

AECOM



Wells Design Guide

August 2022

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	6
1.1. Objectives	6
1.2. Process	6
2. Context.....	8
2.1. Historical settlement development	10
2.3. Heritage designations.....	14
2.4. Landscape designations	16
2.5. Open space, views and setting	20
2.6. Cultural associations.....	25
2.7. Strategic issues	26
3. Character assessment	27
3.1. Introduction.....	28
3.2. Existing character assessments and design guidance.....	28
3.3. Character assessment	29
4. Design Guide	74
4.1. Introduction.....	75
4.2. Understanding and responding to the context	75
4.3. General design considerations	76
4.4. Design Guide.....	79
5. Deliverability	108
5.1. Delivery Agents.....	108
5.2. Deliverability	108
6. References.....	110

Quality information

Project role	Name	Position	Action summary	Date
Project Coordinator	Simon Hargreaves	Landscape Architect, AECOM	Site visit, initial contact, research, photography and author.	30/07/2020
Director / QA	Ben Castell	Director, AECOM	Detailed review and comments on draft report.	08/10/2020
Technical	Mark Service	Built Heritage Consultant, AECOM	Technical input.	07/08/2020
Qualifying body	Adrian l'Anson/Chris Winter	Wells City Council	Review	

Copyright and Limitations

© 2020 AECOM Limited. All Rights Reserved.

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited ("AECOM") for use of Locality (the "Client") in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. No third party may rely upon this document without the prior and express written agreement of AECOM.

Introduction

01



Welcome to The City of Wells

Twinned with
Bad Dürkheim and Paray le Monial

This page has been left blank intentionally

1. Introduction

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

This Design Guide has been produced to inform new development proposed in the area. It presents a summary of the key characteristics of Wells which make this a special place to live in and visit. This information is then used to inform a specific Design Guide to promote sustainable development and guide best practice.

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

The NPPF also emphasises that 'the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities' (NPPF, 2019). It is therefore important that planning policies and decisions should address the connection between people and places and how any new development will respond to and integrate successfully into the natural, built and historic environment.

1.1. Objectives

The main objective of this document is to establish principles so that new development is designed and planned with regard to the existing character and context of Wells. It sets out a series of design principles related to residential development.

The document initially provides context to the Design Guide including strategic issues identified by Wells City Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group together with the aspirations of the community, as although not strictly design issues, these must be considered in the context of any design proposal.

1.2. Process

The following steps were undertaken to produce this document:

- Initial video call (29th July 2020) with Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group;
- Site visit (30th July 2020) - Character, urban and settlement analysis;
- Site visit (7th August 2020) - Heritage analysis;
- Preparation of principles and Design Guide derived from analysis to be used to assess future developments;
- Draft report with Design Guide; and
- Final report.



2. Context

The City of Wells comprises of 3 wards; Wells Central, Wells St. Thomas and Wells St. Cuthbert. It is situated within the Mendip District, just south of Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). See Neighbourhood Plan Area in Figure 1.

Wells lies 25 km west of Bridgwater and 27km south west of Bath. The M5 located 20km to the west provides motorway access and a series of A roads serve the area and link with the M5. More locally, Wells is situated to the west of Shepton Mallet (7km) and north east of Glastonbury (8km), with views possible towards St Michael's Tower and Glastonbury Tor from the western part of the city. Vehicular access to the settlement from the south west is provided by the A39 from Glastonbury, continuing to connect with Bath to the north east. The A371 links Wells to Weston-Super-Mare (west) and Shepton Mallet (east).

At one time the city was served by 3 railway stations but all have now closed. The closest railway is now Castle Cary, 16km south east of Wells.

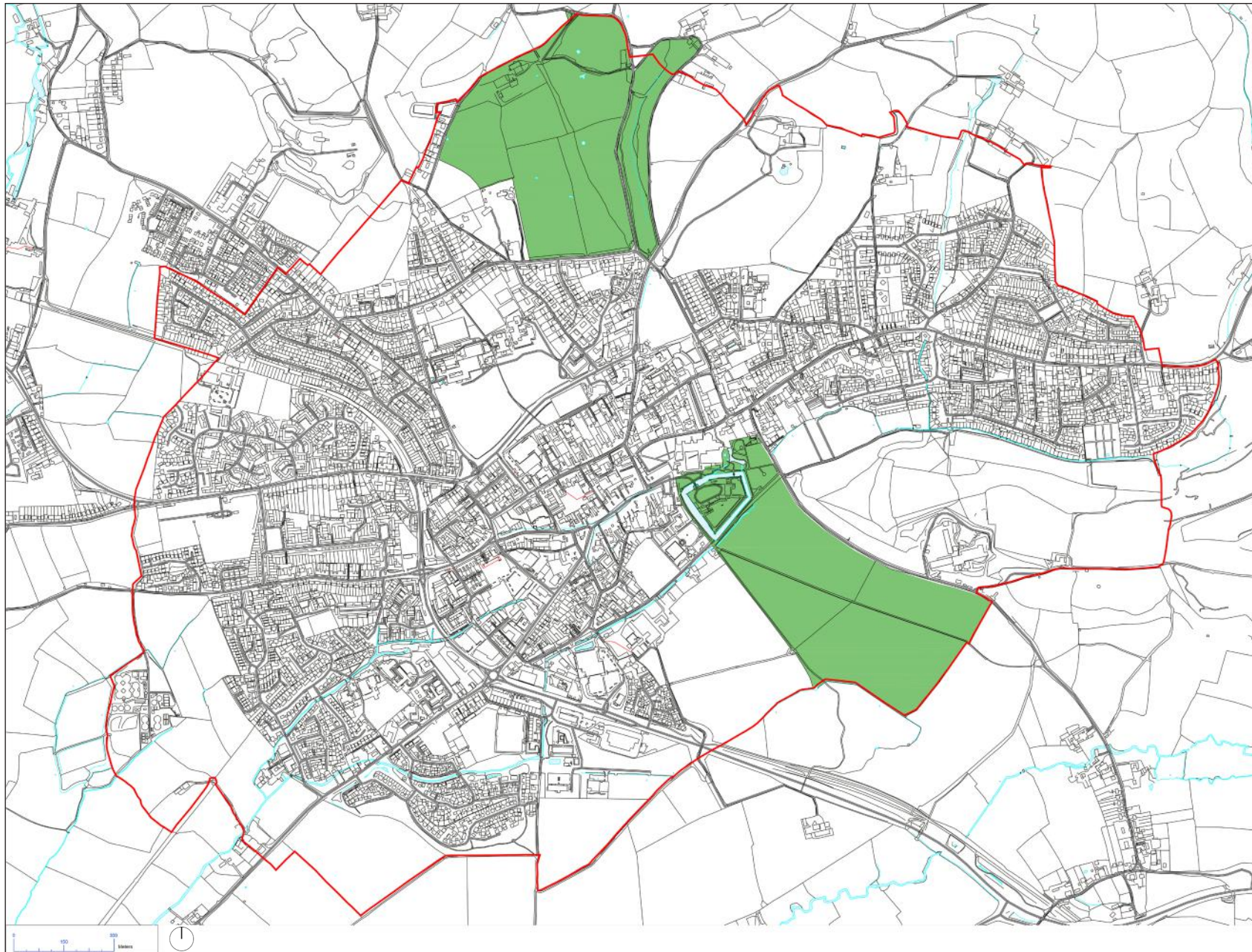
Wells has a rich history and a wealth of architectural heritage including the Cathedral dedicated to St. Andrew, Bishop's Palace, Vicars' Close, Church of St Cuthbert and a Conservation Area designated in 1970 by Somerset County Council.

The Parish of Wells has a population of 10,536 usual residents and 45.9 is the average age of residents according to the 2011 Census (Nomis, 2020).

There are plenty of green spaces close to the city centre, including Wells recreation ground, a Registered Park and Garden and Palace Fields. The Neighbourhood Plan Area is also served by a network of Public Rights of Way (PROW) promoting the health of residents and liveability of the area.



Railway heritage interpretation



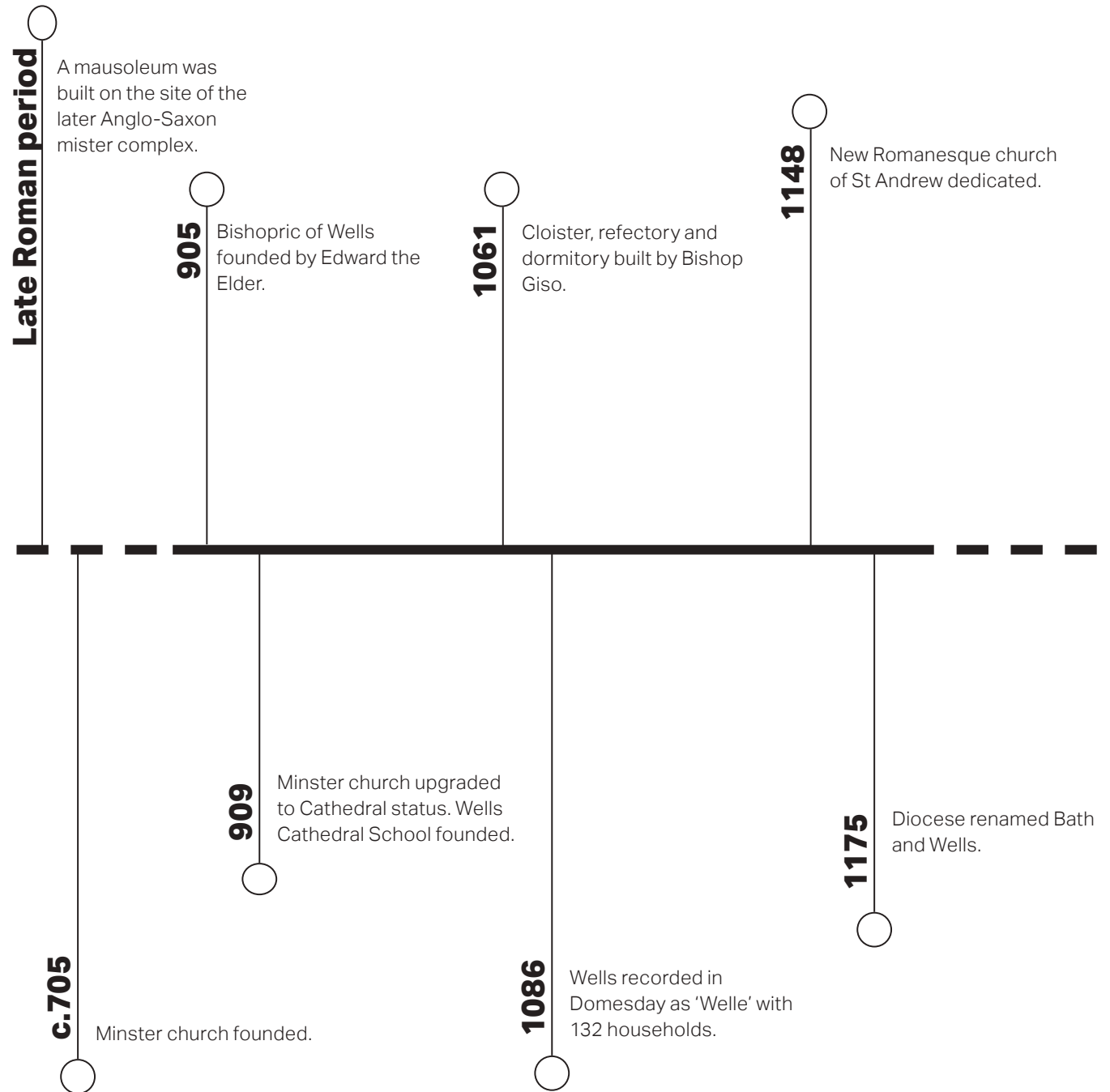
© Crown Copyright and database right 2020

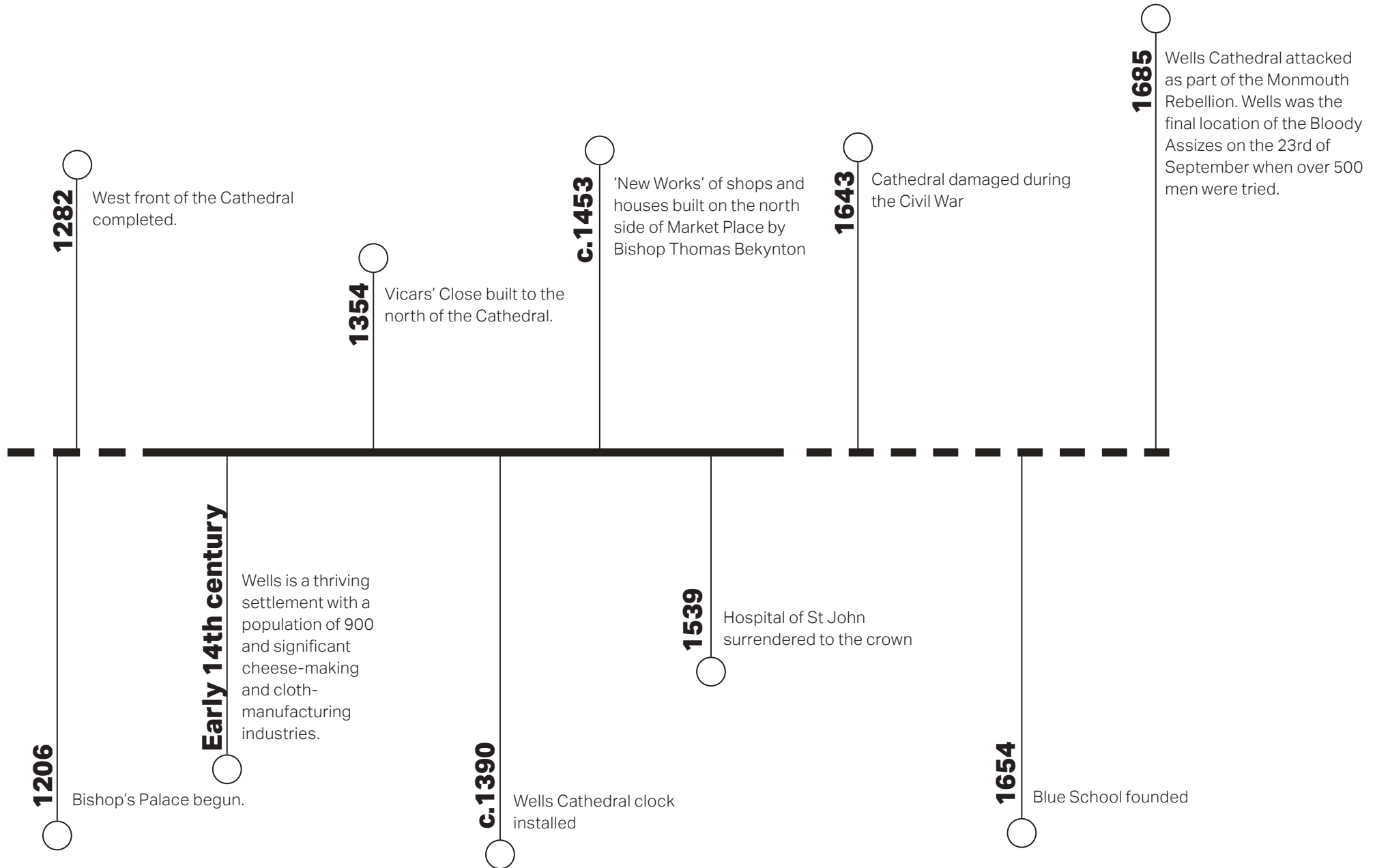
Figure 1: Neighbourhood Plan Area

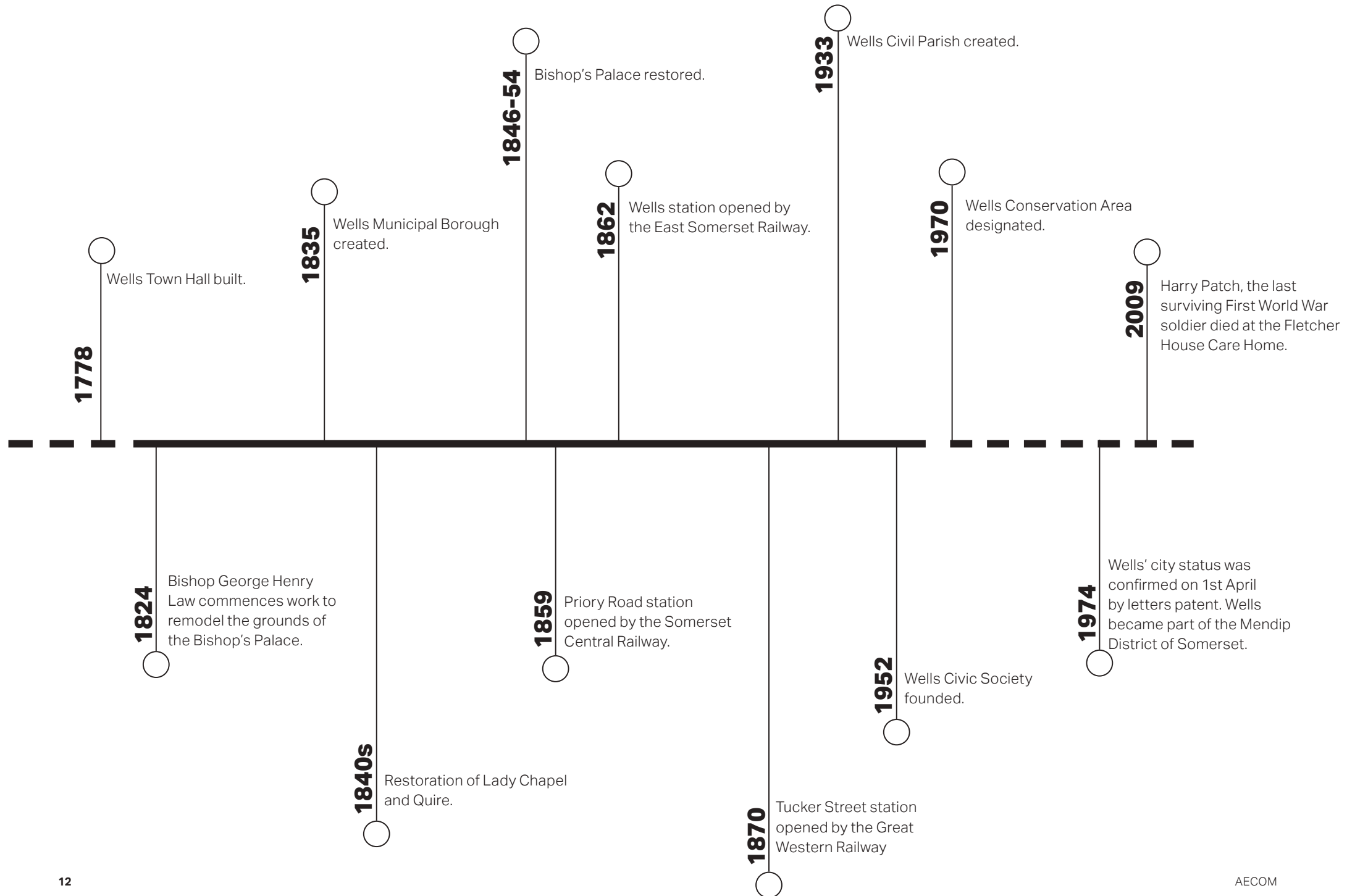
- Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Watercourse

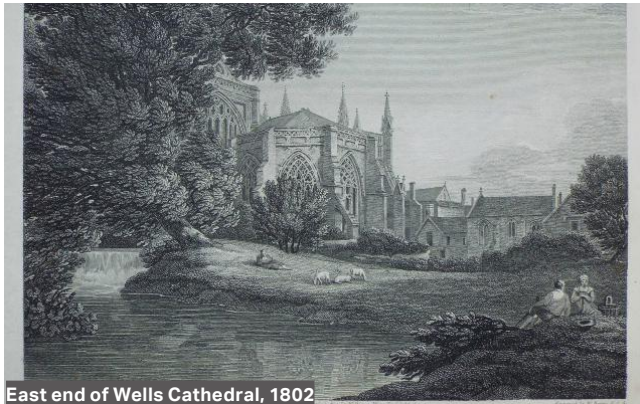
2.1. Historical settlement development

A historical settlement development timeline had been produced to demonstrate the influence of settlement growth on the history of the city.









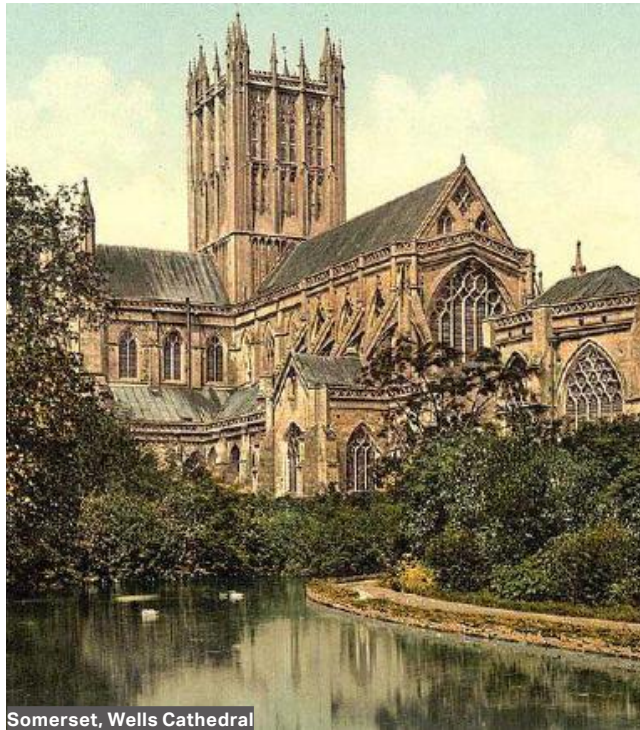
East end of Wells Cathedral, 1802



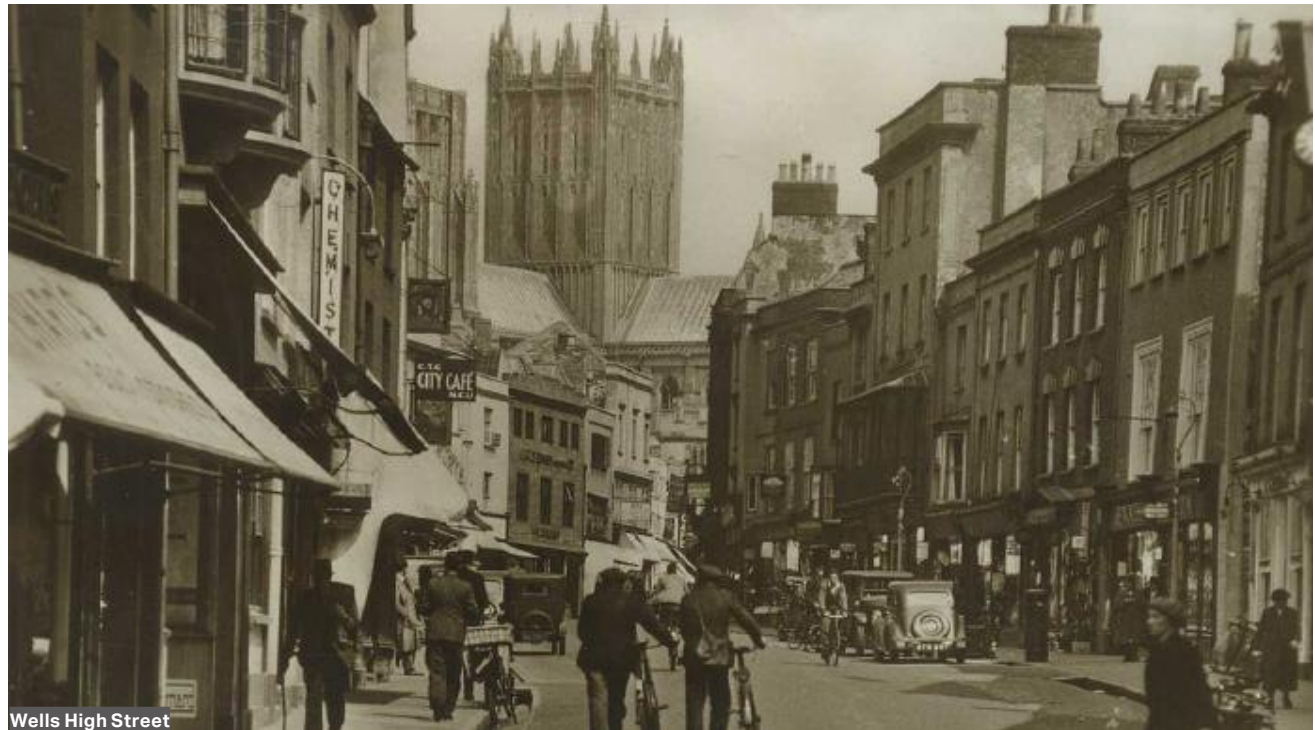
View of Wells from the south-east, 1830



High Street 1900-1910



Somerset, Wells Cathedral



Wells High Street

2.3. Heritage designations

The Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area contains a very large number of designated heritage assets. These include Wells Conservation Area, 275 Grade II listed buildings, 37 Grade II* listed buildings, 26 grade I listed buildings, 3 Scheduled Monuments and 2 Registered Parks and Gardens.

