

**AECOM**

# **DRINKSTONE**

## Design Guidelines



**FINAL REPORT**

April 2019

# Quality information

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Introduction

01

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# 1. Introduction

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This section provides context and general information to better introduce the project and its location.

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## 1.1. Introduction

Through the Ministry of Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to Drinkstone Parish Council.

The Steering Committee is making good progress in the production of its Neighbourhood Plan. Although the Local Plan has not allocated any new housing numbers to Drinkstone, it has requested to access professional advice on design guidelines for any potential development within the parish. This document should support Neighbourhood Plan policies that guide the assessment of any future development proposals and encourage high quality design. It advises on physical development helping to create distinctive places integrated with the existing settlements.

## 1.2. Objective

The main objective of this report is to develop design guidelines that future development in Drinkstone should follow to retain and protect the rural, tranquil character and scenic beauty of the area. In particular:

- The design of new buildings should respond to the scale, density, and position of existing buildings in relation to the streets and plots. It should enhance local distinctiveness without limiting originality and innovation;
- Development proposals should avoid the loss of trees, hedgerows, or woodland, and should provide a clear commitment to replace this vegetation should any loss occur;
- Any development should conserve and protect heritage assets and their settings;
- Where new domestic access points are required, small-scale features such as hedgerows, walls, fencing, and entrance gates should respond to the local vernacular to promote and enhance local distinctiveness;
- Proposals to alter historic buildings should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the history and design qualities of the buildings and provide a clear rationale for how this has been taken into account in the design of the proposed alterations, without limiting originality and innovation.

## 1.3. Process

Following an inception meeting and a site visit, AECOM and Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee members carried out a high level assessment of the villages. The following steps were agreed with the group to produce this report:

- Initial meeting and site visit;
- Urban design analysis;
- Preparation of design principles and guidelines to be used to assess future developments;
- Draft report with design guidelines; and
- Final report.



Figure 1: Grade II listed thatched cottages in Drinkstone Green.



Figure 2: Sheep grazing along Rattlesden Road.



Figure 3: Grade II listed timber-framed cottage on Cross Street under restoration.  
AECOM

