AECOM

WATTON TOWN CENTRE DESIGN CODE



FINAL REPORT May 2020

Limitations

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited ("AECOM") in accordance with its contract with Locality (the "Client") and in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. AECOM shall have no liability to any third party that makes use of or relies upon this document.

Copyright © 2020 AECOM Limited. All Rights Reserved.

All maps reproduced courtesy of Emapsite © Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 09121572.

Quality information

Project role	Name	Position	Action summary	Signature	Date
Qualifying body	Neil Featherstone	Watton Neighbourhood Planning Group	Review		03-04-20
Director / QA	Ben Castell	Technical Director	Review		10-02-20
Researcher	Stela Kontogianni	Graduate Urban Designer	Research, site visit, drawings		
	Ela Johnson	Graduate Landscape Architect			

Contents

1. Introduction	6	
1.1. Background	6	
1.2. Objectives	6	
1.3. Process	6	
2. Policy review	10	
2.1. Introduction	10	
2.2. Breckland Local Plan policies	10	
3. Town centre character analysis	14	
3.1. Existing land uses	14	
3.2. Public realm	18	
3.3. Movement and parking	20	
3.4. Gateways and wayfinding	22	
4. Town centre opportunities/policies plan	26	
4.1. Opportunity sites	26	
5. Town centre design codes	32	
5.1. Introduction	32	
5.2. Mix of use	33	
5.3. Public realm	34	
5.4. Streets and movement	39	
5.5. Shop fronts	41	
5.6. Signage and wayfinding		
5.7. Sustainability and resilience	48	

5.8. Details and materials	
6. Delivery	57
6.1. Delivery agents	57
6.2. Deliverability	57





1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Through the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Programme, led by Locality, AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to Watton Town Council.

The support is intended to provide design guidelines for development in the town centre that will inform, deliver and complement the Town Council's wider work on economic development.

1.2. Objectives

The overarching objective of this report is to advise on how the town centre can be improved with particular reference to the High Street.

The objective and study area focus was agreed with Watton Town Council at the outset of the project.

1.3. Process

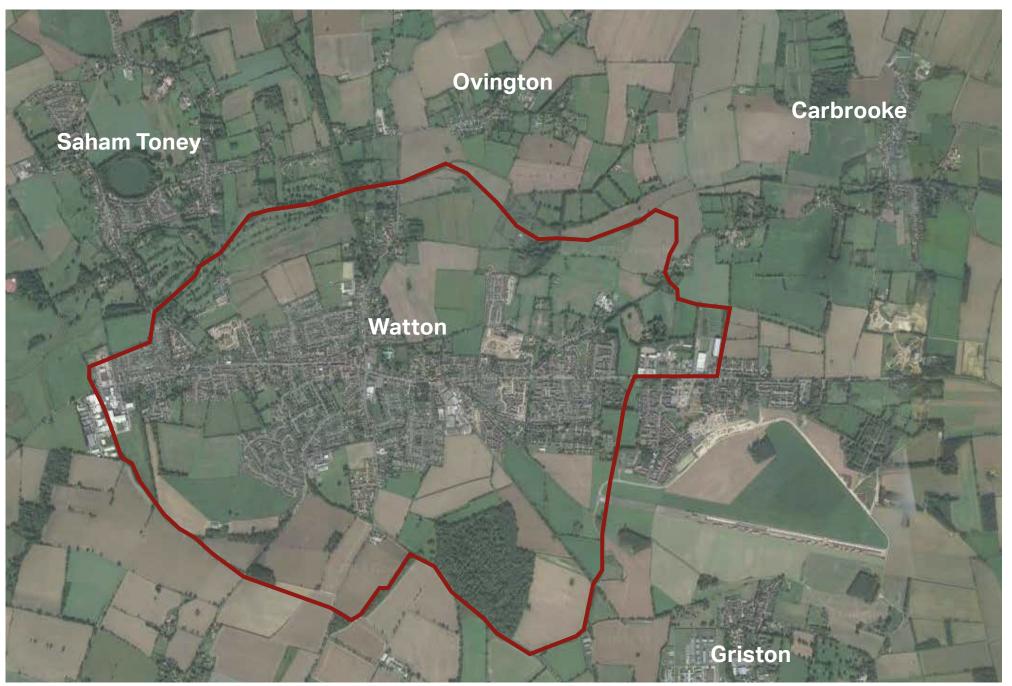
Following an inception meeting and a site visit with Watton Town Council representatives, AECOM carried out an urban design assessment of the study area, mainly focused on the high street and the surrounding town centre area.

The following steps were undertaken to produce this report:

- Initial meeting with Town Council representatives and a joint site visit;
- · Urban design analysis;
- · Desktop research and policy review; and
- Preparation of this draft report for comment by Watton Town Council.

KEY

Neighbourhood Plan Area



Watton Neighbourhood Plan Area (as defined in Watton Town Neighbourhood Plan, May 2018)





2. Policy review

This section notes the existing policy context and highlights the relevant policies to which development should comply.

2.1. Introduction

The Breckland Local Plan was adopted in November 2019. The Plan sets a vision and strategy for Breckland throughout the plan period up to 2036. The Plan sets out strategic policies and development management policies to guide development in the district and meet the overall strategic vision and objectives.

The Local Plan defines Watton as a medium-sized Market Town which serves as an administration and service centre which has a good range of services that meet the needs of residents within the town and in surrounding areas. Watton also provides a good range of employment opportunities.

The Local Plan allocates two sites for the development of new housing in Watton; Land off Saham Road and Land north of Norwich Road, which are addressed in section 2.3.

Breckland District Council is committed to producing a new Supplementary Planning Document on design, to which any new development will be able to demonstrate conformity.

The Local Plan has been reviewed and the policies relevant to the site's development are summarised hereafter.

2.2. Breckland Local Plan policies

Policy GEN 01: Sustainable Development in Breckland

Policy GEN 01 seeks to achieve development that responds to environmental, social and economic objectives, and can demonstrate the application of the sustainable development principles defined within the policy.

Policy GEN 02: Promoting High Quality Design

The Council seeks to achieve new developments of a high quality design that positively contribute to communities in Breckland. Policy GEN 02 requires that new developments be designed to respect the character of, and contribute positively to, the area context and surroundings, contribute to the creation of sustainably designed and safe streets and neighbourhoods, maximise connectivity, and protect and contribute to amenity and quality of life.

Policy HOU 06: Principle of New Housing

Policy HOU 06 requires that the design and layout of new developments be employed to optimise building density to a level that is most appropriate and responsive to its location. Where acceptability and justification can be demonstrated, lower density development will be supported in rural areas and areas at the edge of settlements. Higher density development in sustainable and highly accessible locations will be supported.

Policy HOU 10: Technical Design Standards for New Homes

The Council seeks to ensure high quality living environments in new homes. The development of new homes should conform to the policy's standards for water efficiency by meeting the building regulation requirement of 110 l/h/d. Nationally Described Space Standards should also be met for all new homes in Breckland.

