

DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR THE A5 BETWEEN CHURCHBRIDGE AND LONGFORD ISLAND

Aim of guidance

The aspiration has developed to seek improvements to the commercial A5 corridor through Bridgtown, including to mitigate environmental issues following its designation as an Air Quality Management Area in 2006 and to enhance its economic attractiveness. **Key aims include:**

- Seeking a less cluttered, greener, more attractive townscape/corridor benefitting local economy and improving the impression of Cannock Chase District to passers-by.
- The Air Quality Management Area designated 2006 includes a Management Plan with recommended actions and climate change matters which reinforce visual issues and road safety

Sources of useful information

- DOT 'Manual for Streets'2 and 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges'
- Historic England 'Streets for All – West Midlands'
- Staffs County Council - Cannock Extensive Urban Survey
- Appendix A: CCDC Character Area Descriptions for Design SPD: A5 Corridor
- www.green-roof-systems.co.uk

Key features and Character

- **Busy main traffic corridor through District** (mostly 3 lane width with 2 traffic signal junctions at Walkmill Lane/North Street and Bridge Street/Lakeside Boulevard), largely a modern commercial street scene with some older residential frontages. Grass verges on one or both sides at west and east ends. 2 main character areas – western half and eastern half with change at Delta Way/B&Q: west is lower density, modern larger scale commercial buildings in landscaped settings, historically was open country with buildings around Longford crossroads; east is higher density, smaller scale and more tightly built up to road, residential and commercial, historic and modern buildings on the edge of Bridgtown. Interesting history/industrial heritage -Roman Road, brickworks, canals (route of Hatherton Canal), watercourses, farmsteads, mills, etc – potential for siting information board by laybys/B&Q.
- **Big variety of building footprints, heights (mostly one and two storey), materials, designs, signage, colours and landscaping including front boundary treatment.**
- **Corridor is an Air Quality Management Area designated 2006**
- **A few TPO protected trees** – mixed yew/oak etc around Longford House and 3 willows at Chenet House (adj Motorhouse). Significant mature trees and hedgerow along frontage of Sewage Treatment Works and mature hedgerow along front of Linkway Retail Park /adjacent vacant site. Smaller trees along front of Motorhouse and Finnings, Phoenix Centre and Watling Street bungalows. Consideration will be given to further Tree Preservation Orders.
- **Main positive features – historic buildings, some of modern buildings, frontage low brick walls, frontage greenery - trees/hedges/verges, watercourses close to road.**
- **Main negative features – lack of co-ordinated frontages (some poor quality), proliferation of signage particularly temporary**

'banner' signs, clutter and general 'tattiness', high traffic pollution levels(nitrogen dioxide) affecting residential environment in particular, lack of pedestrian/cyclist use and active frontages, so high traffic generation level.

- Key development sites each side of Finnings currently vacant.

