

NEWBURY TOWN DESIGN STATEMENT

FINAL DRAFT AS ADOPTED

“The challenge is to analyse the character of the town, identifying its best assets and systematically begin to plan so as to conserve and enhance a beautiful and historic English market town for future generations to enjoy.”

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1. Introduction

Aims and Objectives

The aim was to analyse the character of Newbury and produce a document providing a consensus view of the local community that could have a positive influence on any future changes in the town, by conserving the ‘best of the old’, and encouraging sympathetic new development.

Originally, (in June 2003) Newbury Town Council’s objective was to produce a **Town Design Statement** conforming to guidelines set in December 2002 by *The Countryside Agency*. At the time town and village design statements could be adopted by the local planning authority (West Berkshire Council in this case) as *supplementary planning guidance (SPG)*. However the introduction of *The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* resulted in changes to the planning system. West Berkshire Council is no longer able to produce new *supplementary planning guidance*, the nearest equivalent being the more formalised ‘supplementary planning documents’.

In order to keep the valuable contribution village and town design statements make to the planning system, West Berkshire Council’s approach is to adopt appropriate future town and village design statements that provide a consensus view of the local community, whether they are prepared as part of a wider parish plan or as a stand alone document. Although village and town design statements will not have the formal statutory status of supplementary planning documents, the Council’s intention is that they will act as non-statutory local authority approved guidance which is a ‘*material consideration*’ in terms of determining planning applications.

Scope

This Town Design Statement (TDS) is intended to supplement policies in the existing West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 as it relates to the town of Newbury. As a ‘*material consideration*’ the guidance contained in this Design Statement provides an explanation of West Berkshire Council’s policy position and while it is not a statutory document, it has been subject to public consultation. The TDS was adopted by the Council’s Newbury Area Forum on 19th April 2005. Compliance with its guidelines will not by itself guarantee planning permission as each case is judged on its merits.

This document should be read in conjunction with other guidance that West Berkshire Council has produced, such as that on ‘House Extensions’ which was adopted as SPG on 15th July 2004 and ‘Shopfronts and Signs’ which was adopted as SPG on 3rd July 2003.

As West Berkshire Council has published '**Newbury Vision 2025**', much of the information on possible future development in the Town Centre and Industrial sections has been sourced from there and no specific comment made on these two areas.

Newbury is a predominantly Georgian town, and since much of the town centre has been identified as a Conservation Area, it should be noted that many of the shops and business premises are subject to special planning regulations.

Procedure and Public Consultation

A Town Plan Sub Committee was set up by the Town Council's Planning and Highways Committee in summer 2003. Following early discussions with West Berkshire Council's Planning and Transport Strategy Service, the Town Council decided that the best way forward was to produce an initial draft document before public consultation began. This was seen as a necessity due to the large size of the subject and essential to focus future comment.

The Design Statement is specific to Newbury Town, and this was then divided up into eleven 'Areas', often following established boundaries. These eleven 'Areas' were not intended to be homogenous - historical waves of building have produced distinct period styles. However the location of local primary schools, open spaces and shops, together with awkward boundaries such as main roads, help to mould residents into social communities, irrespective of their style of housing. The Character of each 'Area' was then described and usually this necessitated further internal division. From this recommended design guidelines were drawn out where appropriate. It was not the intention to cover every road. This initial task was the work of town councillors resident in or very familiar with the eleven 'Areas' and involved contributions from outside the sub-committee.

Five Public Consultation Workshops were held in the Town Hall from January to March 2004. These consisted of a 20 minute Powerpoint presentation explaining the aims of the Design Statement, followed by a brief look at several 'Areas'. Photographs were used as much as possible. The five workshops focussed on different 'Areas' but were made inclusive, as the whole of the draft text, section by section, was displayed around the council chamber on large boards and illustrated with numerous photographs. Afterwards residents were able to ask questions and some interesting discussions ensued.

250 full colour posters were printed and the workshops advertised widely through a mailing to important local organisations in the Town. These included The Newbury Society, schools, church communities, residents associations, the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme representatives, community centres, the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust and conservation groups. In response to a special request, a final presentation was given at Greenham Community Centre at the end of March 2004.

In addition there were large illustrated displays (including copies of the Draft for reference) for four weeks in both Newbury Library and the reception area of Newbury College. These publicised that information about the TDS and the actual first Draft were available on the Town Council's website or from the Town Hall itself. Suggested amendments from this public consultation process provided detailed clarification of certain issues and helped strengthen the document, whilst indicating strong support for the style and content of the draft as well as its aims. In particular *The Newbury Society* endorsed it wholeheartedly.

Second Public Consultation 2005

Formal consultation on the Draft TDS was undertaken for four weeks from 4th March to 1st April 2005. West Berkshire Council consulted with 228 statutory agencies, national interest groups, relevant local authorities, Parish/Town Councils, local interest groups and local developers (or their agents). In addition, copies of the draft document were also made available for inspection at the Council Offices in Market Street, Newbury, all public libraries in the District and on the Council's web site. Comments were taken on board as appropriate.

In addition to this formal consultation, Newbury Town Council's website had an updated Draft TDS with a linked Questionnaire, and publicity for the public consultation was widespread in the town, through a poster campaign and mailings to residents' group, schools and other local organisations. As a result of these consultations several amendments were made, most notably the addition of an 11th Principle in the Conclusion.

The final version of the Newbury Town Design Statement was adopted as a '*material consideration*' by West Berkshire Council at the Newbury Area Forum on 19th April 2005.

2. Historical Development

Newbury originated and grew at a convenient bridging point of the River Kennet, the main tributary of the Thames. It is halfway between London and Bath, at the crossing of main road links from east to west and from the south coast to the Midlands, and set between the ecclesiastical centres of Winchester and Oxford. The town as such was created at the time of the Norman Conquest and the earliest plots, in Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street, which became available to traders and craftsmen to rent from the Lord of the Manor, date back to shortly after the Norman Conquest.

Prosperity and trade grew in the 15th Century when the town became famous for its wool weaving. The surrounding Downs provided grazing for sheep while the river was utilised for water power and for washing wool. The market town was granted a Charter by Queen Elizabeth in 1596 when the Borough of Newbury became a truly independent town governed by its own Council. The town's progress and prosperity may be traced in some of its notable old buildings – St Nicolas Church, rebuilt in the 16th century and funded by donations from local cloth merchants; Shaw House, also built by clothiers; the earliest Almshouses in 'The City', built by brewers; and the picturesque Weavers Cottages at West Mills. St Bartholomew's School is one of the oldest schools in England, founded on Lady Day, March 25th 1466 in The Litten, a Scheduled Monument over 500 years old and still standing today in 'The City' (part of the wider Conservation Area covering the town centre).

By the late 18th century, the cloth trade was in decline, unable to compete with the north of England. Greenham Mill, the most progressive, closed in 1817. However the town's economy was revitalised by the rise of the coaching trade and canal transport. Newbury's position, half way between London and the now fashionable spa town of Bath, meant over-night stops in the two-day journey by coach. Evidence of this abounds – several old 18th century inns with large arched entrances for coach and horses still exist, notably the Bacon Arms, The Chequers and The Wagon and Horses.

Newbury's market place is bordered by imposing Georgian facades and the fine Georgian terrace of coachmen's houses in Shaw Road reflects the prosperity of their trade at this time. Local interest in horses resulted in a racing track at Wash Common before the existing Racecourse was built in 1905.

Good communication towards London, initially by canal and then by railway, encouraged trade in agricultural produce and the first industries – brick making, iron foundries, and joinery works. Housing for the workforce was built in West Fields and East Fields at the end of the 19th Century and has continued ever since as the population expanded. Also notable are the large housing estates built after WWII – some by the newly created United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) for its employees at Aldermaston and Harwell, others developed by the local authority.

During the 1980s, Newbury's position, with its rail and greatly improved road links to London, were again responsible for the transformation of a quiet market town into a thriving business centre for 'high tech' industries. The M4 motorway and the A34 By Pass gave Newbury convenient access to major trunk routes in the south of England, further enhancing its attractiveness to commerce and industry. Consequently, the need for new housing has generated considerable pressure and forced up land values. This has encouraged infilling and new large scale housing developments, as well as generating an increase of traffic into the town centre.

Newbury is fortunate in having both a thriving community arts centre in the Corn Exchange and the Watermill Theatre at Bagnor, just two miles out of town. The Corn Exchange presents almost 400 events a year, ranging from plays performed by professional drama groups to concerts by local school children and forms an integral part of the cultural life of the town.

The Town has a small but important tourist industry relating to its historic centre, boating on the canal and the famous Racecourse. Moreover, the Corn Exchange and the annual Spring Festival attract theatre-goers and music lovers from a wide regional catchment area. These visitors generate an increase in trade and this prosperity is important to the local economy.

3. The Landscape Setting

The Town of Newbury is set in beautiful countryside, with the canal and rivers cutting an attractive green passage through its centre and along Victoria Park.

Geologically the surrounding area is chalk downland being part of the beautiful Berkshire Downs, much of which is part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The town of Newbury (at around 75 metres above sea level in the centre) lies on both sides of the valley of the River Kennet, with the land rising about 20 metres to two plateaux, before descending again a mile to the north to the River Lambourn and about two miles to the south, to the River Enborne at Wash Common. Parts of the residential suburbs of Wash Common are at 120 metres above sea level. This topography produces green corridors alongside the rivers and canal, adding visual relief to the urban environment and provides welcome recreational areas surprisingly near the town centre. The width of the river/canal corridor varies - in some areas there is room for a proper footpath along the banks – eg the River Lambourn corridor widens as it passes Walton Way in NE Newbury.

In addition hill top residential areas enjoy spectacular views over the town and surrounding countryside e.g. from the top of Kiln Road, Newtown Road, and Essex Street (all have views of Donnington Castle), also Greenham Road, Elizabeth Avenue and Wendan Road.

On three sides the open countryside is less than a mile and a half from the town centre. The suburb of Wash Common stretches some two miles from the centre along the Andover Road and is backed by farmland on both sides. Only on the east is there almost continuous development along the A4 into the residential areas of the neighbouring town of Thatcham.

