Semington

Design codes and masterplanning

Final Report

July 2024

Delivering a better world

Quality information

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Revision History

Issue no.	Issue date	Details	Prepared by	Position
5	25.11.2024	Site layout update	Nicola Jurkiewicz	Graduate Urban Designer
4	24.07.2024	Review, approval	Madeleine Gohin	Neighbourhood Planning Officer, Locality
3	09.07.2024	Review	Dr William Scott	Councillor, Semington Parish Council
2	03.07.2024	Review	Nicola Jurkiewicz	Graduate Urban Designer
1	03.06.2024	Review	Jessie Watson	Associate Director Urban Design
		Research, drawings	Nicola Jurkiewicz	Graduate Urban Designer
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Contents

Introduction

01

1. Introduction

This chapter explains the importance of good design, with a brief summary of the scope of this report, followed by an overview of the location, the key features and the policies influencing the content of this report.

1.1 Good design

The NPPF 2023, paragraph 131 states that:

'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'

Further, paragraph 132 states that:

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

1.2 Scope

The Design Guidelines and Codes chapter of this report provides design guidance to ensure that any future design proposals in Semington contribute to consistent and high-quality design standards. It then provides a vision for how a site within the Neighbourhood Area could come forward. These design concepts and principles are high level and illustrative, prepared to demonstrate how the design principles that the Parish Council wishes to promote could be applied on the site. We have not undertaken technical studies on topics such as ecology, ground conditions, traffic or drainage (although AECOM specialists have inputted into design development). It is expected that full co-design exercises are undertaken by applicants on the sites. This report is a step in that direction, enabling stakeholders to progress from an informed position.

1.3 Process

Following an inception meeting and a site visit with members of the Semington Parish Council the following steps were agreed to produce this report (see, right).

STEP 01
Site visit and initial analysis of AECOM and the NP Steering Group

STEP 02
Development of a Contents document as a basis of this report

STEP 03
Draft report document issued to the NP Steering Group

STEP 04
Review and feedback by the NP Steering Group

STEP 05
Document revision and formal review

STEP 06
Submission of the revised draft report to Locality for review

STEP 07
Final submission to Locality

Policy context

02

2. Policy and design guidance

The following documents have informed this document. Some of these guidelines have been produced at national, district or parish level.

Any new development application should be familiar with these documents and make explicit reference to how each of them is taken into account in the design proposals.

POLICY CONTEXT

2023 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

MHCLG

The NPPF sets out the nationwide planning policies and government's expectations on how these should be applied.

The NPPF document contains references to the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code and the use of area, neighbourhood, and site-specific design guides, in order to ensure good quality and context sensitive design.

2021 - National Model Design Code

MHCLG

This report provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide.

2020 - Building for a Healthy Life

Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the new (2020) name for Building for Life, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help planning authorities in assessing the quality of proposed developments.

2021 - National Design Guide

MHCLG

The updated National Design Guide illustrates how attractive, successful and sustainable placemaking can be achieved in practice.

2007 - Manual for Streets

Department for Transport

Development is expected to respond positively to the Manual for Streets, the Government's guidance on how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets. It promotes streets and wider development that avoid car dominated layouts but that do place the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first.

LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

2015 - Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)

Wiltshire Council

The Development Plan includes the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which provides a framework within which community-led planning policy documents can be brought forward. At the time of writing, Wiltshire Council are undertaking a review of the Core Strategy and the Wiltshire Local Plan will replace this, when adopted. Some relevant policies of the WCS listed below:

- Core Policy 1 - Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2 - Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 3 - Infrastructure Requirements
- Core Policy 41 - Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy
- Core Policy 43 - Providing Affordable Homes
- Core Policy 45 - Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs
- Core Policy 50 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 51 - Landscape
- Core Policy 52 - Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 55 - Air Quality
- Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 58 - Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment
- Core Policy 60 - Sustainable Transport
- Core Policy 61 - Transport and New Development
- Core Policy 62 - Development Impacts on the Transport network
- Core Policy 67 - Flood Risk

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

Wiltshire Council

Wiltshire council has also produced a number of SPDs that aim at high quality design, including:

- Wiltshire Design Guide
- The Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) Standards for Social Housing Design
- Code for Sustainable Homes
- Lifetime Homes
- Secure by Design
- Building for Life (the CABE/Home Builders Federation Quality Standard)
- Decent Homes 'Plus'
- Open Space Standards

2011 - Wiltshire Local Transport Plan

Wiltshire Council

The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) contains strategies for 2011-2026 relating to public transport, road safety, accessibility, cycling, powered two-wheeler, smarter choices of active travel and car parking.

2023 - Semington Parish Draft Neighbourhood Plan (emerging)

Semington Parish

At the time of publication, the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Semington Parish (2023-38) was being prepared. The NP includes a vision and objectives as well as a series of land use planning policies. The NP allocates a number of Local Green Spaces as well as a site (Draft Policy SEM 10: Land to the West of Turnpike Close) for the development of up approximately 40 homes and a new shop.

2023 - Semington Parish Character Statement

Semington Parish

This character statement document is an appendix to the Semington Neighbourhood Plan. It provides a description of significant and uniquely local attributes of the parish overall, including the arrangement of settlements and distinctive features of the built and natural landscape within it. Additionally, it offers guidance on the character, conservation, and development considerations to be taken into account when making any alterations within the parish, whether for new or existing buildings.

Wider context

03

3. Wider context

3.1 Area of study

This chapter establishes the basis for the design guidelines and codes in Chapter 4.

3.1.1. Overview

Geographical background

The Neighbourhood Area is the Civil Parish of Semington in the Unitary Authority of Wiltshire. It is located 3 km south of Melksham, 4 km north-east of Trowbridge, 10 km west of Devizes, and 14 km east of Bath. The village of Semington is located in the west of the parish and forms its main settlement. The Neighbourhood Area also contains the hamlets of Little Marsh and Littleton, located to the south and east of the main village respectively. The remainder of the parish mostly comprises open fields. It is bordered to the north by the parish of Melksham, to the east by Seend and Keevil, to the south by Great Hinton, and to the west by Hilperton.

Historic background

Semington originated in the 12th century. The oldest surviving building in the village is St George's Church, dating from circa 1300. Other historic structures include the farmhouses surrounding the village from the 1500s. The parish boasts several noteworthy residences constructed during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, with many Grade-II listed buildings. The village's school was established in 1859. The Wilts & Berks Canal once commenced from Semington until its cessation in 1914, and there are plans for a renewed link with the Kennet & Avon Canal. Serving as the focal point of the village, both spatially and socially, the village hall, erected in 1933 and recently renovated, holds significant importance.

Figure 01: Diagram showing location of Semington in the wider county context.

Figure 02: Semington Parish and its settlements in wider area context (Source: OS Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

3.1.2. Access and movement

Road network

The Neighbourhood Area is located at the crossroads between two strategic roads; the A361 and the A350. The A361 crosses the parish east to west and connects to the High Street via Semington Roundabout, providing access to Trowbridge and Devizes and forging a physical divide between Semington and Little Marsh. The A350 runs north-south in the parish, where it meets the A361 at the Littleton Roundabout.

The remainder of the road network serves local needs, with access to housing. The High Street forms the village's main north-south spine. The majority of the remaining roads in the village are residential cul-de-sacs.

Due to their small size, the hamlets of Little Marsh and Littleton are accessed by single cul-de-sacs.

Waterways

The Kennet and Avon Canal is a navigable waterway connecting to Bristol and Reading which forms most of the parish's northern boundary.

Public Rights of Way

Most residential streets in the Neighbourhood Area feature narrow pavements. Some streets, such as Church Street have a pavement on one side and a grass verge on the other. The strategic A361 and A350 roads are bordered by grass verges, but mostly lack pavements.

The parish contains a dense network of public rights of way (PRoW) that link its three settlements together. The network of footpaths and short bridleways also connects with neighbouring settlements. The Kennet and Avon Canal towpath is a popular walking and cycling route that runs along the north side of the canal.

Cycle routes

The Kennet and Avon Canal towpath forms an off-road section of National Cycle Route 4 (NCR4), which runs from London to Fishguard via Reading, Bath, Bristol, Newport, Swansea and St David's.

Public transportation

Semington is served by bus routes 49, X34, X49, X84, and X85, which run along the High Street and the A361. These services connect the parish to Swindon, Chippenham, Melksham, Devizes, Frome, and Trowbridge. The nearest train stations are located in Melksham and Trowbridge, with services to Swindon, Westbury, Portsmouth, Bristol, Cardiff, and Salisbury.