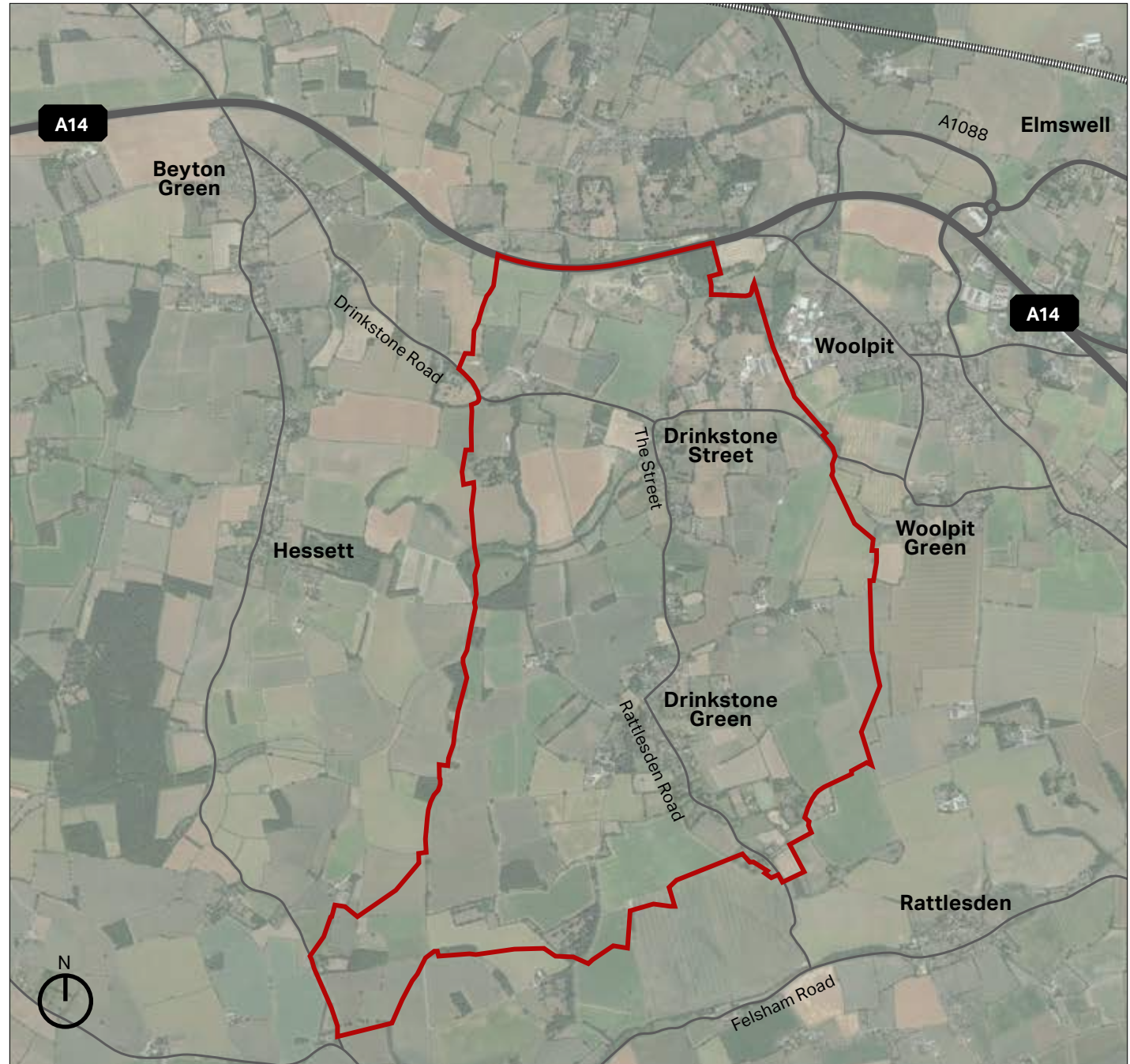


Figure 4: Drinkstone Parish area, with parish boundaries shown in red (source: Google Earth).

## 1.4. Area of Study

### Location

The Mid Suffolk parish of Drinkstone lies about 7 miles west of Stowmarket, 8 miles east of Bury St Edmunds, 30 miles east of Cambridge, and 20 miles north-west of Ipswich along the A14, which borders the parish to the north. The parish includes two main settlements - Drinkstone Street and Drinkstone Green, which are about a mile apart - as well as the smaller clusters of Potash and Drinkstone Park. Settled areas consist almost exclusively of detached and semi-detached residential properties, and are surrounded by arable farmland. The Grade II\* listed Church of All Saints serves as the parish church. The former village school closed in 1986 and has been converted into private housing.

The parish is situated in the Ancient Rolling Farmlands and Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze landscape character areas as defined by the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment. The river Black Bourn flows through Drinkstone Street.

### Population

At the 2011 census the population of Drinkstone Parish was 548.



Figure 5: Grade I listed Post Mill.



Figure 6: The 18th century Grade II\* listed Old Rectory.



Figure 7: Grade II\* listed Church of All Saints in Drinkstone Street.





Figure 8: Long view from Drinkstone Park, showing the Old Rectory (centre) and the spire of St Mary's Church in Woolpit (left).





## Local Character Analysis

02

## 2. Local Character Area

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of Drinkstone. It analyses the pattern and layout of buildings, hierarchy of movements, topography, building heights and roofline, and parking. Images in this section have been used to portray the built form of Drinkstone.

### 2.1. Introduction

The large number of listed buildings reflects the architectural diversity and historic quality of Drinkstone Street and Drinkstone Green, the two main settlements that form the parish of Drinkstone.

There are 36 listed buildings within the parish boundaries of Drinkstone. Of these, 24 are within the settlement boundaries or very close to them. In addition, there are a number of noteworthy (unlisted) buildings such as the former school. Drinkstone Mills conservation area is located outside the two main settlements and contains a Grade I listed post mill and a Grade II\* smock mill.



Figure 9: Former school on the Street.



Figure 10: Street edges framed by trees and tall hedgerows marking property boundaries.



Figure 11: Small clusters of houses with various setbacks from property line boundaries.



Figure 12: "Woolpit white" brick house.



Figure 13: Deep parcels with varying building lines and roof lines.



Figure 14: Settled area edge screened by hedgerows and tall trees.

