

# Swavesey Village Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document  
Adopted January 2020





Figure 1. Aerial photo of Swavesey with parish boundary highlighted.

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## Foreword

South Cambridgeshire is a district of diverse and distinctive villages, as well as being a high growth area. South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) wants new development to maintain and enhance the special character of our villages, and for communities to be at the heart of the planning process to help achieve this.

This is supported through our Local Plan which places good design at the heart of its vision for achieving sustainable growth:

### **Local Plan – Policy S/1: Vision**

South Cambridgeshire will continue to be the best place to live, work and study in the country. Our district will demonstrate impressive and sustainable economic growth. Our residents will have a superb quality of life in an exceptionally beautiful, rural and green environment.

In 2018, the Council was awarded funding from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to develop exemplar village design guidance, working in collaboration with village communities undergoing significant growth and change, in order to develop locally specific design guidance.

In line with our key objective of putting our customers at the centre of everything we do, we are delighted to have worked with representatives who live and work in these communities, to produce this exemplary design guidance to improve the quality of new developments in our villages. We look forward to seeing a new generation of locally distinctive, high quality schemes that show the influence of this Village Design Guide.

**Cllr. Dr. Tumi Hawkins**  
**Lead Cabinet Member for Planning**



## 1. Introduction

### **Purpose and scope of this document**

As a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), the Swavesey Village Design Guide has been prepared to amplify and build on the requirements set out within policy **HQ/1: Design Principles** in the adopted 2018 Local Plan, as well as supporting the other policies within the Local Plan which relate to the built and natural character, and distinctiveness of South Cambridgeshire.

This Village Design Guide SPD:

- Supports South Cambridgeshire's policy that seeks to secure high quality design for all new developments, with a clear and positive contribution to the local and wider context.
- Describes the distinctive character of the village, and those aspects of its built and natural environment that the community most value
- Sets out clear design principles to guide future development proposals in and around the village of Swavesey.
- Is intended as a user-friendly tool for planners, developers, designers and community members.

The Swavesey Village Design Guide SPD is a material consideration in determining planning applications for developments within the village.

### **Who should use this document**

The Swavesey Village Design Guide should be read by:

- Developers, property owners and their designers, in considering potential development proposals.
- Development management officers in assessing the suitability and determination of planning applications.
- Statutory and non-statutory consultees, including the parish council and members of the public, in commenting on planning applications.

The Village Design Guide should give confidence to all parties involved with the planning and design process, that they understand the essential character of the village, and how to respond to this appropriately through design. This will lead to better quality, more locally distinctive development that is welcomed by local residents and contributes positively to the sustainability of the village.

## Acknowledgements

The Swavesey Village Design Guide has been prepared by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service and Emily Greeves Architects with Freddie Phillipson Architect, and developed in collaboration with the village community, through a process of active community participation and consultation.

SCDC is very grateful to Vicki Bidwell for leading the village steering group for the Village Design Guide project and acting as community project champion.

# 2. About Swavesey

Swavesey is a long, linear village that lies on the edge of the fen landscapes of the river Great Ouse. Swavesey’s High Street, the single route through the village, extends for two kilometres from the original village centre in the north to the settlement of Boxworth End in the south. The older settlement was spread over two ‘islands’ which today form the conservation area in the northern part of the village. This includes St Andrew’s Church and its surroundings, and, further south, the area of the former medieval docks at Swan Pond and Market Street.

The parish of Swavesey encompasses 1,611 ha. The population according to the 2011 Census was 2463 and is currently estimated to be over 2500 by Cambridgeshire County Council (cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk). The underlying geology is Ampthill clay, with areas of heavy alluvium, sand and gravel to the river terrace north of Swavesey. The quality of farmland is poor, falling into Agricultural Land Classification Grade 3b and Grade 4. A Neighbourhood Plan is being developed and photographs taken to support this were kindly supplied for use in this Village Design Statement.



Figure 2  
The historic St Andrew’s Church at the north end of the village

Swavesey has a rich history as a working agricultural settlement. In the Medieval period (fig. 3a) there were settlements at Swavesey and Boxworth End, between the important trading routes of the river Great Ouse and the former Roman Road (now the A14). An enclosure with a castle and priory was founded in the 11th Century. A river port and market were established in the 13th Century in present day Market Street, selling local produce, wildfowl, reeds, and imported goods from the continent. The village supported a number of windmills.

In the 19th Century the docks were infilled to form the open space of Market Street. The railway was constructed and the railhead formed Swavesey’s new ‘port’. Swavesey and Boxworth End grew together along the main road. The surrounding fields were enclosed in the 1840s and the present network of drainage ditches established (fig. 3b).

During the 20th Century, there was significant expansion on Swavesey’s western side, with the mid-20th Century residential developments of Whitton Close, Priory Avenue and Thistle Green. Moat Way, a large private housing estate, was developed in the 1990s. The Village College, primary school and recreation ground were formed and the railway was removed (fig. 3c).

Subsequently, smaller residential developments have been formed around the edge of the development boundary. The guided bus was introduced along the route of the former railway and the Buckinghamway business estate was constructed (fig.3d).

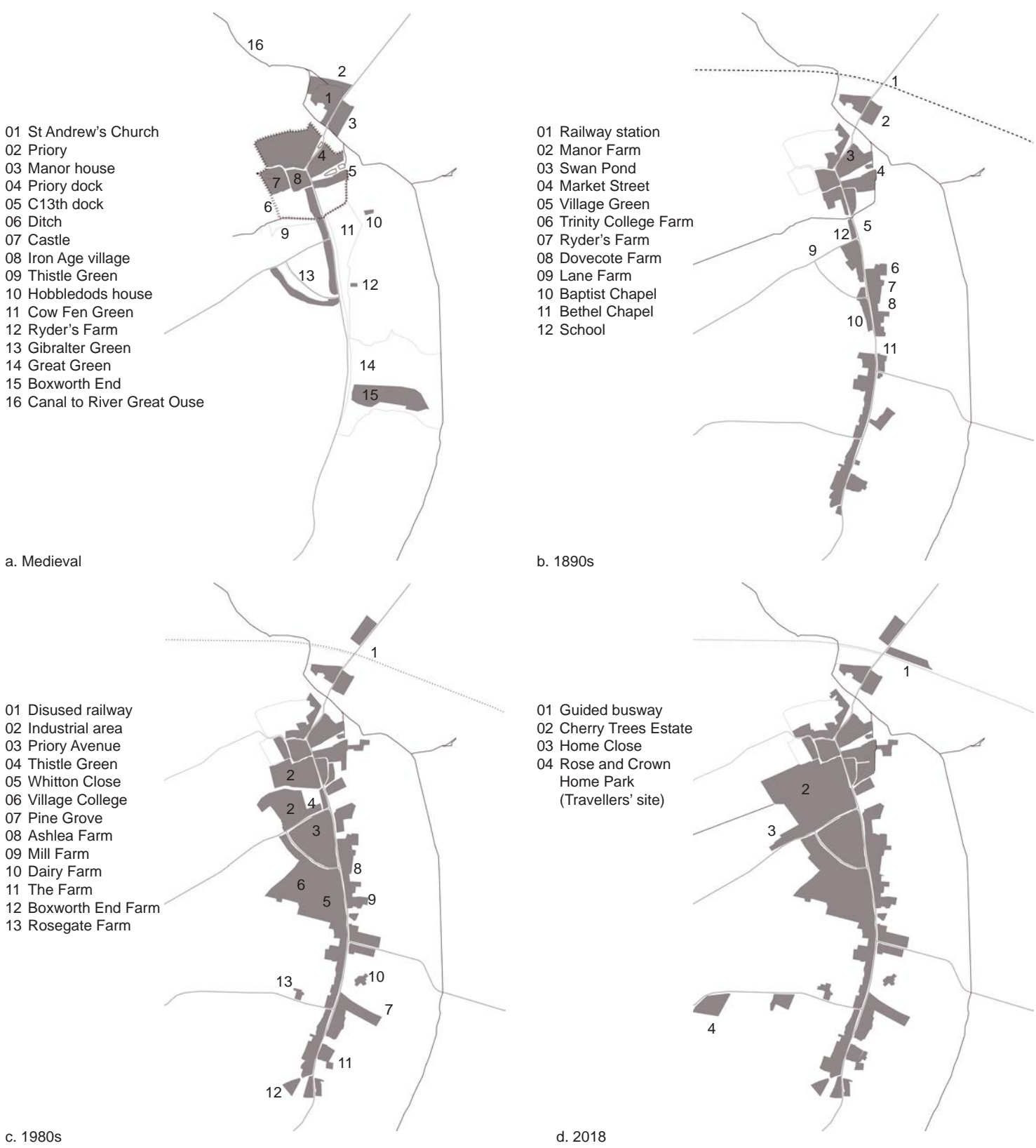


Figure 3  
Plan diagrams showing evolution of Swavesey



Figure 4  
Location of Swavesey Parish within South Cambridgeshire





# 3. Community input

The Village Design Guide was developed in consultation with a steering group of Swavesey residents that included representatives of the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan group. The guidance is intended to capture the community’s priorities for the design of future development within the village and to identify where development can potentially improve and enhance the village’s infrastructure. Residents’ key priorities for the Village Design Guide are summarised below, along with other issues raised through the engagement process that are outside the scope of this Supplementary Planning Document but captured here as important wider priorities.



Figure 6  
Consultation meeting 28.09.2018 at Swavesey Memorial Hall

## 1. Priorities for the Village Design Guide

### Maintaining rural character

- Maintain the characteristic rural landscapes of the village, connections with open countryside along the main road, important rural views and glimpses.
- Maintain the characteristic height and scale of village buildings and the character of the existing roofscape of predominantly one and two storey houses.
- New housing development should feel like a genuine part of the village, not generic or suburban.

### Flood prevention

- New development should not cause an increase in flood risk, to which Swavesey is especially susceptible.
- Flood alleviation landscapes should contribute to the green spaces network, movement network and biodiversity.
- Potential bottlenecks extending as far as the River Great Ouse must be taken into account when assessing flood alleviation measures.

### Moving around the village

- New development should provide safe and direct walking and cycling routes around the village, and to key destinations including the two schools.
- Opportunities should be taken to extend and enhance the network of bridleways around the village, connecting with neighbouring communities, the Busway and adjacent cycle routes.

### Public open space

- Public open space should be integrated into new developments of multiple homes, complementing and enhancing the existing green space network.
- Where additional open space is created outside new developments, the priority should be on providing the types of amenity which are felt to be most needed by the community, in the locations identified as most lacking.

### Environmental sustainability

- Mindful of District-wide existing policies, it is important to residents that new developments should achieve water and energy efficiencies and, where appropriate, incorporate energy production from renewable technologies and low carbon sources.