Further details of the character of the landscape surrounding Newbury can be found in the following landscape character assessments:

Newbury District-wide Landscape Character Assessment (Newbury District Council 1993);
North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (Countryside Agency 2002);
Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit 2003)

*The Council has this year commissioned the **Newbury Historic Character Study** as part of its commitment to ensuring the preservation of the historic character of the town. It will provide a resource for better informing future development and planning strategies in relation to the historic environment. The area covered extends across much of the modern built-up area of the town and ultimately will be linked to a wider project which the Council is undertaking to map the Historic Landscape Character of the District.*

4.1 North West Newbury

Character of the Area

Starting immediately beyond the north end of the main shopping street, Northbrook Street, the residential area of North West Newbury is bordered by historic coaching roads – the Old Bath Road leading west and the London Road going east. The road north to Oxford bisects it with the bypass (Western Avenue) slicing through east to west. The A339 flyover imposes the eastern boundary, while the water meadows of the River Lambourn form a natural green corridor between Newbury and Donnington to the north. To the west residential development leads into Speen, whose community produced a *Village Design Statement* in 2002 (please refer to page 9 for further details).

In this Area there are four distinct sections: the residential area of Brummell Grove; the Oxford Road area which includes some 19th Century housing at the approach to the town centre; Northcroft Park just west of the Town Centre; and the post war ‘Tree Estates’ built by the local authority on either side of Western Avenue. The whole area is near enough to the town centre to enable residents to walk to the shops.

Brummell Grove

Brummell Grove is a relatively flat area on higher ground between the Kennet and Lambourn river valleys. It gets its name from the two roads forming its boundary with Speen Parish – Brummell Road and Grove Road. (The name of the former commemorates the Brummell family who lived nearby, the most infamous member of which was the Regency dandy Beau Brummell.) Proximity to open countryside, coupled with striking views of Donnington Castle on its mound, gives this residential area a special ambience

Brummell Grove, (stretching from Grove Road to Western Avenue) was developed in the 1950s on green field land (formerly a pig farm and allotments) compulsorily purchased from Sutton Estates by the former Newbury Borough Council. Subsequently the Council sold off some land as larger plots for private housing in the area immediately south of Grove Road, where detached houses were built in the mid 1950s.

Brummell Road consists predominantly of short terraces of three bedroomed homes built by the local authority in the 1950s, with a variety of housing including bungalows and some small blocks of flats in the four roads leading off to the east.

In general, the front gardens are quite deep and bordered with low brick boundary walls, or low hedges. The wide, tree-lined grass verges and wide pavements, give this area a spacious and established ‘green’ feel.

The presence of a primary school – Robert Sandilands – a pub, large ‘corner shop’ and a spacious recreation ground with playground equipment, generate foot traffic, thus enabling residents to meet each other informally. In particular, Digby Road - a long circular road of 1950s local authority built semis - has its own residents’ group and a small adjacent play park. As elsewhere in Newbury, some of the post war local authority houses are now owner occupied, but most are owned by a housing association.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Brummell Grove estate are:

Primarily residential area with a primary school, corner shop and pub.

Pleasant variety of house styles, terraced and semis in repeated rhythms

Established medium to small ornamental road side trees, some grass verges on wide pavements.

Fairly deep front gardens with low brick boundary walls or hedges and established planting, contributing to the ‘green’ and spacious feel of the neighbourhood

Views north to the golf course, countryside and Donnington Castle beyond.

Possibilities for enhancement such as improvement of the landscape setting around the School and the provision of more roadside trees

The following principles are suggested:

Maintain the pleasant visual rhythm of the street scene, avoiding overbearing extensions, which can produce a ‘terraced’ effect and inappropriate ‘infilling’.

Whenever possible, opportunities should be taken to establish landscape features which can give a sense of place and definition to different areas within the estate.

The Oxford Road

Acting as an approach to the town centre, the Oxford Road area is mainly residential. It has several listed buildings and notable Victorian houses, particularly in Donnington Square, with its elegant four storey town houses and lovely walled gardens. Adjacent and contrasting with this is a small higher density 1960s estate. Further away from the town there are larger privately built detached properties with good sized gardens, including Castle Grove and its cul de sacs.

In the early 2000s the large site of the old Newbury College was redeveloped into a high density mixed estate of some 120 homes – flats, townhouses, semis and detached houses, with lots of decorative features. There is a landscaped feature in the centre, with a mock ‘bandstand’ surrounded by mature trees. Many of the mature trees on the site have been maintained, which has helped to integrate the development into its surroundings. The scale of these three storey blocks echoes the tall Victorian town houses opposite on the Oxford Road.

Diagonally opposite is a Waitrose supermarket, partially hidden behind high walls and the mature trees on the roundabout. The listed Georgian building adjacent to the site (fronting onto the Old Bath Road) has been converted into apartments and is now flanked on either side by blocks of apartments of contrasting modern appearance.

On the south side of Western Avenue is Speenhamland primary school, which has retained a Victorian schoolhouse, in close proximity to a small number of 19th century terraces. Here there is also more modern high-density urban housing and flats as well as large residential blocks for elderly people. This neighbourhood leads into car parks and the rear of hotels, adding to its busy urban character.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Oxford Road are:

Near the town a large supermarket dominates, with a mix of period and modern offices nearby.

A mainly residential area north of the roundabout, which acts as a gateway to the town centre.

A core of Victorian properties of character, with boundaries such as red brick walls and mature trees and hedges, sitting tightly against the back of pavements.

A 21st century high density development sits comfortably in the Victorian surroundings.

Further on, large detached 20th Century properties with deep front gardens, mature trees and shrubs, give a prosperous feel to a main gateway into the town.

The following principles are suggested:

Where practicable, the re-use of detached Victorian properties set in spacious grounds should be sought as an alternative to demolition and redevelopment, in order to preserve the visual character and setting of such properties and their surroundings. This could apply to conversion to both residential and commercial use.

Any future development should retain the spacious character of the area, conserve and enhance existing planting and reflect and respect the area's architecture.

Northcroft Park

Immediately west of the town centre, the high density Northcroft Estate, built in the 1980s, has an imaginative layout of two and three-storey terraces and flats of varying designs. A large 21st Century gated development of apartments extended the residential area down to the river. The more spacious, 'neo Georgian' estate of detached houses was built on the sloping grounds of Goldwell House. Both developments border onto parkland, which runs down to the river and canal. Here there is evidence of landscaping in the former Goldwell House Estate with its many mature trees which dominate the skyline. There is one pedestrian crossing over the canal here to the south of the town, which is well used

Bordering the western slopes of Goldwell Park is a quiet, leafy private road – Croft Lane –consisting mainly of 1950s detached houses and bungalows with large established gardens, and many mature trees.

A striking avenue of mature lime trees along Northcroft Lane connects the parkland, the Leisure Centre, the surrounding playing fields and the canal corridor, with the town centre and creates an important vista. From the top of the grassy slopes there are views of the spires of St Nicolas Church and the Town Hall. The arrival of spring is heralded each year with a massive display of daffodils, planted by the local community, between the lime trees and along the edge of the park slopes. This whole area is greatly valued by residents and is well used – here there is a Play Group, a well equipped childrens’ playground, and a Cricket Club. In addition local schoolchildren learn to swim in the Leisure Centre. Now the site of the annual Michaelmas Fair, in October the park erupts into a burst of bright lights, fairground tunes and excited shrieks.

Immediately to the west, the open land of Speen Moors is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and contains water meadows and rare wet alder woodlands. Here there is a popular walk from the residential areas of the town along the canal towpath, over the canal by the Enborne Bridge and through the peaceful riverside scenery of Speen Moors. A part is also designated a cSAC – candidate Special Area of Conservation. There is a Thames Water pumping station in Moor Lane which has supplied Newbury with drinking water for over a century, as well as several important fresh water boreholes nearby.

Speen Village Design Statement was produced in 2002 and guidelines relating to the Moors are relevant to the undeveloped riverside area between Northcroft Park and the old railway line, which forms the western boundary of the Town. Extract from pages 6 & 7: ... “3.3 Wildlife and Habitat Conservation

Speen Moor is designated as a Wildlife Heritage Site (WHS) and also a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) for the rare Desmoulin’s Whorl Snail. The area is entered into the Countryside Stewardship Scheme by the landowner. This area is liable to flooding which was a key feature in the past to bring silt from the river to the land to make it more fertile.

The River Kennet (and its tributaries) is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a national designation, which recognises its diverse flora and fauna.

Wet Alder Woodlands – These are an increasingly rare habitat, so the alder woods at Speen Moor have now developed into an area of high conservation value, supporting a diversity of bird (notably red kite) and invertebrate communities. It is not uncommon to see deer, fox and other wild animals. Part of this has been designated as an SSSI and cSAC.

Unimproved or natural grasslands – apart from one, all the grass fields on Speen Moor are ‘unimproved’, i.e. they have never been ploughed, re-sown or fertilised, being too wet for tractors. Because of this they still contain a wide range of wildflower and grass species. Such wildflower meadows are now amongst the rarest and most prized wildlife habitats. The majority of wildflower meadows and pastures in the country have been destroyed since the Second World War.

3.4 Planning Guidelines

PG4: The southern section of the former railway cutting forms a strong visual feature in the landscape and a natural habitat for wildlife, which should be conserved. Public access to this area should also be considered. “

Running along the top of Goldwell Park is the historic Old Bath Road - an interesting blend of new and old business premises, several notable Georgian listed buildings and a neat line of nine 1960s detached houses set back along an access crescent, with large front and back gardens. This pleasing gateway to the town centre is enhanced by many mature trees, proximity to the park and wide road and pavements. Castle House, now converted into apartments, used to be a coaching inn and Goldwell House is now home to several businesses.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Northcroft Park neighbourhood are:

A mainly residential area immediately west of the town centre, bordering on old parkland

The adjoining Speen Moors and river/canal corridor, providing a 'green lung' near the town centre.

The heavily used recreational facilities provided by the parks, the Leisure Centre and playing fields

An important view of the town from the top of the slopes of Goldwell Park and along Old Bath Road., as well as a striking avenue of lime trees along Northcroft Lane.

Some native hedging bordering the park, walls and fencing vary.

The following principles are suggested:

The design of future development in this area should respect the recreational role and ecological value of Northcroft and Goldwell Park

The green space of Goldwell Park should be preserved as parkland for recreational use.

Any future development in this area should conserve and enhance the largely open and undeveloped character of Goldwell Park

Any new developments overlooking the Parks should be partially screened using native hedgerow & trees.

Gaps in the lime avenue should be filled so the uniform line is maintained.