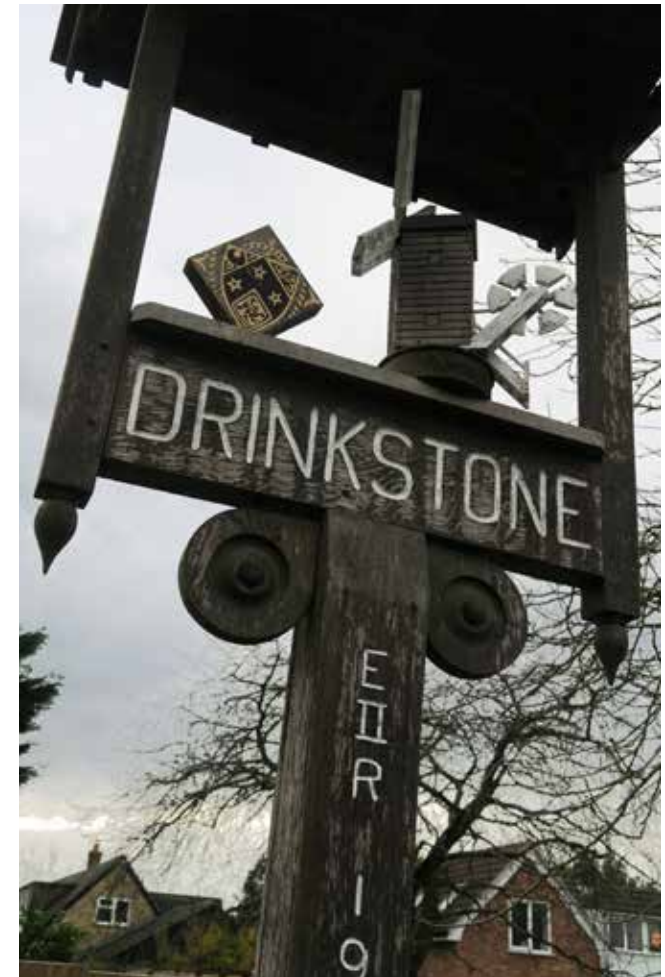


Figure 15: Drinkstone village sign on Green Close.

## 2.2. Local Character Analysis

<p><b>Streets and Public Realm</b></p>	<p>The main streets are organic in nature and seemingly evolved from historic routes, natural features, and topography. Most streets are bordered with hedges and mature trees, and most lack pavements. There is no street lighting.</p>
<p><b>Pattern and Layout of Buildings</b></p>	<p>Most buildings in Drinkstone are detached houses sited on wide plots, with a minority of semi-detached houses. Recesses of varying depths in the building line enable the formation of large front gardens or yards. There remains a high degree of openness to the open countryside and green spaces; most properties back onto or face open land.</p> <p>Most post-war development was achieved through infilling along roads. Other 20th and 21st century developments tend to have strong linear arrangements of semi-detached houses facing the streets (Gedding Road, Green Close) or organic arrangements of buildings creating residential enclaves (the Meadows, Cherry Tree Rise).</p> <p>Outside the settlement boundaries, the settlement pattern is characterised by dispersed farmsteads.</p>
<p><b>Building Heights and Roofline</b></p>	<p>Building heights typically vary between one and two storeys. Typically the roofline is pitched and many buildings have prominent chimneys. Gabled dormers are common.</p>
<p><b>Car Parking</b></p>	<p>The prevalence of large parcels enable either on plot front yard parking or garage parking adjacent to houses. Front yard parking is partially screened by tall hedges. Streets are usually too narrow to accommodate on-street parking.</p>
<p><b>Open Spaces &amp; Landscape</b></p>	<p>Drinkstone Green and Drinkstone Street are divided by a mile-long stretch of open countryside, and are surrounded by open fields with long views towards the countryside. Settled areas are punctuated by smaller fields, allotment gardens, and sports pitches. The streets also feature tall hedges and a large number of mature trees.</p>