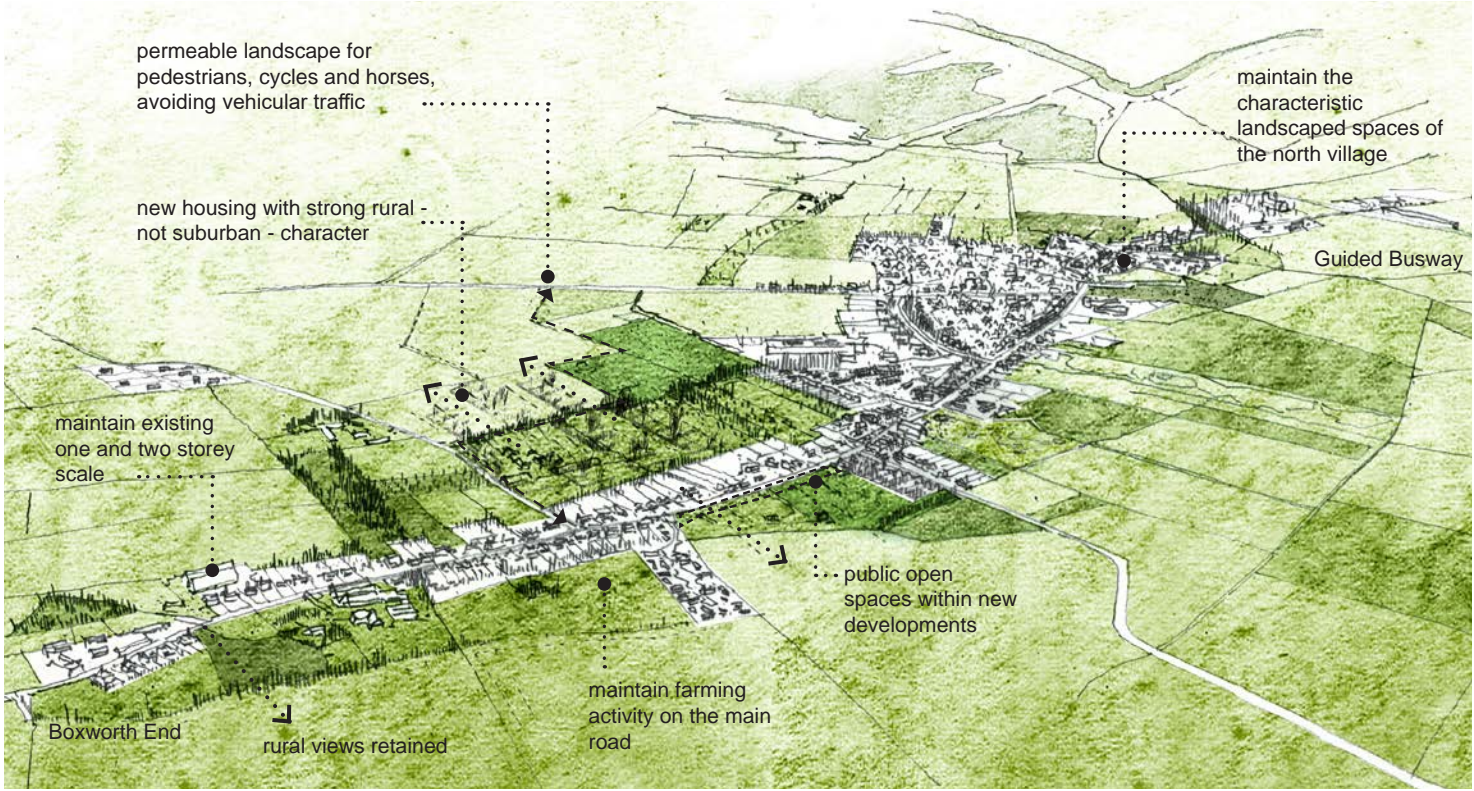


Figure 5  
Aerial sketch illustrating residents’ priorities

## 2. Other priorities raised through the engagement process

- Creating additional sports fields connected with the Village College, facilities for children and teenagers, open space at the southern end of the village, and small open spaces .
- Providing a mix of housing types including bungalows and smaller homes for elderly villagers wishing to downsize and for disabled people, young singles, couples or families needing their first home.
- There is a desire to create a new bridleway along the A14 similar to the route along the guided bus way. This would connect into the system of connected bridleways which is desired by residents (see section 6).
- Control over the location of new development to avoid increasing flood risk, including maintaining sites free from development.
- Traffic congestion and the future capacity of the main road. Future scenarios raised by residents were a series of connecting residential roads around the west side of the village, and a bypass.
- The problem of insufficient parking, particularly in the north of the village.
- The future of the village centre: reinforcing the existing centre in the north, providing new community facilities in the geographical centre of the village, or creating multiple centres.
- The need for additional dredging of drains and upgrading of embankments to maintain and improve the village’s flood management system.



# 4. Rural character

Swavesey has retained a strong rural character; in close contact with, and permeated by, the surrounding natural and agricultural landscapes. For much of its length, the main road has an expansive, rustic feel, bordered by grass verges and hedges, and with houses well set back behind front gardens. Sheep graze beside the main road at Trinity Farm, one of ten active farms along the High Street. Gaps in the building line allow views through to farmland and gardens. These rural qualities are highly valued by Swavesey's residents.

There are several special landscapes in the north of the village that lie along three 'green fingers' leading out into the countryside:

- Station Road, Swan Pond, St Andrew's church, the former Priory and the adjacent farmland
- Market Street Green and Cow Fen Road
- Taylor's Lane, Constable's Rood and Hale Road leading to Swavesey Windmill.



Figure 7  
Working farms on the main road and behind back gardens.



Figure 9  
Gaps in the main road provide views to the wider landscape



Figure 8  
Landscape character within Swavesey Parish

The landscapes surrounding the village vary in character. The river edge landscapes to the north, including the RSPB Fen Drayton nature reserve (a former sand and gravel quarry), are particularly important recreational spaces for the village. Northeast of Swavesey, between Over Road and Ramper Road, are smaller fields that are defined by trees and hedges and provide pastureland and grazing for cattle, sheep and horses. The remaining farmland to the west, south and east, is arable cropping land. Large fields are bounded by hedges and drainage ditches, and there are very few trees. Where bands of trees are present, they tend to frame, rather than block, views of the surrounding countryside.



Figure 10  
Swavesey landscape edges and views





a. Swan Pond



b. Market Street



c. Village Green



d. Main road

Figure 11  
Characteristic spaces of Swavesey with a rural character.

## Design Guidance

**4.1** Maintain the rural gaps and important views identified in figure 10, including through controlling tree planting and alterations to buildings and boundary structures.

**4.2** Maintain the historic pattern of farms within the village as shown in figure 10. New development should not inhibit the active use of pastureland where this contributes to one of the identified rural gaps and views.

**4.3** Maintain characteristic landscape features including grass verges, ditches, hedges and trees, and the pattern of building set-backs, front gardens and boundary treatments along village streets (see figure 12).

**4.4** New linear development of multiple homes along the main road should incorporate the characteristically rural features identified in 4.1 to 4.3, such as verges and breaks in the building line (see figures 13 and 14).

**4.5** Infill development of larger individual plots should be avoided where it would block or encroach on the important or valued gaps and views identified in figure 10. Setting the key facade of the new building perpendicular to the main road and behind the existing dwelling is recommended, as shown in figure 14.

**4.6** Infill development should be in proportion to its plot and location within the village. The scale and massing of each building should as a rule be no bigger or higher than the existing building and no higher than the surrounding buildings, to distinguish back land development from the older linear village pattern.