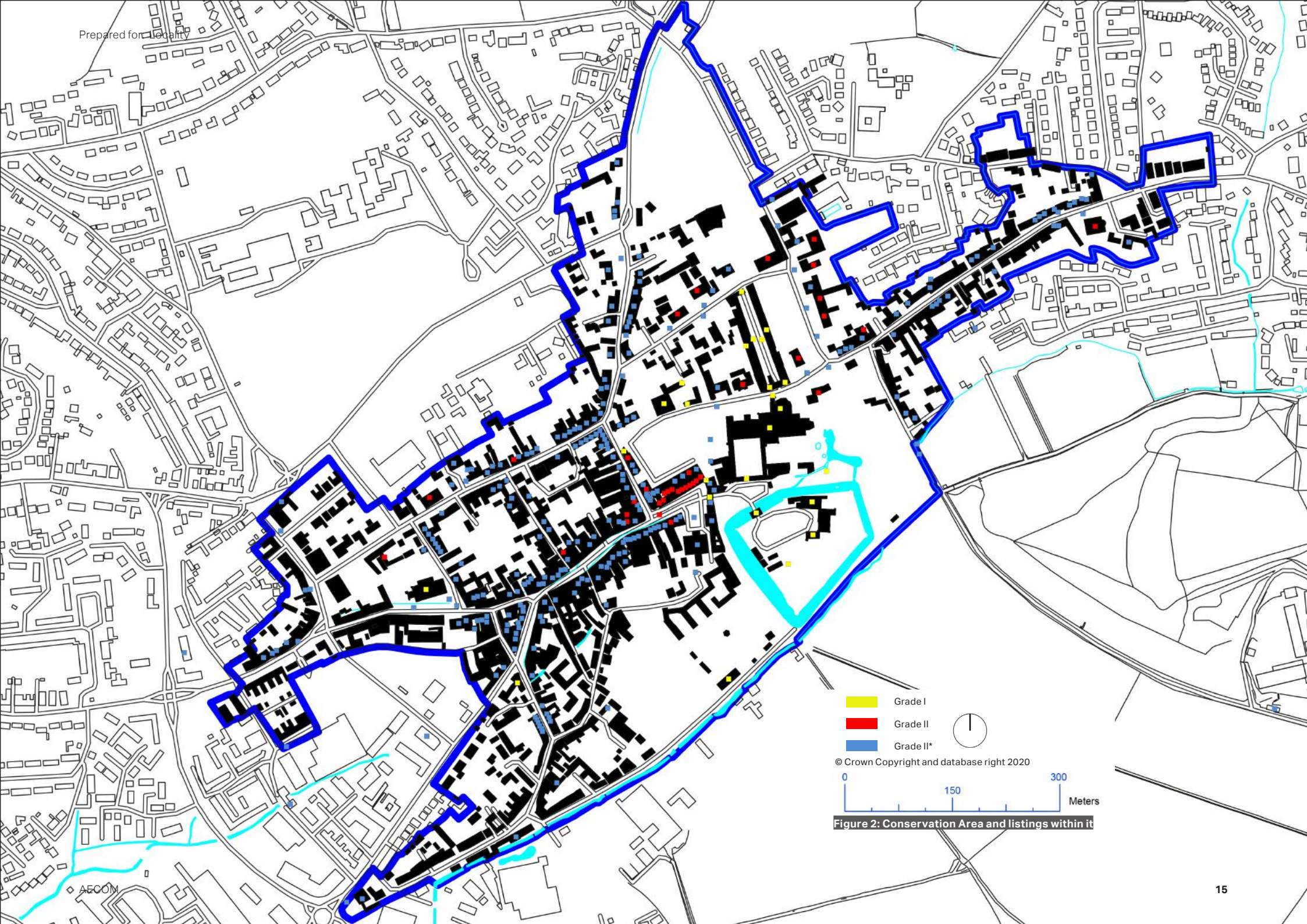
For full designation listings visit: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?clearresults=true>

The Wells Conservation Area was first designated in 1970 by Somerset County Council. The boundary was revised in 1989 when buildings in Priory Road (Nos. 7-15), the sports field to the east of New Street and The Vicarage in St Thomas Street were added. The Conservation Area currently covers the historic core of the city and the later 18th and 19th century areas of expansion. The Conservation Area Appraisal (October 2011) - https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/7628/Wells-Conservation-Area-Appraisal/pdf/Wells_Consevation_Area_Appraisal_inc_Maps.pdf?m=635380137308930000 investigates the historic development, special character and morphology of the city. There is no Conservation Area Management Plan.

There is no Local List for Wells, however the Wells Civic Society compiled a list of 67 non-designated buildings for inclusion on a future Local List. The Wells Conservation Area Appraisal includes a map which shows the locations of 'Other significant buildings' as well as those of scheduled monuments, listed buildings and important open spaces.



Eastern facade illuminated by morning sunlight



- Grade I
- Grade II
- Grade II*

© Crown Copyright and database right 2020



Figure 2: Conservation Area and listings within it

2.4. Landscape designations

- There are two Registered Parks and Gardens within the Neighbourhood Plan Area: Milton Lodge and The Combe (Grade II) and Bishops Palace (Grade II*) - see figure 1. There are no Registered Battlefields;
- Wells has 3 Scheduled Monuments: Browne's Gate (List Entry Number: 1006198), Bishop's Palace ruined portions, walls and well house (List Entry Number: 1006201) and Bishop's Tithe Barn (List Entry Number: 1003247);
- There are no World Heritage Sites within the Neighbourhood Plan, the closest is the City of Bath approximately 25km north east of Wells;
- The Mendip Hills AONB (21) is located directly north of the Neighbourhood Plan Area with parts included within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary; and
- There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas or Conservation (SAC), County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) or Special Protection Areas (SPA) within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area is covered by the following National Character Areas (NCA) and local landscape assessments:

NCA Profile: **141 Mendip Hills (NE416)**

NCA Profile: **143 Mid Somerset Hills (NE564)**

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>

Landscape Assessment of the Mendip Hills May 1996: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/landscapeassessment1996>

Landscape Assessment of Mendip District May 1997: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/landscapeassessment1997>

Mendip Landscape Character Assessment 2020 - Consultation Draft:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/evidencebaselandscape>

Further landscape guidance for the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area can be found at:

Adopted Local Plan Part I: 2006-2029 (2014): https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/9073/Adopted-Local-Plan-2014/pdf/Adopted_Local_Plan_2014_with_erratum_note.pdf?m=637329032902270000

Local Plan Part II (examination): <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/localplanexamination>

Mendip Open Space Study: https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/11336/Open-Space-Technical-Paper/pdf/Open_Space_Technical_Paper_2012.pdf?m=635820793371030000

Local Green Spaces / Open Areas of Local Significance Technical Paper : https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/20587/SD17-Local-Green-Spaces-Open-Areas-of-Local-Significance-Technical-Paper/pdf/SD17_-_LGS_-_OALS_Technical_Paper_Sept_2015.pdf?m=636844620537200000

Pre-submission Consultation Draft - City of Wells Neighbourhood Plan (2015-2029): <https://www.wells.gov.uk/uploads/documents/General/Presubmission-consultation-WNP-draft-08-02-15.pdf>

Assessment of Special Landscape Features: https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/1022/Assessment-of-SLF-s-November-2012/pdf/Assessment_of_SLF's_November_2012.pdf?m=635005924893330000

Emerging Green infrastructure guidance 2020: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/evidencebaselandscape>

The following **National Character Assessment** attributes define the characteristics associated with the Neighbourhood Plan Area:

141 Mendip Hills (NE416)

- *"A chain of prominent limestone hills, cored by Devonian and Silurian rocks, extending inland from the coast and rising up sharply from the surrounding lowlands;*
- *The plateau and hill tops are largely treeless, except for a few old ash pollards, wind-shaped shelterbelts and conifer plantations. The slopes and valleys surrounding the plateau have a wide range of woodlands forming an attractive mosaic with calcareous grassland and agriculture;*
- *Variable enclosure patterns with larger, rectangular 18th-century field patterns bounded by drystone walls on the plateau and smaller, irregular fields with hedgerows on the scarp slopes and eastern Mendips; and*
- *Buildings are constructed of red conglomerate, grey limestone and pale grey Doultong Stone".*

143 Mid Somerset Hills (NE564)

- *"The Mid Somerset Hills are a series of low hills, islands and ridges dividing the Somerset Moors and Levels. They are formed from Jurassic limestones and mudstones, with the overlying younger sediments eroded away. The hills, such as the Poldens, are prominent and dramatic, rising above the surrounding landscape, forming a visual backdrop to the Somerset Levels and Moors and giving panoramic views across the lower lands surrounding them;*
- *Flatter landscapes to the eastern side of the NCA can be contrasted with the hillier west; and*
- *The historic landscape illustrates continuous human occupation since prehistory closely linked to the farming and occupation of the Somerset Levels and Moors, with droves and farming systems reflecting this long association".*



The following **Landscape Assessment of Mendip District** attributes define the landscape type (LT) and character area (CA) associated with the Neighbourhood Plan Area:

LT 21 - Undulating ridges and knolls of mixed farmland

- *"The dominant characteristic is an attractive and very varied group of landforms. The ridges and knolls are separated by small areas of moorland, but in many cases this is no more than a shallow valley without a truly wetland appearance. Vegetation of the tops of the ridges and knolls is very variable. It includes woodland, hedges, and bare pasture which augments the variety of the landforms".*

CA A4 - The Mendip South Western Slopes

This Character Area is further refined and split into 4 subcategories of which the Neighbourhood Plan Area falls within the following:

CA A4.4 - The Wells Bowl:

- *"From the wooded ridge of Milton Hill eastwards to the even more prominent flat-topped Kings Castle Ridge, the land around Wells slopes upwards to the Plateau of irregular infoldings and minor valleys, steepening towards the crest to form very steep, wooded coombes like Biddlecombe. Springs emerge high up the slope below Pen Hill and at Walcombe. The availability of water, gentler gradients and southerly aspect have permitted the establishments of farmsteads and hamlets like that at Walcombe, where old field systems and earthworks indicate that the settlement was once probably larger. Certainly deserted medieval settlements like that at Milton indicate a pattern of more frequent settlement in the Middles Ages.*
- *The parkland character of the land above Wells has arisen not only from Stobery and Milton Parks, but also from the parkland trees around Walcombe, on the Mendip Hospital site and elsewhere. Moreover, on the upper slopes there is an attractive contrast between woodland in the combs and the larger fields with scattered hedgerow trees where*

open sheep walks have been enclosed. To the west, the small villages of East and West Horrington are surrounded by patterns of fields which may indicate that they are planned settlements.

- *The Wells Bowl thus is an attractive mixture of landscape elements with a predominantly lush, well wooded character. It provides a setting for the much admired view of Wells, where, despite the post-war development radiating out along the main roads to the east and west. The historic core is still readily apparent. The cathedral, prebendal buildings and the Bishop's Palace are within a largely parkland setting visible from the hills above, but it is the central tower of the cathedral and the equally fine tower of St. Cuthbert's Church which give the views their unique qualities".*

Landscape Character Assessment 2020

The revised Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is currently at consultation stage and information relating to the 2020 study can be found here:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/evidencebaselandscape>

Assessment comments:

Wells Bowl A4.4

- *"High quality area of landscape may be overlooked due to secluded land form and other more well known areas nearby. Interesting landforms, woodland, farmland. Habitat and historic parkland interest. Isolated condition away from built up edge, positive backdrop to the historic city. Visually interesting ever-changing views, long distance panoramas and views to landmark buildings. Pen Hill Mast on edge of LCA identified as landmark for whole district. Area forms important landscape backdrop to views towards Wells from the south".*



The emerging City of Wells Neighbourhood plan is committed to enhancing wildlife, ecosystems and habitats.

The following action table sets out the overall aim, objectives, policies and community actions or projects:

Aim	Objectives	Policy	Community Action or
To develop, protect and enhance a green infrastructure network, which provides woodland, riparian (streams and brooks), grassland and hedgerow habitats and corridors for wildlife thus enhancing the linkages of the City to the surrounding countryside, and provides accessible open green space for people in the City and on its rural fringe.	To ensure that planned development respects the landscape of Wells including, in particular, views of its heritage assets and rural context. In addition, to ensure that development on the edge of Wells is sensitive to its impact on both the rural landscape and the character of the historic settlement.	Policy ENV1: Protecting the Character of the Landscape, Views and Setting	Project 7: The City Council will work with neighbouring parish councils to consider developments that may impact the environment beyond their respective boundaries
	Environment policies will protect and enhance existing natural space and create new wild spaces for the benefit of wildlife and people.	Policy ENV2: Nature Recovery Network (including protected areas of biodiversity, geodiversity and habitat)	Project 8: The city council will develop projects to enhance biodiversity
	Preserving the green spaces within the city is important, whether informal or designated play areas. There is national recognition that green spaces enhance well-being and are beneficial to health.	Policy ENV3: Local Green Space	

2.5. Open space, views and setting

Wells benefits from a generous swathe of green space relative to the settlement size and the bowl like countryside context combines with opportunities for distant viewpoints. Despite this, not all green space is publicly accessible, and indeed 'Back Out to Play in Mendip' 2007 states that "overall provision of play and open space in Wells is low".

Mendip Local Plan proposes a "*Green Infrastructure Strategy to identify around 4.5 hectares of new open space to be secured from new development and other initiatives. The Strategy will also identify priorities for expenditure of development contributions towards improvement of the quality of public open spaces*".

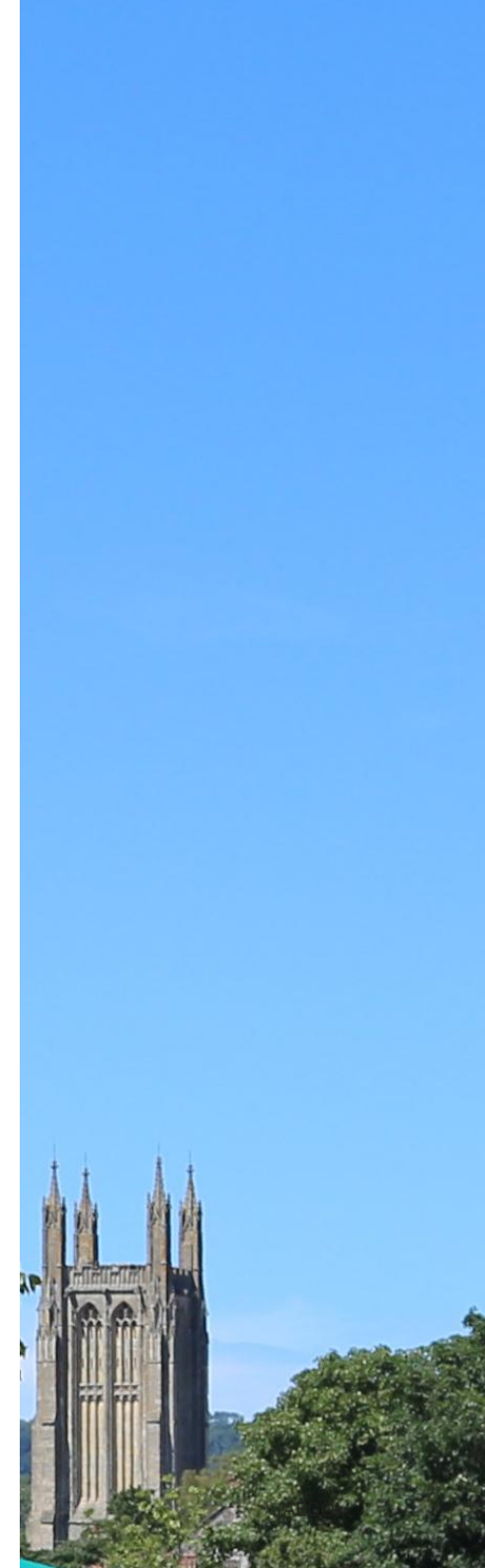
Open Spaces of Local Significance, and Formal and Informal Recreational Spaces are mapped in Figure 5.

A primary contributing factor to 'place' includes the characteristics of the landscape 'setting' comprising of the constituent parts of the landscape such as land cover, habitat type and geology. These attributes combined with expressions of culture, built form and heritage are what define a place and make it special. Views which deliver and encompass these elements contribute to the settlement's 'sense of place' which is an intrinsic principle in designing livable and high-quality built environments.

The Wells Neighbourhood Plan therefore proposes 4 view cones to be subject to special planning control. These are from:

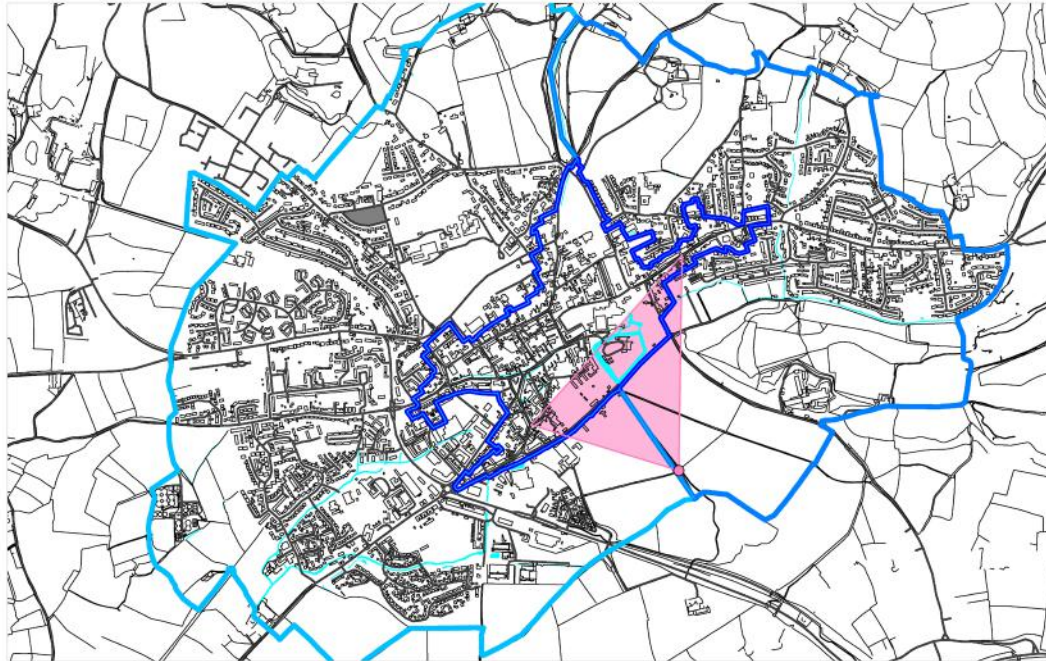
- Tor Furlong at the western edge of the Play Area looking west across the Cathedral School Playing Fields;
- Monarch's Way footpath 130 metres from its junction with Park Wood and the city boundary looking north across Palace Fields towards the Cathedral;
- Constitution Hill (B3139) Bristol Road east of its junction with the footpath leading towards Torhill Quarry, looking south across Palace Fields and towards the Cathedral; and
- Upper Milton – the junction of Monarch's Way and the city boundary and Upper Milton Lane looking south towards the western area of Wells.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the areas included within the proposed view cones.

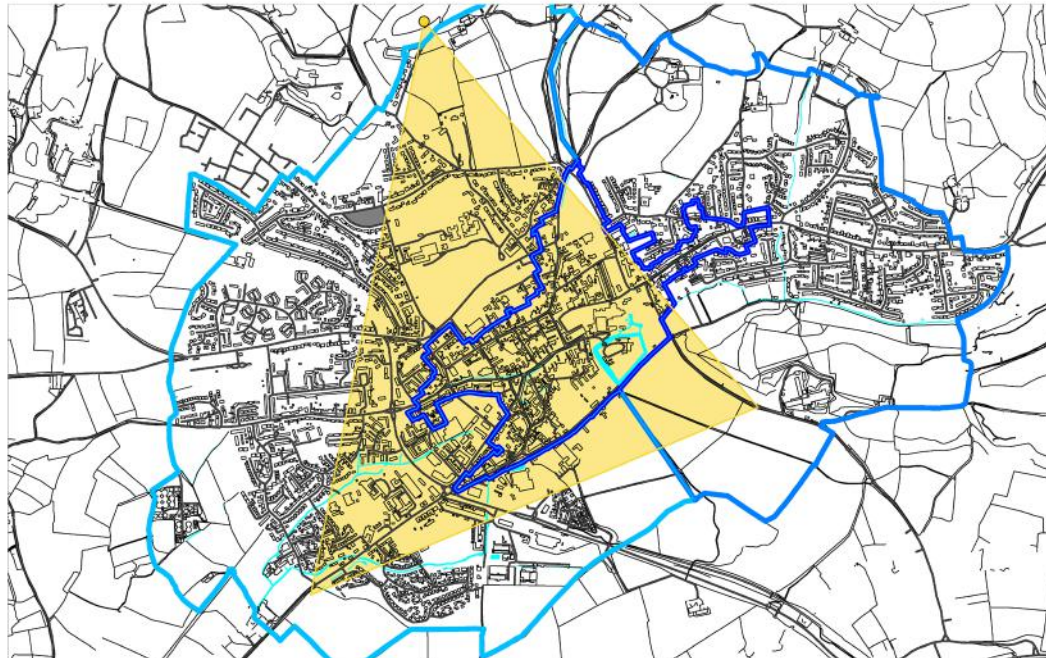


Wells View Cones

Monarch's Way



Upper Milton



Key

- Wells Conservation Area
- Residential West
- Residential East
- Upper Milton View Cone
- Monarch's Way View Cone
- Constitution Hill View Cone
- Tor Furlong View Cone



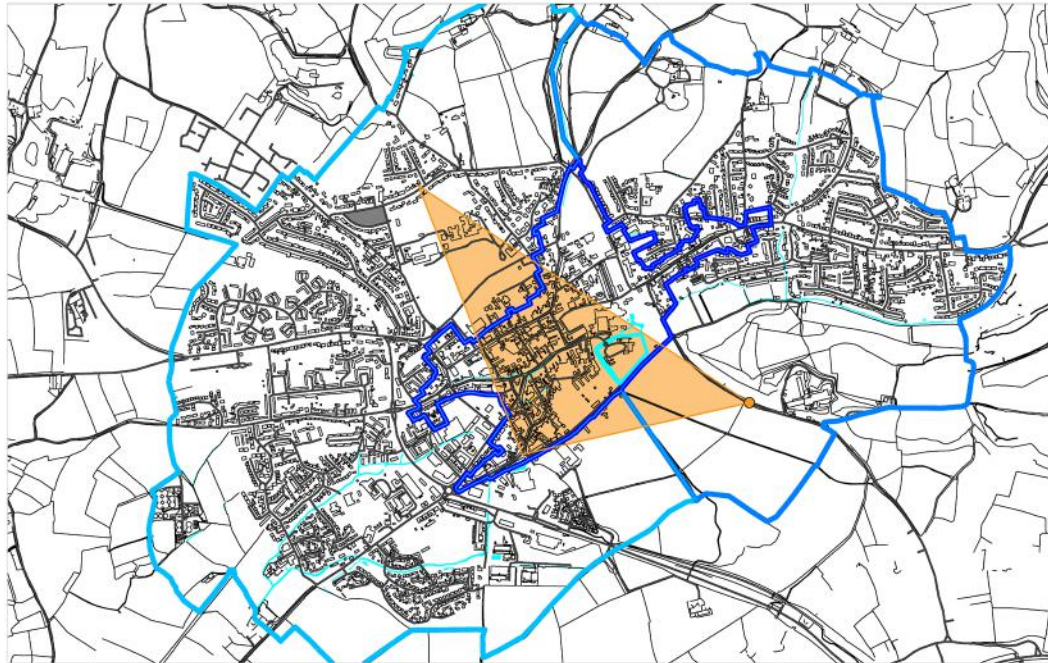
© Crown Copyright and database right 2020

