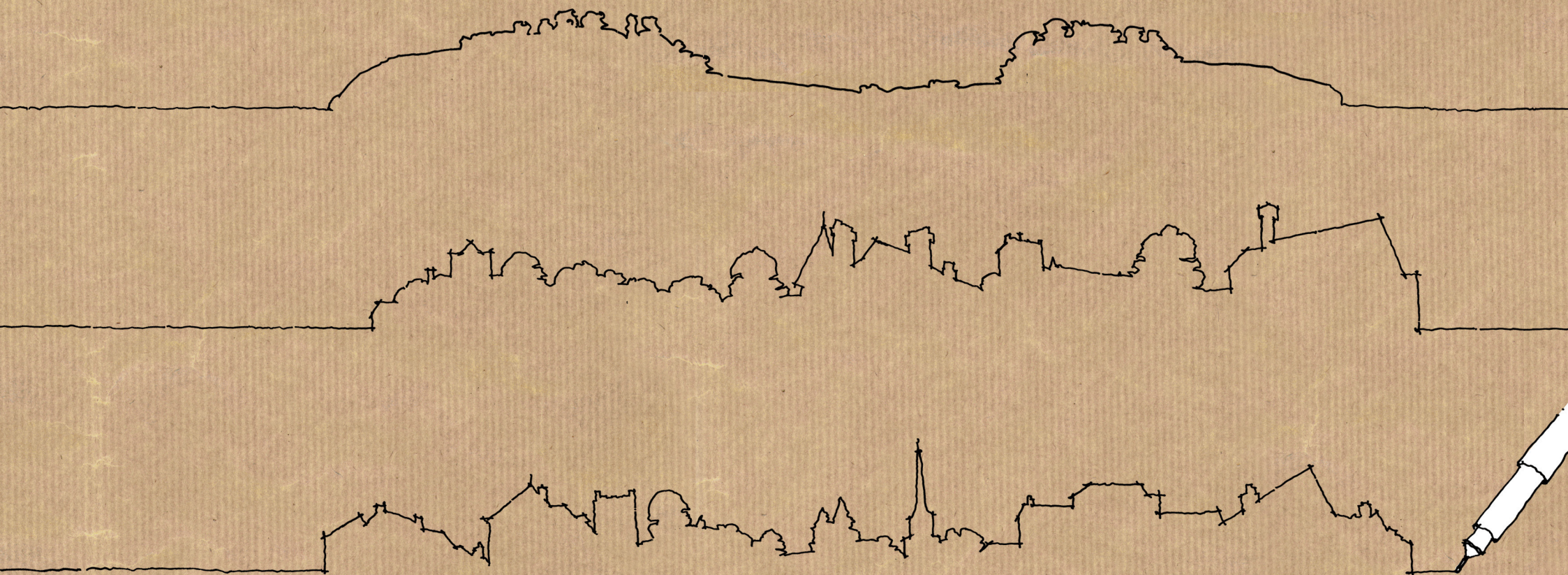


SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE

DESIGN GUIDE

TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS



INTRODUCTION

The South Oxfordshire design guide is accompanied by a suite of technical documents focusing on disciplines such as landscape, biodiversity, trees, public art, sustainable energy, etc., all of which need to be taken into account at the outset of the design process alongside the principles set out in the Part 1 and 2 of the guide. The technical documents also focus on other types of development such as non-domestic buildings, apartments, householder extensions and outbuildings, building conversions, shopfronts and signage.

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UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE

GOAL: To make sure that a detailed understanding of the particular qualities and characteristics of the wider landscape has been taken into account at the outset of the design process and that the proposed development is designed so that it can integrate with and enhance the existing landscape and/or settlement.

The landscape of South Oxfordshire gets its unique identity from the natural setting and historical development. New development should respect, respond and enhance this unique **landscape character**. New development should share common characteristics with its locality and reinforce local identity as well as providing well-designed, accessible landscapes and public open spaces.

Designers often refer to green and blue infrastructure as key elements of landscape which will influence the proposal. **Green Infrastructure (GI)** is a planned and managed network of multifunctional green spaces which can provide a healthy and rich environment. These can include: allotments, gardens, including communal green spaces within housing areas, green corridors, brownfield and greenfield sites, urban parks and gardens, registered commons, village and town greens, children's play space, natural and semi-natural habitat for wildlife, playing fields, cemeteries, pocket parks, country parks, woodland, nature reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Scheduled Monuments. Blue infrastructure would include waterways and waterbodies, including flooded quarries.



An example of the landscape character found in the Vale Fringes in Ewelme



To inform your design:

Technical studies including (but not limited to) surveys on trees, topographical survey, etc.



To communicate your design:

- Prepare a Landscape Strategy that sets out how the existing landscape and biodiversity features on the site will be maintained and managed;
- Demonstrate how the features of a Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), e.g. retaining ponds and swales, will be integrated into the landscape of the development.
- Undertake a landscape appraisal (see test your design section overleaf)



View north from Wittenham Clumps

Terms for Glossary:

Landscape character - The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements and features in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another.