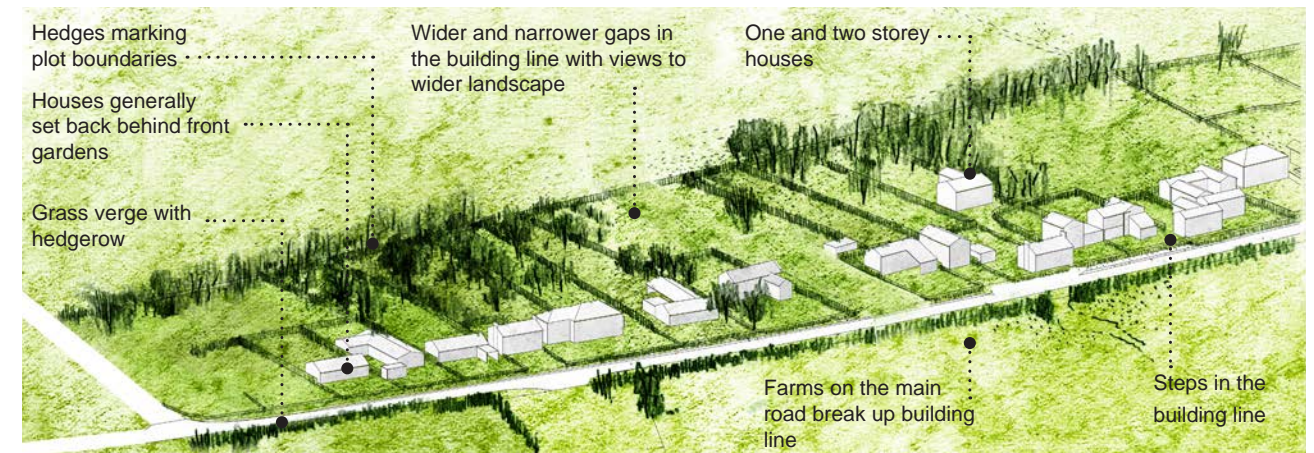


Figure 12  
Existing main road characteristics

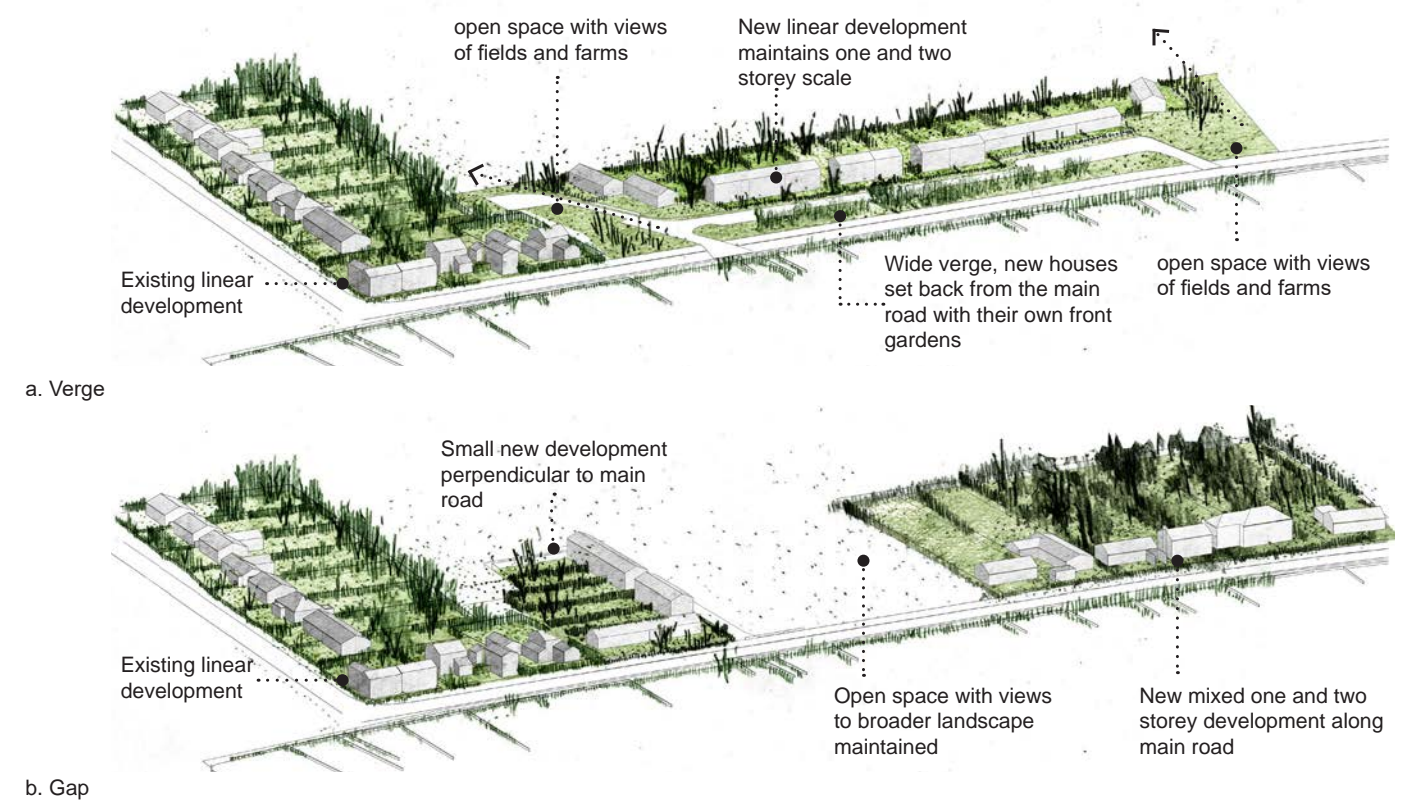


Figure 13  
Design strategies for new development along the main road

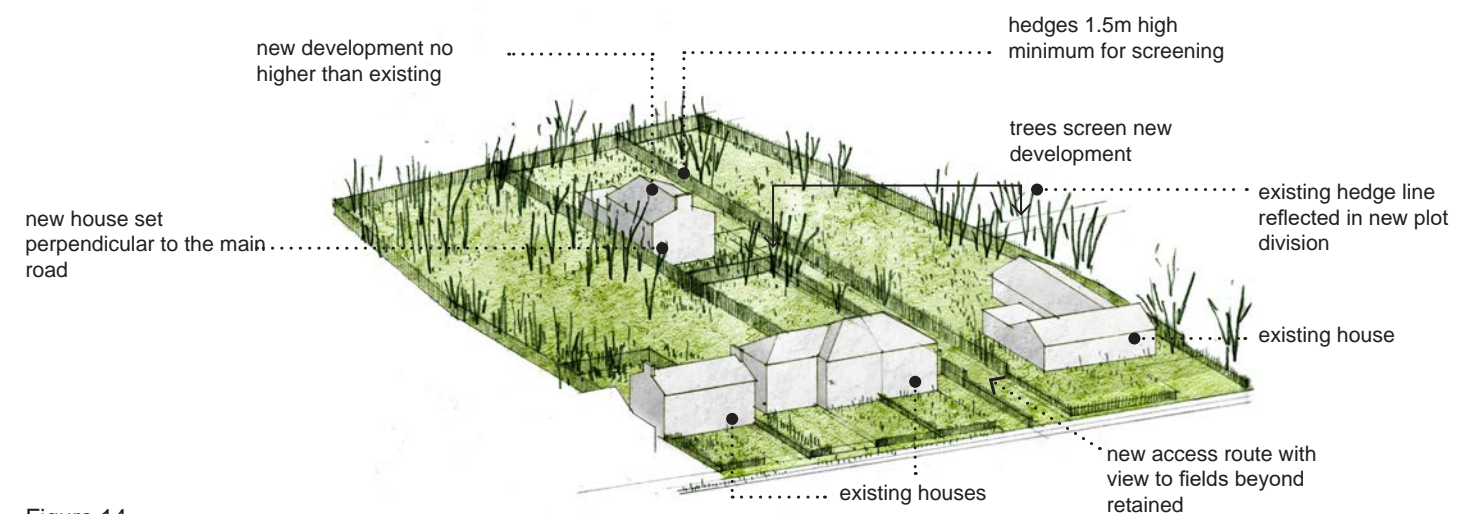


Figure 14  
Design approaches to infill development



# 5. A flooding landscape

Swavesey lies beside, and partially within, an extensive area that is designated by the Environment Agency as Flood Zone 2 for flooding from rivers and drains. Middle Fen and other areas within the flood zone flood frequently in winter. Episodes of severe flooding occurred in 1947, 1974, 1998 and 2003. In 1947, flood waters extended beyond the flood zone area, through the Main road and Middle Watch. In such severe flooding events the underlying structure of the historic core has been revealed, the two raised islands north of the central spine and the two former docks at Swan Pond and Market Green becoming discernible.

Swavesey is also prone to frequent surface water flooding following heavy rain, due to the relatively impermeable underlying Ampthill clay. Swales are to be found along the main road adjacent to grass verges, locally alleviating surface flooding (see right hand edge of fig. 11d). These are sometimes crossed by small bridges which connect individual driveways to the main road.



Figure 16  
Flooding on Over Road in 2003



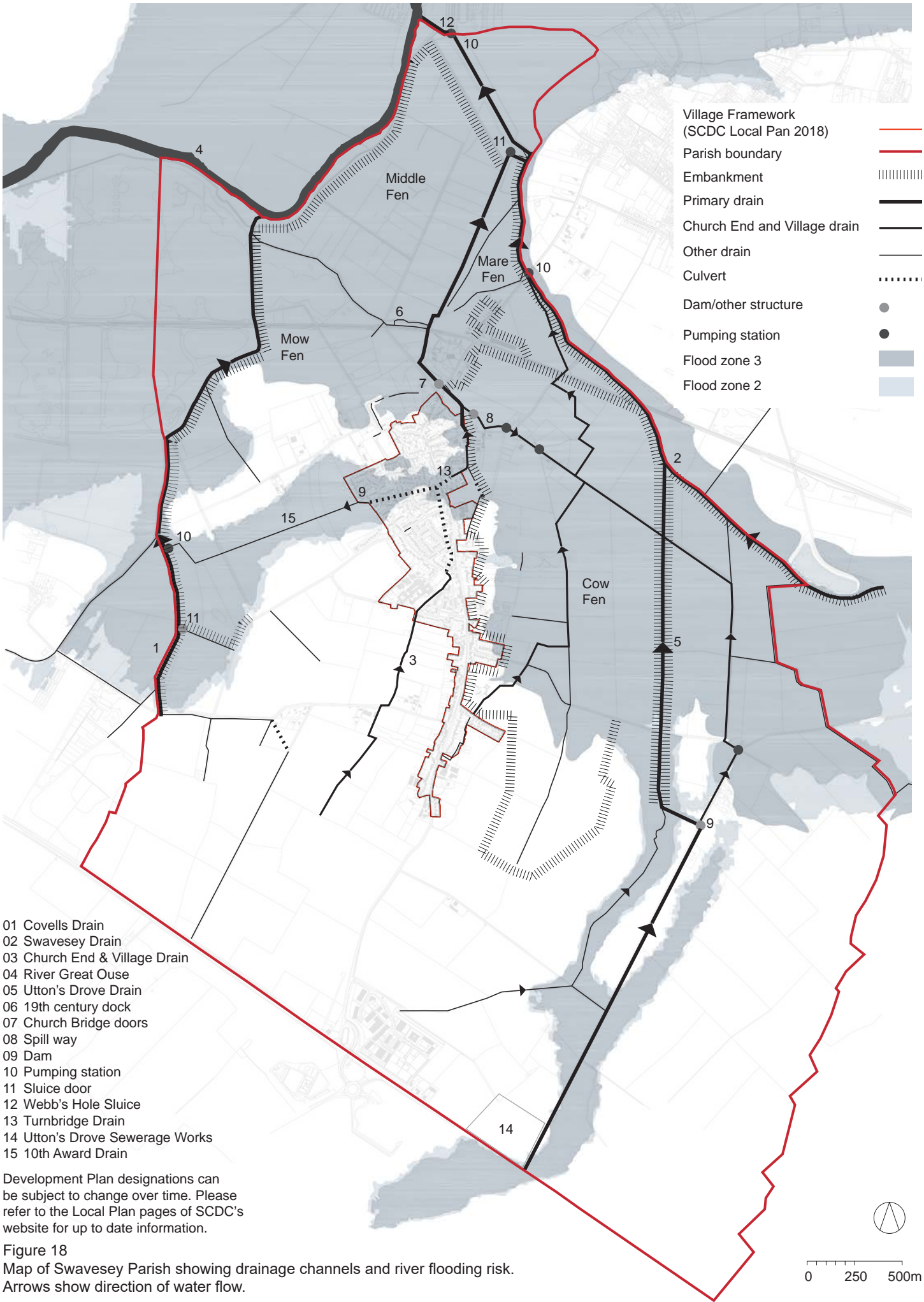
Figure 17  
The 1947 flood looking south along the main road



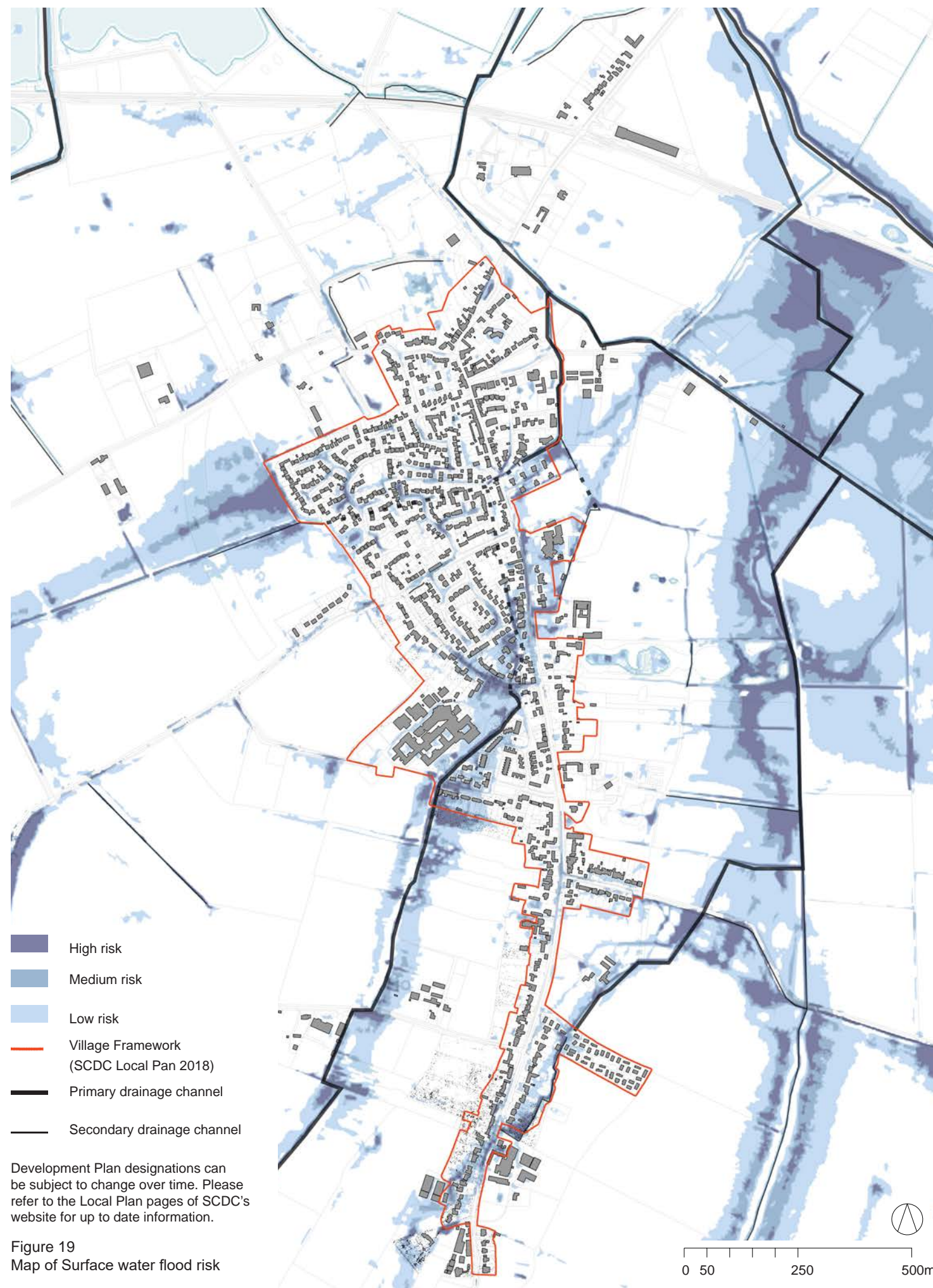
Figure 15  
Map of the 1947 Swavesey flood showing the 'islands' of the medieval settlement