Western Avenue Tree Estates

On either side of Western Avenue the residential 'Tree Estates' (so called because the roads were named after trees, e.g. Almond and Cherry), were built by the former Newbury Borough Council in the 1950s. They consist of semi detached, short terraces and some bungalows, with generous front and back gardens, wide pavements and roadside trees. Semi circular road layouts are a feature and these estates are served by a small parade of shops and primary school. Immediately past the residential development, near to the banks of the Lambourn River, lie Shaw Social Club, a separate Scouts Hut and a Nursery School next to a children's playground surrounded by green space. These amenities facilitate the establishment of natural communities within the estates. With well established trees and planting and with some variety due to extensions and alterations, these residential roads have a pleasing visual rhythm.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Tree Estate are:

Pleasant variety of house styles, in repeated rhythms

Roads with wide grass verges and houses set back in front gardens

Ornamental street trees (species used as street names, which is particularly distinctive when the trees are in flower), small to medium size ornamental trees in gardens and hedges

The following principles are suggested:

Maintain the overall pleasing visual rhythm of the street scene avoiding extensions which produce a 'terraced' effect

Corner plots are particularly sensitive and their design should be carefully considered

Over mature street trees should be replaced using trees which the roads are named after e.g. cherries in Cherry Close

Whenever possible opportunities should be taken to enhance the landscape setting around the School

4.2 North East Newbury

Character of the Area

This Area is bordered by the London Road to the south, the flyover of the A339 to the west, a small stretch of open land to the east before the start of Thatcham, and more extensive open countryside to the north. The River Lambourn traverses diagonally through, providing ecological diversity and a green corridor with good tree cover.

The Area divides naturally into three sections: Shaw Road, Kiln Road/Turnpike Road, and London Road.

Shaw Road leads north from the Town, with historic properties such as Smiths Crescent and those around the old Mill, and a village centre. From there, running east, **Kiln Road** (further on Turnpike Road) has 23 junctions (14 on the north side and 9 on the south) with side roads leading to residential areas built in various stages over the last 100 years. These include some distinctive local authority housing from the 1950s, but are mainly private estates of modest homes built in the 1960s and 1970s. There are also some large business units, notably Quantel and Vodafone. Lying to the south, the **London Road** was developed from the second half of the 19th Century, retaining some Victorian buildings nearest the town and side roads developed post WWII. There are some old business premises near the town and further out a large business park opposite superstores. The trees along the Kennet and Avon Canal corridor can be glimpsed through gaps between the superstores from the road.

Shaw Road (and part of Shaw Hill)

The Shaw Road starts with a sweeping Georgian terrace (listed) of some 60 houses built in 1823 for coachmen. The old pub at the south end is Georgian as well, and used to be called The Robin Hood Inn, hence the name for the roundabout built in the 1960s. The bridge over the River Lambourn is the precise boundary between Newbury and Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish. However the public house – The Cock Inn - early 19th century - opposite the general store, together with the three shops just around the corner in Kiln Road, are convenient for all living in the neighbourhood and are commonly referred to as ‘Shaw Village’. The Old Mill, with its surrounding buildings, dates back to 1760, though there has been a mill there on the River Lambourn since the Domesday Book. The simple architectural style of this attractive complex of red brick buildings is echoed all around the neighbourhood.

Near the river are three listed buildings, Shaw Bridge House being the most picturesque, and the centre of the village has a complex of small developments with houses from different historic periods, producing an interesting blend with lots of character. A footpath from St Richards Road, with its compact row of pretty terrace cottages, connects Shaw Road to the post war housing estate around Newport Road

Sandwiched between the A339 flyover and the Shaw Road are elderly people’s bungalows and residential accommodation built in the late 1950s and 1960s. Some relief from the view of the road interchange is afforded by the triangular Recreation Ground, a football pitch for the firemen from the station opposite.

Shaw Road rises steeply north beyond the twin roundabout in the village and is in fact called Shaw Hill. Trees and thick hedges on high banks line this road. There are two large Edwardian residences here, set well back and hardly visible from the road. The town boundary includes the award winning Shaw Cemetery - beyond that is the farmland of Shaw Parish - open countryside only a mile north of the town centre. Privacy for mourners inside the cemetery is very important to residents, as are the very highest standards in landscaping and setting.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of Shaw Road/Shaw Hill:

A core of historic properties in a village centre, including a listed Georgian Terrace and picturesque old mill

The River Lambourn, which is a cSAC and a SSSI, crossing under Shaw Road

An open triangular recreation ground between a large roundabout and old people's accommodation

A cemetery at the edge of the Town boundary, adjoining open countryside

The following principles are suggested:

Future development should retain the historic mix and interesting character of the area

Whenever possible, opportunities should be taken to enhance the landscape setting of the Recreation Ground, through additional planting.

Where development takes place within the vicinity of the River Lambourn, the conservation of the river corridor, and views to it, should be a prime consideration in the design of the development.

Whenever possible opportunities should be taken to enhance the landscape setting around Shaw Cemetery. The character and setting of the Cemetery should be a prime consideration in the design of any future development in this area.

Kiln Road & Turnpike Road

The oldest housing in Kiln Road is at the western end, near the shops - Albert Cottages are mid 19th century. Cromwell Road's earliest houses date back to 1908, with further building between the Wars and completion after WWII. Kiln Road rises steeply from the Lambourn River valley and on the top of the hill there are fine views which include the historic Donnington Castle. Front gardens are small, often with low brick walls, and the simple, red brick 'country' style is nicely echoed in late 20th century terraced housing,

The residential roads north off Kiln/Turnpike Road were privately developed from the 1960s onwards and so are very mixed, ranging from detached houses to flats. Stoney Lane and Pear Tree Lane are the longest, running on as country lanes into the open countryside of Cold Ash Parish. Immediately below Pear Tree Lane are a few large houses and some cottage type homes which were built on the old railway line, and very near the cemetery.

Walton Way runs south from Kiln Road, crossing the River Lambourn and leads into a large high density housing estate from the 1960s. Here there is a mix of house styles, with some small blocks of flats. The design is open plan, typical of the period, without prominent hedges or fencing defining individual front gardens. The openness is enhanced by the green river corridor with its footpaths and trees. A large complex for the elderly – Lambourn Court - has been built by the bridge, giving residents a peaceful riverside garden to enjoy.

A second large area of housing, at Manor Park, was built in the early 1990s, on hilly land close to the open countryside and woodland. Here there is a successful mix of house styles and sizes, with decorative details and imaginative groupings, producing a very pleasant neighbourhood with good views to open countryside. Mature trees were retained and ten years later, when gardens have become established, the estate sits well into its surroundings. Building is still continuing. These developments are surrounded by open countryside on two sides and have good links to the A4 along Waller Drive, with the primary school at Fir Tree Lane en route.

Castle Industrial Estate and **Turnpike Industrial Estate** were built on the sites of previous industrial premises.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Kiln Road/Turnpike Road neighbourhood are:

A mix of styles and ages of housing with the oldest properties at the western end.

Proximity to a picturesque old mill and surrounding red brick properties in Shaw Village

Some well established gardens providing good tree cover, particularly near the top of the hill

Open plan design of Walton Way

Edge of town setting and views to the open countryside in Shaw and around Donnington Castle

The River Lambourn in a green corridor with many trees, providing relief from the built environment and creating a footpath link to the London Road

The following principles are suggested:

Where development takes place within the vicinity of the River Lambourn, the conservation of the river corridor and views to it, should be a prime consideration in the design of the development.

Any future development should retain the open plan character of Walton Way.

The mature trees on Manor Park Estate should be preserved

South of Kiln/Turnpike Road there are again mainly 1960s and later estates of mixed housing, featuring many 'starter homes'; also post war local authority estates, including the distinctive **Gaywood Drive** area. This estate was built in two separate stages, firstly the more westerly area. Here roads and pavements are wide, originally laid out with a grass verge, which has in places been replaced with the more practical cobble stone to

accommodate parked vehicles. There are a few small road side trees, now reaching maturity, but front gardens are generally small 'open plan' lawns. A few houses have low walls or hedges and some planting..

The second stage, which extended Gaywood Drive down to meet **Fir Tree Lane**, was completed during the 1970s and continued the theme - open plan front gardens, wide roads and pavements. There is a chip shop and oriental take away in Gaywood Drive and a general store/Post Office in Avon Way. The Turnpike Community Centre and Social Club has a popular licensed bar and a hall which can be hired for private functions – it was built by local residents.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Gaywood Drive estate are:

Spacious layout with open plan front gardens, a few with low hedges or walls and wide pavements

Pleasant variety of house styles, in repeated rhythms

Not much planting or tree cover, rather hard built environment. Some on street parking

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development should respect and enhance the architectural style of the area

Corner plots are particularly sensitive and their design should be carefully considered

Further tree planting would improve and soften the built environment

Fir Tree Lane, one of the remaining original 'country lanes', has 4 detached houses at its southern end, commonly known as 'the Africans' since their white rendering and shutters reminded the locals of South African colonial houses, adding some extra character to an otherwise 1970s residential area. Just across the road is Fir Tree Lane Primary School, serving the North East area.

The multi-storey flats in Curling Way were demolished in 2000 and this has become a continuation of the 'Riverside' development on the former Turnpike School site, which is traversed by the River Lambourn in a green corridor lined with trees. The houses are of cottage mews design, some of three storeys to make best use of the slopes of the river valley. A variety of roof tiles and bricks have been used, some yellow brick walls have contrasting red brick edges and bands, and flint panels in brickwork are also a feature. Most houses have porches and overall the effect is highly decorative.

This development has incorporated the latest 'pepper pot' combination of homes, with affordable housing mixed in with private, all co-located with the new **Riverside Community Centre**.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

The key characteristics of this area are:

A contrasting mix of mature detached houses of individual design with well established gardens and many trees, and a new estate of higher density homes in a variety of sizes and designs.

The following principles are suggested:

Where development takes place within the vicinity of the River Lambourn, conservation of the river corridor should be a primary consideration in the design of the development.

West Berkshire Community Hospital

The new hospital opened in 2004 on a greenfield site on the eastern boundary of Newbury. North is the parkland of an old estate, with many striking mature trees and open downland countryside beyond; on the east a flat field forms a narrow green gap before the first houses of Thatcham.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

The key characteristics of this area are:

Green gap between Newbury and neighbouring Thatcham, enhanced by parkland with mature trees to the north, and glimpses of open countryside.

The following principles are suggested:

The green gap between Newbury and Thatcham should be retained in line with Local Plan policies.

The open aspect of the parkland to the north of the Hospital and adjoining countryside should be conserved and, where possible, enhanced.