Figure 3: Settlement view cones

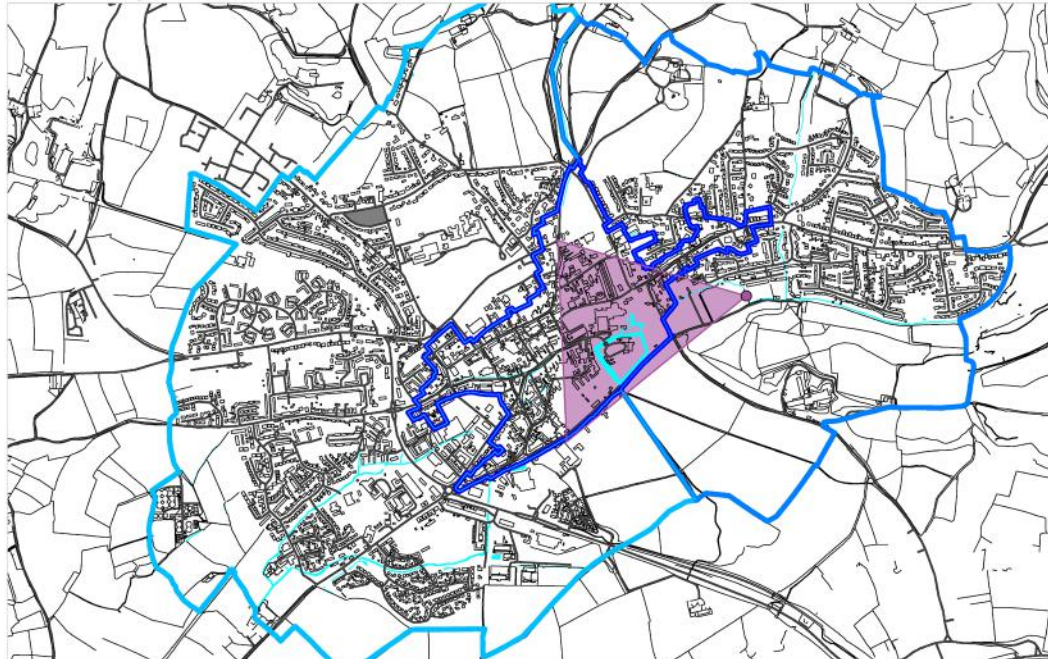
Diagram only - not to scale

Wells View Cones

Constitution Hill



Tor Furlong



Key

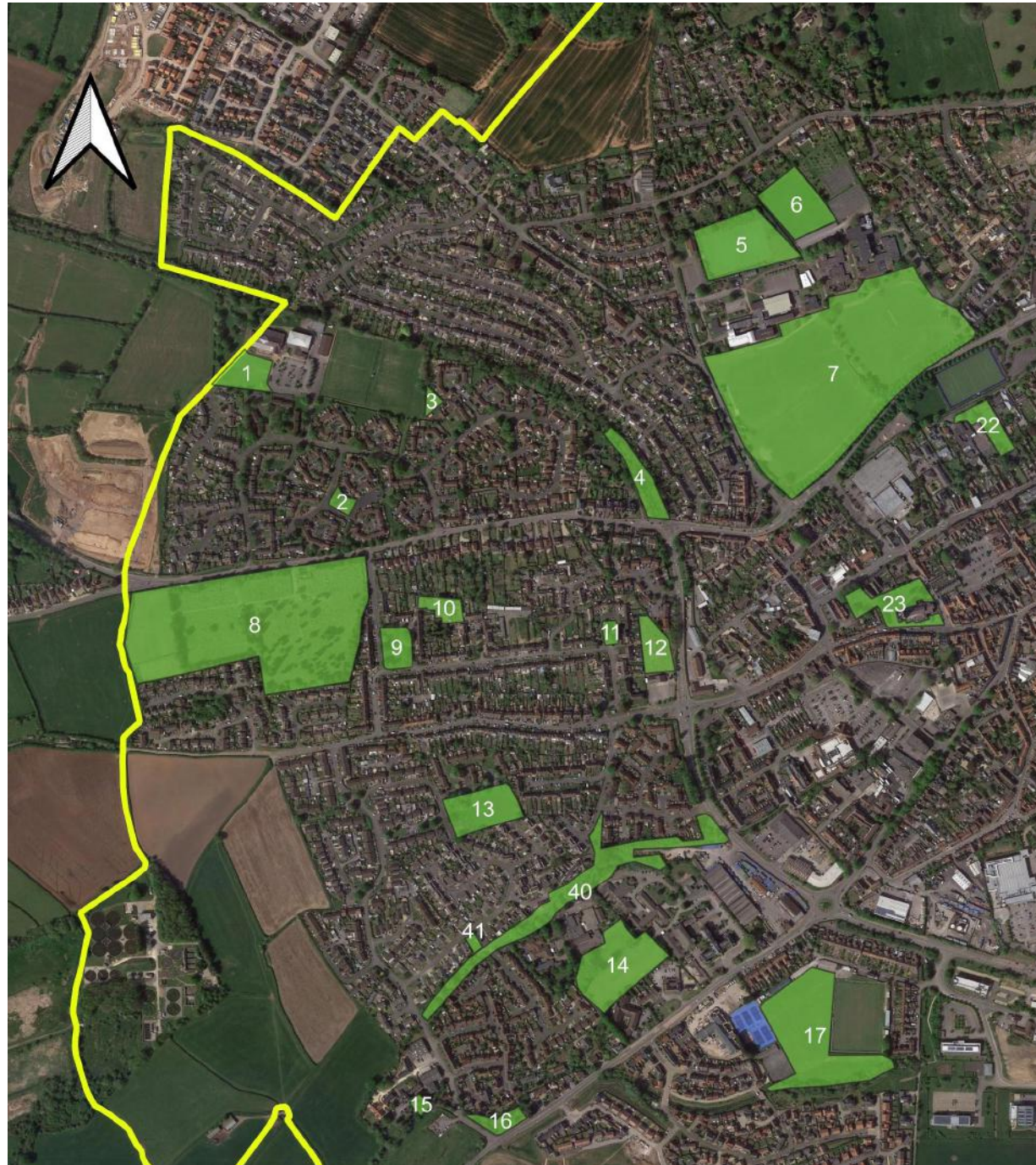
- Wells Conservation Area
- Residential West
- Residential East
- Upper Milton View Cone
- Monarch's Way View Cone
- Constitution Hill View Cone
- Tor Furlong View Cone



© Crown Copyright and database right 2020

Figure 4: Settlement view cones

Diagram only - not to scale



Green Spaces Within the Wells Parish Boundary (West)

GreenSpaces
 Wells Parish Boundary

id	Name
1	Land West of Leisure Centre
2	Parsons Way Playground
3	Leathbridge Road Play area
4	Disused Railway
5	Blue School Playing Fields
6	Land between Blue School & Ash Lane
7	Blue School Playing Fields
8	Wells Cemetery
9	Balch/ Coronation Road
10	Allotments west of Barnes Close
11	Reakes Close
12	Allotments north of Wells Fire Station
13	Signal Rand Park
14	St Cuthbert's Junior School
15	Land adjoining Keward House
16	Jocelyn Drive/ Glastonbury Road
17	Wells Sports Ground
22	St Joseph&St Teresa Primary School
23	St Cuthbert's Churchyard
40	St Andrews Stream
41	Keward Avenue

This map was created to display the green spaces within the Wells parish boundary in July 2022 for the Wells Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 5: Open Spaces of Local Significance (West)



Green Spaces Within the Wells Parish Bounadry (East)

- GreenSpaces
- Wells Parish Boundary

id	Name
18	Cathedral Walk Play Area
19	Recreation Ground
20	Approach to Bishop's Palace
21	Cathedral Green
24	Wells Cathedral School sports Ground
25	Land Opposite the Cedars
26	Tor Street Gardens
27	Bishop's Palace Allotments
28	Tor Furlong
29	Wells Cathedral School Playing fields
30	Tor Furlong Playground & Pitch
31	Tor Hill Meadow
32	Tor Hill Verges
33	Churchill Close
34	Sealey Crescent
35	Hawkers Lane Play area
36	Stoberry Park School Playground
37	Kidder Bank
38	Mendip Hospital Cemetery
39	South Walk

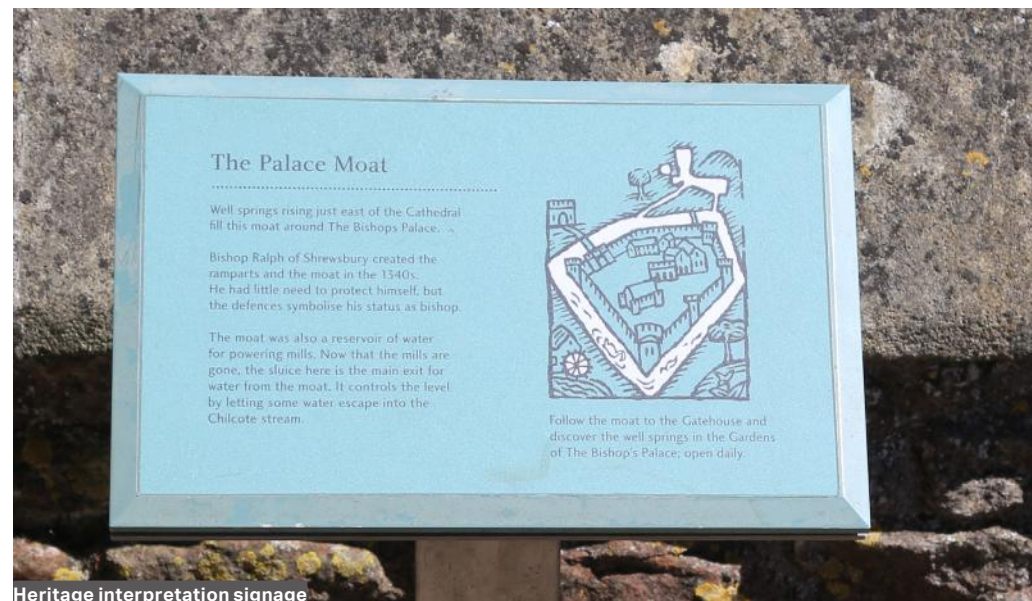
This map was created to display the green spaces within the Wells parish boundary in July 2022 for the Wells Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 5: Open Spaces of Local Significance (East)

2.6. Cultural associations

Wells has a rich history and strong cultural associations which are referenced below:

- Wells was listed in the Domesday book in the Hundred of Wells in Somerset, with a recorded population in 1086 of 132 households comprising of 58 villagers, 47 smallholders and 27 slaves with the acting Tenant-in-chief in 1086: Wells (St. Andrew), bishop of;
- The imposing Minster Church of St. Andrew was first documented in 766 where it is referred to as 'the minster near the great spring of Wells';
- Construction began on the present Cathedral structure in 1175 in the Early English architectural style. The bishop responsible for the building was Jocelyn of Wells, who was a witness to the Magna Carta in 1215;
- The City of Wells' name is derived from the four natural springs located within the settlement. Water from springs within the garden of the Bishops Palace passes through the High Street in small channels either side of the street and the largest of the four springs has been held in a well at the Bishops Palace in dedication to St. Andrew;
- Edward VI blew up the grand chapel with gunpowder as part of the Reformation started by King Henry XII;
- During the English Civil War parliamentary troops used the cathedral as a stable;
- It is rumoured lead from the roof and windows was used by rebel soldiers to make shot during the Monmouth Rebellion;
- Historically the wool and cloth trades flourished in Wells;
- Award-winning and best-selling author Elizabeth de Beauchamp Goudge was born in Wells on 24 April 1900;
- Sir Roger Henry Hollis, KBE, CB was born in Wells and served with MI5 becoming Director General between 1956 to 1965;
- Mary Denise Rand, born in Wells, became the first British woman to win an Olympic gold medal in track and field at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo. Previously competing in 1960 Rome, 1962 European championships in Belgrade and the 1966 Commonwealth Games in Kingston, Jamaica. Rand was also awarded Member of the British Empire in 1965.
- Wells Festival of Literature, set up in 1992 to encourage an enthusiasm for literature; and
- Wells' architecture and character have made it a popular location for feature films and TV shows. Productions filmed in the city have included The Canterbury Tales; The Libertine; Doctor Who; Bonekickers; The Pillars of the Earth; The Hollow Crown; Wolf Hall and Poldark. Location filming for Hot Fuzz, directed by Edgar Wright which received international acclaim, was filmed in the city in 2006.



Heritage interpretation signage

2.7. Strategic issues

Members of Wells City Council's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were invited to share their knowledge and experience of the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area. A video call workshop took place in July 2020 (COVID-19) to discuss requirements, key elements of settlement character and aspirations for the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Several key considerations and strategic issues emerged from the discussion, which have informed the preparation of the Design Guide. These issues have been identified at a wider scale and represent the aspirations of the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Group that can be achieved through design and masterplanning.

These are summarised below:

- Nationally significant heritage assets and conservation core;
- Strong historical and cultural associations;
- Influence of local geology and hydrology on place;
- Attractive place to live, work and visit: tourism;
- A wide variety of buildings, places and spaces which should be celebrated;
- Population demographic attributes, and attracting younger families;
- The influence of the surrounding landscape context;
- Value of green space and green infrastructure within streets;
- Ensuring quality and representative character within new development;
- Opportunities and threats of continuing change through development;
- Constraints to transport and movement;
- Neighbourhood Plan Area development density, capacity and edges;
- Parking / pedestrian centres; and
- Gateway building development quality.



Character assessment

03

3. Character assessment

3.1. Introduction

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area. Character assessment is used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a place. It is used to identify recognisable patterns of elements or characteristics that make one place different from another. This report is focussed on the character of the urban cityscape and its rural landscape context. The features introduced in this section are later used to inform the Design Guide.



Terrace at North Road

3.2. Existing character assessments and design guidance

The following published character assessments, management strategies and design guidance documents are relevant to the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area:

Conservation Area Appraisal: https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/7628/Wells-Conservation-Area-Appraisal/pdf/Wells_Conervation_Area_Appraisal_inc_Maps.pdf?m=635380137308930000

Current biodiversity requirements: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/8168/Biodiversity-and-Geological-Conservation-Assessment> Biodiversity Net Gain is expected to become mandatory as part of the emerging Environment Bill.

Mendip Biodiversity Action Plan: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/bap>

Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2019-2024: <https://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FINAL-Mendip-Hills-AONB-Management-Plan-Review-2019-v1.pdf>

Mendip Shopfront Design I https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/3233/Shopfront-Design-Guide/pdf/Shopfront_design_guide_final_jan_2013.pdf?m=635070770335300000

Building for a Healthy Life: https://www.udg.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/files/14JULY20%20BFL%202020%20Brochure_3.pdf

Living with Beauty: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861832/Living_with_beauty_BBBBC_report.pdf

National design guide: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

Paragraph 9 of the NDG states that “The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government’s priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics.”

The ten characteristics set out in Part 2 are:

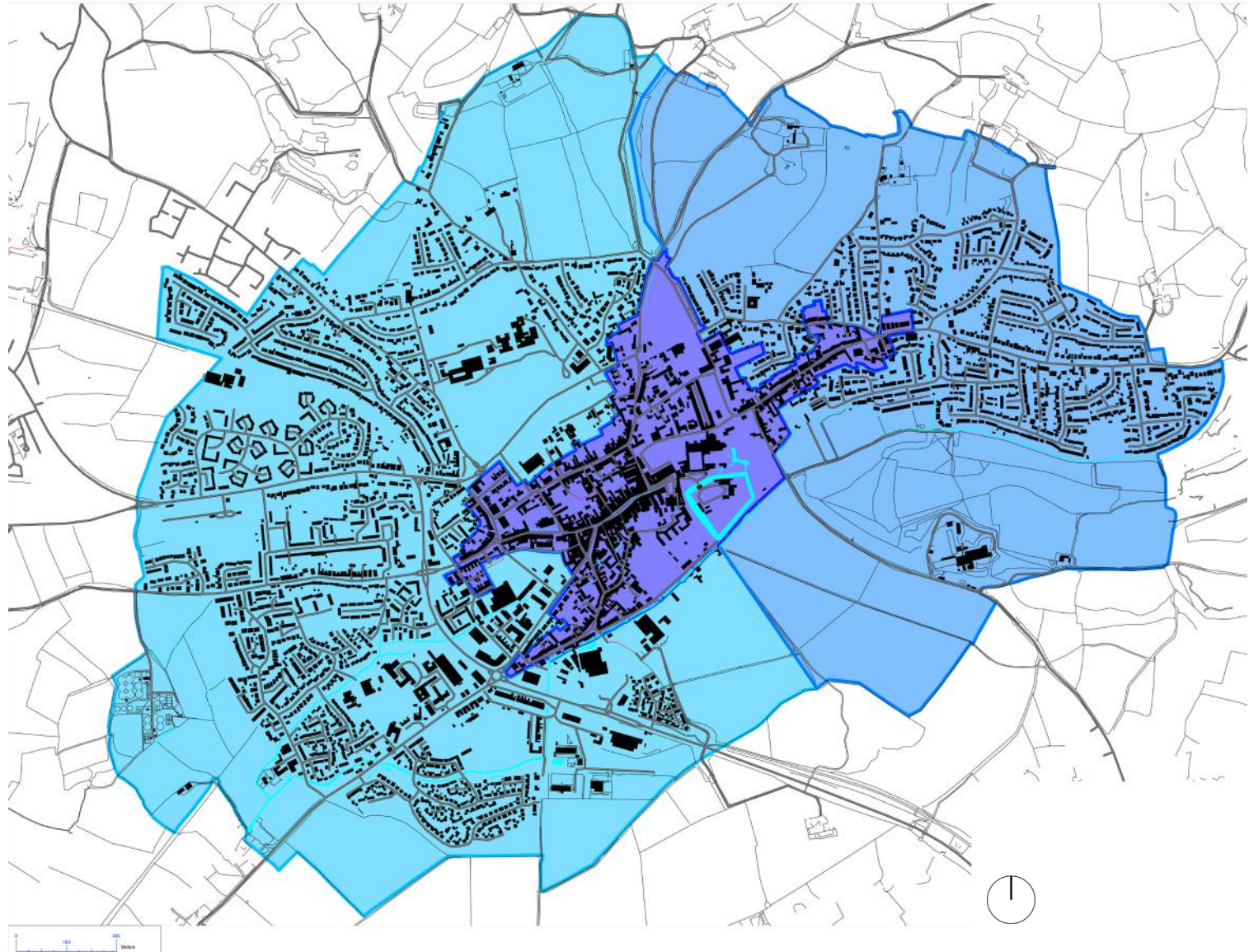
- **Context** – enhances the surroundings.
- **Identity** – attractive and distinctive.
- **Built form** – a coherent pattern of development.
- **Movement** – accessible and easy to move around.
- **Nature** – enhanced and optimised.
- **Public spaces** – safe, social and inclusive.
- **Uses** – mixed and integrated.
- **Homes and buildings** – functional, healthy and sustainable.
- **Resources** – efficient and resilient.
- **Lifespan** – made to last.

National Model Design Code is due for publication shortly and is intended to provide the framework for local design guides/codes

3.3. Character assessment

Three distinct areas of local cityscape character have been identified within the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area, as shown in Figure 6:

- CA1 - Wells Conservation Area
- CA2 - Residential East; and
- CA3 - Residential West.



© Crown Copyright and database right 2020.

Figure 6: Character Assessment areas

Character Area 1 (CA1)- Wells Conservation Area

Historic settlement morphology

The Wells Conservation Area covers the historic core of the city which has remained constant in size and shape since the late 18th century with most development being infill and replacement rather than expansion into undeveloped areas. Wells is depicted on a number of maps of the county of Somerset from the early 17th to the 19th centuries with the Cathedral shown at its centre, the Mendip Hills to the north and the River Sheppey to the south. A map from 1838 by R K Dawson, enlarged from the earlier First series Ordnance Survey map, shows Wells to have been developed to the boundaries of the Conservation Area in the early 19th century. The 1888 25 inch Ordnance Survey map XLI.5 shows a similar situation with the addition of new streets at Priory Road and Princes Road to the west of the city, with large semi-detached villas at the junction on the south side of Priory Road. Piecemeal developments had sprung up on the south side of Tucker Street, on Ethel Street, along the south side of Ash Lane on the northern boundary of the city and at the eastern end of Bath Road to the east of the city. A considerable amount of infrastructure was added to the city during the 19th century including the three railway lines to the south and west, a cattle market on Princes Road, engineering works and corn mills on West Street and a gas works between the railway and Southover.

The end of the 19th century saw little additional development within the Conservation Area but by 1931 houses had been built on the north side of North Road to the east of Little Entry and on the north side of

Bath Road between Beryl Lane and Hawkers Lane on land previously occupied by St Thomas's Farm.

Market Place feels like the core of the Conservation Area, and this is further reinforced by the recent pedestrianisation part of a COVID-19 retail mitigation strategy. Later 20th / 21st century development at South Street within close proximity to the Cathedral, Bishop's Palace and Town hall is therefore set within an area of significance, with the development accessed directly off Market Place. Further examples of more recent development can be seen on the northern side of Chamberlain Street and other areas such as The Mews, and a small high-quality development off St Thomas Street demonstrates recent infill development.



Cityscape structure

The Wells Conservation Area covers approximately 58 hectares of land stretching from Bath Road in the north to the entrance to Stobery Park and along Chamberlain Road terminating just before Strawberry Way. The Conservation Area boundary then contracts back to development at St Johns Street and Queen Street, including some of Priory Way and follows Silver Street round the southern boundary of Bishop's Palace and back along St Thomas Street.

The structure of the Conservation Area is one that represents the high-profile nature of the Cathedral and Bishops Palace. As Priory Road and St Cuthbert Street both converge to provide centralised access in the form of the High Street from the west and primary access from the east provided by St Thomas Street. Each guide flows directly through the Conservation Area to the centre occupied by the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace. These heritage assets and adjacent parkland also form a significant break in 'development'.

Buildings are densely packed within the Conservation Area, lining access roads and are generally located directly at the road edge or rear of pavements, with few examples including garden or yard frontages. The feeling of compression within the central cityscape structure is a result of the density, and provides great focus to the streets, helping those that walk through them to absorb the theatre of 'everyday life'.

Access roads reflect the age of the Conservation Area, often narrow, at times one-way and meandering. A good degree of pedestrian permeability is offered by the layout, and the Conservation Area has good activity levels and a feeling of low-level density, attributed to the many alleys and roads in the centre.



Building placement at rear of pavements

Heritage assets

Wells contains over 300 listed buildings; the majority being located within the Wells Conservation Area. The 26 grade I listed buildings are all either ecclesiastical or have connections to the Church and mainly date to the 14th and 15th centuries. In addition to the Cathedral Church of St Andrew, its Chapter House and Cloisters, the Bishops' Palace and Old Deanery are grade I listed as are a number of gatehouses, boundary walls and porches surrounding the cathedral. Vicars' Close is one of the oldest residential streets in Europe and contains five grade I listed buildings including the 28 Vicars' houses, the Vicars' Chapel, the Vicars' Hall and the boundary walls enclosing the street. The only grade I listed building in the centre of the city not directly associated with the cathedral is the 13th century parish church of St Cuthbert.

