

Mattersey and Mattersey Thorpe Village Appraisal

Produced August 2017 for the Mattersey
and Mattersey Thorpe Neighbourhood
Development Plan by urban forward ltd



urban forward ltd





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Section 1: About this document



The purpose of this document

This document has been produced to support the spatial strategies and design policies in the Mattersey and Mattersey Thorpe Neighbourhood Development Plan. It should be read in conjunction with the Plan document, along with the documents outlined in the appendices of this guide.

The intention of this document is to enable design teams to make their proposals specific to the Plan area, and to help avoid some of the common pitfalls associated with new development. It also provides guidance on how to manage change in the village, including how the existing built form and townscape can inform new development should it come forward.

The guidance within this document is not exhaustive, and we encourage design teams to undertake further studies should they wish to develop schemes within the villages.

Finally, appendices is included that sets out general design guidance that reflects best practice and national policy, with key principles that all development should follow established. You can also find a glossary of useful terms in this section.

Structure

The document is set out in the following sections:

Section 1 sets out how to use the document, introduces the Plan area and explains the rationale behind the information contained within this Guide.

Section 2 explores the form of Mattersey, looking at the way topography influences its morphology, how the village is set out, and how it has changed over time. It then looks at the details of the village, examining the aspects that make up its character and identity. This analysis is then translated into useful principles for future development, suggesting ways in which designers can ensure their proposals support rather than erode local distinctiveness.

Section 3 does the same for Mattersey Thorpe, exploring the village in terms of morphology, growth and design.

Section 4 examines the development sites seen as most favourable by the community. We establish core development principles for each of the preferred site, setting out the design objectives that should be delivered should these sites come forward for development.

Section 5 provides appendices, setting out suggested further reading and providing a glossary of useful terms and definitions. It also includes general design principles. It looks at nationally accepted place making design best practice, and established design approaches that should apply to all places, with some Plan area-wide recommendations. It also demonstrates how design is embedded in national policy and guidance, giving weight to the need to secure high quality design through the planning process.

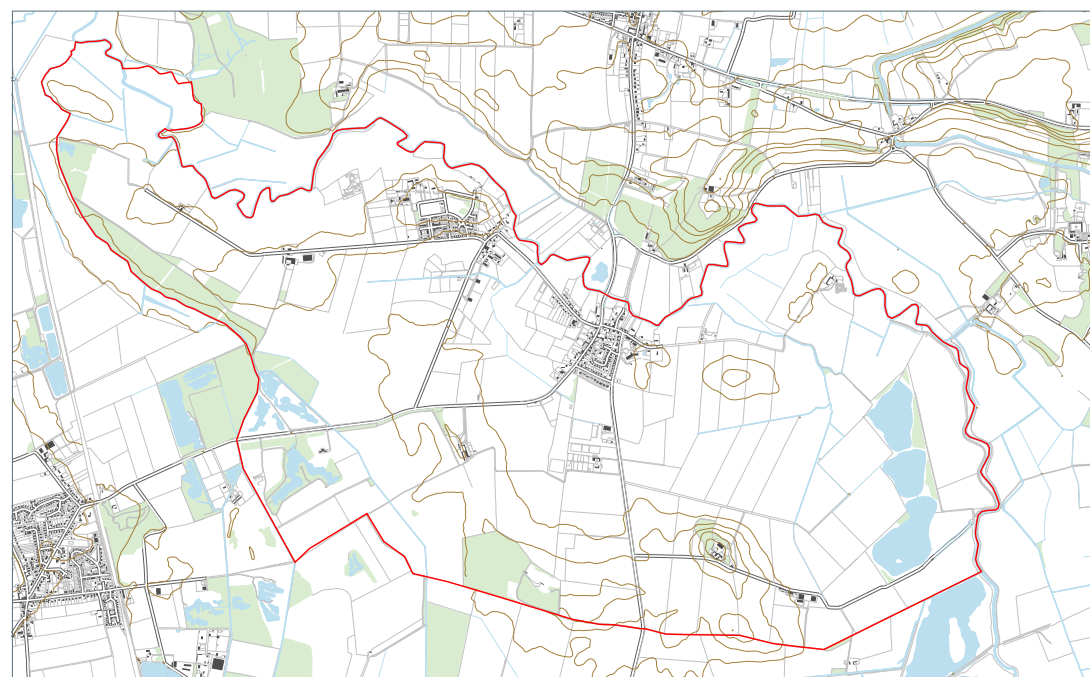


The study area

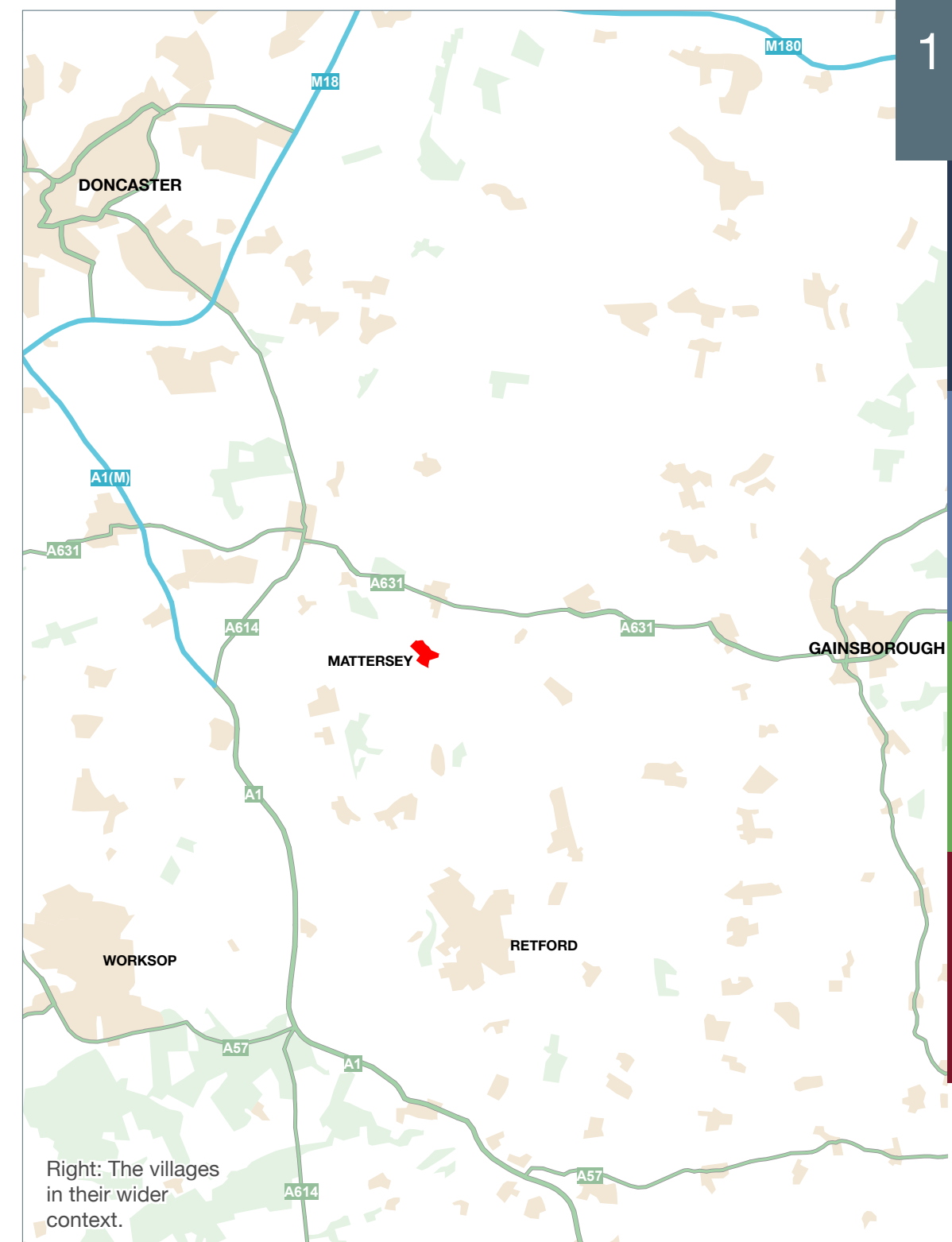
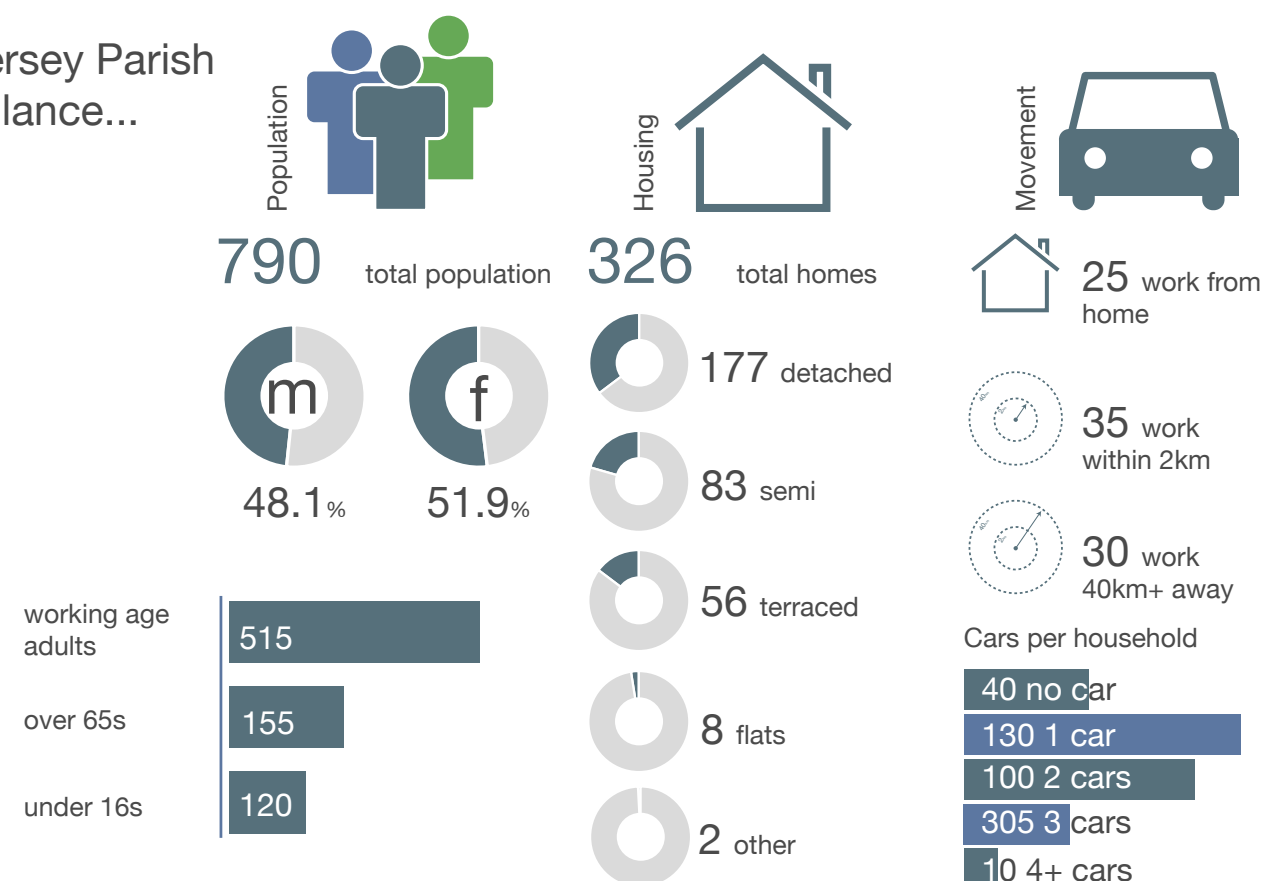
The Neighbourhood Development Plan area takes in the villages of Mattersey and Mattersey Thorpe, within Mattersey parish, which sits around six miles to the north of Retford in Nottinghamshire.

They are two small villages that are very distinct from one another, built at different times and with different spatial approaches to their arrangement. They also have very different architectural approaches. We cover both of these settlements within this study, but do not go into detail around conservation issues in the area.

Key:
Parish boundary



Mattersey Parish at a glance...



Right: The villages in their wider context.



Section 2: Mattersey





Structure and growth



About this section

This section of the study aims to understand how the general character and identity of Mattersey is formed. To do this, we examine how the village relates to its topography, how the extent of the built up area can be defined, and what pattern the village has formed.

We then examine how the village has changed over time, and chart the evolution of the built environment of Mattersey to see what lessons earlier growth has for the future.

We map the type and distribution of dwellings throughout the village, and then examine how dwellings sit in relation to the main lines of movement in the area. Finally, we examine the heritage offer of the village.

This section is arranged as follows:

- Existing built up area.
- Settlement pattern.
- Change over time.
- Evolution of the village.
- Dwelling types.
- Heritage.





Existing built up area

Mattersey is a small, compact village that is mostly 'contained' within the main streets in the area. Retford Road, Ranskill Road / Main Street and Abbey / Thorpe Road all provide a strong perimeter system of edges, with most of the developed area within the village sitting within the zone this creates. Some development extends along Thorpe Road to the north west, but generally, development does not extend along the streets as they lead away from the village.

Most villages transition to open countryside through 'soft' edges such as back gardens that are green and which fade into the wider landscape setting. Because of the way the built form sits within the village, the transitions between the urbanised areas of the settlement and the open countryside shows two approaches; a 'hard' fronted edge to the outside world, as seen on Retford Road, or 'soft' transitions through the back gardens of dwellings, as seen on Job Lane, Main Street etc. This is unusual, and gives Mattersey a different character when viewed from different directions.

Management:

- Effort should be made to keep the village compact and walkable, with development extending along the main routes resisted. Instead, infilling between the main routes should be explored.
- Transitions between built form and the open countryside that surrounds Mattersey needs careful consideration; new development that has a relationship with the open countryside at the village edge should, where possible, maintain the transitioning approach of that part of the village.

Right: Mattersey's existing built up area in relation to the open countryside beyond.





Settlement pattern

Historic Mattersey is a predominately nucleated settlement and its shape has a strong relationship with the underlying topography of the area. The main streets to the north of the village run parallel to the river, which sits in a shallow valley.

Some lineation has begun to occur along the Thorpe Road to the north, but as can be seen from the diagram, this 'spur' is unusual in terms of the form of Mattersey. Instead, Mattersey is dense, compact and walkable, with tight-knit streets and spaces to the core.

The figure ground diagram (right) shows that most streets are well 'constituted' by buildings; that is, the lines of the streets are clearly discernible from how the buildings define their edges and buildings present their fronts to the public space within the street. Backland development does occur, but is not commonplace. This is an important lesson for new development should it occur; buildings having a discernible relationship with their street is a key feature of the village.



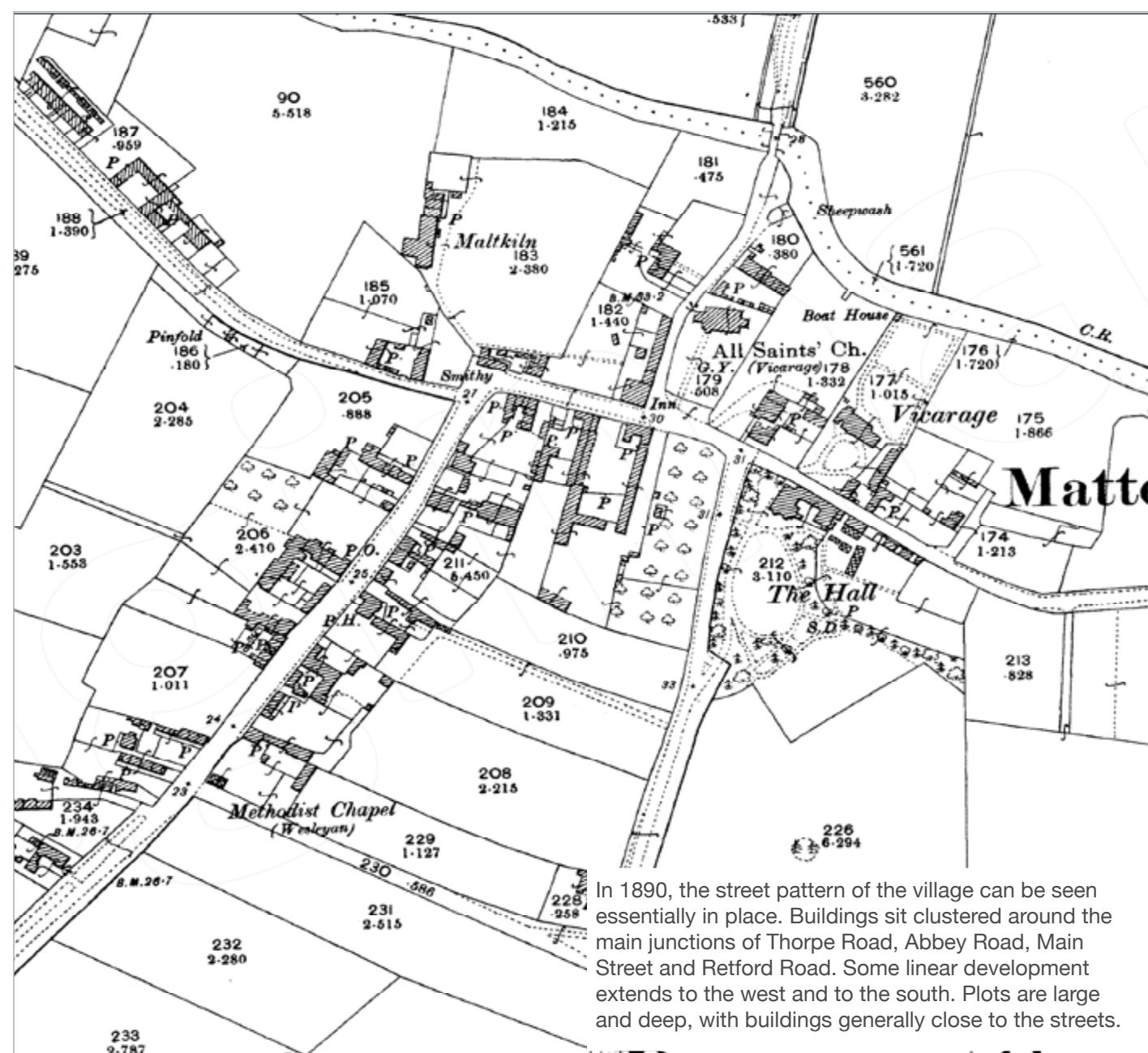
Right: A 'figure ground' of Mattersey, showing buildings and the settlement boundary.