The mature trees in the area should be preserved – new planting should replace any losses

The London Road

The London Road is a very old road, along which coaches travelled between London and Bath in the 18th century. It remains the main route into Newbury for local traffic from the east, via the Robin Hood Roundabout. Throughout its length utilitarian retail and commercial buildings mark the first views of the town. Sadly the traffic interchange at the Robin Hood Roundabout is incongruous with both St Joseph's Church with its imposing campanile and Jesus statue, and the nearby Georgian terrace.

Development along London Road is very mixed - retail and commercial; residential from many historic periods including 21st century housing on former business premises; a smart landscaped business park opposite a small utilitarian retail complex; several

historic pubs and a hotel/conference centre. Traffic flow can be heavy, particularly at peak times and is punctuated by several sets of traffic lights and roundabouts.

The River Lambourn flows from Shaw Village and between the Business Park and the new Riverside housing development. It then crosses under the London Road to join the River Kennet in the Two Rivers Conservation Area. Here blocks of flats were built in the 1990s, facing the main road, just north of the industrial area. The locality is softened and enhanced by the mass of mature trees along the banks of the river as it crosses the London Road, and the corridor of the Kennet and Avon Canal to the south.

Residential roads off include Newport Road, an access road leading into a large area of mixed housing from different periods, including pleasant streets built in the 1950s by the local authority (such as Doveton Way), a primary school and elderly people's accommodation. Unfortunately the potential of providing landmark attractive views of the River Lambourn was blocked by high density modern housing of indifferent design at the north end of Newport Road. The general impression is of piecemeal and utilitarian development, out of sympathy with then natural surroundings. Further east along London Road is Skyllings, a distinctive post war estate (built by the former Newbury Borough Council) which by contrast, has a pleasing visual rhythm. However trees and large shrubs are conspicuous by their absence.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the London Road are:

A main gateway into Newbury - a very old road with a mix of properties both residential and commercial

Compared to other gateway roads there are fewer trees along sections of the London Road.

The following principles are suggested:

The design of any new residential or commercial development along London Road should respect the important role it plays as a main gateway into the town

Further tree planting would improve and soften the built environment, particularly in the Skyllings area

4.3 The Town Centre

Newbury Bridge is traditionally regarded as the centre of the town and from this river crossing stretch the two main shopping streets – Northbrook Street to the north and Bartholomew Street to the south. Close by is St Nicolas Church, the Town Hall, the Market Place, Granary and Corn Exchange - the main heritage public buildings in the town. From the Market Place, Cheap Street - the site of retail business since the 11th century - leads to the Bus and Railway Stations, with established residential areas beyond.

The passage of the Kennet and Avon Canal right through the town centre provides visual relief from the built environment, and links Northcroft and Goldwell Park to the west, with Victoria Park to the east.

For our purposes the boundaries of the town centre are:

- to the east – the A339;
- to the west – Strawberry Hill and West Street;
- to the north – Oxford Street, the Broadway and London Road;
- to the south the railway line.

The Conservation Area known as **The City** is ‘off centre’, and is described elsewhere.

Newbury town centre is compact, human in scale and enriched by the variety of historic styles – Northbrook Street presents an attractive mid to late Georgian front, with distinctive pink and blue brick houses above the lines of shop fronts. Camp Hopson department store occupies three main buildings along Northbrook Street two of which are late 18th century and the middle one dating from 1663, with classical pilasters and hung tiling distinctive to the area. Similarly, Oxford Street contains a number of fine 18th century coaching inns and houses making it an impressive block. Bartholomew Street has a variety of medieval, 18th and 19th century buildings with a contrast of new and old provided by the early twentieth century buildings and the 1970s Kennet Centre. Yet more variety is added by several modern retail ‘mews’, containing small units, leading off from the older streets – such as Weavers Walk and Inch’s Yard.

The Market Place is surrounded by impressive buildings of 17th and 18th century origin, including the 19th century Corn Exchange with its imposing Corinthian front, together with the White Hart House and Hatchet Public House and Queens Hotel which have 19th century fronts built over earlier facades. There are two lively weekly markets – the Thursday market being a charter market dating back to 1596, and one on Saturdays. The Town Hall and its clock tower were built in 1878 with decorative brick and stonework in ‘gothic’ Victorian style. The ‘Municipal Building’ was added to the Town Hall in 1911,

when the 18th century Mansion House, which had previously served as a council chamber, was demolished to widen the street. It is remembered in the street name.

For centuries there had been a wooden bridge over the River Kennet at the end of Northbrook Street, with shops built on it. The present bridge over the canal was built in 1772 and designed by James Clarke. It is of a single span, built of brick with stone dressings and balustrades, although there are two further arches to support the carriage way as it rises each side. The strength of the bridge was proved during WWII when vehicles and tanks of the heaviest types were perpetually crossing.

St Nicolas Church was rebuilt in the perpendicular style during the 16th Century, on the site of an older Norman Church and nowadays its role extends well beyond the ecclesiastical. This beautiful church with its lovely stained glass windows, hosts regular classical music concerts while the modern church hall next door holds popular charity coffee mornings every Thursday - market day - and numerous other social events.

During the annual **Spring Festival**, the town centre becomes particularly lively in the evenings, with concerts both at the Corn Exchange and St Nicholas' Church, as well as at numerous other local venues.

Park Way – at present this area is dominated by service yards, access and surface car parking for Northbrook Street. The appearance is very poor, and does little to enhance the perception of the town centre and Victoria Park.

Victoria Park – There is much to enjoy here, a traditional park with many beautiful trees, colourful flower beds, a bandstand, tennis courts, boating pond, playground equipment and two very popular skateboarding ramps. The park is heavily used by all age groups, particularly on sunny days. For many townspeople Victoria Park forms part of the very experience of growing up in Newbury – starting with visits to the children's playground with parents, boating on the pond, later on skateboarding, tennis or football, as well as attendance at open air functions and concerts. There is a bowling green by the bandstand for the oldest age group as well. Proximity to the Kennet and Avon Canal, with its canal boats, swans and ducks, enhances the colourful atmosphere. Twice in the summer months local artists exhibit art work and crafts for sale along the park railings at '*Art on the Park*', and each Sunday during the summer holidays there is live music from the bandstand. Only buildings serving visitors to the park, such as a cafeteria, storage shed for boats and public conveniences merit a permanent place in the park, and should be of the best design.

Residential areas within the town centre – Between Victoria Park and the London Road are some residential roads, with a contrasting variety of old and modern homes, including apartment blocks and some listed houses. West Street is a mixture of recent blocks of flats, a terrace of Georgian town houses which now faces a corner pub, car parks and office buildings, and modest red brick terraces from the late 19th century.

‘Newbury 2025’

West Berkshire Council has recently set out its long term aspirations for the town centre and the role that it has to play in supporting the surrounding villages and rural area, in its document *‘Newbury 2025 – a Vision for Newbury Town Centre’*. The Vision has the status of a strategic document and is intended to help guide and provide a framework for more detailed strategies and policies such as this Town Design Statement.

In looking at the current issues facing the town centre, three over-riding themes are seen to emerge: accessibility, townscape and vitality. In order to support these objectives the Vision proposes to create a series of Quarters for the town centre, each of which has different primary functions. These include:

- Primary retail quarter (presently southern end of Northbrook Street and in the Kennet Centre).
- Cultural/leisure/recreation quarter (including Market Place, The Wharf, Canal and Victoria Park).
- Urban Village quarter (south of Market Street between the railway station and the Kennet Centre).
- Mixed Use Quarter.
- Business/Commercial Quarter (east of the town centre).

An Action Plan clearly identifies how and by whom the various parts of the Vision can be achieved, with the emphasis very much on partnership. The Vision includes an urban design framework for the town centre, which has been used to guide and inform this Town Design Statement.

4.4 Business/Commercial Area

This is located immediately to the east of the Town Centre (in the main, to the east of the A339), from the railway line and Hambridge Lane to the south, to London Road and modern Business Park to the north. Visually, the area can be characterised overall as being low and flat with large utilitarian buildings (such as the Police Station and the Telephone Exchange) and woodland belts generally blocking views out of the area (including potential vistas of the attractive Kennet and Avon Canal).

The Hambridge Lane area succeeds in combining functionality with business park aesthetics, and the industrial environment is relieved by two rivers and the canal flowing through it in quiet conservation areas. The nearby Racecourse adds to the eclectic mix.

Where possible, opportunities could be taken to enhance the area by opening up views to the canal and river corridors and avoiding the use of security fencing, especially where visible from public rights of way. In addition, new developments could include tree planting to help integrate new buildings into the area.

Newbury Race Course

Although technically in Greenham Parish, the Race Course, being only a mile from the centre, regularly impacts on life in the town on race days. Race meetings are held throughout the year, both flat and national hunt, and the main event is the Hennessey Gold Cup, held in December. There is a railway stop at the Race Course and the striking new buildings and well kept grounds helps give it a clear identity to rail travellers.

Faraday Road

The Faraday Road industrial area is segregated from the town centre by the A339. At present the buildings that front onto the A339 do little to provide a high quality visual environment on one of the main approaches into Newbury. Within the estate, buildings are generally set back from the road, with the street scene dominated by hard paving surfaces, wide concrete roads, chain link fencing and self sown vegetation. Any redevelopment of this area for higher density, primarily business uses (as outlined in the 'Vision') which contribute to the visual enhancement of the area would be welcomed.

To the north of the industrial area, the Robin Hood roundabout on the A339 is a major gateway into Newbury town centre for shoppers and our local link to the M4. Visual enhancement measures would therefore be particularly significant.

This Statement supports the views outlined in 'Newbury 2025' relating to the redevelopment of specific sites in this area. Should any specific business/commercial sites come forward for redevelopment in the next few years, such as the Police Station, Magistrates Court, or Telephone Exchange, a high quality design which makes a positive contribution to the visual appearance of the area would be greatly welcomed.

4.5 East Fields

Character of the Area

The Area called East Fields is bordered by the Kennet and Avon Canal, the A339 to the west, the town boundaries to the south and the edges of the Business/Commercial Area on the east (roughly along Boundary Road).

Dividing the area into two is the railway line, beside which are some old commercial buildings creeping in from the Business/Commercial Area, and the Sainsbury's superstore on the corner of the A339. Opposite is the Police Station and Magistrates Court, rather utilitarian looking buildings from the 1960s which do nothing to enhance the image of the town. Traffic flow through the area, particularly along Queen's Road, can be heavy at times, reducing the quality of the local environment for residents.

The Area can be divided into three: the **19th century residential** streets; **late 20th /21st century blocks of flats** north of King's Road, and the **commercial area** backing onto the canal.

