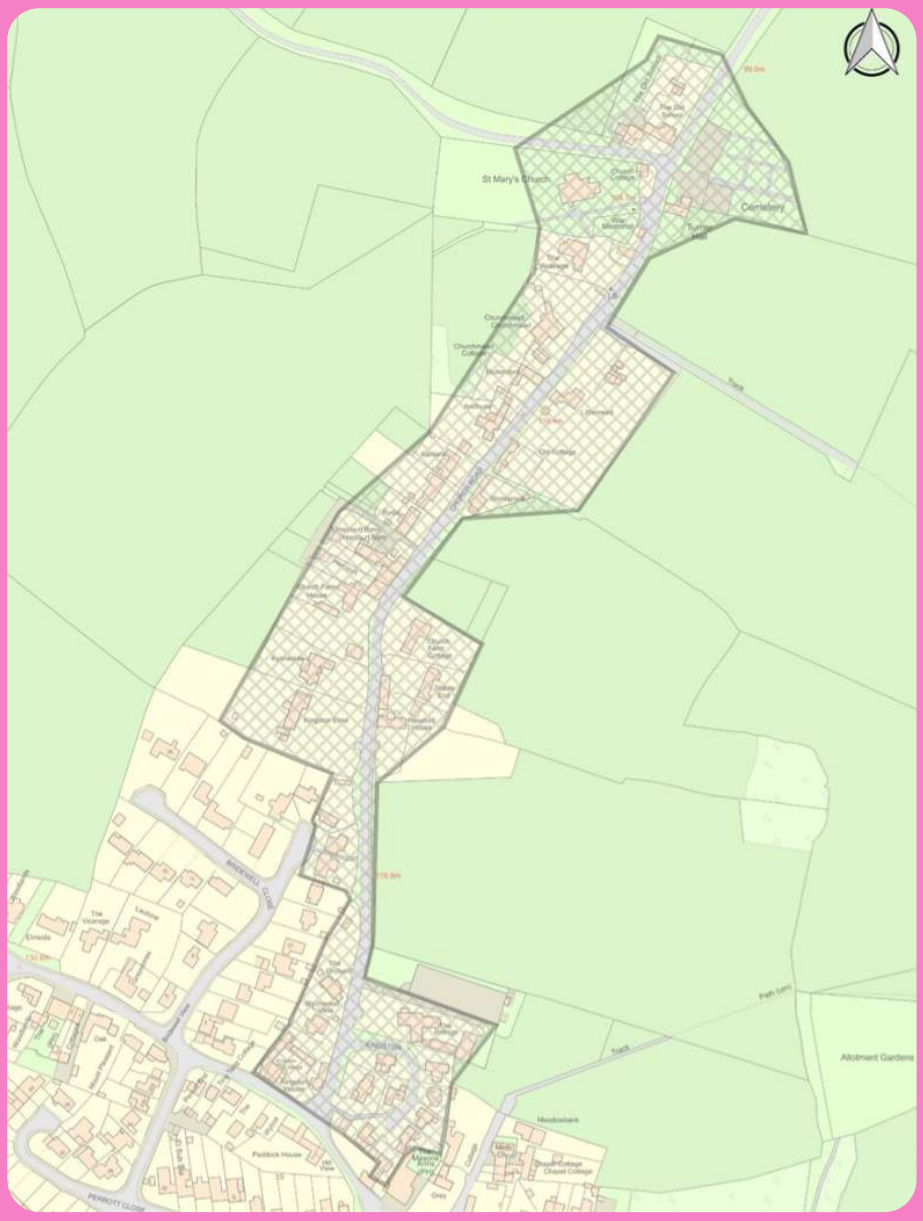


Figure 22. Character Area Highlighted on Parish online Map. OS Data Crown Copyright 2025.

The form of this sub-area is linear with properties built largely to one side of the lane, one house deep, backing onto fields. Plots vary in size and building orientation is often staggered. Views in and out of the village in this area are very important to setting, especially of the Grade 1 Listed St Mary's Church, the old cemetery, and the fields to the west and east of Church Road rising up to the ridge, which provide more elevated superb views of the church. This allows open views of the wider countryside and the listed church from various points within the main part of the village.

Figure 23. View of church from Evenlode Close

Church Road connects the church to the heart of the village on the ridge and there is a degree of continuity in form and a tranquil, aesthetic appearance, materials including stone walls, slate or thatched roofs, with red 'Oxford' chimneys.

Church Road has a large number of older traditional buildings of the Cotswold vernacular and whilst some of these are listed others might merit local listing as they contribute strongly to character. Traditional features include dry stone walls, grass verges, and mature trees. These provide a sense of enclosure to Church Road which gradually narrows to become a lane as it descends from the ridge. There is an excellent network of footpaths in this area which are well used by local people.

Figure 24. Church Road - the old Vicarage & Church

AREA B

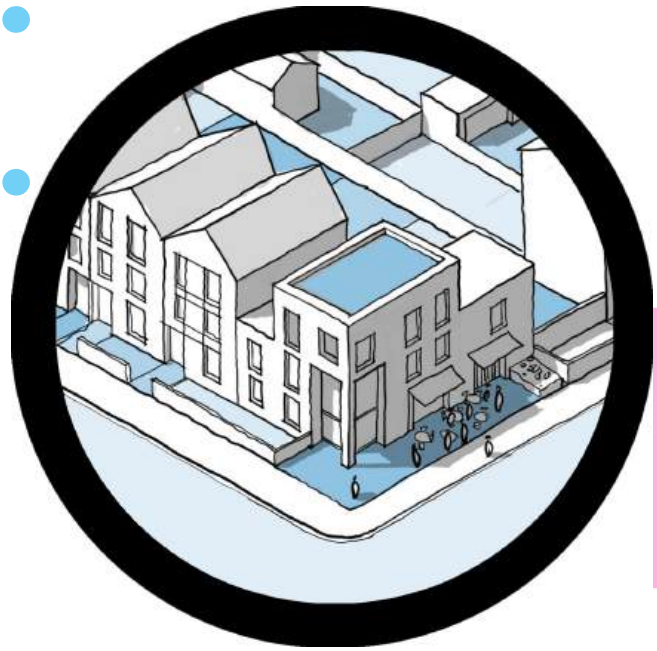
Church Road and Kingston Heights

Skies are dark with no street lighting, accentuating the unspoiled rural character of the sub-area. Church Road itself is quite narrow with no pavements but with occasional sections of grass verge. There are many sections of low, stone boundary walls with “cocks and hens” atop the stonework. In some places there are bungalows set back behind dry stone walls comprising of brick and render with clay tile roofs.

Behind these larger Church Road plots and properties the more modern, one to two-storey houses of Bridewell Close and Kingston Heights are visible. There are few buildings higher than two storeys in the village.

Figure 25. Church Road - traditional cottages and bungalow

Built Form



Development layout, building lines, orientation

This sub-area comprises a linear form of built area, sloping steeply down northwards from the central part of the settlement. There are many traditional properties along the lane which concludes shortly beyond the Grade 1 listed St Marys Church which dates from the Anglo-Saxon era. The setting of the church is protected in many respects by this linear form, which offers limited scope for infilling without disturbing views of the church in its arable hinterland.

Church Road is a direct connector with the historic central part of the settlement on the ridge and naturally many of the properties along its length date from the same period. The oldest properties are mainly two-storeys and are constructed, like other settlements in this part of the county, from coursed limestone, with Stonesfield slate roofs and red 'Oxford' chimneys. Some were formerly agricultural buildings and add significantly to character here. At its northernmost extent the sense of enclosure is heightened with the lane at its narrowest, twisting to avoid the oldest structures. This creates a strong and intimate street scene.

Church Road and Kingston Heights

Outside the sub-area but also close to the centre are more modern buildings in infill development, close to the ridgeline. Further expansion or intensification of plot development in this locale would be prejudicial to key views to the north and to the church as well as adversely impacting the rustic nature of Church Road. Likewise, development on either side of this linear, built-up area would also compromise the rural character, which includes key views.

Any new development here should ideally be infill in frontages rather than back land development in rear gardens which would be out of character. Outbuildings with scope for conversion should retain features including traditional walling and roofing materials and dormer windows. Conversions should be in keeping with scale – extra height to accommodate new dormer windows should not exceed the typical ridge lines of existing two-storey buildings.

Although not in a Conservation Area, the verdant nature of the sub-area should be retained along the length of Church Road, especially in the setting of the church. Tree Preservation Orders should be encouraged where possible and mature trees should not be removed simply to enable greater subdivision of plots for development. Plot sizes are an important element of local character and the orientation of new build should maintain privacy and distances from adjacent properties. “Estate” standards such as 1-2m distances between houses will not be acceptable in this sub-area.

Use of traditional materials, including stone and slates, colour palettes, roofscapes, traditional windows and doors should all be applied to the highest possible standard.

Roofs

Most older properties along Church Road have gabled roofs either fronting the lane or being set at right angles to it. There are no flat roofs in this sub-area, including single story structures. Roofscapes are varied by siting and orientation, appearing less uniform as a result.

There is no strong building line. Roofs are steeply pitched with some exceptions, with stone slates rather than tiles. Any new infill here should be set back from the lane behind stone boundary walls, with similar heights to existing two-storey dwellings, stone walls, dormer windows, and red 'Oxford' chimneys.

Doors and windows

In keeping with many of the traditional properties in the village, new development should have dormer windows. Doors, windows, chimneys, gates, and boundary walls should all demonstrate continuity with village styles from the pre-twentieth century.

Boundaries

Proposed development should retain key features such as high boundary stone walls, gate posts, verges and lower-level dry stone wall boundaries (topped with vertically arranged capstones ("cock and hen") or other suitable methods, especially to main road frontages).

There are some close boarded fences fronting Church Road which are unattractive and out of line with local character. These should be screened, if possible, and new ones avoided.

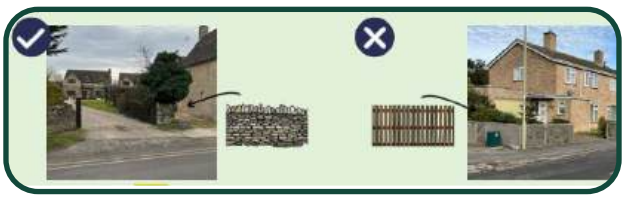


Figure 26. Examples of desirable and undesirable boundary treatments

Movement

Streets, driveways and parking

Most of the properties are detached. Many occupy large plots, with long driveways, all accessed from Church Road. As a linear part of the settlement, there are no crossroads but there are some pedestrian alleyways running through the area connecting to a wider network of paths.

Figure 27. Church Road - access to footpath into Bridewell Close

Character Assessment & Design Code

Parking is not especially noticeable as many driveways are long and curve inside the plots or are screened by planting. Generally, they are discreetly sited behind or to the side of homes.

Any new development here should follow the same pattern with garages set back and provision of accessible EV charging points suitable for bikes and cars. Modern garages should fit with vernacular local character so doors should not be metal up and over doors or fibreglass due to ugly appearance and noise. Garage roofs should be pitched with slate covering. Garage courts or blocks (such as a line of freestanding garages set apart from housing) would be unwelcome in this sub-area.

New infill development should not permit tandem parking (where more than one car is parked one behind another on a single width driveway) as this would encourage over-development. Driveway materials should complement acoustic management measures, avoid tarmacking, and instead provide attractive, legacy surfacing. This might include block paving, brick weave or resin-bonded surfaces.

Figure 28. Parking Examples

Figure 29. Electric Charging facilities for all new homes

Nature And Landscape

Pressure on wildlife should be resisted and so Veteran and Ancient trees, hedgerows and ponds should all be protected for their landscape and biodiversity value. Layout designs should incorporate them as features such as in focal points and along footpaths. Any felling of any such trees that are unprotected will require mature trees of native species to be replanted upon development being approved.

Reversing key losses could include reinstatement of water areas for wildlife and even infill development should be encouraged to provide small ponds.

Hedgerows should be maintained and enhanced where these form a boundary to a development area or a corridor through the village out to the open countryside, including areas outside the settlement boundary. Where hedgerows connect with gardens these should be integrated more effectively without the need for more boundary fences.

These hedgerow/ field boundaries are wildlife havens and where they exist already should be expanded and strengthened. These corridors should encourage active travel, creating or linking into heritage trails and public footpaths. Note that stone boundary walls or garden walls should provide very small gaps to allow biodiversity and movement.

Figure 30. Retain and enhance natural landscape features

Swift boxes and other amenities for bird and bat species should be incorporated into new homes. Greywater collection should provide some facilities to top up ponds in dry weather to support biodiversity.