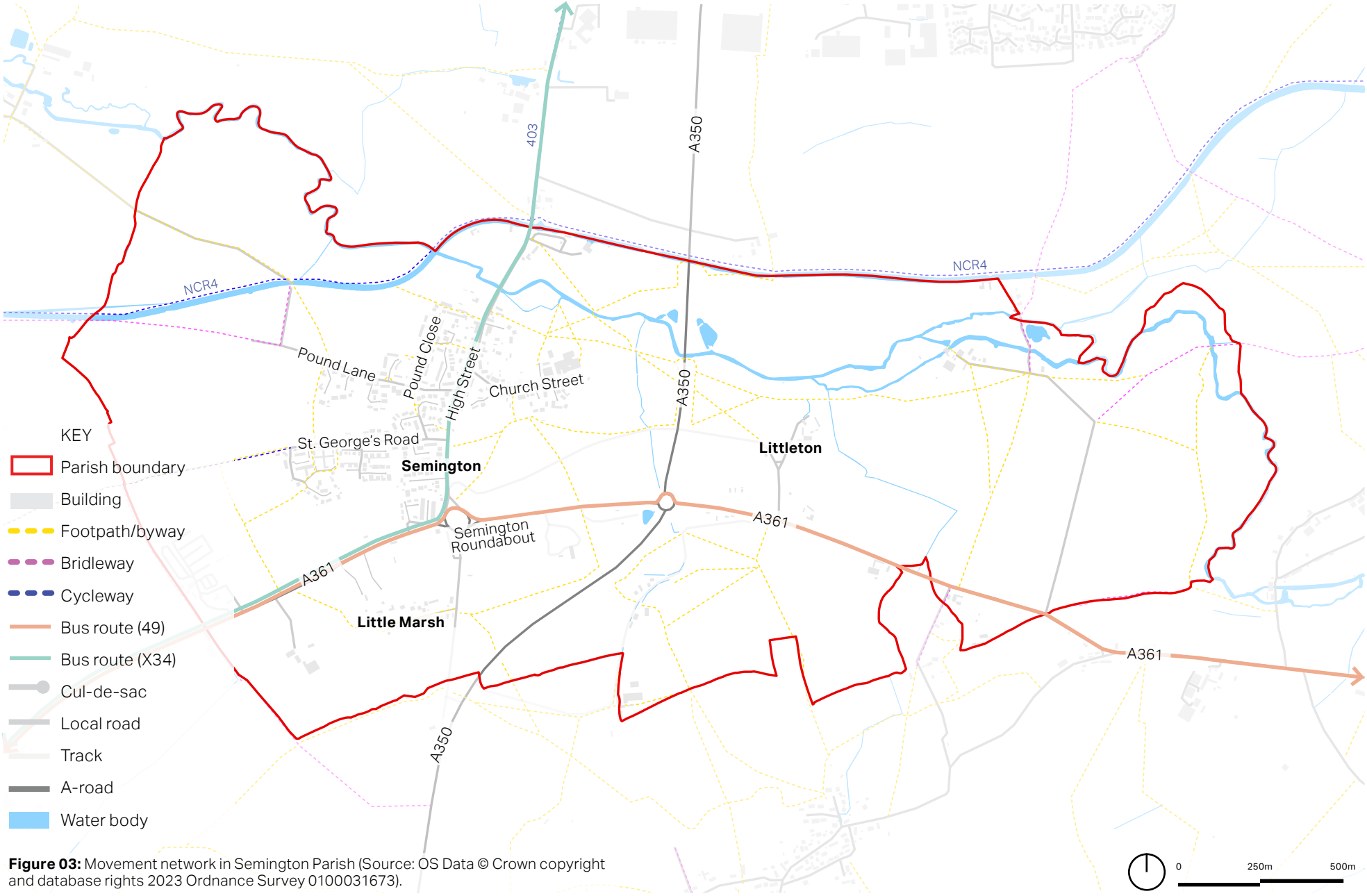

Figure 03: Movement network in Semington Parish (Source: OS Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

3.1.3. Green and blue network

Green assets

Open fields occupy the vast majority of the area of the parish. The parish also contains small areas of deciduous woodland and belts of trees with hedges along the waterways and the strategic roads, such as the A350.

Small areas of open green space include the church yard; allotments; the grounds of St George's Primary School; and the playing fields south of Wessex Close.

Semington Football Club occupies a large green space to the south east of Semington Roundabout and to the west of the West Wiltshire Crematorium, which features dense tree coverage.

Additionally, there is a traditional orchard to the north of St. George's Road, which is not publicly accessible.

Blue assets

The parish is dissected by Semington Brook and the Kennet and Avon Canal in an east west direction. Semington Brook is punctuated by a small number of ponds, and the brook is fed by a network of ditches that collect water from the neighbouring fields.

Flood zones

The sparsely built-up areas located along the banks of Semington Brook are at high and medium risk of flooding from rivers[1]. In addition, an area of High Street is at risk of flooding from surface water, although only a small number of properties are affected.

The area surrounding river Semington Brook and adjoining streams is located within flood zone 2 and 3. This is illustrated in Figure 06, overleaf.

1 https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/confirm-location?easting=389989&northing=160955&placeOrPostcode=ba14+6jt&locationDetails=BA14+6JT%2C+Wiltshire%2C+South+West%2C+England&isPostCode=true

Figure 04: View of the river from Semington Bridge.

Figure 05: View of the countryside to the east of High Street.

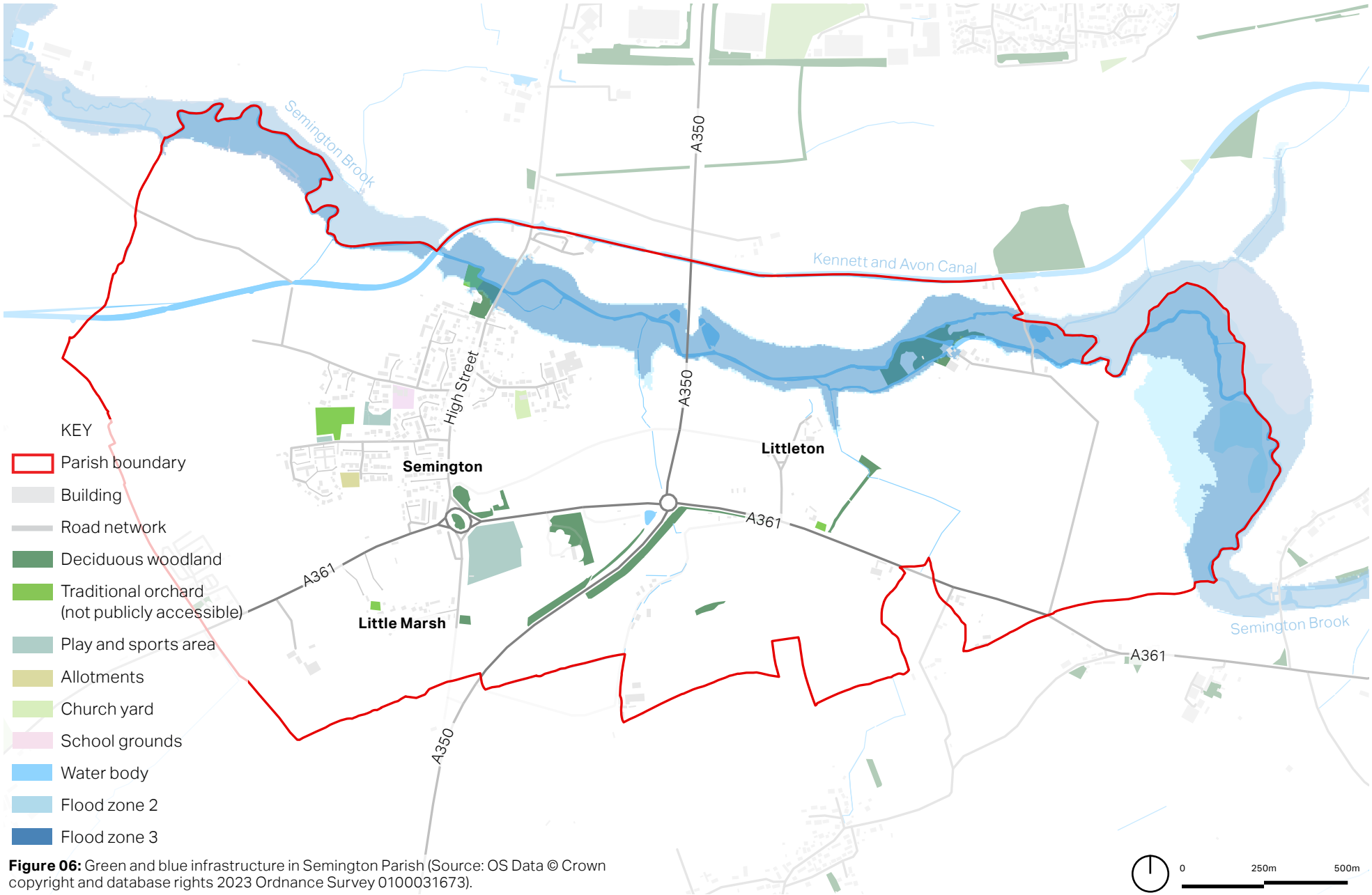

Figure 06: Green and blue infrastructure in Semington Parish (Source: OS Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

3.2 Character areas

This chapter illustrates and summarises the character areas that are defined within Semington Parish Character Statement[1] document. These are listed below:

- Semington Historic Core;
- Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Semington;
- Semington Industrial Area; and
- Small Hamlets (Little Marsh and Littleton).

The location of the masterplanning site is shown in Figure 07 opposite. It is currently located outside of the existing settlement boundary, but abuts the 20th/21st Century Semington character area. A summary of the main defining characteristics of each of the four character areas is shown on the next page.

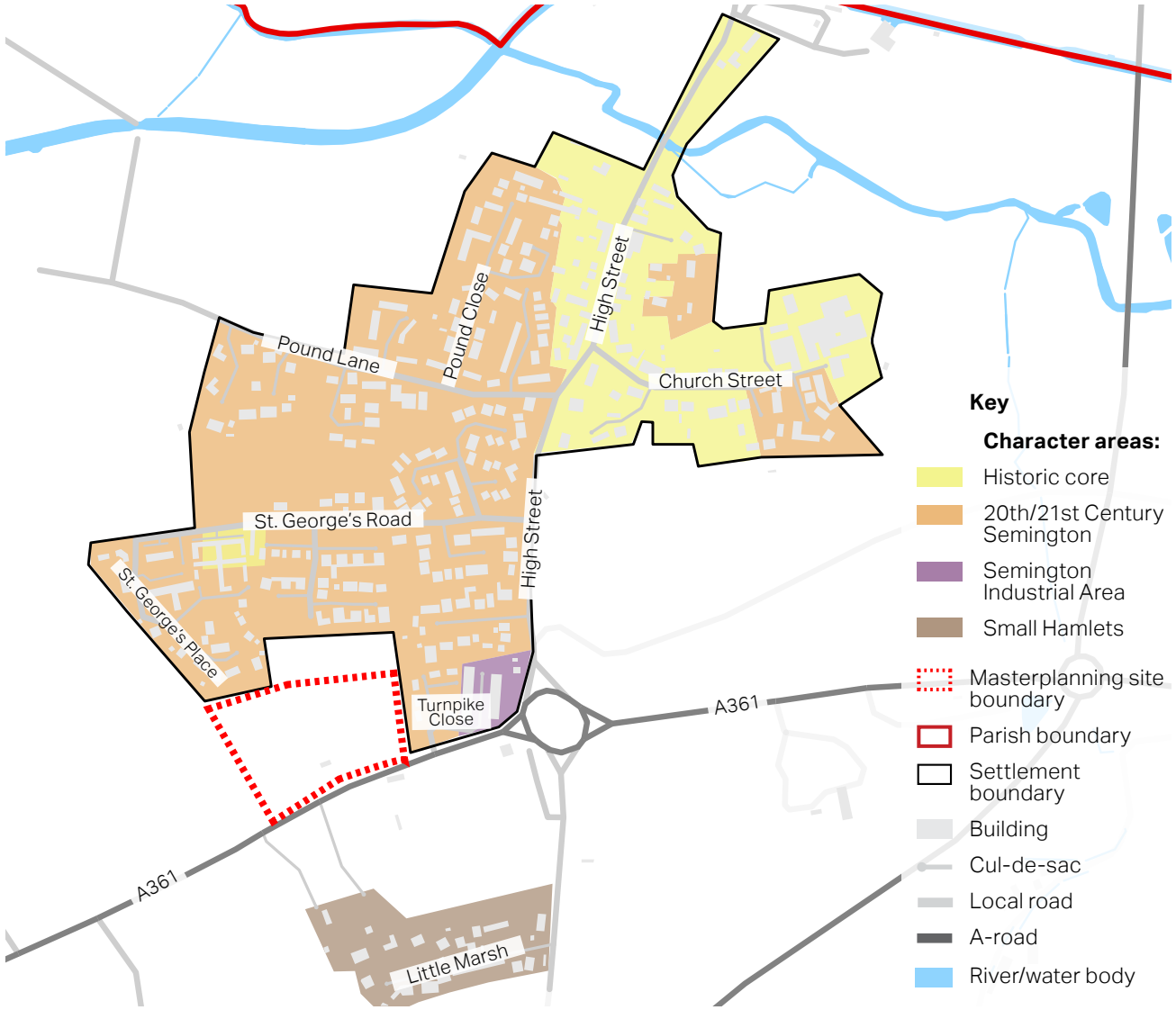

Figure 07: Map showing Semington character areas (Source: OS Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