The village is protected from river and surface water flooding by a complex, gravity-fed system of drains and sluices, and by the managed flooding of a sequence of fields and fens surrounding the village. Drains are partially below ground where they pass through Swavesey.

The drainage infrastructure visible within the village and its surrounding landscapes is an important part of Swavesey's history and character as a Fen Edge village.







In Swavesey there is a particularly strong risk that new development will intensify flood risk. Much of the adjoining land that may be considered for future development plays a role in flood attenuation. The impermeable clay subsoil means that any increase in the area of impermeable surface will increase the overland flow of surface water.

The main drains are at capacity and risk being overloaded by surface water runoff during times of prolonged heavy rainfall. When the sluice gates to the north of the village close in order to prevent river flood water from backing up into the village's drainage system, any new development of multiple homes needs to be capable of storing its own water.

Furthermore, the Swavesey drains lie downstream of settlements where development is putting further pressure on the network. Utton's Drove Sewerage Treatment Works (situated alongside the A14) services effluent from a number of surrounding villages including Cambourne and Northstowe (sewage from Swavesey is treated at a separate works, in Over). All treated foul water is then discharged into Swavesey Utton's Drove open drainage system. Should the banks breach there is a high risk that properties situated at the low lying areas of the village will be at risk of flooding.

These factors make the siting and landscape design of any new development of paramount importance to residents.

## Design Guidance

**5.1** Each new development of multiple homes should be designed to manage the full range of flood risk factors within its own site. In the event that the sluice gates north of the village should close, the development should not add to the burden already placed on the existing drainage infrastructure by surrounding villages and the Utton's Drove Treatment Works.

**5.2** Soakaways are not considered sufficient given the impermeable subsoil which underlies Swavesey.

**5.3** Flood alleviation measures should be designed as visually attractive green infrastructure that contributes to Swavesey's landscape character, to biodiversity and Swavesey's network of green spaces. However flood alleviation measures should not take the place of community green space.

**5.4** Where a raised ground level is proposed, the design and height of buildings should not increase overlooking of neighbouring plots and should avoid a negative visual impact on the surrounding area by maintaining the general village roof line.

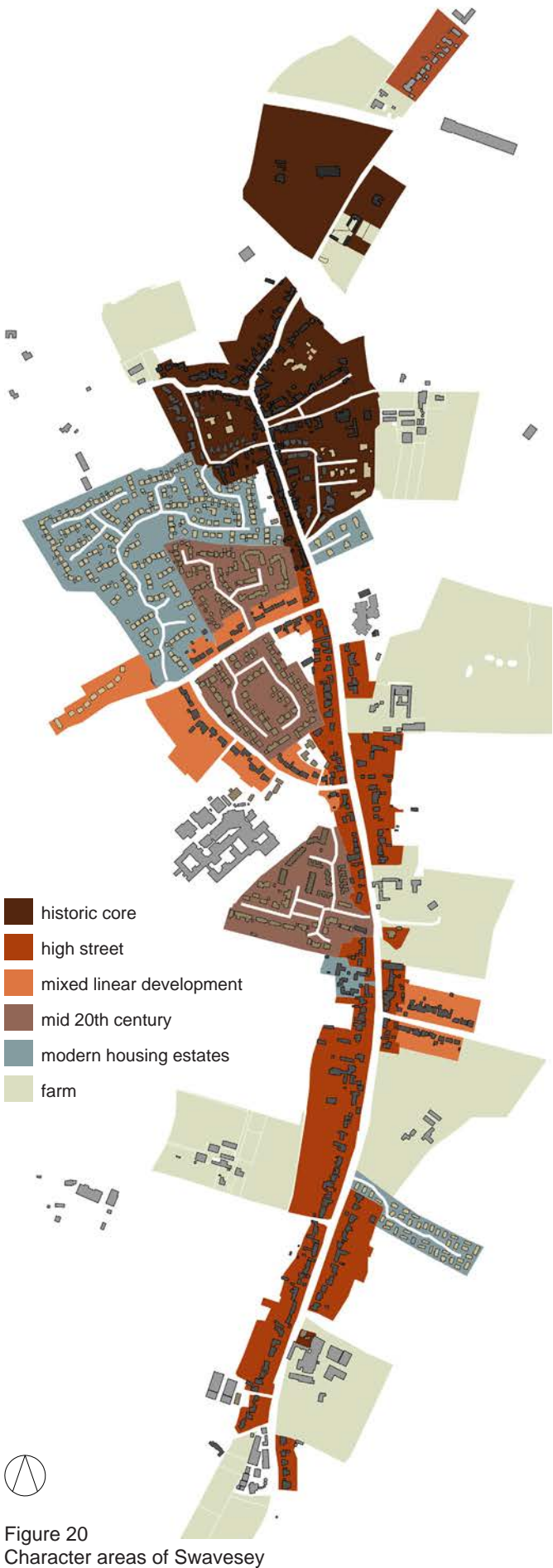
**5.5** While a raised ground level can mitigate flooding within a new development, it should not lead to flood water being discharged on to neighbouring housing sites which are not raised on embankments, thereby exacerbating the flooding problem. Sustainable drainage techniques (SuDS) should be used to mitigate run-off.

**5.6** Where new residential developments include drainage by underground channels or pipes, they must be of an approved type which is straightforward to inspect and repair if necessary.

**5.7** Mindful of existing District-wide policy, residents are particularly concerned that new residential development should take into account the impact of climate change given the specific risks which flooding poses to the village. Residents strongly support increased water efficiency, recycling and reduced water use and the implementation of grey water systems.



6. Character areas

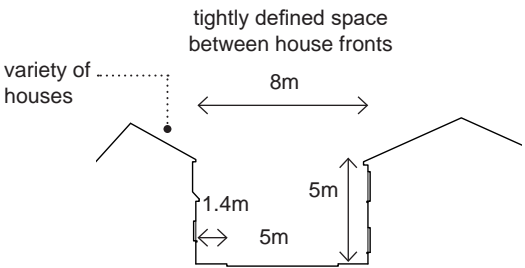


Historic Core

- The area of the Swavesey Conservation Area. Originally a medieval enclosure and has a radial street pattern of narrow back lanes off the High Street.
- Buildings are tight to the pavement, with only small breaks in the building frontage (see fig.22).
- A concentration of businesses, many without parking.
- One- and two-storey brick buildings.
- A range of house types: terraced, cottage, detached.
- Houses generally have pitched roofs, chimneys and large windows.
- ‘Green fingers’ (linear green spaces) leading out into the landscape.
- Swan Pond and Market Street are significant public open spaces.
- At Church End: brick boundary walls, stand of mature trees, grazing land with sheep and horses beside the church.

Design Guidance:

- 6.1.1 Limited scope for additional development
- 6.1.2 Maintain historic character of streets and open spaces, including building height, plot size and building line.
- 6.1.3 Consider new sites for visitor parking.
- 6.1.4 Business uses to provide parking on site where possible.



Main road

- Linear development along the main road south of the historic core, bordering the landscape and generally one plot deep.
- Strong rural character and open aspect. The road is bounded by grass verges and hedges (see fig.24). Large breaks in the frontage on the east side give views to the landscape, while the wide spacing between houses allows glimpses of back gardens and the countryside behind.
- Most houses are set back from the road with deep front gardens (see fig.24) and off-street parking. There is an irregular building line, with some houses breaking forward. Houses are detached and semi-detached, with a consistent two-storey building height.
- Active farms (Trinity Farm, The Farm, Boxworth End).
- Former public houses, now residential properties.



Design Guidance:

- 6.2.1 Maintain hedges, front gardens, verges, irregular building line. New development could continue these features.
- 6.2.2 Maintain rural views and gaps.
- 6.2.3 There are opportunities to provide more public open space through new development.
- 6.2.4 Avoid construction of garages and car ports in front gardens.

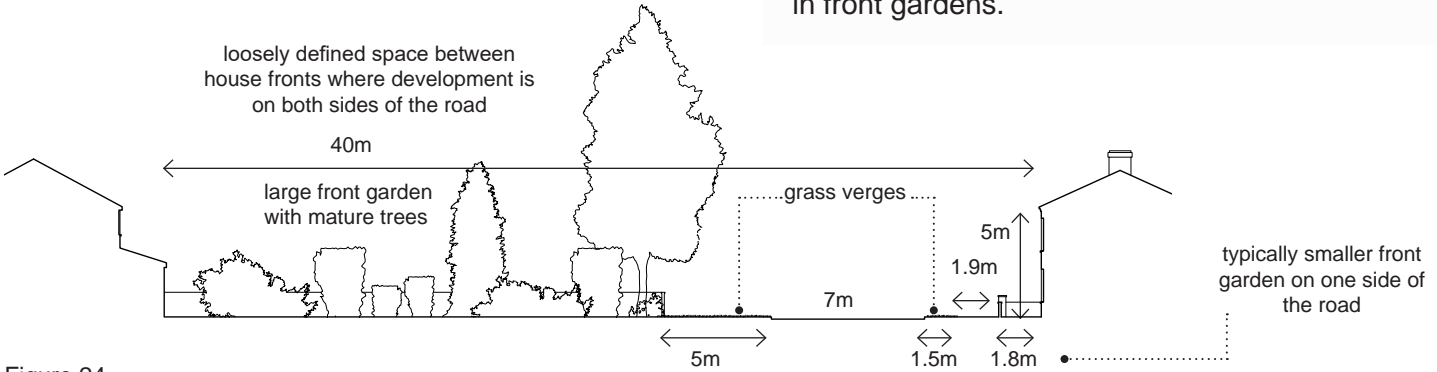






Figure 26  
Gibraltar Lane looking north

### Mixed linear development

- Linear development including Gibraltar Lane, School Lane, Home Close.
- Simple arrangement of houses fronting onto secondary road with front gardens (fig.27).
- Streets are bounded by hedges and small verges.
- A variety of house types (detached and small blocks of two or three) that blend well due to similar materials of brick, natural coloured render, slate and tile.
- Bungalows on Ramper Road contribute to the village housing mix.
- Small breaks in frontage with views through to the landscape behind.
- Houses set back from road with own parking.
- Informal, rural quality where some houses face hedgerows and back gardens (see figures 26,27).