Public Spaces

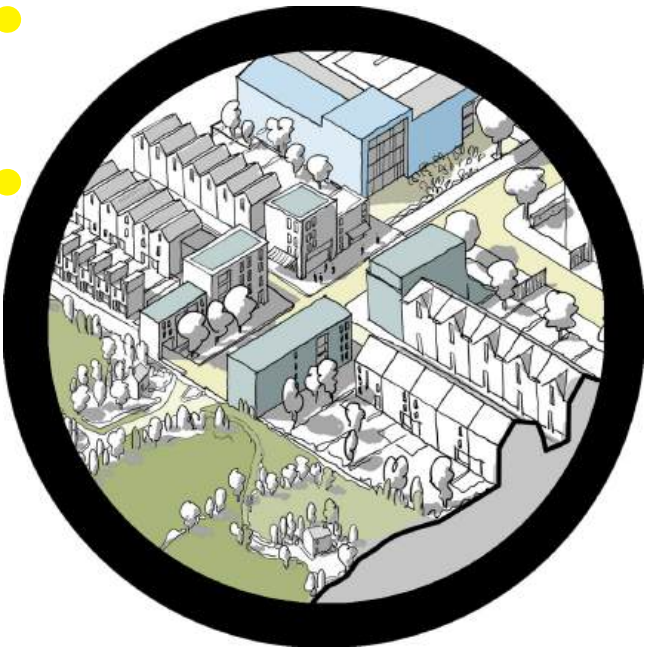
Public spaces, including public realm and green infrastructure within the sub-area such as play areas, parks, gardens and allotments, all contribute to character and identity and must be maintained as accessible to all.

Any new green and open spaces/ green infrastructure etc. forthcoming via new development should be subject to stewardship arrangements (long term maintenance) which set out funding provision for long-term management and maintenance.

Planting along footpaths and in parks should avoid non-native species or high maintenance species that can spread rapidly. Plants that are listed as pests or are invasives such as Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, and even Rhododendron, should be monitored and removed as soon as identified.

In maintaining open spaces both formal and informal use of toxic sprays using classified chemicals such as neonicotinoids, glysophates etc. will not be permitted by contractors or volunteers.

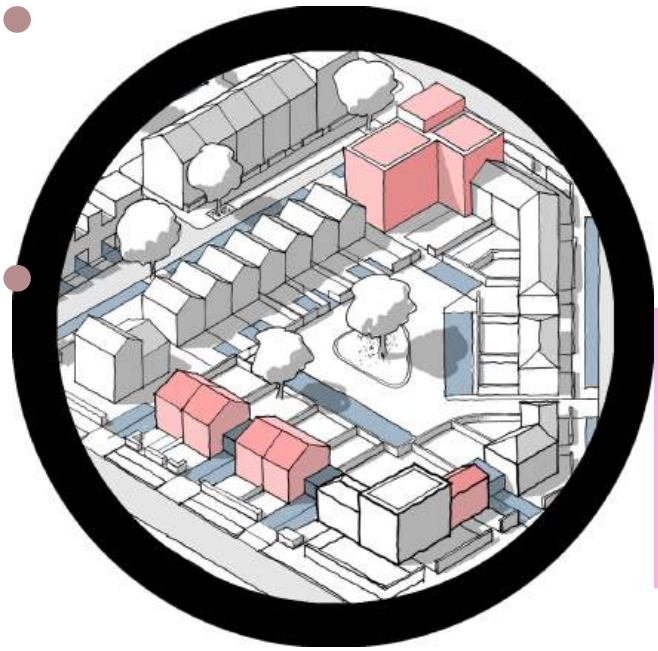
Uses



Maintaining vitality and strength of the village amenities requires opportunities to be realised such as direct safe walking routes – where viable and on new development - to shops, to the pub and other facilities.

Where relocation is an option for say a community hub, these should be associated with green space such as playing field, plus parking space and scope for additional facilities such as café, meeting room etc.

Homes and Buildings



Developers are encouraged to maximise ecological and climate sustainability in design and construction, such as applying Leti Net Zero Carbon Building Standards and taking innovative approaches to the construction or redevelopment of zero carbon homes and community buildings. These should demonstrate sustainable use of resources, maximise opportunities for the use of renewable and low carbon forms of energy (such as air source/ ground source heat pumps and solar panels, and achieve high energy efficiency and water conservation (e.g. greywater harvesting). Examples of sustainable construction could include, and are not limited to, modular Passive Haus homes, earth sheltered, rammed earth, or straw bale construction.

Discreet siting and screening of refuse bins is referenced but today these considerations should also apply to greener matters such as the siting of air source heat pumps, cycle storage, and photovoltaic panels.

Church Road and Kingston Heights

Retrofitting of older homes should be enabled through provision of renewable energy, including photovoltaics and heat pumps. The latter should be sited discreetly with no visibility from the street or from key views.

Orientation of buildings will also be important to ensure for example that PV solar panels are not visible from the street, instead being sited on south-facing (ideally) rear roof elevations.

External lighting (including street and property lighting) should be minimised in new development and reflect considerations/ recommendations set out in the OCC Street Design Guide.

Mature trees in gardens should be recorded and held on a Tree Register by the Parish Council. Where these are removed to enable infilling prior to any planning approval they should be replaced as part of any permission and maintained for a minimum of five years until proven to be viable.

There may be space available for verges, fruit trees, and hedgerows. These should be retained if part of the original character of the site. In larger infill schemes, food growing areas such as allotments and common areas for traditional orchards might be feasible.

Figure 31. Examples of Solar Panels fitted flush within a Slate Roof

Figure 32. North Leigh Allotments

Materials and design

Due to the significance of heritage in the sub-area, the salvage and storage of original traditional materials should be a priority to enable re-use. Demolition should be resisted and where it does occur conditions should be imposed to require the stock of materials to be stored safely under supervision at the expense of the applicant.

Developers should avoid styles of roof materials that conflict with local styles.

The use of traditional materials and styles should be implemented in all new developments, including treatment of hard and soft surfaces. Cotswold stone, stone slates, and other features prevalent in this sub-area should be replicated in new development. Where brick represents a characteristic building material, it should be noted that buff brick is the most commonly used colour of brick in North Leigh.

Where older buildings are included in new development sites every effort should be made to integrate such buildings and individual features into the scheme including homes or outbuildings/ garage space.

Where this is not possible, materials should be re-used in the new development. Corner buildings at junctions of streets are especially worthy of retention and re-use of features and materials.

Figure 36. Buff coloured brick with brown clay tiles are common materials in North Leigh

Figure 33. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 34. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 35. preferred style of roof

Space between and around buildings

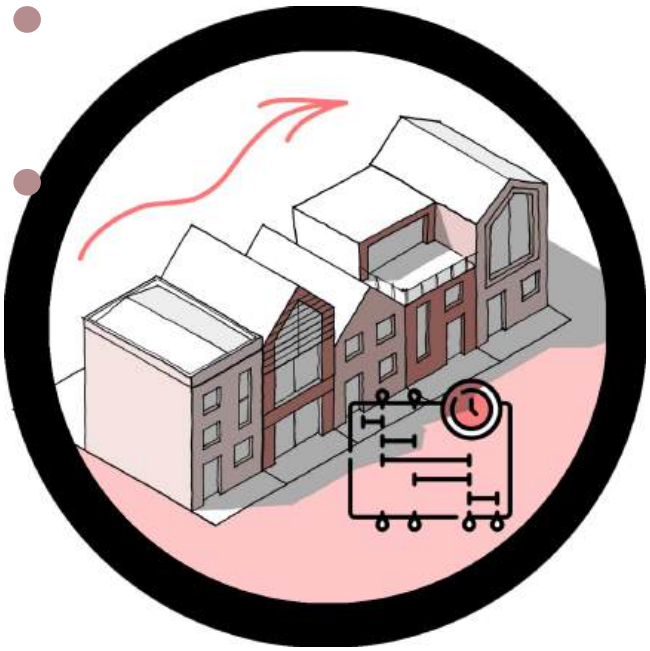
It is often the case that the sub-area may be characterized by buildings being in close proximity with small distances between boundaries – in new development this may also be relevant.

Within this sub-area higher density sites might reduce land take and leave more green space for residents to enjoy. Terraced housing may be suitable in this location.

Extensions and conversions

In this sub-area, changes and additions to existing buildings should be limited by the current design, orientation, materials. Ideally, such changes should be modest in scale and not be visible from the street.

Lifespan



Any stewardship (management and maintenance) arrangements for green and blue infrastructure, community facilities and/or other assets in new development should be discussed with North Leigh Parish Council.

Any Assets of Community Value should be protected from conversion to other uses.

Sub Area C:

Main Roads and Attached Side Roads

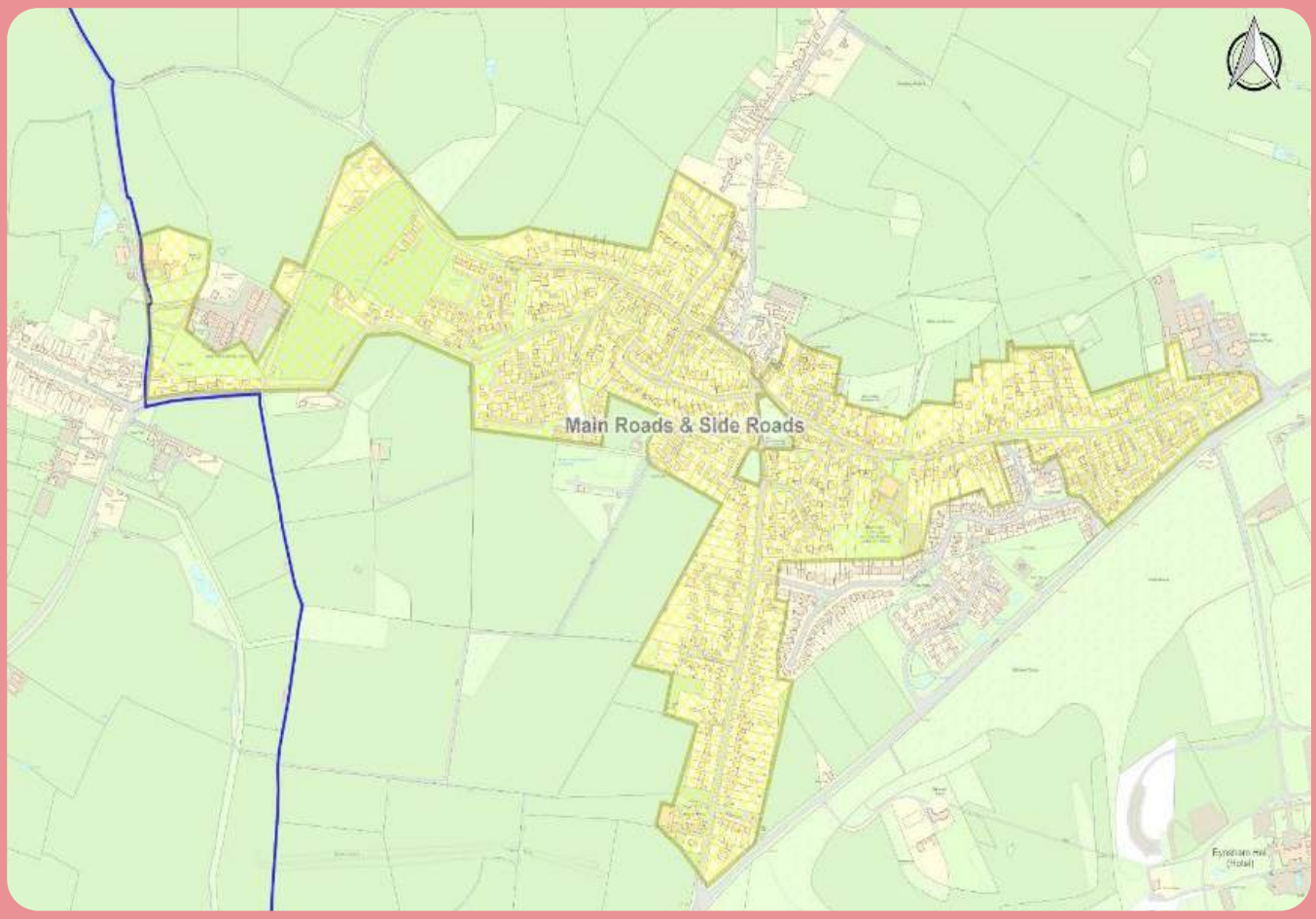


Figure 37. Character Area Highlighted on Parish online Map. OS Data Crown Copyright 2025.

This area encompasses the three main arteries within North Leigh – Park Road, New Yatt Road and Common Road - and its associated side streets, albeit outside Character Area A.

This sub-area is quite varied, with a mix of historic older properties, more modern suburban housing (including considerable numbers of chalet bungalows), and higher density housing in cul-de-sac side roads. The more modern housing includes new development to the west along New Yatt Road.

Park Road

This is the main distributor road through the village and runs roughly east-west, linking the Eynsham Hall junction on the A4095 with the historic heart of the village. Whilst a small cluster of houses close to the A4095 junction, and also close to the Masons Arms, were in existence before 1900 the majority of houses in this area were built post-World War Two.

Park Road has determined the linear form of the village over the years and naturally has hosted community assets of the highest communal value, such as the link to the village allotments, school, library, shop/PO, the public house, community hall, youth club, playground, and footpaths into the countryside. The present Memorial Hall has parking for about four cars in front of the hall and two cars in the layby opposite, but this is insufficient for this amenity and users of the hall/shop/library complex need to park on the roadside as well.

Figure 38. Park Road - traditional cottages

AREA C

Main roads & attached side roads

The eclectic character of Park Road is noteworthy, including older stone-built houses interspersed with more modern buildings such as bungalows. Like the central sub-area this area offers glimpses of countryside an elevated position along the ridge.

Superimposed onto this backdrop are many typical 1950s/ 1960s houses alongside brand new houses, and a small estate of houses at Bluebell Gardens built in the last 5 years.

Construction materials reflect the variety and age of the houses with brick, stone, reconstituted stone and render/ whitewash, plus some pebbledash putting in an appearance.