1 https://www.semington.org.uk/Documents/Neighbourhood_Plan/Reports/CHARACTER_STATEMENT_COMPRESSED.pdf

Character area	Scale and form	Windows and doors	Building materials	Roof types and materials	Boundary treatments
3.2.1. Semington Historic Core	• Residential scale of predominantly two storeys with three storey Georgian villas with some 20th century bungalows. • Detached, semi-detached and detached with pronounced variation of building line and plot size. • Majority of properties set back within garden plots. Some back-of pavement and at 90 degrees to street.	• Varied window sizes and styles, authentic to the architecture and historic role of buildings.	• Varied authentic to building typologies and ages within the village core. • Heritage fabric includes timber frame and render, Ashlar and coursed stonework, stone tiles, brickwork and painted render with stone quoins and window surrounds to larger buildings. Simple painted render facades to more modest cottage terraces and stone porches on the cottages next to canal.	• Mixture of pitched, hipped and gable fronted roof treatments. Mixture of stone and clay tiles. Some use of slate for cottage scale terraces. • Chimneys make significant contribution to roofscape character.	• Gardens behind low walls to domestic frontages add positively to the High Street character. Differing materials and treatments reflect variety in building style. Some frontage enclosure lost to car parking.
3.2.2. 20th/21st Century Semington	• 20th and 21st century development combines two storey housing with some bungalow development in clusters and cul-de-sacs of a mixture of standard housing designs. Future development should deliver north-south pedestrian connections between lanes.	• Varied twentieth century forms consistent with the age and design of housing developments. • Replacement of wooden windows and doors with UPVC widespread.	• Varied standard 20th century building materials including brick, concrete block-work and render.	• Pitched and hipped with feature gables and dormers. Larger properties tiled.	• Suburban front gardens, hedges and residual lane hedges combine to soften and connect the estate clusters and enable a less impactful relationship with Semington's rural setting.
3.2.3. Semington Industrial Area	• Existing industrial estate development of about 1.5 residential storeys minimises the visual impact on the surrounding residential neighbourhoods and enables development to create standardised space and external service areas.		• Existing steel cladding is in good repair. Where visible from the highway, building design and condition are not harmful to the character of south gateway to the High Street. However, boundary treatment is fragmented adjacent to the bus stop.		• To enable both sites to operate and potentially change to meet future employment needs, it is essential that existing boundary planting is retained and bolstered where it is denuded.
3.2.4. Small Hamlets	Diverse building styles and ages with mixed building line. Two and three storey detached and semi-detached houses and detached bungalows.	Examples of dormer windows with no prevailing style. Examples of Georgian style windows present in Littleton.	Mix of painted brickwork, exposed brickwork, white and beige render, and Bath stone blocks.	Concrete roof tiles in Little Marsh. Primarily pitched roofs with either stone tiles or clay pan tiles in Littleton.	Most properties feature large gardens and long driveways except some small front gardens on south side of road in Little Marsh.

Source: Semington Parish Character Statement https://www.semington.org.uk/Documents/Neighbourhood_Plan/Reports/CHARACTER_STATEMENT_COMPRESSED.pdf

Design guidance and codes

04

4. Design guidance and codes

This chapter provides design guidance aiming to shape future development in the parish including larger housing schemes, infill development and house extensions or conversions.

4.1 General design guidance

What urban designers and planners call 'placemaking' is about creating the physical conditions that residents and users find attractive and safe, with good levels of social interaction and layouts that are easily understood.

The design guidelines and codes set out in the following pages should be used to assess the design quality of future development in the parish.

Structure of design guidance and codes

4.2 Settlement edge

4.3 Built form and density

4.4 Boundary treatments

4.5 Style and material palette

4.6 Public spaces

4.7 Quality PRoW network

4.8 Safe streetscape

4.9 Car parking

4.10 Nature and biodiversity

4.11 Carbon neutrality

4.12 Electric vehicle charging

4.13 Water management

4.14 Storage and slow release

4.15 Permeable paving

4.16 Sensitive lighting

Figure 08: The 10 characteristics of well-designed places. (Source: National Design Guide, page 8).

4.2 Settlement edge

Semington is defined by a clear settlement boundary. New development has tended to be situated on the western edge of the village. The proposed site allocation (west of Turnpike Close) is located outside the settlement boundary.

The WCS Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy defines different tiers of settlements within Wiltshire, based on their role and function. Some additional design guidance on settlement edge is set out below.

4.2.1. Abrupt edges with minimal vegetation or open landscaping at the edge of the settlement should be avoided. Instead, new development should incorporate vegetation to create a seamless transition to the rural landscape and to define the settlement edge.

4.2.2. Whilst new development outside the existing settlement boundary is discouraged, growing housing demands and new housing allocations must be addressed. Future development outside the defined settlement boundary should not significantly alter the village scale, massing and roofline.

4.2.3. Housing densities should be reduced along the settlement edge in general. Within an overall site, the density should be lowest along the development / rural edge, to create a gradual transition towards the countryside.

Figure 09: Example of successful landscape buffering along the settlement edge where dense vegetation have been implemented / retained. St. George's Place.

Figure 10: Vegetation buffer illustrated in Figure 09 visible between neighbouring properties.

4.3 Built form and density

Overall, there is a low housing density in the parish, which reinforces its rural character. The building density of surrounding hamlets of Little Marsh and Littleton are visibly lower than the densities of the Semington Historic Core and 20th/21st Century Semington character areas.

Building heights tend to be between 1-2 storeys high with generous sized rear gardens, and front gardens of varying sizes. There are two taller buildings in the Parish; St. George's Church and St. George's Hospital, which is three storeys high and contains residential units.

The rooflines are generally irregular and they are often visually broken up with vegetation, where building density is lower. General guidelines for built form and density are:

4.3.1. Generally, new development should be 2 storeys to preserve the existing setting, which is formed by the rural countryside and heritage assets. Three-storey development, including the installation of dormer windows at second floor is unlikely to be appropriate. The building height and massing should always be in harmony with the immediate surroundings, in accordance with the character area, as set out in Chapter 3.2.

4.3.2. Densities should reflect the rural character of the parish and should be generally low density. However, each design should be treated separately based on the immediate surrounding context. For example, the building densities in surrounding hamlets of Little Marsh and Littleton are visibly lower than the densities of Semington Historic Core and the 20th/21st Century Semington character areas.

4.3.3. Roofline and building gaps should allow views of the surrounding countryside to be maintained. New dwellings and extensions should be designed to retain the characteristic generous spaces between neighbouring dwellings in the parish.

Figure 11: Consistent building heights along the High Street

Figure 12: Consistent building scale with breaks in the roofline formed by front facing gable, which creates interest, Kendell Lane

4.4 Boundary treatments

Boundary treatments can either be hard surfaces, (such as fences and walls), or soft (hedges, flowerbeds and trees). Both types can be found in the parish, however they vary between character areas. For example, Semington Historic Core generally features walls and often metal railings, with higher level of enclosure than other character areas, such as those around the edges of the Semington, which tend to incorporate more natural boundary treatments and open areas. Guidance on boundary treatments are set out below.

4.4.1. Boundary treatments forms and materials should reflect the prevailing treatment in the character area, as analysed in Chapter 3.2. Therefore, low level, natural boundaries should feature.

4.4.2. Any examples of high, non-permeable fences and gates should be avoided as they are not in keeping with the rural setting. They also impede the movement of wildlife. If incorporated, they should allow for filtered views into the properties offering a similar feel to the natural boundary treatments.

4.4.3. Boundaries between properties should feature native planting with timber posts and rail fencing. Where it is necessary to remove planting, mitigation should be undertaken with additional planting elsewhere on site to ensure that the green screening remains. The use of extensive runs of close-boarded boundary fencing should not feature.

Figure 14: Low rise hedgerow and tree planting along St. George's Place in the 20th/21st Century Semington area.

Figure 13: Low rise stone wall with high hedgerow boundary within the Semington Historic Core area.

Figure 15: Low rise wall with black metal railing clearly delineating the edge of pavement.

4.5 Style and material palette

As described in the character area analysis in Chapter 3.2, the four areas within the parish have their own unique characteristics and distinctive architecture.

4.5.1. It is very important that proposed developments are well evaluated to achieve a high quality of design, sympathetic to the existing built fabric in the parish. New developments should draw inspiration from the high-quality local design features. It is essential for new development to make a meaningful contribution to preserving the rural character of the parish.

4.5.2. Material selections should be made based on an understanding of the immediate context and the wider Semington parish. Where proposals affect heritage assets, either directly or due to proximity, it is recommended that advice is obtained from a Conservation Architect at an early stage of design development.

4.5.3. Designs need to be sensitive and complementary to their surroundings, but this does not require merely replicating existing styles and imitating architectural details. It is recommended that contemporary architectural solutions are considered.

4.5.4. Use of materials on roofs that encourage moss growth is favoured and any chemical or physical treatment to remove moss growth should be discouraged.

Figure 16: Variety of architectural styles and materials used along the High Street, displaying white render façade and red brick frontage with decorative stone quoins.

Figure 17: New development on Kendell Road references the historic materials used in the rest of the parish.

4.5.5. New development should use appropriate materials that contribute to the local vernacular in the parish. The use of natural and locally sourced materials should be prioritised over synthetics, which often lack variation in colour and texture.

4.5.6. Any development which adopts traditional vernacular features found in Semington (timber frame and render / ashlar and coursed stonework / painted render / stone door and window surrounds, chimney stacks, etc.) must have an integrity of heritage detail. Strong and vibrant colours will not blend well with the rural setting in the parish.