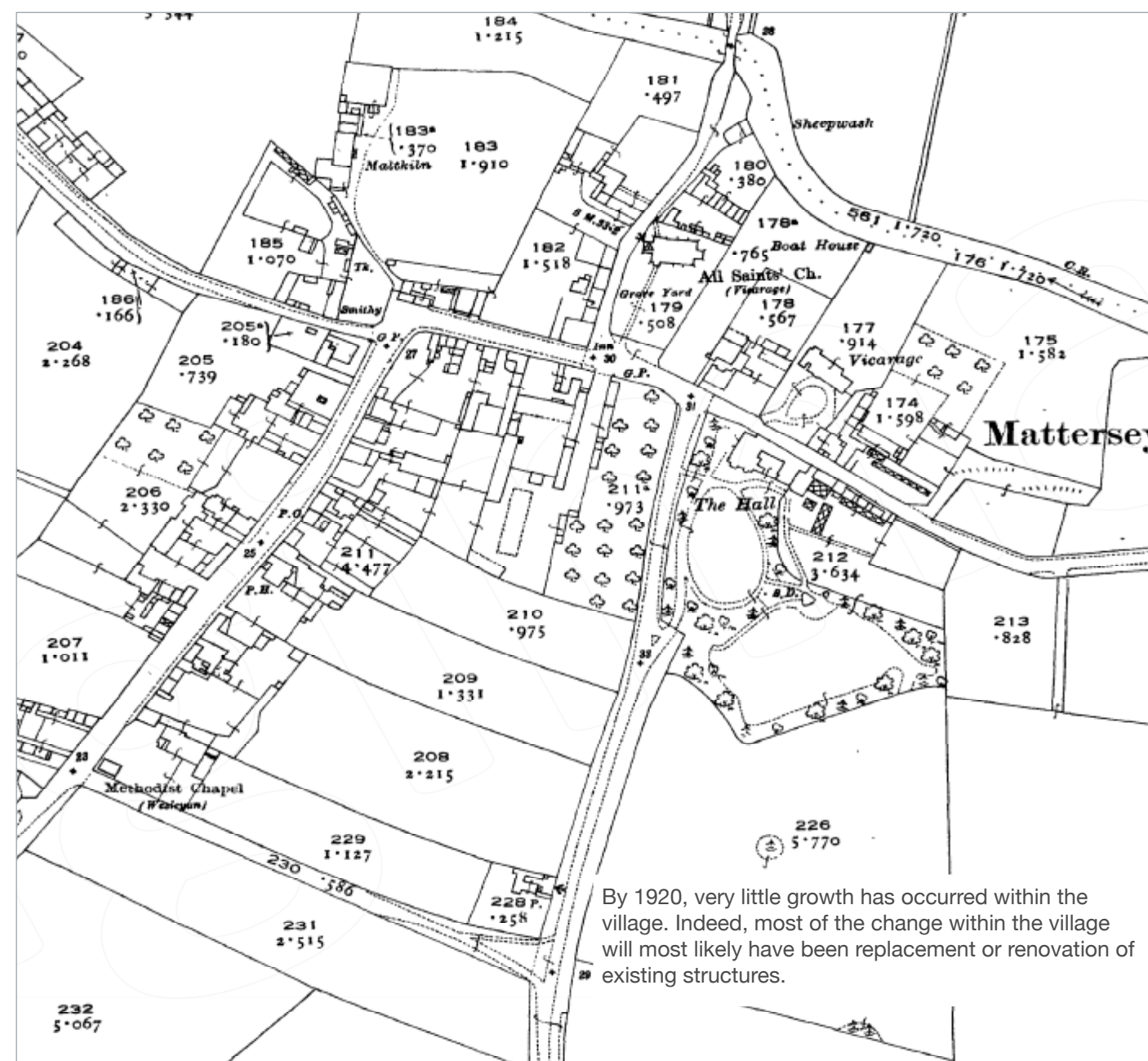
Change over time

Mattersey is an old settlement, with the remains of a Priory dating from around 1100 still present in the village, and the All Saints Church dating from around the 14th century. The following sequence of plans show how Mattersey has grown over time, where new development has occurred and how the shape of the settlement has evolved as new buildings have been added to the village.

1890 plan

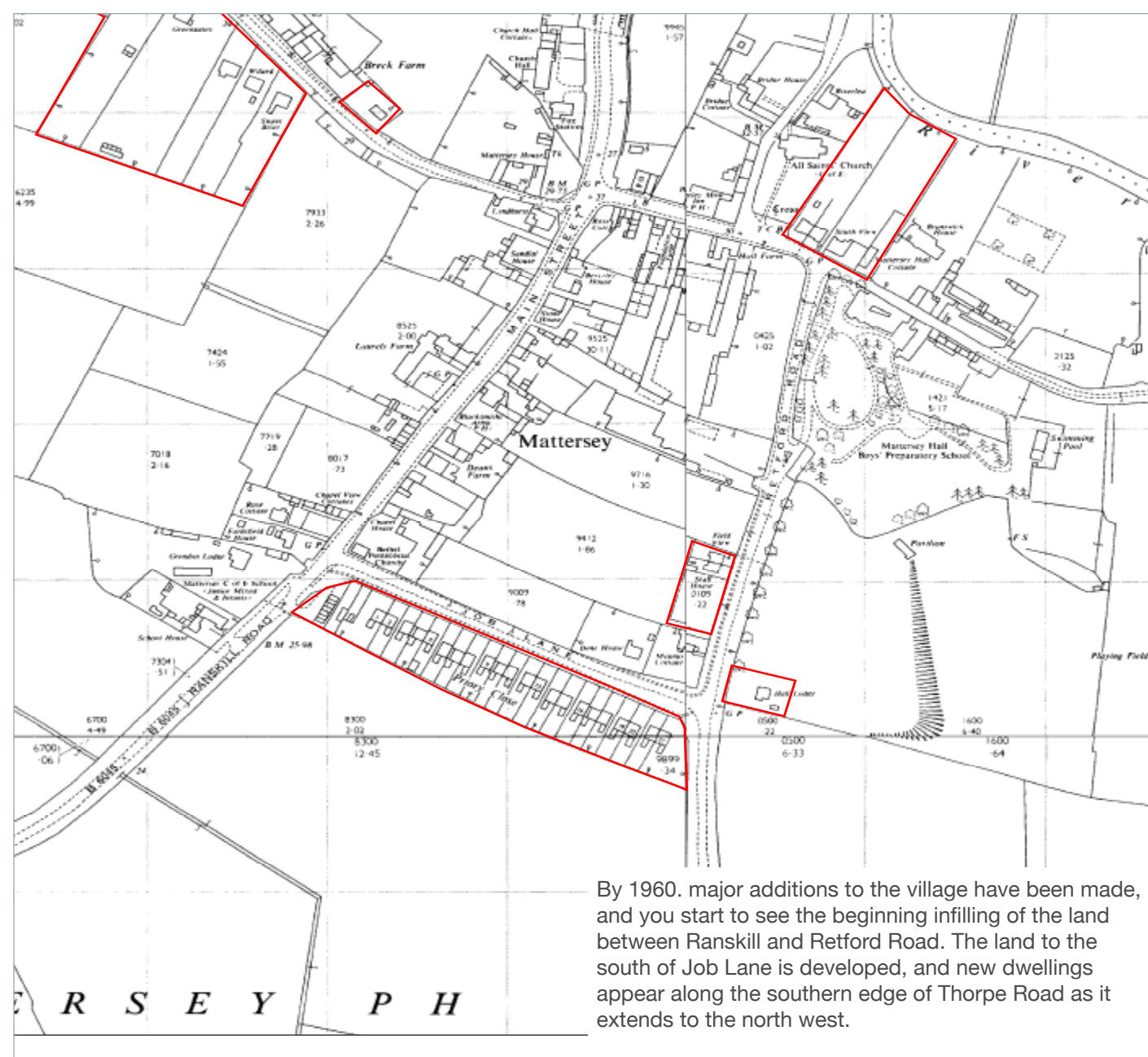


1920 plan

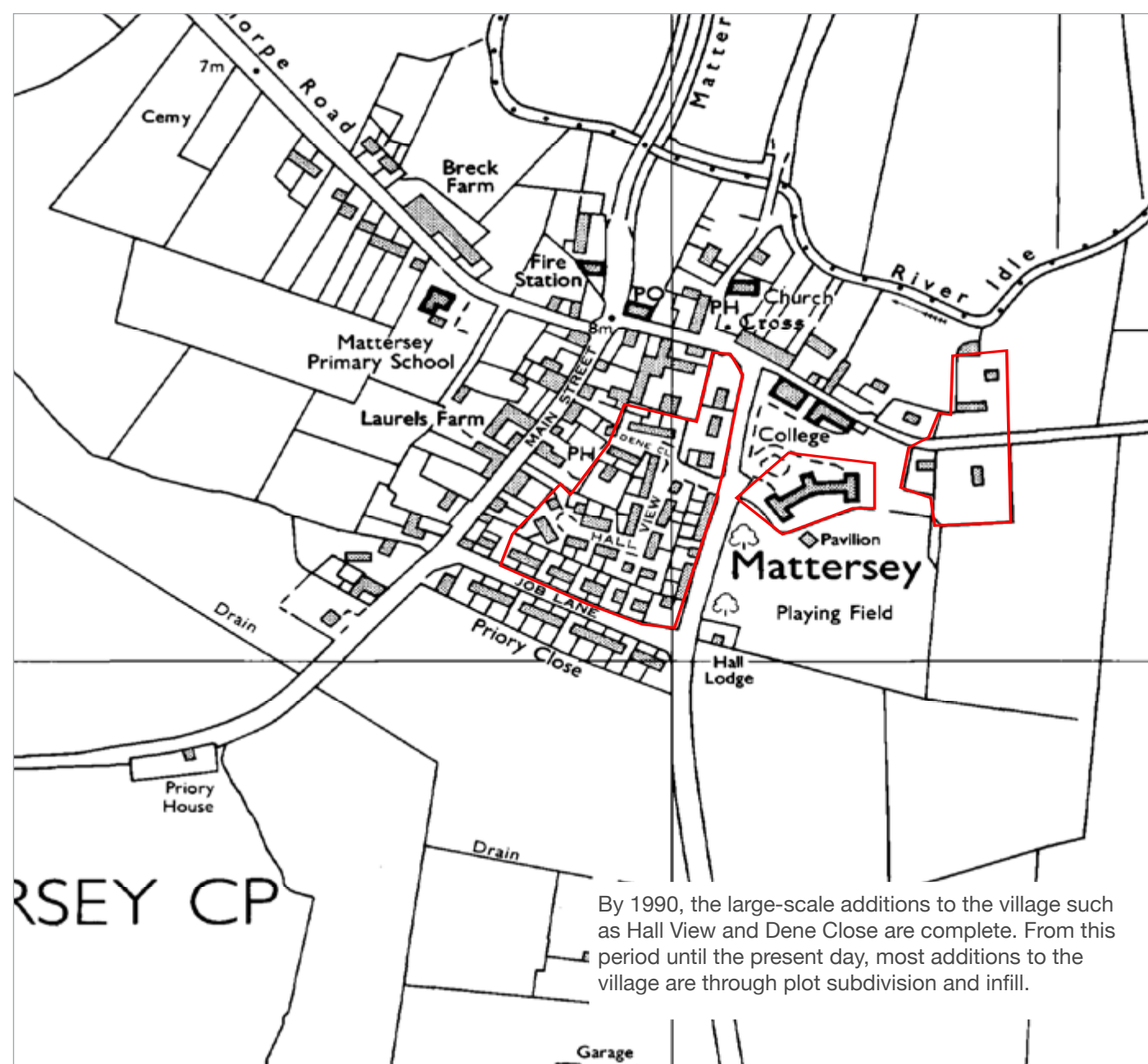




1960 plan



1990 plan





Evolution of the village

When tracking the evolution of Mattersey over time, distinctive patterns of development emerge. The original village extended from the junctions, with large, wide plots and a loose grained relationship with the street visible. More regular, linear development with regular plots were added next, and these tended to extend along the streets to the edge of the village.

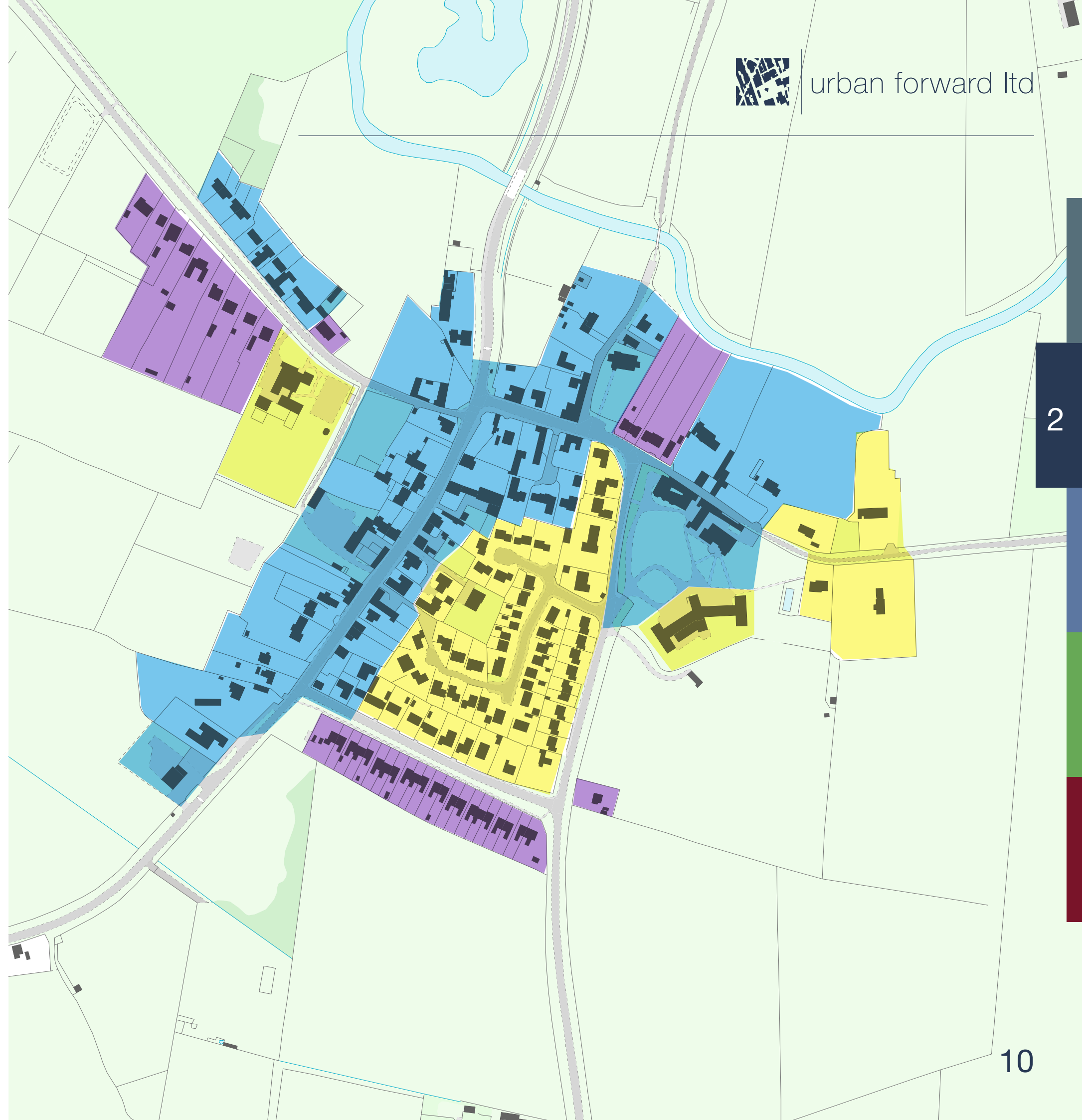
Later, infill development clustered around dead-end streets can be found. This type of development is typical of the mid-90's era of housebuilding. The area occupied by this kind of development generally sits within the village envelope, between Ranskill Road and Retford Road. Some larger buildings such as the Christian College are added around this time.

Key:

- 1890
- 1960
- 1990 onwards

Right: The village growing over time, with the main eras of development highlighted.

Note that within these areas, a high degree of building replacement has occurred, so whilst an area might have been urbanised in one period, the actual buildings might be from a later period.





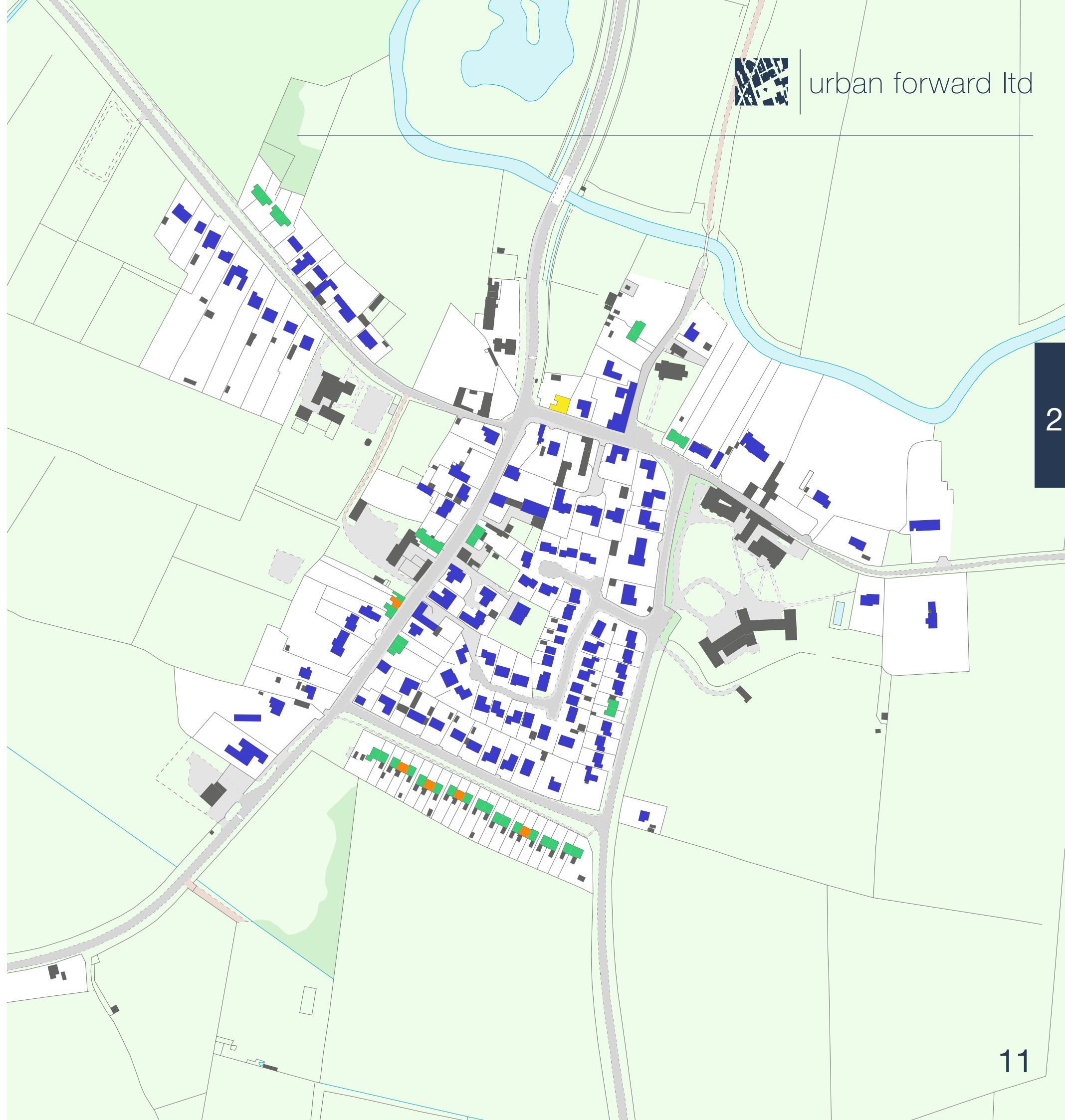
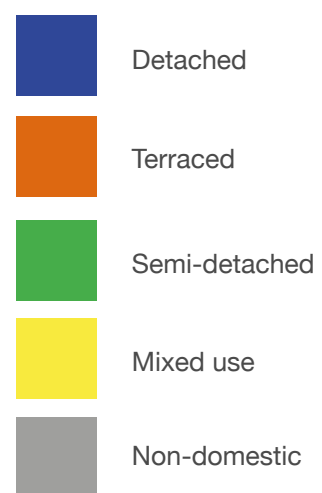
Dwelling types

The housing stock within Mattersey is predominantly detached or semi-detached, although a modest number of terraced dwellings and flats are also present.

Of particular note is how dwelling types are distributed, with similar dwelling types clustered into distinct groups rather than dispersed throughout the village.

Beyond these clusters, most of the development in the village is loose and fragmented, with larger buildings evenly distributed throughout the village.

Fragmented development set within large plots is more common on the as you move away from the village core, helping to soften the impact on the landscape setting beyond.






