

Design Code

Introduction

What is it? A design code is a type of design guidance but detailed and written as a set of instructions or rules. Any new development should adhere to these rules. Housing should be attractive, functional and sustainable. Great design can change the places we live in and the way we live in them. Better buildings and places that takes the health and wellbeing of people into consideration, can bring the community together, facilitate long term behavioural change and transform lifestyles for the better.

Farndon's Background

Farndon grew up around the church (St Chad's) and the High Street and was remarkably compact with a balance of shops and services to meet the local needs of the time. In the 1960's and 70's three new developments were built to provide the accommodation required by an expanding village; Quarry Hill was mainly local authority funded housing; the Townfield Lane area targeted the retiring private sector with a variety of bungalows and Wimpy built mainly four bedroomed houses aimed at family living.

The status quo was maintained by and large for the next 50 years. Small developments such as those at Rectory Close, Maddocks Close, Barnston Court and Swallowfields were built and these attracted new residents. However, these additions were mainly organic growth and did not change the nature of the village

The 2010's dramatically changed the whole village after Farndon's selection by Cheshire West and Chester as a Key Service Centre. New developments were built with Kings Meadow, Fern Hill, Wellington Green and the Elan homes adding over 250 homes to the village, swelling the population by 50% in eight years.

This design code is an attempt to restrain further development of this nature. Any new housing should be specific in its design and style, be small scale and emphasis must be on environmentally sound construction.

What are the principles?

- To ensure that the design of any new development builds on the history and identity of the village through links with the past and enhances the character of the existing village and rural landscape.
- To maintain the sharing of the benefits of the natural environment – river, trees, open sky and views.
- To provide access to safe streets, parks and public spaces.
- To ensure proximity to affordable, good quality shops and public transport.

What are we looking for?

Integration:

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

Does the development have a similar style to that which exists in the area? For instance, traditional materials and detailing including decorated brickwork such as blue brick features and detailing at roof apexes. Other traditional materials include colour washed rendered walls, slate roofs and timber work.

Windows are a very important feature to a building and should include detailing similar to that in traditional houses including, above window arches with brick detailing, half brick set back windows, stepped back flush casement windows with stone or brick sub-cills and not projecting wooden cills

Inclusion of these small repetitive details are what gives the locality an overall sympathetic inclusive appearance whilst allowing for houses of different sizes and styles.

Character:

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?

What do we expect?

New development proposals will be expected to be of a design which:

1. Complements and enhances where appropriate the prevailing size, height, scale and mass, materials, layout density and access of the existing surrounding development.
2. Demonstrates the development reflects the existing character of the locality.
3. Demonstrates that the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers will not be adversely affected through overlooking, loss of light or outlook, over-dominance or disturbance.
4. Provides an appropriate level of landscaping which complements and enhances the character of the local area.
5. Includes local features and materials such as 'Cheshire' railings and sandstone

In addition to the above, in the case of new housing development, garden space commensurate with the size of the dwelling, the prevailing pattern of development in the locality and the likely needs of the prospective occupiers must be provided.

It is important to achieve a balance of allowing new design and innovation to flourish whilst protecting the existing defined character of the surrounding built development and rural landscape.

New development that will involve the loss of or damage to trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute positively to the character and amenity of the area, must demonstrate there is an overriding need for the development proposed and must provide for appropriate replacement planting on the site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting.

New development within the proximity of existing mature trees will be expected to have an arboriculture method statement to BS5837 standards or equivalent in place before any development commences. This will detail tree protection strategies to be employed during construction.

Extensions to existing dwellings

Proposed extensions and/or alterations dwellings must appear subservient in size and scale to the existing building and will be required to be constructed of complementary materials and be of a design which reflects and enhances the character and appearance of the existing

building. New roofs are to be pitched unless this is out of character with the existing building.

Extensions and alterations to non-residential buildings will be required to be of a design which reflects and enhances the character and appearance of the existing building and to appear in keeping with the surrounding built development or landscape.

It is important to ensure that changes to existing development do not adversely impact on the existing character and appearance of the built development or the rural landscape. Farndon is a desirable place to live and house prices are generally high. Within the parish there is evidence that modest sized dwellings are being enlarged beyond the allowances set out in the General Permitted Development Order¹⁵ causing a loss to the small sized housing stock and resulting in development which appears out of scale and character with the surrounding existing development.

Replacement or additional housing development

Replacement dwellings are to be proportionate to the size of the site and the size and scale of surrounding existing development.

Additional dwellings, resulting from the sub-division of existing housing plots, are to reflect the size and scale of the existing dwelling and the prevailing character and appearance of the surrounding development, with particular regard to materials and layout.

It is important to ensure that new housing development fits in with the existing character of its locality and does not result in conditions of overdevelopment or appearance of cramped or squeezed development.

In formulating this policy, it is acknowledged that existing dwellings do have permitted development rights which, in certain cases, permit extensions without the need to apply for planning permission. This will need to be taken into account when assessing proposed development schemes.