The 37 Grade II* listed buildings in the city include residential buildings of the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Hotels are also represented (Nos.4 and 6 Market Place (The Crown Hotel), with Nos.8 and 10; Nos.20 and 22 (The Ancient House Hotel) Sadler Street) as are commercial buildings (No.12 Sadler Street; Nos.3, 5, 7, 9 (Barclays Bank), 11 (Conservative Club), 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, and 25 Market Place).

The city's Grade II listed buildings are predominantly residential and mostly date to the 18th and 19th centuries. Earlier buildings are present however as are municipal buildings (The Town Hall, Market Place); commercial buildings (The Post Office, Market Place); ecclesiastical buildings (Wells United Church, Union Street; Wells Methodist Church and Sunday School, Southover); charitable buildings (Llewellyn's Almshouses, Priest Row; Harpers Almshouses, No.28 Chamberlain Street); and street furniture (Triple lamp standard, Cathedral Green; water hydrants on Ethel Street, Priory Road, and St Andrew Street).

A large number of non-designated buildings within the character area are recognised on the Wells Conservation Area Townscape Appraisal map as being Positive Buildings. A positive building is defined by the Wells Conservation Area Appraisal as being a good example of a relatively unaltered historic building, the style, detailing and building materials of which provides the streetscape with interest and variety and makes a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. The Positive Buildings comprise mainly, but not exclusively, residential buildings of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Of the Positive buildings identified, the following buildings have been proposed by the Wells Civic Society for inclusion on a Local List:

- 15 Broad Street;
- 17 Broad Street;
- 19 Broad Street;
- 13 & 15 Chamberlain Street;
- 25-31 Chamberlain Street;
- College Road (west side) Boundary Wall with gate piers & gate;
- 1-10 Ethel Street;
- Ethel Street (wall);
- Guard House Lane;
- Moat Walk Boundary Wall (south-east end);
- 10-19 Market Street;
- 10-19 Market Street (boundary wall);
- 3 & 4 Priest Row;
- 5 Priest Row;
- 1 Priory Road;
- 5 Priory Road;
- 7 Priory Road;
- 9 Priory Road;
- 11 Priory Road;
- 13 Priory Road;
- 15 Priory Road;
- 17 Priory Road;
- 19 Priory Road;
- 14 South Street;
- 3-9 St Cuthbert Street;
- 11-21 St Cuthbert Street;
- 21 Tor Street;
- Tor Street Boundary Wall (west side);
- 1-10 Tucker Street (south side);
- 3 Tucker Street;
- 4 Tucker Street;
- 5 & 6 Tucker Street;
- 9 & 10 Tucker Street; and
- 1 - 5 Cheddar Valley Buildings.

Green spaces and streetscape

The character area is noted for its open spaces which are present both in the centre of the area and on its periphery. The Cathedral precincts enclose the cloisters and cemetery while Cathedral Green to the west is a large public open space surrounded by historic buildings, many with their own large gardens such as the Old Deanery. To the south and east of the Cathedral the gardens of the Bishop's Palace cover a large area both within and without the defensive wall and moat. The open space in this part of the character area continues south-west to the recreation and sports grounds with the deer park, now part of the grade II* listed Bishop's Palace, Registered Park and Garden, stretching away to the south-east. This element acts as a sprawling green wedge for the settlement which safeguards the area from development, and its location at the southern edge of the Conservation Area provides distant bucolic views.

Towards the west of the character area the churchyard of St Cuthbert's is a large area with views in from three of the surrounding streets. Towards the eastern end of the character area is the churchyard of St Thomas'. There are large private open spaces within the character area including the remains of the burgrave plots to the north of Chamberlain Street, the gardens between the east side of Vicars' Close and The Liberty. At the centre of the quadrangle formed by Chamberlain Street, Sadler Street, High Street and Union Street are the remains of the former convent gardens.

Public realm areas within the Conservation Area comprise of pedestrian pavements and publicly accessible spaces in and around the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace. These elements help to give the pedestrian safe routes through the centre, providing good pedestrian priorities to counter car dominance. Recent pedestrianisation part of a COVID-19 retail mitigation strategy further reinforces

pedestrian priorities at Market Place, helping to establish a true centre for the settlement.

Spring water overflow channels along the high street, provide a striking connection to place and a unique detail. The public realm is enhanced by local stone walls, quality paving and some surviving granite kerbs. Pavement finishes range from Pennant Stone and York Stone, to smooth sandstone sets and smooth sandstone paving. Modern flame-textured conservation paving has been specified as replacement paving in central areas, and tarmacadam is utilised in areas of lower significance.

A constant topography means pedestrian and bicycle access is good, however the bicycle network is quite limited within the Conservation Area comprising of signposted routes only. Transitioning from the Conservation Area by bicycle to outer settlement areas without cycling lane infrastructure could prove problematic in areas where access is narrow and cars are parked.



Water channel, High Street



Public art, Bishops Palace

Pattern and layout of buildings

Wells grew up around the natural springs, close to which Roman remains have been found and where the Saxon minster was founded. A marketplace was established close to the minster and it is likely that High Street follows the line of the main street of the Saxon settlement. In the 12th century the cathedral was re-sited to take better advantage of its setting and in the 13th century the Bishop's Palace was built, later gaining its defensive moat and walls.

The east side of Sadler Street facing Cathedral Green was developed in the late 14th century and in the mid-15th century Bishop Bekynton separated the ecclesiastical sites from the city with the addition of two gatehouses to Market Place. He also developed the north side of Market Place with a new terrace but did not complete the scheme on the south side of Market Place which has been infilled with 18th and 19th century buildings. Burgage plots were laid out along the north side of Chamberlain Street under Bishop Bekynton's expansion and the evidence for them can still be seen in the plots to the rear of the current houses.

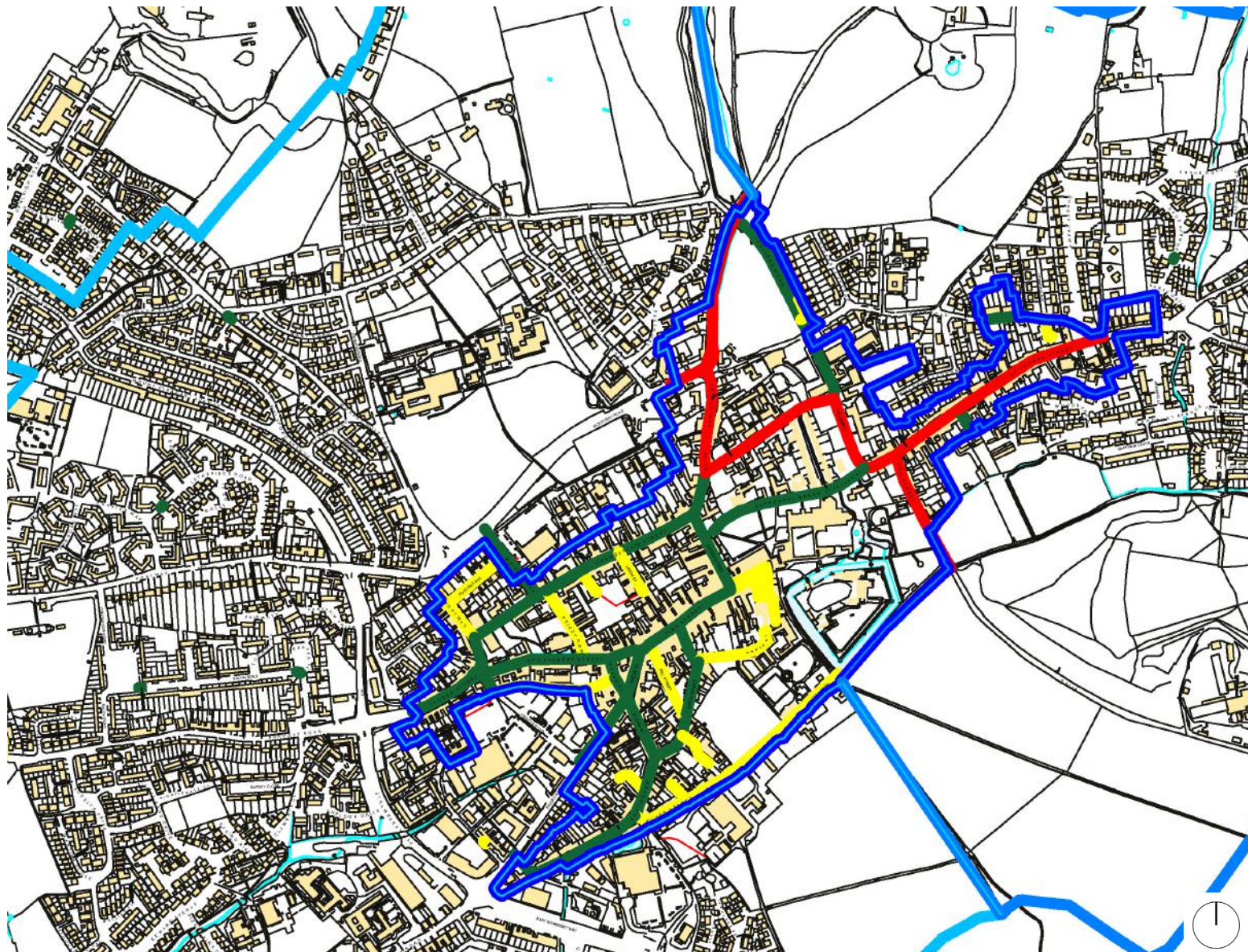
From Market Place west the High Street is made up of almost continuous terraces and connected buildings, broken only occasionally by alleyways and narrow lanes such as Guard House Lane, Union Street and Mill Street. This close packing of houses can also be seen in the subsidiary streets such as Sadler Street, Union Street, Mill Street, Broad Street; St John Street; St Cuthbert Street and Priest Row. Detached properties are present in the more prestigious streets such as the north side of Cathedral Green, New Street, and The Liberty.

The continuity of terraced typologies means the Conservation Area is quite high density, particularly the High Street, however the first floor of retail elements tend not to be occupied as residences due to access limitations. A quadrangle section formed by the High Street, Chamberlain Street, Sadler Street and Priest Row takes the form of two blocks, creating central area gaps

free from development, which is now utilised for parking. Terraced properties again line St Thomas Street, but elsewhere in the Conservation Area development has less density and access is less linear. Wells recreation ground, Bishop's Palace, Cathedral and Stoberry Park provide breaks to development of generous scale relative to the settlement. Observations from the following Nolli map illustrate the areas of highest density line primary access routes on east to west alignment, whilst highlighting the lack of density in areas to the north below Stoberry Park and close to the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace.



Figure 7: (CA1) - Wells Conservation Area



Access here is generally functional, with primary and secondary routes- the majority lined with retail and residential land use.

- Key**
- Wells Conservation Area
 - Residential West
 - Residential East
 - Primary Road
 - Secondary Road
 - Tertiary Road

Figure 8: Road hierarchy and structure - (CA1) Wells Conservation Area

Diagram only - not to scale

Views and landmarks

The tightly packed nature of the historic core of the Conservation Area restricts views to those along the main streets and from the main streets along subsidiary streets. Cathedral Green allows views of the Cathedral and the ecclesiastical buildings connected to and associated with it, and of the historic buildings on the north side of Market Place and the east side of Sadler Street. The Cathedral provides good wayfinding across the settlement, however within the Conservation Area densities limit these views.

St Cuthbert's churchyard affords views of the church and the historic buildings surrounding it while there are important views out from the Bishop's Palace into the deer park. This green buffer provides distant countryside views.

The Cathedral can be seen from viewpoints across the city, especially from high ground. There are especially good views of the Cathedral from Torhill Lane, Tor Street and St Thomas Street but glimpsed views can be had from many locations.

Wells Conservation Area has a high concentration of landmark elements, with the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace and moated grounds representing nationally significant heritage assets, complemented by the setting and proximate Registered Park and Garden.



Building line and boundary treatment

The prominence of terraced typologies within the Conservation Area accentuate the linear characteristic of streets, as buildings organically follow the meanderings of the street alignment without break. The majority of the buildings within the historic core of the city are separated from the street only by a narrow pavement and in the case of Union Street, Mill Street and Guard House Lane front directly onto the street. With the exception of the Old Deanery the detached houses on the north side of Cathedral Green are set back from the street and separated from it by front gardens protected by boundary walls. This is also the case on both sides of The Liberty. The houses on the south side of Chamberlain Street have narrow front gardens protected by dwarf walls and railings. Purpose built 19th century terraces at 1-10 Ethel Street and 10-19 Market Street have larger front gardens with taller stone boundary walls and at 1-10 Tucker Street with dwarf walls and (replacement) railings.

Boundary walls are generally constructed from local facing stone at times finished with coping stones and brick gate piers. Dwarf wall construction is very low at times, this may be accentuated by surface replacement, however examples on St Thomas street have a finished top of wall height of no more than 300mm. Stepped access, provided by 2-3 steps enclosed either side by walls and finished with handrails is a quaint detail, albeit this limits accessibility. Some handrails have been also been removed.



Terraces with stepped access and handrail, St Thomas Street



Tor Street, local stone walls of varying heights



Garden frontage, Southover



Replacement railings, Tucker Street



Garden frontages, Bath Road



No frontage, Silver Street



Local stone wall, Old Bristol Road



Metal railings, St Cuthbert Street



New Road, renovated wall beside modern development

Building heights and roofline

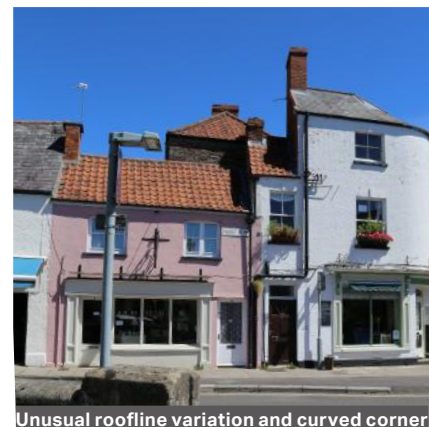
Building heights and rooflines vary across the Conservation Area. Three storey buildings dominate the High Street, the older properties having lower rooflines and the later buildings taller and often with attic storeys with dormers. Towards the west end of High Street and on Broad Street three-storey houses are interspersed with two-storey properties, which start to dominate on St Cuthbert Street and Market Street. The purpose built 19th century terraces tend to be of two storeys with dormers (Ethel Street, St Cuthbert Street, Cheddar Valley Buildings), without dormers (Market Street), and with attic rooms in the street-facing gable ends of the end-terrace houses (Tucker Street).

Pitched roofs represent the majority of buildings in Wells with some examples hipped. Rhythm is created by full length projections with pitched roofs. There are some good examples of pitched roofs turning the corner with a curve, such as the corner of St Cuthbert Street and Priest Row. Parapet roofs with concealed shallow pitched roofs provide variety and gable upstands that were specified to prevent the spread of fire to neighbouring properties add further variation to the styles seen within the Conservation Area.

Variation of roof covering include red clay pantiles, replacement red-brown concrete pantiles, concrete profiled, grey slate, plum slate and modern standing seam. Despite the variation, there is a strong pantile majority throughout the Conservation Area. Examples of decorative lead work such as scalloping is also widespread.



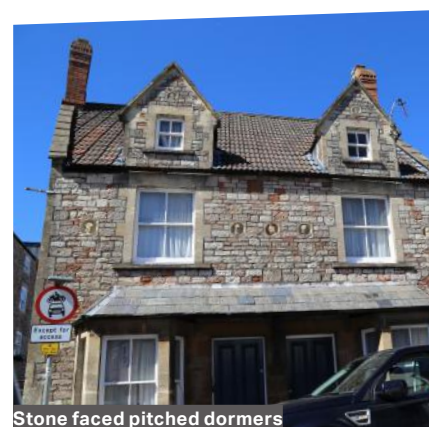
Shallow pitched roof with parapet and dormers



Unusual roofline variation and curved corner



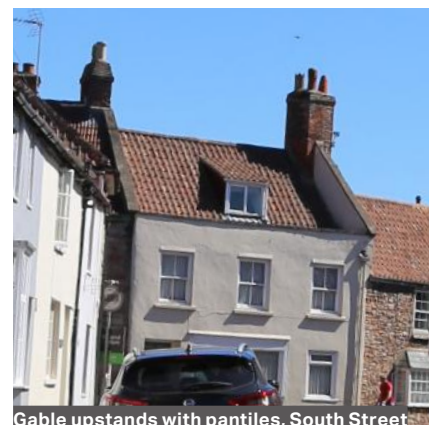
Full length pitched projection street rhythm



Stone faced pitched dormers



Roof height variation, St John Street



Gable upstands with pantiles, South Street

Architecture

The architecture of the character area can be broadly divided into three categories: ecclesiastical buildings; polite architecture and vernacular architecture. As previously noted, the Grade I listed buildings within the character area are all ecclesiastical and date mainly to the 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. Stone was the preferred material. The Cathedral, Chapter House and Cloister were built in Doultong ashlar with blue Lias and some Purbeck marble used for dressings. Doultong ashlar is used for other buildings including the Bishop's Eye or as dressings for buildings with stone rubble walls as with Bishop Burnell's Great Hall and the houses of Vicars' Close.

Examples of polite domestic architecture can be found across the historic core, but especially in the finer streets such as the north side of Cathedral Green; Sadler Street and The Liberty. A number of these buildings such as the Swan Hotel have been re-fronted in the 18th and early 19th centuries and retain fenestration of the time including hornless sash windows. The character area also contains examples of municipal and commercial buildings including the classical Town Hall (1779); the Italianate Post Office (formerly the Market House, 1835); and the Venetian Gothic National Westminster Bank (1856).

The majority of the listed buildings within the character area are examples of vernacular architecture of varying ages. Timber framing was used occasionally in Wells. In some cases its use is visible through visible jettying as at 7 Sadler Street and 11 High Street while in other cases such as 15 Sadler Street the building has been re-faced and the use of timber framing is not apparent. In some instances, timber has been applied and is not part of the structure as at the White Swan Hotel in Sadler Street. Local stone rubble, rendered and painted was used for many of the houses within the character area. Locally made brick was used from the 19th century with finer, imported red bricks being used after the railways reached the city with Welsh

slate for roofing. The earlier buildings retain mullioned windows while sashes were used from the 18th century, some retaining original hornless sashes. Many doors have been replaced but examples remain from the 18th and 19th centuries. Equally, many shop fronts have been modernised but earlier examples are not uncommon, most dating to the 19th century. Ornamentation is unusual in both the polite and the vernacular buildings within the character area and buildings on which it is used stand out from their plainer neighbours. Some ornamentation is part of the architectural style used and some of the grander Georgian buildings have pedimented doorways

and balustraded parapets. Cast iron railings can be seen protecting balconies on a number of buildings including the Swan Hotel, Sadler Street and there are some examples of ornamental plasterwork as at the nearby No. 7 Sadler Street. There are also examples of decorative rainwater goods as at 46 High Street. Other examples of decoration can be found at 58 High Street (plaster frieze and gable), and 56 High Street (ornamental bargeboards).





Land use, levels of activity and parking

The Conservation Area has quite pronounced land use functions and defined areas. The retail core at the high street and adjoining streets have low levels of residential occupancy above, inhibited due to access which no doubt impacts 24hr usage in this area. The Bishop's Palace and Cathedral grounds occupy a prominent central swathe of the Conservation Area, reserving land use here for religion, public recreation and tourism purposes. On the periphery of these areas residential land use begins to dominate

Activity levels are closely matched to the land use characteristic. Retail areas see most footfall during daytime opening hours as does the Bishop's Palace and Cathedral grounds. Residential areas can fluctuate, depending on the age of the resident, some quiet during the day when residents are working. Peak time around the Conservation Area is at rush hours (morning and afternoon) lunch time and end of the school day.

The historic structure of the Conservation Area means some roads are one-way and parking restrictions are in place. There are 4 car parks in Wells on Princess Road, South Street, High Street (rear) and Union Street. There is also some blue badge provision.



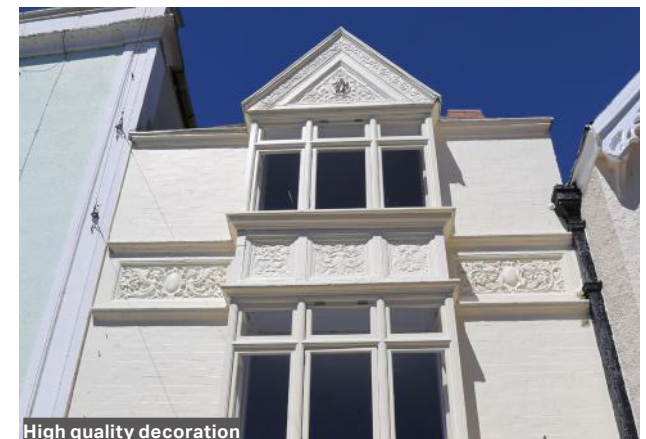
Positive aspects of character

As noted in the Wells Conservation Area Appraisal the character area is rich in historic buildings, the vast majority being either listed or assessed as positive. The proportion of Grade I and II* listed buildings is very much higher than the nationwide average. A large number of the most significant buildings within the character area are connected to the Cathedral and many are set amongst open spaces and the 'setting' contributes to their significance. Views of the Cathedral itself can be had from many parts of the city. Outside the Cathedral's precincts, streets within the historic core of the city are lined with listed buildings with substantial detached houses on The Liberty, New Street and the east end of Chamberlain Street; commercial properties on Sadler Street, shops with accommodation over on High Street and Broad Street and smaller houses on the west end of Chamberlain Street and other subsidiary streets. A largely intact and continuous Conservation Area set around the extensive grounds of the Cathedral and Bishops Palace, and fringed by views across a Registered Park and Garden to countryside beyond, is one of the settlements most unique attributes, which is a City fringed immediately by countryside, offering the best of both worlds.

Open spaces largely on the east side of the area, and of generous proportions, are a key contributor to character, providing a means of reaching Cathedral Green through one of three gateways. This 'hidden' nature of parts of the character area extends to the Vicars' Close and to the walled and moated Bishop's Palace.

Positive aspects of character include:

- The concentration of nationally significant buildings connected with the Cathedral;
- The large proportion of open spaces, mostly surrounded by historic buildings and the setting which this creates;
- The mix of ecclesiastical, polite and vernacular architecture;
- The contiguous nature of the historic buildings along High Street, Sadler Street and Broad Street;
- The material usage and diversity that provides clear vernacular style;
- The connection to spring water, the historical links and the embodiment of place, seen in elements such as the water channels in the High Street.
- The burgage plots to the north of Chamberlain Street; and
- The large, detached properties on The Liberty and New Street.



Issues to be addressed by the Design Guide

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management;

- Ensure car parking does not inhibit access or reduce quality of the Conservation Area;
- Continue with the pedestrianisation of Market Place to affirm this as the commercial centre and to provide improved access for all abilities;
- Achieving a measure of pedestrian priority in the High Street;
- Invest in improvements to bicycle infrastructure network and links;
- Incorporate more and improve the existing city's green infrastructure networks;
- Encourage the renovation and use of residential units above shops in the centre;
- Aspire to ensure quality shop fronts which are fitting of the host building they occupy;
- Maintain material specification quality for repair, replacement and modern developments;
- Boundary treatments specification should accord with Conservation Area character and timber fencing should not be used at street visible boundaries; and
- Avoid oversimplification of architectural detail and maintain usage of locally distinctive materials.





Character Area 2 (CA2)- Wells Residential East

Historic settlement morphology

At the end of the 19th century the character area was undeveloped being mainly agricultural land (Beryl Farm, Knaphill Farm, St Thomas's Farm) and parkland (Stoberry Park). Apart from the farmhouses there was a scattering of large country houses (Stoberry Park, Beryl House, Woodbury), the Britannia Inn on the south side of Bath Road and the Mortuary Chapel of the Mendip Hospital Cemetery to the south. The only residential developments of any note were the terraces of houses on the south side of Bath Road to the south and east of the junction with Hawker's Lane.