Heritage

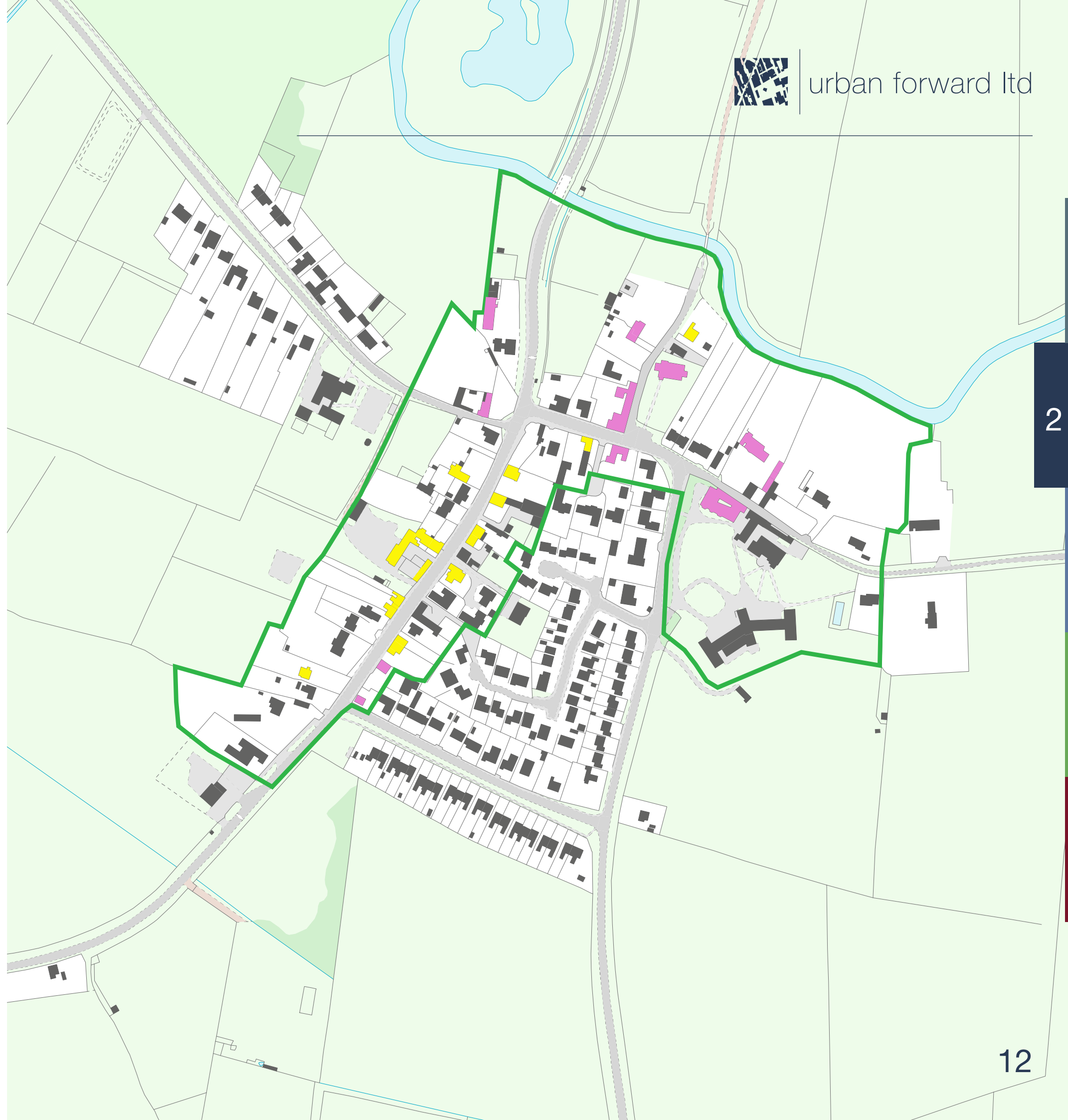
Around a third of Mattersey is designated a conservation area, the extent of which covers the development occurring within the village until around the late 19th century. There are also several listed buildings of considerable quality. The conservation statement for the village describes the area covered:

'The village itself is split between the distinctive historic core along Main Street and Abbey Road with the modern elements along Retford Road and Job Lane. Main Street is predominantly characterised by a mixture of late 18th to early 20th century farmsteads, cottages and houses. A few of these buildings are listed, but many are local interest buildings that have a good level of heritage significance, particularly Laurel's Farm. Other buildings such as the School House, adjacent lodge, and Lyndhurst are good exemplars of Victorian and Edwardian architecture that compliment the older parts of Main Street. Characterful historic brick boundary walls remain throughout Main Street'

- Mattersey Conservation Area: Designation statement June 2010

The qualities that define the conservation area include the way the street scene is largely in tact, with clusters of good buildings along with listed structures etc. Development within conservation areas is subject to additional planning controls, so managing the conservation area is outside the scope of this document. However, the form of the conservation area is a key resource for designers looking to embed local character into their proposals.

-  Positive buildings in conservation area
-  Listed buildings
-  Conservation area boundary





Character appraisal



About this section

This section of the study aims to understand how the various elements that make up settlements combine to form a built environment of different characters. Much is made of the value of settlement character and identity, and a criticism often levelled at new development is that it lacks a distinctive character and does not speak 'of its place', instead looking much like anywhere else. Character and identity informs our experience of different places and helps us to differentiate one from another. The various elements that make up this image of a place are often shared between settlements, but with subtle but important variation. Variation within a settlement helps us to understand how a place is put together, which parts might be of interest for social and economic activities, which for more private living etc and affects the quality of experience when moving between each.

As previously discussed, at the larger scale, settlement character is informed primarily by the landform and the landscape setting in which it sits. Topography, watercourse and other natural elements help define the shape of the settlements, and how settlements interact with these elements is a key 'first step' in developing a distinctive character. How lines of movement relate to underlying natural features is the next 'morphological layer' that defines character. How streets, lanes and linear green elements work with or against the landform changes between places and can generate distinctiveness.

Commonalities in design between places exist at all levels, with shared spatial and detailing relationships giving a feeling of familiarity and 'readability' even for new places. At the scale of plots and buildings this is especially true, but boundary detailing, materials, architectural styles and 'special' spaces all combine to distinguish one place from another, or more commonly, one region of the country from another. Local materials and detailing are especially important in this regard, with vernacular elements usually defined by locally sourced building materials and design flourishes at the building level.

The areas within the village have features which distinguish them from one another and the aim of this section is to distil those to enable new development to maintain and enhance the feeling of character. To do this, each of the main design aspects is analysed to break down its character-forming elements, so that new development can draw inspiration from local types and forms to embed the character of Mattersey into their design approach.

The analysis in this document has been prepared as a result of consultation with the Steering Group, and is set out to cover the following:

- Streets & spaces
- Plots
- Boundaries & landscape
- Buildings & materials

How sensitive an element is to change is also explored, and to do so we use a simple scale to show how each important element analysed is to character:



The higher the score on this scale, the more critical an element is in supporting the overall character and identity of the village.





Streets and Spaces

The main experience of Mattersey is from it's publicly accessible streets. There are only a few open spaces within the village that can be viewed as integral to it's character and the experience of using the village.

The space to the back of the Christian College (1), adjacent to Retford Road to the east is self-contained behind a mature line of trees and as such adds little to the visual character of the village. However, this is an important amenity space that does provide opportunities to link to the wider countryside through long views to the east.

The space to the back of Job Lane and to the east of Ranskill Road (2) is similarly enclosed by vegetation and as such is visually isolated. It is a pleasant space with mature planting and landscape, which works well as a secluded park and garden.

Beyond this, most of what is publicly accessible within Mattersey is streetscape, and here a distinctive pattern emerges; streets tend to have long sight lines, meaning they are straight and allow for a rich visual field to be seen. The exception is the 90's development around Hall View and Dene Close, which offer short, truncated sight lines that are not characteristic of the rest of the village, especially of the more historic parts.

Management:

- The spaces within Mattersey are remote and secluded from the village, pushed to the edges. Should new development occur around these spaces, then overlooking onto them should be encouraged to improve surveillance and feelings of safety. However, secluded parts might still be appropriate. New development or landscape treatments should not obstruct long views where they occur.
- Should new streets be added, then these should allow for long sight lines as is characteristic of the rest of the village.

Sensitivity to change:





Streets and Spaces



Left: Retford Road looking south, showing the hard transition from buildings to the countryside beyond. Note the heavily tree'd street edge to the east, plus the long sight lines along the street.

Right: Soft verges and a simple building line along Job Lane, with the footpath set back from the carriage way. Note the strong edge to the street provided by boundaries and how straight the lane is.



Left: Looking south along Main Street, with good sight-lines, and a well-defined street edge, both of which are characteristic of the older streets within the village.

Right: The view along Main Street / Retford Road towards Abbey Road, with a more urbanised look and feel. Harder edges and more enclosure help to signify this street as part of the village core.





Plots

There are a wide range of plots to be found within Mattersey, and at first this can make the village feel disparate and unordered. However, as you examine the settlement more closely, patterns begin to emerge, with a regularity to the distribution of different plot types that helps to generate distinct character areas within the village.

Plots to the main streets are large, with high setback and a formal rhythm. Buildings face the front, with entrances placed to enliven the street. Although separation between buildings can be quite high in places, the repetition of entrances to driveways helps to bind the street scene together.

As you move to the back streets, plots tighten up, with a closer knit grain to the edge of the street and a higher building to plot ratio. This helps you to orient yourself within the village; if you are on a tighter, more urban street then you are on a street that does not connect to places beyond the village; if you can see large plots with buildings set back away from the street edge, then it is likely that you are on a high order street that connects you to the wider world.

Front gardens are a key unifying feature within the village; most if not all properties have them and they add cohesion to the overall character of Mattersey. Parking is generally on-plot to the side or front, with garages common.

Management:

- Regular plots, with front gardens and on-plot parking should be encouraged. Should it occur, new development should seek to create rhythm within the street scene by repeating plots of a similar type.
- Buildings should, where possible, present an active edge to the street, with front door placed on the edge of the building facing the front boundary. Windows overlooking the frontage should also be encouraged.

Sensitivity to change:



Right: Many buildings are wide-fronted, face the street directly and have a vertical delineation between street and plot, such as this low wall. Garages set within the plot are also common.



Right: Large front gardens are commonplace, although not all properties have them. Windows and doors facing the street help provide an active edge to the public spaces between buildings.



Right: The more close-knit development within the village still allows for front gardens and a repetition of plot types as you move along the street. The repetition helps to establish an overall character for the street.





Boundaries and landscape

Boundary treatments and landscaping can be extremely important features for defining a place's character, often being the glue that holds different development types within an area together. For Mattersey, there isn't the consistency often found in more cohesive villages, but some commonalities do exist.

Almost all plots have a vertical delineation for the boundary. For the main streets near to the centre of the village, low walls are the most common treatment, with large hedges behind defining the main approaches to the village. Garden trees help to add more greenery to the street, which reinforces the role of front gardens in helping to give Mattersey it's character.

As you move to the back streets, many of them feature low walls, although some clipped monoculture hedging can also be found. Where a street has a consistent boundary treatment, this helps to give it character, which is a important lesson that could influence future development; a simple low boundary treatment helps to hide parked cars and bins, and adds enclosure to the street edge.

Management:

- Vertically delineated boundaries of either low walls in red brick or hedges help define the character of the village. Should new development occur, then this kind of design feature should be employed to help it fit the local character.
- Existing boundary treatments should be maintained, and the removal of walls and hedges to allow for more parking should, where possible, be resisted.

Sensitivity to change:



Right: Hedging features as the boundary treatment to many of the properties, which helps green the street and define the plot.



Right: Low walls with greenery behind are also common, either in red brick or stone. Stone is less common, but there is a local stone that could feature in future development.



Right: On newer development, low monoculture hedges are more common, which helps define the street.





Buildings and materials

An first glance, there appears to be a high degree of variation within Mattersey in terms of building styles and materials. Closer analysis reveals that there is actually a narrow range of materials and forms, but that it is the distribution that creates a feeling of variety.

The use of red brick with a multi-grained texture is reflective of the local vernacular of the wider area, which links to its industrial heritage. Render buildings in light colours feature on most of the historic streets. Windows tend to have a vertical emphasis, window bars, and white frames. Some windows are top-hung.

Complex brick bonds in either Flemish or English garden help to create grain and detailing when viewing buildings up close, and banding, window headers and eaves detailing also help to enliven brick buildings.

Common throughout the village and an element that gives it a distinctive characteristic is the use of red pantiles for the roofs. This makes for an element of cohesion across the various parts of the village, helping them to work together. Hipped or gabled roofs are common, with gables often arranged parallel to the street edge.

Management:

- A simple palette of materials should be maintained for the village, with brick and render the predominant finishes. Brick detailing should be utilised to add visual interest and richness. Simple stretcher bond should be avoided, as should wire-cut bricks or buff brick.
- Red pantile roofs in clay with either hipped or gable-ended designs are encouraged.
- Windows with a vertical emphasis are encouraged, and window bars should be included.

Sensitivity to change:



Right: The main material used for buildings is brick, usually read or multi-grained and with banding and coursing details to add interest.



Right: Rendered buildings line the main streets, mixed in with the brick, which helps to give a feeling of variety across the village.



Right: On newer development, multi-grained red brick helps to link it back to the local vernacular. Here, red pantile roofs would have further helped express the village character.





Section 3: Mattersey Thorpe





Structure and growth



About this section

This section of the study aims to understand how the general character and identity of Mattersey Thorpe is formed. To do this, we examine how the village relates to its topography, how the extent of the built up area can be defined, and what pattern the village has formed.

We then examine how the village has changed over time, and chart the evolution of the built environment of Mattersey Thorpe to see what lessons earlier growth has for the future.

We map the type and distribution of dwellings throughout the village, and then examine how dwellings sit in relation to the main lines of movement in the area. Finally, we look at heritage assets within the village.

This section is arranged as follows:

- Existing built up area.
- Settlement pattern.
- Change over time.
- Evolution of the village.
- Dwelling types.
- Heritage.





Existing built up area

Mattersey Thorpe is essentially two distinct places; the old village to Thorpe Road road and the new village off Broomfield Lane. The older parts of the village essentially nucleated around the junction between Breck Lane and Thorpe Road, with development confined to the edge of the street.

The newer village extends up the slopes to the north, creating an internal arrangement of streets to make an estate. Farm buildings sit to the edge of the village, but appear visually and spatially separate from the rest of the area.

Most of the village is bound within the street system, so that the countryside beyond is addressed by building fronts. This is a distinctive feature of the village, and offers long views out from the settlement. The older part of Mattersey Thorpe is more traditionally laid out, with gardens providing the transition to the countryside.

Management:

- The envelope of the built environment is tightly enclosed by streets, and development generally faces out onto the countryside. This could be a useful device for the new development, should it occur.

Right: Mattersey Thorpe's existing built up area in relation to the wider countryside.



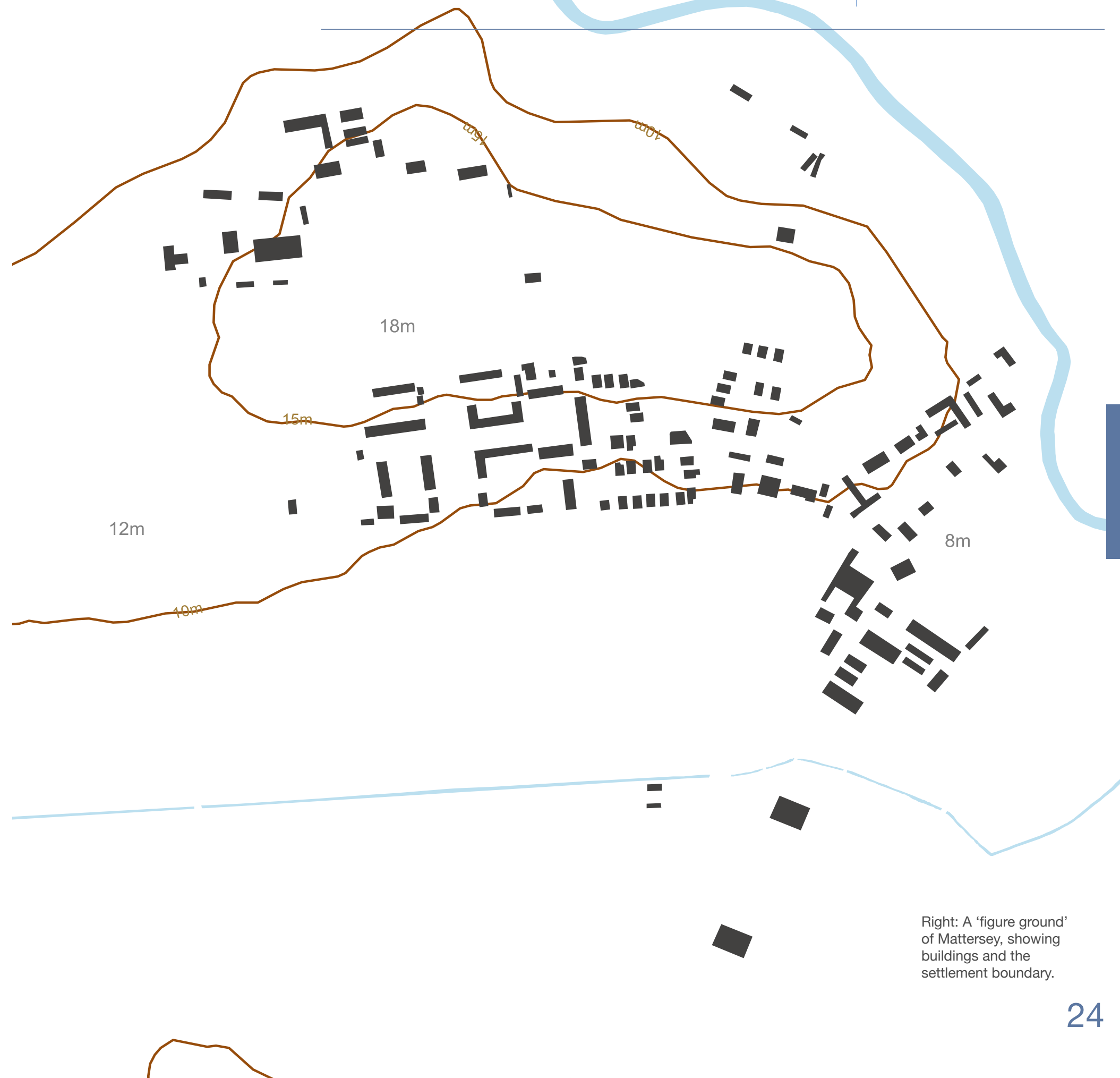


Settlement pattern

Historic Mattersey Thorpe, like Mattersey, is a predominately nucleated settlement, clustering around the junction between Thorpe Road and Breck Lane. The newer additions to the village are formed into an estate-type pattern, with an internal street system serving only dwellings within the estate.

There is a local high point where the playing fields and open spaces are located, and the newer parts of the village run up the slope to this plateau. Streets in the area either run along the slope or directly up the slope, giving a logic to the underlying structure. This does, however, cause issues with level changes (discussed later). Development directly atop the plateau is restricted, with buildings sitting away from the high ground.

The figure ground diagram (right) shows that most streets are well 'constituted' by buildings; that is, the lines of the streets are clearly discernible from how the buildings define their edges and buildings present their fronts to the public space within the street. In some instances, the relationship between streets and buildings breaks down, indicative of public access to spaces that should be private. This is an important lesson for new development should it occur; building should have a discernible relationship with their street and spaces to the backs of buildings or into the centre of development blocks should be private.