Housing density on Park Road and its side streets varies from 8 to 18 houses per hectare and this reflects the wide variety of housing types from large detached to semis and terraced. There is also a selection of detached or semi-detached bungalows/ dormer bungalows – a few on Park Road itself and many on Wilcote View. Home ownership is equally varied with Park Road being largely owner-occupied and some side streets offering Housing Association homes. This adds to the variety of architectural styles with Housing Association properties being more utilitarian in style.

Figure 39. Example of a larger modern detached house on Park Road

Figure 40. Examples of bungalows on Park Road - set back from the road

Many of the postwar, privately owned houses on Park Road are set well back from the roadside and screened from the road by fences or hedges. The view of Park Road at the eastern end is leafy, quieter and green due to the wide verges and trees/hedges and with houses largely set back from the road. Also at the eastern end of Park Road is an undeveloped field carrying an important footpath towards the view north to the church. This field interrupts the building line and gives an open feel to this end of Park Road. Past the school, heading west, there are no grass verges and the view is restricted by houses being closer to the roadside.

Figure 41. Park Road – Bluebell Gardens

Intermingled amongst the twentieth-century houses and bungalows are a few houses that have historic characteristics and feature thatched roofs or attractive brickwork. Rooflines are irregular, matching the variation in housing type, and this adds interest to the streetscape.

Main roads & attached side roads

New Yatt Road

New Yatt Road stretches out from the village centre towards the hamlet of New Yatt. It combines a rich mix of historical character with more recent developments. Its blend of housing, natural surroundings, and accessibility makes it a key part of North Leigh's identity. The properties are varied in style and age, contributing to its character, from terraced cottages near The Woodman Pub to larger detached homes and semi-detached houses. Newer developments like Shepherds Walk and Masons Grove have been carefully designed to blend with the surrounding area and are built using materials and styles in keeping with the Cotswold aesthetic.

A network of public footpaths connects this area to the wider landscape and the combination of green spaces, well-kept gardens, and the surrounding rural environment creates an attractive setting.

Common Road and side streets

Common Road runs north and south between the junction of A4095 in the south to the northerly T-junction, which leads to New Yatt Road (to west) and Park Road (to east). Many homes have countryside views. The houses are well spaced apart and it feels generally calm. The housing evolved organically during the mid to late twentieth century, with some more recent additions on a very small scale. Houses are set back from the road with long front gardens behind a road verge.

Side streets such as Windmill Heights, Leigh Close, and Heath Farm Lane contain mainly detached houses. The small closes /lanes leading off Common Road have a mixture of styles relating to when built, similar to Common Road.

Building materials include local pale stone, some pale brick, some painted or rendered white or cream. Roof coverings are mainly grey tiles and slate. No red tiles are noted. On Common Road most properties have front gardens with hedges, trees, shrubs and discreet wooden fencing, all contributing to the attractiveness of the roadside.

AREA C

Main roads & attached side roads

Built Form

This sub-area has seen infill developments with some green spaces and there is potential scope for more of this in future on a small-scale basis, respecting their immediate surroundings in scale and character. Infill or larger plot subdivision along main roads in particular should be resisted.

Extensions or redevelopment should reflect the pattern of development in the older central parts of the village, including layout, orientation, design and use of materials. i.e. stone, slate, thatch, especially where visible from main roads. Building lines should be respected along the main roads of the sub-area in particular.

There are few buildings higher than two storeys in the village and new buildings should be no higher than 2-2.5 storeys.

Plot sub-division or back land development should not be encouraged as this will inevitably impact character as well as creating further congestion.

There is little prospect of any significant change, such as infilling, in these side roads. In suburban side roads there are far fewer verges, boundary walls and open spaces which characterise older parts of the village. The loss of spaciousness thereby contributes to adverse impacts on character and should be resisted.

Outside the central areas of the village there are more boundary hedges and less in the way of dry stone walls. Homes flanking both sides of main roads often face side gardens, hence the need for boundary treatment for privacy.

In addition, new schemes such as Breakspear Way/Gough Close have been built in peripheral locations with limited footway access to the village centre, a good 10-minute walk away. Although reasonable in scale and height, such small-scale developments should not introduce non-characteristic treatments such as white render.

Edge of village locations on a scarp slope, such as off Common Road, means new homes are likely to be visible from surrounding lower-lying areas, which is detrimental to character.

It is beneficial for new development to have significant public green space such as for play areas or village greens especially as garden land will inevitably be small-scale in North Leigh.

Main roads & attached side roads

Roofs

Gabled roofs will need to achieve some variation in roofscapes in new development to avoid uniformity of design. Village roofscapes should be applied to new development, including extensions in the sub-areas and the wider parish. These include:

- Steeply pitched roofs typically 40 – 45 degrees.
- Roof covering with slate, e.g. Stonesfield slate.
- Scale including height should reflect sizes of existing properties in the vicinity.
- Buff brick chimneys should be provided in new infill.

Figure 42. Typical 19th Century cottage with rendered dormer windows and Stonesfield slate roof

Doors and windows

Doors, windows, chimneys, gates, and boundary walls should all demonstrate continuity with village styles from the pre-twentieth century.

Boundaries

Proposed development should retain key features such as high boundary stone walls, gate posts, verges and lower-level dry stone wall boundaries (topped with vertically arranged capstones (“cock and hen”) or other suitable methods, especially to main road frontages).

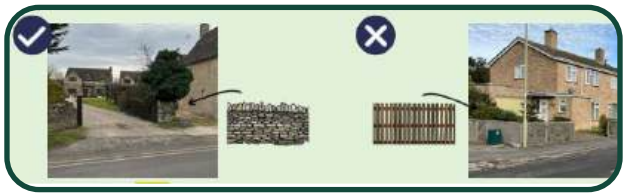


Figure 43. Examples of desirable and undesirable boundary treatments

The side roads have driveways straight off the street allowing off street parking which is necessary as these are very narrow lanes that cannot tolerate pavement parking and so on. For this reason, homes often pave over limited front garden space often fronting directly or close to the pavement.

Figure 44. Park Road - example of Cotswold stone walling boundary retained in front of 1960s terrace

Movement

Streets, driveways and parking

The historic alignment of Park Road is created by older properties that sit close to the carriageway and means there is only room for a pavement on the south side of the road. This location is a major 'pinch point' in the road system and is very congested at school run and other times. Any further development along Park Road or New Yatt Road will inevitably impact access along Park Road and generate congestion through the village. Thus, it is preferable that further infilling should not rely on Park Road for its servicing.

No through traffic is enabled on side roads so rat running is generally limited. However, Windmill Road runs off Park Road and provides an alternative route from Park Road through to Common Road – albeit a rather tortuous and congested one. New development around the village should avoid creating rat-runs. Side roads generally are cul-de-sacs and are beneficial for safety. Curtailing speeds is aided if there are no bell mouth junctions.

Figure 45. Park Road - pinch point approaching the school

Greater permeability should be feasible through use of convenient access routes, alleyways, paths with verges, and use of materials to emphasise different surface treatments.

Character Assessment & Design Code

At all times within side roads in new developments drivers should understand they do not have priority. Narrow lanes running from main thoroughfares will all support this more conducive pedestrian/cycle-friendly environment encouraging greater increase permeability, safety and active travel. Bike parking should be encouraged with lockable facilities at new homes in the sub-area.

Parking provision is a sensitive issue in the sub-area and new development should not overload local lanes, vistas, and open spaces with on-street parking. Within developments garage parking should be discreetly sited behind homes with fully accessible EV charging points including for e-bikes. Garages doors must not be metal up and over doors or fibreglass due to ugly appearance and noise.

Figure 46. Parking Examples

Open style short driveways to streets will be acceptable provided EV charging points for cars and bikes are included. Driveway materials must complement acoustic management measures and attractive legacy surfacing. Street lighting, amenity or other external lighting will not normally be permitted except possibly at accident hot spots to improve safety.

Figure 47. Electric Charging facilities for all new homes

Main roads & attached side roads

Nature And Landscape

Ecologically important areas in and around the settlement are accessible via Public Rights of Way from this sub-area and views of the village from surrounding elevated areas of open countryside should be protected.

On the peripheral edge, new development should define the field boundary by creating shelter belts and restricting views from afar. Development should be screened from the countryside and discourage future incursions beyond the established settlement boundary.

Existing natural assets

New infill developments should retain biodiversity areas to meet BNG requirements but also allow access through and between gardens through wildlife friendly barriers. Areas set aside for nature must be protected from illegal parking and dumping through landscape features (e.g. roadside ditches).

Vintage and Ancient trees, hedgerows and ponds should be protected for their landscape and biodiversity value. Layout designs should incorporate them as features, such as in focal points and along footpaths. Any felling of any such trees that are unprotected will require mature trees of native species to be replanted upon development being approved.

Hedgerows should be maintained and enhanced where these form a boundary to a development area or a corridor through the village out to the open countryside, including areas outside the settlement boundary. These hedgerow/field boundaries are wildlife havens and where they exist already should be expanded and strengthened. These corridors should encourage active travel, creating or linking into heritage trails and public footpaths. Stone boundary walls or garden walls should provide very small gaps to allow biodiversity and movement.

Figure 48. Retain and enhance natural landscape features

Swift boxes and other amenities for bird and bat species should be incorporated into new homes. Greywater collection should provide some facilities to top up ponds in dry weather to support biodiversity.

Public Spaces

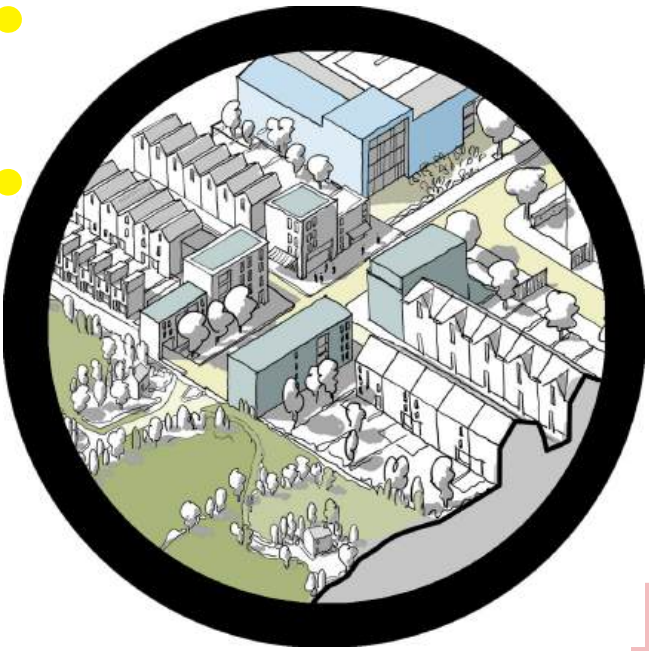
Public spaces, including public realm and green infrastructure within the sub-area such as play areas, parks, gardens and allotments, all contribute to character and identity and must be maintained as accessible to all.

Any new green and open spaces/ green infrastructure etc. forthcoming via new development should be subject to stewardship arrangements (long term maintenance) which set out funding provision for long-term management and maintenance.

Planting along footpaths and in parks should avoid non-native species or high maintenance species that can spread rapidly. Plants that are listed as pests or are invasives such as Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, and even Rhododendron, should be monitored and removed as soon as identified.

In maintaining open spaces both formal and informal use of toxic sprays using classified chemicals such as neonicotinoids, glysophates etc. will not be permitted by contractors or volunteers.

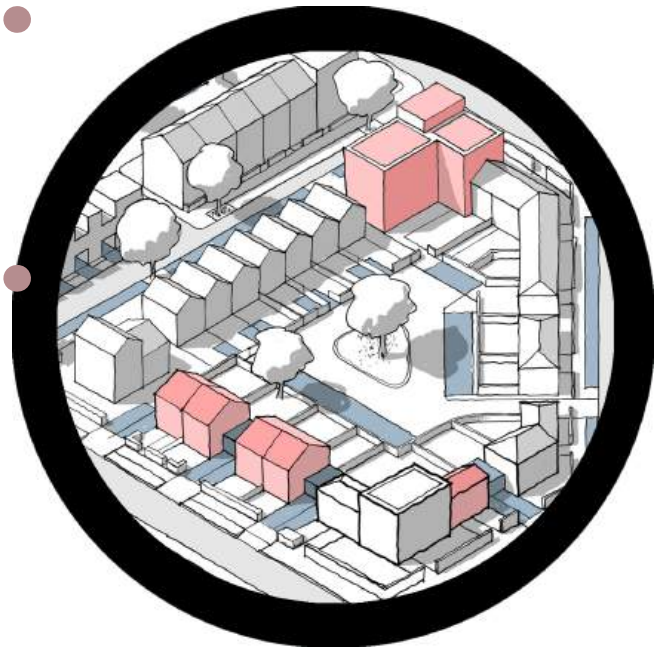
Uses



Maintaining vitality and strength of the village amenities requires opportunities to be realised such as direct safe walking routes to shops, to the pub and other facilities.

Where relocation is an option for say a community hub, these should be associated with green space such as playing field, plus parking space and scope for additional facilities such as café, meeting room etc.

Homes and Buildings



Developers are encouraged to maximise ecological and climate sustainability in design and construction, such as applying Leti Net Zero Carbon Building Standards and taking innovative approaches to the construction or redevelopment of zero carbon homes and community buildings.