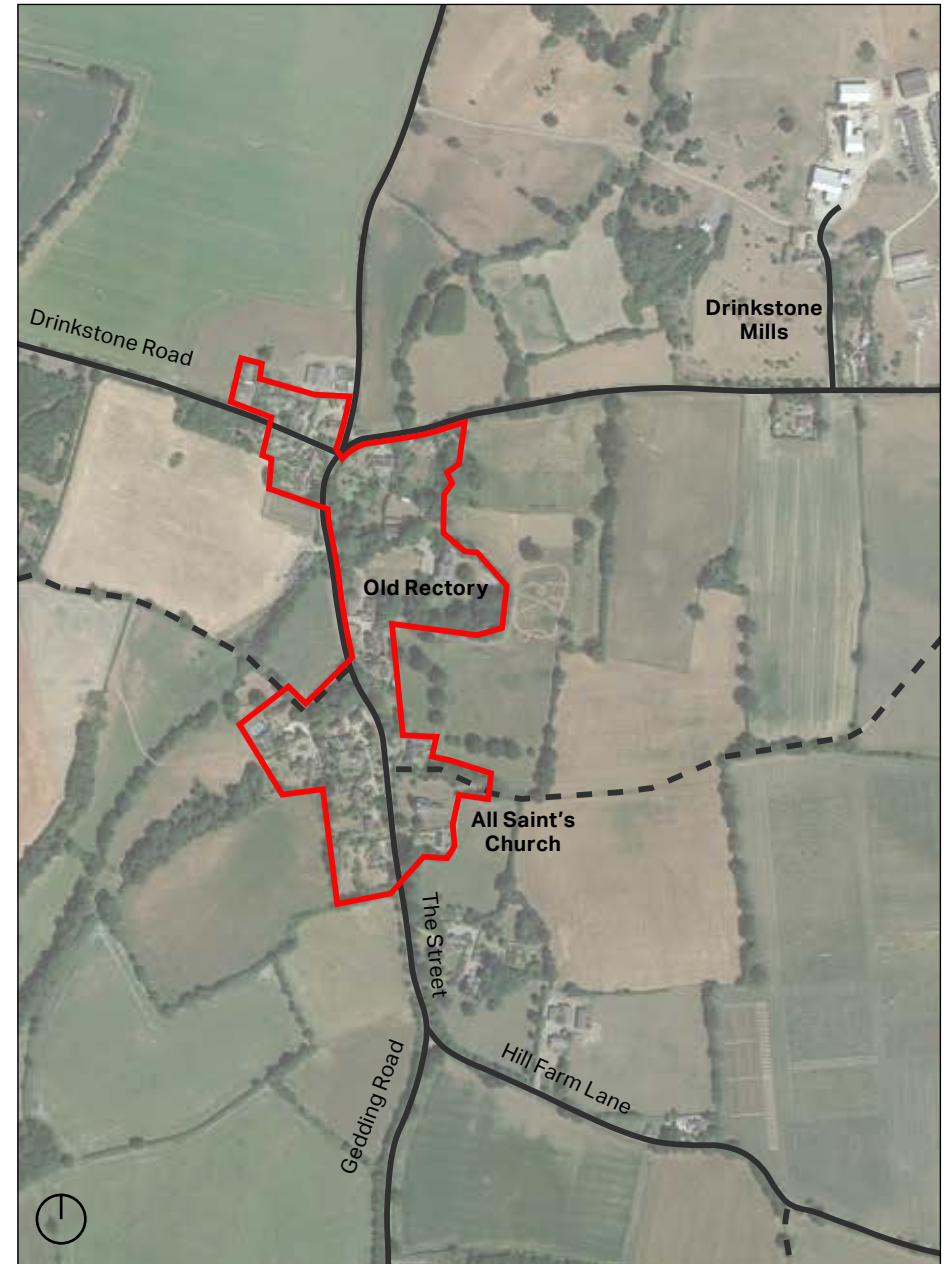


Figure 16: Aerial photo of Drinkstone Street showing settlement boundaries (red), streets (grey solid lines), and public right of ways (grey dotted lines).



Figure 17: Aerial photo of Drinkstone Green showing settlement boundaries (red), streets (grey solid lines), and public right of ways (grey dotted lines).

## 2.3. Architectural Details

Building detailing is a set of architectural tools that contribute to local distinctiveness by adding interest to new buildings.

In case of new development, buildings should be designed in harmony and proportional to each other and enhancing or complementing the overall street character.

All building elevations (all floors) should be designed with equal care and design details to create a well integrated overall composition. The design of windows, in particular, must carefully balance considerations for natural surveillance, interaction, and privacy; openings must be of sufficient number and size to allow abundant natural light inside the buildings.

The following section showcases a good amount of local building details which should be considered as positive examples.



Gabled dormers on clay plain tile roof (back) and brick wall (front)



Flint wall with red brick cap and trim.



Boundary-defining hedges.



Church of All Saints Gothic tracery window details.





Painted front door and window trims.



Variety in rendering materials and surface treatments.



Timber gate, brick wall, and landscaped hedges.



House with main façade in render and side in flint and brick.



Buildings recessed from the planted property boundary.



Thatch and pantile roofing.



Gable with decorative barge board and rendered off-white walls.





Design Guidelines

03

## 3. Design Guidelines

This section outlines key design elements and principles to consider when assessing a design proposal.

### 3.1. General questions to ask and issues to consider when presented with a development proposal

Based on established good practice, this section provides a number of questions against which the design proposal should be evaluated. The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has taken into account the context and provided an adequate design solution.

As a first step there are a number of ideas or principles that should be present in the proposals. The proposals or design should:

1. Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
2. Reinforce or enhance the established village character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
3. Respect the rural character of views and gaps;
4. Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
5. Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long distance views;
6. Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
7. Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
8. Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
9. Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
10. Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;

11. Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
12. Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
13. Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours; and
14. Positively integrate energy efficient technologies.

Following these ideas and principles, there are number of questions related to the design guidelines outlined later in the document.

### **Street Grid and Layout**

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-de-sac models? If not, why?
- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists, and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern? Are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

### **Local Green Spaces, Views and Character**

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Has the proposal been considered in its widest context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal affect trees on or adjacent to the site?
- How does the proposal affect the character of a rural location?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?

- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?

### **Gateway and Access Features**

- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between villages?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

### **Buildings Layout and Grouping**

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?

### **Building Line and Boundary Treatment**

- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Have the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

### **Fenestration**

- Are windows of sufficient size and number to allow abundant natural light inside the building?
- Have long stretches of blank (windowless) walls been minimised?
- Have considerations for natural surveillance and privacy been carefully balanced?
- Have consistent window styles and shapes been used across the elevation to avoid visual clutter?
- In historic areas, does the fenestration demonstrate a careful understanding of locally distinctive features such as scale, rhythm, materials, ornamentations, and articulation?