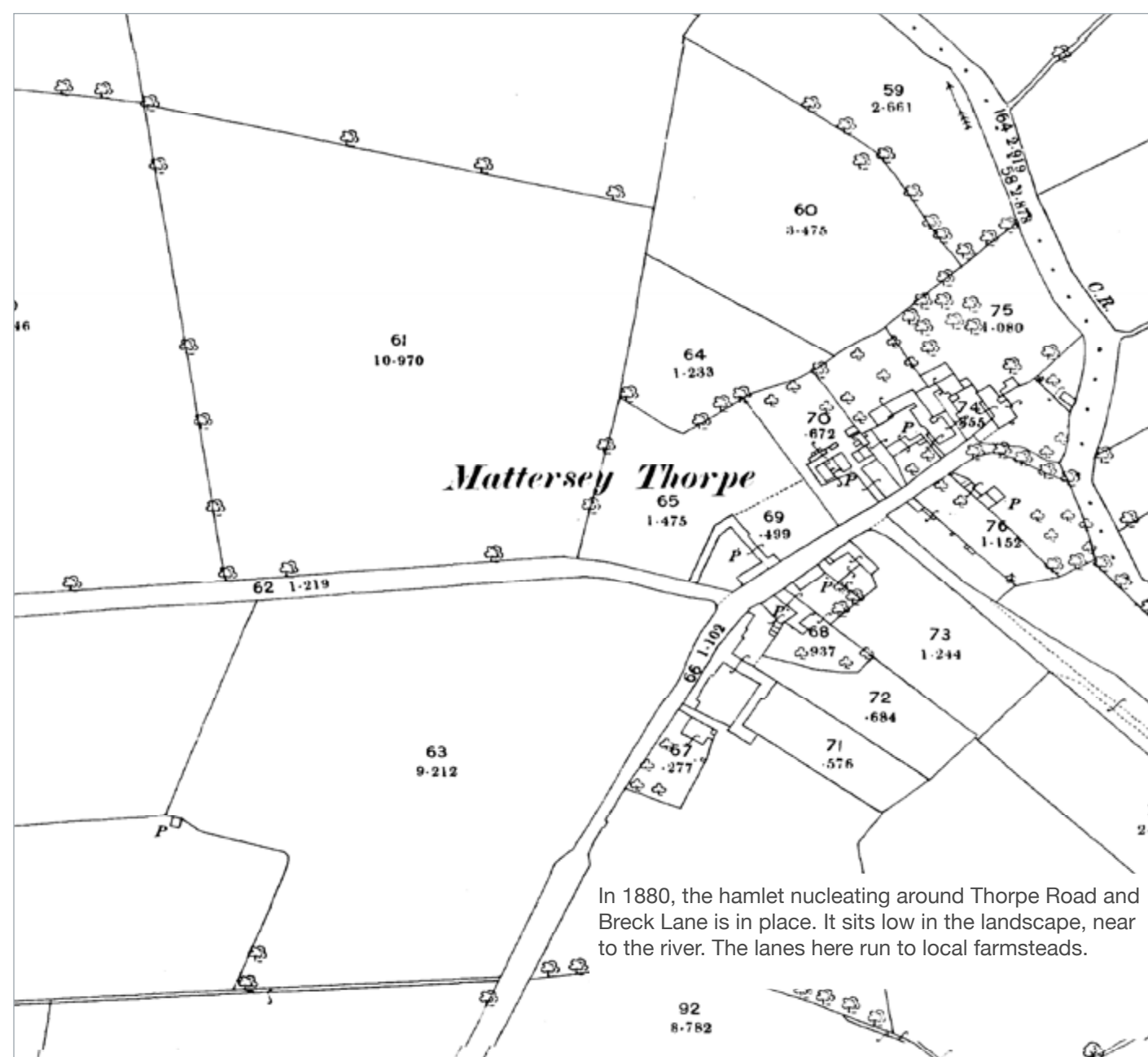
Right: A 'figure ground' of Mattersey, showing buildings and the settlement boundary.

Change over time

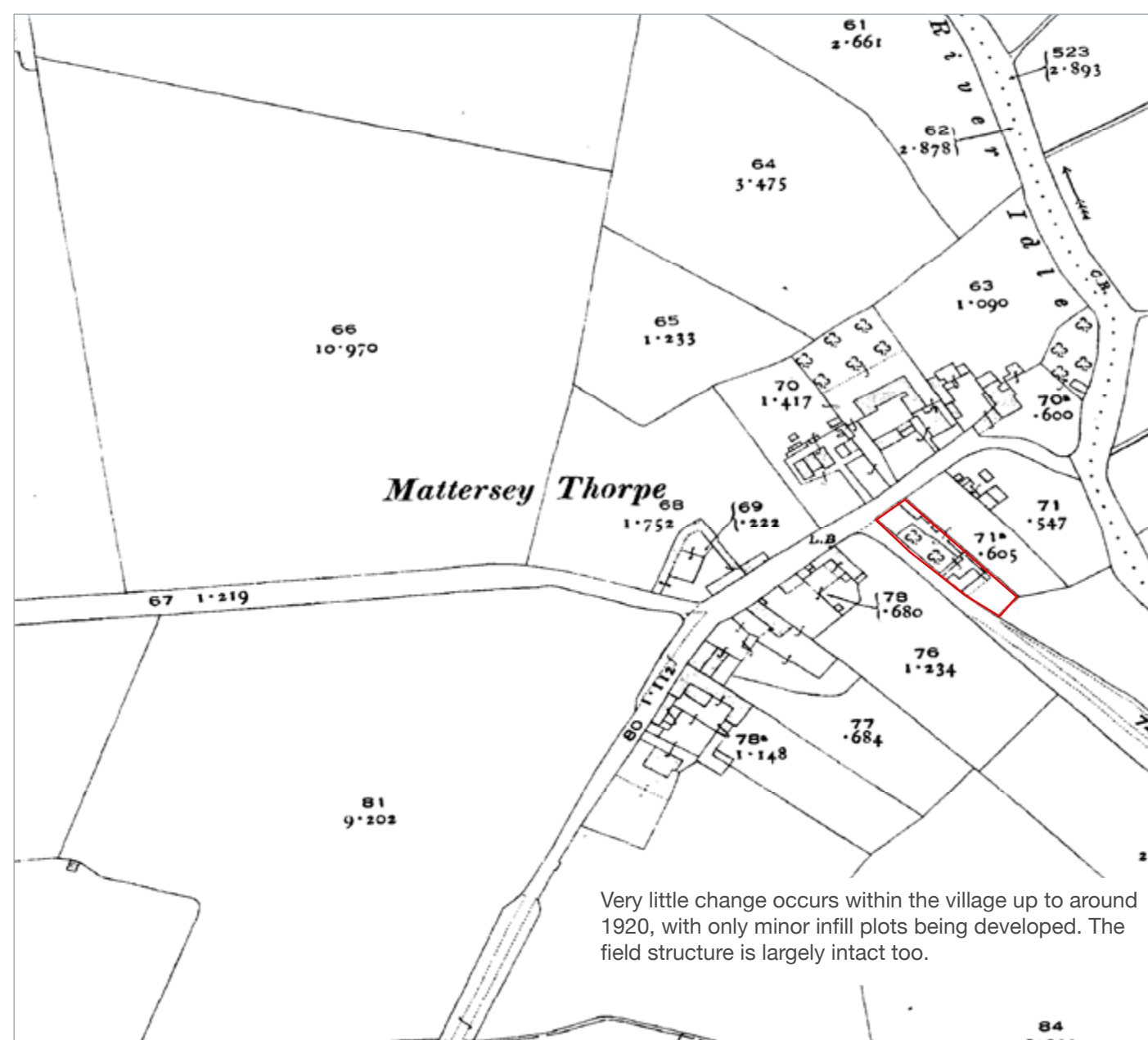
Mattersey Thorpe is formed by an historic hamlet and farmstead buildings, with the addition of significant number of estate housing. Unlike many places, including Mattersey, it's growth is not incremental; large sections of the village are added in short development periods.

The following sequence of plans show how Mattersey Thorpe has grown over time, where new development has occurred and how the shape of the settlement has evolved as new buildings have been added to the village.

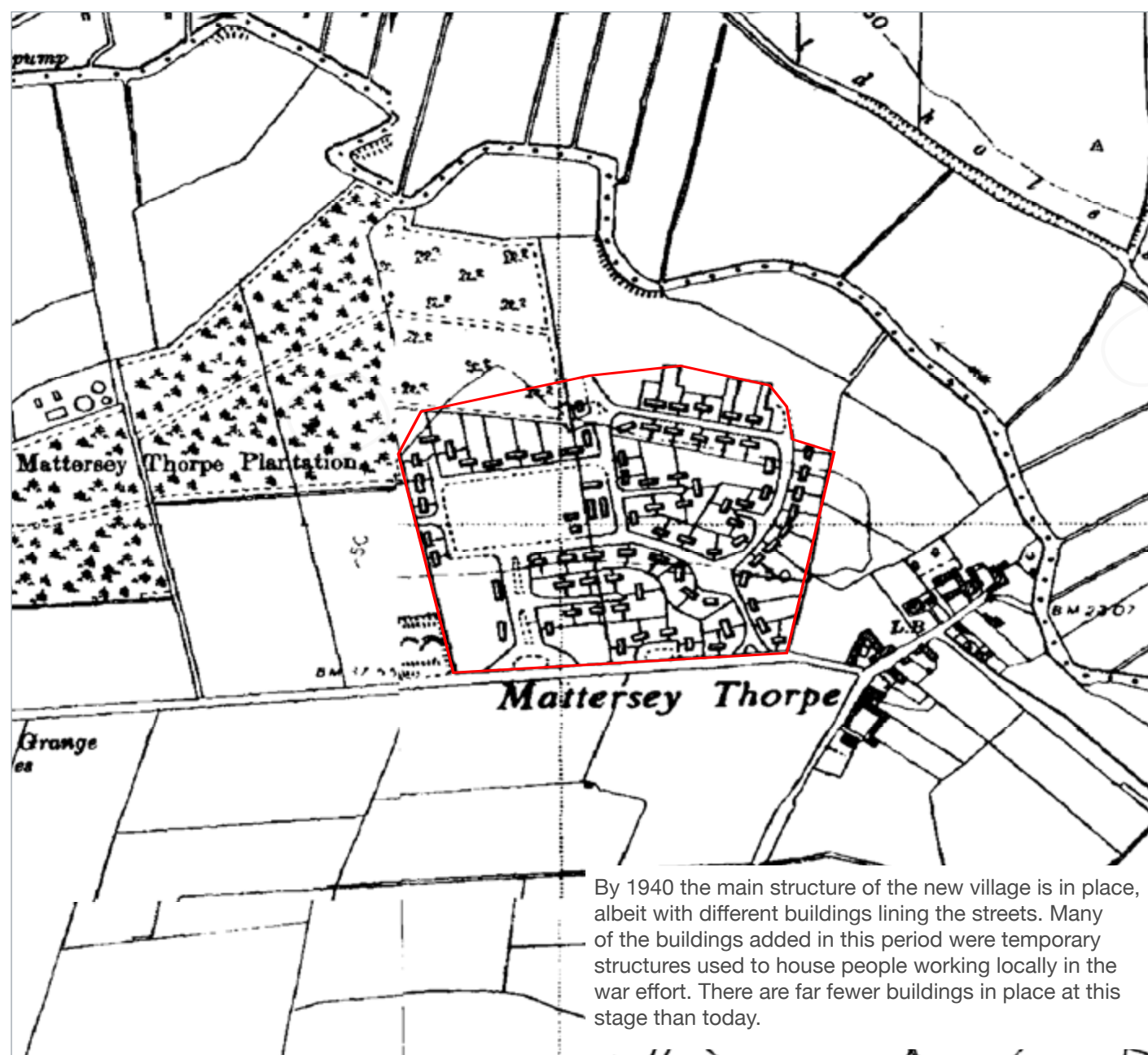
1880 plan



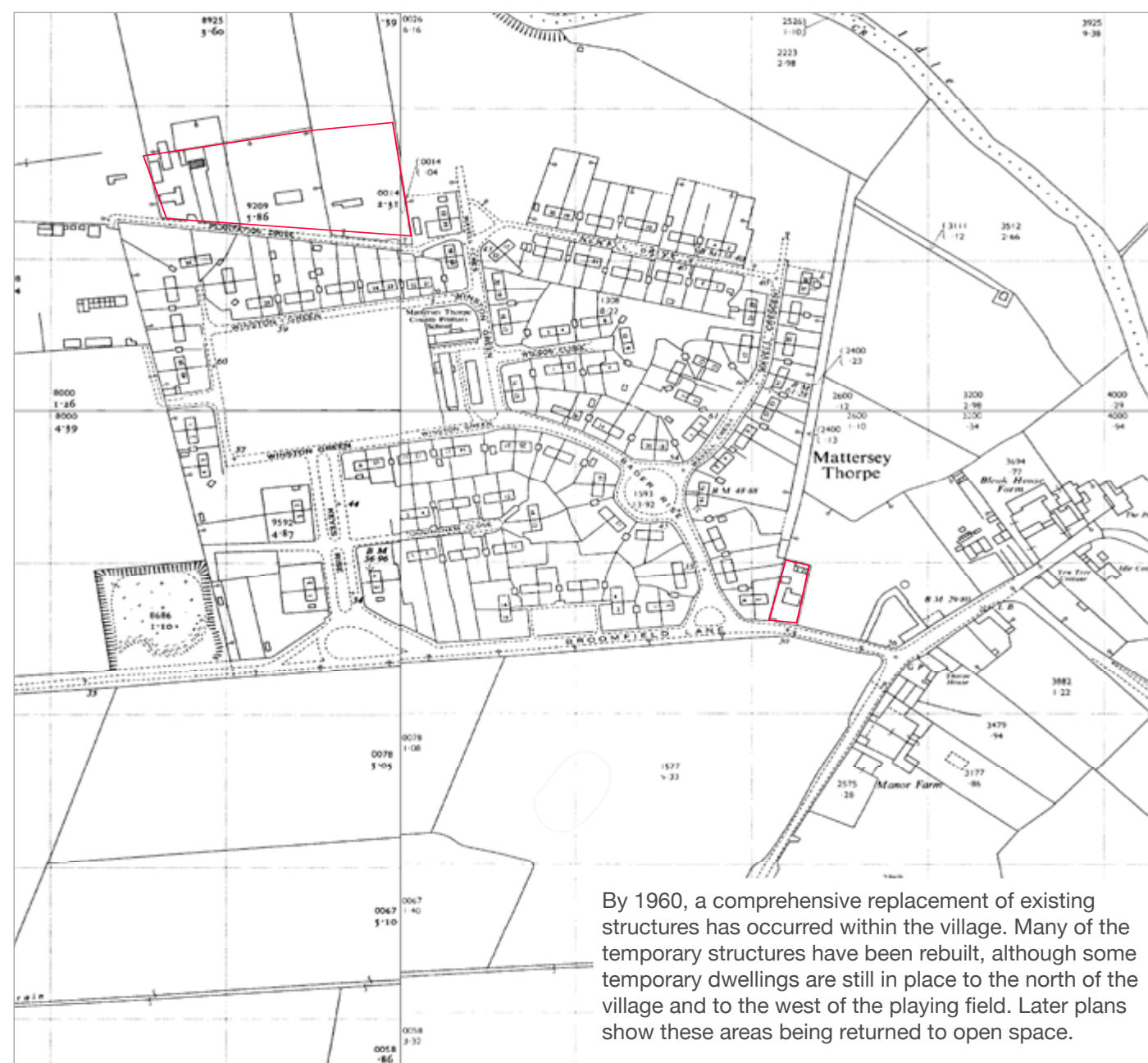
1920 plan



1940 plan



1960 plan





Evolution of the village

Mattersey Thorpe shows a very clear evolution, defined by large additions and, unusually, removals, in short periods of time. This gives rise to cohesive development styles (discussed later) as many neighbouring properties are all constructed at the same time and by the same developer.

The early village sits low, and is visually similar to the historic development in Mattersey. The temporary housing that was built mid-century evolved to become the main 50's and 60's housing estate, with many of the temporary structures to the north removed and not replaced.

Key:

- 1880
- 1940
- 1960 onwards

Right: The village growing over time, with the main eras of development highlighted.

Note that within these areas, many of the buildings have been replaced with newer designs, but the street system remains largely intact.



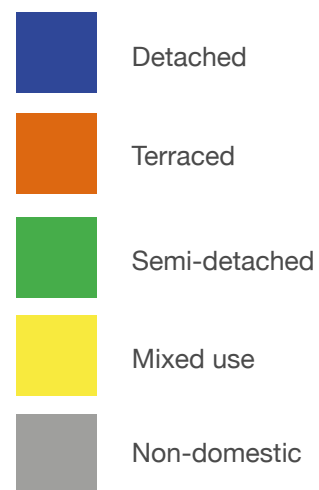


Dwelling types

Historic Mattersey Thorpe is made up of detached dwellings, typical of farmstead-type buildings set in large plots. Likewise, a cluster of detached bungalows can be found around Bader Rise.

As you move to the west, we see large numbers of terraced and semi-detached dwellings grouped together, which is unusual for the wider area, where most of the dwelling stock is detached.

In this way, Mattersey Thorpe injects much-needed choice into the housing market, but grouping so many similar households together could be socially isolating and create management issues.



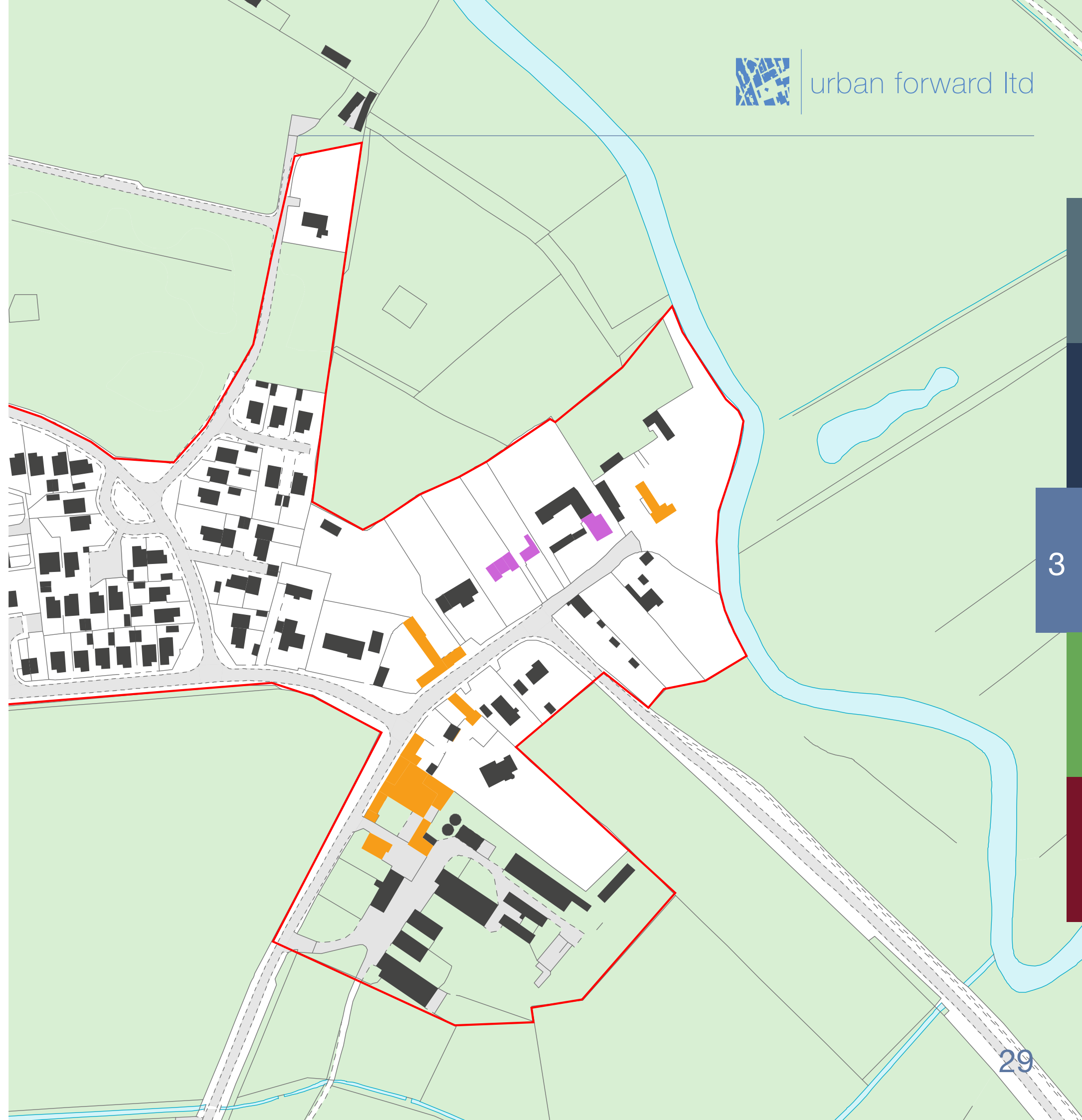


Heritage

Unlike Mattersey, Mattersey Thorpe does not have a conservation area. However, there are many fine buildings within the lower village, some of which are listed.