4.5.7. The materials listed in this document should not be considered prescriptive. Complementary innovation and creativity in material use are encouraged, with due consideration of context.

Figure 18: Examples of materials used in Semington

4.6 Public spaces

The design of new public space is important in creating sustainable communities, as outlined in WCS Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality and Place Shaping[1] and Policy RLF2 of the Open Space Provision[2] . Additional design guidance is set out below.

4.6.1. Public spaces should be accessible to all and adaptable, capable of hosting a variety of functions, activities, and events. Temporary solutions can allow for experimentation with different uses and experiences.

4.6.2. There should be an emphasis on incorporating natural elements in public spaces within the parish. This relates to the quantity and quality of green spaces to enhance community wellbeing, alongside the enhancement of biodiversity.

1 WCS https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/372/Wiltshire-Core-Strategy-adopted-2015/pdf/Wcs.pdf?m=1574343137353
2 https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/Data/Northern%20Area%20Planning%20Committee/20090527/Agenda/Item%20No.%2006%20(6)%20-%20Glen-Pac,%20Cricklade%20-%20Apdx.pdf

4.7 Active travel

Active travel and access to the wider countryside is key to ensuring healthy communities. A safe and accessible movement network helps to encourage walking and cycling.

4.7.1. New development should seek to provide good network of sustainable travel options, in line with WCS Core Policy 63[3]. Additional guidance is listed below.

4.7.2. Newly developed areas must retain or provide new, safe and attractive footpaths between neighbouring streets, facilities and the countryside.

3 https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/372/Wiltshire-Core-Strategy-adopted-2015/pdf/Wcs.pdf?m=1574343137353

Figure 19: community green space, St George's Place.

Figure 20: Footpath to the west of tennis court allowing access to Pound Lane and the countryside beyond.

Figure 21: Private green space, St George's Court.

Figure 22: Tennis courts, St George's Road.

4.8 Safe streetscape

A well-designed street hierarchy and streetscape are key elements of successful places. The relationship between streets and the adjacent buildings strongly influences the safety, appearance and movement function of a place.

4.8.1. Street design should adhere to the WCS Policies 60-69[1], and Manual for Streets[2].

4.8.2. Streets and driveways should be well vegetated and feature permeable paving where possible, for surface water drainage.

4.8.3. Traffic calming measures should be appropriate for the rural context. For example, 'visual narrowing' of a street with the edge paved in a different material to the carriageway can encourage slower speeds.

4.8.4. New driveways should be relatively short and provide onward pedestrian links to nearby transport links and amenities.

4.8.5. New development should seek to retain grass verges within the scheme.

4.8.6. Street signage /furniture and road markings should be limited and used with care to ensure public safety but to maintain the rural character of the settlement. Timber street furniture should be used in preference to a metal or plastic.

Figure 24: A clearly marked, but narrow pavement, High St

Figure 23: An overprovision of wayfinding signage can be confusing, St George's Road

Figure 25: A high grass verge and narrow footpath creates a rural setting, Church Street.

1 https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/372/Wiltshire-Core-Strategy-adopted-2015/pdf/Wcs.pdf?m=1574343137353
2 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7e0035ed915d74e6223743/pdfmanforstreets.pdf

4.9 Car parking

Due to the remote location of the parish, the demand for private cars and car parking remains high. Car parking typologies across the parish is predominantly on-plot parking (front and side), with garages. There are instances of parking bays and parking courts, which feature in more contemporary developments such as Kendall Lane. The design guidelines on the next pages will focus on these prevailing typologies.

On-plot car parking

4.9.1. On-plot parking should be sufficient to the local residents' needs to avoid issues of parking overflow along the narrow rural lanes.

Front parking

4.9.2. As a general rule, a third of the front garden space should be dedicated to parting, while two-thirds of the front garden should remain as green space.

4.9.3. Parking should be well integrated into design so as not to dominate the public realm. Especially, high-quality and well-designed soft landscaping, hedges, hedgerows, and trees, should be used to increase the visual appeal of the parking. This also helps local biodiversity and enhances the character of the Parish.

4.9.4. Hard standing and driveways must be constructed from porous materials, to minimise surface water run-off and therefore, help mitigate potential flooding.

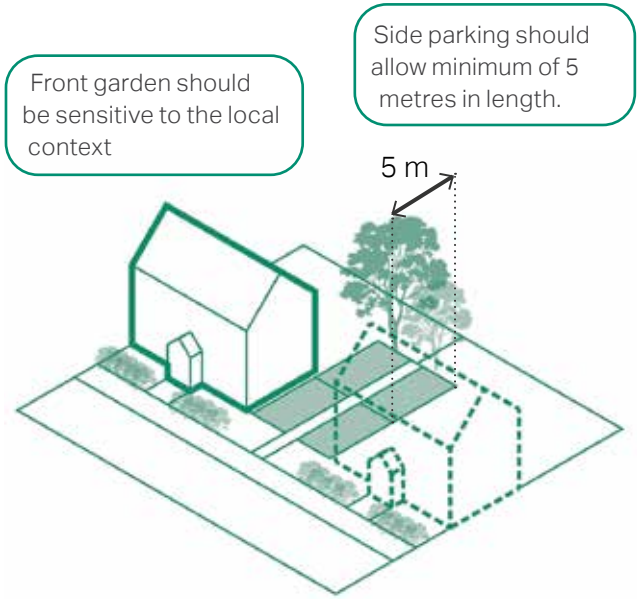

Figure 26: An illustrative diagram showing the indicative layout of and minimum dimensions of on-plot front parking.

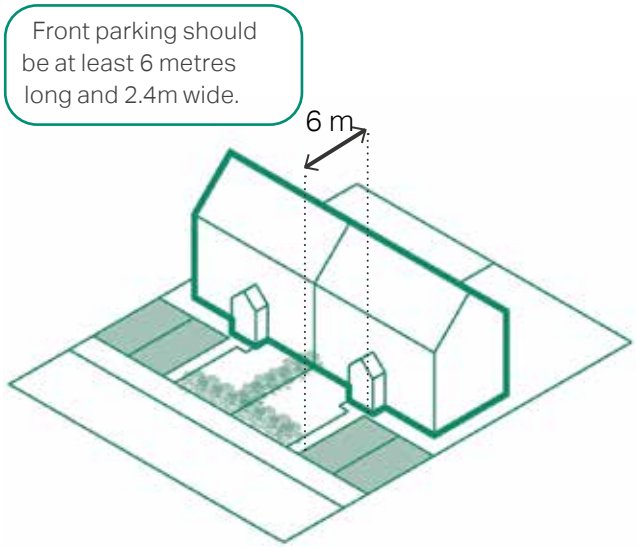

Figure 27: An illustrative diagram showing the indicative layout of and minimum dimensions of on-plot side parking.

Parking courts and bays

4.9.5. Parking courts are acceptable for small building clusters. Permeable paving should be used where possible.

4.9.6. Parking courts must be overlooked by properties to increase natural surveillance.

4.9.7. Planting and vegetation should be integrated into design to soften the presence of cars and preserve the local rural character.

Garages

4.9.8. Garages must not dominate the appearance of dwellings and must not reduce the amount of active frontage to the street.

4.9.9. The design of any garage enclosure should integrate well with the surroundings in terms of visual and physical impact.

4.9.10. Open car barns could offer an attractive parking solution in keeping with the rural character.

4.9.11. Garages should provide a minimum 3m x 6m internal space.

For further information about car parking see Building for a Healthy Life[1] and Manual for Streets[2] documents.

1 Building for a Healthy Life https://www.udg.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/files/14JULY20%20BFL%202020%20Brochure_3.pdf
2 Manual for Streets https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7e0035ed915d74e6223743/pdfmanforstreets.pdf

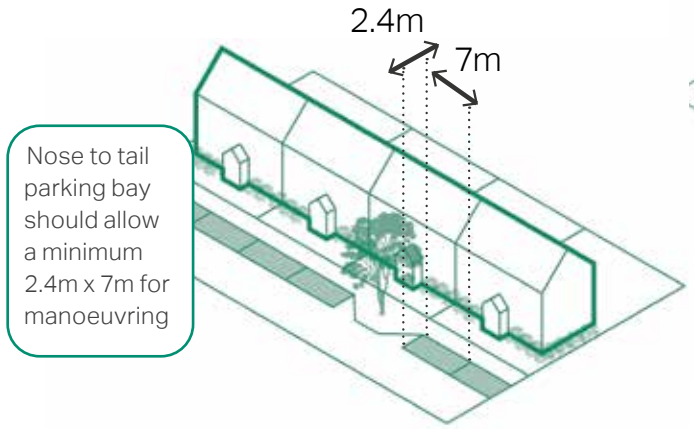

Figure 28: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout and minimum dimensions of on-street parking bay.

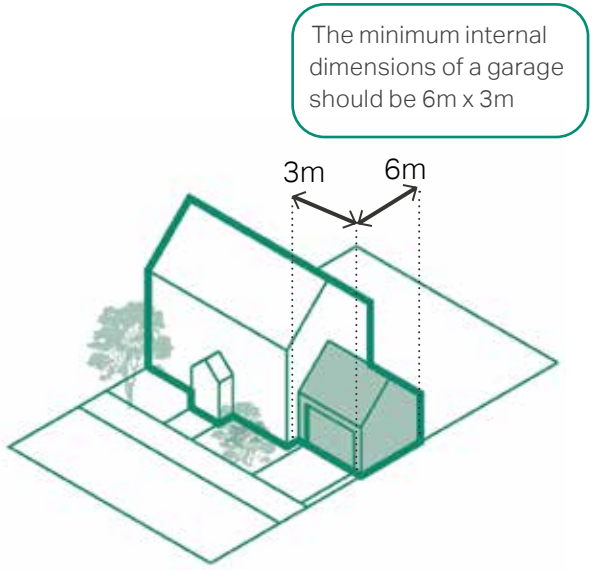

Figure 29: Illustrative diagrams showing recommended measurements of garage parking.