The early 20th century saw some piecemeal development such as the terrace at 78-94 Bath Road. The inter-war years saw Everett Close built off Hawker's Lane and Welch Avenue (now Churchill Avenue) and Bedford Road built off Bath Road and developed with semi-detached houses. Welch Avenue also had detached bungalows and a string of detached bungalows and larger houses was built nearby on the north side of Bath Road. By 1960 further streets, Churchill Road, Hervey Road, Sealey Crescent and Churchill Road East had been added and developed, largely with semi-detached and terraced houses. Further houses were built on both sides of Hawker's Lane. The 1960s saw the creation of a number of streets to the south of Bath Road (Hooper Avenue, Bekynton Avenue, Woodbury Avenue and Manning Close). These streets

were developed with a mixture of semi-detached houses and detached bungalows. Manning Close was given detached bungalows with no boundaries between them giving the area a strikingly modern feel. The final piece of development to the south of Bath Road was the extension of Woodbury Avenue and the creation of Woodbury Close and Tor Wood View. The 1970s and 80s saw the creation of streets to the west of Hawker's Lane (Drake Road, Kidder Bank, Colles Road) and their development with detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows.



Cityscape structure

The expansion of the settlement and subsequent development of areas to the east, represented the start of larger scale developments in this character area. Aesthetically the move away from terraces to semi-detached and detached typologies and spatial changes which altered how development was planned and arranged meant these new development areas changed the settlement's character. Land was developed away from primary access routes and new secondary and tertiary development road networks were built to house new development. This represented a change in the city's structure, away from the character seen in the Conservation Area. Swathes of residential development also without the diversity provided by commerce and combined with cul-de-sacs, further contributed to a quieter less active character area.

The availability of land and the influence of the car are also reflected in changes to the settlements character. Generous plot sizes with buildings set back from the road, mean access routes are more generously sized, which provides a feeling settlement expansion and opportunities for longer views, such as those eastward from 94 Bath Road. Buildings set further back from access roads allowed for the frequent incorporation of garden frontages, and commonly driveways for vehicles and garages.

This character area also contains part of the Mendip Hills AONB, which includes the Stoberry House estate and land at the rear of properties on Drake Road. Development meets with the AONB boundary.



A generous scale to the street

Heritage assets

The character area contains three Grade II listed buildings:

- Turnpike Cottage (NHLE 1382879) on the A39 Bristol Hill;
- Milepost - approximately 160 Metres East of Churchill Road Corner (NHLE 1382872) on the B3139 Bath Road; and
- Tor Cottage (NHLE 1383181) on the B3139 Constitution Hill.

The character area also includes a large proportion of the Bishop's Palace and Wells Registered Park and Garden to the south of the walled area.

The character area includes a number of buildings proposed by the Wells Civic Society for inclusion on a Local List including:

- Woodbury House (27 Bath Road) and its boundary wall;
- 18-30 Bath Road;
- 10 Bath Road;
- 32 – 43 Bath Road;
- 36, 38 and 40 Bath Road; and
- 42, 44 and 46 Bath Road.

There are a number of other characterful buildings on Bath Road including the Britannia Inn and the terrace at the eastern extent of the area and on north Road.

Mention should be made of Manning Close, a development of 1960s bungalows that have retained their original boundary-free front gardens. Outside the built up area, Beryl House at the north end of Hawker's Lane is a substantial, double fronted stone-built house in the gothic style which stands in a considerable area of grounds.



Full length pitched projections create rhythm, 18-30 Bath Road



Stone faced, rubble rendered gable, 10 Bath Road



Unusual building alignment

Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

The character area has a high proportion of open spaces, to the north of the Neighbourhood Plan Area there is a section of the Mendip Hills AONB which includes part of the Stoberry House estate and adjacent land, and to the south; playing fields, woodland, farmland and a large stretch of the Grade II* listed Bishop's Palace, Wells Registered Park and Garden.

Within the built-up part of the character area there are some open spaces enclosed by post-war development south of Kidder Bank and east of Beryl Lane. The Mendip Hospital Cemetery is enclosed on three sides by post-war development. Woodbury at the apex of Hawker's Lane and Bath Road retains its substantial grounds while Woodbury Avenue, Manning Close and other post-war developments have an open aspect having been designed without front garden boundaries. Everett Close has broad grass verges between the street and the front gardens of the houses and Seeley Crescent is built around a central green.

The availability of land in these areas and the type of later residential development means the streetscape is more generous in scale, often with pavements together with some inclusions of grass verges. Many of the post war developments include well established green infrastructure, and with occasional views back towards the Cathedral or St. James' Church, especially in areas to the south of St Thomas Street there is a strong sense of place.



Grass verges, Everett Close



Views from Manning Close towards St Thomas Church

Pattern and layout of buildings

The spine of the character area is formed by Bath Road (B3139) which runs through the centre of the character area from west to east. In the north the A39 and south Constitution Hill (B3139) provides connectivity to other settlements. All other development is serviced by secondary and tertiary access roads. Whilst many of the secondary access roads loop and connect to provide settlement permeability, a number of tertiary roads are planned in cul-de-sacs. A good example of linking tertiary access is Kings Road in the south of the character area.

While there are some 19th century terraces within the character area on Bath Road the building density has decreased in this character area. Building stock is mainly comprised of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows. The majority are built facing the street with the occasional example built with its gable end facing the street. Most building stock includes garden frontages and driveways. The nalli map on the following page illustrates the character area's pattern and building layout.

Views and landmarks

There are views of Wells Cathedral from a number of locations within the character area including from Constitution Hill, Torhill Lane, Woodbury Avenue and Bath Road. The spire of St Thomas' Church is also visible from a number of locations within the character area and is especially prominent in the view south on Kippax Avenue.

The decrease in building density and the resultant increase in space provides opportunities for contextual views beyond the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary. Little Entry in the north of the character area just off North Road, begins in a residential but soon begins to meander through the Stoberry House estate with open views into the Mendip Hills AONB. Equally to the south views of open countryside are possible to a landscape crossed by the East Mendip Way.



Stoberry Estate views

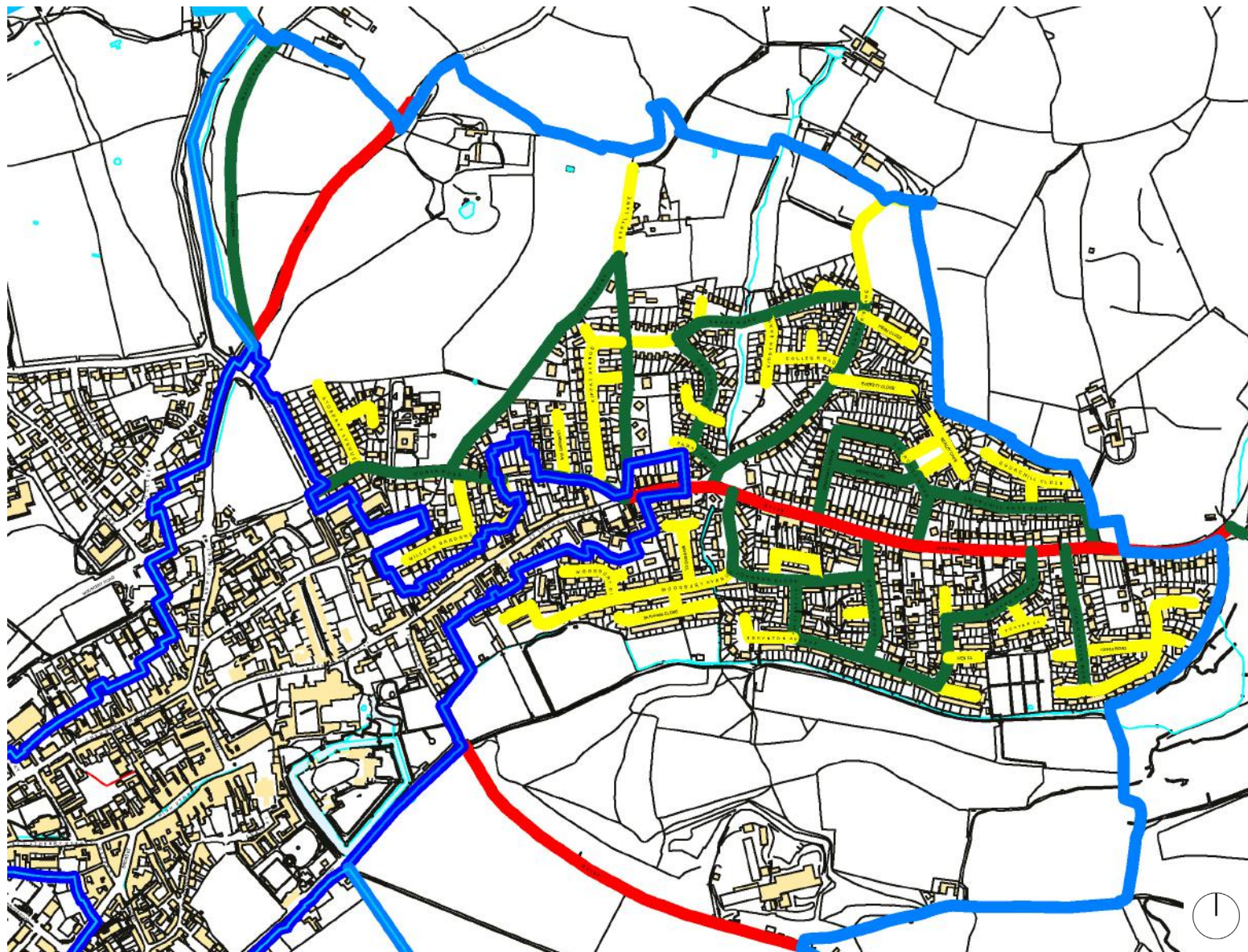


Constitution Hill and glimpsed countryside views

The following Nolli map figure illustrates the clustering and spatial arrangement of properties within the character area.



Figure 9: (CA2) - Wells Residential East



Secondary access forms the majority here, with some good examples of looped secondary roads. Tertiary access is increasingly common, some looped examples are demonstrated, however many dead-end cul-de-sacs are located here which impede access.

- Key**
- Wells Conservation Area
 - Residential West
 - Residential East
 - Primary Road
 - Secondary Road
 - Tertiary Road

Figure 10: Road hierarchy and structure - (CA2) - Wells Residential East

Diagram only - not to scale

Building line and boundary treatment

The majority of buildings within the character area are set back from the street behind front gardens protected by boundary walls. Houses and bungalows on Woodbury Avenue, Woodbury Close, Manning Close, Barkham Close, Drake Road and Kippax Avenue were designed without front garden boundaries and while some have been applied, generally the gardens remain open. Where boundaries do exist, they tend to be stone wall construction within areas close to the Conservation Area such as North Road, whilst post war development demonstrate open frontages, inter-property hedge boundaries or boundaries constructed of brick or timber fencing. The evolution of materials is evident within this character area.

The character area contains some terraces with garden frontages and examples of buildings aligned perpendicular to the access road. At times pavements are integrated on only one side of the road and some areas include grass verges. A development at College Road comprises of detached dwellings overlooking a secondary road with grass verges on either side and views towards Wells Cathedral School pitches.

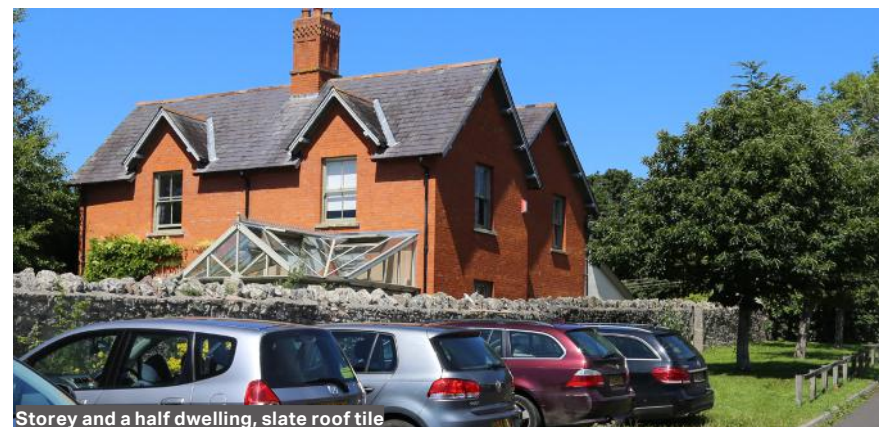


Building heights and roofline

The character area has a mix of single storey bungalows, some incorporating an attic storey necessitating a higher roofline, two storey houses and some storey and a half dwellings. Roofs are generally pitched, at times hipped and pitched dormers are frequently incorporated. Some areas such as Kippax Avenue incorporate flat roofed dormers which are out for character for the settlement.

Garages when incorporated display type variations of both flat roofs and pitched, the latter aligning more favourably with the historical settlement's character and provide improved weather performance, pitched roofs are normally guttered which offers opportunities for water collection and reuse. Gable upstands are a common detail in older building stock and chimneys also.

Red pantiles and later tile variation of a complimentary aesthetic are displayed. Albeit often in post war development profiled concrete tiles of varying colour, brown – red have been specified.



Architecture

The only polite architecture in the character area is seen at Woodbury, a substantial 19th century house at the apex of Bath Road and Hawker's Lane. Older properties within the character area on Bath Road are stone built. Nos. 10, 12-16, and 32-40 are vernacular houses of some age and have tiled roofs. Later examples such as the terrace at 18-30 are more substantial and have roofs finished in slate. This terrace is notable for the three bays projections that step forward from the main house and have tall gables and dormers. Use of stone returned to the character area at The Mews (2012) where stone was used to complement the existing Victoria Mews immediately to the west. Most of the late 19th and 20th century development in the character area are brick constructions, Kippax Avenue demonstrates the use of stone slips on masonry cavity construction and at Paray Drive an incongruent brick tone is used. Some properties are rendered and painted and some examples are clad partially with uPVC.

The majority are workmanlike designs but there are some exceptions such as; 53 Bath Road which nods to Arts and Crafts, 21 Drake Road - an interesting modernist house with strip windows and a green tiled roof and The Mews which is a well detailed development which has succeeded in merging the areas vernacular with a distinctly modern edge, albeit flat roof dormers disappoint. There are some attractive examples of inter-war bungalows and houses on Bath Road and the bungalows on Manning Close including generous roof overhangs and plot sizes.



Gable wall projection, rendered facade with uPVC cladding



Buff brick colouration



The Mews, stone faced with roof upstands

Land use, levels of activity and parking

Land use lacks the diversity seen elsewhere within the settlement, leaving mainly residential land use areas free from commercial and retail activity. A regular vehicle flow is supplied by the B3139 Bath Road which can be susceptible to traffic congestion, however secondary and tertiary estate roads remain generally quiet. Activity levels align with this residential characteristic, fluctuating around rush hours and school times.

Adequate parking provision within developments is provided by a combination of on-street and private driveways, evidence of settlement evolution and the integration of vehicular transport. On-street parking along primary access roads can be a contributing factor to traffic congestion.



On-street parking, St Thomas Street. Traffic cone hints at possible collisions



Private communal parking area, permeable surface, The Mews



Petrol station and bus stop

Positive aspects of character

- The character area has a largely suburban feel but the presence of Woodbury and the other 19th century houses along Bath Road give an idea of what the area was like before the 20th century eastward expansion of the city. These buildings of some character and form an attractive entry to the city from the east;
- North Road area contains some buildings of architectural merit and there are pockets of new development which have set a good standard;
- While much of the inter-war and post-war development to the north and south of Bath Road is of little architectural merit there are some good examples and the front gardens, often without boundaries, give a sense of space;
- Despite the use of cul-de-sacs in the planning of this character area, there is a good proportion of roads which loop and provide continued access;
- The character area now almost fully developed with few areas available for development, means the character area's green infrastructure is well established which is a contributing factor in the area's leafy feel, helping to merge the settlement with its context; and
- The character area affords good views of the spire of St Thomas' church and, further to the west, the Cathedral.



Issues to be addressed by the Design Guide

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management;

- Ensure the backs of development that currently or may potentially face public areas are well designed and project a positive appearance;
- Ensure settlement edge development merges with the contextual landscape character;
- Aspire to improve existing green infrastructure networks through a landscape lead approach which grows and connects green infrastructure networks across the settlement and to the surrounding context;
- Invest in improvements to bicycle infrastructure network and links;
- Raise the architectural standards of development, which represent Wells' vernacular appearance; and
- Maintain material specification quality for repair, replacement and modern developments. Ensure material specification such as brick match the colouration of the settlement.



This page has been left blank intentionally

Character Area 3 (CA3)-

Wells Residential West

Historic settlement morphology

At the end of the 19th century development to the west of the city was restricted to the immediate area adjacent to the railway lines. This was mainly restricted to station buildings and goods depots but there were houses on both sides of Portway either side of the line. The Wells Union Workhouse had been built on the north side of Glastonbury Road in 1845 and extended in 1871. The city's gas works was located between Southover and the line to Shepton Mallet. By the turn of the 19th century houses had started to appear on the north side of Portway and on the west side of the road north of Tucker Street. In 1900 the Blue School added a girl's school on Portway on land formerly belonging to Portway Farm. Brick and stone terraces were built on Burcott Road either side of the Hospital for Infectious Diseases. Houses had started to be built along Glastonbury Road and the long red brick terraces on Rowdens Road and Alfred Street had been built.

By 1931 a small development had been built at Mount Pleasant to the north of Wookey Hole Lane (now Wookey Hole Road). Kennion Road, Mary Road and Somerville Road consisted were developed with semi-detached houses in brick and render. Piecemeal development also took place along Ash Lane and a new street, Mountery Road was laid out between New Street and Milton Road. To the south-west of the city the Wiltshire United Dairies Diploma Cheese Factory had recently been built on the south side of Glastonbury Road and an Engineering Works at Lower Mills together with terraces of houses on nearby West Street. The main residential development in the area in the 1930s was of semi-detached houses on the south

side of Burcott Road and Barley Close to the south with a mix of terraces and large semi-detached houses.

The post-war period saw streets of mainly detached and semi-detached houses laid out in a quadrangle bounded by Portway to the north, the railway line to the east, Burcott Road to the south and the cemetery to the west. To the north of the city Ash Grove was laid out to the south of Ash Lane. Industrial development continued with a large animal food stuff factory on former railway land west of West Street and the Tincknells building north of Glastonbury Road. The first buildings of the new Blue School were built to the east of Kennion Road in the 1950s with a further group to the east of them in the 1960s.

In the 1960s the Mount Pleasant development was joined by a network of residential streets to the south of Wookey Hole Road and north of the disused railway line. These included Mount Pleasant Avenue, Goodymoor Avenue and Welsford Avenue which were developed with semi-detached houses and detached and semi-detached bungalows. Further development occurred on three streets to the north of Ash Lane. In the 1970s and 80s a large area to the south of Burcott Road was developed, mainly with semi-detached houses. More recently development has taken place to the south of that development, to the south of Glastonbury Road, on former allotments and sports grounds to the west of Strawberry Way, on former industrial land to the east of Strawberry Way and to the north of the A371 East Somerset Way.



Cityscape structure

Greater land availability and fewer contextual restraints such as the Mendip Hills AONB, means this character area has been developed steadily and incorporates more modern development examples than seen in the east. The existence of water in this part of the settlement contributes greatly to the structure, placement and aesthetic of some developments, adding great richness and sense of place where integrated.

Morphology comprises of primary access roads A39 and A371, mainly with older building typologies formed along and road facing. Few modern developments face primary access, except development edge examples such as St Andrews Mews on Strawberry Way. Recent cityscape is structured around secondary and tertiary access roads, with a higher density and common use of cul-de-sacs. Despite the use of cul-de-sacs, there are many precedent examples with good pedestrian permeability provision.



Pedestrian bridge, Old Mill Way

Heritage assets

The character area contains seven Grade II listed buildings and one Grade II Registered Park and Garden. These comprise:

- The Lower Lodge (NHLE 1383055) on Old Bristol Way;
- Milton Lodge and The Combe RPG (NHLE 1001277);
- Former Railway Goods Shed (NHLE 1383204) on Strawberry Way;
- Fire Hydrant (NHLE 1272461) south of Ethel Street;
- The Regal Cinema (NHLE 1383073) on Priory Road;
- The Gatehouse with Front Boundary Walling (NHLE 1382945) on Glastonbury Road; and
- Wells Infirmary Main Block (also known as Priory Hospital) (NHLE 1382946) on Glastonbury Road.



Former railway goods shed

The character area includes a number of buildings proposed by the Wells Civic Society for inclusion on a Local List including:

- 1 Glastonbury Road and its boundary wall;
- 3-5 Glastonbury Road;
- 7-13 Glastonbury Road;
- 19-21 Glastonbury Road;
- 23-25 Glastonbury Road;
- 27 and 29 Glastonbury Road;
- Market Street 10-19 Boundary Wall;
- 34 Portway;
- 36 -38 Portway and boundary wall;
- 40-42 Portway;
- 44-46 Portway; and
- 71 Portway.



40-42 Portway

Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

The eastern part of the character area lacks green space, most of the land being given over to car parking. To the south of Silver Street and south of the industrial part of East Somerset Way large areas remain in agricultural use. Further west is the ground of Wells City FC and to the north of Glastonbury Road the playing fields of St Cuthbert's C of E Junior School and further north still Bignal Rand Park. Some of the open space either side of the former railway remains in the shape of allotments to the west of Strawberry Way and as woodland to the north off Strawberry Way on what was once a cutting. The houses on the south side of Portway have very long gardens and to the west of them is the large expanse of Wells Cemetery. Further north is the ground of Wells RFC while to the north of Mountery Road and quite close to the centre of city are the extensive playing fields of the Blue School. At the northern extent of the character area, north of Ash Lane the land remains agricultural with woodland. Some post-war developments such as Coronation Road and Reakes Close are built around central greens.

Development within this character area however demonstrates the evolution of the concept and importance of integrated green space as part of development. Green transit areas incorporating pedestrian and bicycle access are a welcome common site, again these landscape elements are at their best when waterscapes are incorporated also.

Part of a dedicated bicycle network is also located within this character zone which links to a wider national network via National Cycle Network route 3.



Development and water management should be integrated to benefit both assets

Pattern and layout of buildings

North of Portway (A371) diverging from Charter Way a series of cul-de-sacs have been articulated in a way as to create more internal space with parking areas and frontages included. Building layout is non-linear, designed as courts with properties that wrap around the road access. Building typologies here are also varied, comprising of single and two storey properties.

Earlier interwar 20th Century housing is uniformly arranged with runs of development containing little variation. Master-planning evolution is illustrated in developments north of Glastonbury Road accessed via Jocelyn Drive, south of Glastonbury Road at Vicarage Fields and at Thompson Road. Here new housing developments incorporate more layout, typology and materiality diversity, and corners are articulated better, however densities are higher, and streets can lack urban greening elements. Indeed few later developments include front gardens of anything more than a frontage strip. There is however a distinct connection between properties here and the streetscene.

Views and landmarks

There are views into the centre of the city and the Cathedral from a number of locations within the character area including Portway, Sheldon Drive, Glastonbury Road, the Blue School, Milton Lane, Ash Grove and Wookey Hole Road. The character area is largely suburban and lacks landmarks, but the Gothic main block of Wells Infirmary dominates the north-east end of Glastonbury Road. There are views of Glastonbury Tor from locations on the western edge of the character area.