The buildings are clustered in a tight group, giving this part of the village a distinctive character similar to that of the Mattersey conservation area.

The top part of the village sits visually apart from the heritage-rich area of the village and is not overly influenced by the character of its built form. However, careful interpretation of local forms and materials could bring the best of the heritage character to newer development in the area, and new development should seek to demonstrate how it references not just Mattersey Thorpe in general, but the highest quality parts of the village.





Character appraisal



About this section

As with Mattersey, this section examines the character of Mattersey Thorpe to establish which aspects of its design are important to how the place is formed and which can influence future development should it occur within the area.

Mattersey Thorpe is very different from Mattersey in how it grew, with essentially two distinct character areas within the village; the old village around Thorpe Road and Breck Lane to the south and the new village to the north of Broomfield Lane.

For this analysis, we focus primarily on the new village, as many of the design features in the more historic parts of the village fit with the character of Mattersey's earlier buildings and streets and the conservation area within the village.

The analysis in this document has been prepared as a result of consultation with the Steering Group, and is set out to cover the following:

- Streets & spaces
- Plots
- Boundaries & landscape
- Buildings & materials

How sensitive an element is to change is also explored, and to do so we use a simple scale to show how each important element analysed is to character:



The higher the score on this scale, the more critical an element is in supporting the overall character and identity of the village.



Streets and Spaces

Unlike Mattersey, the open spaces within Mattersey Thorpe are integral to the character of the village. The large open spaces to the north of the village provide formal play (1) and something akin to a village green (2). Both of these spaces are unusually large given the size of the village, and in the first instance new development, should it occur, should seek to support these existing spaces by being well-connect to them. It may also be possible to seek financial contributions towards improving the facilities within these spaces rather than requesting the provision of new spaces. The football hut in particular (3) is in need of replacement, and new development could help support that objective. However, the character of these areas and the development at their edge is a useful precedent should new development be added to the area that provides more open space. The buildings to the south along Winston Green provide a positive relationship to the open space, fronting it with an active edge and allowing for good natural surveillance. A criticism often levelled at development from this era is that the open spaces provided are not well-overlooked, but the spaces in Mattersey Thorpe avoid this issue.

The streets are 'estate' style, with little in the way of trees and other character-forming elements. They are typical of their time, and new approaches to street design have been developed since that make for more friendly and inviting streets. Manual for Streets should be consulted on how to design new streets in the area and on how to retrofit existing streets to improve the user experience.

Management:

- The positive relationship with development to the edge of these spaces should be maintained, and any new development to the edges should seek to address the spaces in a way that increases overlooking and natural surveillance.
- In the first instance, new development should support these large, likely under-used existing spaces rather than providing new ones. This support could include financial contributions to add facilities and play equipment or renovate existing facilities such as the football hut.
- Streets to be designed to MfS standards, including retrofitting existing streets to make them more user-friendly.

Sensitivity to change:



Streets and Spaces



Left: Some of the spaces within Mattersey Thorpe are low quality and poorly integrated. New development should not seek to replicate spaces such as this.

Right: The median space along Keyes Rise is an interesting concept that could be adapted to work well. Adding trees, space for play and parking into this area could enliven this street.



Left: The main greens adjacent to Winston Green and Bader Rise offer formal and informal play, good quality landscaping and positively addressed edges. More could be done to promote and support these spaces, including replacing the football hut.

Right: Challenging topography means that level differences are an issue. Level changes should be dealt with within the block rather than within publicly accessible spaces.





Plots

Unlike Mattersey, Mattersey Thorpe has a relatively narrow range of plot types. Within the newer part of the village, plots are narrow, with the long edge to the street and have shorter front and rear gardens than those found within Mattersey. In the older part, the more loose and informal arrangements that typify plots in the more historic parts of Mattersey are found, with buildings set further back in more generous plots.

The arrangement of plots within the village is very regular, with similar plots to be found along the whole length of most of the streets. This clustering of plot types helps to develop a rhythm along the street, and may be a useful device for future development to emulate. Dealing with the topography of the area is a key challenge, with much of the change in levels dealt with through retaining structures. Should new development have similar issues to address, then this should be done along the back edge of the plot, away from public view.

For Mattersey Thorpe, some of the parking is dealt with in garage courtyards. Ubiquitous in early development periods, this approach is not supported by best practice now and should be avoided in new development. On-plot parking to the front or sides of properties is encouraged, supported by integrated on-street parking where possible.

Management:

- Regular plots, with front gardens and on-plot parking should be encouraged. Should it occur, new development should seek to create rhythm within the street scene by repeating plots of a similar type.
- Buildings should, where possible, present an active edge to the street, with front door places on the edge of the building facing the front boundary. Windows overlooking the frontage should also be encouraged.
- Level differences should be dealt with along the back edge of the plot, away from publicly accessible spaces so that unsightly retaining walls are not visible from the street.

Sensitivity to change: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Right: Levels are an issue within the village, and cause some uncomfortable relationships between streets and buildings.



Right: Regular plots clustered by type are common, and help develop a rhythm along the street. Front gardens are commonplace and an important feature.



Right: Some of the development within the village has poorly defined plot edges, and the relationship with the main street is not positive. New development should address the street and define the edge of the plot.





Boundaries and landscape

The boundary treatments within Mattersey Thorpe are varied, but most properties have a vertical delineation to the front boundary either by a low hedge or fence. The quality of these boundary treatments, and the consistency of them within the street scene is also varied, with the best streets are defined by a single treatment executed along their length. This consistency helps establish a character for the street. Where boundaries are inconsistent, this makes the street scene appear untidy and diminishes the feeling of character.

Some of the development is open-fronted, with no delineation of public and private space at the boundary edge. This treatment is especially low quality and should be avoided in future.

A program to install new, high-quality boundary treatments across the village should be explored, as this would add a considerable amount of quality to Mattersey Thorpe without incurring huge costs. Street trees are largely absent from Mattersey Thorpe. Adding trees to the area would add a great deal in terms of visual interest and amenity.

Management:

- Vertically delineated boundaries of either fences, low walls or hedges exist in the village, and the hedges and walls are the best examples. New development should establish a strong boundary treatment to the plot edge.
- Existing boundary treatments should be maintained, and the removal of walls and hedges to allow for more parking should, where possible, be resisted. A program to implement a cohesive boundary treatment across the village should be explored.
- Planting street trees would do much to improve the visual amenity of the area and should be explored.
- Open frontages should be avoided.

Sensitivity to change:



Right: Low hedges and small garden trees add much-needed greenery to the street scene, softening the view and improving the feeling of quality.



Right: The treatment here creates a clear edge to the street, but inconsistent design means that the street can appear fussy and untidy. Retrofitting a single treatment would add a great deal in terms of quality and identity.



Right: Open frontages or areas where boundaries have been removed entirely are of especially low quality. New development should avoid this kind of approach.





Buildings and materials

Both the old part of the village and the new addition use a very consistent approach to building design and detailing, although they differ a great deal from each other. The older part of the village uses the multi-grain red brick and red clay pantile found in historic Mattersey, and as such has a vernacular feel to its design.

The newer parts of the village use a lighter, more engineered brick and concrete roof tiles, both of which are out of character for this part of the country and are more closely associated with the era of house building that saw the creation of this estate. Some tile hanging is also used. The roof forms are generally simple, with gables arranged perpendicular to the street. In some places, more complex roofs are used, but there is no predominant form for the village. Overall, the character of the area is nondescript and generic, typical of its time.

However, this lack of a strong character offers the opportunity for new development to inject something new into the area. The simple forms and styles of the existing buildings, the narrow palette of materials, and the unfussy detailing could translate well to more contemporary architecture.

Management:

- A simple palette of materials should be maintained for the village, but the materials chosen should reference the locality.
- Simple, plain buildings that are well-executed could be a good basis for adding new dwellings to the village.
- Clusters of similar buildings are encouraged so that a rhythm to the street scene is created.

Sensitivity to change:



Right: Buildings are simple, with a light red brick and concrete roof tiles. Some tile-hanging present.



Right: Similar buildings tend to be clustered, with common detailing and consistent building lines etc.



Right: Some of the more recent additions to the village are richer in detail, although they too do not reference the local vernacular appreciably.





Section 4: Possible development sites



Preferred sites

There is a pressure on both Mattersey and Mattersey Thorpe to accommodate new housing to help the District Council meet its housing targets. The sites shown here are the preferred sites as established through consultation with the community, selected from a wider range of sites put forward as part of the Bassetlaw District Council's site allocations program. A full breakdown of the selection criteria can be found in the consultation documentation that supports the main Neighbourhood Development Plan.

If Mattersey and Mattersey Thorpe are to grow, then the growth needs to be sustainable, support the social and economic function of the place, and integrate well with the existing built environment. The following section looks at each site in turn, and sets out the broad development principles that, should a site be developed, are to be followed.

The advice here is not exhaustive and the sites have not been designed in detail, and designers seeking to create proposals for these sites should demonstrate how their work builds on the advice in this Guide and meets the specific site requirements shown here.

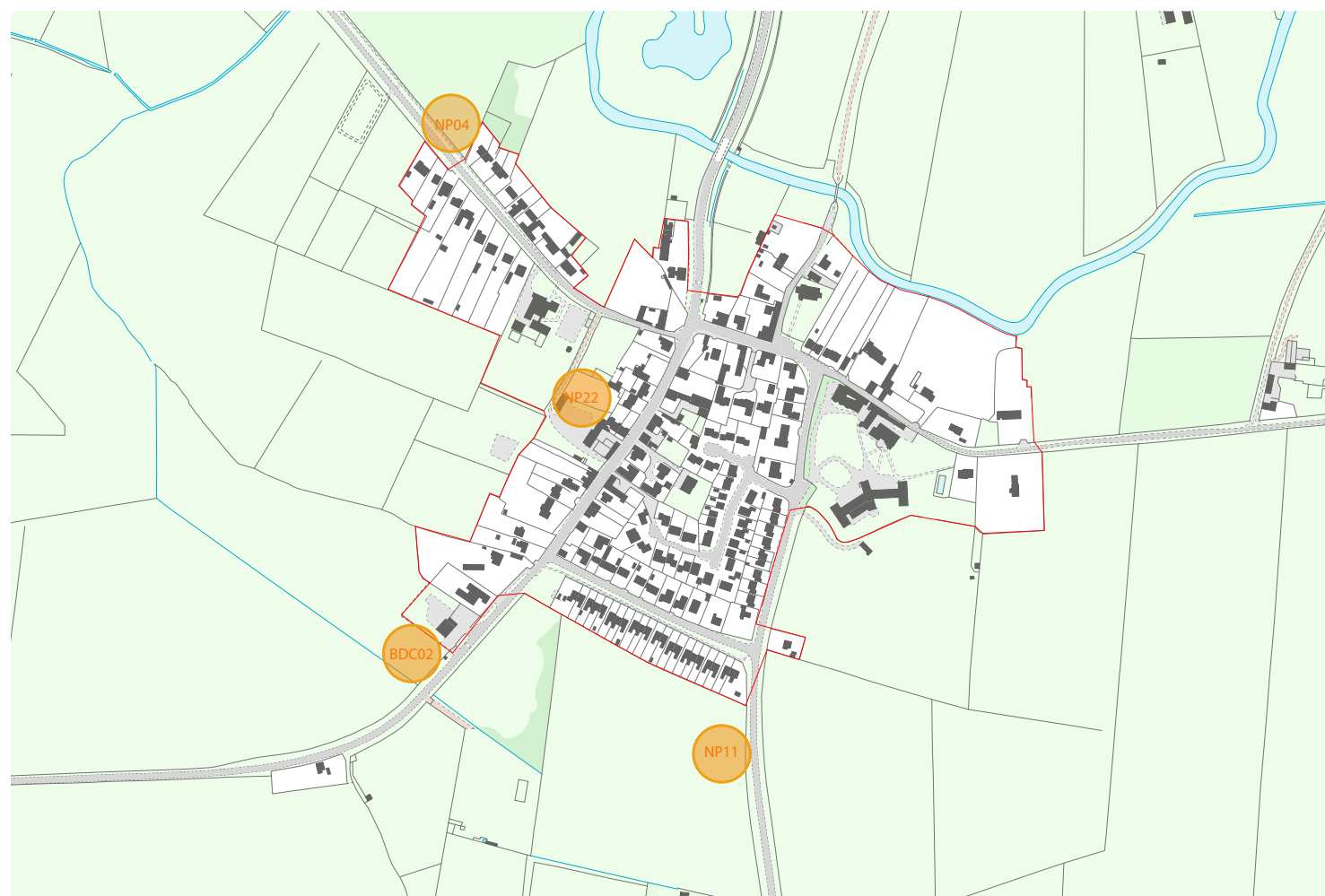
The sites in Mattersey are:

- NP04: Land to the north of Thorpe Road
- NP22: Land at the rear of Laurels Farm, Main Street
- BDC02: Land west of Main Street
- NP11: Land West of Retford Road

In Mattersey Thorpe, the sites are:

- NP18: Land North of Newall Drive
- NP14: Land East of Breck Lane
- NP23: Land at the rear of Gilbert's Croft, Breck Lane

Mattersey:



Mattersey Thorpe:



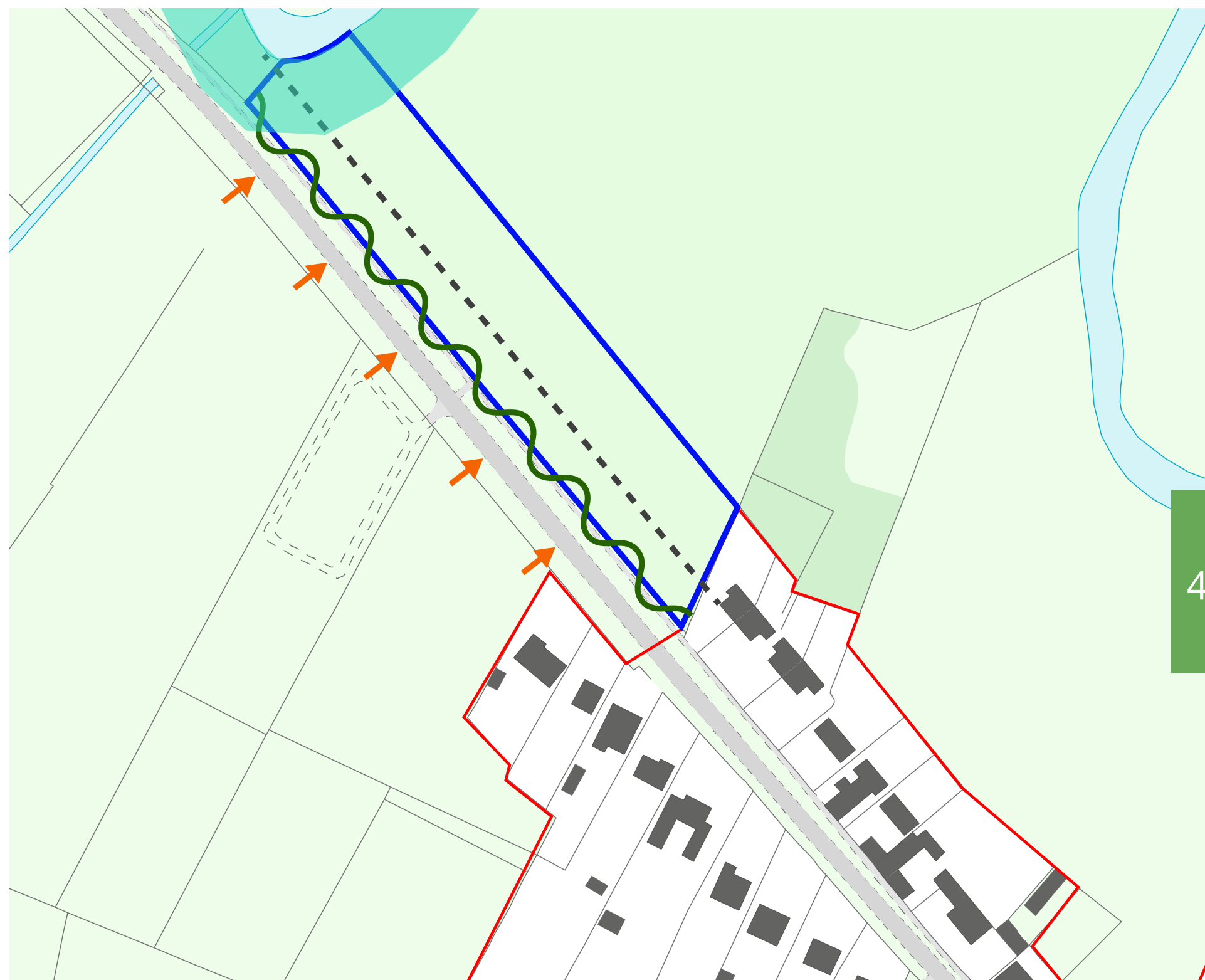
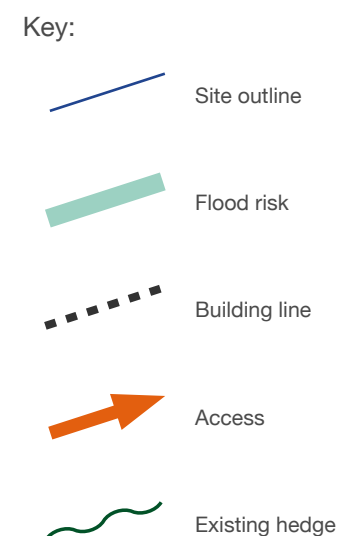


NP04: Land to the north of Thorpe Road, Mattersey

The land to the north of Thorpe Road offers the opportunity to add a modest number of new homes to the village. There is a risk that developing here begins to break the settlement pattern of Mattersey, and that the two villages in the plan area begin to coalesce.

Careful management of the landscape and boundary treatments, and sufficient attention to detail could make this a suitable transition zone to the open countryside, and the position of the river and associated ditch could form a natural break between here and Mattersey Thorpe.

Site description:	Linear site sitting to the north of Thorpe Road, adjacent to the established building line along this main street.
Access and connections:	Direct frontage access from Thorpe Road to on-plot parking, possibly in garages to the side or rear of plot.
Landscape:	Existing mature hedgerow along Thorpe Road, which could be retained and re-purposed as a boundary treatment with breaks in it for access to individual plots and drives.
Built form and materials:	Edge of village location that leads to open countryside, so 1.5 storey development with accommodation in the roofscape appropriate. Local red brick and red pantile roofs. Existing building line to be respected.
Other considerations:	Flooding from adjacent watercourse needs to be managed. Footpath improvements into the village should be explored.