Victorian East Fields

Most of the housing development in East Fields is Victorian, consisting of high density streets of two storey red brick terraced and semi-detached houses, generally with no garaging. Mixed in are several notable older properties, dating back to a small 18th century community in Greenham, which was originally separated from Newbury by fields and centred on the Methodist Chapel. This cluster included the Tithe Barn, Tudor Lodge, Holland House, Poplar House and Greenham House. The building of the houses of the East Fields development formed a sort of 'infill' between Newbury and Greenham in the last quarter of the 19th century.

There is a mixture of designs, but there is one clear prevailing style of house-building - red brick, with lines of dark grey brick. The typical East Fields house is a Victorian terrace or semi-detached, two storey, built of red brick and decorated with two horizontal lines of dark grey brick (there are also some double horizontal lines of white or cream brick). Front doors set in recessed porches, with attractively tiled floors and cream external arches are often seen, as are ground floor bay windows. The whole adds up to an attractive street scene with a strong period look. The neighbourhood is further enhanced by proximity to Stroud Green, a typical English village green with an ancient public house – *The Plough on the Green*.

The Newbury Weekly News of 1953 shows a large Coronation street party on Stroud Green of children from East Fields and it is clear that there was a strong sense of community. In the past, the proximity of the town, the Business/Commercial Area and other amenities would have enabled most journeys to be done on foot.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of Victorian East Fields are:

Core of older properties which add character to the area

Typical Victorian street scene of red brick terrace housing, with decorative details such as bay windows and grey brick stripes

Lack of garages and off street parking together with through traffic in East Fields, impacts on the quality of the environment for the residents

The following principles are suggested:

Any new development should respect and enhance the architectural quality and variety in the street scene

The design of any new development should carefully consider the current lack of off road car parking

North of King's Road and Canal Corridor

The high density flats of three storeys built in 2002/3 present a contrast in scale to the older two storey properties along King's Road. However, the mix of brickwork and ornamentation looks familiar and blends in well. In stark contrast are the older blocks of flats along Boundary Road that reflect the plainer architectural style of the 1970s.

Along Mill Lane are the remnants of the now declining industrial estates between here and the railway line. Here there is a complete mix of 19th century terraced cottages, business premises of vastly differing scales and historic origins, 20th century and later housing, backed by the green corridor of the canal.

The blocks of flats at Greenham Mill, overlooking the canal at the back, are particularly attractive as they retain some of the character of the original mill, are close to town, yet with a peaceful, almost rural setting. This development is seen by residents as a good start to the regeneration of the neighbourhood.

To the north of Mill Lane there is a good footpath and cycle way to the town along the canal towpath, passing through Victoria Park and leading to the Wharf area. This helps to create a 'geen lung' extending right into the town centre.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of this locality (from north of King's Road to the canal) are:

A sustainable location for residential development, close to Stroud Green, the town centre and the canal corridor.

Good pedestrian and cycle routes into the town centre.

Contrast between the 21st century flats, older red brick terrace cottages and the adjacent industrial premises.

Possibilities for the enhancement and visual integration of the canal corridor with the rest of the Area

The following principles are suggested:

Regeneration of a highly sustainable locality, reclaiming it for high quality residential development

Maximising the potential of the canal corridor, both as an amenity area and wildlife corridor and to provide visual relief in a 'hard' urban environment. Glimpses of the canal between new developments would enhance the neighbourhood.

Existing trees should be conserved. Further tree planting in this area would also help to soften and enhance the local environment.

4.6 West Fields

Character of the Area

For the purposes of this document, West Fields has been defined as that area bounded by the Kennet & Avon Canal to the north, the town centre to the east, Enborne Road to the south and the open fields to the west. It is one of the most densely developed areas of the Town and contains some important individual properties, many with interesting architectural features in a Conservation Area. There are four clearly distinct neighbourhoods within this Area: **West Mills** lying alongside the canal, the 19th Century development of "**West Fields**" itself, the **Enborne Road**, and **St George's Avenue**.

West Mills

This lies immediately to the west of the Town Centre, starting adjacent to the Parish Church of St Nicolas and running along the canal. It contains an eclectic mix of mature property of varied design, some of which are now utilised as business premises. On the south bank of the canal adjacent to the church, the site of former commercial mills is now occupied by a pleasant development of flats with an interesting and appropriate design which reflects the previous commercial use of this area.

Further to the west, between the canal and the River Kennet lies Lock Island, which contains a mix of historic property, a former granary now converted into flats and a number of modern properties that all blend well together. To the south of the canal at this point are a row of cottages formerly occupied by weavers, whose trade was a staple part of the town's economy for so long.

Further along the canal bank are two sets of "retirement properties": the first, Mallard Court, was built in part on a former light industrial site.

Kennet Road, leading down to the canal, passes the eastern end of the West Mills allotment gardens and also contains the historic John Kimber's Almshouses and adjacent to them, modern retirement flats.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

The key characteristics of West Mills are:

A unique canal side location of picturesque character and a distinctive 'island' between the canal and river with a cluster of historic buildings including a striking old mill

A core of historic buildings close to the 16th century St Nicolas Church, which dominates local views

Several listed buildings within a Conservation Area

Footpath access to the town centre along a scenic tow path

The main water gateway into town along the canal from the west

The following principles are suggested:

Any new development should conserve the existing character and scale of the area.

The design should incorporate local features and use traditional materials.

The design of new development should respect the role of the canal as the main western waterway entry into Newbury, and the towpath, with its picturesque views, as popular with walkers.

West Fields

This was a 19th century development of Victorian housing built to accommodate the increasing population of the Town as its economy expanded. In most of the roads this development was primarily terraced housing and is relatively unchanged - there remains one 'corner' shop within the district. However, there were also some larger detached and semi-detached properties. These were predominantly built of red brick with grey slate or tile roofs and with stone lintels providing architectural relief. There has already been some infilling of more modern property but attempts have been made to integrate such development where possible.

Lying on the southern edge of the West Fields development, **Craven Road** has a mixture of interesting and larger detached, semi-detached and terraced housing on the north side, mostly 19th century, although individual properties have older elements. On the south side of Craven Road, after the run of Victorian developments, are post war local authority built properties of a more utilitarian design. Again there has been some more modern infilling but attempts have been made to retain the character of both sides of the road.

Oddfellows Road runs behind the shops in Bartholomew Street from Craven Road to St Nicholas Church, and is now a high density street of blocks of flats built in the late 20th century.

At the western end of 'West Field' modern housing was built in the 1980's across the whole area between the canal and the railway line. Housing here is in pale red-brick, primarily semi-detached, but with some small terraces. Beyond this point lie fields, which, together with the existing allotment gardens, continue to provide some relief from the urban area and lead out to the open countryside. The canal towpath is a popular walking route into town and in the opposite direction towards Speen Moors.

Enborne Road

Next to the railway that divides this Area in two and standing at the corner of **Rockingham Road** and **Enborne Road**, is the former St Nicolas Primary School - a substantial Victorian building designed by William Butterfield. This is currently used as a language school for overseas students. However, it also has extant planning permission for conversion to flats.

Behind the school lies **Enborne Grove**, a district with a mixture of substantial detached and semi-detached Victorian dwellings, mid-20th century semi and detached houses and

also earlier developments of Victorian terraced housing. Further along Enborne Road lies the imposing Wormstall Sixth Form Building of St Bartholomew's School. This late Victorian building, of immense character and set in spacious grounds, makes a profound statement of its educational importance and is architecturally significant. Opposite is a recent development of housing that echoes the architectural style of the School in a simplified form.

As one proceeds westwards along **Enborne Road** the character of the property becomes one of mainly large semi-detached and even larger detached houses set in their own grounds. These properties range in age from the 18th century to recent additions. Several of these have been converted into flats and there has been some infilling with late 20th century styles houses (such as in Floreat Gardens cul de sac). Lying to the south, the Victorian terraced streets of Salcombe and Kingsbridge Roads are clearly a legacy of light industry in the vicinity in bygone years. As elsewhere these red brick streets have an attractive period appearance with small front gardens bordered by low walls or fences and very little planting. The absence of garages and off road parking results in heavy on street parking.

Finally, at the very end of the existing urban area and lying just beyond the school playing fields, a large new estate of mixed housing is being built. This estate's western line lies at the Town's boundary with Enborne Parish.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

The key characteristics of West Fields and Enborne Road are:

Historic core of Victorian (or earlier) buildings

Wide range of house types in pleasant surroundings and excellent local facilities

Proximity to the canal and open countryside for recreation

In Enborne Road, large well established gardens with many mature trees fronting onto the street

St Bartholomew's School's Sixth Form building – Wormstall – with its dominant and historic character

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development should respect the existing character and scale of the area. The design should incorporate local features and be compatible with the existing brick colours and patterns.

Roofs should be of similar height and pitch and be of slate or tile construction as appropriate to the surrounding area.

Any new development, particularly along Enborne Road, should balance considerations of character and density

New development should, wherever possible, incorporate surrounding open countryside as part of the landscape and open space network of the area.

The design of new development should incorporate cycleways into the town and should link with the wider open space network in the area.

The existing allotment gardens should be conserved

St George's Avenue

To the south of Craven Road lies this very individual development built after the First World War. Here the former Newbury Borough Council developed an excellent and spacious estate of "homes fit for heroes"! Houses of pleasing design are built around a large oval central green providing pleasant views out. Today, replacement windows, extensions and other one-off additions have begun to break up the symmetry of the development.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of St George's Avenue are:

Oval street layout, with a good sized green in the centre, planted with some trees.

Spacious layout.

Plain architectural style, with an attractive simplicity

A variety of house styles, in repeated rhythms, forming a pleasant street scene

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development should respect and enhance the architectural quality and variety in the street scene

Whenever possible, opportunities should be taken to establish landscape features which can give a sense of place and definition to different areas within the estate.

In nearby **St Michael's Road** is the site of the former Territorial Army Drill Hall which is to be developed into higher density residential properties. This mirrors other similar developments nearby and reflects the increasing pressure for flats in or near the Town Centre. Such developments contrast with the older terraced properties backing onto Bartholomew Street, the 1930s local authority housing and the later bungalows in St David's Road.

4.7 South and City

Character of the Area

'South' covers the Andover Road north of Wash Common and most of the residential side roads 'feeding' into it. This includes the housing between it and the Old Newtown/Newtown Roads. Monk's Lane forms the southern edge, corresponding with the boundaries of Newbury Town itself.