Development arrangement, Vicarage Fields

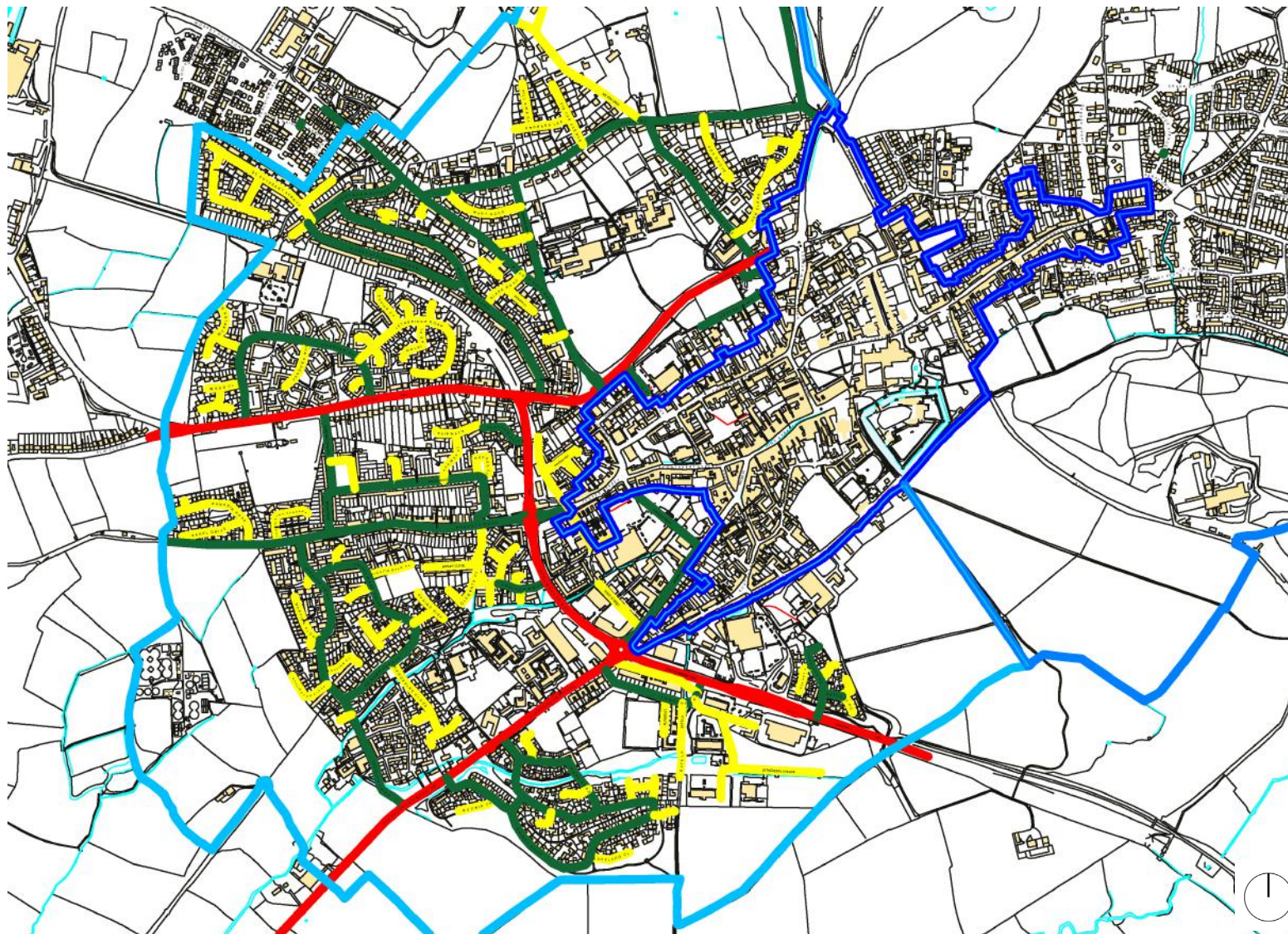


Uniformity, Burcott Road

The following Nolli map figure illustrates the clustering of properties within the character area.



Figure 11: (CA3) - Wells Residential West



There is an even mix in this character area, however the area is planned on a framework which contains an increasing number of dead-end cul-de-sacs.

- Key**
- Wells Conservation Area
 - Residential West
 - Residential East
 - Primary Road
 - Secondary Road
 - Tertiary Road

Figure 12: Road hierarchy and structure - (CA3) - Wells Residential West

Diagram only - not to scale

Building line and boundary treatment

Modern developments share a similar characteristic with older built-form precedent from the Conservation Area, such as the articulation of corners, meandering building line and the general omission of frontages. Whilst early 19th, interwar and post-war 19th century development tends to be more spatially generous and set back from the road, some by considerable distance as in the houses on the south side of Portway and on both sides of Ash Lane. The variety of building typology reflects the diversity of building line seen within the character areas, with some development areas compact with others spatially expansive.

Older properties are separated from the street by dwarf walls constructed of stone or brick in a variety of styles. This practice continued between the wars and into the post-war period with timber pickets and panel fencing also used. Small frontages are bordered on modern developments with materials ranging from brick dwarf walls, stone slip fronted masonry walls, railings and hedge/planted boundaries.



Building heights and roofline

The building typologies represented within the character area range in height, roofline and construction type. Heights vary from grand 3 storey plus dormer inclusion on Portway 66-72, to modern purpose-built accessible bungalow units. Roof types are generally pitched though there is usage of pitched roofs with parapets and pitched dormers are common. Roof pitch is also variable from shallow bungalows to acute roofed larger examples. There are also some examples of full-length gable projections, some crowned by aligned pitched dormers (next page).

The character area contains the vernacular red pantiles, simple low quality concrete tiles and grey slate. Modern developments notably display roof material variation across developments.





Architecture

The large character area covers a number of styles from 19th century terraces in stone and brick on Portway, Balcott Road and Glastonbury Road and brick on Wookey Hole Road to larger 19th century and inter-war detached houses on the same streets. Modernist architecture is represented by the Tincknell's buildings on Glastonbury Road and Wookey Hole Road and by the 1930s Art Deco 71 Portway. The dominant style is suburban brick built semi-detached houses and bungalows.

Many new developments demonstrate similar architectural decorative details to those illustrated on heritage buildings throughout the settlement. Window lintel, sill and sash details integration is demonstrated at Vicarage Fields, and gable upstands are widely specified such as at St Andrew Mews. Building alignment and articulation is also used to add diversity and interest to new estates, which is reflective of old settlement character.



Land use, levels of activity and parking

The character area's primary land use is residential housing, although there is greater diversity in the west than seen in the east. Commercial gateway elements on Glastonbury Road such the Tincknells building is indicative of the area's commercial hub function within proximity of the A39 /A371 intersection. Priory Health Park, Wells Police Station, Wells Tennis Club, Football Club, CRS builders merchants and Lidl are all located here. Within the wider character area residential streets stretch to the north west as far as the Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary at Portway, with some surrounding land capacity to the south and west.

Ample parking provision is provided by private car parks, on-street parking and private driveways.



Positive aspects of character

- The character area comprises of some older buildings of historical and architectural merit, including areas on Ash Lane, Portway and Glastonbury Road;
- The character area has greater function and land use diversity than the east which adds richness and activity to the settlement;
- The presence of water on this side of the settlement in the form of streams, provides additional character when used and incorporated as part of development. These areas also form part of the biodiversity network for the settlement;
- There are a few good examples of new development precedent which demonstrate quality place making, an integration of the landscape and local architectural character;
- Despite the use of cul-de-sacs in the masterplanning of this character area, there is a good proportion of roads which loop and provide continued access; and
- Pedestrian and bicycle access in areas such as Bishopslea Close provide good access precedent for future development.



Building heritage, Glastonbury Road



Nature based engineering water management strategy

Issues to be addressed by the Design Guide

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management;

- Improvements to the abrupt settlement edge at Glastonbury Road to help merge with the contextual landscape character;
- Examples of overly fussy pastiche architectural detailing on some new development buildings. Too much variation of typology and materiality can create a lack of development synergy;
- Advocate for new development which is representative of Wells' architectural character;
- Aspire to improve existing green infrastructure networks through a landscape lead approach to grow and connect green infrastructure networks across the settlement and to the surrounding context; and
- Maintain material specification quality for repair, replacement and modern developments.



This page has been left blank intentionally



Design Guide 04

4. Design Guide

4.1. Introduction

This section is divided into three parts. The first outlines how development should respond to context, and provides a basic approach to analysis and design approach, second is a set of key elements to consider when assessing a design proposal. These are presented as general questions which should be addressed by developers and their design teams who should provide clarification and explanation as necessary. The final part is the Design Guide, setting out the expectations of the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area.

4.2. Understanding and responding to the context

All development proposals should start with a site analysis. Development never happens in isolation; there is always a context to respond to. This includes what is within the site itself and what surrounds the site.

A basic approach to a site analysis will include the following steps:

- Desk-based studies of topography, surrounding land uses, connections, designations, policies and more;
- Site visit to observe and assess the characteristics of the site. This can review things like existing buildings, vegetation, wet areas, potential wildlife activity and boundary conditions;
- Explore around the site, looking at, for example, access, connections, views, local facilities that people will want to use and local character – heights, massing, materials, uses; and
- Make sure all of this is recorded so that anybody reviewing a development proposal can understand what makes the site and its surroundings unique and the basis for the design decisions taken.

An important function of the site analysis is to distil what defines the special character of the site and the neighbourhood or area it forms part of.

The site analysis should form the basis of a carefully considered design response. Those assessing designs will need to understand how the designer has:

- Shaped the proposals based on the site's natural features, topography, landscape and views, and the surrounding built environment. For example, how has a particular view been framed and how and why does the density and massing of development differ across the site?;
- Connected the proposed development to existing routes (streets, footpaths, cycle paths) and facilities (shops, schools, employment, public transport); and
- Crafted a bespoke vision and set of development principles for the scheme, particularly for larger developments.

Larger schemes – which can be defined as those that require new streets to be constructed – will be expected to be guided by a masterplan. This should show the key structural elements of the design, including access, open space, development blocks and character areas.

4.3. General design considerations

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

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

- Harmonise with and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form, movement pattern and land use;
- Relate well to local heritage, topography, landscape features, countryside setting and long-distance views;
- Reinforce or enhance the established high-quality character of streets and other spaces;
- Integrate with existing access; public rights of way (PRoW), streets, circulation networks and use;
- Provide adequate open space and green infrastructure for new development in terms of both quantity and quality, to reflect settlement needs;
- Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness, avoiding pastiche replication;
- Retain and incorporate important existing landscape and built-form features into the development which add richness;
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials, architectural details and construction details;
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space relate well to each other; to provide safe, connected, attractive and cohesive environments;
- In city centre areas, ensure provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene or the amenities of neighbours;
- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to existing networks;
- Energy generating technologies should be integrated within development at the start of the design process.
- Retrofitting existing properties including Conservation Area properties should be done sensitively;
- Development of areas susceptible to flooding should include construction details and protection elements within the design of the building to increase resilience; and
- Nature based water management solutions should be integrated into all new and existing developments.

4.3.1. Key points to consider when assessing planning applications

The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment overview as to whether the design proposal has considered the context and provided an adequate design proposal. Following these fundamental principles, there are number of questions related to the Design Guide which should be used to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of development proposals.

Cityscape structure

- What are the essential characteristics of the existing development area and street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- Does the proposal respect, incorporate and enhance local landscape features including topographic features and hydrology?
- What are the important landscape or historic features within and surrounding the site? Have these features, including existing trees been considered in the proposal?
- If located in a Conservation Area, do proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area?
- How does the proposal relate to its setting? Are there any important links both physical and visual (view

cones) that currently exists on and adjacent to the site?

- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Does it favour accessibility, permeability and connectivity over cul-de-sac layouts? If not, why not?
- Are new points of access appropriate in terms of visibility, patterns of movement and road speed?
- Do the new points of access and street layout pay regard to all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

Pattern and layout of buildings

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

Building heights and roofline

- Does the proposed development height compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens?
- Has careful attention been paid to height, form, massing and scale of new buildings? Is it appropriate to reflect the proximate scale of development?
- If a proposal is an extension, is it subordinate to the existing property?

Building line and boundary treatment

- Does the proposal respect the existing building line and harmonise with the adjacent properties?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

Green spaces and street scape

- Do new proposals respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Providing continuous green infrastructure linkages is important for biodiversity. Does the proposal enhance existing green corridors and biodiversity habitat networks, linking to areas adjacent to the site?
- In rural and edge of settlement locations does the development negatively impact visual character or interrupt existing tranquillity within the area, and has this been fully considered and sufficient mitigation included?

- Has the impact on landscape quality been considered?
- Does the proposal positively contribute to the quality of the public realm and street scape?
- Is there adequate public/ private/ communal amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space and have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, consider the usage of new owners and existing residents, including how will it be managed?
- Have aspects of active and passive security been fully considered and integrated with development?
- Is active travel promoted across the site, and does this connect to existing networks?

Views and landmarks

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

Architectural details and materials

- Has the local geology and architectural character been reflected in the contemporary or traditional design of new proposals?
- Does new development demonstrate strong design rationale, quality material specification and good detailing appropriate?
- Do the proposed materials harmonise with the local vernacular? Are the details and materials of sufficient high quality?
- Can local materials be specified?
- Have window, door, eaves and roof details been refined and considered in the context of the overall design?
- Has a fabric first approach to energy efficiency been integrated as a primary design driver? Are there opportunities to improve the thermal performance of the building fabric and future proof development?

Parking and utilities

- Has adequate provision been made for car and cycle parking both private and public?
- Do the proposed private car and cycle parking locations complement the existing provision or introduce new approaches? If new, do these new approaches enhance the character of the street?

- For appropriate housing typologies, are there opportunities to accommodate mobility vehicle storage areas when required?
- Is there scope for the integration of well-placed electric car charging points?
- Does new development include fast internet speeds and working from home space?
- Has adequate provision been made for bin storage, including communal areas when appropriate with facilities for waste separation and recycling?
- Is the location of bin storage facilities appropriate in relation to the travel distance from the collection vehicle?
- Has the design of bin storage facilities been fully considered; including the quality of materials and location within the development?
- Does the installation of utilities include appropriate access for maintenance/ servicing?
- Is the use of renewable energy and energy saving/ efficient technologies encouraged and maximised? Are these technologies well integrated?
- Does the lighting strategy reflect the strategy of the settlement for both private and public lighting applications? Development should be designed to conserve and enhance the quality of dark night sky.

4.4. Design Guide

The following Design Guide is applicable to all character areas and should be applied as a starting point to all new development, regardless of where it is in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. These guidelines advocate for landscape and character-led design which responds to the natural environment, and enhances the existing cityscape. Reference to context does not mean to copy or replicate in a pastiche manner, it means taking inspiration and influence from surrounding precedent and forming a design rationale which harmonises with the surroundings and local vernacular.

Cityscape structure

- Development should respond to the immediate cityscape context of the built environment reinforcing building lines, frontages and distance from the road;
- Development should usually adopt the enclosure and density characteristics demonstrated in the nearby context. New development should strive to knit with the existing cityscape by adopting similar characteristics or evolving the design;
- New development should be planned to provide direct connections and route options to existing PRowS and access roads.
- Development should be considered strategically at settlement level, developments should not be considered in isolation;
- Edges of urban developments should be carefully considered. New development should engage with existing edges and building elevations should project an attractive and positive frontage. Edge of settlement development should gradually transition to the surrounding landscape context;

- In Neighbourhood Plan Areas away from the Conservation Area, regular breaks in built-form should be provided to increase visual permeability, opportunities for habitat corridors, contextual views, and pedestrian/bicycle access connections;
- Attractive pedestrian and cycling routes, including connections to public transport, must be planned in from the outset to promote sustainable transport option; and
- The density assumption of 30-40 dwellings per hectare in the Mendip Local Plan should be used as a starting point - some sites in the town could work well with higher levels.

Code: Structure

New development should be planned at contextually appropriate density's and built form should be used to compliment and contribute to surrounding spaces.



Residential streets

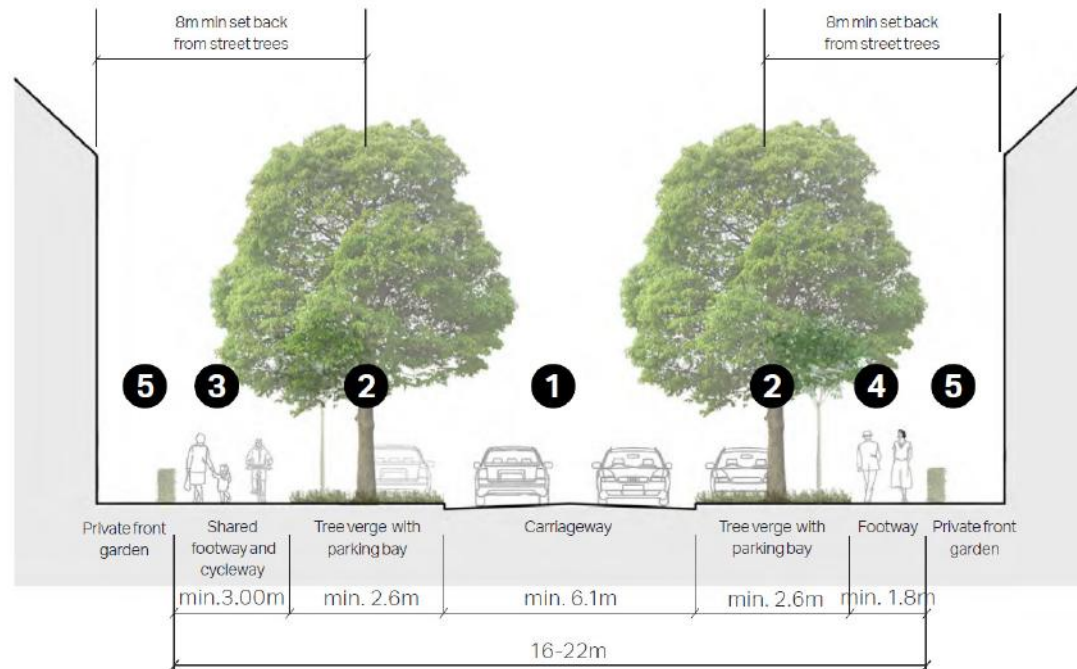
- It is essential new developments include streets and junctions that incorporate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and, if applicable, public transport users ahead of motor vehicles;
- Streets should incorporate planting elements and green infrastructure (GI). Sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) should be incorporated in the form of attenuation ponds, rain gardens, swales and development should incorporate permeable surfaces. Street parking bays provide huge potential to integrate with SuDS strategies;
- Version 1 West of England Sustainable Drainage Developer Guide <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34524/West+of+England+sustainable+drainage+developer+guide+section+1/864fe0d2-45bf-4240-95e2-a9d1962a0df9>
- Car free opportunities should be explored, with parking areas and pedestrian access separated;
- Cars should not dominate development;
- Pedestrian and bicycle users should have a high priority within residential areas. Development masterplans should aim to make non-vehicular usage appealing;
- Adequate off-street parking is not always achievable and so the provision of on-street parking bays is desirable to avoid the access of pedestrians and other vehicles being impeded. Streets must meet the technical highways requirements, however they should be considered as a 'safe place' to be used by all;
- Traffic calming features such as raised tables, limiting sightlines, shared surfaces and gateway elements can be used to reduce traffic speeds. Residential streets must be designed for low traffic volumes and low speed, 20mph zones are desirable for residential areas;
- Where appropriate areas of shared surfacing should be integrated into development, these are areas where the carriageway and footway are constructed in a single surface type to encourage driver caution and emphasise shared priorities. Blocks of up to 10 dwellings work best with shared surfaces; and
- Sections on the following pages have been provided to give indicative dimensions for residential street types:

Code: Residential streets

Streets should be designed to meet the complex needs of development users, by weaving: access, green infrastructure, drainage, safety and other multifunctional opportunities together.

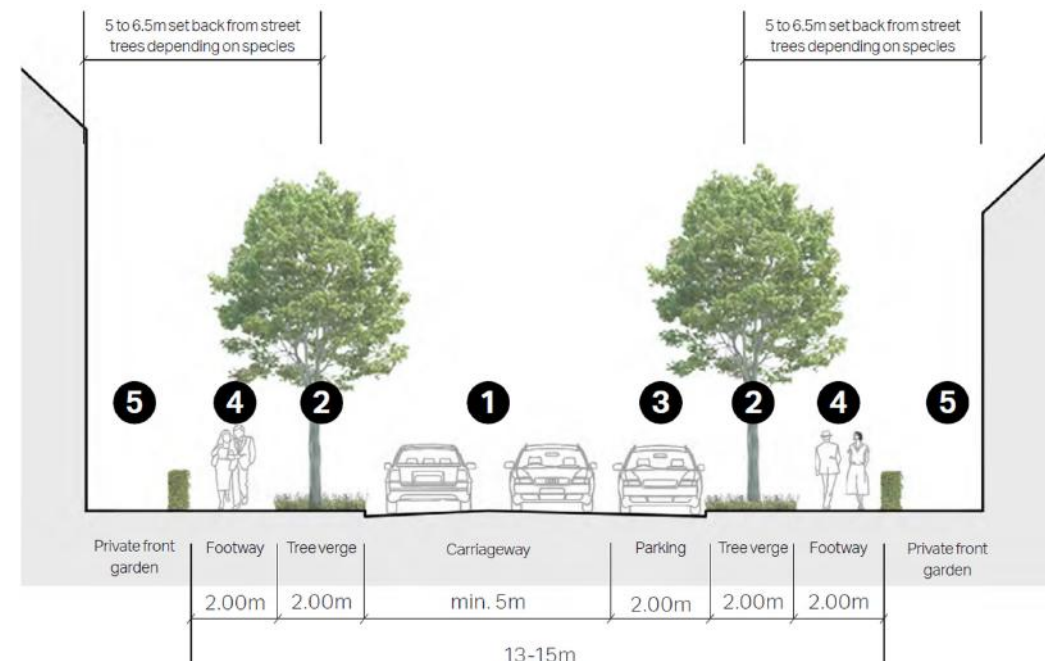


Integrated pedestrian and bicycle routes, Old Mill Way



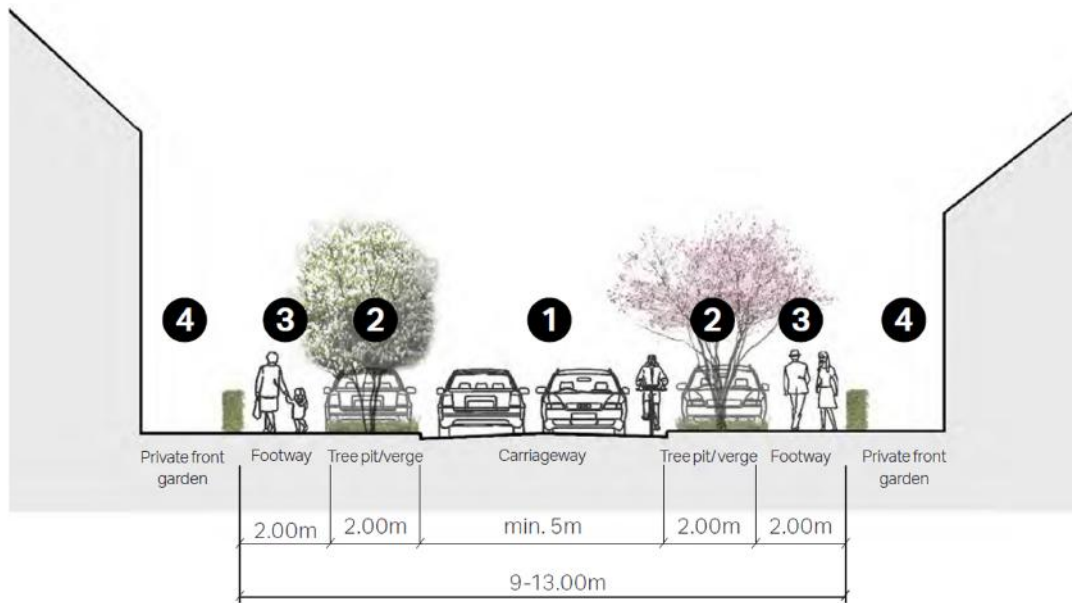
Section showing indicative dimensions for primary roads

- 1. Carriageway (settlement-wide traffic);
- 2. Green verge with tall trees to accord with the emerging green infrastructure strategy. Parking bays to be inset into the verges for SUDs opportunities and to avoid impeding moving traffic, cyclists or pedestrians;
- 3. Shared footway and cycleway can provide an opportunity for cyclist to be segregated from vehicle traffic;
- 4. Footway; and
- 5. Residential frontage incorporating boundary and front gardens when in-keeping.