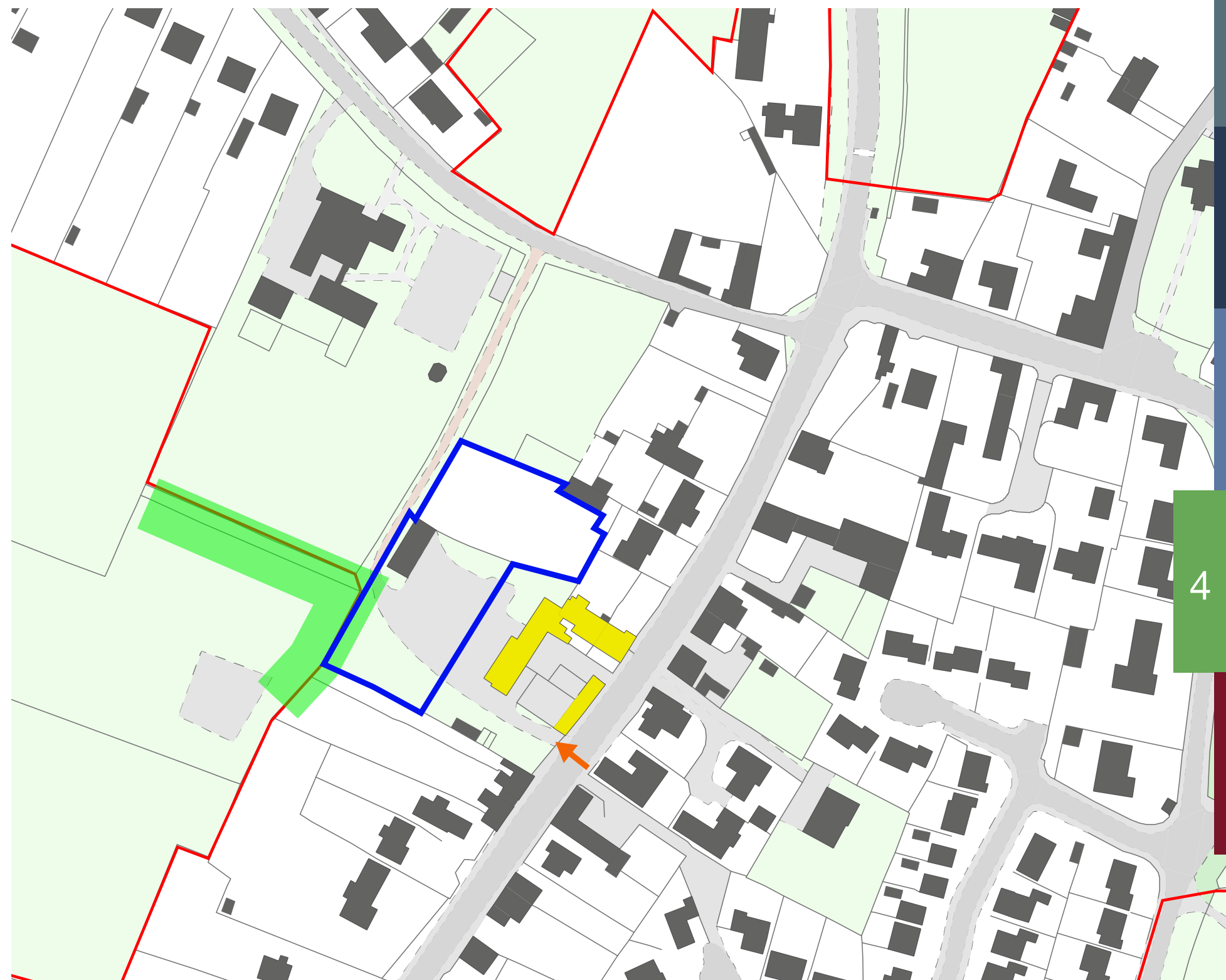
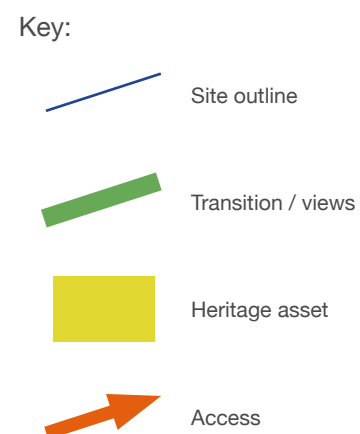


NP22: Land at the rear of Laurels Farm, Main Street, Mattersey

The land at the rear of Laurel's Farm, just to the west of Main Street has the potential to deliver a small, bespoke 'courtyard' development, with a shared access from Main Street.

The location at the edge of the settlement means that the landscape treatment and building massing needs to manage the transition from built form to open countryside. Making the new buildings appear as outbuildings to a farmstead is likely to be the most appropriate approach.

Site description:	Backland site to the west of Main Street, within Mattersey's conservation area.
Access and connections:	Direct frontage access from Main Street, likely to a courtyard-type development.
Landscape:	Some mature trees on site. Also a need to manage the transition to open countryside to the west.
Built form and materials:	Within the conservation area, so should respect the qualities of brick and pantile vernacular cottages and farmsteads, whilst also respecting the setting of the heritage asset to the east of the site.
Other considerations:	Long views onto the site from the west are likely. Potential for footpath access through to Thorpe Road should be explored.



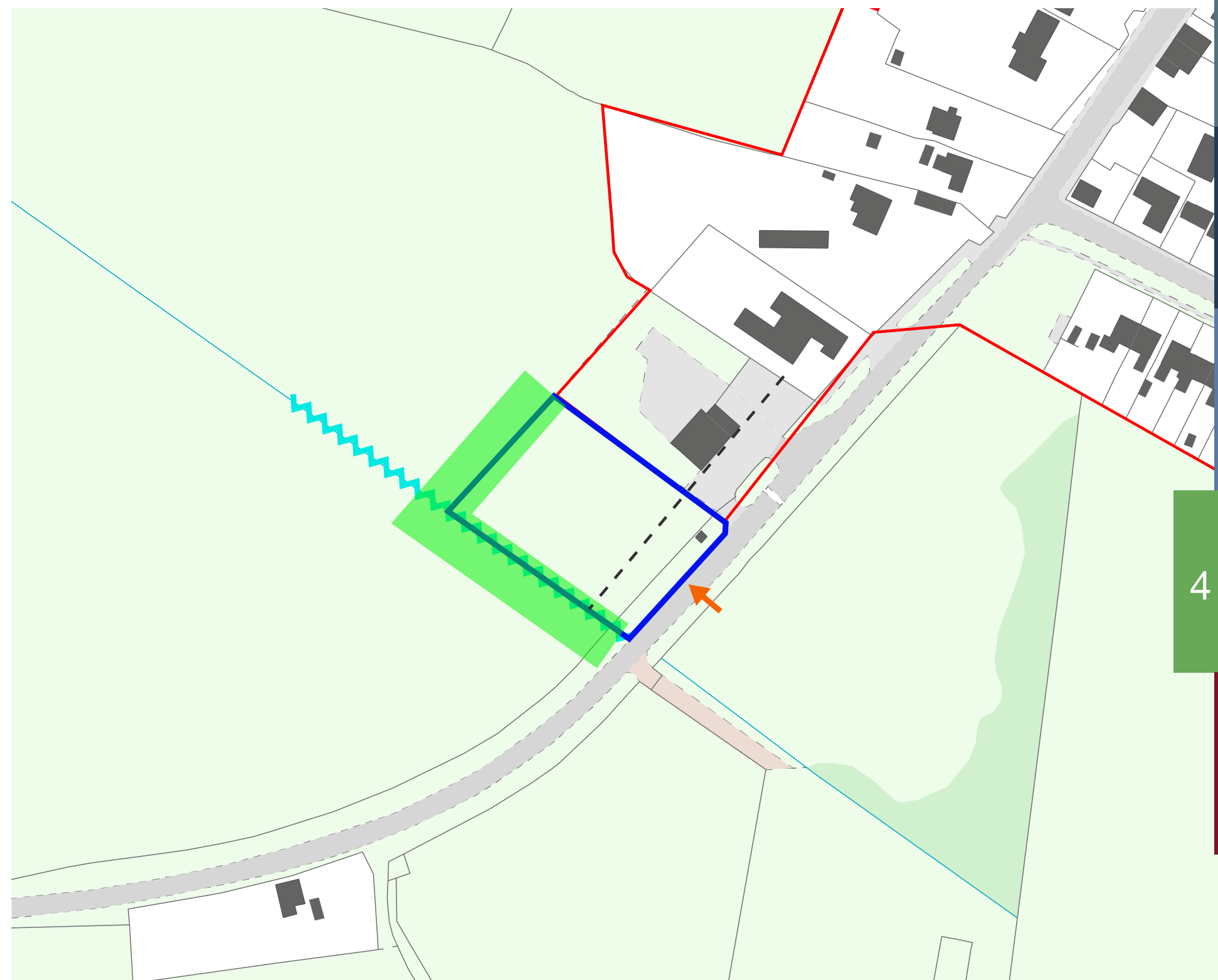
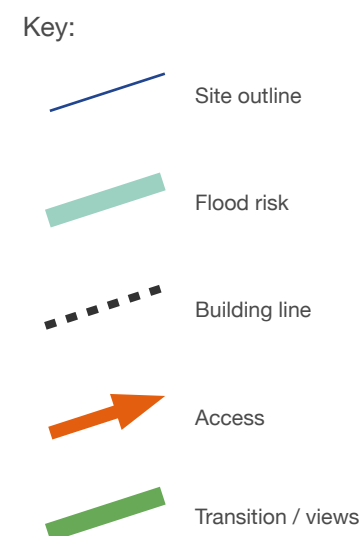


BDC02: Land west of Main Street, Mattersey

The site to the west of Main Street sits outside the established village envelope, but is opposite the Millennium Green, so feels integrated into the settlement. The ditch along the edge of the site offers a good natural break between the village and the open countryside, so could be an appropriate place to grow up to.

It has scope for limited development with a strong frontage, good rear gardens and a landscape treatment that helps soften long views onto it from the north and west. The type of development here could be more mixed than in other places in the village. A shop or cafe, live / work units or commercial units could work in the location.

Site description:	Linear infill site beyond the established boundary of Mattersey, next to commercial property and opposite the Millennium Green.
Access and connections:	Direct frontage access from Main Street / Ranskill Road to on-plot parking, possibly in garages to the side or rear of plot.
Landscape:	Existing drainage ditch to the west of the site plus a small field hedge to the frontage. Mature tree to eastern boundary.
Built form and materials:	Edge of village location that leads to open countryside, so 1.5 storey development with accommodation in the roofspace appropriate. Local red brick and red pantile roofs. Existing building line to be respected.
Other considerations:	Flooding from adjacent watercourse needs to be managed. Footpath improvements into the village should be explored. Crossing to the Millennium Green should be explored.



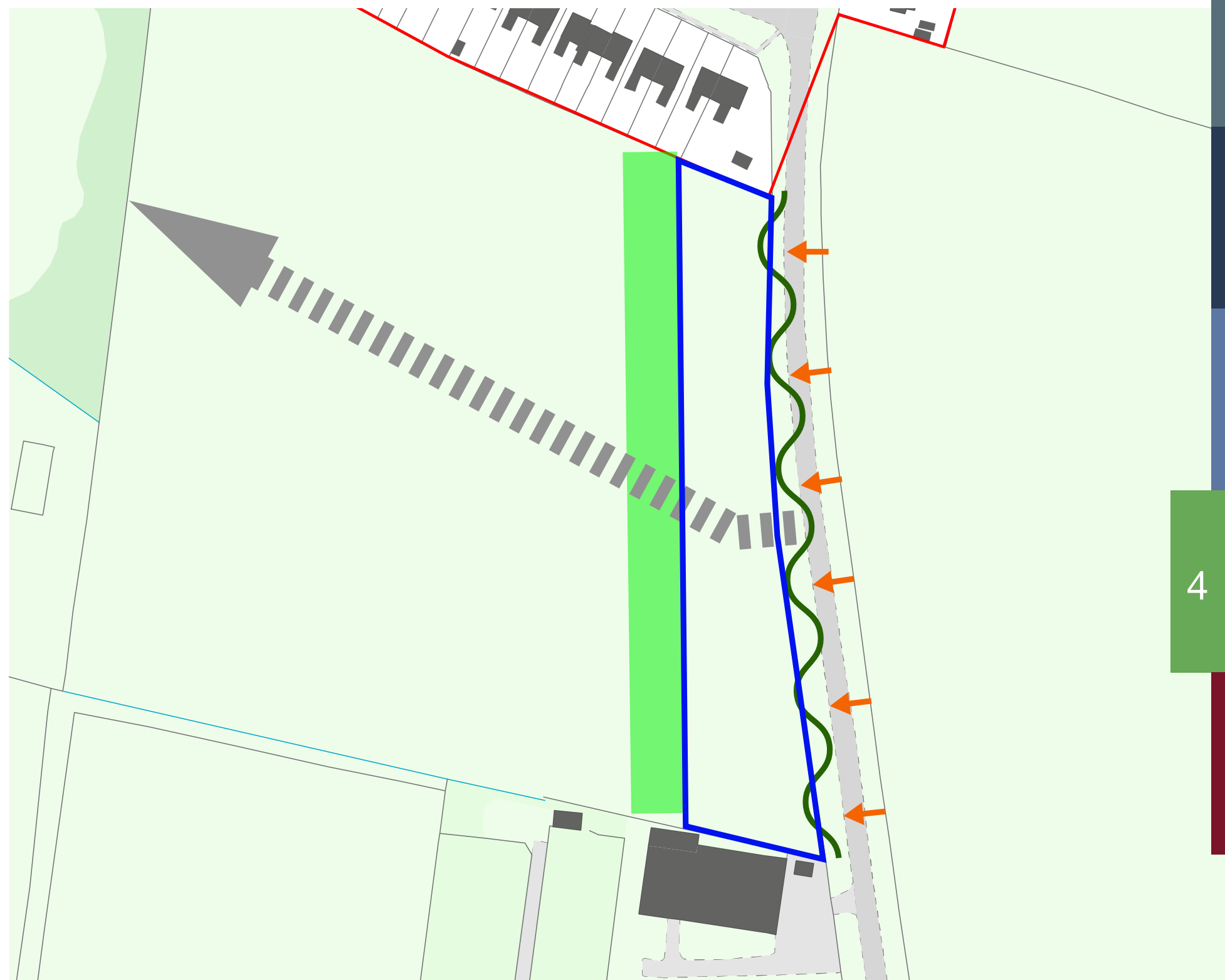
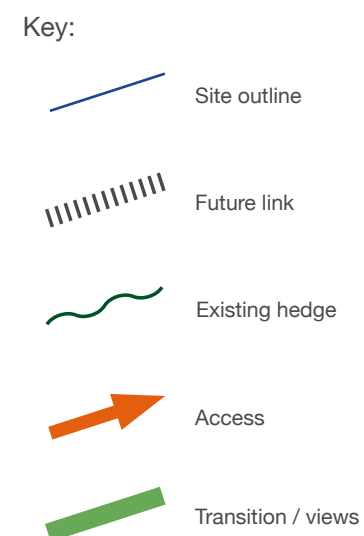


NP11: Land West of Retford Road, Mattersey

The land to the west of Retford Road has the potential to provide a linear row of housing leading to the south of the village. The existing hedge could be retained and used as a front boundary. The site is flat, so views onto and from the site need to be carefully considered so as not to overly block views onto open countryside.

A key opportunity for this site is to provide a link to the Millennium Green. Even if this link cannot be provided in the short term, the design should safe-guard a connection for the future.

Site description:	Linear site sitting to the west of Retford Road, set behind a field boundary hedge.
Access and connections:	Direct frontage access from Retford to on-plot parking, possibly in garages to the side or rear of plot. Lower speed limit to be extended south. Connection west to the Green.
Landscape:	Existing mature hedgerow along Retford Road, which could be retained and re-purposed as a boundary treatment.
Built form and materials:	Edge of village location that leads to open countryside, so scale and massing needs to be carefully considered. New building line to be established.
Other considerations:	Views onto and from the site need to be carefully planned for. Future link to the Millennium Green to be safeguarded.



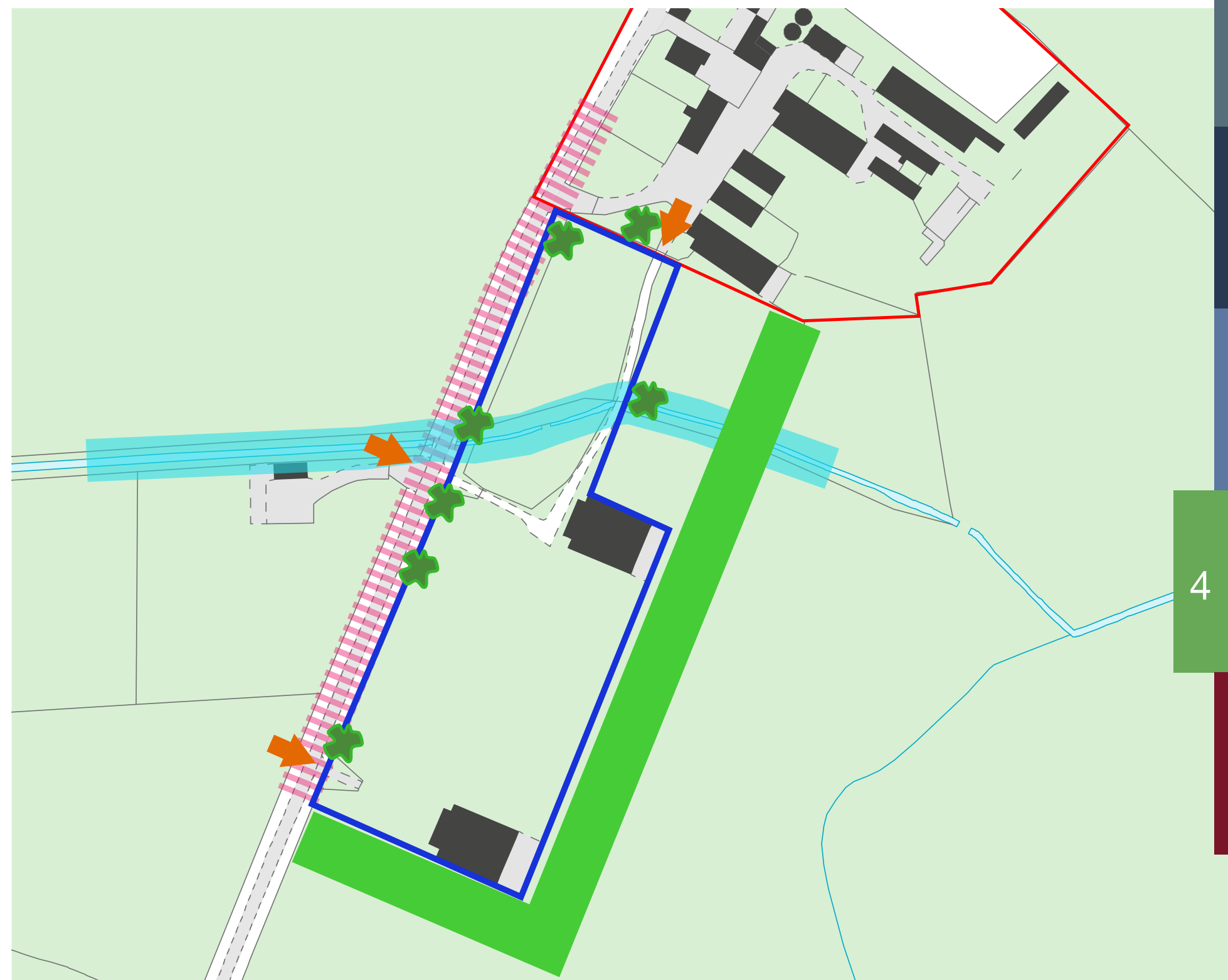
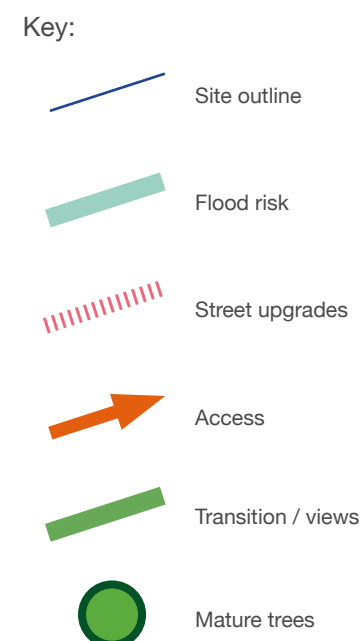


NP14: Land east of Breck Lane, Mattersey Thorpe

The land to the east of Breck Lane, Mattersey Thorpe is a linear site adjacent to the farm buildings leading south, out of the village. The site is home to a watercourse, mature trees and some existing buildings. It is close to the heritage assets within the village.