### **Building Heights and Roofline**

- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing, and scale?
- If a higher than average building is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?

### **Household Extensions**

- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing, or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of side extension, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?

**Building Materials and Surface Treatment**

- What is the distinctive material in the area, if any?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local material?
- Does the proposal use high quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves, and roof been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?

**Car Parking Solutions**

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?

**Architectural Details and Contemporary Design**

- If the proposal is within a conservation area, how are the characteristics reflected in the design?
- Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties? This means that it follows the height massing and general proportions of adjacent buildings and how it takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features?
- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?

## 3.2. Design Guidelines

### 3.2.1. Streets

- Streets must meet the technical highways requirements as well as be considered a 'space' to be used by all, not just motor vehicles. It is essential that the design of new development should include streets that incorporate needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and if applicable public transport users.
- New streets, should any be built, should tend to be linear with gentle meandering - providing interest and evolving views. Routes should be laid out in a permeable pattern allowing for multiple connections and choice of routes, particularly on foot. Any cul-de-sacs should be relatively short and include provision for onward pedestrian links.
- Access to properties should be from the street where possible.
- The distribution of land uses should respect the general character of the area and street network, and take into account the degree of isolation, lack of light pollution, and levels of tranquillity.
- Pedestrian paths should be included in new developments and be integrated with the existing pedestrian routes.



**Figure 20: Recessed residential properties (left) facing open fields behind hedgerows along Cross Street.**



**Figure 19: Semi-detached houses with front gardens facing Gedding Road.**



**Figure 18: Streets (solid lines) and public right of ways (dotted lines) in Drinkstone Green (source: Google Earth).**



### 3.2.2. Local Green Spaces, Views and Character

- Development adjoining public open spaces and important gaps should enhance the character of these spaces by either providing a positive interface (i.e. properties facing onto them to improve natural surveillance) or a soft landscaped edge.
- Any trees or woodland lost to new development must be replaced.
- The spacing of development should reflect the rural character and allow for long distance views of the countryside from the public realm. Trees and landscaping should be incorporated in the design.
- The existing quiet and peaceful atmosphere of Drinkstone should be preserved.
- Green gaps between settlements and built up areas must be retained to avoid coalescence.
- Landscape scheme should be designed and integrated with the open fields that currently border the village.
- Native trees and shrubs should be used to reinforce the rural character of the village.



**Figure 21: View along the Street towards the Church of All Saints framed by tall trees and planting.**



**Figure 23: Allotment gardens on Gedding Road and Chapel Lane.**



**Figure 22: Cross Street playing fields in Drinkstone Green**



**Figure 24: Open fields between Drinkstone Street and Drinkstone Green**

### 3.2.3. Gateway and Access Features

- In the case of any future development, the design proposals should consider placing gateway and built elements highlighting the access or arrival to the new developed site.
- The gateway buildings or features should reflect local character. This could mean larger houses in local materials with emphasis on the design of chimneys and fenestration, as well as well laid and cared for landscape.
- Besides building elements acting as gateways, high quality landscaping features could be considered appropriate to fulfil the same role.



Figure 26: Village sign and tree-lined verges marking the entrance into Drinkstone Green Close.



Figure 25: White fences, hedges, and trees acting as gateway features into the Old Rectory

### 3.2.4. Pattern and Layout of Buildings

- The existing rural character must be appreciated when contemplating new development, whatever its size or purpose.
- Where an intrinsic part of local character, properties should be clustered in small pockets showing a variety of types. The use of a repeating type of dwelling along the entirety of the street should be avoided.
- Boundaries such as walls or hedgerows, whichever is appropriate to the street, should enclose and define each street along the back edge of the highway, adhering to a consistent property line for each development group.
- Properties should aim to provide rear and front gardens or at least a small buffer to the public sphere where the provision of a garden is not possible.