These should demonstrate sustainable use of resources, maximise opportunities for the use of renewable and low carbon forms of energy (such as air source/ ground source heat pumps and solar panels, and achieve high energy efficiency and water conservation (e.g. greywater harvesting). Examples of sustainable construction could include, and are not limited to, modular Passive Haus homes, earth sheltered, rammed earth, or straw bale construction.

Discreet siting and screening of refuse bins is referenced but today these considerations should also apply to greener matters such as the siting of air source heat pumps, cycle storage, and photovoltaic panels.

Figure 49. Park Road - pinch point approaching the school

Retrofitting of older homes should be enabled through provision of renewable energy, including photovoltaics and heat pumps. The latter should be sited discreetly with no visibility from the street or from key views.

Orientation of buildings will also be important to ensure for example that PV solar panels are not visible from the street, instead being sited on south-facing (ideally) rear roof elevations.

Mature trees in gardens should be recorded and held on a Tree Register by the Parish Council. Where these are removed to enable infilling prior to any planning approval they should be replaced as part of any permission and maintained for a minimum of five years until proven to be viable.

There may be space available for verges, fruit trees and hedgerow retention and these should be retained if part of the original character of the site. In larger infill schemes food growing areas such as allotments and including some common areas for traditional orchards might be feasible.

Figure 50. Examples of Solar Panels fitted flush within a Slate Roof

Figure 51. North Leigh Allotments

Main roads & attached side roads

Materials and design

Due to the significance of heritage in the sub-area, the salvage and storage of original traditional materials should be a priority to enable re-use. Demolition should be resisted and where it does occur conditions should be imposed to require the stock of materials to be stored safely under supervision at the expense of the applicant.

Developers should avoid styles of roof materials that conflict with local styles.

The use of traditional materials and styles should be implemented in all new developments including treatment of hard and soft surfaces. Where brick represents a characteristic building material, it should be noted that buff brick is the most commonly used colour of brick in North Leigh.

Where older buildings are included in new development sites every effort should be made to integrate such buildings and individual features into the scheme including homes or outbuildings/garage space and where this is not possible materials should be re-used in the new development. Corner buildings at junctions of streets are especially worthy of retention and re-use of features and materials.

Figure 55. Use of traditional construction materials

Figure 52. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 53. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 54. preferred style of roof

Space between and around buildings

It is often the case that the sub-area may be characterized by buildings being in close proximity with small distances between boundaries – in new development this may also be relevant.

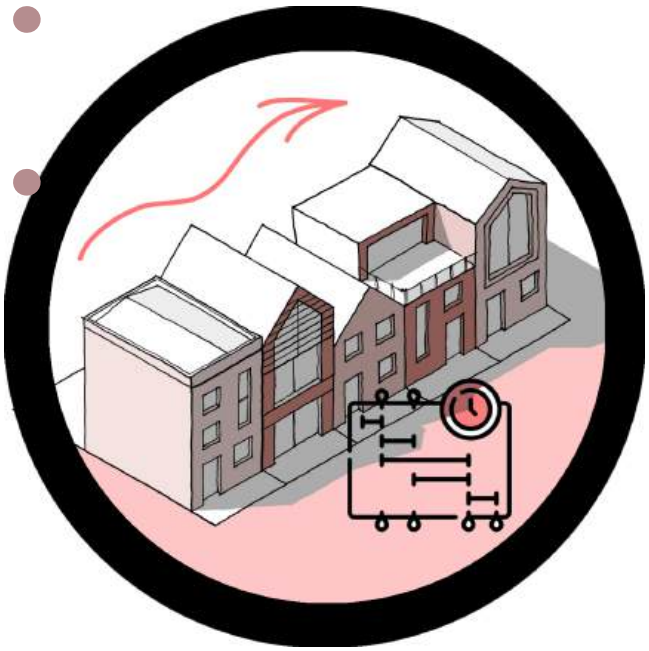
Very dense sites might allow for increases in height to create more useable internal space.

Extensions and conversions

In this sub-area, changes and additions to existing buildings should be limited by the current design, orientation, materials. Ideally such changes should be modest in scale and not be visible from the street.

Main roads & attached side roads

Lifespan



Any stewardship (management and maintenance) arrangements for green and blue infrastructure, community facilities and/or other assets in new development should be discussed with North Leigh Parish Council.

Any Assets of Community Value should be protected from conversion to other uses.

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Sub Area D:

Windmill Road and associated streets

Figure 56. Character Area Highlighted on Parish online Map. OS Data Crown Copyright 2025.

This part of the village is characterised by more recent development, with many bungalows from the 1960s. These often feel congested and lack spaciousness. Windmill Road runs West to East starting from Common Road, ending in a northern curve to Park Road.

Windmill Road, Windmill Close, and Ladywell

The first group of houses on Windmill Road are semi-detached bungalows. Some have had extra bedrooms added in the roof area (dormer windows have been added). This group is made of buff brick, - the most commonly used colour of brick in North Leigh – with some having parts of the walls covered in white rendering.

At number 53, there is a terrace of four bungalows made of 'sandstone,' i.e. bricks moulded out of ground sand, diverse fragments of rock, and some form of silicone. The semi-detached houses in the next section of Windmill Road have two storeys. There is a facing of tiles on the upper storeys. These houses have hardstanding for cars.

There follows a mix of semi-detached and terraced housing up to the corner with Ladywell Close. The last section of Windmill Road before it reaches Park Road has two sets of four houses joined together. On the other side is the care home which belongs to Cottsway Housing Association – this building is shielded from the road by a high hedge.

Figure 58. View of Windmill Road

AREA D

Windmill Road & associated streets

The first houses in Windmill Close are bungalows like those on the main road, except they are detached. At the far end of the Close are two semi-detached houses with painted wood cladding on the upper storeys.

There are no gaps on the main road, except for footpaths leading to Park Road and towards the Akeman Road estate.

Where Windmill Road curves north for the first time, natural vegetation has been retained on the south side – where there is a gap in the housing. This means that Windmill Road is shielded at this point from the new estate, known as Marlborough Gardens.

In Ladywell Close, there is one plot of land which is too small to take a house. The residents have welcomed its existence: shrubs, a grassed area and wildflowers are being maintained.

Figure 59. View of Windmill Close

Figure 60. Greenery, Windmill Road;

Figure 61. Green space, Ladywell Close

Marlborough Gardens

The Marlborough Gardens housing estate of fifty houses was built in 2021-23. It is accessed from the A4095, except for a footpath through to Windmill Road to the north.

The houses on Akeman Road are mainly detached, but a small number are semi-detached. Most houses have built-in garages and gardens. There is additional parking for cars. Millers Close is similar to Akeman Road, except that all houses are detached. Some houses have chimneys, but these are for decoration i.e. there are no fireplaces.

Throughout the estate, the houses have a variety of construction i.e. brick ones are mixed in with other houses made of reconstituted stone (in a sandstone colour) with some being partly covered in white rendering. The exception is Foxglove End towards the east of the estate, which has two blocks of 3 houses attached: one is a terrace, the other 3 houses joined to create a triangle. These blocks are close to the A4095, but these is no access to that road.

Figure 62. mixed housing on Akeman Road

Figure 63. terrace in Foxglove end

Windmill Road & associated streets

The new development feels very open with a small ‘village green’ good for social cohesion and community events. The scale is good not overbearing in terms of the wider village, with plenty of design variations for instance, roof types, porches and dormers. Again, as with other edge locations on elevated ground the scheme is visually dominant from the main road, giving an urban rather than a rustic appearance.

Figure 64. unfinished green area, Akeman Road

However, the visual dominance occurs only when passing the entrance to Akeman Road. Beyond that point the new estate is shielded by tall hedges.

Built Form

Development layout, building lines, orientation

This compact sub-area on the southern side of the settlement of North Leigh previously comprised grazing land.

Starting from the high ground nearer the ridge, suburban style development (mainly bungalows) gradually spread southwards down gently sloping land towards the A4095. The sub-area retains some open spaces and a degree of spaciousness which forms an integral part of its character.

More recently, the sub-area witnessed a new development of c. 50 homes built off Akeman Road known collectively as Marlborough Gardens. The houses on Akeman Road are mainly detached, but a small number are semi-detached. Most houses have built-in garages and gardens. There is additional on-street parking for cars.

Millers Close is similar to Akeman Road, except that all houses are detached. Some houses have chimneys, but these are for decoration i.e. there are no fireplaces. Throughout the estate, the houses have a variety of construction i.e. brick-built houses are mixed in with others made of reconstituted stone (in a sandstone colour) with some being partly covered in white rendering. There is some street lighting in this area but generally street lighting is limited in the village.

The new development feels very open with a small ‘village green’ which is good for social cohesion and community events. Affordable housing is mixed in well.

The scale is not overbearing in terms of the wider village, with plenty of design variations for instance, roof types, porches and dormers. Whilst its appearance and design features may not be in keeping with parts of the village the use of materials in new housing is better than 1960s housing with 2-2.5 storey homes using Cotswold stone, Welsh slate and other heritage style. Overall, this scheme seems relatively spacious and has high-quality landscaping and views over countryside.

Other open land in the sub-area is enclosed by development and may come under pressure from small scale housing development in the future.

Any limited one-off infill developments that do take place should respect their immediate surroundings in scale and character. Infill or larger plot subdivision along main roads in particular should be resisted and in no case should mature trees be removed to allow for more intensification of development in this Character Area.

Figure 65. Typical 19th century cottage with rendered dormer windows and Stonesfield slate roof

This Design Code influences the form of development in this sub area, but it also seeks to ensure that community facilities should be more accessible on foot than by other non-car modes of transport.

The constraint to further development in this direction is provided by Eynsham Hall, a large rural landholding on the south side of the A4095.

Extensions or redevelopment should reflect the pattern of development in the older central parts of the village including layout, orientation, design and use of materials, i.e. stone, slate, thatch.

Development should be limited in size to avoid a significant reduction in remaining spaciousness and with scope for much more green space to be created.

Windmill Road & associated streets

Roofs

Gabled roofs should achieve some variation in roofscapes in new development to avoid uniformity of design. Village roofscapes should be applied to new development including extensions in the sub-areas and the wider parish including:

- Steeply pitched roofs typically 40 – 45 degrees
- Roof covering with slate, e.g. Stonesfield slate
- Scale including height should reflect sizes of existing properties in the vicinity.
- Buff brick chimneys should be provided in new infill.

Figure 66. Large housing units on Akeman Road, with gabled roofscapes without chimneys. Houses front poorly landscaped green space with no trees, ponds, or other features such as dry stone boundaries

Doors and windows

Doors, windows, chimneys, gates, and boundary walls should all demonstrate continuity with village styles from the pre twentieth century.

Boundaries

Proposed development should retain key features such as high boundary stone walls, gate posts, verges and lower-level dry stone wall boundaries (topped with vertically arranged capstones (“cock and hen”) or other suitable methods, especially to main road frontages).

Homes in this sub-area have limited front garden space, often fronting directly or close to the pavement. Not all homes have large rear garden space and unusually in this sub-area close boarded timber fences form the boundary to side streets. This type of layout creates unattractive dead frontage and should be discouraged in the sub-area in future. Even using lengths of stone or brick wall is not ideal though preferable to close boarded timber fencing.

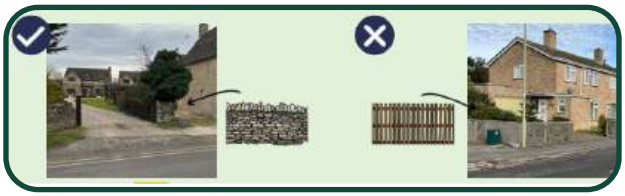


Figure 67. Examples of desirable and undesirable boundary treatments

Movement

Streets, driveways and parking

Marlborough Gardens has its own access via the A4095 but cannot connect with other streets thereby ensuring no rat running through the village. In this sub-area street layouts should avoid bell mouth curves at corners to avoid speeding, ideally with speed humps and high boundary walls at corners to reduce traffic speeds. At all times within new developments drivers should understand they do not have priority. Additional street lighting should not be permitted in this sub-area to ensure urban effects are minimised.

Permeability is important to connect residents to community facilities by the safest and most convenient walking and cycling routes, including to bus stops on Common Road. Any development should integrate with existing local paths and lanes to encourage walking and should maintain tranquillity in this Character Area.

Figure 68. Windmill Road - restricted roadway

Parking provision is a sensitive issue in the sub-area and new development should not be accompanied by on-street parking which would narrow road space for emergency vehicles and refuse vehicles.

Garage spaces should be set back from roadways. For example, the driveways in Marlborough Gardens usefully hide spaces and garages discreetly behind homes.

Figure 69. Parking Examples

Fully accessible EV charging points including for e-bikes should be provided on driveways. Garage doors must not be metal up and over doors or fibreglass due to ugly appearance and noise.

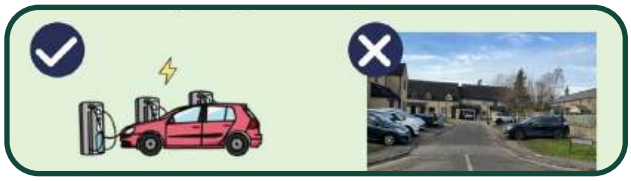


Figure 70. Electric Charging facilities for all new homes

Nature And Landscape

The sub-area has some mature trees, hedgerow remnants and green packets and the more recent developments have created some biodiversity areas. Generally, the new developments have a high degree of hard landscaping.