There is scope to add predominantly linear development with some backland / courtyard dwellings to the village, probably in the style of a farmstead. Transitions to the countryside need to be managed, and Breck Lane will need significant improvements to allow for access.

Site description:	Linear site sitting to the east of Breck Lane, beyond farm buildings to the south of the village. Contains a stream and mature trees.
Access and connections:	Direct frontage access from Breck Lane to on-plot parking, possibly in garages to the side or rear of plot. Further connection possible to the north from farmstead.
Landscape:	Existing mature trees within the boundary to Breck Lane, plus along the line of the stream.
Built form and materials:	Closely associated with the historic village in terms of built form, so farmstead type buildings in red brick and pantile.
Other considerations:	Flooding from adjacent watercourse needs to be managed. Breck Lane needs to be upgraded to allow for good access.





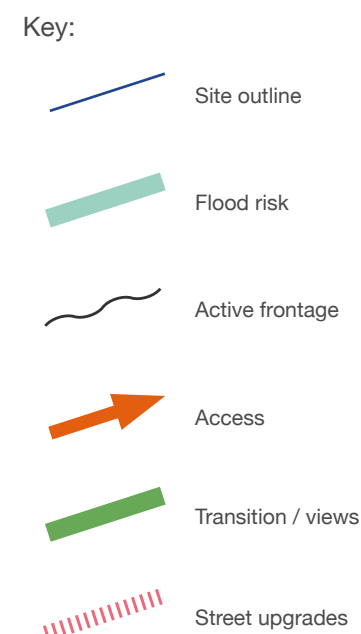
NP18: Land north of Newall Drive, Mattersey Thorpe

The land north of Newall Drive sits on the slopes leading down from the top end of the newer development in Mattersey Thorpe. There is scope for development here to provide good overlooking of the open space to the south, and to fund improvements to the local street network.

This part of the village offers the opportunity to explore different models of delivery, such as self or custom-build, and for the architectural style to be innovative and forward-looking. Flooding and long views onto the site from the north need to be considered and managed.

NOTE: At the time of writing, the deliverability of this site is still under discussion.

Site description:	Linear site sitting to the north of Newall Drive, adjacent to the green space at the top of Mattersey Thorpe. The site slopes down towards the river.
Access and connections:	Direct frontage access from Newall Drive to on-plot parking, possibly in garages to the side or rear of plot. Newall Drive is not adopted and will need upgrading.
Landscape:	The development here could support the existing open space to the front and install a sympathetic landscape treatment to the rear of the plots.
Built form and materials:	Visually isolated from the village, so scope to innovate. Long views onto the site need to be considered.
Other considerations:	Flooding from adjacent watercourse needs to be managed. Any development should provide overlooking to the green.



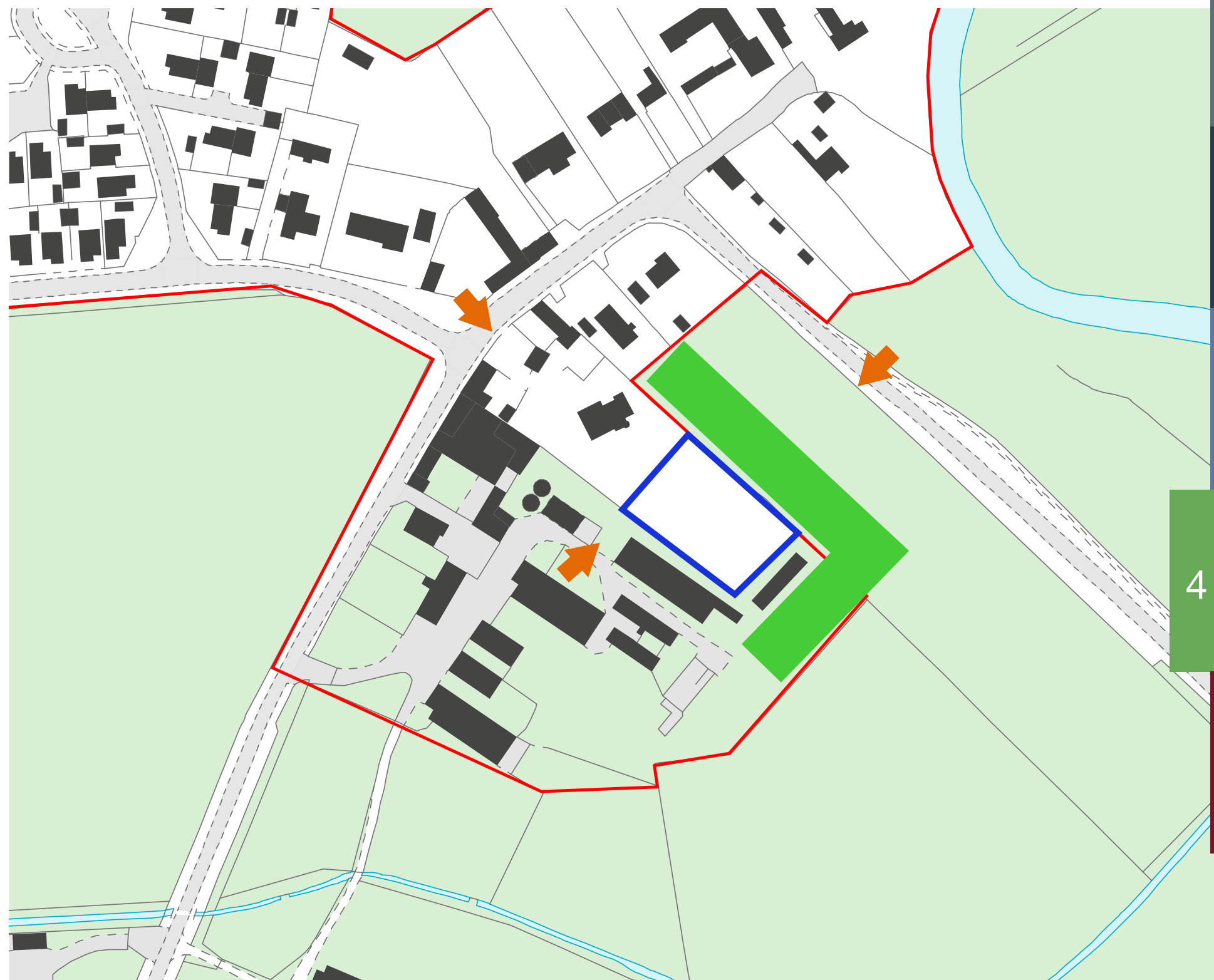
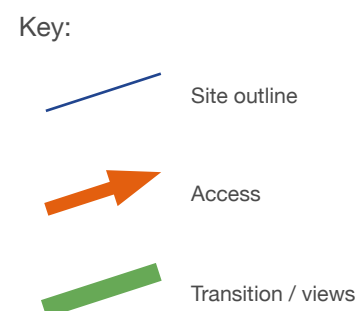


NP23: Land at the rear of Gilbert's Croft, Breck Lane, Mattersey Thorpe

The land to the rear of Gilbert's Croft is a backland site that could offer limited development, possibly in a courtyard or farmstead type arrangement.

Accessing the site could prove difficult, and limit the amount of development that it can accommodate. Another key concern is that development here would sit within the setting of a non-designated heritage asset. However, a suitable design may be possible and the access concerns could be addressed through taking a route across the adjacent field or through from Breck Lane.

Site description:	Backland site to the rear of Breck Lane, but visible from Thorpe Road. Currently used as formal gardens for large house.
Access and connections:	Limited access from Breck Lane, but the potential for a driveway from Thorpe Lane across the adjacent field or from the farm to the south.
Landscape:	Some boundary planting but no mature trees on site. Potential to add in screen planting on boundaries to soften the view onto the site.
Built form and materials:	Sitting within the historic village and curtailage of a non-designated heritage asset, so should reference local forms and materials to maintain character of the area.
Other considerations:	The site is visually isolated, so could be suitable for an innovate structure that utilises local references in a contemporary way.





Section 5: Appendices



Appendix I: The importance of good design

Although the primary purpose of this document is to examine the character and identity of Mattersey Parish, it is important that any new development, should it occur, addresses every aspect of design best practice.

Good design is about more than just aesthetics; well-designed places let people have better lives by making places safe, easy to move through, economically and socially vibrant, and robust against climate change. Although this document focuses primarily on landscape in terms of how it informs local distinctiveness, all elements of good design best practice should be considered together.

Design has a role to play in all aspects of how a place functions; it influences the movement economy (the economic activities that rely on footfall and passing trade), the level of walking and cycling, the way in which people can meet and socialise, where people can take recreation and leisure activities and the levels of crime within any given area.

How a neighbourhood is connected to its surroundings is an extremely important factor when determining the likelihood of residents from that area walking and cycling. Research has shown that poorly connected neighbourhoods have far lower walking and cycling trips than those that integrate well with local shops and other facilities, which in turn leads to more traffic, poorer air quality and higher health problems for people living there.

Designs that incorporate natural and existing site features into their layout help retain character and identity as well as helping to maintain ecology and biodiversity. If managed well and 'designed in', flood prevention measures can be of real amenity value to local people and a habitat for wildlife.

Buildings that do not properly manage public and private space offer poorer quality living environments for residents, and cannot provide the levels of overlooking needed to make public spaces safe to use. Public spaces which are not overlooked are often sites of antisocial behaviour and are not usable for play and leisure.

However, well designed open space increases people's levels of exercise and gives people spaces to meet and socialise. Embedding character into new development helps an area as a whole be more recognisable, and helps to maintain links to a place's history.

Getting things wrong is extremely costly, as many design mistakes last a very long time, having impacts that extend for decades and which can be expensive to rectify. That is why it is critical to embed good design from the outset and to make sure that all new development follows urban design best practice.

“*Good quality design is an integral part of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that design quality matters and that planning should drive up standards across all forms of development. As a core planning principle, plan-makers and decision takers should always seek to secure high quality design.*”

Source: PPG: Design (2015)



Working with the site

Working with what you have on site enables new developments to make the most of their setting, embedding existing landscape and other natural features into the design in a way that helps maintain links to the history of the area whilst retaining the character of the site.

New development in the Plan area should seek to work with the landscape, retaining important trees and other ecological features and using the topography to influence the alignment of streets.

Existing trees and vegetation should, where practical, be retained in such a way as to add visual amenity and ecological value to the development. Existing trees and hedges can give new development a mature look and feel, and this adds value. However, difficult to maintain or manage greenery should be avoided, as this has the potential to cause problems in the future.

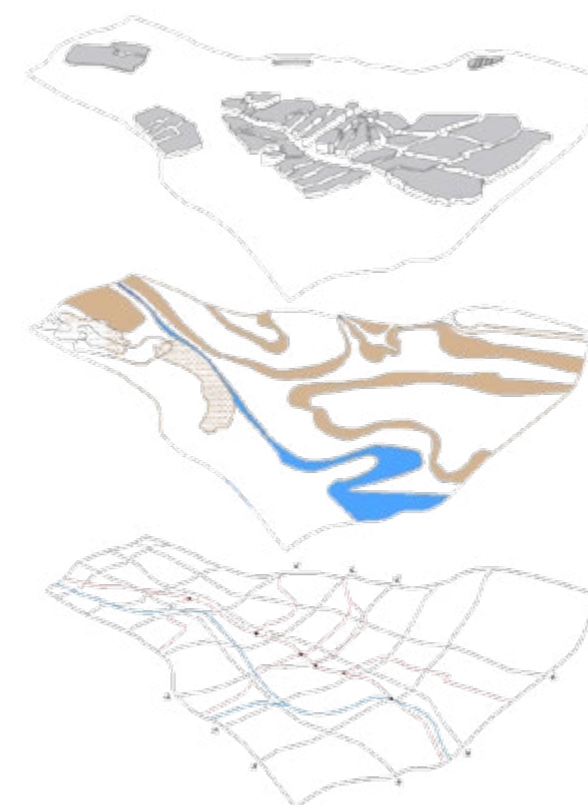
Surface water should be managed in a way that enhances the public realm and provides habitat for wildlife. Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) have the potential to add extra character and amenity to developments but must be considered at the outset along with the design of streets and other spaces rather than retrofitted as an add-on.

“A system of open and green spaces that respect natural features and are easily accessible can be a valuable local resource and helps create successful places. A high quality landscape, including trees and semi-natural habitats where appropriate, makes an important contribution to the quality of an area.”

Source: PPG: Design (2015)

Right: Landform and watercourses influencing route structure and developable land.

(Source: Sue McGlynn)



Images: Existing trees and water being used to generate place character and identity.





Connecting to the neighbourhood

Movement is the lifeblood of settlements; places with well-integrated movement systems have been shown to be economically and socially vibrant, safe and energy efficient. New development in the Plan area should not shy away from making strong links with the local neighbourhood, nor should it seek to create insular and overly private enclaves within existing neighbourhoods (see **Glossary** for more information, especially ‘Radburn’ and ‘nested hierarchy’).

Instead, new development should make as many links with the surrounding street mesh as possible, but only where those links can be well overlooked, direct and legible. Routes that are poorly overlooked, that run adjacent to private gardens or between back fences, or that are unnecessarily indirect should be avoided.

Streets should be designed in a way that offers more than just a movement corridor for cars; they should be pedestrian and cycle friendly, have space for parking, and should slow traffic through their design rather than through retrofitted calming measures.

Internally, where possible new streets should form a grid, with as many streets offering through movement as possible. Where this is not practical, dead ends should be short and should not be connected by blind alleys. Streets should vary in character, with their role in either local or wider movement evident from their design.

All streets should be simple and uncluttered, with decent lines of sight, low speeds and space for trees. Over-engineered junction radii should be avoided, and all streets should be designed using Manual for Streets principles (see **Appendix 2**).

“*Development proposals should promote accessibility and safe local routes by making places that connect appropriately with each other and are easy to move through. Attractive and well-connected permeable street networks encourage more people to walk and cycle to local destinations.*”

Source: PPG: Design (2015)

Right: A grid of streets enables high permeability and easy movement, whereas a ‘nested hierarchy’, where streets are arranged more like branches of a tree, offers very little route choice.

Bottom right: Quieter streets like this lane can be more pedestrian focused.

Bottom left: Mature trees and good sight lines give this street a high quality feel.





“Development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, local man-made and natural heritage and culture, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.”

Source: PPG: Design (2015)

Making a place

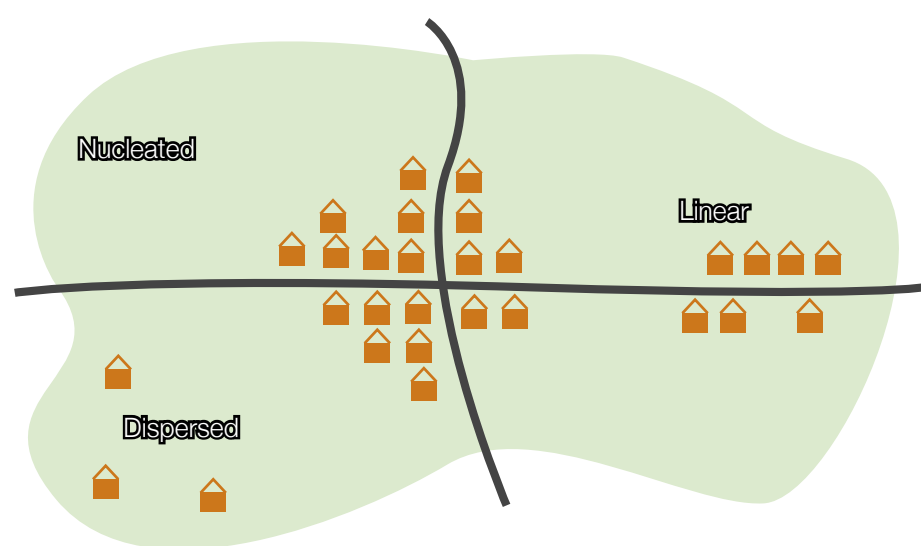
All new development in the Plan area should seek to promote local character and identity, because through doing so it is possible to protect and enhance what is already there for existing residents, and provide community and social cohesion for those new to the area.

A criticism often levelled at new development is that it ‘lacks character’, with many new developments looking generic despite the wide range of building types and materials used. Often this is due to overly standardised approaches to streets and spaces, where very little room is given for the types of innovation that allow one place to be different from another. Also, too wide a range of materials and styles can confuse the identity of new development, with the lack of a coherent approach weakening the overall visual quality and diluting the overall character.

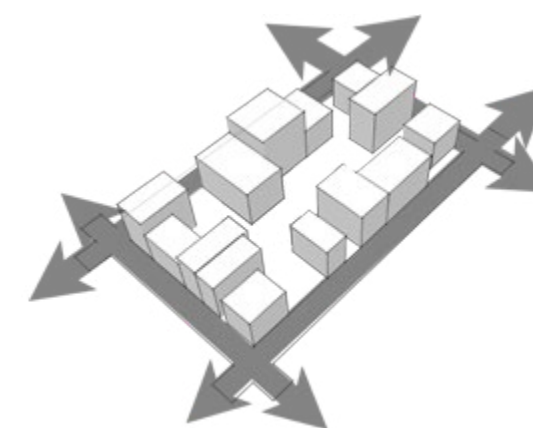
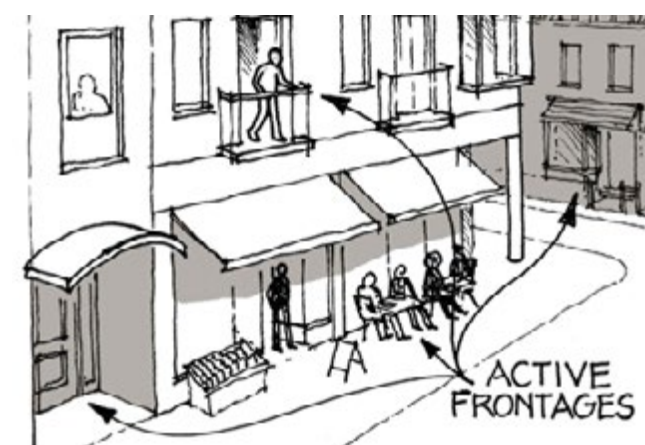
To maintain local distinctiveness, new development should be reflective of local aspects such as:

- the local landform and the way development sits upon it
- the local pattern of streets, blocks and the dimension of plots
- development style and vernacular
- built forms, massing, details and materials (including street furniture and boundaries)

Developers should demonstrate how they have embedded local character in their Design and Access Statement.



Left: Settlement typologies in terms of how buildings sit in relation to main lines of movement, a key consideration for the character of the settlements in the Crich area.

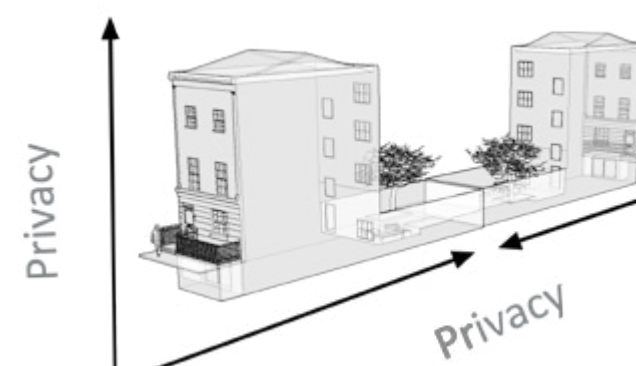


Clockwise top left:

Active building fronts provide overlooking to the street, making it safer.