'The City' is an established Conservation Area bordered by the Andover Road, Newtown Road North, Pound Street and Buckingham Road.

This Area has been split into four: Andover Road Garden Suburbs, Monks Lane, Wendan Road (and the UKAEA estate), and The City.

Andover Road Garden Suburbs

The South Area encompasses the 'garden suburbs' of that part of the Andover Road between the St John's and Falkland Roundabout, where large detached properties set in very spacious gardens were built in the 1930s. The road and most pavements are wide, and there are many mature trees. Set well back from the road, the houses are of individual, high quality design, giving the Andover Road a great deal of style and charm. Coupled with the steep rise up to Wash Common, the road presents a well wooded and prosperous image, appropriate for a main route into the Town.

The residential side roads which 'feed' into Andover Road include Woodridge and Tydehams, with similarly large properties. There has been some more modern infilling – for instance, the back gardens of some of the houses in Tydehams were developed into Heather Gardens, off Monks Lane, the southern perimeter of the Area. The houses at Tydehams were built in the 1920s by local businessmen for their own residences - typically large detached houses standing in their own extensive wooded grounds. There is a range of styles with several surviving examples of period 'Art Deco' architecture rarely seen elsewhere in Newbury.

Further up, on the opposite side of the Andover Road is Woodridge, a unique locality of character properties of individual design reached by a private road running between mature Wellingtonia of impressive size. This is also surprisingly secluded and spacious considering its closeness to the town. Recent infilling is evident. – new detached houses built on relatively smaller plots reduce the spaciousness of the original layout.

The 'Highlands', a higher density development completed in 2004, just south of Woodridge, is on the site of a former residential home. The gable end of the first of the new houses rears up abruptly at right angles to the Andover Road.

Further down the Andover Road on the east side, some infill from the 1970s can be seen in Kingsland Grange, Gwyn Close and The Brambles, all developments of detached

houses of similar style. Nearer to the town is a terrace of late 19th century houses. The attractive and imposing bulk of St Bartholomew's Luker building is softened by hedges, trees and well maintained gardens, enhancing the appeal of the neighbourhood. The garden suburb setting of the school is particularly significant as it is enjoyed by many generations of school children, parents and teachers from outside the neighbourhood.

Directly opposite St Bartholomews School is Falkland Drive – a mixed cul de sac, initially of older detached houses, but terminating with a development of 1970s detached bungalows. Erleigh Dene next door was built in the 1960s and consists of a small cul-de-sac of terraced housing in three blocks. City Playground offers open space for recreation.

Andover Road is heavily used by cars and pedestrians on route to St Bartholomew's School and the town centre, particularly during the morning peak times.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

The key characteristics of the Andover Road locality are:

A mainly residential area with the Andover Road acting as a main gateway into the town.

Fine detached properties of individual design set in large well established gardens, generally well screened and with many mature trees. In filling in cul de sacs and on individual plots since the 1970s.

Quiet residential side roads with smaller but still spacious gardens continuing the prosperous English 'garden suburb' theme.

St Bartholomew's School – a very large secondary school generating heavy traffic during peak times

Wide pavements with well screened boundaries giving a feeling of enclosure

The following principles are suggested:

Any new development should respect the role Andover Road plays as a gateway into the town

Any future development should conserve the 'garden suburb' character of the area

Where practicable, the re-use of the larger detached properties set in spacious grounds should be sought as an alternative to demolition and redevelopment, in order to preserve the visual character and setting of such properties and their surroundings. This could apply to conversion to both residential and commercial use

Opportunities should be taken to retain established landscape features which give a sense of place and definition to the area.

Any new development should include provision for extensive tree and shrub planting

Monks Lane

This forms the southern boundary of the urban area of Newbury and only has houses along the northern side for most of its length. A field hedgerow was planted on the south side in the 1980's. The housing comprises, for most part at the eastern end, of individually designed detached houses with long back gardens, built in the 1930s and

1940s, with some later infilling with smaller homes. Further along is a development of 24 individual houses at Heather Gardens, built in 2000 on parts of the gardens of five houses in Tydehams. Here there is one unique house built as an exercise in energy conservation and eco-friendliness. A charming Victorian semi-detached cottage, (one of a pair separated by about half a mile) of red brick with a distinctive grey band adds to the eclectic mixture. A modern house next to it, built in a similar style, blends in successfully. Newbury Rugby Club's extensive grounds and a modern Medical Group Practice are on the opposite side of the road.

At the far eastern end of Monks Lane is the campus of Newbury College, built on part of what was Sandleford Farm. Opposite the College, towards the corner of Monks Lane and the Newtown Road, is an architecturally interesting group of ex-local authority houses built in the 1930s. These homes with generous gardens are built in 6 groups of 4 and arranged in a shallow crescent with their own service road. On the corner of this service road is the so-called 'Electric Garage' (recently listed), which was the first in the Town to have electric petrol pumps. It is a compact building of pleasing proportions roofed with green glazed tiles, with the roof extending over the service area. Close by is a fish and chip shop, Chinese take away, general store and an electrical repair shop at the top of the Newtown Road. The Retail Park and Tesco Supermarket are just across the A339 in Pinchington Lane

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

The key characteristics of the Monks Lane neighbourhood are:

An edge of town road with full residential development on the north side and with Newbury College, a modern Doctor's Surgery and the Rugby Club on the south side.

Despite these urban influences the area has a semi rural character with native hedging on the south boundary and with open countryside and many mature trees beyond

Detached properties, mainly of individual design set in well established gardens continuing the 'garden suburbs' of the Andover Road

The possibilities for the enhancement of the setting of the area around the junction of Monks Lane and Newtown Road

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development should conserve the semi rural character of Monks Lane.

Any future development should conserve the character, setting and symmetry of the 1930s homes at the eastern end of Monks Lane

Where possible, opportunities should be taken to enhance the setting around the junction of Monks Lane and Newtown Road to reflect its role as a gateway into the Town from the south.

Wendan Road

Running uphill and south from the Andover Road, Wendan Road provides access into a large residential area, including a UKAEA estate.

Initially in Wendan Road the houses are detached with generous sized gardens up to Meadow Road, which then leads to a mixed area with privately built housing from the 1930s onwards. The area is characterised by large front gardens, red brick walls and relatively steep gradients., with views across the town centre to the north.

Chandos Road starts at the top of the hill at the end of Wendan Road and leads into several other residential roads with mainly semi detached housing built in various stages from the late 1930s through to the 1960s. The later houses have smaller gardens. There is no public open space or facilities other than St John the Evangelist primary school. At the top of the hill there are fine views over Newbury towards Donnington.

UKAEA/AWRE Estate – Wendan Road area

This estate was built in the 1950s in the area bounded by Tydehams, Andover Road and Wendan Road to house workers employed at the UKAEA at Harwell and AWRE at Aldermaston. It is characterised by well laid out semi-detached housing built to a high standard, with large gardens to the rear and open plan to the front. This, together with open spaces with mature oak trees, produces a pleasant spaciousness. Being on high ground, there are wide ranging views over the town and to the open countryside beyond. Some variety has been added with the addition of various storm porches. There is a small pre-school tucked away in a little dell, near a pedestrian track leading directly through to the Andover Road and St Bartholomew’s School.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the UKAEA Estates:

Very spacious layout, featuring wide road verges with mature trees in open spaces and some central green road islands, providing screening from houses opposite.

Semis of a simple design with established gardens, adding up to a pleasant street scene.

Hill top location and some gradient variation adding visual interest

Red brick walled gardens, trees and hedges

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development should respect and enhance the spaciousness and architectural quality of the original street scene

The overall pleasing visual rhythm of the street scene should be conserved, avoiding extensions which can produce a ‘terraced’ effect

The open nature of the front gardens, with no fences or hedges in front of the building line should be preserved.

The building line, a strong element of the street scene, should be preserved.

Views out to the surrounding countryside should be conserved and, where possible enhanced in the design of any future development

The City

Already part of a Conservation Area covering the town centre, 'The City' is a small area along Argyle Road and Derby Road with several groups of historic Almshouses, the oldest dating back to the 17th Century, and all still inhabited. The walled gardens and decorative building materials make them particularly attractive. In the twentieth century retirement homes for nurses (from the Middlesex Hospital) were built in a similar style, and these blend in surprisingly well.

The oldest, St Bartholomew's Almshouses, were built in 1618, and replaced the earlier hospital of the same name. The 15th century Litten Chapel (in Newtown Road, but essentially part of The City) started life as St Bartholomew's School, and then served the hospital as a chapel. Original stone windows can be seen, but its real glory lies in the carved timber trusses inside.

A local brewer, as evidenced by a coat of arms, date and initials above the entrance, built further almshouses in the City later in the 17th century. In 1826 Upper Raymond Almshouses, a range of 10 dwellings, were built in Gothic style with a centrepiece pointed stone arch reminiscent of the entrance arches of St Nicolas' Church. Bartholomew Manor was restored in 1920, but has medieval (14th century) origins and is one of the oldest dwellings in Newbury.

The City is adjacent on the southeast to the site of the former hospital now being redeveloped as high density old people's accommodation. On the south side is Rectory Close (mainly 1930s semis and detached), which backs onto the City Recreation Ground, a welcome public open space.

On the other side of this green are the back gardens of Buckingham Road, a wide, attractive, tree lined road. There are large detached properties on the north side with substantial gardens from the 1930s and in essence part of the 'garden suburbs' in the vicinity of the Andover Road. On part of the other side of the road are the grounds of St Bartholomew's School, with busy pedestrian and vehicular entrances. It is therefore important to maintain this garden suburb setting, as it is enjoyed by generations of school children, teachers and parents from outside the neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of 'The City' area are:

The City is part of a Conservation Area and as such is subject to special Planning Guidelines

Detached houses in Buckingham Road providing a garden suburb setting for St Bartholomew's School

The following principles are suggested:

Any new development should be sympathetic in design and scale, to the modest scale of the almshouses and nearby historic buildings in The City.

Any new development should carefully consider the role that Buckingham Road plays in the setting of St Bartholomew's School

4.8 St John's

Character of the Area

This Area starts immediately south of Station Road and the town centre and is bounded by Old Newton Road to the west, A339 to the east, and Monks Lane to the south.

It can be divided into two sections: the older residential roads nearer the town centre and further south higher density housing with ecclesiastical road names - Friars, Abbey, Priory - leading off the Newtown Road.