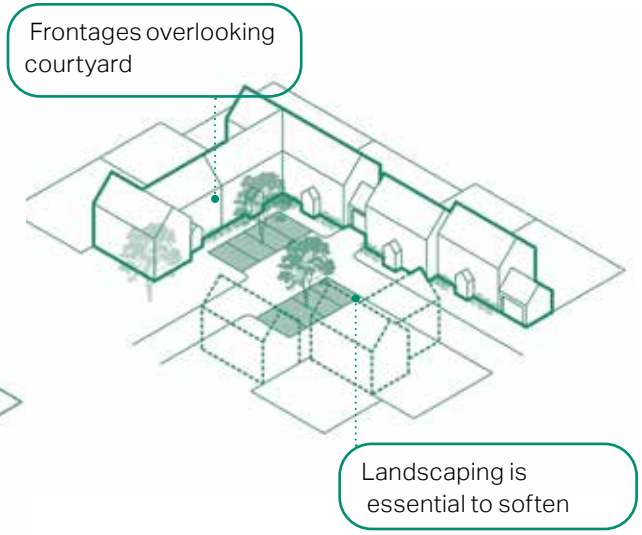

Figure 30: Illustrative diagrams showing the indicative layout of courtyard parking.

4.10 Electric vehicle charging

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

4.10.1. EV charging infrastructure should be designed in close proximity to homes, within well-designed parking spaces, for example, within car ports and garages.

4.10.2. New developments, especially of higher density, should consider providing secure, serviced communal parking with EV charging.

4.10.3. EV charging points should be installed sensitively within streets and spaces, for example, by aligning with green infrastructure and street furniture. This is particularly important within conservation areas, where charging points should not visually impact neighbouring heritage assets. For example, parking can be set behind the building line or behind native hedgerow planting.

4.10.4. Mounted charging points and associated services should be integrated into the design of new developments, if possible with each house that provides off-street parking.

Figure 31: Example of off-street electric vehicle charging points

4.11 Nature and biodiversity

Semington Parish offers a wide variety of green and blue infrastructure assets, such as the Kennet and Avon Canal and Semington Brook. Against the broader context of climate change and global warming, safeguarding biodiversity is gaining increasing significance and should commence at the community level. Biodiversity Net Gain requirements are now enshrined in law. Thus, it is in the best interest of new developments to give priority to enhancing biodiversity through thoughtful design below.

4.11.1. Biodiversity interventions in the public space could help improve the environment as well as inform and educate the community about the existing species and habitats. For instance, having hedgehog streets, wildlife friendly show gardens or designated areas within green space for wildlife could raise awareness about biodiversity. In addition, illustrative signage could be placed next to these interventions to offer more information and photos about the available species and habitats in the area.

4.11.2. Biodiversity, woodlands, hedgerows, ditches should be protected and enhanced where possible and be an integrated part of the design process rather than an afterthought. For examples, existing green assets should be integrated into the new proposals and help define the location of green spaces, green buffers, aligned back and front gardens or development edges.

4.11.3. Blue assets can also contribute to biodiversity connectivity and indeed feature in the parish already. Therefore, the existing ditches and streams should be considered in design proposals, in the form of ponds or pollinator gardens, when planning for wildlife corridors.

4.11.4. Gardens and boundary treatments should be designed to allow the movement of wildlife and provide habitat for local species. For that reason, rich vegetation and plantation is suggested, whilst non-permeable high gates and fencing should be avoided.

4.11.5. New development proposals should aim for the creation of new habitats and wildlife corridors, e.g. by aligning back and front gardens or installing bird boxes or bricks in walls.

4.11.6. Biodiversity, woodlands, hedgerows, ditches should be protected and enhanced where possible and be an integrated part of the design process rather than an afterthought. The choice of plants in new development should be appropriate to the setting of the proposal and its proximity to the designated National Landscape and SSSI.

4.12 Environmental impact

There are several alternative energy sources for new housing that can utilise to reduce reliance on traditional fossil fuels and decrease environmental impact. Some commonly used alternatives include (but are not limited to):

Solar power
Optimising solar orientation of streets and buildings with an aim to increase the number of buildings on site that are oriented within 30° to the south (both main fenestration and roof plane) to maximise solar gain, effectiveness of solar panels and natural daylighting.

Wind power
Incorporating wind turbines utilising local wind speed and direction.

Heat pumps
Accommodating loops for ground source heat and space for air source heat pump units.

Biomass
Burning wood pellets for space heating and generating biomass from organic waste, as well as linking to local estates for harvesting or recycling of biomass fuels.

Energy management
Using batteries to store excess energy generated by renewables for later use, and using smart devices to optimise energy consumption and to reduce waste

Rainwater harvesting
Utilising systems allowing the capture and storage of rainwater as well as those enabling the reuse in-site of grey water. Simple storage solutions, such as water butts, can help provide significant attenuation that can have multiple application areas like toilets and irrigation.

4.12.1. Any environmental solution should be considered prior to design and integrated appropriately into the design.

4.12.2. Tanks and pipes should be concealed from visual impact, for example by cladding them in suitable, locally used materials.

4.12.3. Landscaping and planters should incorporate water capture systems to make the most of naturally available resources.

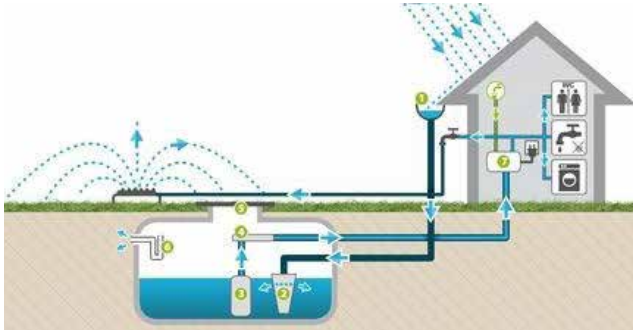

Figure 32: Diagram illustrating rainwater harvesting systems that could be integrated into open space and residential developments.

Figure 33: Examples of water butts used for rainwater harvesting in Reach, Cambridgeshire.

4.13 Water management

All new development should work to moderate extremes of temperature, wind, humidity, local flooding and pollution, by considering the strategies illustrated below:

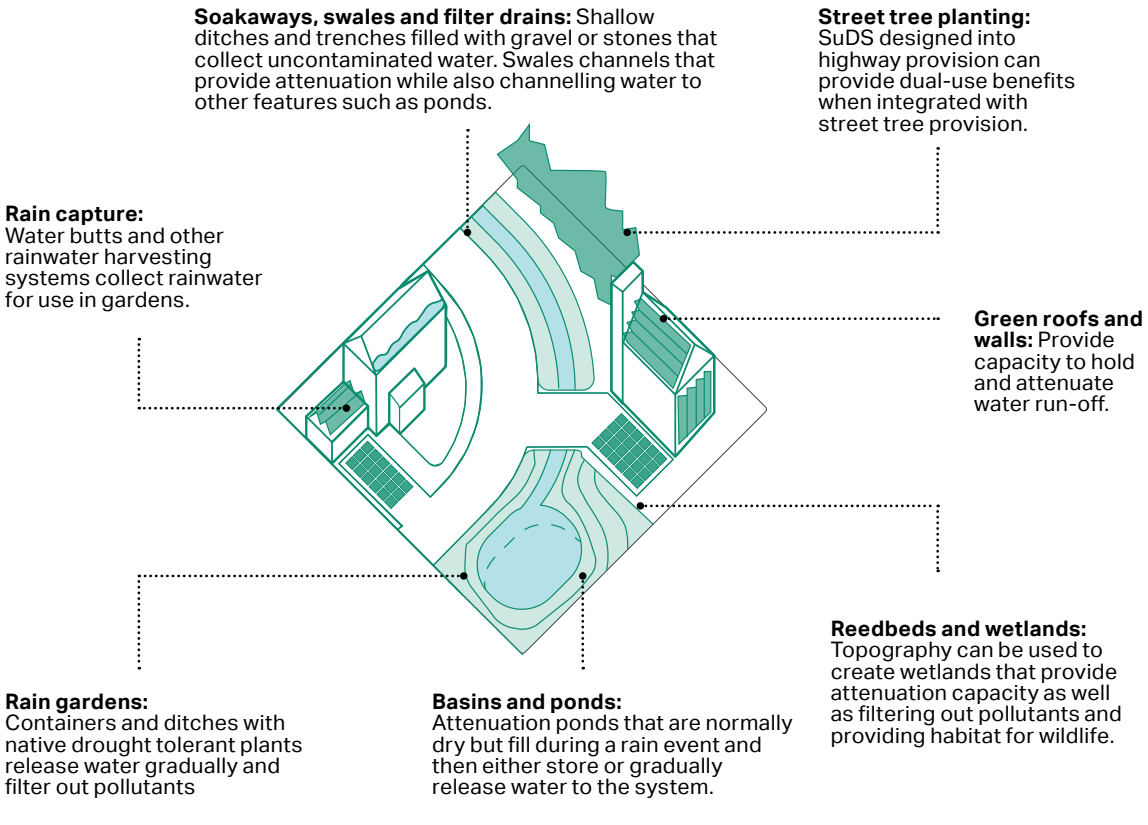

Figure 34: Example of a local pond in an infill development in rural countryside, elsewhere in the UK.

Figure 35: Example of SuDS designed as a public amenity and filly integrated into the design of the public realm, Stockholm.

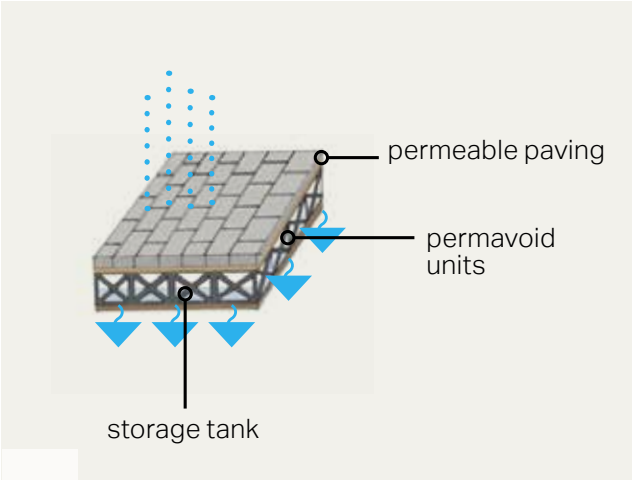

Figure 36: Diagram illustrating the functioning of a soak away with permavoid units.

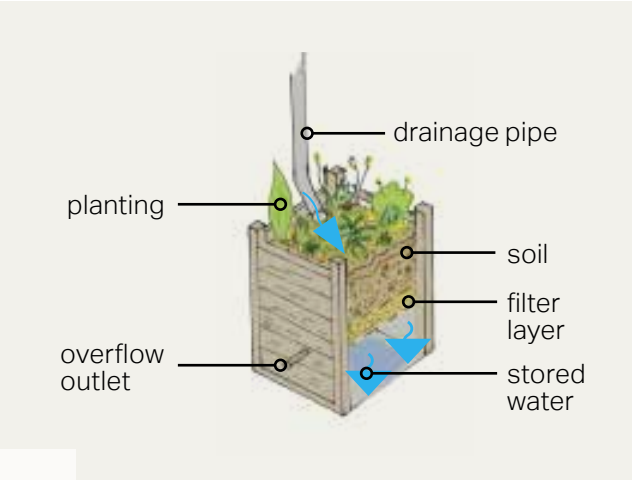

Figure 38: Diagram illustrating the functioning of a stormwater planter.