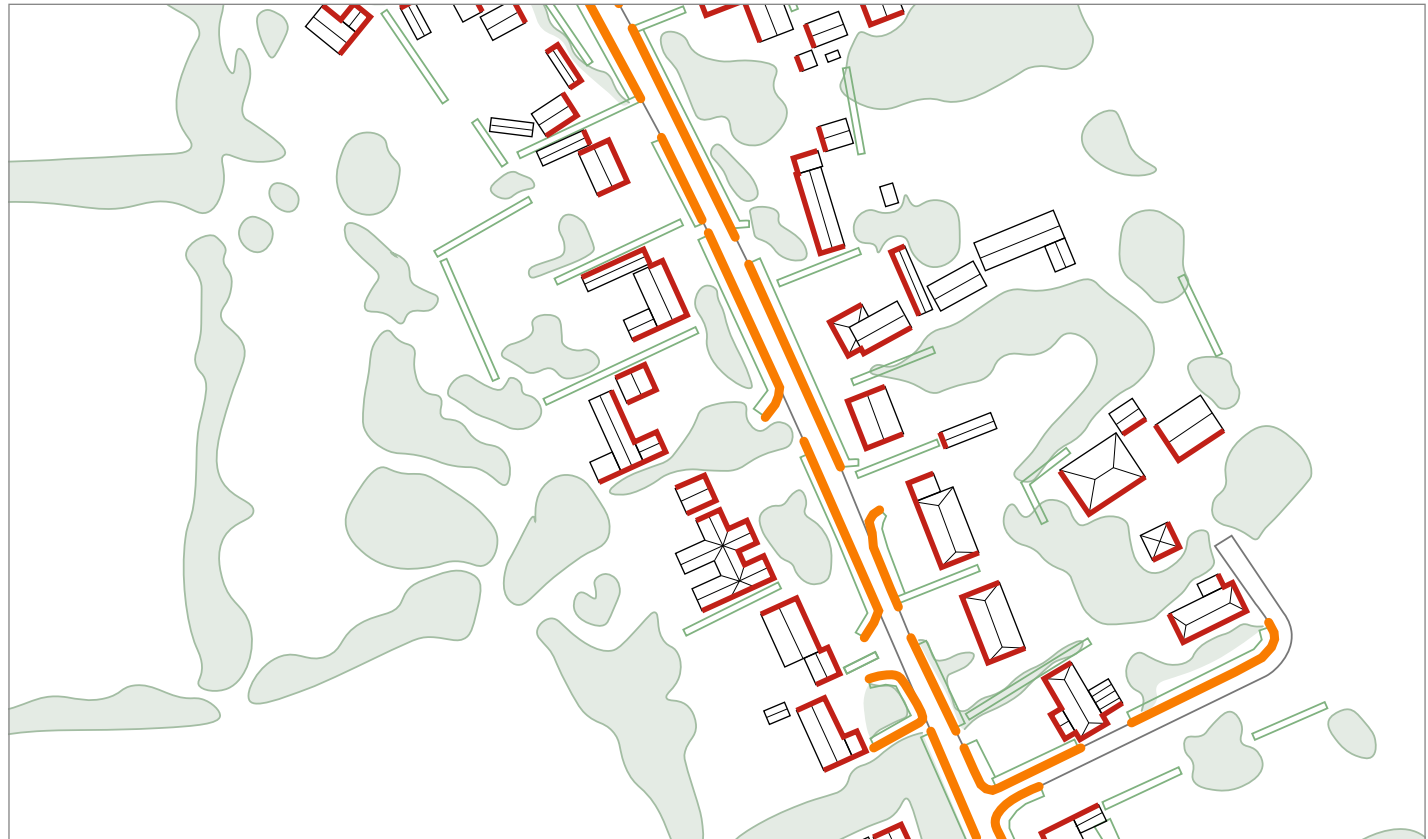


Figure 27: Aerial photo showing loose building lines created by informal clusters of detached houses and street-defining hedges on Rattlesden Road (© Crown Copyright and database right 2019).



Figure 28: A small cluster of houses sharing a common driveway bordered by hedgerows.



Figure 29: Detached house on Rattlesden Road set back from the planted property line.

### 3.2.5. Building Line and Boundary Treatment

- Buildings should have their main façade and entrance facing the street where this is in keeping with local character. The building line should have subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions but will generally form a unified whole.
- Buildings should be designed to ensure that streets and/or public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings. This can be ensured by placing ground floor habitable rooms and upper floor windows facing the street.
- Boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity of the building line and help define the street, appropriate to the rural character of the area. They should be mainly continuous hedges with a minority of low walls made of flint with red brick cap on top or lined with bricks standing perpendicular to the wall. The use of either panel fencing or metal or concrete walls in these publicly visible boundaries should be avoided. Also, boundary treatments should not impair natural surveillance.
- Front gardens should be included where this is characteristic of the area.
- If placed on the property boundary, waste storage should be integrated as part of the overall design of the property. Landscaping could also be used to minimise the visual impact of bins and recycling containers.



**Figure 30: Street edges and property boundaries defined by landscaped hedges and mature trees rather than building lines.**



**Figure 31: Low flint and brick property wall.**



**Figure 32: Back edge of residential properties are delineated by a thick planted buffer that screens most houses from the open countryside.**



**Figure 33: Backdrop of mature trees marking the edge of settlement boundaries, as seen from Gedding Road.**

### 3.2.6. Building Heights/ Roofline

Creating a good variety in the roof line is a significant element of designing attractive places. There are certain elements that serve as guideline in achieving a good variety of roofs:

- The scale of the roof should always be in proportion with the dimensions of the building itself;
- Monotonous building elevations should be avoided, therefore subtle changes in roofline should be ensured during the design process;
- Locally traditional roof detailing elements should be considered and implemented where possible in cases of new development; and
- Dormers can be used as design element to add variety and interest to roofs.