**Design Guidance:**

**6.3.1** Maintain existing landscape features.

**6.3.2** New development should take cues from the street section, hedges and verges, off-street parking, views through to the landscape, and the harmonious variety of houses.

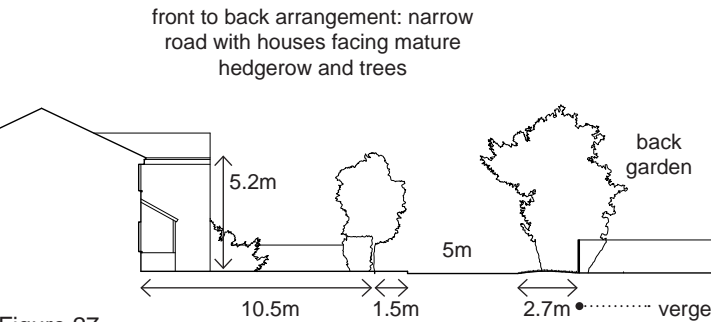


Figure 27  
Section through Gibraltar Lane cottages and rear of Priory Avenue



Figure 28  
Priory Avenue

### Mid 20th century housing estates

- Priory Avenue:
- Curved streets with no clear views through, detached and semi-detached houses.
  - Good contribution to pedestrian movement network.
  - Choked by parked cars. Garages have been filled in and front gardens lost to parking (figures 28, 29).
  - Sharing driveways disliked by residents.
  - Limited variation in house types.

- Thistle Green sheltered housing:
- Cul-de-sac of one- and two-storey linked houses grouped around courtyards
  - Narrow streets and congested parking courts.
  - Footpaths through sheltered housing.

- Thistle Green private housing:
- Detached two-storey housing and detached bungalows
  - Curving roads leading to closed cul-de-sacs
  - Poorly connected to pedestrian network.

- Whitton Close:
- Three distinct areas with different house types:

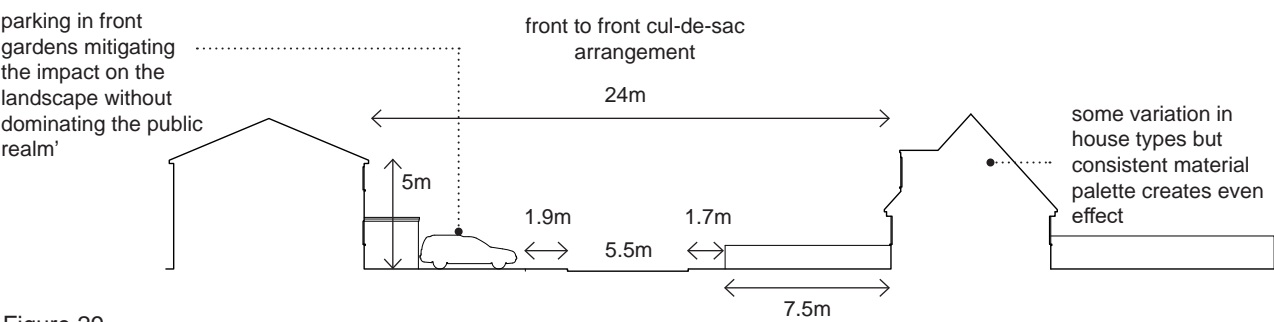


Figure 29  
Section through typical street in Priory Avenue



Figure 30  
Entrance to Whitton Close looking southeast

- Northern part:
- Highly geometric plan with modernist housing blocks in brick. Layout not in keeping with village character.
  - Open spaces of poor quality and low play value, some used for parking.

- Southeast corner:
- Mixture of semi-detached houses and short terraces with some bungalows (fig.30). Scale is in keeping with village character but areas of coloured render are not.
  - Large open spaces are of poor quality and undefined.

- Southwest corner:
- Close of newer one and two storey dwellings. Mixture of materials and roof forms not in keeping with village character (see also fig.33a).

**Design Guidance:**

**6.4.1** Potential to improve permeability of pedestrian network through existing estates.

**6.4.2** Potential to improve open spaces with additional trees and play facilities, benefitting the village as a whole.

**6.4.3** Potential for better communal parking.

**6.4.4** New development should contribute to these improvements where opportunities arise.



Figure 31  
The Cherry Trees estate viewed from Fen Drayton Road

### Modern housing estates

- Cherry Trees estate:
- Cul de sacs with curved streets. Inward-looking with confusing layout.
  - Mainly detached houses, highly repetitive over a large area (figures 31, 32).
  - Layout and house designs have suburban character, out of keeping with the village.
  - Bordering landscape with fences. No access to the landscape .
  - Poor permeability and footpath connections.
  - Insufficient public open space, located at centre of development where it does not make a contribution to the wider community.

**Design Guidance:**

**6.5.1** Potential to provide footpath connections to the west of Moat Way and south of Whitegate Close, subject to further investigation (see fig.39).

**6.5.2** Potential to provide further amenity space in new developments to offset lack within the estate.

**6.5.3** Further development of this kind, especially in the adjacent fields, would be out of keeping with village character.

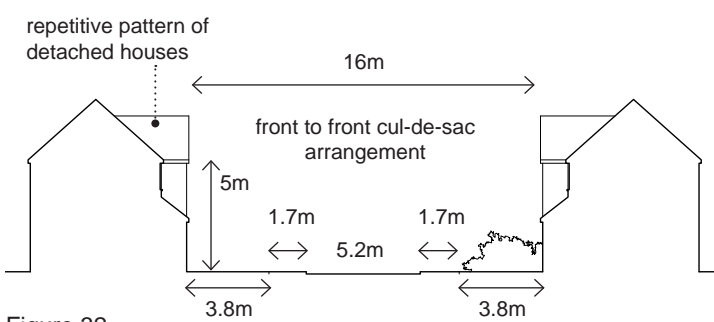


Figure 32  
Section through typical street in Moat Way



## 7. Materials

In keeping with the village's rural character, the use of materials in the historic core is simple and direct. Elevations are primarily of local (buff) stock brick, sometimes limewashed or painted white. Painted wood window frames are used, with square or vertical window proportions. Thatch, clay tile, pantile and slate roofs are found within the historic core (fig.34).

Certain houses within the conservation area are of red brick, most notably at the west end of Market Street. The black weatherboarding of agricultural buildings also contrasts with the residential fabric. These buildings punctuate the streetscape of the village (fig.35). The use of black timber has recently become more widespread, with offices and homes designed to simulate farm buildings. There is some concern among residents that this dilutes village character. This approach should therefore be restricted.

In the oldest thatched roof buildings there is a substantial overhang at the eaves; however the majority of houses have modest eaves and gutters. This contributes to the clear volumetric quality seen in most of the village's buildings. In 19th century and mid 20th century buildings there is some use of white render to highlight particular features (fig. 36). The primary brick volume of the house remains clearly visible and the highlighted element is an accent. This ensures that the volume of the building is unbroken, in keeping with the older fabric of the village.

Some newer buildings in Swavesey have elevations in a mixture of cladding materials. Elevations are divided horizontally into the different materials and sometimes there is a change of material on the corner of the building (see figures 33a and b). This is not in keeping with village character and should be avoided.

### Design Guidance

**7.1** New buildings should make use of, and respond to, the primary material palette of the village: buff stock brick and pale limewash for external walls with natural clay tile, natural clay pantile or natural slate roofs. Red brick and other materials should be used sparingly if felt to be required for 'landmark' buildings which have a prominent location.

**7.2** Buildings should have a simple and unified material character in keeping with the rural setting.

**7.3** References to the agricultural buildings of the village should be carefully considered in relation to the surrounding streetscape, especially where the intended use is not agricultural. The use of black cladding is to be avoided as a rule.

**7.4** Elevations should be in one primary material only. Where lighter materials such as timber boarding are used (for instance in panels joining two windows) they should be carefully integrated and subservient to the main material of the building (see fig.36). Window surrounds and projecting bay windows can be subtly highlighted in other materials or colours.



a. Whitton Close



b. 81-83 Middle Watch

Figure 33  
The use of multiple materials to fragment the volume of a building is not in keeping with the village character.



Figure 34: historic palette  
a. Swan Pond: Buff brick with painted wood windows, clay or pantile roofs.



b. High Street: unified brick walls, either limewashed or exposed. Thatched roofs found on a few of the oldest houses.



Figure 35: contrasts in the streetscape  
a. Boxworth End: agricultural buildings in continuous timber weatherboarding with black tar finish.



b. High Street: landmark building in red brick at numbers 10-12. The elevation terminates the view from the historic Market Street.



Figure 36: local accents  
a. Market Street: white render and paint to windows and projecting bays within a unified brick volume.



b. Priory Avenue: panels of white painted timber boarding are subservient to the full height brickwork, which turns the corner.



# 8.Village edges

The northern edges of the village are highly sensitive to new development due to the concentration of heritage assets, valued landscapes and important views, and due to the presence of flood risk zones surrounding the historic core on all sides.

Along the eastern edge (Cow Fen Road to Ramper Road) the land is extensively in Flood Zones 2 and 3, and there are numerous valued views of the landscape.

The southern limit of the village is defined by Boxworth End Farm. The farm buildings, trees and hedges that mark the southern entrance to the village are valued characteristics, and there is a strong desire that Swavesey should not extend south of this point.

The western edges of the village are more mixed in character due to the development that has already taken place during the 20th Century and in recent years. The western edges are generally outside Flood Zones 2 and 3 but with a medium risk area for surface water flooding running along the line of the Church End and Village drain.