Landscape appraisal - This is the consideration of the physical aspects of the site in order to identify key constraints and opportunities.

Landscape structure - This is the proposed landscape, incorporating existing landscape features and providing new ones to enhance and integrate the development.

Green infrastructure - This is a multifunctional landscape that incorporates the widest range of functions an open space can support to unlock the greatest number of benefits.

TEST YOUR DESIGN:

A **landscape character** assessment has been carried out which includes the following:

- 1.1 identifies and describes the character of the landscape in which the site is set by referring to existing landscape character assessments at the national, regional and district level including historic landscape character assessments, where available;
- 1.2 identifies the landscape features and historic development of the landscape setting that helps to form its essential character;
- 1.3 identifies the perceptual qualities that add to its character such as remoteness/busyness, darkness/lighting, quiet/noise;
- 1.4 describes how the existing site relates to and reflects this landscape setting;
- 1.5 identifies any important views to and from the site that are valuable to its sense of place;
- 1.6 identifies what landscape elements (views, topography, water, vegetation etc) should be retained and enhanced within any new development to ensure it integrates and enhances the landscape setting.

Meets criteria If not, reason for not meeting

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Landscape appraisal

- 1.7 A landscape appraisal has been undertaken which identifies clearly on a plan the key constraints to any future development including topography, trees and hedgerows, views to and from the site, land use, water features, rights of way, historic features, etc.

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A form of green infrastructure (allotments, Didcot)



Additional useful and interesting resources:

- National Landscape Character Area profiles (Natural England, 2014)
- SODC Landscape Characterisation Assessment (1998)
- Historic Landscape Character (Oxfordshire County Council, 2016)
- Guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment (Landscape Institute, 3rd ed. 2013)
- Chilterns AONB Management Plan (2014-2019)
- Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Supplementary Technical Notes (CCB, 2nd ed., 2010)
- North Wessex Downs Management Plan
- Design for play (Play England, 2008) and Public space lessons (Design Council/ CABI, 2008)
- An approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2014)



TEST YOUR DESIGN:

Ensure the **landscape structure**:

Meets criteria If not, reason for not meeting

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1.8 retains landscape features identified in the appraisal which are important now, in terms of contributing towards landscape character and setting, or will become important when the site is developed; | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.9 incorporates these features into the new landscape structure as they will not only help integrate the new development but will provide instant 'maturity' as well as creating windbreaks, visual screening and shelter; | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.10 incorporates the existing public rights of way within the new movement network to ensure connectivity; | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.11 ensures all open spaces have an identified purpose and be of the size, location and form appropriate for that use; | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.12 does not use planting as a divisive measure between new and existing development as it leads to isolated pockets of development and areas vulnerable to social misuse and dereliction; | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.13 links existing and proposed landscapes and open spaces together to form open space networks; | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.14 demonstrates how proposed open spaces contribute and respond to the hierarchy of existing landscape and open space networks; | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.15 refers to the Council's open space standards setting out the open space requirements for new developments, in terms of its quantity, quality and accessibility; | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.16 locates open spaces within walking distance so that they are easily accessible to new and existing development; | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.17 locates play spaces to form part of the wider park area rather than an isolated/separate feature. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |

TEST YOUR DESIGN:

Ensure that the **green and blue infrastructure**:

1.18 combines the existing and proposed landscape features to provide a multifunctional landscape eg. incorporate footpaths, mature trees and swales into open space to create a higher quality open space for both people and wildlife;

1.19 links landscape features into existing features outside of the site boundary to create a wider network of footpaths, hedgerows, woodlands, rivers and streams, etc.;

1.20 has '**Sustainable Drainage Systems**' that is an integral part of the development's open space network.

With respect to **topography and strategic views**, ensure new development:

1.21 locates buildings where they work with the existing topography in order to soften the appearance of a new development within the landscape;

1.22 retains and enhance views out of a site to prominent landscape features, ridgelines and landmarks;

1.23 opens up new views to prominent landscape features, ridgelines and landmarks to enhance identity and legibility.

Meets If not, reason
criteria for not meeting

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TEST YOUR DESIGN:

With respect to health, well-being and recreation, ensure new development:

1.24 create a network of safe and well-designed streets and public spaces that can have a social function as well as accommodating vehicular movement;

1.25 provides opportunities for play, social interaction and recreation as well as any formal sports requirements in line with the design guide;

1.26 provides the community infrastructure to encourage a legacy of community and cultural activities;

1.27 leaves a legacy that allows the resident community to have some control over managing their surroundings;

1.28 includes opportunities to encourage local food growing such as community orchards, provision of allotments or other community garden projects;

1.29 includes open space which is accessible for all users including people with disabilities, parents/ carers and older people.

With respect to play space, ensure:

1.30 the size of the play space facility and the intended age of the children using it has been considered;

1.31 any new development uses existing national guidance on inclusive play to ensure play space is accessible to all children.

Meets If not, reason
criteria for not meeting

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