Ecologically important areas in and around the settlement are accessible via Public Rights of Way from this sub-area and views of the village from surrounding elevated areas of open countryside should be protected.

On the peripheral edge, new development should define the field boundary by creating shelter belts and restricting views from afar. The intention should be to screen development from the countryside and discourage future incursions beyond the established settlement boundary.

Existing natural assets

New infill developments should retain biodiversity areas to meet BNG requirements but also allow access through and between gardens through wildlife friendly barriers. Areas set aside for nature must be protected from illegal parking and dumping through landscape features (e.g. roadside ditches).

Vintage and Ancient trees, hedgerows and ponds should be protected for their landscape and biodiversity value. Layout designs should incorporate them as features such as in focal points and along footpaths. Any felling of any such trees that are unprotected will require mature trees of native species to be replanted upon development being approved.

Hedgerows should be maintained and enhanced where these form a boundary to a development area or a corridor through the village out to the open countryside, including areas outside the settlement boundary. These hedgerow/field boundaries are wildlife havens and where they exist already should be expanded and strengthened. These corridors should encourage active travel, creating or linking into heritage trails and public footpaths. Stone boundary walls or garden walls should provide very small gaps to allow biodiversity and movement.

Swift boxes and other amenities for bird and bat species should be incorporated into new homes. Greywater collection should provide some facilities to top up ponds in dry weather to support biodiversity.

Figure 71. Retain and enhance natural landscape features

Public Spaces

Public spaces, including public realm and green infrastructure within the sub-area such as play areas, parks, gardens, common land and allotments, all contribute to character and identity and must be maintained as accessible to all.

Any new green and open spaces/ green infrastructure etc. forthcoming via new development should be subject to stewardship arrangements (long term maintenance) which set out funding provision for long-term management and maintenance.

Planting along footpaths and in parks should avoid non-native species or high maintenance species that can spread rapidly. Plants that are listed as pests or are invasives such as Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, and even Rhododendron, should be monitored and removed as soon as identified.

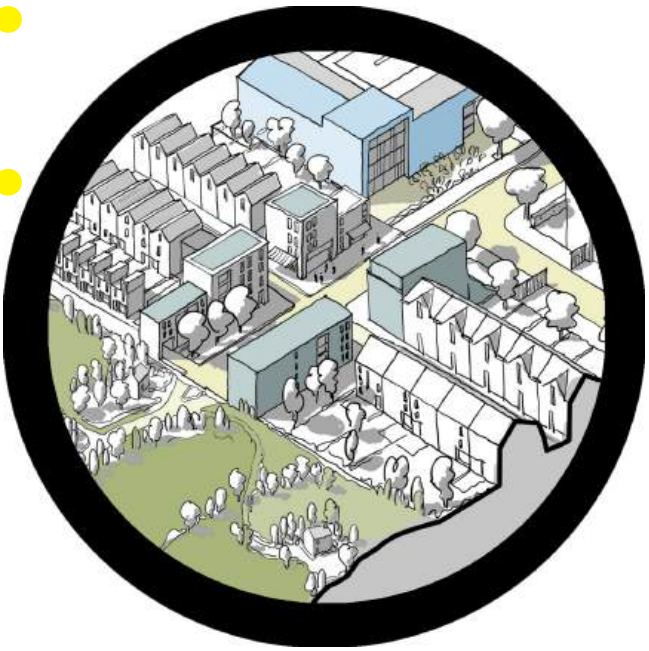
In maintaining open spaces both formal and informal use of toxic sprays using classified chemicals such as neonicotinoids, glysophates etc. will not be permitted by contractors or volunteers.

Figure 72. Millers Close equipped play space

Where there are flood meadows or extensive areas of green space reserved in development schemes, these can support biodiversity but also may also provide ecosystem services such as use of wastewater for supply to allotments and other food growing areas via filtration/sustainable drainage systems.

Boundary planting should utilise and augment where possible remnant hedgerows, gaps (e.g. in field boundary walls, and tree planting for cooling and shading close to housing). Reducing urban heat island effects through design (e.g. minimising hard landscaping and maximising planting of tree cover) will be essential where high density housing development schemes are promoted.

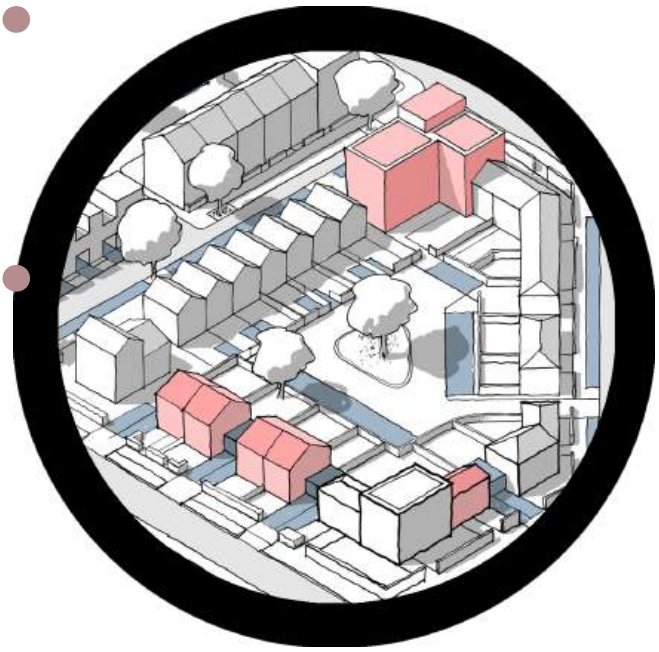
Uses



Maintaining vitality and strength of the village amenities requires opportunities to be realised such as direct safe walking routes to shops, to the pub and other facilities.

Where relocation is an option for say a community hub, these should be associated with green space such as playing field, plus parking space and scope for additional facilities such as café, meeting room etc.

Homes and Buildings



Developers are encouraged to maximise ecological and climate sustainability in design and construction, such as applying Leti Net Zero Carbon Building Standards and taking innovative approaches to the construction or redevelopment of zero carbon homes and community buildings.

These should demonstrate sustainable use of resources, maximise opportunities for the use of renewable and low carbon forms of energy (such as air source/ ground source heat pumps and solar panels, and achieve high energy efficiency and water conservation (e.g. greywater harvesting). Examples of sustainable construction could include, and are not limited to, modular Passive Haus homes, earth sheltered, rammed earth, or straw bale construction.

Figure 73. Akeman Street street scene

Discreet siting and screening of refuse bins is referenced but today these considerations should also apply to greener matters such as the siting of air source heat pumps, cycle storage, and photovoltaic panels.

Retrofitting of older homes should be enabled through provision of renewable energy, including photovoltaics and heat pumps. The latter should be sited discreetly with no visibility from the street or from key views.

Orientation of buildings will also be important to ensure for example that PV solar panels are not visible from the street, instead being sited on south-facing (ideally) rear roof elevations.

Mature trees in gardens should be recorded and held on a Tree Register by the Parish Council. Where these are removed to enable infilling prior to any planning approval they should be replaced as part of any permission and maintained for a minimum of five years until proven to be viable.

There may be space available for verges, fruit trees and hedgerow retention and these should be retained if part of the original character of the site. In larger infill schemes food growing areas such as allotments and including some common areas for traditional orchards might be feasible.

Figure 74. Examples of Solar Panels fitted flush within a Slate Roof

Figure 75. North Leigh Allotments

Materials and design

Due to the significance of heritage in the sub-area, the salvage and storage of original traditional materials should be a priority to enable re-use. Demolition should be resisted and where it does occur conditions should be imposed to require the stock of materials to be stored safely under supervision at the expense of the applicant.

Developers should avoid styles of roof materials that conflict with local styles.

The use of traditional materials and styles should be implemented in all new developments including treatment of hard and soft surfaces. Where brick represents a characteristic building material, it should be noted that buff brick is the most commonly used colour of brick in North Leigh.

Figure 79. Use of traditional construction materials

Figure 76. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 77. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 78. preferred style of roof

Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid damaging key views through the village, retain hedges and spaces, boundary walls and verges, and characteristic building styles and spaces between buildings.

Where older buildings are included in new development sites, every effort should be made to integrate such buildings and individual features into the scheme including homes or outbuildings/garage space and where this is not possible materials should be re-used in the new development. Corner buildings at junctions of streets are especially worthy of retention and re-use of features and materials.

Space between and around buildings

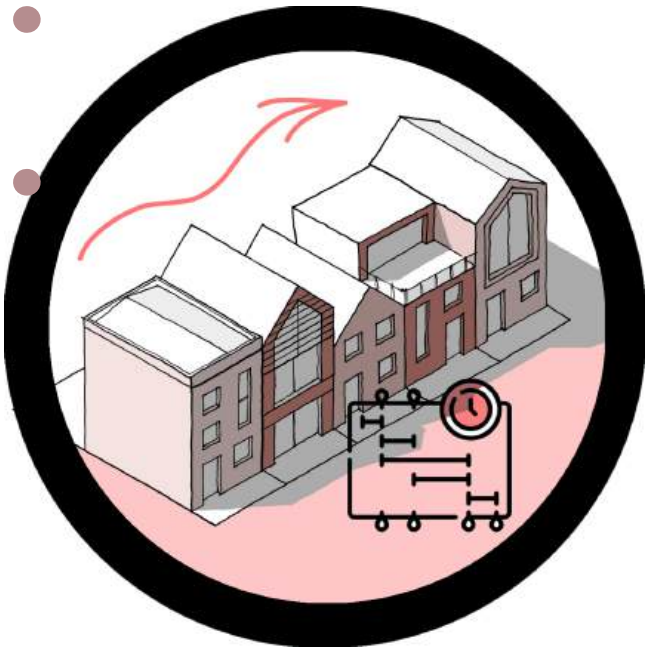
It is often the case that the sub-area may be characterized by buildings being in close proximity with small distances between boundaries – in new development this may also be relevant.

Very dense sites might allow for increases in height to create more useable internal space.

Extensions and conversions

In this sub-area, future changes and additions to existing buildings may well be difficult to achieve as even in new development there will be limited space to do so. With high ridge lines, however, there may be scope to add in more space in roof voids with dormer windows. Ideally, such changes should be modest in scale and not be visible from the street.

Lifespan



Any stewardship (management and maintenance) arrangements for green and blue infrastructure, community facilities and/or other assets in new development should be discussed with North Leigh Parish Council.

Any Assets of Community Value should be protected from conversion to other uses.

Character Assessment & Design Code

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Sub Area E:

East End, Wilcote, and the Wider Parish

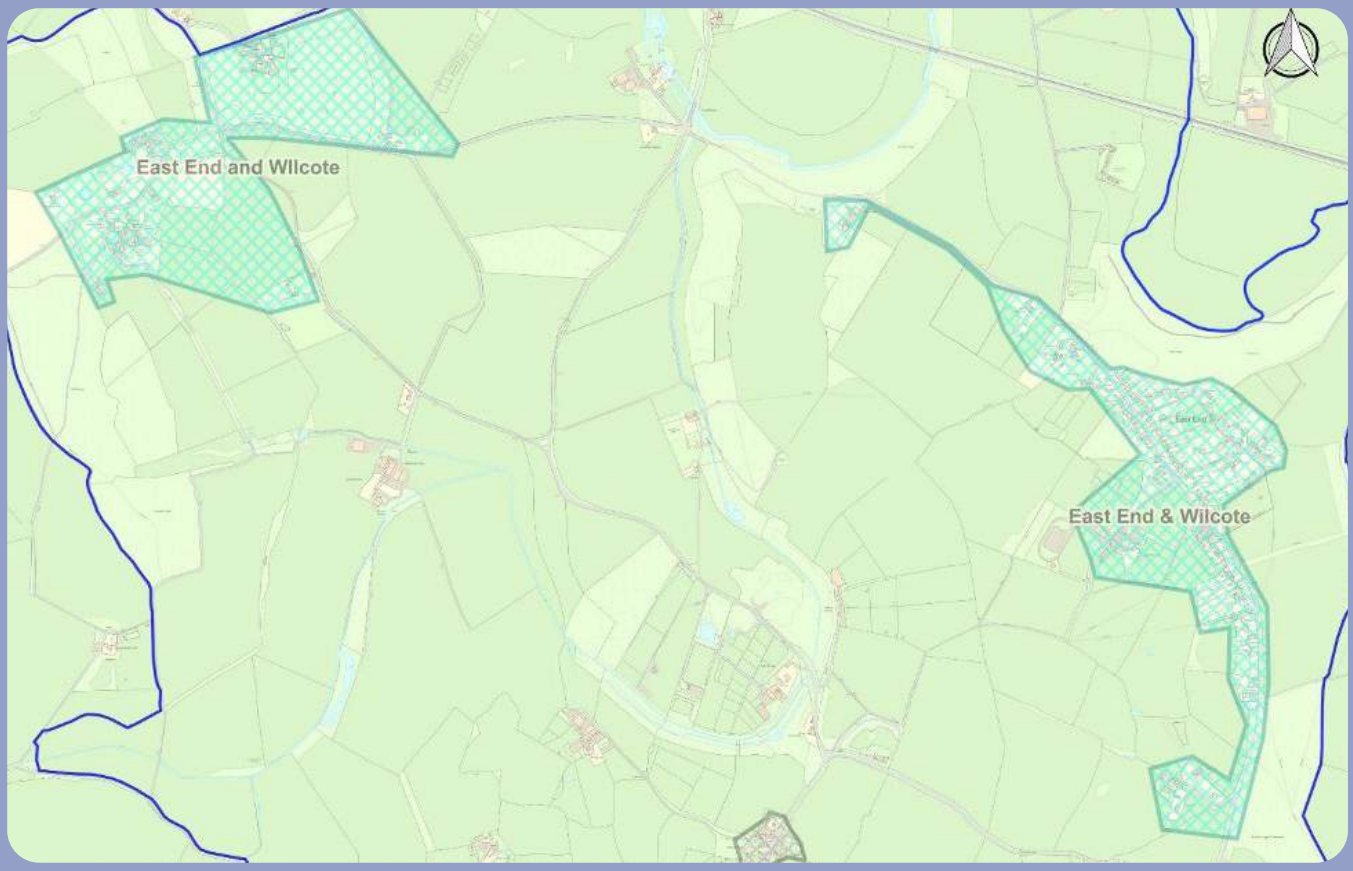


Figure 80. Character Area Highlighted on Parish online Map. OS Data Crown Copyright 2025.