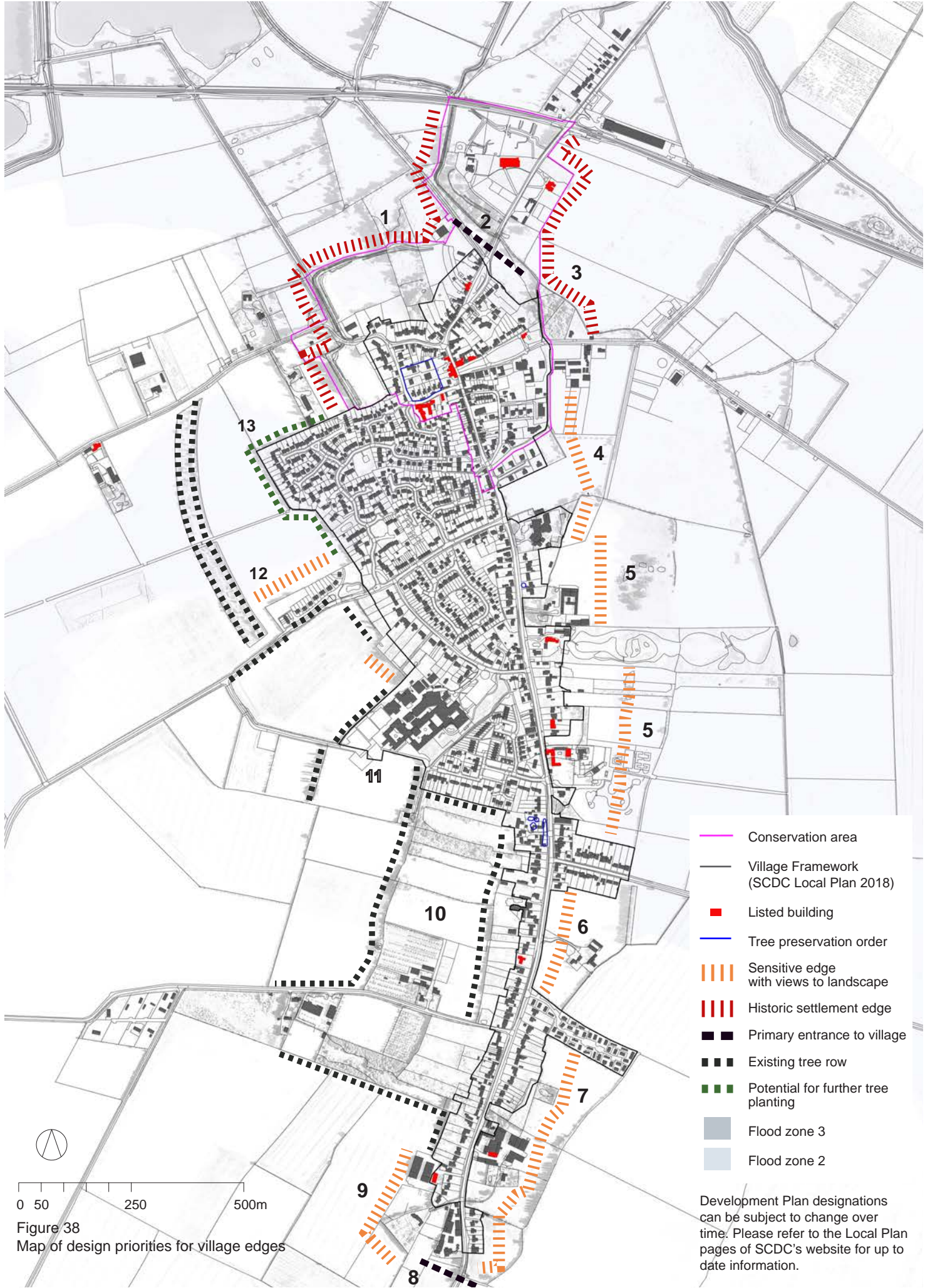
Figure 37  
Entrance to Swavesey from the north

## Character of edges (see figure 38)

- 01. Special views, landscapes and floodplain. Outlines of medieval ‘Town Ditch’ and castle form sensitive edge marked by mature hedgerows.
- 02. Wooded approach to village from the north via raised causeway to Swan Pond, between the ‘islands’ of the medieval village. Important views east and west.
- 03. Hedgerows and trees at termination of Market Green form characteristic soft edge to historic core.
- 04. Important views of countryside from Village Green.
- 05. Elevated contour with trees to back gardens. Active and historic farms. Valued views of landscape.
- 06. Important views to the countryside through breaks in the dense evergreen hedgerow.
- 07. Delicate edge with views into enclosed fields, provides threshold to the open countryside.
- 08. Entrance from wide open fields to village from the south, defined by copse of trees.
- 09. Incomplete edge with views between agricultural buildings.
- 10. Row of fields defined by tree screens forms wide soft edge on the west side of the village.
- 11. Open edge to Village College connecting into playing fields.
- 12. Views to fields contribute positively to character of Home Close. 50m wide tree band to west.
- 13. Breaks in tree line reveal suburban quality of Cherry Trees estate. Houses, back gardens and fences visible from open fields (see also fig.43).

## Design Guidance

- 8.1** New development should sustain the distinctive character of the village edges 1-12 as identified on figure 38. The landscape and visual gap between Swavesey and the A14 is particularly important to residents.
- 8.2** Opportunities should be taken to further screen the Cherry Trees estate from the surrounding fields with additional trees.
- 8.3** Any new development to the east or west should be broadly perpendicular to the main road, to maintain valued and important views. It should be screened by trees to form a wide village edge (such as no.10 on fig.38).





# 9. Movement network

Swavesey has a congested main road and a poor pedestrian and cycle network within the built up areas, with few safe routes away from the main roads to the schools and other main destinations. The main road is the only north-south route through the village and carries through-traffic from Over and Willingham. In the northern section, pavements are narrow and there is insufficient parking for houses and businesses. Recent and post-war housing development has not made a positive contribution to the movement network, through cul-de-sac planning with twisting roads and poor lines of sight, and pavements that are interrupted frequently by driveways.

Swavesey lacks safe cycle routes and bridleways to the guided bus interchange and neighbouring villages, and the leisure footpaths and bridleways around the village are discontinuous and do not form an effective network.

## Design Guidance

**9.1** New development should provide direct and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes allowing ease of access around the village and to key destinations such as the schools, doctor's surgery, main road facilities, nature reserve and transport hubs. Cycle routes to the schools should preferably be away from main roads and segregated from vehicle traffic.

**9.2** The design of new development should incorporate the following features:

- Footpaths and cycle routes should be well-lit and with no blind spots to allow for safe passage
- Footpaths and cycle routes to provide access to (and preferably through) open green spaces to avoid using the main thoroughfares.
- Infrastructure to allow for benches and cycle stands.
- Footways designed to be accessible to wheelchair users through their width and the surface material.

**9.3** Planning of new developments should take into account the existing and potential linkages shown on figure 39, for example:

- Create new Public Bridleways linked to existing bridleways around the village and connecting to droves, particularly where indicated on figure 39.
- Extend bridleways into neighbouring parishes such as Over.
- Extend bridleways such as Middle Fen Drove to

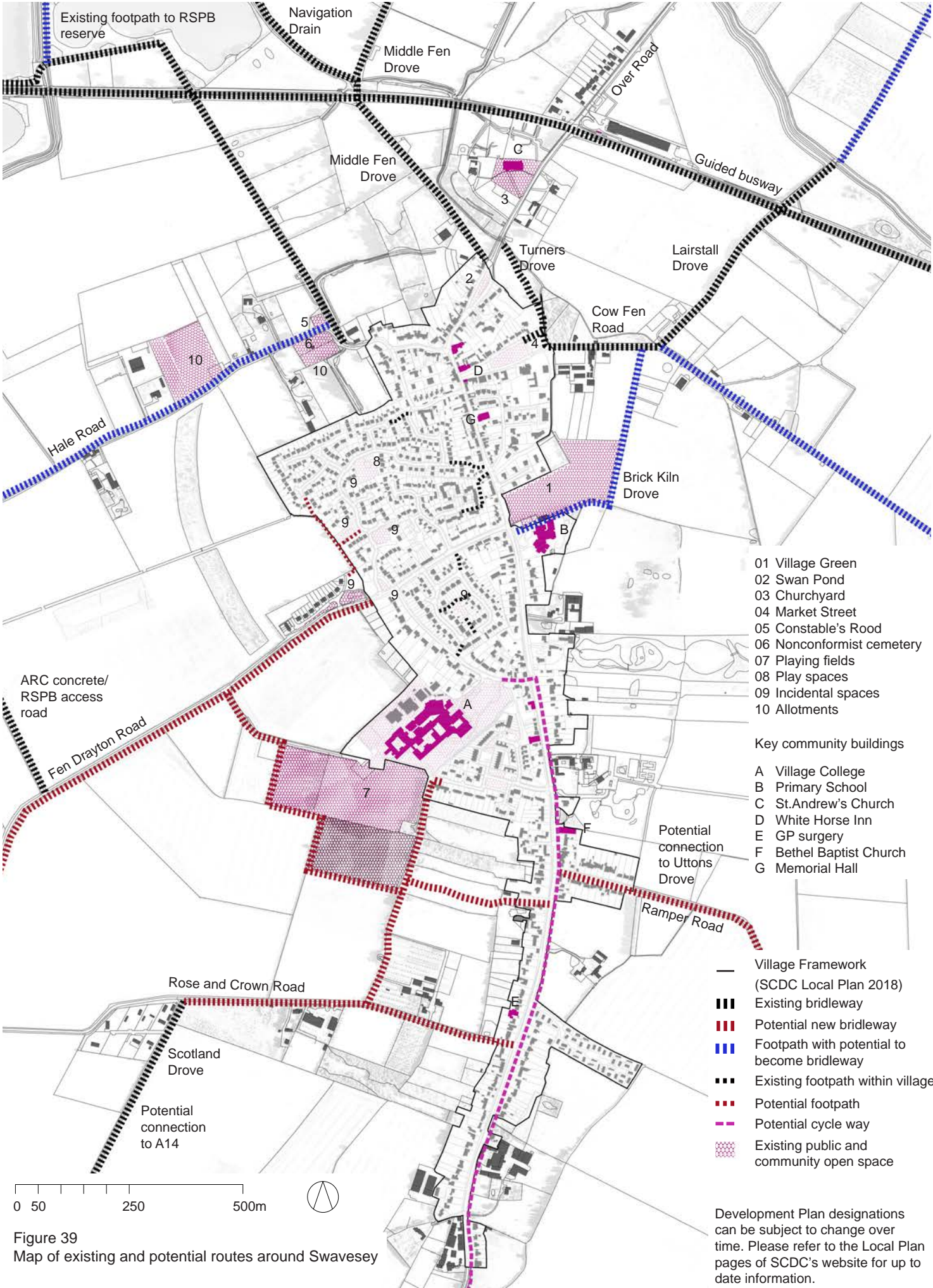
the north, where currently the bridleway stops to become only a public footpath.

- Link new development to existing bridleways.
- Upgrade footpaths to bridleways where indicated.
- Create a cycle route on the east side of the main road from the A14 to the Village College.

**9.4** The potential for additional footpaths within the built up area where indicated on figure 39 should be explored when new development can contribute to upgrading existing infrastructure.

**9.5** Along roads leading into the village where there is currently no pavement, cycle way, or route for equestrians, and no space to install one adjacent to the road, there is the potential for routes to be provided along the edge of the adjacent field, preserving existing hedges.

**9.6** Bridleway tracks should preferably be hedge lined and constructed over hard core. The surface should be permeable, such as very fine gravel (not tarmac), and edged with wood. Ideally the surface should be grass, however if a harder surface is required, a soft-edged small module material can be used.