Policy HOU 11: Residential Replacement, Extension and Alteration

The Council requires that new proposals seeking to alter, replace or extend a rural dwelling must meet the requirements of HOU 11, which requires that extensions and alterations to a rural dwelling be of a suitable and proportionate size relative to the existing dwelling, is respectful and considerate of existing character and design, and does not alter the character of the original dwelling. Replacement dwellings are required to be considerate of the countryside setting in terms of size, scale and design, and enhance the appearance and setting of the neighbourhood.

Policy TR 01: Sustainable Transport Network

Policy TR 01 seeks to promote safe and efficient sustainable transport systems across Breckland. The council will support development which is sustainably located, promotes opportunities for use of sustainable transport modes, and improves accessibility to services.

Policy ENV 04: Open Space, Sport & Recreation

Policy ENV 04 requires that new residential development proposing more than 11 dwellings provide a contribution towards outdoor playing space, and where over 25 dwellings are proposed, provide outdoor playing space within the development of a size which accords to local standards.

Policy ENV 05: Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape

The Council requires that proposals for new development consider the guidance contained in the Breckland Landscape Character Assessment and Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment, and subsequently consider and assess the impact of proposals upon local landscape character, landscape features and biodiversity. The policy suggests that new developments should employ measures to protect landscape character.

Policy ENV 07: Designated Heritage Assets

The Council requires that measures be taken to ensure the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings be conserved and enhanced. Any development which is understood to have any impact upon a designated heritage asset will be subject to 'comprehensive assessment'.

Policy COM 01: Design

The Council seeks to achieve the highest possible standards of design for all new development in the district, contributing to the amenity and distinctive local character of the area. The policy defines the Council's design criteria which is required to be met in full for any new development to be permitted. The design criteria comprises a list of key requirements to ensure the highest possible quality of design can be achieved.

Policy COM 03: Protection of Amenity

Development which could result in unacceptable impact on residential amenity will not be supported, and special consideration to potential impacts upon amenity should be made. New developments should be in accordance with the key amenity considerations set out within the policy.

Policy COM 04: Community Facilities

Development which proposes the development or enhancement of community facilities is supported, and any proposals which would result in the loss of such facilities should be required to provide justification to the Council.

The Watton Neighbourhood Plan will need to comply with each of these policies to meet the 'basic conditions'. But it can also fill any gaps where Local Plan policies do not cover an issue that is important to the town and it can add local detail to inform the implementation of the Local Plan policies.





3. Town centre character analysis

This section outlines the spatial and contextual characteristics of Watton town centre with a focus on the High Street. It analyses the existing land uses along the High Street, the public realm, movement and parking as well as signage and wayfinding. It is informed by the Watton Character Assessment, prepared by community volunteers. The features outlined in this section are used as the basis for the design guidance in chapter 5.

3.1. Existing land uses

The town centre has a number of independent businesses, catering for day to day essentials including food and drink, hairdressers, butchers, home furniture, bookshops, flower shops, jewellers, health centre, police station and library. There are some pubs and cafés, which create some late afternoon and evening activity in the area. There is also a number of offices, estate agents and banks. This is supplemented by a number of typical High Street names including Tesco and Boots. Educational uses also exist in the area; Wayland Academy is a mixed secondary school which was converted to academy status in 2012.

The market that takes place every Wednesday on the High Street is another asset for the town centre. It sells a wide but diminishing range of goods and its location can be seen on the opposite map. There is a wide variety of stall holders, the large majority of which are independent retailers.

Watton is a local service centre with businesses offering services to meet the needs of the community. The diversity in the business types along the road is a positive characteristic of the area that creates a vibrant place. There is, however, some concern about the number of vacancies on the ground floor which could potentially have a negative impact on the town centre.



Fruit market, hairdressers and pet shop on the High Street, Watton



Flower boutique shop in Watton

KEY

Town centre (as identified by Breckland council)

Location of the market

Hotel

Education

Retail

Residential

Food-entertainment

Religion

Health Centres

Services (bank, community centres)

Vacant

Car Parking

Allotments

Public green space

Private green space

Primary shopping area (as

💶 🛓 identified by Breckland council)



Existing ground floor land uses in Watton town centre(based on the site visit on the 09/12/2019)

Residential

Residential uses within the town centre enable people to live in areas that are very accessible to town centre services, which they help to support. They allow for living / working and promote natural surveillance.

Restaurants / Cafés / Pubs

Restaurants, cafés and tearooms provide places to rest and dwell and support other uses within the town centre. They help to create a vibrant place and an attractive street scene. Restaurants also provide both day/night time activities.



Restaurant in Watton town centre



Local Shops and Services

Traditional shops and local services are important for the area. Examples of these shops include local butchers, cobblers, greengrocers, bakers, newsagents etc.

Boutique Shops

Boutique shops provide leisure activity for residents and visitors. They help improve dwell time within the town centre and attract visitors. Examples of these include gift shops, boutiques, flower shops, souvenir shops etc.



Local shops in Watton town centre

Hotels

Hotels help support the night-time economy and serve visitors/tourists in the area. They help to improve tourist infrastructure within the Town Centre. There are already two hotels in the area; the Crown and the Willow House and the MJB Watton Apartments. The first two also provide restaurant and pubs serving the locals as well.



Crown Hotel in Watton town centre



Local Market

Street vendors and local markets help to make the Town Centre vibrant and attract both residents and visitors. The existing local market is considered to be a financial asset for the area.

Community Hubs

Community centres support the community through providing valued space for activities. They also promote a community feeling and help locals to bond under the same cause, activity, purpose. Examples include Wayland House and the Youth Centre.



Local market in Watton town centre



Wayland House in Watton town centre

3.2. Public realm

Running from east to west, the High Street is the most dominant street in Watton¹ town centre; it is included in the conservation area, as seen on the map opposite.

The public realm is, in the most part, well equipped and maintained. Planters positively contribute to the character of the area, although the proposed selection of small plants does not fully use the potential of the large planters. There are not many public realm trees; the majority of them can be found closer to the west end of the High Street.

There is some variation in pavement width along the High Street which occasionally creates some issues. More specifically, there are points, as seen on the opposite map, where the pavement is narrow which could impact the safety of pedestrians. The pavement widens towards the western end of the High Street, providing a safer environment and more potential opportunities for car parking.

Street furniture and street lighting are an important part of the public realm along the High Street. The public open space next to the Crown hotel/pub offers some space for street furniture and lighting; however, the space is not currently meeting its potential.