Buildings arranged in a perimeter block, with public streets and spaces to the front, and private gardens to the rear.

Perimeter blocks set up a ‘privacy gradient’, enabling active frontages whilst keeping gardens and rooms within a building private.



“The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.”

Source: National Planning Policy Framework (2012)



Good design checklist

Below is a simple checklist to help designers when thinking about how to bring a site forward. It may also be helpful for other stakeholders looking at a development proposal, prompting examination of the design elements that are often left until too late in the design process or overlooked all together. A more comprehensive checklist can be found in Building for Life 12 (see Appendix 2).



Are there existing site features of note? Can these be integrated into the development to add character and preserve site identity?



How can new routes into and out of the development help link with existing areas and make finding your way around easy? How should they cross the site?



Where should vehicles come into and out of the development?

Are there any traffic issues to manage?



Where should pedestrians access the site?

Are there any existing rights of way to consider?



Are streets designed to be pedestrian friendly so as to encourage walking?

Are vehicle speeds low and are there places to meet and socialise?



What are the needs of cyclists in the area and how have you accommodated these?

Is there enough parking for bikes?



Are buildings and spaces designed to be safe? Do buildings face the street and are their gardens secure? Are public spaces well overlooked and do they have a clear use?



How are bins and recycling to be dealt with?

Where are bins stored? Can people put bins away after waste has been collected?



High gates on large plots should be avoided. Use walls or landscape to define the plot.



Close-board fencing to public routes should be avoided. Use a high-quality material that lasts.



Where brick is used, it should reference local hues and finishes.



Narrow footpaths should be avoided. A more rural character can be found in the best parts of the village.



Appendix II: Manual for Streets

Manual for Streets (MfS) replaces Design Bulletin 32, first published in 1977, and its companion guide Places, Streets and Movement.

It puts well-designed residential streets at the heart of sustainable communities. For too long the focus has been on the movement function of residential streets. The result has often been places that are dominated by motor vehicles to the extent that they fail to make a positive contribution to the quality of life.

MfS demonstrates the benefits that flow from good design and assigns a higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists, setting out an approach to residential streets that recognises their role in creating places that work for all members of the community. MfS refocuses on the place function of residential streets, giving clear guidance on how to achieve well-designed streets and spaces that serve the community in a range of ways.

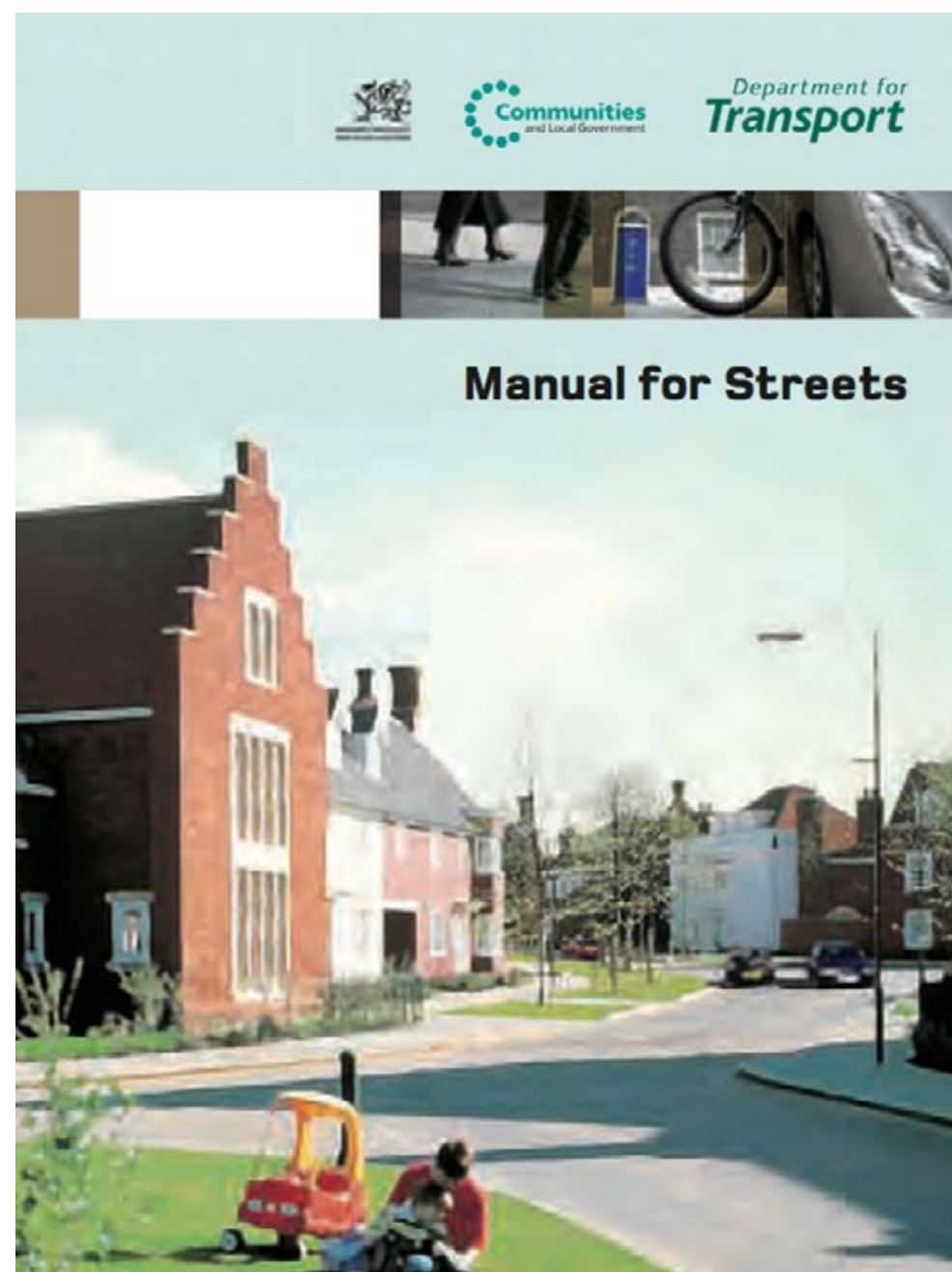
MfS updates the link between planning policy and residential street design. It challenges some established working practices and standards that are failing to produce good-quality outcomes, and asks professionals to think differently about their role in creating successful neighbourhoods.

It places particular emphasis on the importance of collaborative working and coordinated decision-making, as well as on the value of strong leadership and a clear vision of design quality at the local level.

Research carried out in the preparation of Manual for Streets indicated that many of the criteria routinely applied in street design are based on questionable or outdated practice.

For example, it showed that, when long forward visibility is provided and generous carriageway width is specified, driving speeds tend to increase. This demonstrates that driver behaviour is not fixed; rather, it can be influenced by the environment.

MfS addresses these points, recommending revised key geometric design criteria to allow streets to be designed as places in their own right while still ensuring that road safety is maintained.



Manual for Streets, TFL



Appendix III: Building for Life 12

Building for Life 12 is the industry standard, endorsed by government for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods that local communities, local authorities and developers are encouraged to use to help stimulate conversations about creating good places to live.

The 12 questions reflect our vision of what new housing developments should be: attractive, functional and sustainable places. Redesigned in 2012, BfL12 is based on the National Planning Policy Framework and the government's commitment to not only build more homes, but better homes - whilst also encouraging local communities to participate in the place making process.

The questions are designed to help structure discussions between local communities, local planning authorities, developers and other stakeholders.

BfL12 is also designed to help local planning authorities assess the quality of proposed and completed developments; it can be used for site-specific briefs and can also help to structure design codes and local design policies.

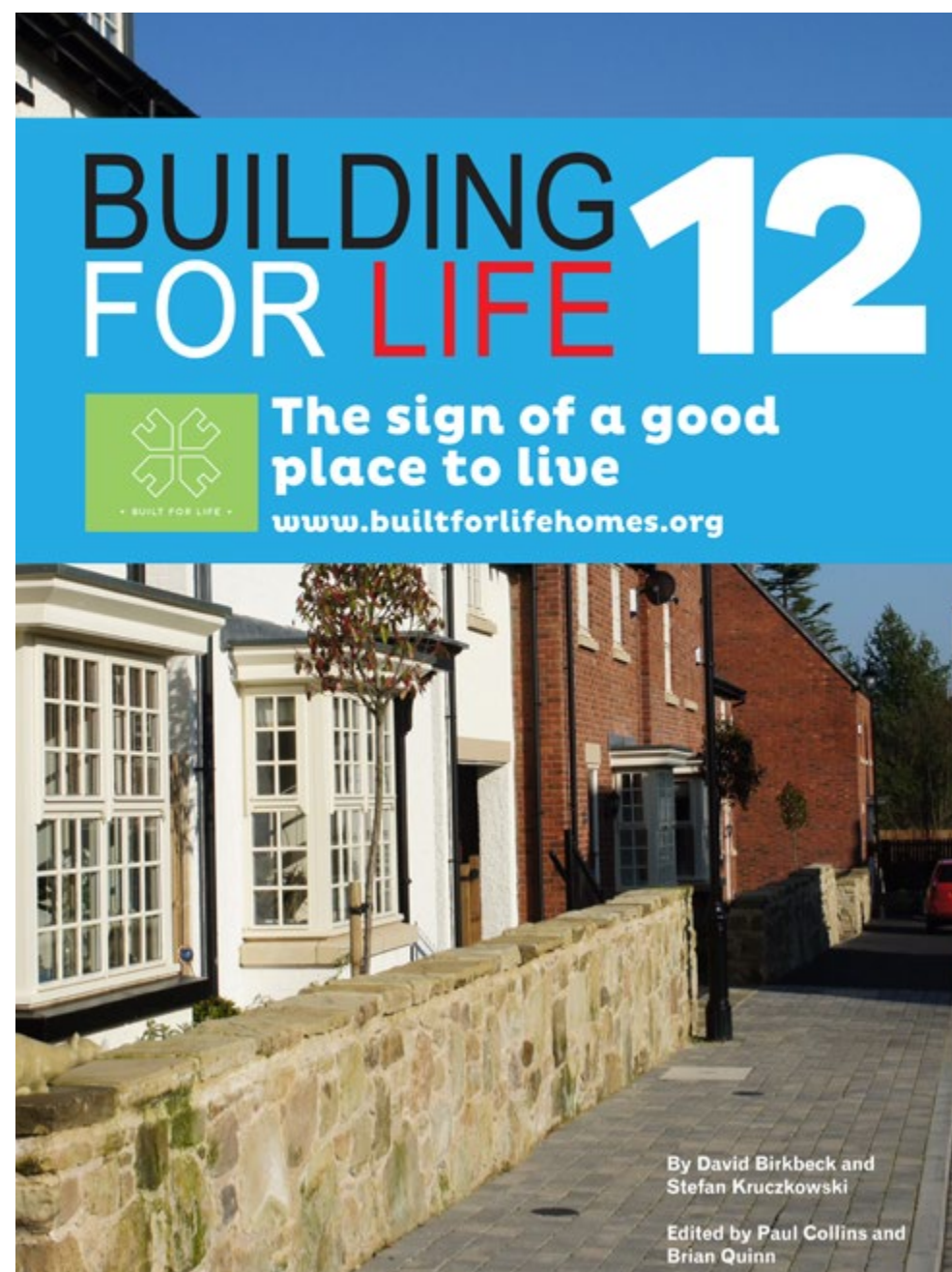
BfL12 comprises of 12 easy to understand questions that are designed to be used as a way of structuring discussions about a proposed development. There are four questions in each of the three chapters:

- Integrating into the neighbourhood
- Creating a place
- Street and home

Based on a simple 'traffic light' system (red, amber and green) we recommend that proposed new developments aim to:

- Secure as many 'greens' as possible,
- Minimise the number of 'ambers' and;
- Avoid 'reds'.

The more 'greens' that are achieved, the better a development will be. A red light gives warning that a particular aspect of a proposed development needs to be reconsidered.



Building for
Life 12, the BfL
Partnership



Appendix IV: Glossary of terms

Shortened extracts from By Design (ODPM/CABE, 2000) and The Dictionary of Urbanism (Streetwise Press, 2003)

accessibility The ease with which a building, place or facility can be reached by people and/or goods and services. Accessibility can be shown on a plan or described in terms of pedestrian and vehicle movements, walking distance from public transport, travel time or population distribution.

adaptability The capacity of a building or space to respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions.

amenity Something that contributes to an area’s environmental, social, economic or cultural needs. The term’s meaning is a matter for the exercise of planners’ discretion, rather than being defined in law.

appearance Combination of the aspects of a place or building that determine the visual impression it makes.

area appraisal An assessment of an area’s land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics.

authenticity The quality of a place where things are what they seem: where buildings that look old are old, and where the social and cultural values that the place seems to reflect did actually shape it.

background building A building that is not a distinctive landmark.

backland development The development of sites at the back of existing development, such as back gardens.

barrier An obstacle to movement.

best value The process through which local authorities work for continuous improvement in the services they provide. Local authorities are required to challenge why a particular service is needed; compare performance across a range of indicators; consult on the setting of new performance targets; and show that services have been procured through a competitive process. Councils are subject to independent best value audits by the Best Value Inspectorate, an offshoot of the Audit Commission.

block The area bounded by a set of streets and undivided by any other significant streets.

block The space in between the streets, usually used for development but can also be used for parkland and open space. The shape can be regular (square) or rectilinear (longer and shorter sides).

brief This guide refers to site-specific briefs as development briefs. Site-specific briefs are also called a variety of other names, including design briefs, planning briefs and development frameworks.

building element A feature (such as a door, window or cornice) that contributes to the overall design of a building.

building line The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street. The building line can be shown on a plan or section.

building shoulder height The top of a building’s main facade.

built environment The entire ensemble of buildings, neighbourhoods and cities with their infrastructure.

built form Buildings and structures.

bulk The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Also called massing.

character appraisal Techniques (particularly as developed by English Heritage) for assessing the qualities of conservation areas.

character area An area with a distinct character, identified as such so that it can be protected or enhanced by planning policy. The degree of protection is less strong than in a conservation area.

character assessment An area appraisal emphasising historical and cultural associations.

conservation area character appraisal A published document defining the special architectural or historic interest that warranted the area being designated.
conservation area One designated by a local authority under the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as possessing special architectural or historical interest. The council will seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of such areas.



context (or site and area) appraisal A detailed analysis of the features of a site or area (including land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics) which serves as the basis for an urban design framework, development brief, design guide, or other policy or guidance.

context The setting of a site or area.

countryside design summary A descriptive analysis explaining the essential design relationship between the landscape, settlement patterns and buildings. From this analysis the document draws principles that can be applied to development in the area and sets out the implications of the choices open to designers. As supplementary planning guidance prepared by a local authority, the summary can encourage a more regionally and locally based approach to design and planning. It can also provide the context for individual communities to prepare village design statements.

defensible space Public and semi-public space that is ‘defensible’ in the sense that it is surveyed, demarcated or maintained by somebody. Derived from Oscar Newman’s 1973 study of the same name, and an important concept in securing public safety in urban areas, defensible space is also dependent upon the existence of escape routes and the level of anonymity which can be anticipated by the users of space.

density The mass or floorspace of a building or buildings in relation to an area of land. Density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial development); homes or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); site coverage plus the number of floors or a maximum building height; space standards; or a combination of these.

design code A document (usually with detailed drawings or diagrams) setting out with some precision the design and planning principles that will apply to development in a particular place.

design guidance A generic term for documents providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the planning and design policies of a local authority or other organisation.

design guide Design guidance on a specific topic such as shop fronts or house extensions, or relating to all kinds of development in a specific area.

design policy Relates to the form and appearance of development, rather than the land use.

design principle An expression of one of the basic design ideas at the heart of an urban design framework, design guide, development brief or design code. Each such planning tool should have its own set of design principles.

design statement A developer can make a pre-application design statement to explain the design principles on which a development proposal in progress is based. It enables the local authority to give an initial response to the main issues raised by the proposal. An applicant for planning permission can submit a planning application design statement with the application, setting out the design principles adopted in relation to the site and its wider context. Government advice (Planning Policy Guidance Note 1) encourages an applicant for planning permission to submit such a written statement to the local authority.

design-led development (or regeneration) Development whose form is largely shaped by strong design ideas.

desire line An imaginary line linking facilities or places which people would find it convenient to travel between easily.

development appraisal A structured assessment of the characteristics of a site and an explanation of how they have been taken into account in drawing up development principles.

development brief A document providing guidance on how a specific site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed in line with the relevant planning and design policies. It will usually contain some indicative, but flexible, vision of future development form. A development brief usually covers a site most of which is likely to be developed in the near future. The terms ‘planning brief’ and ‘design brief’ are also sometimes used. These came into use at a time when government policy was that planning and design should be kept separate in design guidance. The term ‘development brief’ avoids that unworkable distinction.

development control The process through which a local authority determines whether (and with what conditions) a proposal for development should be granted planning permission.

development plan Prepared by a local authority to describe the intended use of land in an area and provide a basis for considering planning applications. Every area is covered either by a unitary development plan or by a development plan comprising more than one document (a structure plan and a local plan, and sometimes also other plans relating to minerals and waste). The development plan sets out the policies and proposals against which planning applications will be assessed. Its context is set by national and regional planning policy guidance.

development Statutorily defined under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as ‘the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land’. Most forms of development require planning permission.



eyes on the street People whose presence in adjacent buildings or on the street make it feel safer.

facade The principal face of a building.

fenestration The arrangement of windows on a facade.

figure/ground (or figure and ground diagram) A plan showing the relationship between built form and publicly accessible space (including streets and the interiors of public buildings such as churches) by presenting the former in black and the latter as a white background, or the other way round.

fine grain The quality of an area's layout of building blocks and plots having small and frequent subdivisions.

form The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

grid (street pattern) A street system in which streets connect at both ends with other streets to form a grid-like pattern. Grids can be regular or deformed; regular grids have junctions that meet at crossroads, whereas deformed grids have their junctions offset from one another.

in-curtilage parking Parking within a building's site boundary, rather than on a public street or space.

landmark A building or structure that stands out from the background buildings.

landscape The appearance of land, including its shape, form, colours and elements, the way these (including those of streets) components combine in a way that is distinctive to particular localities, the way they are perceived, and an area's cultural and historical associations.

layout The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

legibility The degree to which a place can be easily understood by its users and the clarity of the image it presents to the wider world.

live edge Provided by a building or other feature whose use is directly accessible from the street or space which it faces; the opposite effect to a blank wall.

local distinctiveness The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

massing The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. This is also called bulk.

mixed uses A mix of complementary uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. 'Horizontal' mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. 'Vertical' mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

movement People and vehicles going to and passing through buildings, places and spaces.

natural surveillance (or supervision) The discouragement to wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to see out of windows. Also known as passive surveillance (or supervision).

nested hierarchy (layout) A type of layout common from around 1950 that, instead of traditional interconnecting grids of streets, uses a tiered order of streets, each with only one function (commonly distributor road, access road, cul-de-sac).

node A place where activity and routes are concentrated.
performance criterion/criteria A means of assessing the extent to which a development achieves a particular.

'Radburn' (layout) a type of layout developed in America for a scheme in New jersey which used a segregated footpath network to separate cars from pedestrians. Commonly used in the UK in the 1960's, these types of layouts are identifiable by their garage parking to the rear of properties, often maze-like network of footpaths running along back fences and between buildings, and areas of 'left over' space with no obvious use.

urban forward ltd is a multidisciplinary planning, design and urban design consultancy dedicated to quality outcomes for the built environment. We offer a comprehensive range of services designed to deliver the best possible results for any project, from new developments to policy and research. Our team are leaders in the field, with a wealth of practical experience to help you realise the potential of your project. We work with both private and public sector clients as well as with community groups and those in the third sector.

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