10. Community green space

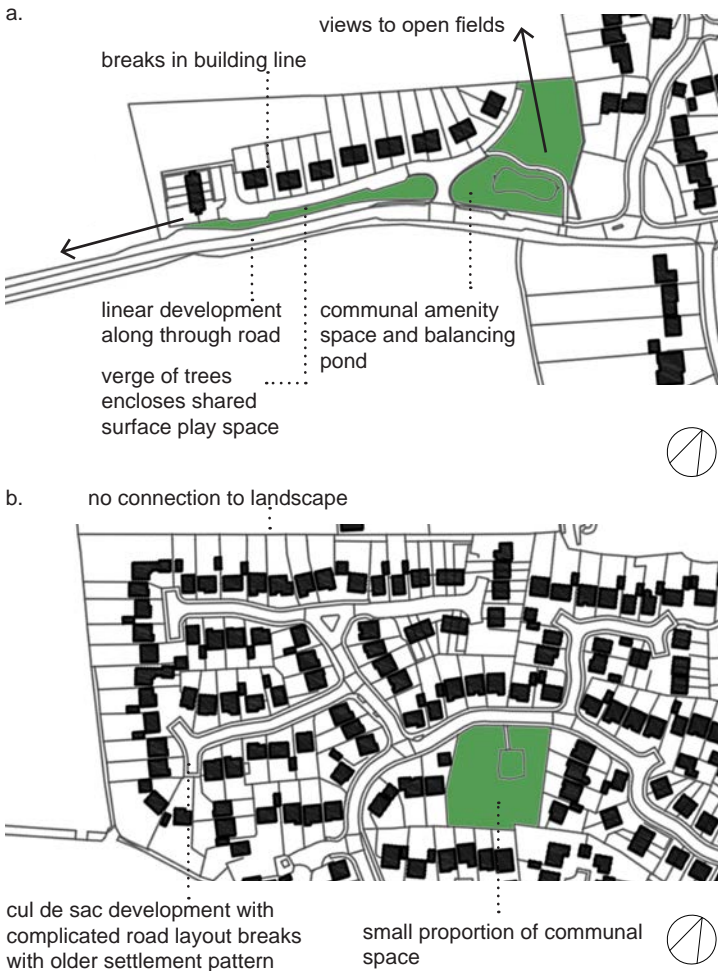


Figure 40: comparative green space plans at the same scale  
a. Home Close: layout with a rural, open character.  
b. Cherry Trees: layout with a suburban, private character.



Figure 41  
a. View of Home Close looking east.  
b. View of typical cul de sac within Cherry Trees estate.

Historically a number of public ‘greens’ were found along much of Swavesey’s central spine (see figure 3a). Today Swavesey’s community green spaces are concentrated in the north of the village, where they form part of the green ‘fingers’ of landscape entering the built up area (see section 4 above).

Overall there is a shortfall of all types of community recreation space in relation to SCDC standards, and there is community support for expanding the playing fields around the village college. There is a particular shortfall within the estate development to the west side of the village where development has an inward looking, suburban character. By contrast, the more recent development at Home Close has a much more outward looking, rural layout (figures 40 and 41).

Design Guidance

10.1 The valued green spaces and ‘green fingers’ of the village should be maintained. Opportunities should be taken to ensure that recreational spaces, including the nature reserve, are well connected by walking and cycle routes and bridleways in line with guidance in section 6.

10.2 New green spaces should be well maintained, with a specific use. Opportunities should be sought to increase provision of benches, refuse bins and dog waste bins in existing green spaces.

10.3 Green and recreation spaces in new developments should be located for access by the wider community and should contribute to the existing ‘green fingers’ and rural views (see figure 40a).

10.4 The design of new green spaces should enhance the natural and biodiversity assets of the site and reinforce Swavesey’s landscape character, taking cues from valued green spaces such as Swan Pond, Constable’s Rood and Market Green, and maintaining rural views and wildlife corridors.

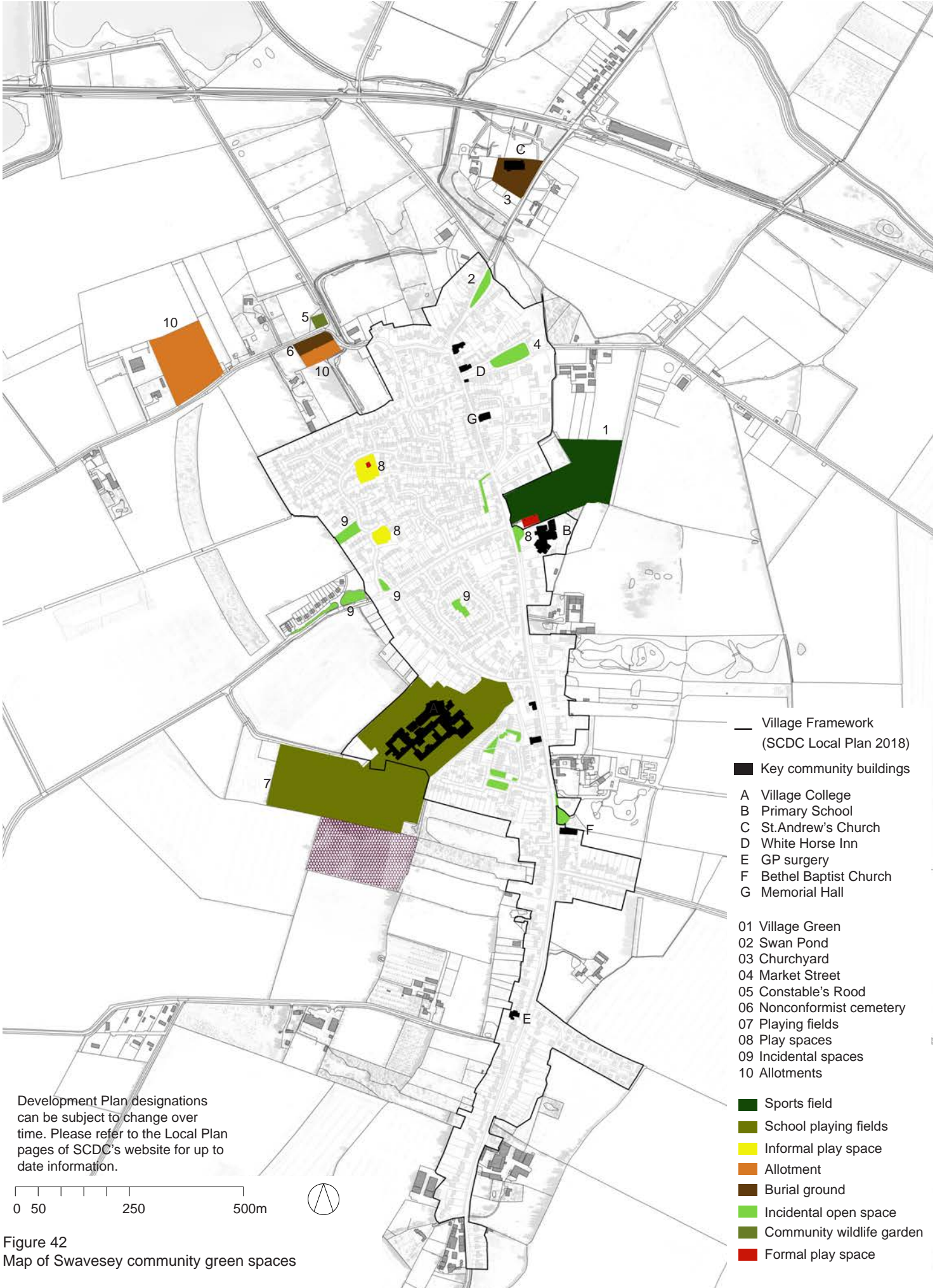


Figure 42  
Map of Swavesey community green spaces



# 11. Integrating new development

As a long, linear village, Swavesey is particularly sensitive to the addition of new development. Extensions to the village during the twentieth century broke with the characteristic village pattern of houses arranged along through roads, which had a direct connection to the broader landscape. Instead, infill development took place between the roads and to the west of the older settlement, obscuring the radial street pattern in the historic core and increasing the village footprint significantly to the northwest. These twentieth century estates have limited points of entry from the older roads and confusing internal road patterns. The estates offer no views of, or access to, the broader landscape and community green space is in short supply.

The community wishes to avoid these types of inward-facing, suburban cul-de-sac development built in Swavesey during the past 80 years, that have detracted from the rural character of the village, its connection with the countryside, and movement around Swavesey. Instead, villagers want to ensure that new development is genuinely part of the historic village, helps to improve the movement network, and connects Swavesey with the surrounding countryside.



Figure 43  
View of Cherry Trees development from the fields to the north. The closed suburban layout is not in keeping with village character.