Street lighting along the High Street



Example of narrow pavement along the High Street

Narrow pavements and difficult to negotiate route through for single person Medium difficulty with enough width on pavement for 2 people to negotiate route through Conservation area (as identified by Breckland District Council) Bus stop Street furniture Public realm trees

Flower planters

inserted

Street lighting

Public green spaces

Private green spaces

Flower planters with trees

1. As mentioned in the Watton Character Appraisal 2018





Limited number of trees along the High Street

Flower planters, street furniture and decorations along the High Street



3.3. Movement and parking

The High Street is a vibrant place which is active throughout the day due the diversity of land uses. By being the only main road in Watton extending east towards Watton Green, Hingham and west towards Little Cressingham and other villages, this has created some issues.

Traffic congestion is an issue that becomes more apparent when lorries and large vehicles drive through the High Street. The issue is exacerbated at 'pinch points' along the High Street, as seen on the map opposite, which is a result of the changing width of the road, the location of some parking spaces and the size of the vehicles.

Parking is also a significant issue. There is an abundance of car parking in the area, however the street parking could be improved and time limits could also be introduced in the Town Centre to increase customer churn.

The market is placed between the two major 'pinch points', causing an inconvenience for both vendors and customers due to congestion, and creating an unpleasant and stressful environment for the High Street.



Lorries along the High Street creating traffic congestion at pinch points



Parking spaces along the High Street

KEY



Car Parking



Location of market



Vehicular entrances to car parking areas



Pedestrian crossings / traffic calming



Pinch points



Car Parking places on High Street



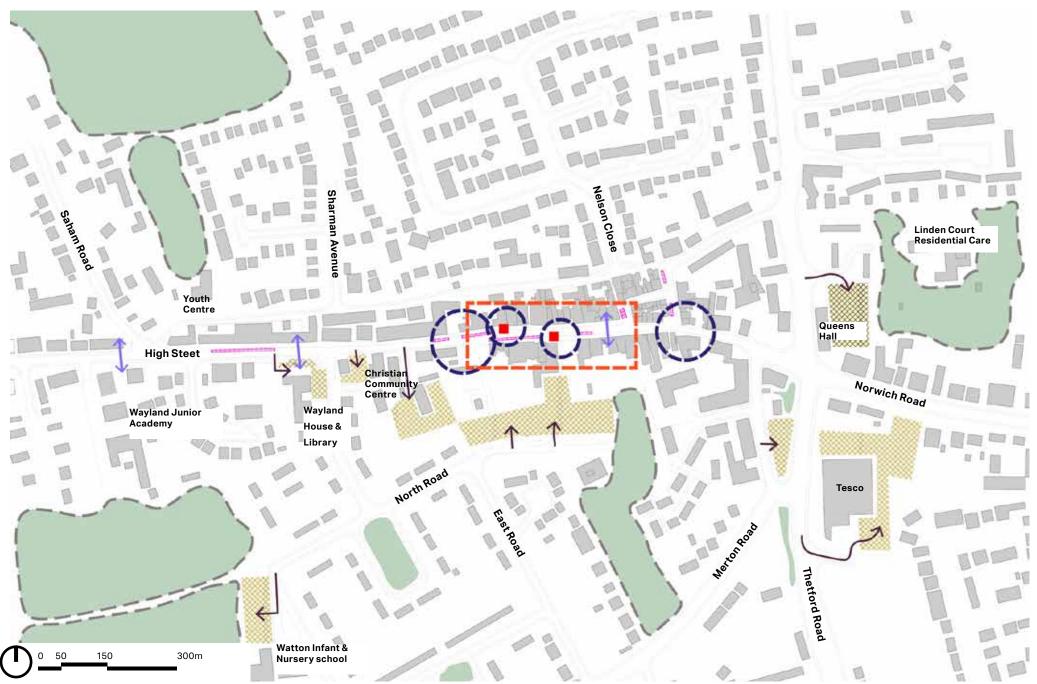
Bus stop



Public green space



Private green space



Movement and parking along the High Street in Watton Town Centre

3.4. Gateways and wayfinding

Signage and wayfinding is important for a town centre. Signage allows people to navigate themselves around and be directed to key landmarks in the area.

Both ends of the High Street act as entrance points to the town centre. To that point, the east gateway is equipped with signs indicating directions to the town centre, police station, car parking and public toilets, as well as tourist information. Nearing the High Street, there are some signs indicating landmark buildings, for example the Council office and the tourist information building.



Signage and wayfinding along the High Street



Watton town sign helps people to orientate themselves



Youth Centre located on Harvey Street



Wayland House located on the High Street

Buildings as landmarks

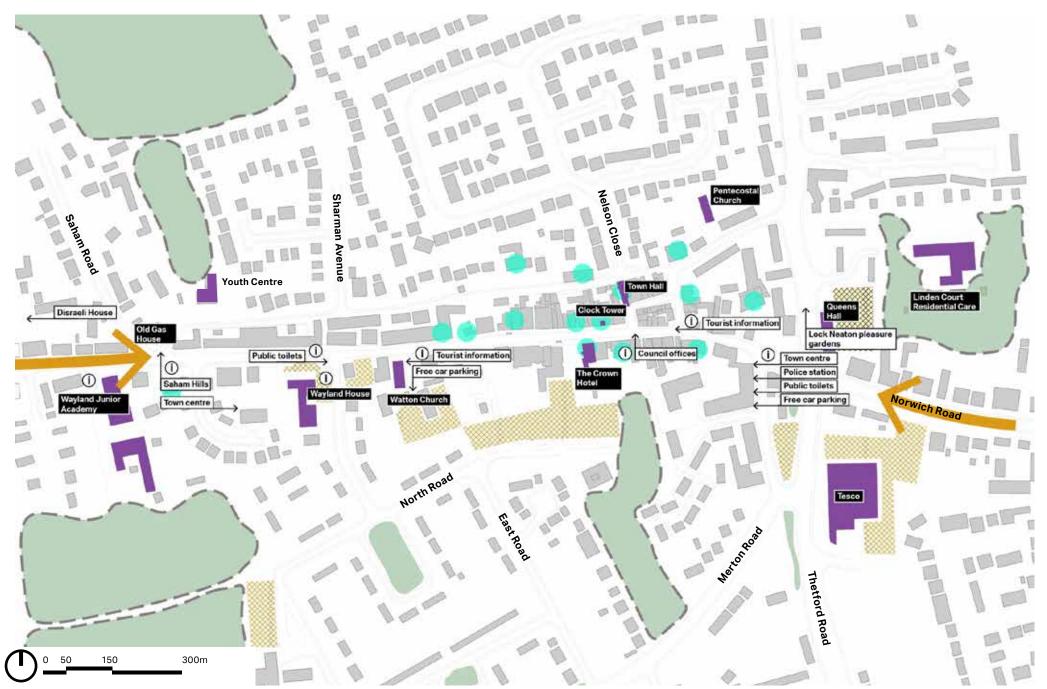
Information signs

Gateways / entrance points

Listed buildings

Private green space

Public green space



Signage and wayfinding along the High Street in Watton Town Centre





4. Town centre opportunities/policies plan

4.1. Opportunity sites

Watton Town Council has identified three key opportunity sites in the town centre. These projects are being initiated to promote economic development and can be enabled by the Neighbourhood Plan. The sites are introduced in this chapter.