Figure 34: 19th century house and contemporary extension showing variety in roofline and orientation.



Figure 35: House and extension in Drinkstone showing a dynamic roofline and a diversity of traditional roofing materials.



Figure 36: Pantile cottages with a diversity of roof styles, orientations, and pitches.

### 3.2.7. Household Extensions

- The original building should remain the dominant element of the property regardless the amount of extensions. The newly built extension should not overwhelm the building from any given point.
- Extensions should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling.
- Designs that wrap around the existing building and involve overly complicated roof forms should be avoided.
- The pitch and form of the roof used on the building adds to its character and extensions should respond to this where appropriate.
- Extensions should consider the materials, architectural features, window sizes, and proportions of the existing building and recreate this style to design an extension that matches and complements the existing building.
- In case of side extensions, the new part should be set back from the front of the main building and retain the proportions of the original building. This is in order to reduce any visual impact of the join between existing and new.
- In case of rear extensions, the new part should not have a harmful effect on neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing, overbearing or privacy issues.



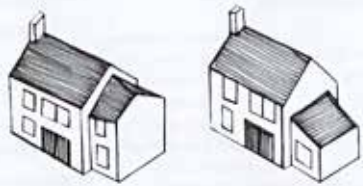
Figure 37: Successful contemporary side extension on Park Road.



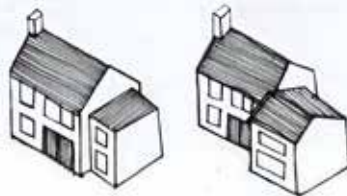
Figure 38: Positive design for contemporary side extension, habitable space and garage amenity.



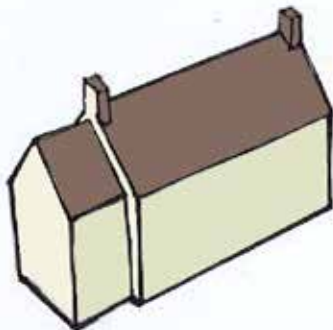
Figure 39: Positive design for historic pantile-covered side extension and habitable space.



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



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



The extension has an appropriate scale and massing in relation to the existing building.

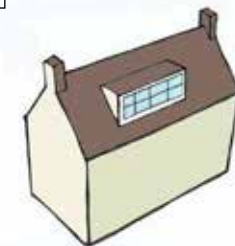
**Design treatment in case of loft conversion:**



Loft conversion incorporating skylights.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.



Loft conversion incorporating a long shed dormer which is out of scale with the original building.



Original roofline of an existing building.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.



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

### 3.2.8. Materials and Building Details

The materials and architectural detailing used throughout Drinkstone contribute to the rural character of the area and the local vernacular. It is therefore important that the materials used in proposed development are of a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness. Any future development proposals should demonstrate that the palette of materials has been selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment.

This section includes examples of building material that contribute to the local vernacular of Drinkstone which could be used to inform future development.



RED BRICK



FLINT WALL WITH RED BRICK TRIM AND CAP



"WOOLPIT WHITE" BRICK



BLACK WEATHERBOARDING



TIMBER SHINGLES



FLINT FAÇADE WITH RED BRICK WINDOW TRIM





OFF-WHITE RENDER



"SUFFOLK PINK" RENDER



TIMBER GATE



THATCHED ROOF



GABLED DORMER



CLAY PANTILE ROOF



NATURALISED TIMBER EXTENSION



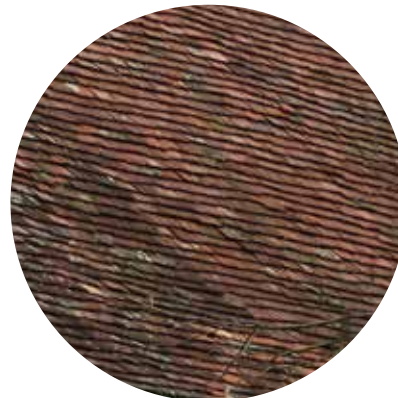
BRICK CHIMNEY



STREET-FRONTING HEDGE



DECORATIVE BARGE BOARD



CLAY PLAINTILE ROOF



PAINTED SQUARE WINDOW FRAMES

### 3.2.9. Parking

- Car parking solutions should be a mix of on plot and garage parking.
- For family homes cars should be placed at the front or side of the property. For small pockets of housing a front or rear court is acceptable. Also, multiple garage parking is encouraged.
- Car parking design should be combined with landscaping to minimise the presence of vehicles.
- When placing parking at the front, the area should be designed to minimise visual impact and to blend with the existing streetscape and materials. The aim is to keep a sense of enclosure and to break the potential of a continuous area of car parking in front of the dwellings by means of walls, hedging, planting, and use of differentiated quality paving materials.