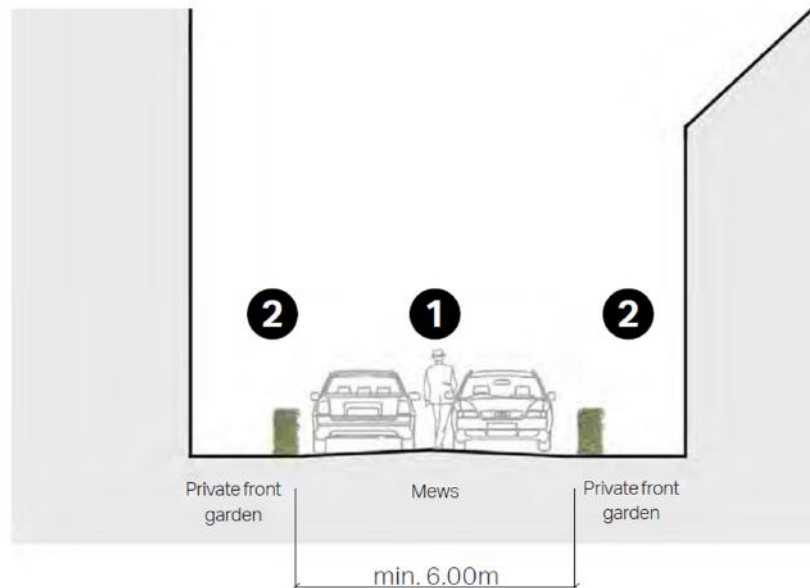
Section showing indicative dimensions for secondary roads

- 1. Shared carriageway (neighbourhood traffic). Traffic calming measures may be introduced at key locations;
- 2. Green verge with medium trees. accord with the emerging green infrastructure strategy.
- 3. Parking bay (may also be inset into verges) for SUDs opportunities and to avoid impeding moving traffic, cyclists or pedestrians;
- 4. Footway; and
- 5. Residential frontage incorporating boundary and front gardens when in-keeping.



Section showing indicative dimensions for tertiary roads

- 1. Carriageway should accommodate both vehicles and cyclists (local access). Traffic calming measures may be introduced at key locations.
- 2. Tree verge or pit with small trees. Parking bays on both sides of the carriageway to alternate for SUDs opportunities and to avoid impeding moving traffic, cyclists or pedestrians;
- 3. Footway; and
- 4. Residential frontage incorporating boundary and front gardens when in-keeping.



Section showing indicative dimensions for mews and courts

- 1. Mews and courts (local vehicle access, cyclists, and pedestrians), with shared surfaces;
- 2. Residential frontage incorporating boundary and front gardens when in-keeping.

Green spaces and public realm

- Development within the Neighbourhood Plan Area should accord with the emerging Wells Green Infrastructure Strategy to encourage businesses, communities and individuals to work together to increase environmental health and prosperity;
- There may be Somerset Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP) requirements for greenfield site developments. For criteria information visit: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/habitat-evaluation-procedure/>
- The retention of existing landscape green infrastructure of value should be incorporated into development masterplans and the felling and removal of trees should be avoided. Where tree removal is unavoidable a replacement strategy should be developed through consultation with the local planning authority.
- Tree and plant species specification should be appropriate for the microclimate and application including management requirements and seasonal colour variation. All green infrastructure species selection should be specified with climate resilience in mind. Further information can be found at https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/19424/2018-302-September-Trees-Appendix-Tree-Management-Policy/pdf/2018_302_September_-_Trees_-_Appendix_Tree_Management_Policy.pdf?m=636923930328100000
- The settlement's links with water management should be maintained and new development should incorporate nature based engineering solutions for continuity of historic lineage;
- All new build should have some form of wildlife enhancement for example: swift boxes or bat tubes/boxes;
- Development should take a strategic, integrated approach to managing water that makes best use of Green Infrastructure led SuDS, permeable surfaces and identifies opportunities for water reuse;
- All developments outside the Conservation Area should incorporate green spaces and dwellings should front onto areas of public open space to improve natural surveillance;
- Front gardens, where this is characteristic of the development area, should incorporate planting;
- Dwelling layout should be designed to limit adjacent plots overlooking rear gardens. Rear gardens should be considered as ecological corridor extensions and designed to connect with surrounding green infrastructure; and
- The public realm material palette should be simple, robust and designed to tolerate usage and weather conditions. The material palette should respect the existing character of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. High-quality materials not only enhance user experience but define the sense of place.

Code: Space between buildings

The setting and open space throughout Wells contribute to the settlement's enjoyment and liveability, and should be used as a reminder to flag the importance of green and blue infrastructure and open space as an essential element of placemaking strategies.



Wildlife enhancement bat box



Incorporating green space and landmark views into new development



Incorporating naturalistic water management



Masterplans which incorporate a combination of public and private green spaces contribute to strong green infrastructure networks.

- Opportunities to incorporate green corridors; a type of open space that provides opportunities for walking, cycling, leisure purposes, and facilitates biodiversity and sustainability should be encouraged.
- Green corridors can be achieved in various ways such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) corridors, pedestrian and cyclist only green corridors or streets with trees and SuDS.



Vicarage Fields on Glastonbury Road presents a unique street scene with development facing the Keyward Brook and integrated SuDS within the scheme used as biodiversity corridors that are already attracting wildlife.



Wildlife on the Keward Brook

On Completion



ings within
and after
iver Sheppey near



r approximately
te factory site.
own stream of the
ad, Badger and



AECOM



Continuous line of trees along the southern side of the brook to provide bats with a commuting route and provide shade for fish.

Dense shrub planting along the southern bank to act as the main wildlife corridor, especially for Otter.

Native bankside planting beneficial to a range of wildlife.

Rock and coir rolls to provide refuge habitat (including for Bullhead) and marginal vegetation.

Otter - *Lutra lutra*



Otters can travel over large areas. Some are known to use 20 kilometres or more of river habitat. Otters deposit faeces (known as spraints, with a characteristic sweet musky odour) in prominent places around their ranges. These serve to mark an Otter's range, defending its territory but also helping neighbours keep in social contact with one another.

They are a largely solitary, secretive, semi-aquatic species and can be prone to disturbance from dogs and people. The design of the brook includes dense bankside planting under which Otters can commute, fencing to minimise disturbance and mammal passes to allow passage through the downstream bridge.

Please help the Otter by Keeping Your Dogs Under Control

Bullhead - *Cottus gobio*



Kingfisher - *Alcedo atthis*



Greater Horseshoe Bat - *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*



Find out more/get involved

Somerset Bat Group: www.somersetbatgroup.co.uk
Somerset Wildlife Trust: www.somersetwildlifetrust.co.uk
Mammal Society: www.mammalsociety.co.uk

Street tree guide

Green infrastructure plays an important role within urban environments, by providing habitat for biodiversity and by performing a range of ecosystem services integral to human life.

Green infrastructure can reduce airborne contaminants and promote cleaner air, it can absorb and lock away harmful CO₂ and plays an important role in reducing surface water runoff and the risk of flooding as part of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

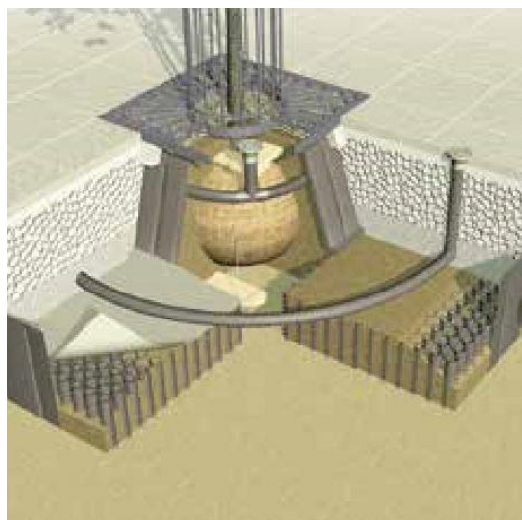
Urban streets can be a hostile place for trees to live and perform at their best. It is therefore crucial the right systems are specified when planting trees within urban environments. The following tree planting themes have been provided to draw attention to tree system considerations for use within all new development and public realm areas.

1. Tree selection - right tree: right place - specified in accordance with BS 8545;
2. Root Volume Availability;
3. Root Management;
4. Irrigation, Drainage and Aeration;
5. Support; and
6. Protection.

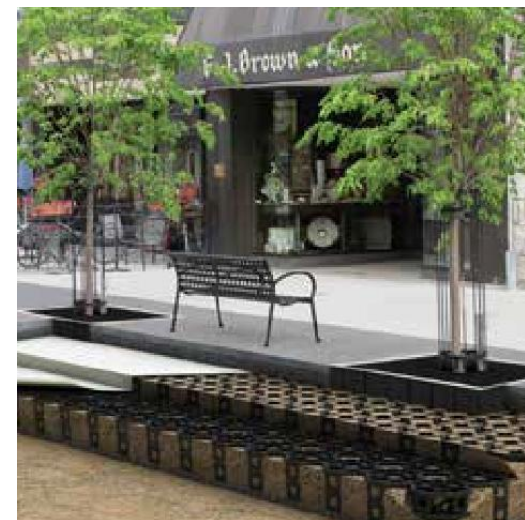
For more information see:

http://www.tdag.org.uk/uploads/4/2/8/0/4280686/tdag_treespeciesguidev1.3.pdf

<https://www.greenblue.com/gb/>

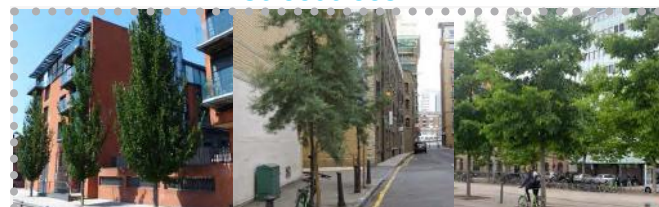


Tree pit design and the correct installation is integral to healthy street trees and the mitigation of conflict with users of streets (Greenblue,2020).



Modules help retain soil structure and prevent compaction which is essential for trees in built up environments. (Greenblue,2020).

Street trees



Hippophaë salicifolia

Sea Buckthorn

Sorbus intermedia

Swedish whitebeam

Alnus x spaethii

Spaeth alder

Ulmus columnella

Ulmus – resistant cultivars

Populus tremula

European aspen

Waste, recycling and Utilities

- Waste storage should be integrated as part of the overall design, with landscaping and planting used to minimise the visual impact of bins and recycling containers;
- Secure communal bin storage areas should be used in appropriate locations to prevent the need for on-street storage;
- Quality recycling facilities should be provided to promote recycling schemes;
- Adequate provision should be made for dog waste bins within new developments when located close to PRow and other recreational areas popular with dog walkers;
- Renewable energy strategies including electric car charging points should be promoted for all new developments, but should not impede pedestrians; and
- Simple water catchment facilities such as water butts should be integrated within scheme design.



Off-street recycling / bin storage areas

Vehicle Parking

At the time of writing, the demand for private cars remains high and these have to be carefully integrated into neighbourhoods. A good mix of parking typologies should be deployed, depending on, and influenced by location, topography and market demand.

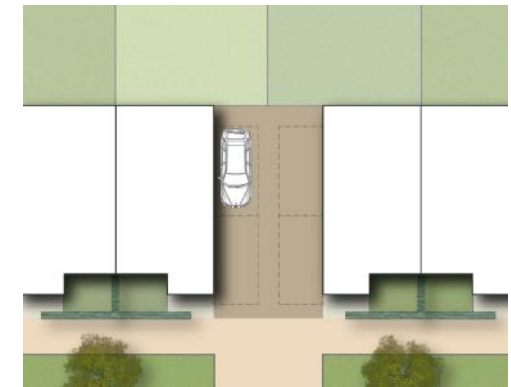
These can include:

- Off-plot communal parking areas;
- On-plot side parking;
- On-plot front parking;
- Options with integrated garages; and
- Safely defined on-street parking.

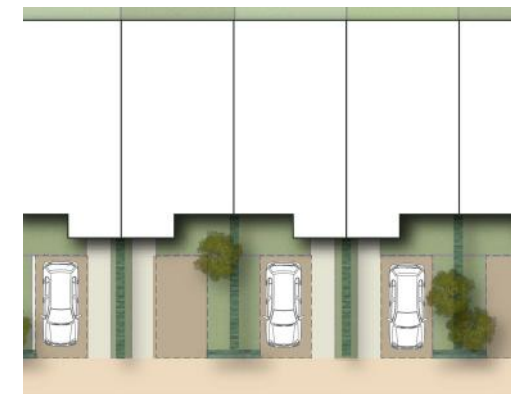
For family homes, cars should be placed at the front or side of the property. For small pockets of housing a front or rear open court with good passive surveillance is acceptable.

Other considerations:

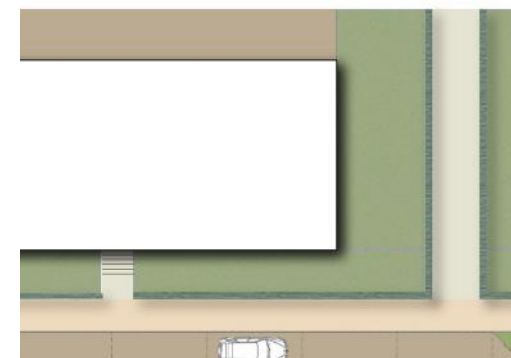
- Parking should not be included at the expense of landscape elements and green infrastructure. Car parking design should be combined with landscape elements which minimises the presence of vehicles and provide opportunities for environmental and water management functions;
- Permeable surfaces must be specified for all residential parking areas;
- On-street parking bays should be combined with linking tree pits as part of urban SuDs strategies;
- Opportunities for the installation of electric car charge points should be explored and integrated where required. Careful design should ensure pedestrian access is not impeded when charge points are in use; and
- Developers converting buildings into multi occupancy units should be cognisant of the increased parking pressures, and provision should be made for resident's parking.



Layout provides gaps for contextual views



Front driveway and garage at ground floor



Limited on-street parking bays can provide additional development visitor parking and SuDs opportunities

Pattern and layout of buildings

- New residential development should minimise the use of cul-de-sacs. Secondary and tertiary access should connect through to the existing settlement structure or loop back if not practicable;
- Access hierarchy should be used to plan sites, with routes for pedestrian and cyclists intrinsic to scheme success;
- New greenfield development should be carefully sited to minimise negative impacts on the surrounding landscape context;
- New developments must demonstrate an understanding of the scale, building orientation, enclosure, and façade rhythm of the surrounding built environment to respect its character;
- Layout, clustering and massing should take precedent from the best examples of development within the surrounding context;
- Building height, boundary design and road width should be designed at ratios which reflect the proposed development and existing settlement character;
- Buildings on both sides of the street should work together to create synergy, visual interests and a strong sense of place;
- Examples of building layout whereby façades are located directly on the road with no frontage, as seen

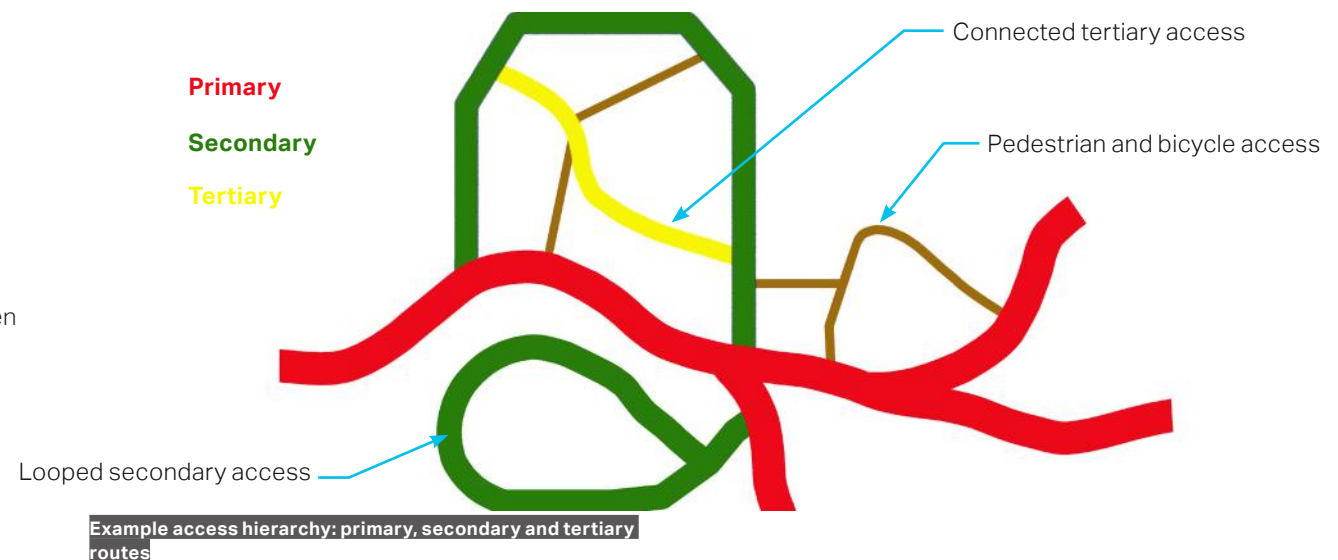
in the Conservation Area, act to provide a feeling of development 'contraction' and can be used to slow traffic speed. The opposite design strategy can also be achieved by including frontages, to provide a feeling of 'expansion' which is effective to integrate important contextual views as seen in areas along Bath Road;

- In areas prone to flooding, layouts, construction details and nature-based engineering principles should be incorporated to mitigate risks;
- City centre areas should reflect higher densities whilst in wider suburban areas development densities must ensure gaps and views to the surrounding countryside and local landmarks;
- In areas where streets have a largely uniform housing type; proposals should be sympathetic to the established uniformity with subtle variations or full-length pitched projections, used to create rhythm and street synergy; and

- New development should respond to site specific microclimates and sun paths and use these as key design drivers to increase the environmental comfort for building users, both internally and externally. Correct building orientation can contribute to passively heating or cooling buildings, and effectively energy usage.

Code: Spatial arrangement

Development layouts should represent the contextual character of the site area, whilst favouring walkable, well-connected streets.



Views and landmarks

- Familiar and recognisable environments makes it easier for people to find their way around, the Cathedral tower is an obvious example for Wells. However other contextual features can be used to aid navigation and create a sense of place; such as knoll landforms or areas of woodland in edge of settlement development, or more centrally; a distinctive house, public art, or even a sizeable tree;
- Existing views of landscape or heritage significance should be maintained and incorporated into new development;
- Design should also be cognisant of developmental views, i.e how the development sits within it's context. Demonstrable design evolution should aim to integrate the development within its surroundings, including any mitigation requirements such as trees and landscaping to embed the development within its surroundings and provide privacy for its residents;
- In suburban areas, lower densities should include breaks for visual connections beyond development to the surrounding context to be maintained, to preserve the settlement's sense of place;
- Passive views can provide natural surveillance and security for development. Designers should use this concept, particularly towards streets, pedestrian access, play and parking areas; and
- Proposed development can enhance key views, by incorporating elements such as avenues of trees which can frame or add focus to views.



Building line and boundary treatments

- In general buildings should be aligned facing the street, however it is part of the settlement's character to include some buildings perpendicular to the street;
- Building placement in relation to the street varies throughout the settlement, new development should reflect proximate contextual character and include variation where possible when in-keeping;
- A strong visual relationship between new development and the existing street scene must be maintained and encouraged;
- Building typologies and building line variation can enhance settlement character and is a common characteristic seen throughout Wells;
- Gateway buildings should be designed to articulate corners and present a positive façade in multiple directions;
- Boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity and building line to help define the street. Locally distinctive stone should be used where possible to reinforce settlement character;
- Front and rear elevations and boundary treatments should be appropriately designed. Properties which back onto streets reduce streetscene quality and therefore masterplans should avoid this where practicable;
- In the Conservation Area and high-density areas, bin storage is an important consideration and bins should not be stored permanently on pavements. Opportunities should be explored to integrate high quality bin storage areas and screening;
- There is precedent for development street naming to promote locally significant history and people;
- Panel fencing should not be used on primary elevations. High boundary treatments which interrupt/impair views into the street or natural surveillance should be avoided. New development should contribute to settlement and not be separated from it; and
- Front gardens or small areas provided by the relief of buildings set back from the road, should be included where this is characteristic of the area; and car parking should not be included at the expense of boundaries and garden frontages.

Code: Building line

Building line and offset should accord with existing contextual precedent and respond to site driven opportunities. Some streets have strong urban street lines with uniform offsets, whilst others have greater offset variation and informal building lines used to help transition between development and the wider countryside context.



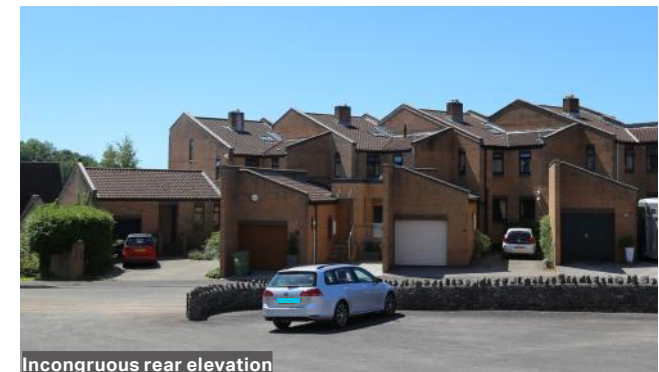
Celebrating local figures



Building placement, no frontage



Well articulated corner



Incongruous rear elevation

Building heights and roofline

- Development building heights should accord with settlement character and be appropriate for the context;
- Roof type, pitch and materiality should reflect settlement character, with the use of pantiles, slate tiles, or standing seam metal roofs to provide contrast. Low quality concrete tiles should be avoided;
- The scale of the roof should always be in proportion to the dimensions of the building itself;
- Subtle variation of roof height is characteristic of the settlement, gable upstands are a common feature, which derive from the first building regulations; The London Building Acts were introduced after the Great Fire of London (6 Sept 1666). This specified that party walls must be extended above roof level to reduce the chance of fire spreading from roof to roof, as this was one of the main ways that fire spread during the Great Fire, this architectural detail became popular and was used throughout the UK;
- Chimney type and height should be congruent with the typical chimney of surrounding best precedent examples; and
- Extensions should generally use the roofing style and materiality of the main building but be stepped down to articulate the extension clearly. In some cases however extensions to heritage assets should clearly define between new and old, and a new roofing style and materiality may be appropriate.

Figure 17: illustrates the building heights within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Code: Height and roofline

Building height and rooflines should be highly considered, both reflecting surrounding character and cognisant of the existing setting - both impacts and opportunities. Designers should develop proposals which provide protection, synergy, articulation and street interest.