4.1.1. Wayland House

Wayland House, which includes the NCC library, on High Street, is an important community hub for Watton and the surrounding area. It is home to the Wayland Partnership, which works to improve social and economic well-being.

There is a proposal to take account of the potential for the nearby Hethel Engineering Centre to create a digital and creative media centre on the site. This would be a good use for a prominent town centre site. The Wayland Partnership and Town Council will need to work together on this proposal.

4.1.2. Charlotte Harvey Youth Centre

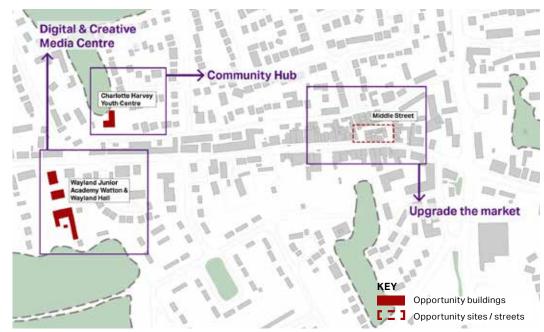
The Charlotte Harvey Youth Centre is subject of an initiative by the Benjamin Foundation, a Norfolk young people's charity, to establish a new Community Hub. Watton Town Council and the Charlotte Harvey Trust are also involved in the Partnership. This would regenerate the site.



Wayland House



Charlotte Harvey Youth Centre



Opportunity sites in Watton town centre

4.1.3. Upgrade of the market

The market plays a vital role in providing a sense of place to Watton both as one of its main attractions and source of economic vitality. AECOM was commissioned in 2018 to advise on how the market could be improved to create comfortable conditions for the people while remaining an attractive place on non-market days. The drawings on the next pages show the design proposals that have been set out in that report.

The key characteristics of the proposals:

- Relocation of the market to Middle Street and Dereham Road:
- Upgrade Middle Street and Dereham Road that at the moment perform poorly;
- Ensuring safe market operations by forming a pedestrian-only area;
- Promote buildings of high importance, for instance Watton Town Hall and the Kings Arms pub;
- Promote a shared surface treatment whereby the carriageway is raised to footway levels so it could be applied to the repaying of Middle Street and Dereham Road;
- Introducing opportunities to sit in order to transform Middle Street into a proper town square and gathering place throughout the week;
- Improving the site drainage, thus reducing the likelihood of surface water flooding on the High Street. For example, permeable paving could be used as a sustainable and attractive solution to alleviate flooding risks and highlight the new role of the public spaces, and could be extended along the High Street.

Examples of proposed treatments



Street market in small public spaces



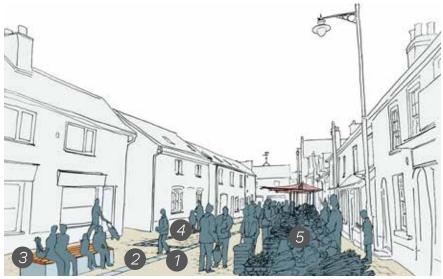
Shared space designs



Drawing 1: Proposed public realm improvements on market days (Reference: AECOM Masterplanning Report 2018)

Drawing 1 Market proposal

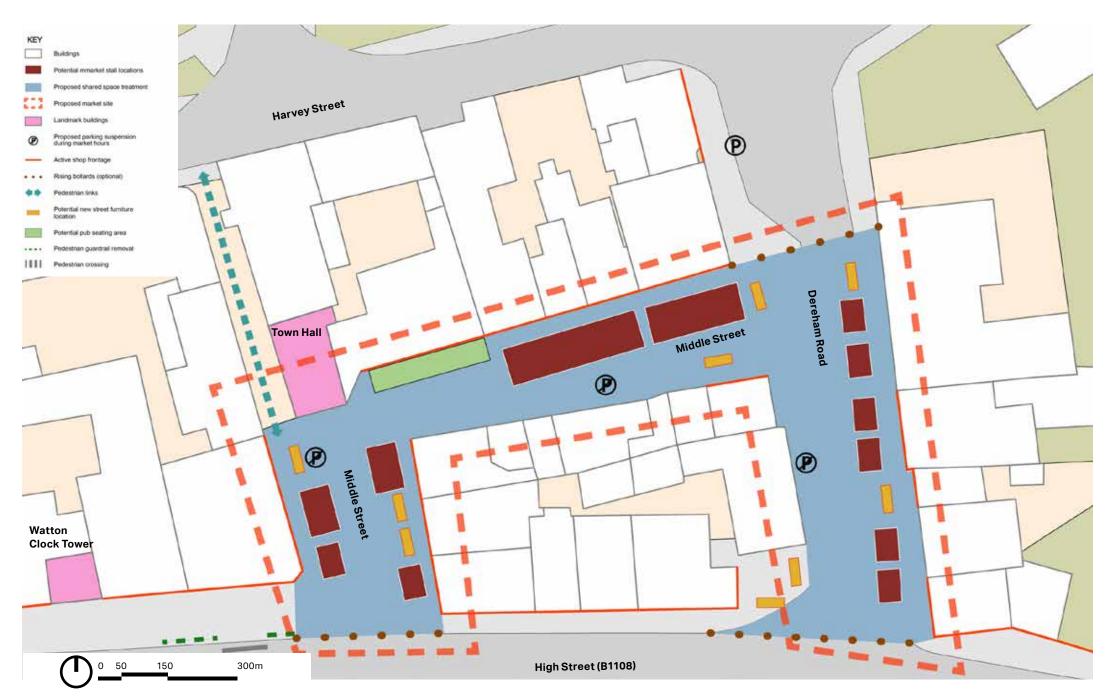
- Shared space treatment to improve pedestrian comfort and flows on market days by making the footway (pavement) and carriageway the same level.
- Rising bollards (optional) to prevent vehicle traffic and create a pedestrian-only area during market hours.
- Parking bays suspended during market hours in favour of stalls.
- Potential location of market stalls. Discrete electric points to be provided for stalls that require electricity.



Drawing 2: Proposed public realm improvements on market days (Reference: AECOM Masterplanning Report 2018)

Drawing 2 Market proposal

- Shared space treatment to improve pedestrian comfort and flows on market days by removing the delineation between footway and carriageway.
- Footways and carriageway repaved with high-quality paving slabs sensitive to historic context to assert the role of Middle Street as a central gathering place.
- New benches to emphasise the role of Middle Street as a gathering place.
- 4 Parking bays suspended during market hours.
- Potential location of market stalls. Discrete electric points to be provided for stalls that require electricity.