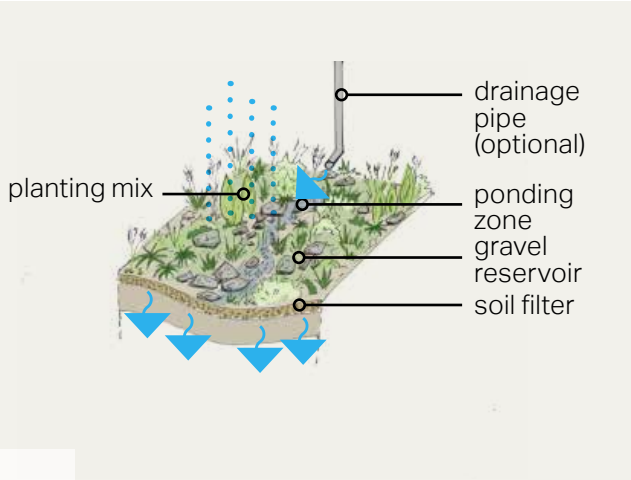

Figure 40: Diagram illustrating the functioning of a rain garden.

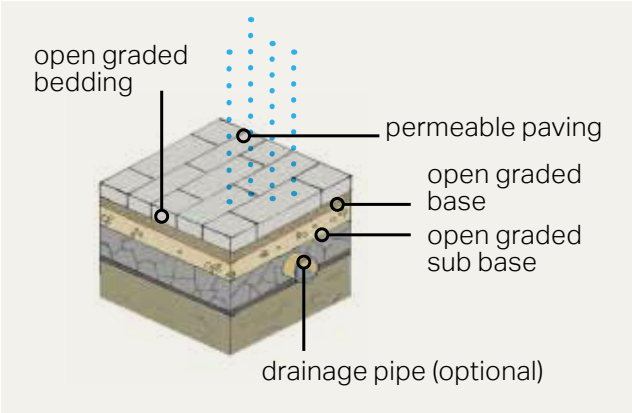

Figure 37: Diagram illustrating the construction of a permeable paving area.

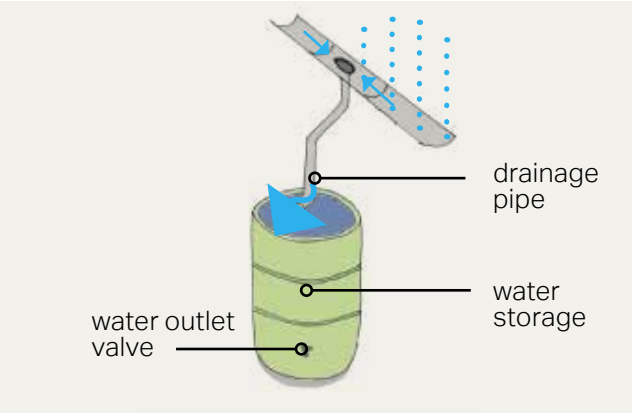

Figure 39: Diagram illustrating the functioning of a water butt.

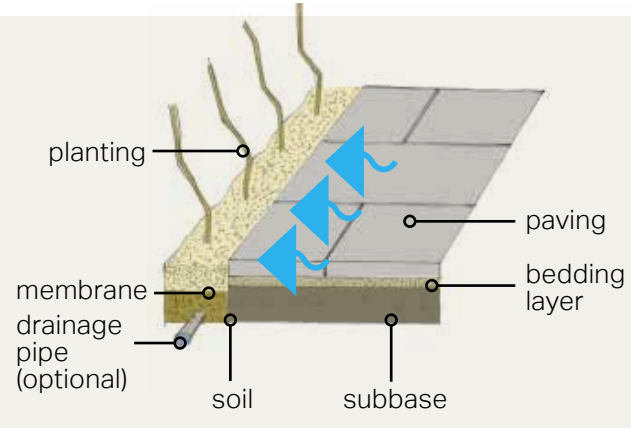

Figure 41: Diagram illustrating the construction of a soak away garden.

4.14 Sensitive lighting

Careful consideration and thoughtful design of lighting schemes within properties, whether in front or back gardens, are essential in any new development. This is crucial to maintain the rural character of Semington parish, benefiting both the residents and the local wildlife.

4.14.1. Low-impact lightning can improve the aesthetics and offer safety during the night. This page offers examples of low-level lighting solutions that can be implemented in private properties and improve the aesthetics and safety, whilst retaining dark skies and the rural character of Semington parish. These examples include lighting schemes that could be turned off when not needed ('part-night lighting') as well as low-impact lighting oriented downwards.

Up-lighting: Focus light and attention on an object or tree from a low fixed location.

Figure 42: Example of up-lighting which is used to illuminate the trees within a property.

Downlighting: Bullet type fixture placed well above eye level on an object or tree.

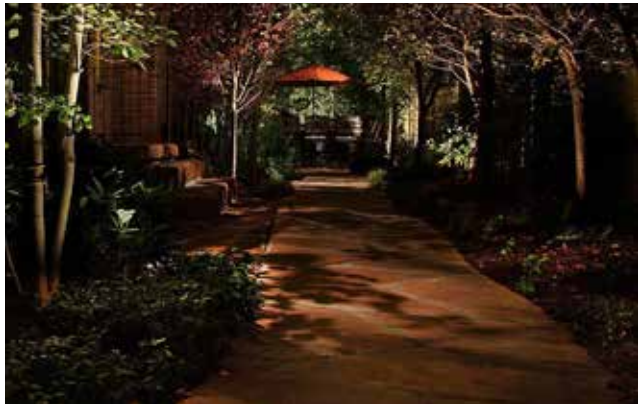

Figure 44: Example of down lighting which was used to illuminate the pathway.

Backlighting: Fixtures placed at the back of an object to create a 'glowing' effect.

Figure 43: Example of backlighting used at the back of a bush to create a glowing effect.

Path lighting: Use of low fixtures which direct illumination downward and outward.

Figure 45: Example of down lighting which was used to illuminate the pathway.

The Site

05

5. The site

5.1 Surrounding context

The following section contains an overview of the site's conditions as well as its immediate context. This baseline information should be considered in the design of future proposals.

Site location

The emerging Neighbourhood Plan allocates the Auction Field site (Draft Policy SEM 10) for the development of up approximately 40 homes and a new shop, which is located to the south west of Semington, to the west of Turnpike Close and to the north of the A361.

Land uses

Surrounding land uses are largely residential. St. George's Place and Kendall Road are directly north of the site. Phase 2 of Kendall Lane is being constructed at the time of writing (see Figure 46). Industrial units, including catering are located to the east at Semington Turnpike.

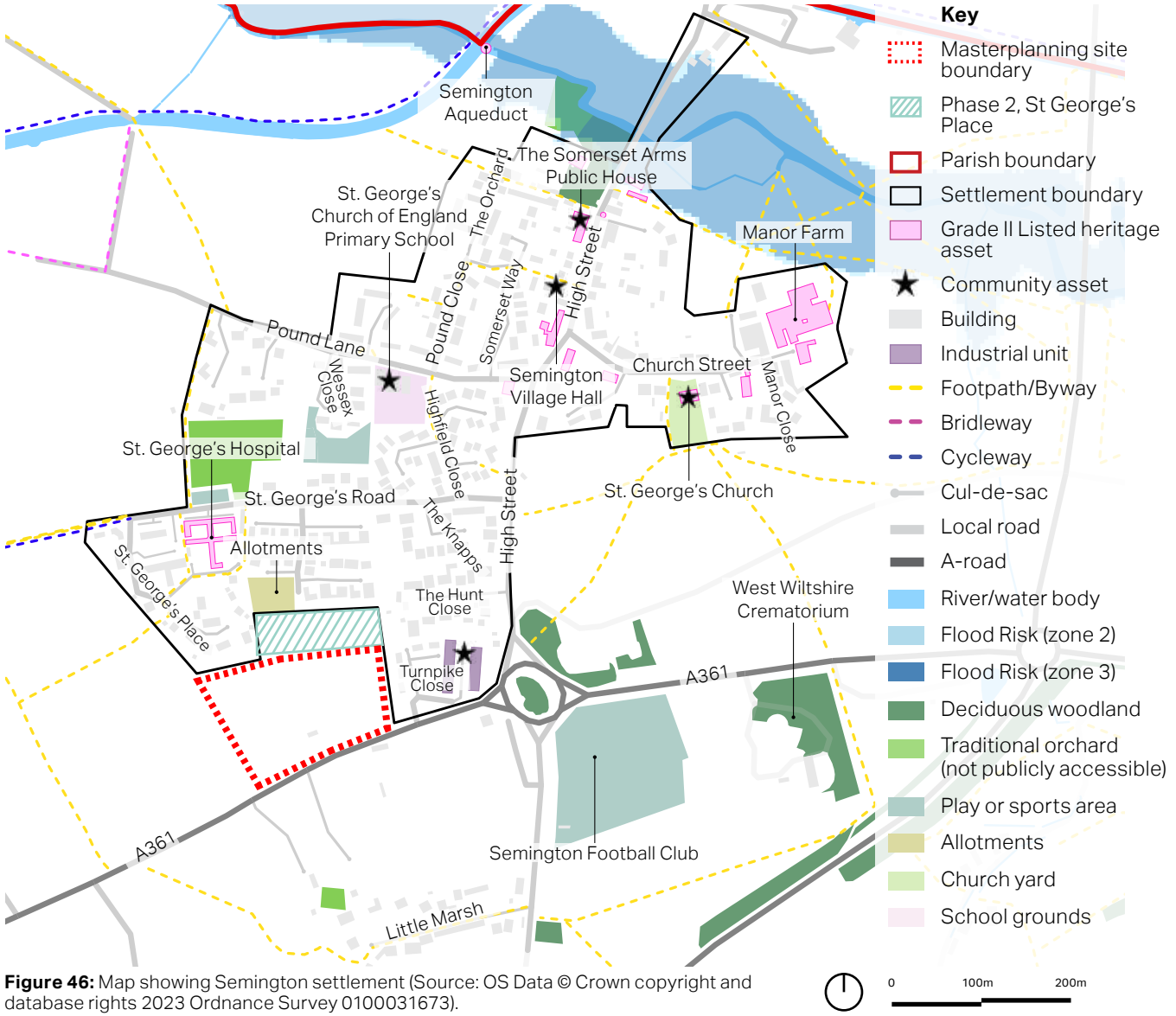

Figure 46: Map showing Semington settlement (Source: OS Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

Surrounding context (continued)

Urban form

The surrounding area has a mixed urban form, with post war development surrounding the site. This includes very recent development to the north. The road network is mainly residential cul-de-sacs in an organic layout.