Enhancement opportunities

- **Air quality management opportunities** – the more appropriate vegetation the better; improve attractiveness of route for pedestrian/cycles and keep traffic free-flowing to minimise pollution ('Pinch point' bid/funding for improvements at Walkmill Lane junction – alter road markings to take traffic further from bungalows – and Churchbridge junction – alter roundabout design/signals)
- **Landscaping of frontages to create a tree-lined route with appropriate hedging and other planting in an up to 10metre deep buffer area from back of footway to help unify varied streetscene, improve attractiveness and air quality.**
- **Creation of active frontages and potential for cycle lane and improved pedestrian routes across/along corridor** to make route more attractive/safer and less hostile to pedestrians/cyclists, less of a barrier to activity. Anecdotal information suggests cyclists commute to large business undertakings on A5 and there is potential for growth in this area.
- **Measures to improve free flow of traffic and enhance attractiveness for other road users** including pedestrians and cyclists
- **Retain existing planting and enhance with new** (amenity/biodiversity/air quality) including on verges, consider more TPO's to safeguard existing trees and devise guiding principles for new development. Front boundary treatments important - Good examples Longford House low brick wall, bungalows low fencing, Sewage Treatment Works trees and hedging. Poor example part of Finnings – poorly maintained pallisade fence and lack of planting. Scope for enhancement - gap in hedgerow at Linkway Retail Park could be replanted, front walls/hedge planting at east end of corridor could be rebuilt/replanted, landscaping on most other frontages could be enhanced, worn/over-run grass verges could be repaired, possibility of new tree planting on verges.
- **Limit signage/ make more effective and remove temporary banner signs.** Co-ordinate signage for groups of units off single access. A good example is Finnings – single large clear well lit sign at entrance so easily visible to approaching vehicles but minimal clutter including lighting set into ground.
- **Develop design code for signage and lighting**
- **Develop palette of suitable options for front boundary treatments** eg Low brick walls or green weldmesh/railing type fencing, possibly reinforced by hedge planting
- **Parking on frontages of some sites could be screened/softened**
- **Appropriate planting to soften frontage parking areas** including car sales
- **Developer contributions to tree planting on verges** where possible
- **Approach landowners for goodwill gesture of tree planting and front boundary enhancement on key sites based on economic development benefits**
- **Use of landscape management agreements**
- Use of **green/gravelled roofs** on large buildings and green walls in confined spaces
- **Comparatively small enhancements would make a big difference cumulatively**, especially where comparatively few landowners with long frontages to have a big effect. Even small enhancements would help.
- **Scope for watercourse enhancements close to A5** and creation of wetland habitat. Natural features could provide sink for air borne pollutants especially particulate matter and volatile organic compounds (VOC's) as well as environmental and visual benefits.



DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR HEDNESFORD TOWN CENTRE

Aim of guidance

As the result of a desire expressed by Hednesford Town Council and the 'Heart of Hednesford' Project to raise the appearance of the town centre to contribute to its viability and vitality some enhancement opportunities and guiding design principles are suggested below. **Key aims include:**

- To encourage development/change which preserves/enhances/conserves Hednesford town centre's local distinctiveness as a key contributor to its vitality and viability
- To support initiatives promoted by Hednesford Town Council and the 'Heart of Hednesford' Project to uplift the town centre through better quality design, materials, shopfronts and signs based on a community wish to restore buildings and enhance the retail offer
- To encourage links between the town, Park and Hednesford Hills based upon the Heritage Trail; better links between the Museum of Cannock Chase and the public transport 'hub' in the town centre; and improved links between the traditional shopping centre in Market Street and the new Chase Gateway and Victoria shopping areas.
- To provide a basis for community development of Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Sources of useful information

- Appendix A: CCDC Character Area Descriptions for Design SPD: Hednesford Town Centre
- Historic England 'Streets for All – West Midlands' and 'Streets for All – Practical Case Studies' (including 'How to Do a Street Audit')
- Shopfronts and Advertisements in Historic Towns – EHTF 1991
- Free downloads from www.helm.org.uk

Key features and Character

- **Compact town with rapid growth in the 19th C standing at foot of Hednesford Hills which create prominent green backdrop to town.**
- Hednesford forms a **gateway between urban Cannock and the rural Chase** beside a key north-south route. A good variety of shop units and services are provided
- **'Old Hednesford' historic settlement** away from present day town centre retains buildings dating from 16th C
- Present day town focussed on **Market Street with 19th C high/medium density character, predominantly 2 storey and some 3 storey terraced buildings with shops lining the winding main street and some modern/contemporary infill** eg Lightworks. Ground levels fall along Market Street from west to east.
- **Distinctive Anglesey Lodge** set back from road behind public gardens with town clock at west end of Market Street, recent change of use to public house will make this former hotel (more recently used as offices) more accessible to the community
- Red brick and grey tile predominate, with some render and yellow brickwork detail. **Unique and traditional detailing reinforce area's distinctive character.**
- **Ongoing regeneration/modernisation at each end of Market Street and area to the north providing larger scale retail units**

including supermarkets to complement traditional small town centre shops and new road layout/car parks/service areas with opportunities to integrate old and new and link to Hills/Park