Proposed market place design, market days condition (Reference: AECOM Masterplanning Report 2018)





5. Town centre design codes

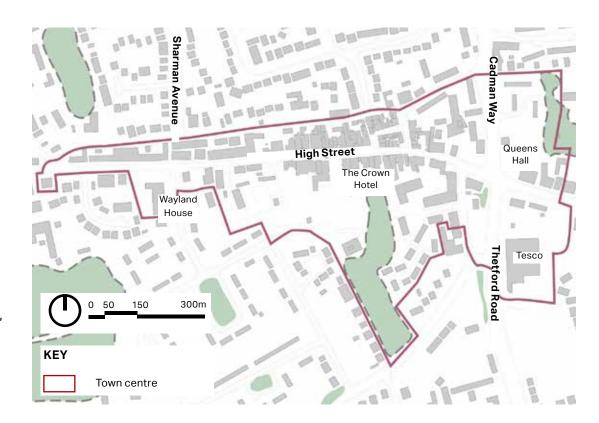
5.1. Introduction

The design guidance can be set out in defined themes after using the town centre character analysis from Chapter 3. These themes are presented below:

- Mix of use;
- Public realm;
- Street and movement;
- Active frontages;
- Signage and wayfinding; and
- Details and materials.

The following section contains design parametres against each of those themes, which form the design codes for the Watton town centre area.

All development permitted within the neighbourhood area and town centre must adhere to the design codes applicable within them.



5.2. Mix of use

A good mix of uses is essential to make the town centre vibrant and sustainable and also attract users and visitors into the town. This will also help to improve dwell time and promote night-time use within the town centre. The market brings economic and social benefits to the community, and to other retailers.

Retaining town centre uses

As summarised in chapter 3, Watton town centre is home to a wide range of complementary uses, including several independent traders and community services. This rich mix of uses should be retained and changes of use that do not conform with the mix should be resisted.

Town centre housing

Residential uses are to be supported in the town centre but not at the expense of retail and services. Primary and secondary frontages should be reserved for core town centre uses, but residential should be encouraged above and at ground floor at either end of the High Street.

Activity

Proposals that bring safe activity to the town centre in the evenings should be supported. Shops and cafes should be encouraged to open late, and the town's programme of events should continue to be promoted. Activity should be allowed to spill into the public realm, with outside tables and places to sit. And, of course, the market.



Town centre activity, Stroud High Street



Town centre activity, Congleton Hight Street

5.3. Public realm

The public realm is physically, visually and culturally accessible to the public and is vital to the quality and identity of a town. Well-connected public spaces of high quality are essential for the town centre. They create informal meeting places and venues, as well as offer a place to rest, gather and organise community events. There is also the potential for a town notice board for information dissemination. The public realm within the town Centre should be coordinated and strengthen local distinctiveness to enhance user-friendliness and aid wayfinding.



Wide pavement to accommodate pedestrian movement and other uses. Watton

Pavement width of at least 2 metres

Pavement width within the town centre should be of comfortable width for pedestrians, especially for those with disabilities, as well as wide enough to create active frontages with spaces for spill out cafe seating and display areas for shops etc. Comfortable pavement width will enhance pedestrian friendliness, increase dwell time and create a vibrant street environment.

Pavements widths should be at least 2m at key points along the High Street. Street furniture should be well organised to avoid clutter and encourage pedestrian flow. This pedestrian width is appropriate for locating the market or placing flower planters and urban trees. Cycle stands can be also placed here in a well defined way.



Pavement width allowing for display and pedestrian interface, Watton



Pavement width allowing for display and pedestrian flow, Bungay

35

Street furniture

Street furniture provides a primary function in the public realm by unifying the street scene. It also helps create a sense of place and identity and make a place feel welcoming. Street furniture design should be simple and robust and easy to maintain. Street furniture design across Watton Town Centre should be complementary based on a unified design palette for each character area, and should be used to strengthen the legibility of key routes and spaces.

Benches

Benches must be located at a minimum distance of 450 mm from the edge of the public highway. Seats should be wide enough for at least three people and should be of a simple design. Materials can be contemporary (to be agreed with Watton Town Council and Retail Group). Seating should be provided for different user groups and should be attractive and easy to maintain.

Bins

Bins should be well designed and covered. They can be contemporary in design and materials (to be agreed with Watton Town Council and Retail Group).

Planters

Planters must be robust and simple in design. They should be well integrated within the public realm and should be spaced sensibly to avoid street clutter. The selection of plants should be carefully considered to utilise the potential of the existing large planters. The use of planters for shrubs, grasses and small trees should be considered to enhance the green streetscape.

Bollards

Bollards must be simple in design and well integrated within the public realm to avoid street clutter.



Wood and concrete bench without armrest



Stainless steel benches with arms







Street furniture (trees, flower planters, other street furniture) in Watton

Comfortable seating areas

Seating in public open space supports social activities such as meeting, watching street performances, gathering or resting etc. Seating area need to be well organised and located appropriately along wider areas to avoid street clutter.

Leisure street seating

In areas designated for shopping, eating and leisure, seating can be arranged informally to complement the activities within the area. Seating should not hinder pedestrian flow.

Public square seating areas

Public square seating areas should be well defined and located for ease of access. They should not result in street clutter or hinder pedestrian movement. Public Square seating should complement the character of the public realm and be simple and robust in design.



Cafe seating along the pavement, Watton



Seating along the pavement, Watton

Night-time/evening use

Evening use is one of the elements that determine how safe and viable a town centre is. A good variety of restaurants, bars, pubs etc. should be provided, to offer choices to residents and visitors of Watton. In particular, young people of the town have expressed their desire for places to congregate and to feel safe in the evenings.



Night time use-Bar



Night time use-Cafe restaurant

Street lighting

Lighting is essential to placemaking. Good quality lighting design can create a place of high quality, inviting public realm that is attractive and usable at all times of the day. In addition, reducing light pollution and ensuring sustainable type of lighting are also important. Light fittings should be unified across Watton town centre.

Street lighting (Street lamps posts)

The design of light fittings should be consistent throughout the town centre to avoid clutter and achieve a cohesive street scene. The street lighting units should be well located to aid wayfinding and provide a safe environment.

Wall - mounted lights

Wall - mounted lighting is encouraged within the town centre wherever possible to avoid street clutter.

Uplift/facade lighting

Uplift / facade lighting will help enhance the street scene. Key landmarks can be illuminated using uplift lights / facade lights. For example, the Clock House, which is one of the key landmarks within Watton town centre, can be illuminated to enhance the street scene.

Feature lighting / public art

Feature lighting should be well integrated within the public realm. Bespoke lighting as integrated public art elements must be supported by a clear design rationale and agreed with the Watton Town Council and Town Centre Retail Group. Feature lighting can also be used to illuminate public art. For example, the Watton's Town sign can be considered as public art and be illuminated accordingly.