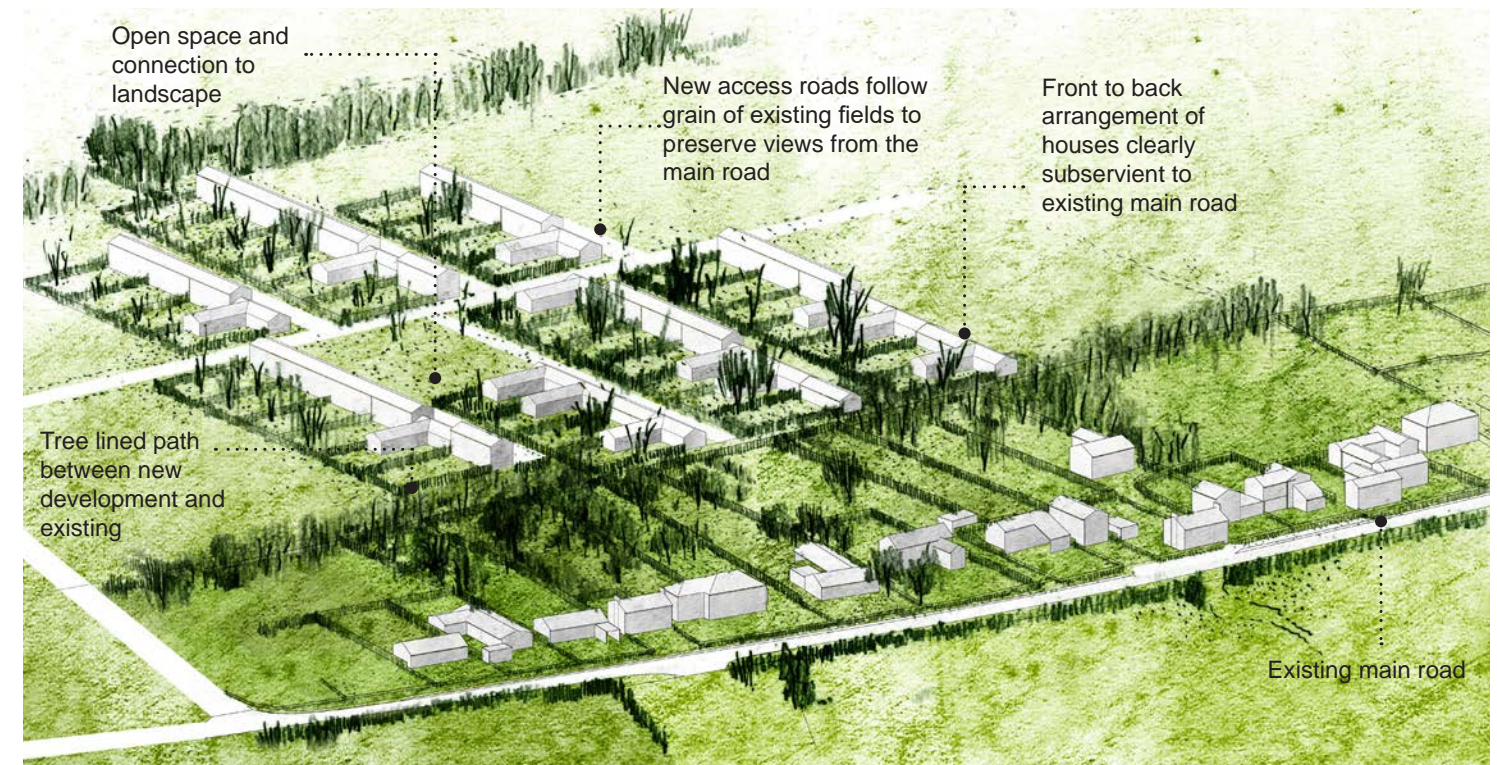
## Design Guidance

**11.1** The following characteristics should be avoided:

- Curving or convoluted road layouts that block views of the surrounding countryside and do not make a positive contribution to the village movement network (pedestrian, cycle and car).
- Large groups of identical houses (more than 6-8).
- Arrangements where the street is dominated by parked cars, such as on-plot parking in front of the property not screened by hedges or walls, or large blocks of communal parking. Care should be taken with individual garage design to ensure that the garages are not easily converted to extensions of the home, displacing car parking to the front garden (see also section 12).
- Houses of three or more storeys, including 'two-and-a-half' storey houses. These are not in keeping with the village's characteristic roofscape.
- Inappropriate building materials (see section 4) and inappropriate treatments to front gardens and external boundaries such as close-boarded fencing.
- Shared driveways.

**11.2** The following attributes are encouraged:

- Maintaining or creating views to the countryside between properties and along roads.
- A highly connective layout that contributes to the movement network of the village. Where a road connection is inappropriate, the development should create footpath access.
- Incorporating green spaces and green lanes that provide footpath or bridleway connections and wildlife corridors. Larger developments should incorporate significant green spaces that form landscape connections between the existing village and surrounding countryside.
- Front gardens with hedges and/or brick walls, or planted strips in front of houses. Hedges composed of native species should be the boundary treatment for all external boundaries, including those facing surrounding fields.
- The appearance should blend well with Swavesey's historic fabric. There should be an appropriate degree of variation in design and materials between houses.



a. New development perpendicular to the main road



b. Green 'fingers'

Figure 44  
Approaches to integrating development behind the existing main road



# 12. Appropriate housing types

**Design Guidance**

Examples of layouts and housing types which would fit in with the village and avoid a car-dominated street environment include the following.

**12.1** Front to back' arrangement of streets, where a row of houses with front gardens faces the back gardens of the next row, as long as they deal sufficiently with privacy and natural surveillance. Parking spaces integrated into backs of plots on one side of the street only (figures 46, 47). Hedges are the dominant boundary treatment and enclose parking spaces (see also figures 26, 27).

**12.2** Semi-detached houses with small front gardens, one parking space to the side of the house and one to the rear of the plot (figure 49a).

**12.3** Larger detached or semi-detached houses with allocated spaces within a parking court. Carefully landscaped parking area concealed by the front row of houses, with some open car ports (figure 49b).

**12.4** Row of semi-detached houses with front gardens. One parking space to the side of the house and another in the front garden, separated from the street by suitable boundary treatment such as a hedge and/or brick wall (not close-boarded fencing). See figures 50 and 51.

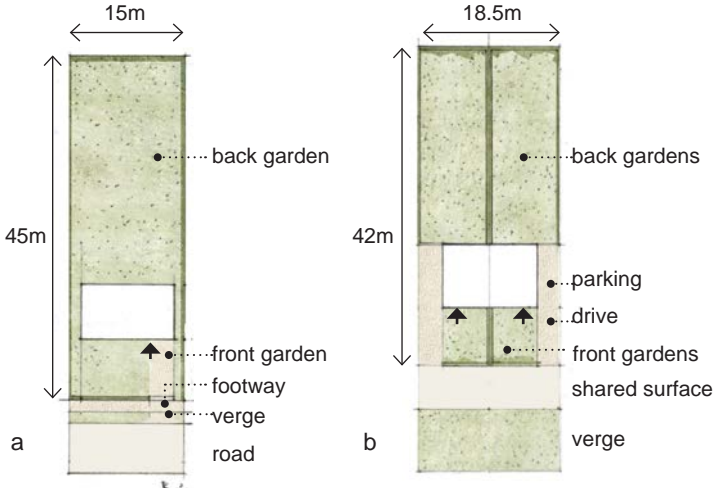


Figure 45  
a. Typical plan of 19th century plot on the main road  
b. Plan of typical semi-detached houses at Home Close

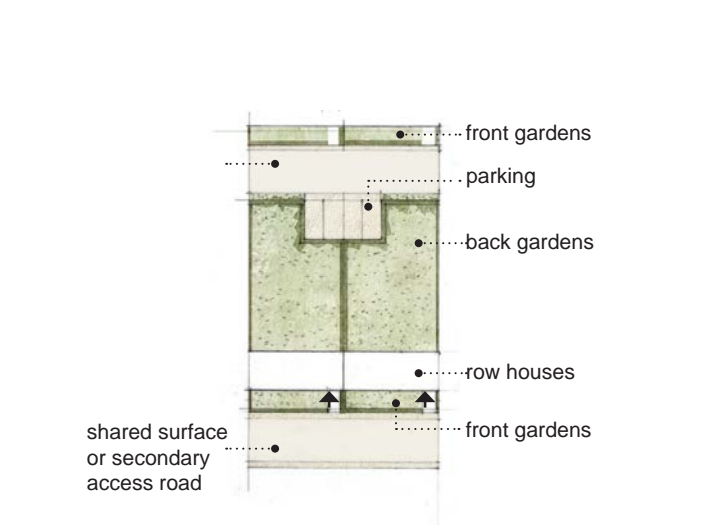


Figure 46  
Front to back development with parking to the rear  
Precedent: Tayler and Green Architects, Smith's Knoll, Hedenham



Figure 47  
Front to back development  
Houses perpendicular to existing main road



Figure 48  
Back to back house plots with green fingers

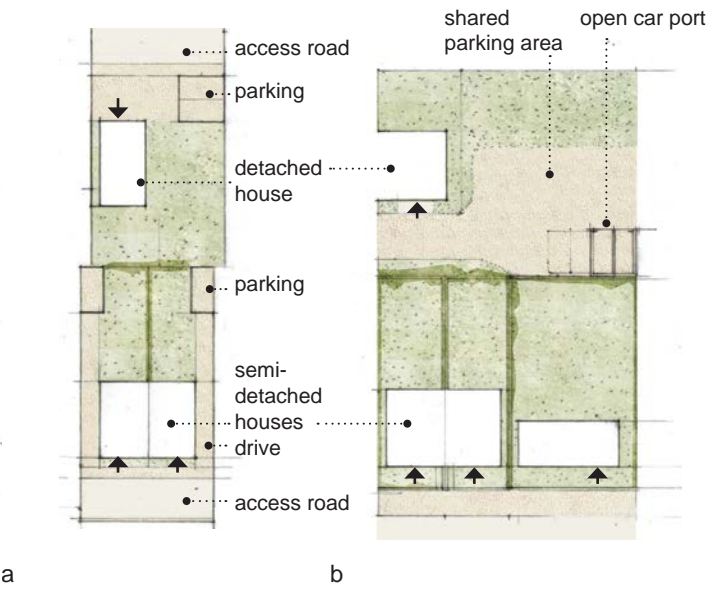


Figure 49  
Back to back house plot and rear parking precedents  
a. Doorstep Green, Jonathan Hendry Architect  
b. Manor Farm, Laragh Homes

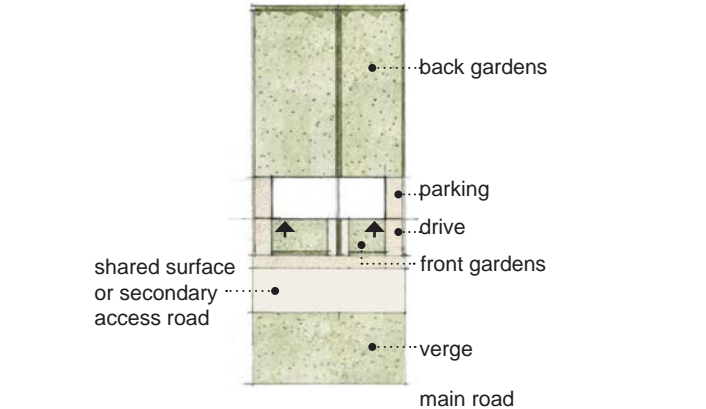


Figure 50  
Semi-detached houses set back from road  
Precedent: Forge Grove, Gillingham. Tayler and Green Architects

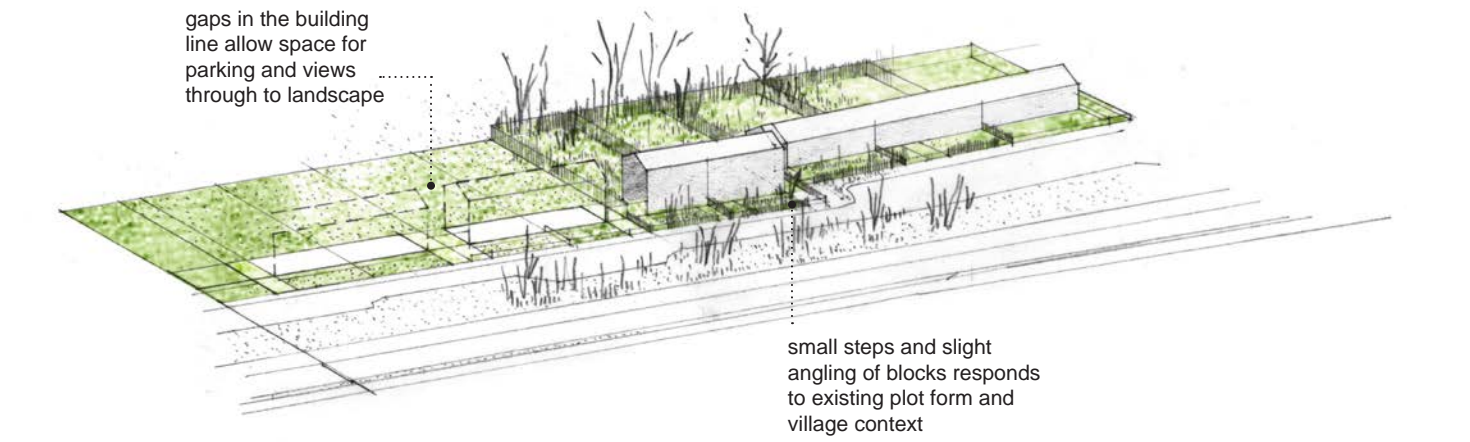


Figure 51  
Loose row of houses set back from the Main road



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