Character Assessment & Design Code

These two hamlets comprise very attractive tranquil places in the wider parish. They are self-contained communities accessible by the local network of rural lanes with very little through traffic. They occupy locations within the historic landscape and the area is criss-crossed with streams, ponds and other natural features providing a remote and rustic feel. There is limited streetlighting, lending a dark sky feel in these hamlets.

There has been limited development over the years, mostly conversions of barns and outbuildings. Surrounded by countryside, they afford views of Grade 1 listed St Mary's Church at North Leigh.

To the north and west of the parish lies the Cotswold National Landscape with views across open countryside that are very important to local people.

EAST END

East End is a hamlet of largely linear form within North Leigh parish. Views in East End are picturesque, encompassing rolling countryside and scenes of the Roman Villa and the Evenlode river, along with a number of small woods and copses. The surrounding landscape of natural beauty adds to the overall appeal of the hamlet. The road access, whilst in reasonable condition in the hamlet, may be problematic in relation to public transport.

Figure 81. East end street scene

There is no central point, pub, village hall or church, but the hamlet holds significant communal value for its residents. Community events, local traditions, and everyday interactions contribute to the collective identity of the hamlet, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among its inhabitants.

East End's historical value lies in its connection to the past over many centuries including the discovery of the Roman Villa. At the south end of East End Road is North Leigh Common, managed by the Local Authority as an area of rare Lowland Heath habitat.

Figure 82. Roman Villa, East End

The architecture in East End is predominantly traditional, with stone cottages and houses alongside more modern additions. The modern additions include single story dwellings and a short row of terraced houses. Many buildings exhibit historical character, reflecting the hamlet's heritage and rural charm.

A number of the stone buildings were in the past shops, pubs, and business properties. Two new properties have recently been built. Both of these were constructed of stone in keeping with the traditional building style.

There are a number of listed buildings.

WILCOTE

Wilcote is an outlying small hamlet of North Leigh, about 3.5 miles north of Witney. Many buildings reflect the historical character of the hamlet, such as Wilcote Manor, which is listed in the Doomsday book, and having Akeman Street, a Roman road on the course of a pre-Roman trackway, which runs through its grounds. Wilcote is a very unspoilt hamlet of 13 homes, much smaller than East End, all hidden away from the road, set behind trees and shrubs. It is served by a single- track road and thus there is no bus services here.

Figure 83. Wilcote view

Wilcote church, St Peter's ,was built in the latter part of the twelfth century. Its parish is now part of Finstock, Leafield and Ramsden. Despite the very small size of the parish, it is an active church.

The architecture in Wilcote is predominantly traditional, consisting of stone cottages alongside more modern reconstituted stone, built in traditional style, with barn conversions. Not one house is the same. Many buildings exhibit historical character, reflecting the hamlet's heritage and rural charm.

There have been two new builds, one back in 2016 built in reconstituted stone, and currently there is a new building being completed, again in reconstituted stone. There is a small group of houses at the start of the footpath toward Bridewell Farm, one is Holly Grove House.

The others are in a small courtyard of connected and converted barns, some in old stone, some in reconstituted stone. Pleasantly in keeping with neighbouring properties, they are situated in a private road. All the properties are set back from the road with good driveways and well-concealed from the road.

Figure 84. Wilcote view

THE WIDER PARISH

Consideration of the wider parish landscape character and the potential impact of more housing is also necessary. The wider parish is agricultural in nature with the river Evenlode passing through in a shallow valley. There is also significant tree cover in places which contributes to a very rustic, even remote, feel in the wider parish. Some of the roads around Wilcote in particular are very narrow single-track, mainly serving the farming community. There are limited passing places and the roads are quite overgrown.

From the hamlets of East End and Wilcote, which are in elevated positions, views can be extensive over this rural landscape. Certain key features such as the churches and other prominent properties are quite dominant in this landscape and key views are offered especially from higher ground such as North Leigh itself.

Witney is located to the west and some new development in the parish is now visible from roads coming out of Witney which has degraded the quality of the views to an extent.

There are a number of views within the parish of North Leigh that are protected within the Neighbourhood Plan, including those around and across Grims Ditch, in the area of open fields to the west of Common Road, and those from 'The Green' in East End across to the AONB and towards Hanborough. Views of the Grade 1 Listed St Mary's Church are available from many directions across the wider parish across a historic landscape.

The new developments to the west of North Leigh have, to varying degrees, blended in but risk damaging character if continued. In addition, there is limited scope for further modern housing on a larger scale as this would be very visible from surrounding countryside. Key views into the village are therefore important to protect character and identity.

Built Form

Development layout, building lines, orientation

Wilcote is a small hamlet in a historic environment and with limited development occurring over the decades. To protect this heritage in both places the Design Code should be applied more very rigorously with respect to the use of traditional materials and designs in this sub-area.

East End is a hamlet with a largely linear form, plots generally being one house deep either side of the road. Growth of the hamlet has been on an ad hoc basis with significant infilling of gaps in the building lines. East End retains a considerable number of historic stone houses from previous centuries.

There are, however, a considerable number of historic stone-built cottages, especially to the western side of the main road. Many of these have uncluttered views to the east over rolling farmland but at a certain point this changes as houses also occur on both sides of the road. Most homes are set back from the road, generally fronting it on both sides except where a few older houses sit at right angles to the road.

Buildings generally adhere to a strong building line. Due to limited plot depth, extensions have often been executed laterally rather than at the rear of properties.

There has been infilling in recent decades both sides of the road with more suburban style homes built since the 1960s and 1970s. These have not always been aligned with the more traditional cottages, often being a mix of brick and render rather than coursed limestone. Clay tiles have been used rather than roof slates in places.

The road serving East End is in generally good condition but there is no pavement and so walking is not especially safe at night, particularly as there is no street lighting.

There is a good sense of enclosure in the resultant streetscape but with a strong building line in most parts of the hamlet along the main road. Older housing is less uniform and has a more varied, sometimes staggered, layout and differing plot occupancy.

Flats or buildings over two-storeys will generally be unacceptable. Some of the more modern housing is one-storey or bungalows.

Over-development in a linear settlement should be resisted as this would be especially damaging to character and especially street-scene. This might be evidenced by back land development, by more intensive plot occupancy (e.g. where developers wish to build larger homes with more bedrooms) increased levels in roofscapes (to allow more infilling later within roof voids) and so on.

Parking will be an indicator so, for example, the use of tandem parking should be resisted.

Roofs

Gabled roofs predominate in East End and on older housing slate roofs and stone walls with dormers will convey a sense of continuity. Flat roofs of any type including extensions or garages or other ancillary buildings are not in character and should not be supported.

Figure 85. East End, traditional building materials

Village roofscapes should be applied to new development including extensions in the sub-areas and the wider parish including:

- Steeply pitched roofs typically 40 – 45 degrees.
- Roof covering with slate, e.g. Stonesfield slate.
- Scale including height should reflect sizes of existing properties in the vicinity.
- Red ‘Oxford’ brick or buff brick (as appropriate to location) chimneys should be provided on new infill.

Doors and windows

Changes or extensions of any sort such as altering window openings or building areas of flat roofs would be out of keeping with local character.

In keeping with many of the traditional properties in the village, new development should have dormer windows with render. Doors, windows, chimneys, gates, and boundary walls should all demonstrate continuity with village styles from the pre-twentieth century.

Figure 87. Typical 19th century cottage with rendered dormer windows and Stonesfield slate roof

Boundaries

Buildings are usually set back from the main road frontages, with dry stone boundary walls and grass verges separating properties from the carriageway. Some older buildings are sited closer to road but this does not mean new buildings such as garages should be sited in ways that obscure the visibility of the primary building.

There are some timber fences on frontages but these should be discouraged on grounds of character in this part of the sub-area. More open areas will be preferred, including more open front gardens on side roads, grass verges.

Proposed development should retain key features such as high boundary stone walls, gate posts, verges and lower-level dry stone wall boundaries (topped with vertically arranged capstones (“cock and hen”) or other suitable methods, especially to main road frontages).

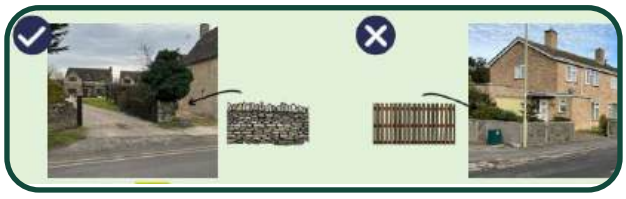


Figure 86. Examples of desirable and undesirable boundary treatments

Movement

Streets, driveways and parking

The narrow winding lanes should link, where possible, to safer routes for walking and cycling including alleyways, paths with verges, and use of materials to emphasise different surface treatments.

Parking provision is a sensitive issue in the sub-area and new development should not overload local lanes, vistas, and open spaces with on-street parking.

Figure 88. Parking Examples

Within new developments, garage parking should be discreetly sited behind homes with fully accessible EV charging points including for e-bikes. Garages doors must not be metal up and over doors or fibreglass due to ugly appearance and noise.

Figure 89. Electric Charging facilities for all new homes

Street lighting, amenity or other external lighting will not normally be permitted, except possibly at accident hot spots to improve safety.

Nature And Landscape

Ecologically important areas in and around the settlement are accessible via Public Rights of Way from this sub-area and views of the hamlets from surrounding elevated areas of open countryside should be protected.

Existing natural assets

New infill developments should retain biodiversity areas to meet BNG requirements but also allow access through and between gardens through wildlife friendly barriers. Areas set aside for nature must be protected from illegal parking and dumping through landscape features (e.g. roadside ditches).

Vintage and Ancient trees, hedgerows and ponds should be protected for their landscape and biodiversity value. Layout designs should incorporate them as features such as in focal points and along footpaths. Any felling of any such trees that are unprotected will require mature trees of native species to be replanted upon development being approved.

Hedgerows should be maintained and enhanced where these form a boundary to a development area or a corridor through the village out to the open countryside, including areas outside the settlement boundary. These hedgerow/ field boundaries are wildlife havens and where they exist already should be expanded and strengthened. These corridors should encourage active travel, creating or linking into heritage trails and public footpaths. Stone boundary walls or garden walls should provide very small gaps to allow biodiversity and movement.

Swift boxes and other amenities for bird and bat species should be incorporated into new homes. Greywater collection should provide some facilities to top up ponds in dry weather to support biodiversity.

Figure 90. Retain and enhance natural landscape features

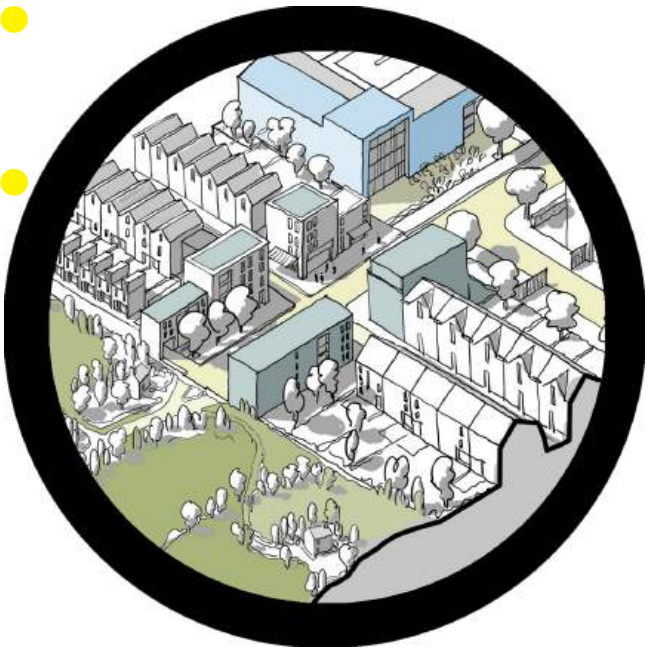
Public Spaces

Public spaces including public realm and green infrastructure are limited within the sub-area and should be provided where possible for wider public benefit, such as play areas, parks, gardens and allotments. These contribute to character and identity and must be maintained as accessible to all.

Planting along footpaths and in parks etc. should avoid non-native species or high maintenance species that can spread rapidly. Plants that are listed as pests or are invasives such as Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, and even Rhododendron, should be monitored and removed as soon as identified.