Lamp post at regular intervals illuminating the street making it safe and attractive for day/night time use



Wall mounted lighting helps reduce street clutter



Wall mounted lighting on Crown Hotel in Watton



Street lighting along High Street in Watton

Upgraded public realm material

The public realm within the Watton town centre including the main high street, pavements, squares, open spaces etc. should be of high-quality material and maintained periodically. The material palette should be simple and robust and designed to tolerate local weather conditions. The material palette should respect the existing character of the town centre. High-quality material and good design not only enhance the user experience of the place but defines a sense of place and identity for the town centre.



Formal type of paving helps to enhance focal points in the area such as squares



Different types of paving materials allow to distinguish zones for the vehicles and pedestrians

Cycle provisions

Cycling is encouraged within Watton town centre as an alternative mode of transport. Cycle storage facilities should be well integrated with other uses along the high street. The cycle routes should connect well with other national and local cycling routes. Location of cycle storage should consider safety of cyclists and cycles and ease of access.

Cycle stands

Cycle stands within the town centre should be well integrated within the public realm. The location of the cycle stands should be accessible and connect well with other local cycling routes. They should be robust and simple in design.



Cycle hubs



Cycle stands

5.4. Streets and movement

Movement around the Watton town centre is essential to create a safe environment for locals and visitors to walk around. The High Street suffers from traffic congestion and freight transport going through the town which creates an unpleasant street scene. Traffic pollution is also an issue, especially on market days. The main purpose is to prioritise people's safety adding regular crossing points and reducing traffic. Note that only land use planning issues can be covered by Neighbourhood Plan policies.



Speed cushions

Traffic calming

Traffic calming uses physical design and other measures to improve safety for everyone. It aims to encourage safer, more responsible driving and potentially reduce traffic flow.

Speed bumps / humps and cushions

There are traffic calming devices that use vertical deflection to slow vehicle traffic to improve safety conditions.

Speed tables

A speed table is long flat-topped speed humps that slow vehicles more gradually than humps and provide safer conditions.

Raised pedestrian crossing

Raised pedestrian crossings act as speed tables, often situated at intersections.



Pedestrian crossing in High Street, Watton

Parking

Car parking should generally be accommodated on the street or rear of shops. On-street parking should form part of the active street scene. Parking bays should be clearly demarcated within the town centre. Pedestrian crossing points and places for street trees / planters and street furniture should be incorporated to break up the parking area visually.

Servicing and utilities

Refuse storage, service areas, and utilities must be located close to the shops. Utility and meter boxes should be located away from the street frontages to minimise unnecessary clutter and detract from the visual appeal of street frontage.

Delivery or servicing should be carried out during nonpeak hours or out of trade hours to avoid cluttering the street during trading hours.

Public transport

Public transport should be easily accessible. The location and design of bus stops should be integrated well within the public realm. Pavements should be wide enough to accommodate bus stops.

Public parking

Public parking will help to ease the parking issue in the town centre. The high street becomes very congested during peak hours and public parking can contribute positively to that. Time limited parking could also be a measure to increase customer churn in the Town Centre.



Bus stops in High Street, Watton









Parking space on Middle Street, Watton

5.5. Shop fronts

Shop fronts add a distinct identity to the Watton town centre and contribute to the visual appeal of the town. The shop front is the identity of the shop. It is also the single most effective marketing tool for most high street businesses. A well-ordered, tidy, contextual high street will result in a better economy. Every shop front is also part of a broader urban context. They significantly contribute to the character and experience of the town.

Traditional shop width

Traditional shop widths within the town centre are between 3-6m wide. The massing and building heights should respect the existing character of the town centre. Vertical and horizontal rhythm in building styles should be maintained. Different uses, styles and variety of form are acceptable and encouraged within each block.

Large floor plates

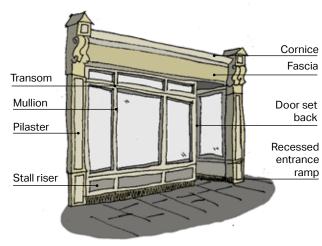
Large floor plates (areas) within the town centre should respect existing building styles, and massing and their elevation treatment should be broken down visually to avoid monolith frontage. Gable end of buildings on High Street and key nodes are not acceptable.

Repetitions

Repetition of styles should be avoided and should be in keeping with the existing character of the town centre. Interpretation of styles is acceptable as long as they respect the existing character of the street frontage.



Different styles and fenestration within the same block, Watton



General principles of Shop Design



Traditional shop width and rhythm should be maintained, architectural variety is acceptable if it is in keeping with existing character, Watton

Shop front design

Stall riser: A stall riser must be incorporated into the design for the full width of the shopfront, except for the door opening. The height of the stall rise must be between 0.3 metres and 1 metre.

Materials: Window frames, doors, pilasters and fascias must be of timber construction with a painted finish and not a stained finish.

Panelling: Any timber panelling used in doors, stall risers, pilasters or other elements of the shopfront must comprise a constructional timber panel and must not comprise the application of timber beading to a flat timber surface.

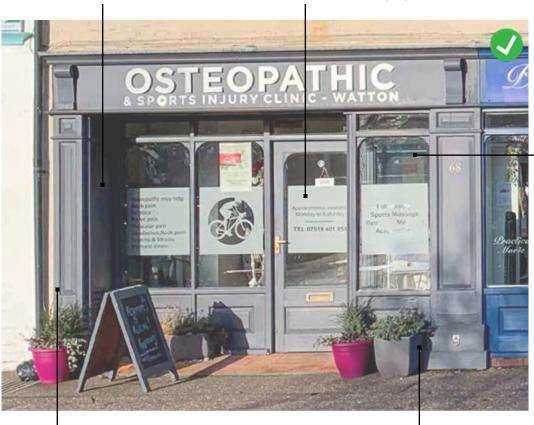
Fascia: The shopfront design must include a full-width projecting fascia. The fascia must consist of a surrounding frame, creating an area for a shopsign. Fascia with lettering of between 250mm and 300mm will read well from street level and from across the road; the size of the fascia is defined by the building typology or detailing, the font size should be proportionate to the fascia.

Lighting: If lighting is incorporated into the design of the shopfront, then it must comprise projecting light to create external illumination of the shop sign area.

Shutters: If shutters and shutter boxes are incorporated into the design, then they must be placed internally, behind the shopfront. When in an open position, shutters must not block the shop window opening.

Good example of shop front design

Window frames, doors, pilasters and fascia should be of timber construction with paint finish and not stain finish Fascia should be projected full width with shop sign lettering between 250-300mm to read well. An hierarchy of lettering enhances the readability and effectiveness of the signage



Display should be organised to promote visual connection to the interior of the shop

Timber framing should be used as panelling for doors, windows, stall risers and other elements of shop front. Use of plastic or constructional timber should be avoided

Stall risers must be designed to full width of shop front and the height must be between 0.3-1.0m. Stall risers must be of timber or metal

Colours: A careful selection of colour could improve the street scene. Rich dark colours are often more appropriate as they harmonise well with the historic building materials without drawing attention away from the shop window. Overly bright finishes should be discouraged.