Scale

21st century development at a consistent two storey housing with some bungalow development in clusters and cul-de-sacs of a mixture of standard housing designs.

Figure 47: Neighbouring houses along Turnpike Close, to the east of the site

Figure 48: View from the footpath leading to St. George's Hospital and St. George's Road.

Figure 49: Community allotments and new homes, Kendall Lane.

Figure 50: Neighbouring industrial units and the adjoining car park, east of the site

Figure 51: Bus stop and green verges to the south east entrance to the site

Figure 52: Public realm within St. George's Place

5.2 Site features

The main site features are:

- Almost fully enclosed by hedgerows, with some gaps providing access into the site;
- Surrounding by housing to the north, with a combination of rear and front facing houses;
- An existing agricultural structure on the southern boundary.
- A grade II listed building, St. George's Hospital, which has been converted into housing, located to the north;
- Community allotments to the north of the site on Kendall Lane;
- Green verges on the side of nearby access roads and the A361;
- Bus stops along A361;
- Industrial units to the east of Turnpike Close, with some car parking spaces.

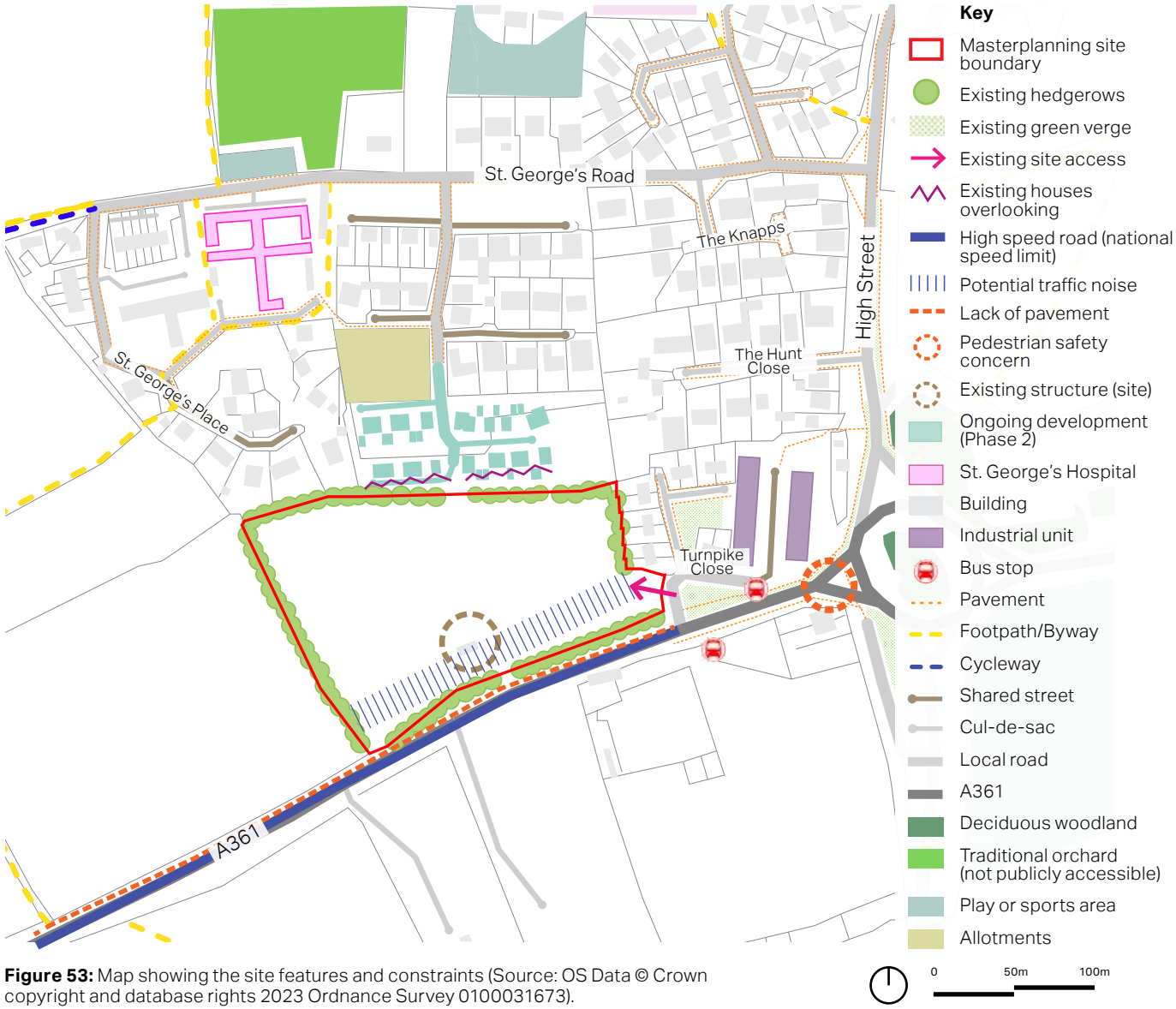

Figure 53: Map showing the site features and constraints (Source: OS Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

Site features (continued)

The site constraints are illustrated in Figure 53 and listed below.

- Potential for noise pollution from the A361;
- Pedestrian crossing at the A361/ Semington roundabout needs improvements;
- National speed limit along A361 applies and currently no footpath along the northern edge;
- Lack of direct connectivity to PRoW network to the west.

Figure 54 illustrates locations of site views photographs, which are displayed overleaf.

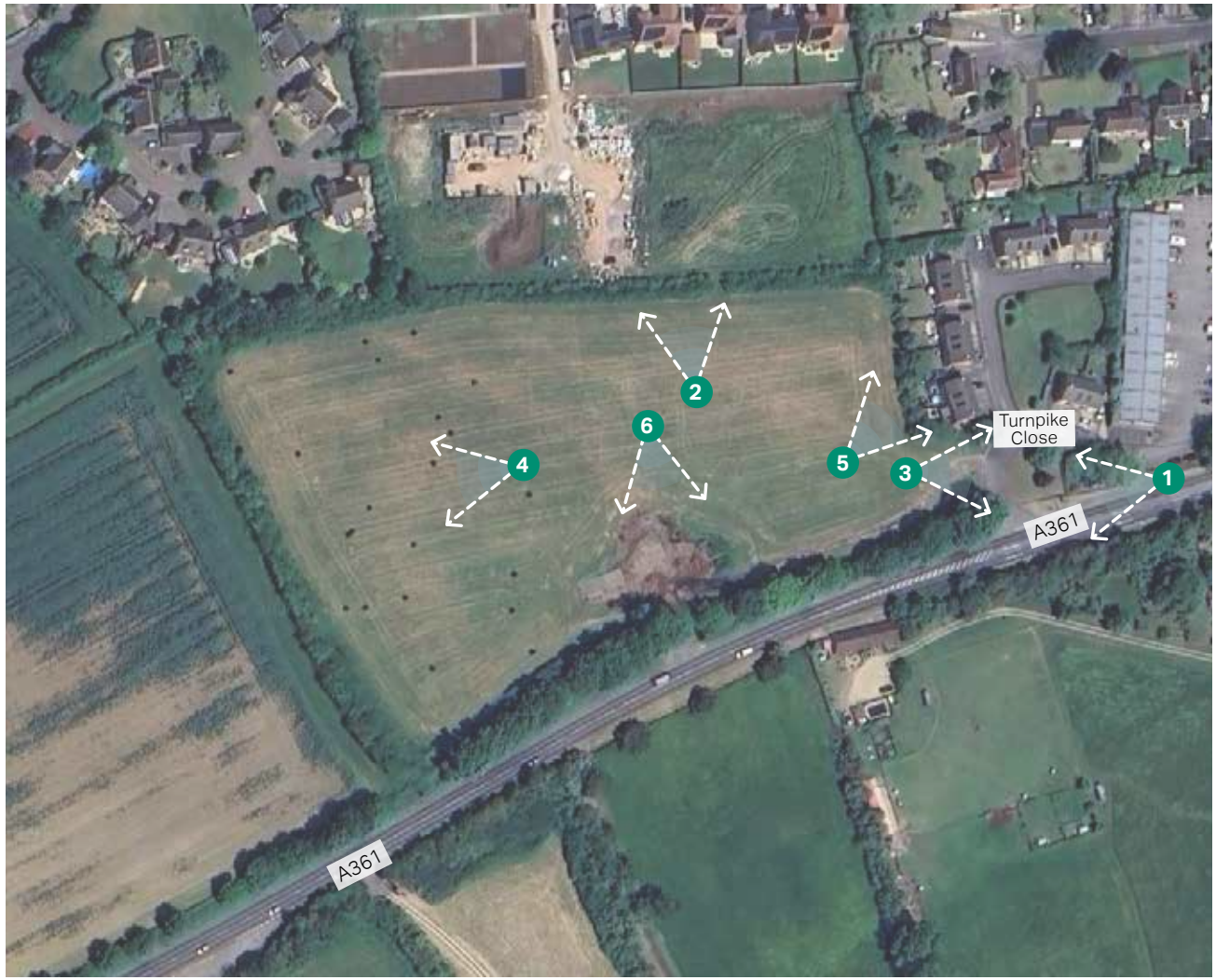

Figure 54: Locations of site views photographs (Source: OS Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

Site features continued

Figure 55: View of bus stop and Turnpike Close junction.

Figure 56: View looking north towards existing hedges and the Kendall Lane development beyond it.

Figure 57: View of the site access at Turnpike Close.

Figure 58: View from the site to the west showing existing hedgerows and overhead pylons.

Figure 59: View from the site to the east at the site boundary and the rear of houses along Turnpike Road.

Figure 60: View of the existing structure within the site situated along the southern boundary

5.3 Site opportunities

The key masterplan opportunities are:

- A village shop forming a key landmark at the eastern site gateway;
- Potential for active travel connections to the main village of Semington and its facilities;
- Potential improvements to road safety, such as pedestrian crossings;
- More convenient vehicular access to Turnpike Close; and
- Improvements to site accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists from the A361, Turnpike Close and St. George's Road.

Additionally, the opportunities below have been recognised as desirable:

- Affordable homes;
- Usable and accessible open space and play facility;
- Financial contributions towards updates to the village community facilities (i.e. tennis courts and play areas).