- **Hednesford's buildings exhibit a variety of architectural styles** which were 'modern' in their time – the north side of Market Street was well developed by 1888 with a Market Hall opposite the 'Anglesey Hotel' and the Uxbridge PH at the Rugeley Road end. On the south side there were few buildings lower down the hill beyond Eskrett Street. Many of these buildings remain today. By 1902 infill development had taken place on the northern side of Market Street and by 1917 most of the rest of the southern side had been built up. The bank at no. 69 is noted on the map from this date and the post office and club are labelled. There are 'picture theatres' on Anglesey Street and Rugeley Road - Hednesford was clearly a self-contained town offering a variety of facilities. Post war further infill development has occurred and most buildings along Market Street have been 'modernised'.
- **Nearby landmarks mark local heritage and identity** – Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church (1927-33), the recent Miners Memorial and the refurbished Hednesford Park and Hednesford War Memorial
- **Key architectural positives:**
 - **decorative/architectural details** (eg plaque at 92/94 Market Street, windows at 98 Market St, chimneys and ridge tiles at 94 Market St, contrasting brick colour eaves and string courses, stone detailed frontage to former bank at 69 Market St including lion heads on doorway)
 - **distinctive buildings characteristic of their period** (e.g. Anglesey Lodge; former Club and Institute at corner of Cardigan Place, 3-7 Market St)
 - **remnants of good traditional shopfronts and windows** (e.g. at 3-7 and 11 Market St)
 - **well-designed modern signage** which complements its host building (e.g. 'Spice of Hednesford' at 13 Market Street.)
 - **attractive public realm** providing controlled vehicular access, short term accessible parking and attractive tree planting, with locally distinctive Miners Memorial as focal point
- **Key architectural negatives – extensive and ad hoc modernisation of buildings** in often very unsympathetic modern designs and materials (windows, shopfronts, signs and repairs) have cumulatively detracted from the appearance of the town, in common with many towns in Britain.

Enhancement opportunities

- Where planning permission is required for changes (e.g. new shopfronts and signs) the **use of appropriate design guidelines** can ensure proposals take account of agreed principles
- Some repairs and changes to buildings do not require planning permission so building **owners need to be convinced of the benefits of following design guidelines as a longer term investment in their property and the future of the town centre**
- **Small scale but significant enhancements can be achieved by influencing the design and materials used for any repairs and alterations owners may be considering anyway**, with maintenance and redecoration over the longer term strongly promoted.
- Larger scale enhancements (eg to the public realm) will require longer term planning and funding.
- **Repair rather than replacement:** historic features tend to be remnants of what once existed so have value. Regular maintenance of traditional building details helps to retain the distinctive appearance of the town. Small scale repairs are often cheaper than wholesale replacement.
- **Following the host building's existing design details will usually provide the most successful result:** upgrading of buildings does not have to be at the expense of their character and the better its condition and appearance the better any building will hold its

value as an investment. Details such as set back of windows within openings can make a difference

- **Careful use of matching materials appropriate to age of host building:** traditional materials on older buildings (eg timber, brick and tile/slate) and modern materials on modern buildings (eg upvc) Artificial/modern materials (eg upvc windows) and non-traditional details tend to be bland and lack the rich textures and colours of natural materials. But they are usually mass produced, easily available and fitted at less cost, so tend to be attractive to owners and are used everywhere. Whilst appropriate for modern buildings they can look out of keeping on historic ones.
- **Use of local craftspeople (eg joiners, carpenters and builders) to carry out traditional repairs to older buildings:** not only benefitting the buildings but the local economy, reinforcing the town's viability.
- **Even if use of modern materials on older buildings is unavoidable it is still possible to find ways of matching design details as closely as possible:** e.g. some double glazed UPVC sliding sash windows provide a good replica of a traditional window, with slim frames recessed within window openings
- **New shopfronts complementing the style, scale and proportions of the building and its neighbours with signage of an appropriate size and colour:** good design can go a long way towards enhancing the appearance of the building and the town
- **Careful design of new buildings and infill development:** to respect, complement and enhance the architectural character of an area. Fine buildings of any type, style and age can enhance the streetscene and contribute to a sense of identity.
- **Opportunity to harness community interest via initiatives such as development of Town Trail linking to District's Heritage Trail route.**



DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR MATURE SUBURBS

Aim of guidance

Over recent years the District's mature suburbs have become a focus of developer interest as a result of their spacious nature so the opportunity is being taken to extend local guidance to cover this topic. A fundamental aspect of character in these areas is the mature landscape setting for the buildings, from which conflict with new development often arises. The cumulative impact of development over time can progressively change the original qualities of the area. The Design and Access Statement should explain how this has been considered.

Public consultation in connection with the Characterisation Study including stakeholders presentations and local residents (including young people's) feedback emphasised the importance of the quality of green space and development fitting in with its surroundings. **Key aims include:**

- To encourage consideration of key features and character in designing development proposals which will enhance these areas and maintain the qualities of locally distinctive parts of the District

Sources of useful information

- www.historicengland.org.uk 'Suburbs and the Historic Environment' Encourages the analysis of the local environment and its variety of features to adapt to change whilst maintaining distinctiveness.
- Appendix A – Character Area Descriptions – South and West Cannock, Western Rugeley and Slitting Mill.

Key features and Character

- The mature residential areas of the District, such as Etchinghill, parts of Slitting Mill and the New Penkrudge Road area of Cannock, are important assets forming desirable and attractive places to live. Maintaining their distinctive quality and character is essential in achieving sustainable communities.
- They are mostly found on the edge of the urban areas where densities are low and the transition to the rural landscape is important, they may also fall within the AONB (parts of Etchinghill).
- They usually consist of substantial houses and bungalows on large plots within well established gardens along roads leading to the open countryside of The Chase or Shoal Hill.
- The spacious nature and lower density of these areas has led to pressure for intensification of development, particularly on the larger plots with impacts on/loss of mature trees and shading effects on the new development itself. Whilst such development can have benefits by increasing housing stock and making efficient use of land, it can also affect local character, amenity and privacy unless development is designed to be sympathetic to the main features which make these areas unique.

Enhancement opportunities

- Particular consideration should be given to existing character and appearance of the area and how best to fit new development into its site
- Consider impact of new development including hard surfacing on spaciousness and established landscape of plots

- Plots need to be of appropriate size, width, depth and shape to reflect typical plot size and density in the area and avoid uncharacteristic subdivision of larger plots
- Mature trees are characteristic of these areas and gardens and subdivision of large gardens into numerous plots may be physically practical but appropriate assessment must be taken of the effect of the mature trees on the usability and enjoyment of these new small gardens
- Siting of buildings needs to respect established building lines and set backs from road, with separation distances between buildings typical of the area
- Buildings should be of height, mass, scale, materials, footprint and frontage width to reflect those in the area
- Large well stocked gardens give a sense of openness and tranquillity providing significant amenity value, not just for residents but from the public realm, and urbanization will be resisted
- Important existing landscape features need to be retained and protected and given sufficient space to grow without need for continual cutting back – both trees and hedgerows – with lawned areas retained in preference to hard surfacing and historic walls retained and repaired
- ‘Green’ views between and over buildings are important
- New planting should reflect features/ species present in the area and provide opportunities for biodiversity including maintaining wildlife corridors
- Access design should reflect width, design and surfacing materials of existing, where possible retaining the existing arrangement
- Hard surfaced areas and garaging should be sympathetically located and not dominate the road frontage
- Boundary treatment is likely to favour hedging and soft planting and avoid loss of soft green planted frontages/replacement with ‘urban’ style walling, fencing and railings
- Grass verges with soft edges should be retained where prevalent and kerbs limited to areas of a more urban nature
- Soft grass verges in semi-rural locations are vulnerable to damage by more intensive vehicle use
- Consider the overall impact on biodiversity from reduced size of mature gardens
- Architectural style may be less important as these areas are often characterised by individual designs so an overall high quality design is the key message



DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES IN THE GREEN BELT

Aim of guidance

Existing employment areas in the Green Belt in this District have industrial origins historically. Key sites are Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre, Cannock Wood Industrial Estate, Watling Street Business Park and Lime Lane Business Area. It is envisaged that these will remain in employment related use for the foreseeable future however all are rated average or low in the 2011 Existing Employment Areas Study taking account of a variety of aspects including environmental quality. They therefore all have potential for environmental and design improvements to help enhance their appearance and attractiveness to businesses within their Green Belt setting. **Key aims**

include:

- To encourage consideration of opportunities to enhance the estates for business use.

Sources of useful information

- DOT 'Manual for Streets'2 and 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges'
- www.green-roof-systems.co.uk

Key features and Character

- **Rural or semi-rural woodland setting on high ground** so potential landscape impact from development - mature tree planting around perimeters of estates but little within them
- 3-12 ha in size and a **variety of units of varied age and quality providing a useful contribution to the local economy.**
- **Majority have good access to the main road network with an entrance on a key route through the District.**
- Parking mostly sufficient but **servicing/circulation/turning space potentially restricted.**
- Despite well surfaced entrance roads **internal access roads in disrepair** with areas in need of resurfacing and broken kerbs.
- Some poor public realm areas beyond main entrances.
- **Variety of frontage boundary treatment to units** from brick walling to concrete walls and galvanized palisade fencing.
- **Some sites have composite signs at entrance listing occupiers, others more ad hoc**
- Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre – small scale and well maintained, tree planting and pithead wheel feature provide character. Surrounded by AONB.
- Cannock Wood Industrial Estate – larger scale and busy, several remnant historic buildings with good detailing, but entrance gives poor impression with broken walling and assorted signage. Partly in and adjacent to AONB.
- Watling Street Business Park – medium sized facility with disused areas/buildings at rear, perimeter fencing recently improved using green 'weldmesh' type.
- Lime Lane Business Area – older buildings accommodate boat builders backing onto Cannock Extension Canal (a Special Area of Conservation) around ad hoc open access area with poor surface/ frontage to road.

Enhancement opportunities

- **Retain existing tree planting and supplement with new where opportunities arise**, particularly on unit frontages and at estate entrances. **Around perimeter of estates where site open to longer distance landscape views, native planting would help reinforce screening of buildings.** This is particularly important at Cannock Wood Industrial Estate where the estate falls within/adjacent to the AONB and Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre which is close to the AONB.
- Size, scale, massing and design of new development/redevelopment should be appropriate to location and use.
- **External materials, particularly cladding colours, for new development should be sympathetic to their Green Belt setting** – darker more subdued colours (dark greys and greens) will be less visible in the landscape than pale greys and ‘green roofs’ would address biodiversity issues as well as landscape impact.
- **Refurbishment of entrances to some estates would create an enhanced impression to businesses and the community with potential economic benefits** using composite signs and appropriate hard/soft landscape treatment.
- **Front boundary treatments to units would in many cases benefit from repair and replacement as the opportunity arises**, to enhance street scene within estates.
- **Repairs and resurfacing of accesses to improve traffic flow and encourage pedestrian/cycle use would enhance use and appearance** of most estates.
- See guidance on Green Belt and Cannock Chase AONB, Landscape and Trees and Climate Change.



Cannock Enterprise Centre



Cannock Wood Industrial Estate



Watling Street Business Park



Lime Lane Business Area