Station Road to Porchester Road

Being so near the town centre, this is an old residential area with examples of housing from several historic periods. These range from imposing Victorian three storey town houses and solid Edwardian detached homes of great character with large mature gardens and trees, to modern blocks of flats of more limited architectural merit. Infilling has been going on for some decades and the more recent apartment blocks are of a higher architectural standard.

Rising steeply southwards, Newtown Road is one of the main approaches to Newbury. The large Victorian properties fronting onto it give it character and style and the well established gardens contain many mature trees.

Across the road lies the old cemetery bordered by a fine flint wall, which provides open green space with many unusual trees. Opposite this are two terraces built in the 18th and 19th century. Below the cemetery a new small scale development of cottage style homes blends in rather well with the historic Church Almshouses immediately opposite. At the bottom there is a Post Office and corner shop fronting onto the substantial St John's Roundabout. Old Newtown Road runs down the hill at the back of the cemetery to St John's Primary School and the corner shop. It has a charm of its own, being an eclectic mixture of old and new housing in close proximity to the fine flint wall of the cemetery with its mature lime and yew trees.

Overlooking the roundabout stands St John's Church, the original of which was bombed during the Second World War as were a nearby group of historic almshouses. The new church was built in the 1950s and the almshouses replaced by the utilitarian Fair Close Day Centre and adjacent blocks of flats for the elderly. Surprisingly, a fine Georgian house of grey brick between the two survived and is now used as offices.

The Upper Newtown Road

South of the cemetery and further up the hill the houses on Newtown Road are mainly mid 20th Century, (some pre war), of individual design with generously sized gardens. They are set well back from the road behind substantial hedges and trees, greening this this section of an important approach road.

A modern high-density development is replacing the old Sandford Hospital. Almost opposite is The Oaks, a late 20th century redevelopment of affordable houses and flats built in a highly decorative style. Near the top end of Newtown Road are motor retail businesses on both sides, incorporating the Electric Garage (listed) and a small parade of shops, near roundabouts leading to a Newbury College and a major road – A339.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of Newton Road:

A main gateway into Newbury Town, with a lot of character and a spacious appearance

A hill rising from the town in the river valley and leading to a plateau.

A wonderfully eclectic mix of properties, including some very striking three storey Victorian town houses in icing sugar colours and historic almshouses

An old cemetery with an old brick and flint wall.

Many magnificent mature trees and views north to Donnington Castle from the top

The following principles are suggested:

The design of any new development along Newtown Road should respect the role it plays as a main gateway into the town.

Any future development should respect the existing character and scale of the area.

Any new development, particularly along Newtown Road, should balance considerations of character and density

Any future development should respect and enhance the architectural quality and variety in the street scene

Existing features, such as the design of the old brick and flint wall around the cemetery, should, where appropriate, be incorporated into the design of future development

Ecclesiastical Roads –housing from the 1970s with a mix of two storey detached houses, bungalows and chalet style homes, some split level to take advantage of sloping plots. Gardens here are well established and cared for and the hill top position gives good views over Newbury and beyond to the open countryside.

4.9 Pyle Hill

Character of the Area

This Area borders Greenham Parish along Greenham Road/Pyle Hill and Pinchington Lane and is effectively divided from the rest of Newbury by the busy A339.

It can be divided into four small sections – at the north corner a mixed neighbourhood around the Blue Ball public house; Pyle Hill and the roads west; The Nightingales Estate; and finally the 21st century residential roads north of Pinchington Lane.

Blue Ball

This is a mixed residential area from several historic periods and includes some interesting buildings - the Blue Ball public house is late Victorian. Housing here includes flats and small semis on modest plots. The nearby Eeklo Place estate was built in the 1970s. Nearby Stroud Green and the five acre Southby's allotment site provide a large open area surprisingly close the town centre.

Pyle Hill/Greenham Road

Nearest the Town are 19th century terraces overlooking Stroud Green, a traditional English village green edged with mature poplar trees, which are a local landmark. The local public house, *The Plough on the Green*, dates back to the 18th Century. Further up the hill are larger Victorian houses of distinctive character with more modern housing in the residential roads leading off to the west. These comprise typical late 60s/early 70s houses of mixed design with well established gardens. Being built on hilly ground, properties in these cul de sacs often have far reaching views to the north across Newbury and the surrounding countryside.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Greenham Road neighbourhood:

A core of historic properties, and including Stroud Green with its 'English Village' character.

Some important listed buildings

A main gateway descending into the Town, with good views, many mature trees and character properties

The following principles are suggested:

The design of any new development in the area should respect the role it plays as a gateway into the town.

Future development should conserve and enhance the 'English Village' character and historic mix of Greenham Road itself

Views out of this area into the surrounding countryside are an essential part of its character. Any new development should conserve, and where possible, enhance this characteristic

The Nightingales

Formerly the site of Bostock House, this hilly area was redeveloped as The Nightingales Estate in the 1970s and takes its name from the road linking it to Pyle Hill. Housing here is high density in a plain style typical of the period. Garages are in blocks, with pedestrian access only to many homes. The locality is enhanced by the wide ranging views over Newbury to the open countryside beyond, and a scattering of small open spaces, some with striking trees. A feature is that the roads leading directly off The Nightingales from the north are named after famous women authors, in alphabetical order. A variety of properties are available on the estate from one-bedroom flats to two and three bedroom houses.

The estate also incorporates residential accommodation for the elderly, a General Store and a thriving Community Centre. Immediately adjacent and set back from the road in good size playing fields is Greenham Court Primary School.

In the 1990s three new residential roads extended the housing southwards into the open land behind Newbury Retail Park. The first of the new residential developments north off Pinchington Lane are visible, though separated by open land.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Nightingales:

A primarily residential area offering the benefits of a local primary school, corner shop and a range of low cost housing.

Close proximity to the Retail Park beyond a small open space

The following principles are suggested:

New development should, wherever possible, incorporate surrounding open countryside as part of the landscape and open space network of the area

Whenever possible, opportunities should be taken to establish landscape features which can give a sense of place and definition to different areas within the estate.

The green gap between Newbury and Greenham Parish should be preserved in line with Local Plan policies

Where appropriate, new development in this area should include the provision of safe cycle and pedestrian routes to the Retail Park

The existing open space network within this area forms an essential part of the original character of the estate. Any new development should respect this role and ensure that these spaces are conserved and, where possible, enhanced

Pinchington Lane

In part this is a non-residential ‘edge of Town’, but with retail development near the A339, the ‘Motor Triangle’ and Tesco Superstore. Much of the Retail Park was developed on the former Rugby Club site. Nearby is a small housing estate built around 2000 with road names linking it to the horse racing industry, ranging from short terraces to detached houses with small gardens. The built environment is a lively mix of brickwork, cream and flint surfaced walls, embellished with dormer windows and decorative porches.

A bit further east, Haysom Drive doubles back and then forks into two small cul de sacs – one borders immediately onto Greenacres Leisure Centre and ends with two unusual ‘L’ shaped corner houses. Houses in this section are two-storey detached properties, traditional in appearance but with a variety of finishes and roof styles. Most are red-brick (some with grey brick ‘bands’) but there are a few in yellow-brick. Some houses are painted half cream, some with flint panels, and all have different porches. Several houses have large areas of hard decorative paving in front to provide extra car parking. Gardens are fairly small.

There are six ‘park homes’ in one corner group providing a contrasting type of home. Throughout the estate mature trees have been retained, contributing to the ‘green’ ambience.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of Pinchington Lane:

A semi rural lane, mainly without pavements, the western half of which forms the town boundary.

Large scale retail development on both sides of the road at the western end.

New housing estates north off Pinchington Lane, backing onto open land in front of The Nightingales Estate.

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development should conserve the semi rural character of Pinchington Lane

New development should, wherever possible, incorporate surrounding open countryside as part of the landscape and open space network of the area

Opportunities should be taken to retain established landscape features, such as native trees and hedgerows, which can give a sense of place and definition to the area

The green gap between Newbury and Greenham Parish should be preserved in line with Local Plan policies

Where appropriate, new development in this area should include the provision of safe cycle and pedestrian routes into the Retail Park.

The provision of children’s play areas would also be welcomed by residents

4.10 Valley Road

Character of the Area

This area centres on Valley Road and Elizabeth Avenue, together with the residential side roads, including Bartlemy and Montgomery Road. The northern boundary is Fifth Road, which runs west into open countryside. The Area has been divided into three distinct sections: Valley Road/Elizabeth Avenue and roads off; Fifth Road; and Bartlemy and Montgomery Road.

Valley Road and Elizabeth Avenue

Valley Road and its continuation south into Elizabeth Avenue, is an attractive wide road of mature houses and bungalows with wide asphalt pathways and grass verges. These verges are complemented at irregular intervals by semi-mature and mature oak trees, some of which are very large and the subject of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The trees, together with the established planting in most gardens, create a pleasing ‘green’ ambience. From the top of the hill there are wide ranging views to the countryside.

From Henshaw Crescent to Valley Road there are a large number of post-war houses built in the 1950s to accommodate UKAEA employees. These spacious semi-detached houses, of several designs, occupy the remainder of the land to the end of Elizabeth Avenue and the residential roads off, including Barn, Henshaw and Garfield Crescents. The front gardens are open plan, while the rear gardens are fenced and generous in size. Not all houses were built with their own garage – some were provided in separate blocks nearby. Several houses have been extended and modified but still retain their original character. The overall effect creates a pleasing visual rhythm, reflecting high quality design despite uniformity.

Sidestrand Road and Homemead Close are on rising ground with a mixture of UKAEA semis and short terraces, in a recognisably similar style. At the top of the hill there are two short cul de sacs with privately built homes of individual design, both with views over the town toward Donnington Castle. Here again there are many tall mature trees and well established gardens. The area is served by a corner shop and a local primary school.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Valley Road Area:

A residential area on hilly ground with views to the open countryside

Very spacious layout, featuring wide road verges with mature trees in open spaces.

A well designed UKAEA estate with a mix of house styles in repeated patterns

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development should retain the visual rhythm of the street scene created by the UKAEA development

Views out of this area into the surrounding countryside are an important part of its character. Any new development should conserve, and where possible, enhance this characteristic

Bartlemy and Montgomery Roads

These are in essence part of the ‘garden suburbs’ of Newbury for the purpose of this document - a mixture of built semis and detached houses on generous plots backing onto the gardens of larger properties in the Andover Road. The roads are wide and lined with trees, generating a feeling of spaciousness. (see Design Guidelines on page 32).