Signs & Branding: Signs & Branding should fit and complement the host building and the local area. Sensitive approach should be taken in reference to the standard house style of branding, especially on listed buildings or within the conservation area.

Good examples of shop front design



Example of the standard house style branding modified to compliment the host building within the conservation area



A well designed entrance on the corner which provides interest to pedestrians on both streets and demonstrates understanding of the building location within the street context



Proportionate, well spaced letters are easy to read and do not overpower the aesthetic of the historic building



Example of overly bright shopfront and oversized letters detracting from the quality of the fascia



Example of the shopfront colour complementing the building and street scene

Windows

It is highly recommended that the design of the windows is appropriate and should reflect and enhance the architectural style of the remainder of the building. The use of glazing panels, with mullions and transoms is preferred to the usually out of context large areas of glass. Shopfronts should ensure that their windows are used to effectively display products or maintain a visual link between the street and interior of the shop. In turn, shop fronts should avoid advertising displays, such as plastic film, that fully obscures the interior of the shop from the eyes the pedestrian.





Modern reinterpretation of traditional shop front design

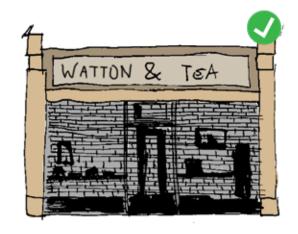




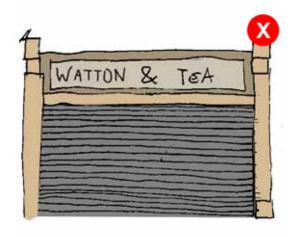
Windows design and proportions

Security

Addressing security is a key issue for both, shopkeepers and community. The use of solid roller shutter blinds, which lead to a very unattractive environment when closed, should be discouraged. The uses of open roller grills, removable grills or internal grilles and meshes are preferred since the shop display can still be seen, enhancing the perception of the street outside working hours. It is recommended that roller shutters and grills are integrated into the design of the shop and not additional items, non-contributing to the building appearance.



Windows design and proportions



Active frontages

Active frontage adds to the vitality and vibrancy of the streets and public realm and enhances the user experience of the town centre. The Design Codes seek to create an active town centre by promoting a vibrant street scene.

Overlooking

High level of natural surveillance should be provided to create vibrancy and vitality within the High Street. Use of larger well-proportioned windows or floor to ceiling windows on the ground floors and active use of the first floor can help achieve adequate overlooking.

Spill out space (in-out spaces)

In-out spill out spaces is encouraged across Watton town centre to create activity on streets. Businesses like restaurants, cafés, shops etc. can have seating or display on the street within well-organised spaces that do not impede pedestrian movement. Those are recommended to be located on wider pavements, <2m. Street clutter should be avoided at all times.



Local market on High Street, Watton



Local market located on a pedestrian only area in Thetford Town

Display space

Display space should be of high-quality design. Large and clunky advertisements on the windows obscuring the view of the inside will be non-acceptable. High-quality materials like metal, wood, glass or high-quality plastic are recommended for elevational treatment. The display should be organised and should not hinder pedestrian movement or cause visual clutter - ideally views in and out of a shop should be possible.



Window display not obscuring visual connection to interiors of the shop, Watton



Organised display to create interaction, although not unhindered views, with the outside, Watton $\,$

5.6. Signage and wayfinding

Legibility, permeability and the ease of navigation make places more accessible to people, providing them with movement choices and improving the town centre experience. Well-defined gateways and wayfinding measures offer ease of access and aid navigation within the town centre. Provision of signage and wayfinding measures should be made at key gateways within Watton town centre and also develop Watton style welcome and directional signage. These measures could be implemented through planning conditions or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) when development happens.

Welcome signs

Welcome signs contribute to the legibility of the town and provide a clear definition of the town centre boundaries. Welcome signs could be located at the key gateways indicated on the map above. They should be clearly displayed and easy to read for both pedestrians and drivers.

Street signs / orientation signs

Street signs and orientation signs should be of high quality and integrate well within the public realm. They should be positioned at the beginning and end of the streets and adhere to highway standards. Wall-mounted signs are recommended wherever possible to avoid street clutter. Street signs in Watton town centre should be used to indicate the location of parking areas, key buildings and landmarks for instance Town Hall, Clock Tower, Youth centre or Wayland School.

Tourism and education signs

Tourism and education signs should be provided at significant public spaces and buildings. For instance, the Watton sign could be placed at the open space next to The Crown Hotel. Existing tourism signs should be upgraded so they can be more easily seen.



Orientation signs placed in one column creating difficulty for people to read them, Watton



Examples of vintage lamp post signs that could be a good fit for Watton town centre(@www.englishlampposts.co.uk)



47

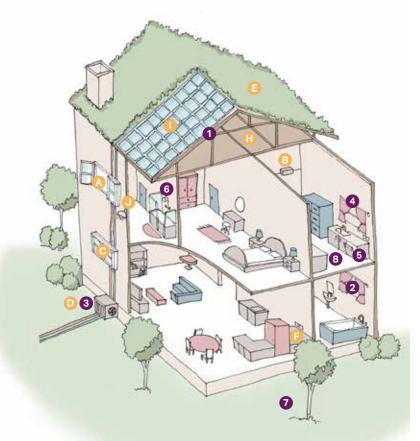
5.7. Sustainability and resilience

Sustainability and resilience should be a priority with an overall aim to reduce home energy use and design for homes with low environmental impact.

Eco-design

Energy efficient or eco-design combine all around energy efficient construction, appliances and lighting with commercially available renewable energy systems, such as solar water heating and solar electricity. Starting from the design stage, the passive solar heating, cooling, and energy efficient strategies can be informed by local climate and site conditions.

Eco-design is a priority and planning applications should show how it has been appoached in the proposed development.



NEW BUILD HOMES





More fresh air

with the mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, and passive cooling



Triple glazed windows and external shading especially on south and west faces



Low-carbon heating and no new homes on the gas grid by 2025 at the latest



Water management and cooling more ambitious water efficiency standards, green roofs and reflective walls



Flood resilience and resistance e.g. raised electrical, concrete floors and greening your garden



Construction and site planning timber frames, sustainable transport options (such as cycling)



Solar panel



External lighting to reduce light pollution with timers and PIR requirements

EXISTING HOMES



in lofts and walls (cavity and solid)



Double or triple glazing with shading (e.g. tinted window film, blinds, curtains and trees outside)



Low- carbon heating with heat pumps or connections to district heat network



Draught proofing of floors, windows and doors



Highly energy- efficient appliances (e.g. A++ and A+++ rating)



Highly waste- efficient devices with low-flow showers and taps, insulated tanks and hot water thermostats



Green space (e.g. gardens and trees) to help reduce the risks and impacts of flooding and overheating



Flood resilience and resistance with removable air back covers, relocated appliances (e.g. installing washing machines upstairs), treated wooden floors

Diagram showing low-carbon homes in both existing and new build conditions (adapted from Committee on Climate Change)

Bioretention systems

Bioretention systems, including soak away and rain gardens¹, can be used within each development, along verges, and in semi-natural green spaces. They must be designed to sit cohesively with the surrounding landscape, reflecting the natural character of the Parish. Vegetation must reflect that of the surrounding environment.