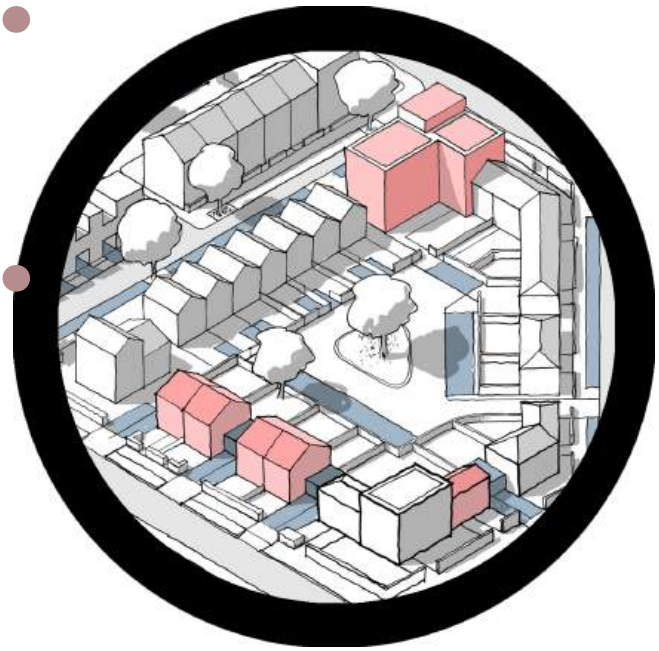
In maintaining open spaces both formal and informal use of toxic sprays using classified chemicals such as neonicotinoids, glysophates etc. will not be permitted by contractors or volunteers.

Uses



There are no community facilities present and where there is a need for a community space this might include other meeting spaces (e.g. café, shop) ideally within an existing building.

Homes and Buildings



Developers are encouraged to maximise ecological and climate sustainability in design and construction, such as applying Leti Net Zero Carbon Building Standards and taking innovative approaches to the construction or redevelopment of zero carbon homes and community buildings.

These should demonstrate sustainable use of resources, maximise opportunities for the use of renewable and low carbon forms of energy (such as air source/ ground source heat pumps and solar panels, and achieve high energy efficiency and water conservation (e.g. greywater harvesting). Examples of sustainable construction could include, and are not limited to, modular Passive Haus homes, earth sheltered, rammed earth, or straw bale construction.

Discreet siting and screening of refuse bins is referenced but today these considerations should also apply to greener matters such as the siting of air source heat pumps, cycle storage, and photovoltaic panels.

Retrofitting of older homes should be enabled through provision of renewable energy, including photovoltaics and heat pumps. The latter should be sited discreetly with no visibility from the street or from key views.

Orientation of buildings will also be important to ensure for example that PV solar panels are not visible from the street, instead being sited on south-facing (ideally) rear roof elevations.

Mature trees in gardens should be recorded and held on a Tree Register by the Parish Council. Where these are removed to enable infilling prior to any planning approval they should be replaced as part of any permission and maintained for a minimum of five years until proven to be viable.

There may be space available for verges, fruit trees and hedgerow retention and these should be retained if part of the original character of the site. In larger infill schemes, food growing areas such as allotments and common areas for traditional orchards might be feasible.

Figure 91. North Leigh Allotments

Materials and design

Use of traditional materials including stone and slates, colour palettes, roofscapes, traditional windows and doors should all be applied to the highest possible standard.

Currently, there are some homes with stone elevations and continuing to use such traditional materials will be important to achieve consistency in the sub-area.

Due to the significance of heritage in the sub-area, the salvage and storage of original traditional materials should be a priority to enable re-use. Demolition should be resisted and where it does occur conditions should be imposed to require the stock of materials to be stored safely under supervision at the expense of the applicant.

Developers should avoid styles of roof materials that conflict with local styles.

Where older buildings are included in new development sites, every effort should be made to integrate such buildings and individual features into the scheme, including homes or outbuildings/garage space. Where this is not possible, materials should be re-used in the new development.

Figure 92. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 93. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 94. preferred style of roof

Space between and around buildings

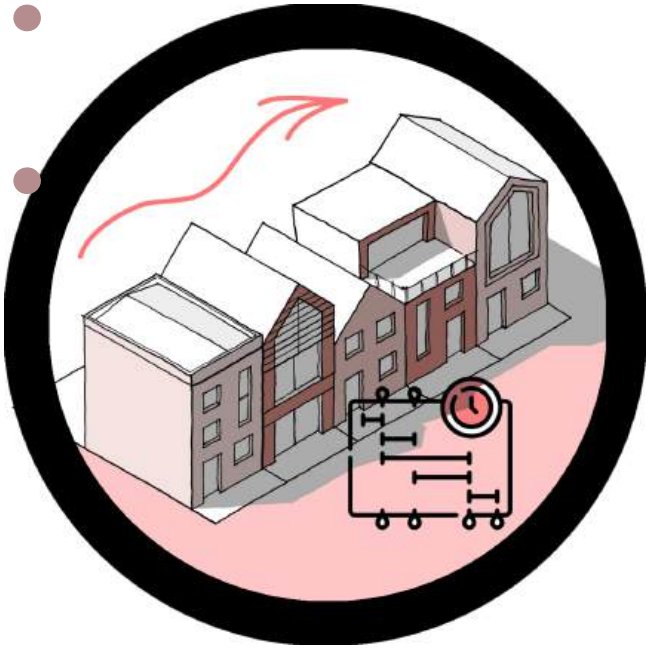
In this sub-area there is limited scope for back land development in gardens and this should not be supported. Minimum distances between buildings in adjoining plots is important to preserve a sense of spaciousness in the hamlets.

Extensions and conversions

In this sub-area, changes and additions to existing buildings should be limited by the current design, orientation, materials. Ideally such changes should be modest in scale and not be visible from the street.

Lifespan

Any stewardship (management and maintenance) arrangements for green and blue infrastructure, community facilities and/or other assets in new development should be discussed with North Leigh Parish Council.



Sub Area F:

Industrial and commercial outliers

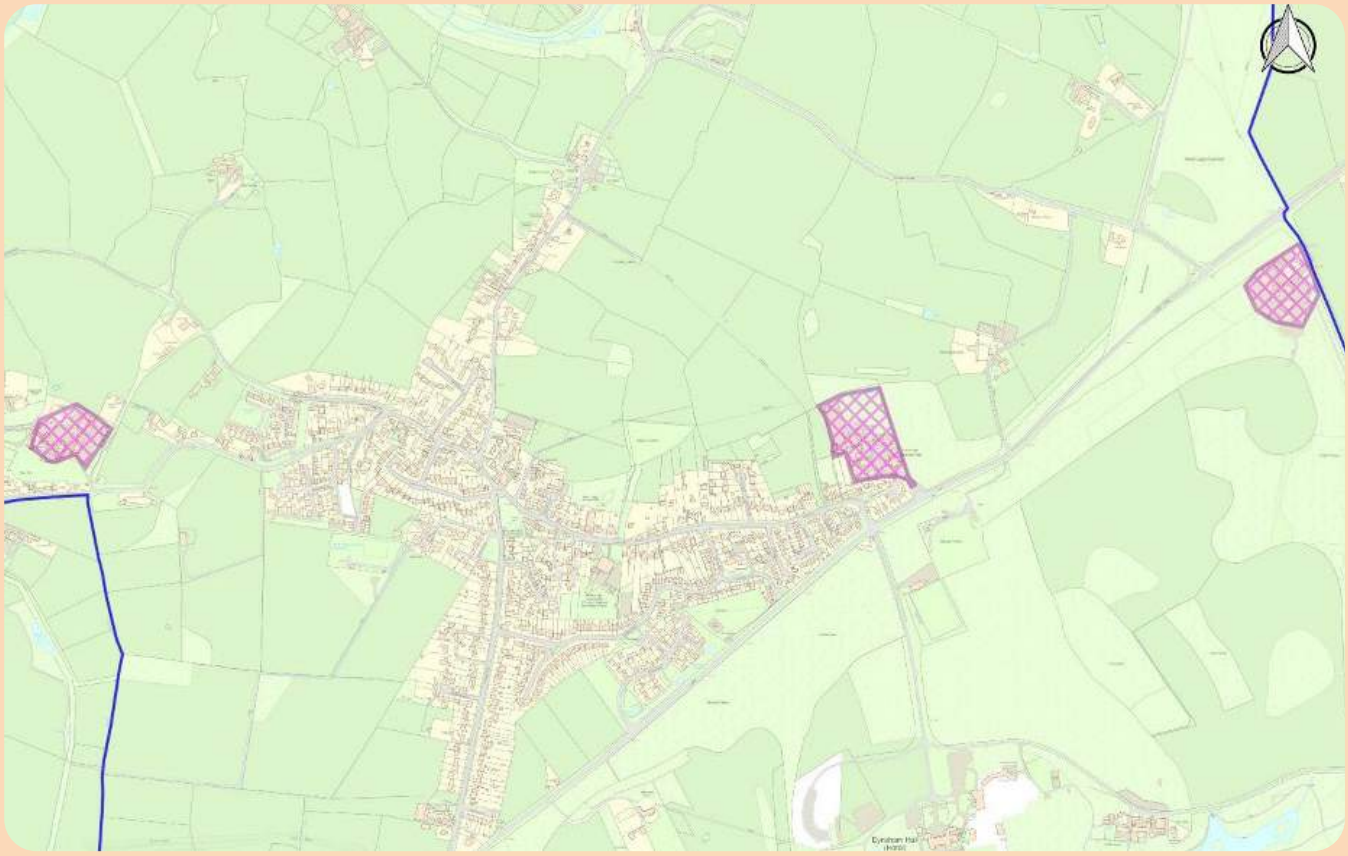


Figure 95. Character Area Highlighted on Parish online Map. OS Data Crown Copyright 2025.

The location of these three outlier employment sites, close to large growing towns such as Witney and in reasonable proximity to Oxford and its Universities, suggest opportunities for growth, perhaps associated with the digital sector.

The village is rather congested with narrow side roads and whilst there are few old buildings that could offer conversion say for live-work space1, the idea of running businesses from residential premises can present problems, blocking roads, parking on pavements and so forth. If more space can be made available at affordable rents on the three outliers there could be improvements for residents. New housing developments should certainly not permit business vehicles being parked on private driveways in congested locations. Unused or open land including small patches of green should also not default to informal parking in respect of business use.

All these sites also have potential to expand and change as North Leigh population grows and especially benefit from being within walkable distance from the existing village. However, at present some do not offer safe walking or cycling routes thereby causing people to use their cars. This will be an urgent issue if these locations are to be truly sustainable. Over time pressure may grow to change uses say to residential and there may be a need to protect these outliers by removing permitted development rights using Article 4 Directions.

This Design Code should not only advance enhancements in quality but will contribute to better located employment uses. New build or refurbishments will be subject to guidance in the North Leigh Design Code. It is important that the Design Code supports greater flexibility for businesses across the area.

1 In some locations, there may be opportunities to convert large old buildings into what is called “live-work” space. This is where the old building is converted partly into residential flats, and partly into office space. North Leigh has no such large old buildings but the existing industrial outliers have potential to create more business and light industrial space at affordable rents. This would provide a better solution to the alternative whereby businesses are set up in residential areas, causing problems with trade vehicles blocking roads and paring on pavements.”

Industrial and commercial outliers

Outlier Locations

North Leigh Business Park

Situated just off the A4095 just to the east of the main village, North Leigh Business Park hosts around 15 SMEs, engaged in light industrial and commercial activity, with some ancillary office space. This is a modern industrial estate with attractively designed modern units with potentially better more sustainable buildings. There is good landscaping with pavements and neat, paved surfaces for parking. Access by foot, cycle and bus is feasible. Higher office content business park space is laid out in a better planned way with parking, common landscape design themes and building styles.

To the west is a large area of open space, currently agricultural use, that could come under pressure for infilling with housing and this may merit consideration as an extension to North Leigh Business Park.

Figure 96. North Leigh Business Park

New Yatt Business Centre

This area lies in the west of the parish, close to its boundary with Hailey parish. The park hosts some 25 businesses, engaged in activity ranging from publishing and broadcasting to light industrial and tech-based. This is a good location for SMEs with varying unit sizes, enabling potential stepping stones as businesses expand. The environment is generally in good condition. Buildings are functional and not very attractive. It is not easy for walkers and cyclists to travel to work here. Industrial areas often have a mix of open plan and palisade fenced plots creating an unattractive and functionally poor-quality layout of fragmented plots and buildings.

Figure 97. New Yatt Business Centre

New Yatt Business Centre does not have main road access – traffic has to approach it via the congested village centre. It has a much more industrial flavour, whereas North Leigh Business Park is more of a commercial/offices location.

Introducing more research and development opportunities could attract spin off companies from the Universities and more start up units should be encouraged and supported. Helping these areas become more competitive may require greater investment in superfast broadband as well as outdoor recreational areas for employees and even some leisure uses to make these locations more suitable for a range of businesses including start-ups.

Industrial and commercial outliers

Eynsham Park Estate Yard

The third area is the Eynsham Park Estate (EPE) Yard and Workshops and is situated on the south east of the parish, off Cuckoo Lane, where workshops occupy a courtyard of older buildings adjacent to the site of a former sawmill, which ceased operation about 5 years ago.