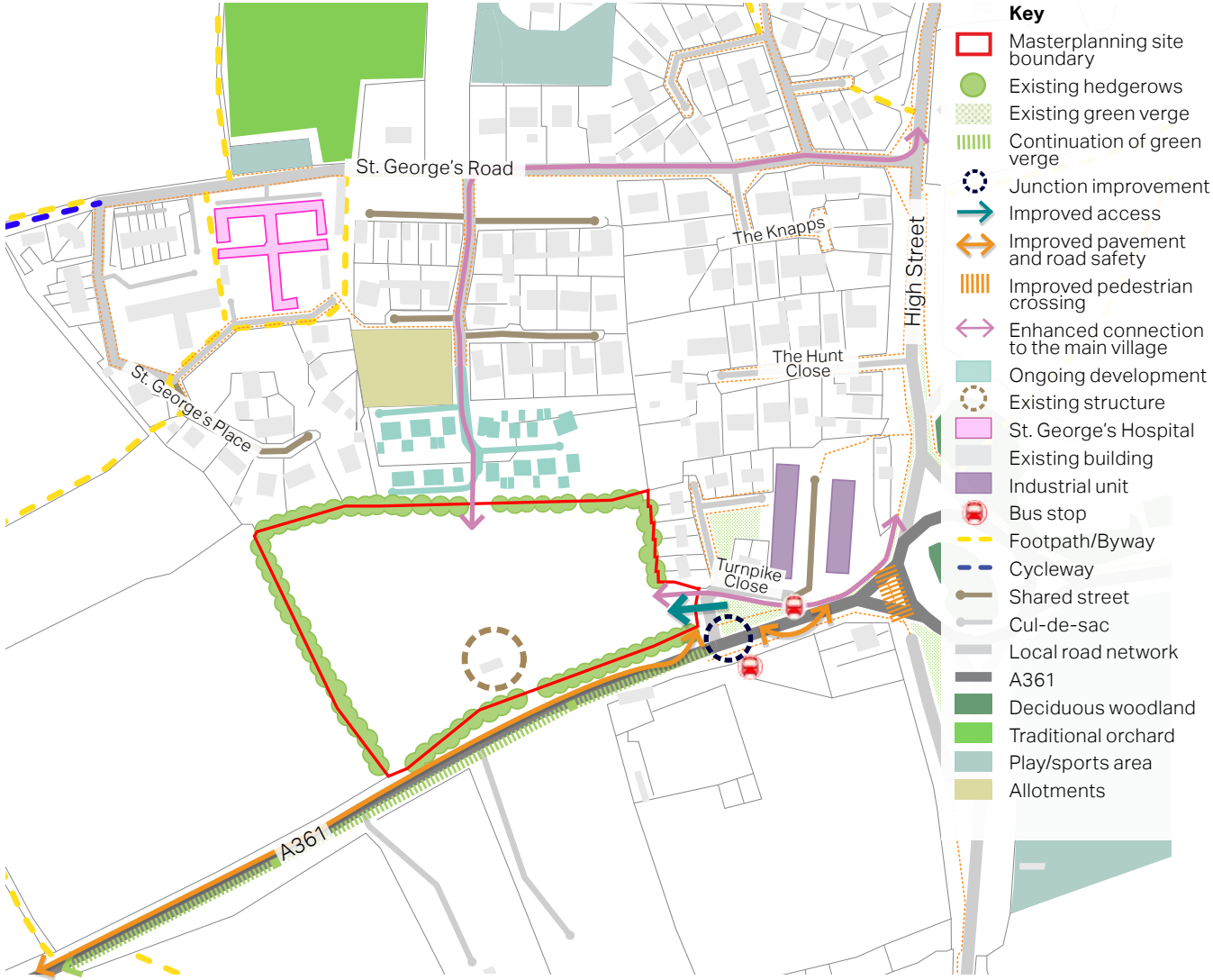

Figure 61: Map showing site opportunities (Source: OS Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

5.4 Emerging Semington Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Development Planning Steering Group started work on this plan in 2021 together with Place Studio consultants and members of the community. The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) document was at the stage of Regulation 15 at the time of writing this report. Among other policies, Policy SEM 10 describes the studied site to the west of Turnpike Close with allocation of housing and a village shop.

POLICY SEM 10: Land to the west of Turnpike Close (the Auction Field)

2. To enable the provision of the village shop, up to 40 dwellings will be supported on the site. The housing proposal should:

a. Meet local needs, as identified in the Semington Parish Housing Needs Survey (2021), the Swindon and Wiltshire SHMA 2017, and any subsequent updates, this should include at least 30% (or higher in line with Wiltshire Local Plan) affordable homes;

b. Include a site-specific flood risk assessment. All proposed development will need to pass the sequential test from all sources of flooding. When preparing flood risk assessments, local flood risk sources must be considered, not only information available from the Environment Agency;

c. Meet the requirements of the Semington Character and Design Statement in terms of the design, layout, form, heights and materials. The development should reflect the existing low-medium density character of the wider area; and,

d. Not be occupied until the village shop is constructed and capable of occupation for its intended use.

Note: Map 13 – Allocation of land west of Turnpike Close in the Semington NP (Figure 62) shows indicative layout and site access proposal. See next chapter for the updated site access in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 62[1].

1 Wiltshire Core Strategy https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/372/Wiltshire-Core-Strategy-adopted-2015/pdf/Wcs.pdf?m=1574343137353

Figure 62: Map 13 – Allocation of land west of Turnpike Close (source: Semington Neighbourhood Plan).

Design proposals

06

6. Design proposals

6.1 Site design principles

New development must provide the following:

Access and Movement

- Points of access for cars, disabled users and emergency vehicles;
- A well connected movement network which gives people the maximum choice in how to make their journeys. This includes by public transport, walking, cycling and by car;
- Active transport should be prioritised by providing direct and attractive walking and cycling routes along popular paths of movement to key locations, such as the PROW network / school. Pedestrians should be prioritised and traffic calming measures and improvements for pedestrians and cyclists should be provided.

Community

- Spaces for social interactions and community activities. Community spaces can come in the form of public spaces, growing space and orchards, informal open space, and programmes such as Youth Groups or Car Pool Clubs;
- Homes at multiple sizes to accommodate various family types. Homes that are desired locally, including affordable homes for first-time buyers, bungalows, self-build plot, suitable family homes and homes for elderly people, to provide a balanced social mix to the community;
- Usable open space and a play facility (in accordance with Wiltshire Open Space Standards and Open Space Provision Policy RLF2);
- Contributions to the nearby Tennis Court facility and Wessex Close Playing area.

Nature and the environment

- Protect and enhance the high quality natural environment of Semington parish and its surrounds;
- Well designed, and varied green space that will increase biodiversity in the area by increasing habitat area for native flora and fauna;
- Provision of well planted landscapes and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce the risk of surface water flooding (see section 4.13 Water Management for more information on SuDS);
- A mix of both public and private green spaces, such as front and back gardens, will help to support a green corridor across Semington parish.

Design proposals (continued)

6.2 Site concept

New development must provide the following:

Access and Movement

- Main site access from the existing entry on Turnpike Close;
- Access to the gateway village shop from the site entry on Turnpike Close;
- A well connected and clear street layout that has a hierarchy of street types;
- Walking and cycling connections to the PRoW and village centre via the east and northern site boundary;
- Potential new pedestrian crossings along A361 and improvement to overall road safety.

Community

- A new village shop located off Turnpike Close creating a landmark and a focal point by the site access;
- A new high-quality play area located in the centre of the site that is overlooked by housing for natural surveillance.

Nature and the environment

- A natural wetland area along the western edge that features native planting to reduce the risk of flooding and that will increase biodiversity in the area;
- The retention of existing hedgerows, with new planting where necessary to strengthen and bolster any gaps;
- New tree planting along the southern boundary to visually soften the edge along the A361;
- A spacious, green buffer along the western edge to provide a natural transition to the countryside.

Urban form

- Lower density detached homes located to the western edge along the edge of the open countryside. Low-medium density homes elsewhere;
- Active frontages, i.e. opened directly to the main open space and routes into the site, with overlooking to ensure safety and neighbourhood interaction;
- A legible continuous building line and a clear defensible boundary;
- 1-2 storeys high homes that harmonise with the surrounding context;
- Pitched roofs, and roofline broken by gaps between properties of low-medium density and tree planting;
- A sense of arrival at the entrance into the site marked by landmark buildings;
- A palette of materials that reflect the character of the village.

Boundary treatments

- Green boundary treatments and low-impact permeable fencing to reinforce rural feel and allow wildlife corridors.

Car parking

- Accommodating for shop users, refuse and delivery with landscaped parking;
- Dominance of on-plot parking, following Wiltshire's LTP3 Car Parking Strategy[1].

1 https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/7623/Wiltshire-Local-Transport-Plan-2011-2026-Car-Parking-Strategy/pdf/ltp-car-parking-strategy-2015-march.pdf?m=1637233473380

Figure 63: Map showing concept masterplanning framework (Source: OS Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

6.3 Precedents

New development must provide good quality design of public spaces, including:

Access and Movement

Figure 64: Pedestrian and cycling lane, Witham.

Figure 65: Footpath through a residential area separated with wooden bollards, Babraham.

Figure 66: Pedestrian bridge over a swale, Witham.

Figure 67: Application of permeable and contrasting surface in a shared street, Strumpshaw.

Shop frontage

Figure 68: Village shop featuring a communication board and post office, Creaton.

Figure 69: Village shop, Titchmarsh (source: https://titchmarsh.info/titchmarsh-village-shop)

Precedents continued

Public realm

Figure 74: Green space with seating areas overspill from a local pub, Babraham.

Figure 75: Example of community space with a central water feature, and street furniture (source: https://landezine.com/futureproof-village-realm-alpen-by-felixx).

Figure 70: Good quality street furniture using natural materials, Creaton.

Figure 71: Central green open space overlooked by historic properties, Creaton.

Play area

Figure 72: Play area featuring natural materials and protected with permeable wooden fencing, Ockley.

Figure 73: Play area overlooked by properties, Lightmoor (source: https://www.bvt.org.uk/news-and-events/new-village-green-and-play-area-opens-in-lightmoor/)

Delivery

07

7. Next steps

The report can be used as a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development in Semington. The report will be used in different ways by a variety of actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table.

Actors	How they will use the design guidelines
Applicants, developers, & landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Design guidance and codes, and the Design proposals as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The Design guidance and codes and the Design proposals should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design guidance and codes are complied with.
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.

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