Rainwater Harvesting

Rainwater harvesting refers to the systems that capture and store rainwater as well as those that enable the in-situ reused of grey water. These systems involve vision for design. Therefore, some design recommendations would be:

- Conceal tanks by cladding them in complementary materials;
- Use attractive materials or finishing for pipes;
- · Underground tanks; and
- Utilise water bodies for storage.

Soakaways and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) should be used to mimic natural drainage.





Example of SuDs designed as a public amenity and fully integrated into the design of the public realm in Stockholm, Sweden



Detention basin in Cambridge designed for public access

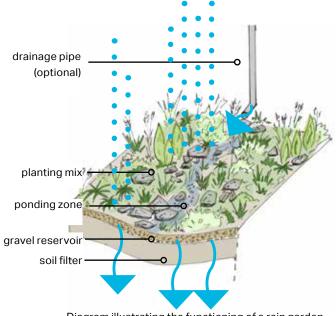


Diagram illustrating the functioning of a rain garden

Permeable paving

Permeable paving can be used where appropriate on footpaths, public squares, and private access roads and private areas within the individual development boundaries. In addition, permeable pavement must also:

- · Respect the material palette;
- · Help to frame the building;
- · Create an arrival statement:
- Be in harmony with the landscape treatment of the property; and
- Help define the property boundary.

Some regulations, standards, and guidelines relevant to permeable paving and sustainable drainage are listed below:

- Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Schedule 3:1
- The Building Regulations Part H Drainage and Waste Disposal;² and
- Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015³.



Permeable paving using gravel paver material (Reference: www. terram.com).

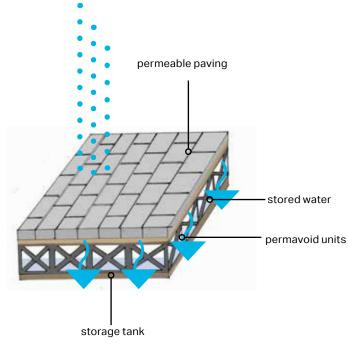
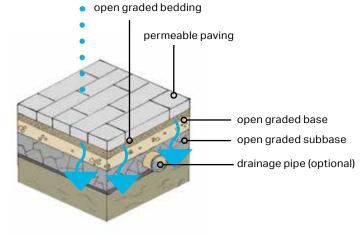


Diagram illustrating the functioning of the soak away



Permeable paving (Reference: www.externalworksindex.co.uk).



¹ Great Britain (2010). *Flood and Water Management Act, Schedule 3*. Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/schedule/3

² Great Britain (2010). *The Building Regulations Part H – Drainage and Waste Disposal*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442889/BR_PDF_AD_H_2015.pdf

³ Great Britain (2015). *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.* Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/pdfs/uksi-20150596 en.pdf

Swales

Swales are the preferred option for water conveyance due to their provision of biodiversity and amenity benefits.

Swales should only be used where they can be integrated with the landscape design and their character will suit the surroundings, with soft, natural features providing contribution to biodiversity.

They will be located within development packages to convey surface water to attenuation features.

Due to their open, linear features, crossing points are required where they intersect with access routes, which will require careful design for future maintenance. Therefore swales are better suited to locations where fewer crossing points would be required, such as alongside buffer zones or perimeter roads encircling a development plot. Swales will also give the opportunity for local provenance and species to encourage invertebrates and wider biodiversity.



Swales to retain water and prevent flooding (@Deccan Herald).



Roadside swale in Stockholm, Sweden.

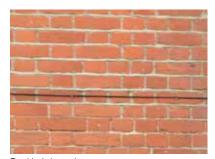
5.8. Details and materials

Details and materials play a crucial role in determining the character and identity of a place.

The selection of built materials and details of buildings should respect the character of the existing townscape. The design codes encourage the use of a variety of high-quality materials that complement and enhance the character of the Watton Town Centre. Other materials apart from the ones detailed in this page may be acceptable if agreed with the town council. A modern interpretation of architectural styles are acceptable and encouraged within the Town Centre fabric but must complement the existing character of the townscape.



Reclaimed brickwork



Red brickwork



Painted brickwork



Combination of flint and red brick



Flint



Light yellow smooth render

Elevation Treatments

Brickwork is widely used across Watton Town Centre, in particular, brown and red brickwork. Therefore, it is considered that the use of brickwork is acceptable for all new and existing developments in the Town Centre. Examples of painted brickwork are also present and acceptable within the Town Centre. Lighter/pastel colours are acceptable, as shown in adjacent images.



Side facing gable end



Gable end facing street



Hipped roofs along High Street

Roof lines and pitches

The overall roofline in Watton Town Centre is generally uniform with the majority of buildings not exceeding two storeys in height. The roofs are mostly double pitched with side facing gable ends. Street facing gable ends may be acceptable in buildings of importance as long as they are in keeping with the street scene. There are also examples of hipped roofs in the town.



Hipped roofs on Harvey Street, Watton



Variation on heights on the terraced houses along the High Street, Watton

Fenestration

The fenestration is generally uniform in Watton Town Centre. While the windows on the ground floor and first floors may differ in sizes and scales in few buildings, they retain consistency and are proportionate overall. New development should maintain a similar horizontal and vertical rhythm, and the fenestration should respect the existing character of the street scene.



Entrance to Durrant's Yard



Colourful façades creating a pleasant walk along the High Street, Watton

Architectural variety

Watton has a variety of architectural style within the Town Centre both traditional and modern. Development within the Town Centre should retain the typical building scale as well as vertical and horizontal uniformity. A modern interpretation of architectural styles is acceptable if they are of high-quality design, proportionate in scale, maintain the rhythm of the streetscape and respect the character of the streetscape within the Town Centre.



Listed monument seen as landmarks on the High Street, Watton



Typical terraced layout of Watton High Street







6. Delivery

6.1. Delivery agents

The design guidelines will be a valuable tool for securing context-driven, high quality development in Watton. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised below:

Actor How they will use the design guidelines

Applicants, developers and landowners

As a guide to the community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought. Where planning applications require a Design and Access Statement, the Statement should explain how the Design Guidelines have been followed.

Local Planning Authority

As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications.

The Design Guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.

Town Council

As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are followed.

Community organisations

As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.

Statutory consultees

As a reference point when commenting on planning applications

6.2. Deliverability

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

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

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

Contact Ben Castell Director T +44 (0)20 7798 5137 E ben.castell@aecom.com