Fifth Road

The Fifth Road Area is an area of mixed housing from different periods. It includes a ‘corner’ shop, allotment gardens and further west, the playing fields of St Bartholomew’s School, so is used as a walking route by generations of school children. Harvest Green, a development of two blocks of flats and some detached houses, was built in the 1980s on part of the allotments and has pleasant views over to playing fields.

The road itself runs west into open countryside, ending near an interesting enclave of properties in a semi rural setting close to a smaller set of playing fields, used by the local Athletics Club.

A large detached house built in 1948 with a generous garden on three sides enhances the corner of Valley and Fifth Roads. This house is unique as the row of houses going south are all late 1930s semis, of a similar style and design, with small front gardens and larger rear gardens. Few of these houses have garages. Fronting onto these houses up to the northern end of Henshaw Crescent is a tarmac service road, and between this and the main road is an expanse of grassed amenity land planted with a number of mature shrubs.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Fifth Road neighbourhood:

Fifth Road is a mix of semi and detached houses, mainly post war, with spacious front gardens. Not all houses have garages, so there is some on street parking.

St Bartholomew’s sixth form building – Wormstall – and the playing fields of the school add a distinctive charm to the area.

The allotments, now encircled by housing, add to the special ‘green feel’ of the neighbourhood.

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development should respect and enhance the architectural quality and variety in the street scene

Fifth Road is a main pedestrian route for pupils attending St Bartholomew’s School. Any new development in this area should create a pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists that is safe and easy to move through

4.11 Wash Common

Character of the Area

Wash Common is a large suburb south west of the town that straddles both sides of the A343 Andover Road and is surrounded by open countryside on three sides. It stretches west to the neighbouring parish of Enborne and south to the Hampshire border along the Enborne River. The majority of housing is between Enborne Street and the Andover Road. The effective 'centre' is in the north east corner where there is a prominent parade of shops located beside two historic public houses, close to schools, churches and a petrol station. The nearby Falkland Memorial on its own open space is a striking landmark. Perhaps better known is 'Wash Common' itself – a large green expanse comprising a recreation ground, allotment site, copse, ancient burial mounds of archeological importance and an open space known as Blossoms Field.

Wash Common can be divided roughly into three main sections: Andover Road, the post war Bovis Estate and the older roads with Civil War names.

Andover Road (south of the Falkland Memorial)

Andover Road is a ribbon development, with the wider residential area on the west. The road and pavements are wide giving the area a feeling of spaciousness. Flanking both sides of the road there is a mixture of both semi-detached and detached houses, which are mainly large and of individual design, set well back from the road with mature gardens and hedges. Deep front gardens with well established hedges and many mature trees add to the attractiveness of the neighbourhood, some trees still remaining from the former gardens of demolished properties. Recent infilling with modern houses on smaller plots is also evident (e.g. The Hollies).

The southern end of Andover Road drops steeply to the Hampshire border and gives some of the large detached houses extensive views over open countryside. Quiet, leafy residential lanes, such as Garden Close Lane and Round End, lead straight off Andover Road. Here mature hedges, trees and spacious lawns screen homes of imposing size and individual design, creating the appearance of being in a country lane.

The Badsworth House development of sheltered housing for the retired, on the grounds of a large property off the Andover Road, was built in 2003 and offers two, three and four bed roomed houses within large communal gardens and with warden services. Although the development is of a higher density than the surrounding properties, the design of the building adapts well with the street scene, being set back and largely screened from the road.

St George's Church is set back a little from the Andover Road with mature trees and a lawned area. It is an interesting building with an Italian feel to its design. The first section was completed in 1933 and the western end, tower, 'cloister' and vicarage were built in a similar style in 1965. On the opposite side of the Andover Road, hidden from view by houses, is the Catholic Church, set in its own grounds with adjacent community hall.

Opposite St George's Church is Park House School, which developed around an imposing house dating back to the late 19th century. It stands in impressive grounds with beautiful specimen trees and gives a feeling of opulence and spaciousness to the neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of Andover Road (Wash Common) are:

A residential area surrounded on three sides by open countryside with the Andover Road as a main artery and the approach road into Newbury.

A primarily residential area with its own identity with local schools, parks, shops and community facilities.

Mainly large detached houses set well back from the road in mature gardens, creating a feeling of spaciousness and prosperity with lots of planting.

Infilling in the grounds of detached houses

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development along the Andover Road should respect its role as a main approach road into Newbury.

The setting around the schools and churches form an essential part of the character of this Area. Any new development should respect this role and ensure that these settings are conserved and where possible, enhanced.

Wash Common Estate

The neighbourhood bounded by Conifer Crest and Enborne Street, including Blossoms Field and Glendale Avenue is known collectively as the Wash Common Estate. The main communication routes through it are Villiers Way, which becomes Glendale Avenue, Meyrick Drive and Normay Rise. Generally houses steadily increase in size southwards, starting with terraces of up to eight houses at the Blossoms Field at the north west end of the estate. The rows of terraces and semi-detached houses off Meyrick Drive are often in closes and walkways, with blocks of garages nearby. Heavy on street parking can cause access problems, especially for emergency vehicles. Along Meyrick Drive and Glendale Avenue there are mainly detached houses, with a few semi detached, all of which are open plan with small front gardens. Normay Rise is made up of individually designed houses built in the 1960s, in contrast to the newer neo Georgian style houses on Conifer Crest. These detached houses have large, well established gardens with many mature trees, producing a very pleasant, prosperous and spacious street scene.

There are several blocks of flats within the neighbourhood, in Villiers Way, around the Community Centre, Washbury House and Gorselands. The sloping ground of the Estate produces a varying landscape, with some striking street scenes of mature trees rising spectacularly behind houses with steep back gardens.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Wash Common Estate are:

A primarily residential area on the outskirts of town with its own identity, local schools, parks, shops and community facilities

A large 1970s estate with a variety of house styles and street scenes

Heavy on street parking along the streets of smaller homes, such as Bedford Close, particularly at night

The local topography producing some steep slopes adding to the visual interest

Proximity to the open countryside on three sides

Site of historical burial mounds adjacent to the recreation grounds and close to allotments

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development should respect and enhance the architectural quality and variety in the street scene

The design of future development should take into account the current lack of off street parking in some streets and the subsequent access problems and congestion

New development should, wherever possible, incorporate surrounding open countryside as part of the landscape and open space network of the area

Opportunities should be taken to retain established landscape features which can give a sense of place and definition to the area

The existing open spaces and more formal recreation area form an essential part of its character. Any new development should respect this role and ensure that these spaces are conserved and where possible enhanced

Civil War Streets

Housing between Essex Street and a line bordering the local recreation ground (known as 'The Common') and Battery End is made up of older (pre-war) semi and detached houses. Street names such as Battle Road, Charles Street and Stuart Road reflect the town's involvement in the battles of the Civil War and more particularly the site of the First Battle of Newbury in 1643. Here there are some fine Edwardian detached houses with a great deal of character. There was some infill here during the 1920s and again from 1950 onwards, resulting in an eclectic mix.

On the south side of Essex Street there are short cul de sacs of houses built during the 1960s, interspersed with much older properties. Parts of Falkland House date back to the first battle of Newbury. Falkland Garth to the north of Essex Street is a higher density estate built in the 1960s.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

Key characteristics of the Civil War Streets are:

Some 19th and early 20th properties of character surrounded by much later infill and new development, resulting in an eclectic mix

Proximity to public open space, recreation grounds and allotments

A primarily residential area on the outskirts of town with its own identity, local schools, parks, shops and community facilities

The following principles are suggested:

Any future development should respect and enhance the architectural quality and variety in the street scene

Opportunities should be taken to retain established landscape features which can give a sense of place and definition to the area

The existing open spaces within this area form an essential part of its character. Any new development should respect this role and ensure that these spaces are conserved and, where possible, enhanced

5. Conclusion

This project gave Newbury Town Council a valuable opportunity to look at the town settlement as a whole, what it was like to live in for residents, and how best to guide future development. The final document represents the consensus view of the local community.

While it signifies what is considered acceptable by the community in any future development, the Town Design Statement was adopted as a *'material consideration'* by West Berkshire Council in the determination of future planning applications at the Newbury Area Forum on 19th April 2005

The Town Design Statement identifies Newbury as an historic market town on the River Kennet, with an elegant, predominantly Georgian centre, but retaining many much older period buildings. Each Area of the Town has its own individual character and future development should enhance it.

Eleven Character Areas were identified in the Design Statement and described in some detail – at the end of each section *'key characteristics'* have been highlighted and specific planning *principles* drawn out.

Eleven overarching Key Principles for the whole Town can be summarised as follows:

- 5.1 Gateway roads into the Town attracted prosperous suburban housing with large gardens early on in its expansion and now these irreplaceable 'garden suburbs' enhance the approach roads into the Town for all to enjoy. Any future development should respect the role they play as gateways into Newbury.**
- 5.2 Similarly, other localities which are most frequently seen and remembered – such as the environs of schools and parks – should be kept pleasing to the eye.**
- 5.3 Several distinct Conservation Areas, such as The City and West Mills, are subject to stringent planning regulations. Any adjacent development should be sympathetic in design and scale.**
- 5.4 Newbury has several post-war period estates which are well planned and landscaped. Successful design deserves to be preserved, so any future development should avoid spoiling the visual rhythm of the original street scene.**
- 5.5 The green spaces provided by the Town parks form an integral part of the Town's character and their role as quality recreational areas and as a wildlife resource should be maximised.**
- 5.6 Views out to the countryside from hill top residential areas should be conserved and enhanced.**

- 5.7 Likewise views into and out of the rural edges of the Town should be conserved and new development here should blend into the existing landscape. In line with the requirements for sustainability new estates here should have good pedestrian and cycle routes into the Town, to minimise dependency on cars. This implies provision for safe cycle storage.
- 5.8 The effect of traffic generated by new development and the associated impact on local road safety and congestion should be a prime consideration in the consideration of development proposals.
- 5.9 New development in the Town should seek to conserve existing wildlife and their habitats and where possible enhance them.
- 5.10 Trees form an important aspect of the urban environment - mature specimens should be retained wherever possible within new developments, which should include appropriate planting schemes.
- 5.11 The potential of the canal corridor in the Town should be maximized as an attractive environment for future residential and recreational development. The canal side appearance of new development should be particularly carefully considered. The successful design of Greenham Mill is considered a good start to this process of regeneration.

“The community of Newbury feels it is important not to lose the character and form of the Town and the image of Newbury as an attractive, well planned and welcoming place for residents and visitors alike”.