Figure 42: Houses on Gedding Road with on plot side parking.



Figure 43: Vegetation-screened on plot front yard parking.



Figure 44: Side garage building with high quality finish.



Figure 45: Landscaped shared driveway with garage shielded by main house (left).

### 3.2.10. Public Realm and Streetscape

- High quality landscaping and building materials should be used across the new development. Care should be taken when selecting the materials that will be used for the paved areas.
- High quality stone, gravel, granite, and bricks can provide durable and attractive hard surface throughout the public realm.
- Expensive materials such as sandstone and limestone could also be used to further enhance the quality of particular spaces.



Figure 46: Planted hedges and mature trees framing Rattlesden Road, adding quality to the public interface.



Figure 47: The informal quality of Chapel Lane is highlighted by a narrow carriageway shared between vehicles and pedestrians.

### 3.2.11. Traditional Architecture

The gradual evolution of the parish over the centuries has resulted in an organic character to development. Each building has its own individuality resulting in variations in construction materials, height, the pattern of openings, and detailing. Buildings are predominantly 1 or 2 storeys and the change in roof heights and the presence of chimneys contribute to the visual interest of the historic villages.



### 3.2.12. Contemporary take on Traditional Architecture

Within the parish there are a few examples of successful contemporary architecture. These buildings are usually refurbished agricultural buildings with a contemporary extension built in high quality building materials. Although their design is contemporary, they demonstrate an intelligent understanding of materials, massing, and local traditional architecture that blends harmoniously with their physical context.

It is suggested that this trend continues to further expand with additional eco design features incorporated in future developments.



**Figure 48: New extension echoing the mass of the adjacent flint and brick house.**



**Figure 49: Barn conversion - National Federation of Builders Awards 2013, Refurbishment of the year 2012 (Top Prize); Local Authority Building Control Award 2013 (Finalist) (photo courtesy of owner)**



**Figure 50: New building along Chapel Lane using high quality building materials.**



A photograph of a white house with a red-tiled roof. The house has two windows visible, one with white shutters. A large tree trunk is in the foreground on the right. The scene is outdoors with some greenery and a blue structure on the left.

**Next steps and  
Recommendations**

**04**

## 4. Next steps

This section concludes the report with recommendations on how to embed findings in the Neighbourhood Plan and engage with Mid Suffolk Council to develop policies supporting the guidelines.

### 4.1. Embed the masterplan and guidelines in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan

The objective of this report is to develop a series of design guidelines for development possibilities in Drinkstone.

The report can be used as evidence to support the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan (and its draft policies) where the analysis highlights relevant issues and opportunities that can be influenced by land use planning interventions.

The focus of this report has primarily been on important local character assets and urban design guidelines to be considered in future development proposals. These suggestions should be considered alongside other non-design interventions, such as exploring opportunities for supporting or restricting certain types of development/land uses and allocating the key sites identified for development. Any policies put forward must be capable of meeting the basic conditions (e.g. having regard to national policies and general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan).

### 4.2. Engage with the Council to develop policies supporting the proposals

The inputs from the Council's policy and development management specialists would be invaluable in advance of formal consultation and submission. The Steering Committee should consider how our recommendations can be transposed into policy through discussions with Mid Suffolk Council and use the best practice guidance from Locality to prepare draft policies for consultation. Locality's 'Writing Planning Policies' guidance sets out how different planning policies are designed to achieve different things. The guide describes the three most common as:

**Generic** – a simple policy which applies universally to development across the entire Neighbourhood Plan area;

**Criteria based** – a policy with a series of requirements that should be met by development proposals. These can be set out as separate bullet points; and

**Site specific** – this is where a policy applies to particular areas of land. One of the most powerful tools for a Neighbourhood Plan is to allocate land for a particular type of development. As well as allocating land you can use your plan to set out the principles which need to be followed in developing a particular site. This might include specifying what needs to be covered in a design brief to accompany any planning application. If you have site specific policies then you need to include a clear map showing the location and boundaries.

Site specific allocations are the hardest to do well. They would normally include associated policy related to land uses, quantum of development, configuration and design.

The Steering Committee should check with the Local Planning Authority that their emerging preferred options are planning matters (i.e. suitable for inclusion as land use planning policy). Those that are not can be considered as community projects or neighbourhood infrastructure to be included within a delivery and implementation section of the Neighbourhood Plan.





Figure 51: Grade II\* listed Drinkstone Smock Mill.

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