Figure 98. Eynsham Park Estate Yard

The workshops, however, continue to operate as small business units. Eynsham Park Estates, who own the site, have registered an interest to redevelop the site with a mixture of housing and business units. The site is surrounded by the woodlands that form the perimeter of Eynsham Park. Of the three outliers, this one is the least accessible and traffic has to negotiate narrow approach lanes. There is a group of 9 houses between the site and the A4095, and there are wooded areas on two other sides. There is potential to add further units to the site in future.

EPE have plans to redevelop the site in future, which will possibly change the scale and character of the site considerably. Conversion to domestic housing in this location would need improvements for cyclists and walkers and could be compromised by lack of sustainable transport options.

However, any new building here should embrace the use of materials such as Cotswold stone walling, slate roofs, and improvements to surfaces in terms of different paving types and textures in order to emphasise this high-quality location. Buildings here should not exceed two storeys. Large roofscapes with significant increases in levels to the ridge line would be out of keeping with the generally low-level buildings that exist. Dormer windows in roofs would not be in character with this part of the sub-area.

All of these outliers are sources of light pollution and also impact on the safety of pedestrians and cyclists who have to use busy roads or even estate access roads with no pavements with no proper provision for cycling or walking.

Landscaping is fragmented, inadequate and in some areas needs re-purposing (e.g. for screening or to provide safe walking routes). Being in close proximity to existing long established residential areas these sites can cause disturbance from traffic noise and other impacts including lighting and day to day operations.

Industrial and commercial outliers

Built Form

Development layout, building lines, orientation

This sub-area consists of three outlier employment areas.

Of these **North Leigh Business Park** comprises a number of free-standing commercial buildings with hard landscaping provided for business vehicles and car parking. The buildings are generally two-storeys in height, of brick construction sometimes faced with a stone finish. Permitted Development (PD) rights should be restricted to prevent conversion to residential use.

North Leigh Business Park is easily accessible from the settlement on foot or by bike with access to bus services.

There is space here for further expansion too. The site backs onto fields on the northern side of the settlement, offering views over the countryside. To the west lies an area of open land that could provide an opportunity for further expansion. Although virtually surrounded by housing on three sides, this land could be protected for employment uses on grounds of good access.

At **New Yatt**, improvements in access and pavements for cyclists and pedestrians would be beneficial, as would be the provision of EV charging points and lock up storage for cycles. Most buildings are single storey so there is scope for larger industrial buildings. Due to narrow access roads, HGV sizes should be reduced. New Yatt has less room for growth being in a sensitive area close to Witney and at risk of coalescence.

Some of the old egg farming buildings could be redeveloped in favour of modern more energy efficient units.

Avoidance of external lighting on buildings will benefit adjacent residential areas. Possible re-siting of noisy or non-conforming uses to the back areas away from nearby local housing would be beneficial.

At **Eynsham Park Estate Yard**, the pleasant small-scale group of craft workshops may attract redevelopment interest. However, due to the fact that the site is some way from the village centre and has poor access to non-car users, expansion of this employment site would be sub-optimal.

Surrounding woodland and screening should be protected from further development. However, this site has an opportunity to see some limited change and potentially some redevelopment. New buildings should not be greater than 2-2.5 storeys in height, should be stone built or faced, with slate roofs.

Boundaries

Boundary timber fences, chain link or Harris fencing will be discouraged in the sub-area and should not be used other than on a temporary basis. To reinforce these rural employment areas, green spaces, verges, stone boundaries will all be supported.

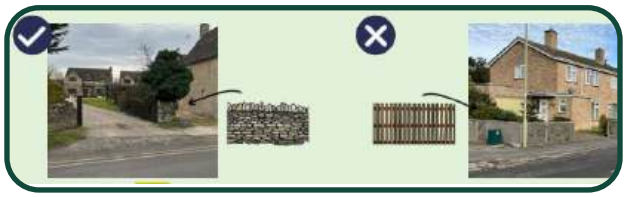


Figure 99. Examples of desirable and undesirable boundary treatments

Movement

Streets, driveways and parking

No through traffic should be enabled in this sub-area for traffic and especially commercial deliveries. New developments should ensure pedestrian and cycle safety through use of convenient access routes, alleyways, paths with verges and use of materials to emphasise different surface treatments.

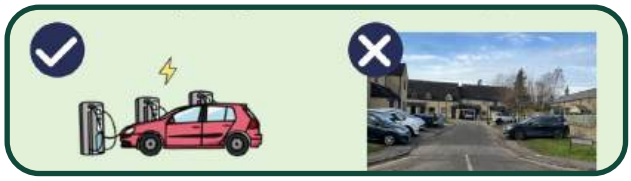


Figure 100. Electric Charging facilities for all new homes

Bell mouth curves at entrances to sites will be appropriate but within them road design must enable slow speeds, crossing and passing places, and pedestrian areas. Bike parking should be encouraged with lockable facilities in the sub-area.

Nature And Landscape

Ecologically important areas in and around the settlement are accessible via Public Rights of Way from this sub-area and views of the village from surrounding elevated areas of open countryside should be protected.

Within these areas Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be encouraged to allow slow surface water run-off and to ensure oil and other materials do not enter ground water systems.

New developments should retain biodiversity areas to meet BNG requirements but also allow access through and between premises through wildlife friendly barriers. Areas set aside for nature must be protected from illegal parking and dumping through landscape features (e.g. roadside ditches).

Vintage and Ancient trees, hedgerows and ponds should be protected for their landscape and biodiversity value. Layout designs should incorporate them as features such as in focal points and along footpaths. Any felling of any such trees that are unprotected will require mature trees of native species to be replanted upon development being approved.

Hedgerows should be maintained and enhanced where these form a boundary to a development area or a corridor through the village out to the open countryside, including areas outside the settlement boundary. These hedgerow/field boundaries are wildlife havens and where they exist already should be expanded and strengthened. These corridors should encourage active travel, creating or linking into heritage trails and public footpaths. Stone boundary walls should provide very small gaps to allow biodiversity and movement.

Swift boxes and other amenities for bird and bat species should be incorporated into new development. Greywater collection should provide some facilities to top up ponds in dry weather to support biodiversity.

Figure 101. Retain and enhance natural landscape features

Public Spaces

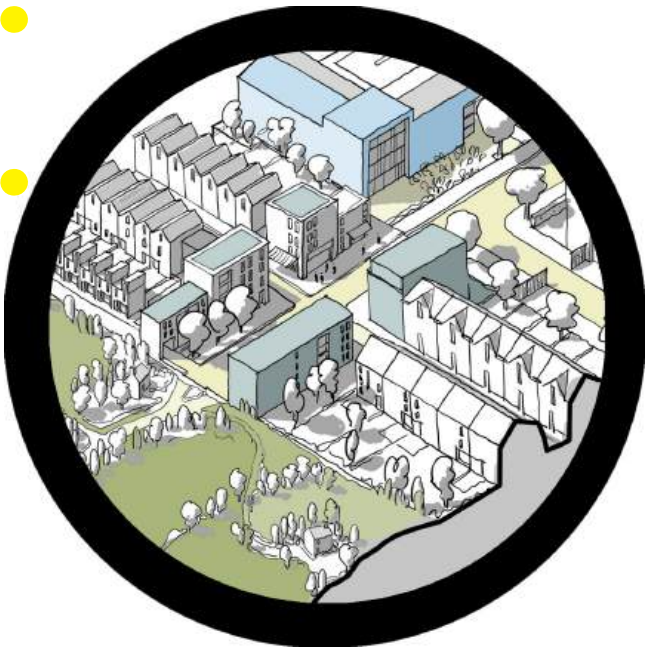
Public spaces including public realm and green infrastructure are often at a minimum within these outliers but can, if well designed and maintained, contribute to character and identity to the benefit of visitors and employees. There may be features and areas that merit retention and enhancement, such as former hedgerow sections.

Planting along footpaths and in parks should avoid non-native species or high maintenance species that can spread rapidly. Plants that are listed as pests or are invasives such as Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, and even Rhododendron, should be monitored and removed as soon as identified.

In maintaining open spaces both formal and informal use of toxic sprays using classified chemicals such as neonicotinoids, glysophates etc. will not be permitted by contractors or volunteers.

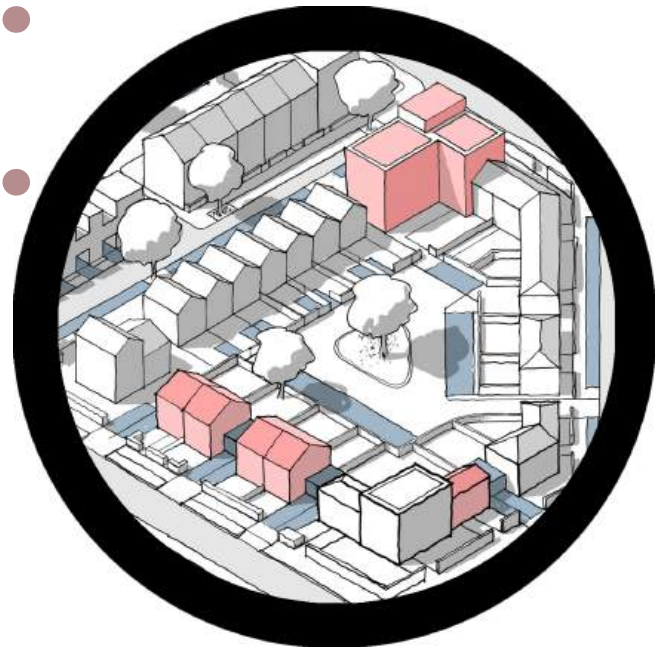
Uses

Maintaining vitality and strength of the village amenities requires opportunities to be realised such as direct safe walking routes to shops, to pubs and other facilities.



Industrial and commercial outliers

Buildings



Developers are encouraged to maximise ecological and climate sustainability in design and construction, such as applying Leti Net Zero Carbon Building Standards in construction.

These should demonstrate sustainable use of resources, maximise opportunities for the use of renewable and low carbon forms of energy (such as air source/ ground source heat pumps and solar panels, and achieve high energy efficiency and water conservation (e.g. greywater harvesting). Examples of sustainable construction could include, and are not limited to, earth sheltered, rammed earth, or straw bale construction.

Discreet siting and screening of refuse bins is referenced but today these considerations should also apply to greener matters such as the siting of air source heat pumps, cycle storage, and photovoltaic panels.

Figure 102. Examples of Solar Panels fitted flush within a Slate Roof

Retrofitting of older development should be enabled through provision of renewable energy including photovoltaics and heat pumps. The latter should be sited discreetly with no visibility from the street or from key views such as from Cuckamus Green.

Orientation of buildings will also be important to ensure for example that PV solar panels are not visible from the street, instead being sited on south-facing (ideally) rear roof elevations.

Where opportunities exist to recreate pedestrian accessways to connect to the village centre this should be progressed.

Industrial and commercial outliers

Materials and design

For those outliers which retain some of their original character, the salvage and storage of original traditional materials should be a priority to enable re-use. Demolition should be resisted and where it does occur conditions should be imposed to require the stock of materials to be stored safely under supervision at the expense of the applicant.

Developers should avoid styles of roof materials that conflict with local styles.

The use of traditional materials and styles should be implemented in all new developments including treatment of hard and soft surfaces.

Where it is determined that there are buildings of character in an outlier these should where possible be included in new development layouts possibly to provide ancillary uses such as a cafe.

Figure 106. Use of traditional construction materials

Figure 103. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 104. deprecated style of roofing material CONFLICTS with local style

Figure 105. preferred style of roof

Space between and around buildings

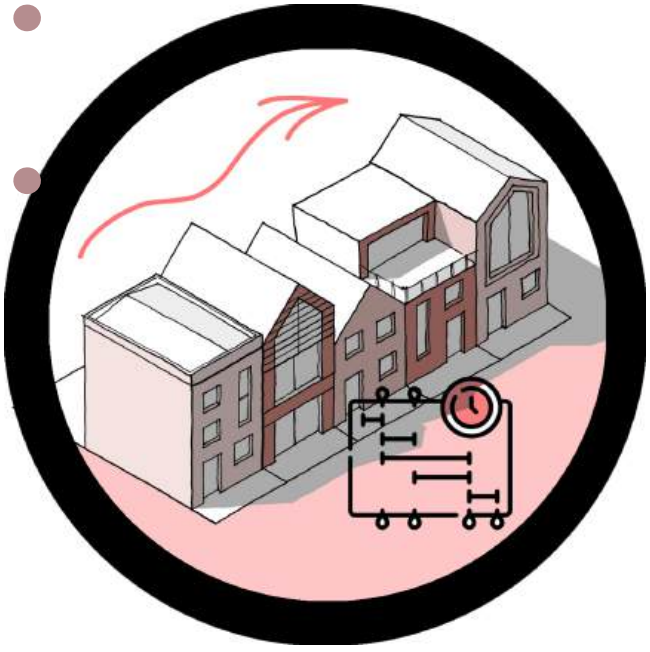
It is often the case that the sub-area may be characterized by buildings being in close proximity with small distances between boundaries – in new development this may also be relevant.

Extensions and conversions

In this sub-area, changes and additions to existing buildings should be limited by the current design, orientation, materials.

Lifespan

Any stewardship (management and maintenance) arrangements for green and blue infrastructure, community facilities and/or other assets in new development should be discussed with North Leigh Parish Council.



North Leigh

Design Code

2026

Community First Oxfordshire