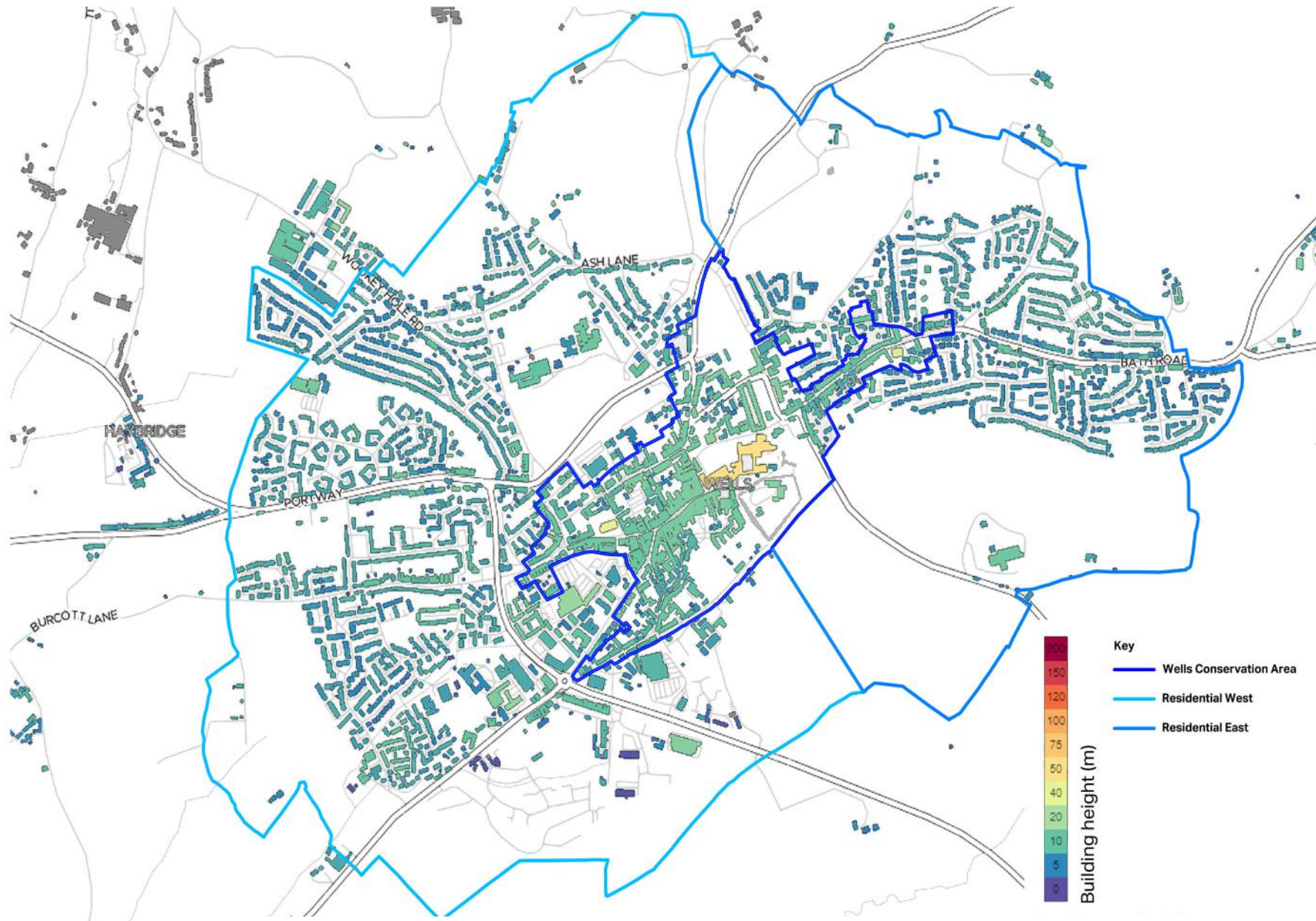


Figure 13: Wells building heights in metres

Diagram only - not to scale

Most buildings in Wells range from 6-10m in height. The Conservation Area contains few single storey buildings, but this typology is widely used in other areas and is changing the character of the settlement. A concentration of tall buildings in the centre consisting of the Cathedral, surrounding buildings and other churches reach up to 49m.

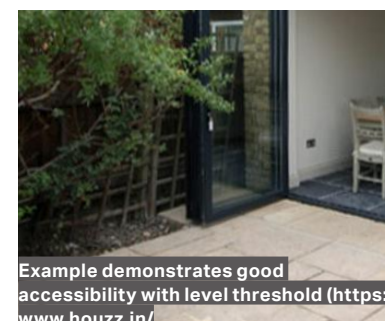
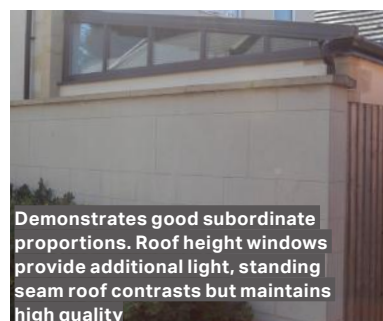
Overall, the scale and massing of buildings in Wells respects the surrounding open landscape character. Taller buildings and higher densities are contained within the city centre, and generally no higher than two storeys buildings in suburban areas.

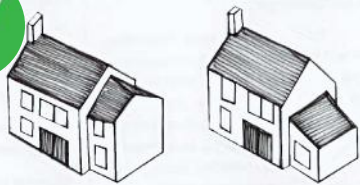
Building modifications and extensions

- The original building should remain the dominant element of the property regardless of the number of extensions. Extensions should always be subordinate to the existing building and therefore should not exceed the footprint of the original building envelope.
- The architectural style of an extension should accord with the host building, using the same or complimentary design language, materiality and fenestration rhythm. Often best practice for extensions to listed buildings of heritage significance is to define old from new. For more information see: <https://www.spab.org.uk/advice/alterations-and-extensions-listed-buildings>
- Infill plot development should take precedent from the surrounding architectural context for detailing and proportions. Design evolution should be encouraged, however there should be clear visible lineage. Proposed development design and layout should respect the existing street scene and character of the settlement;
- Flat roofs should be avoided for extensions and garages;
- Modifications to existing buildings should preserve or where possible, enhance the existing architectural style. Poor contextual precedent should not set the standard;
- The replacement of heritage features, such as timber windows and doors should be done so in the same material type. Where appropriate and when modern materials such as uPVC and other non-traditional building materials are specified, the style and proportions of the removed heritage element should be replicated;
- Renewable technologies should be encouraged and integrated within the design of new development. When retro fitting renewable technologies, particularly to heritage buildings, great care should be taken to integrate well, and to protect the existing character of the building. Solar panels and roof mounted services should be located discretely, preferably not on the street facing elevations; and
- Outside of Conservation Areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, many householder extensions or modifications are covered by permitted development rights, for more information see: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/7819/Is-Permission-Required->

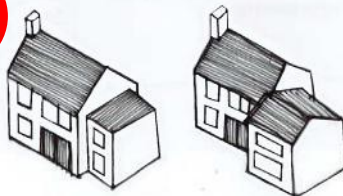
Code: Modifications

Modifications should be used as an opportunity to enhance the existing building; therefore extensions and modifications should increase the functionality, performance and desirability of the property.

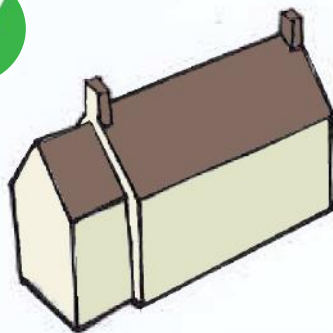




Good example for side extensions, respecting existing building scale, massing and building line.



Both extensions present a negative approach when considering how it fits to the existing building. Major issues regarding roofline and building line.



The extension has an appropriate scale and massing in relation to the existing building. Ancillary structures should be subordinate to the main dwelling.

Design treatment in case of loft conversion:



Loft conversion incorporating skylights.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.

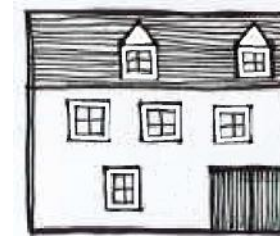
- Minimum 0.5m recess from edge of gable to dormer.
- Maximum height of dormer not to exceed existing ridge.
- Avoid side windows that could harm neighbours privacy.
- No extension to project forward of original roof footprint.



Original roofline of an existing building.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers which are out of scale and do not consider existing window rhythm nor frequency.

This indicative masterplan brings together many of the spatial elements of the Wells Design Guide:



Architectural details

- Wells has a rich vernacular material palette with local stone, brick and pantiles used across the Neighbourhood Plan Area. This material usage combined with architectural detailing is what contributes to the character of the settlement and the area's local distinctiveness. It is therefore important a continuation of these traditions is part of the design language for all future proposed developments.
- High quality material specification, which is locally sourced where possible, and architectural details which evoke the area's local distinctiveness should be a starting point for all new development. However architectural detailing should accord with the status of the proposed building, and therefore overly intricate detailing should not be used for standard development buildings.
- Innovation should not be stifled, but there should be clear design lineage and evolution displayed; and
- Inspiration should be drawn from historic examples within Wells including modest vernacular dwellings.

The following should not be read as a prescriptive list for inclusion within new development, but as a list of elements which help to underpin the special architectural character and quality of built form within the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area:

- Pantiles;
- Slate roofs;
- Local stone façades;
- Stone boundary walls;
- Gable upstands;
- Pitched dormers;
- Brick or stone chimneys; and
- Stepped access.

Code: Details

Careful design development and an appreciation of the development's architectural and environmental setting, including microclimates and user comfort should be used to inform design and detailing.





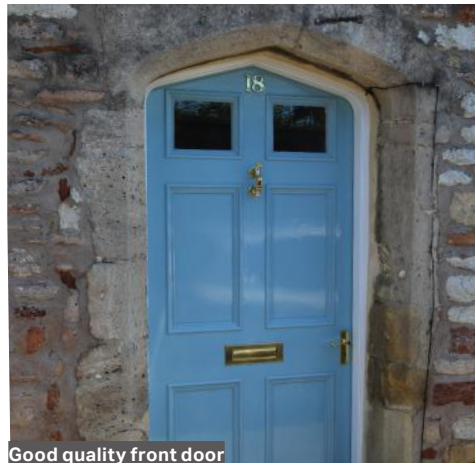
Stone gable, brick facade



Roof type variation



Red pantiles



Good quality front door



Gable upstands



Full length bay projections



Rhythm created by roof pitch elements



Brick chimney with detail



Central pitched dormers



Standing seam metal roof



Recessed stepped access



Pitched bay windows

Materials

Local materials and traditions are what define settlements and their unique story. Wells's vernacular is a legacy of the local geology and landscape and the way historically people have adapted to life here. Modern development must continue these traditions whilst innovating and moving forward. Material specification must be made with longevity in mind and resilience to the climatic conditions of the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area. Local stone and other historic building elements should be retained and reused wherever possible.

Materials for alterations and extensions within the Conservation Areas should be of high quality and retain, or if possible, enhance the character and appearance of the host building or the surrounding area. Often high-quality contrasting elements work best in extension scenarios.

This section includes some examples of building and paving materials that contribute to the local vernacular within Wells, which could be used to inform future development. This list is not exhaustive, and each design proposal should develop a material rationale and explain how it fits within the context of the area. The following material considerations could be applied to new development:

- Local stone walls;
- Well matched brick walls and façade;
- York stone paving;
- Granite kerbs;
- Conservation kerbs;

The Wells Conservation Area Appraisal states the following:

'This part of Somerset provides a number of building stones of varying quality. The Mendip Hills are largely carboniferous limestone which is usually used in rubble form, although at Wells Cathedral it was also carved. Another local rock is a type of Dolomite Conglomerate, a dull pink rock with grey pebbles of carboniferous limestone, easier to work than the limestone and much used where it occurs. Pennant sandstone, mixed in with coal deposits, comes from along the Avon valley and can be seen in Wells where it is used for paving. Blue or white lias stone also can be found in thin bands and intermingled with pebbles – this stone is also seen in Wells. The finest quality of building stone is Doultling limestone, quarried to the east of Shepton Mallet, which was used extensively at Wells Cathedral. The local rubble stone, quarried from Tor Hill, is also used extensively for many of the more modest properties and for boundaries – it is often covered in lime render or has been painted but if left natural is a reddish-brown colour.'

Code: Materials

Materials should be used as a method of connecting development to place, both aesthetically and economically via sustainable development ambitions. Development should therefore grasp opportunities to embed local materials and craftsmanship within all new scheme proposals.



Stone wall with contrasting hedge



Sets with conservation kerbs



Sets used to mark threshold



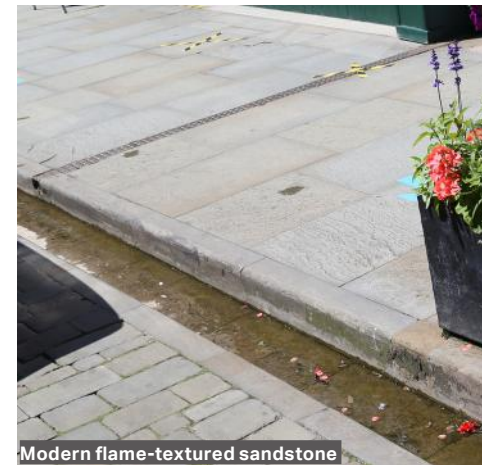
Channels evocative of the High Street



Ironmongery



York stone paving



Modern flame-textured sandstone

Sustainability

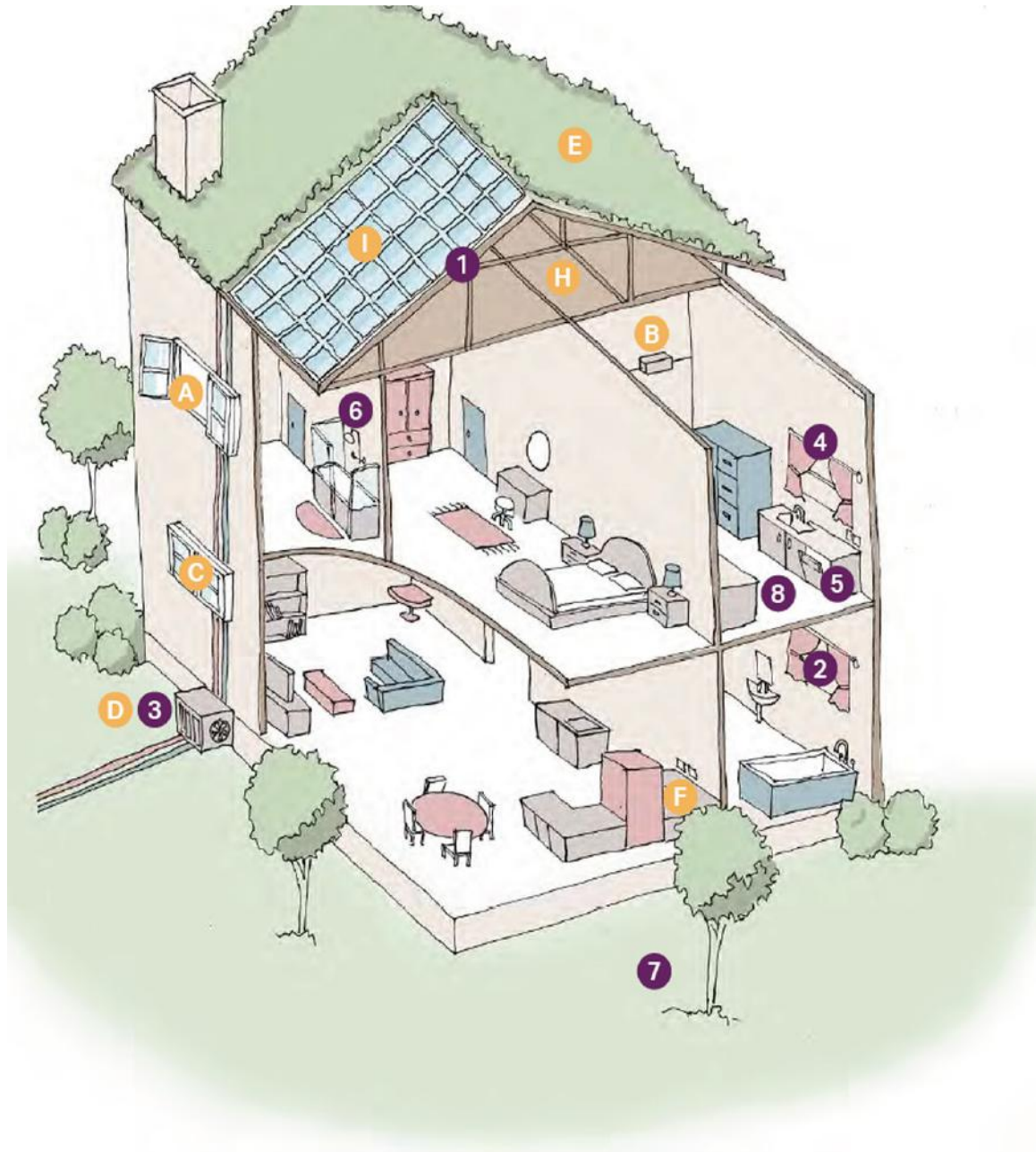
- Mendip Local Plan notes that *"Buildings completed in the next 20 years may stand until 2126 – they must be adaptable, efficient and well built to meet the challenges of a low carbon future and the potential effects of climate change: new development needs to be built using more sustainable construction methods and higher standards adhered to, whilst opportunities to retrofit energy efficiency measures to existing buildings needs to be encouraged"*.
- Illustrated on the following page are some simple design ideas to help improve the sustainability of existing or new homes (adapted from the Commission on Climate Change).

Code: Modifications

Development should be tasked with achieving higher environmental performance, above and beyond building regulations – helping to achieve embodied and operational carbon reductions and improved sustainable material use and waste management processes*.

* Emissions from the construction industry reached the highest ever level in 2019, according to a new report published by the United Nations Environment Programme. Construction industry accounts for 38% of CO2 emissions: <https://environmentjournal.online/articles/emissions-from->





EXISTING HOMES

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

NEW BUILD HOMES

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

Design elements and details

The following images illustrate some good examples of Neighbourhood Plan Area building details and material choices that both evoke the character of the area, and set an achievable precedent for developer adoption:

Details for consideration:

- Modern pantiles roof covering;
- Facing stone gable with quoins;
- Gable and dividing upstands;
- Stone boundary;
- High quality paving and surfacing hierarchy defines public and private space; and
- Development communal parking area, free housing frontages of car clutter.

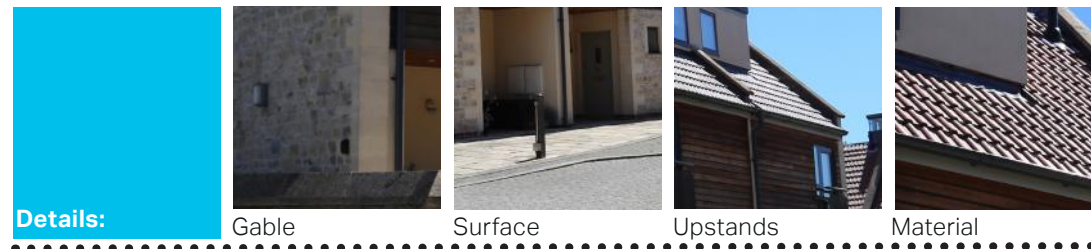


Pantiles roofing material

Enhanced weather protection and private space definition

Quality facing stone gable with quoins

Paving and surfacing hierarchy helps define spaces



Details:

Gable

Surface

Upstands

Material

Details for consideration:

- Storey and a half typology;
- Full length pitched projection;
- Slate roof with pitched dormers;
- Low maintenance frontage with permeable surfaces and trees (*Prunus serrula*); and
- Stone wall boundary with integrated lighting.

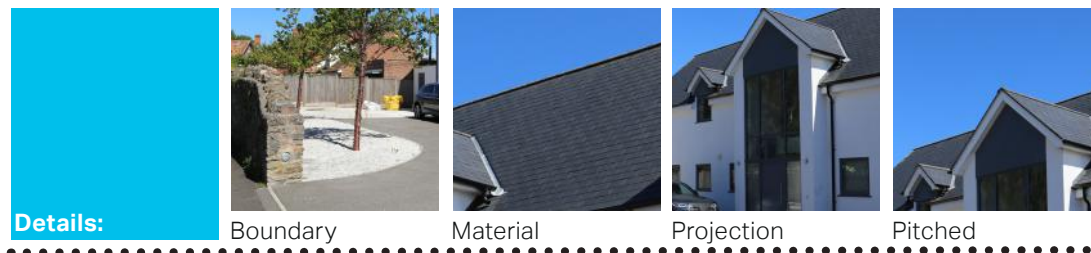


Pitched dormers, grey slate roof

Full length projection can be used to capture more daylight and create street rhythm

Stone boundary with modern lighting

Surface hierarchy. Low maintenance with permeable areas and ornamental trees



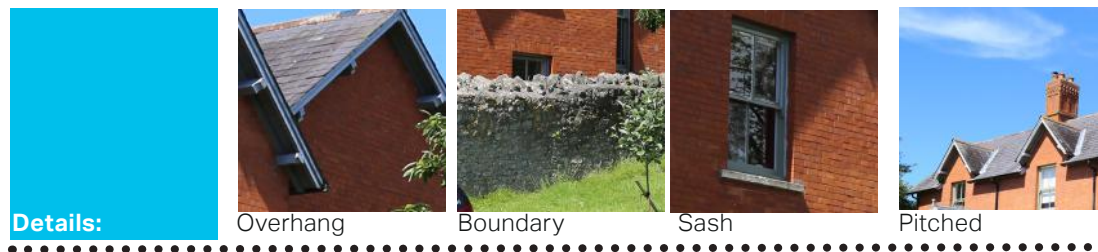
Details for consideration:

- Full length bay projection;
- Brick construction;
- Brick chimney;
- Stone lintel, sills and quoins;
- Brick boundary walls; and
- Pantiles roof covering.



Details for consideration:

- Slate roof covering;
- Staggered gable;
- High quality brick chimney;
- Storey and a half typology;
- Generous roofing overhangs;
- Sash windows;
- Brick construction, Flemish bond; and
- Contrasting stone boundary





5. Deliverability

5.1. Delivery Agents

The Design Guide will be a valuable tool for securing context-driven, high quality development in the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Area. It will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table below:

Actor	How they will use the Design Guide
Applicants, developers and landowners	As a guide to the community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
	Where planning applications require a Design and Access Statement, the Statement should explain how the Design Guide has been followed.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications.
	The Design Guide should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
City Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guide is followed.
Community organisations	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

5.2. Deliverability

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

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

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

This page has been left blank intentionally

6. References

Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission, (2020) Living with Beauty [Online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861832/Living_with_beauty_BBBBC_report.pdf [Accessed on: 28 Aug 2020].

BREEAM, (2020) Resource [Online] Available at: <https://www.breeam.com> [Accessed on: 28 Aug 2020].

Open Domesday, (2020) Resource [Online] Available at <https://opendomesday.org/place/ST5445/wells/> [Accessed on: 09 Sep 2020].

Barbour, (2020) Resource [Online] Available at: <https://www.barbourproductsearch.info/bauder-discuss-changes-that-impact-rooftop-water-news078211.html> [Accessed on: 28 Jun 2020].

CIRIA, 2007 Improving the Flood Performance of New Buildings Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7730/flood_performance.pdf [Accessed on: 04 Jun 2020].

Department for Transport, (2007) Manual for streets [Online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf [Accessed on: 29 Jan 2020].

Design Council, (2015) Building for Life 12 [Online] Available at: <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition> [Accessed on: 9 Jan 2020].

Google, (2020) Street View [Images] [Online] Available at: <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/>

Historic England, (2020) Conservation Areas [Online] Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/> [Accessed on: 9 Jan 2020].

Historic England, (2004) Easy Access to Historic buildings [Online] Available at: <http://www.norwichaccessgroup.org.uk/easyaccess2004.pdf> [Accessed on: 20 Jan 2020].

Mendip District Council, (2011) Wells Conservation Area Appraisal [Online] Available at: https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/7628/Wells-Conservation-Area-Appraisal/pdf/Wells_Conservation_Area_Appraisal_inc_Maps.pdf?m=635380137308930000

Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), (2019) Management Plan 2019-2024 [Online] Available at: <https://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FINAL-Mendip-Hills-AONB-Management-Plan-Review-2019-v1.pdf>

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, (2019) National design guide [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide> [Accessed on: 20 Jan 2020].

Natural England, (2014) (NCA) 141 Mendip Hills [Online] Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5370593?category=587130> [Accessed on: 24 Aug 2020].

Natural England, (2014) (NCA) 143 Mid Somerset Hills [Online] Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4718827694718976?category=587130> [Accessed on: 24 Aug 2020].

Wells Cathedral, (2020) Wells Cathedral Timeline [Online] Available at: <https://www.wellscathedral.org.uk/history/wells-cathedral-timeline/>

This page has been left blank intentionally

