

GRETTON HOUSING DESIGN

A REFERENCE DOCUMENT OF COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. OVERVIEW

The overall intention of this reference document is to promote design which will safeguard the setting, feel and character of Gretton by encouraging future development to be sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of design, density and scale.

The design suggestions below offer guidance for the solutions that we feel will enhance and augment the built environment within our village.

2. PURPOSE

Wherever possible developers are requested to demonstrate in a Design and Access Statement how their proposals reinforce Gretton's character and augments, compliments and fits within its neighbourhood.

These comments do not intend to supersede or replace the suggestions and guidance in relevant national and local documents, but are designed to add to them. The intention is that development within this Plan Area is of a standard high enough to ensure that future development improves Gretton for the community.

There is not an intention to impose a particular style of building design nor to exclude good examples of modern design and construction. It is, however, intended that any development proposals should not conflict with their surroundings nor diminish the existing historical value and local amenity.

The Design and Access Statement should address the following:

1. Context and character

We wish to encourage a situation where new buildings maintain the integrity of the village character. To achieve this the building scale, style and materials should be coherent with, and complementary to, the neighbourhood in terms of visual impact.

Particular care should be taken to reflect and respect the importance of neighbouring listed properties and ancient buildings. Building densities should be concomitant with surrounding residential properties and provide space for greenery and planting if common to the area.

2. Design appropriate to the historic character of the village.

All residential development should enhance and reinforce the local character and sense of place of the specific location in which it is situated. New buildings are expected to maintain the integrity of the village character.

3. Environmental impact

Any new development should demonstrate how it will minimise the negative impact on local flora and fauna. Existing trees, hedgerows and topography should be preserved as far as possible. Existing grass verges and banks should be retained where possible and provision made for the upkeep of any new green areas within the development.

Development should incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques to meet high standards for energy and water efficiency, including the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology and where appropriate, grey water systems. This should be incorporated into the design in such a way that the visual impact in comparison to historical buildings within the village is inconsequential.

4. Vehicular access and parking

Particular care should be taken that all developments provide adequate provision for vehicular access and off-road parking and new dwellings provided with a charging port for electric vehicles. Wherever possible the number of parking spaces should be a minimum of two for properties of 3 bedrooms or less, three for 4-bedroom properties and four for 5 bedrooms or more. Each enclosed garage space should include an external drive/forecourt large enough to accommodate a vehicle standing to allow safe ingress and egress. Car parking spaces should be of realistic dimensions and should not require drivers to reverse more than 25m for access.

The suitability of the proposed access roads for the anticipated volume of traffic should also be addressed.

5. Utilities and waste

Development should incorporate sustainable drainage systems with an adequate maintenance regime in place. Appropriate provision for the secure storage of waste bins and recyclable materials out of sight of public areas is also necessary. Meter cabinets and utility entry points should not be sited on property frontages. All new dwellings must be connected to the local fibre optic network and cabling, pipework and telephone lines must be discreet and protected from damage.

All new developments should comply with existing policies regarding aerials and satellite dishes

6. Accessibility

As well as complying with current building regulations, new developments must provide adequate access for wheelchair users and pedestrians throughout the development area by the use of suitable pavements, drop kerbs and avoidance of obstacles such as steps. It is preferable that all new units achieve a minimum space and amenity standard of building regulations M2.

Access to existing footpaths must be maintained.

7. Connection with the countryside

The countryside is regarded as a non-renewable and natural resource which should be afforded protection. Developments are expected to demonstrate their compliance to Planning Guidance as relates to the countryside. In addition it is requested that the Design & Access statement shows how new buildings will be set into the landscape in such a way that they appear to be a coherent part of the village.

8. Quality for pedestrians, cyclists and the physically disadvantaged.

New developments must not create problems of access for residents. The creation of safe spaces for access and movement around the development, taking into account expected vehicle numbers and movements, must be catered for in the Design & Access statement.

9. Implications for local historical narrative.

The Design & Access statement should demonstrate how a proposed development meets the demands of the Plan with regards to the protection and preservation of local historical assets. Developments close to assets of historical importance, must be designed in such a way that they do not detract from or harm these assets.

10. Implications for local amenity

Developments should demonstrate how they contribute positively to local services and amenities. Any new development should not reduce access to services or amenities for residents. Larger developments are expected to contribute positively in order to offset the impact of higher demand on existing services and amenities.

11. Implications for local ecology

The Design & Access statement is expected to demonstrate an understanding of the ecology local to the proposed development and outline what measures will be put in place to protect important habitats and mitigate the impact on local flora and fauna. It should not only protect current biodiversity but should look to increase and enhance local biodiversity. To this end, we positively encourage the following measures:

Roof and wall construction should follow current technical best-practice recommendations for integral bird nest boxes and bat breeding and roosting sites.

Hedges (or fences with ground-level gaps) should be used for property boundaries to maintain connectivity of habitat for small ground based animals such as hedgehogs.

Security lighting should be operated by intruder switching, not on constantly. Site and sports facility lighting should be switched off during 'curfew' hours between March and October, following best practice guidelines in Bats and Lighting. Maximum light spillage onto bat foraging corridors should be 1 lux.

Existing trees and hedges of ecological or arboricultural value on and immediately adjacent to new development sites should be retained and protected whenever possible. Where this is demonstrably not practicable, the developer should be responsible for arranging new plantings on a two new-for-one existing (or better) ratio, using diverse native species, either on site or elsewhere in suitable locations in the Plan Area. Heights and density at maturity should be considered when planning tree planting.

The Design & Access Statement should show wildlife corridors that join green spaces within the development to the surrounding landscape and allow wildlife to traverse the area.

Sustainable drainage and landscaping schemes such as ponds should be designed to incorporate measures for habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement, and should include a resourced management plan to maintain the designed biodiversity value of these features.

12. DESIGN SUGGESTIONS

Consideration should be given to the following suggestions:

All development proposals for more than one unit of residential property should be of a density sympathetic to the village; no private gated areas of housing should be created, as integration of the new developments to the village is key. All proposed densities should be appropriate to that of the surrounding residential properties, and proportionate to the immediate setting. Development density typical of cities or towns are not appropriate. As a guide, appropriate density would be an average number of dwellings per hectare that is close to the existing average in the immediate neighbourhood. The arrangement of buildings should be such that it maximises the benefits of natural light for the properties. It must also avoid a negative impact in terms of noise or light pollution for its neighbours. The arrangement of buildings should also be such that the visual impact on village approaches and on views from within and without the village will be small in scale and complement those existing.

Any dwelling of above average height should be part of a varied scheme, proportionate, and sympathetic to the topography and not over bearing to the surroundings.

The diversity of materials used in any development should match those found elsewhere in the village, with particular emphasis on neighbouring premises and consideration for listed buildings nearby.

Solar panels should not detract from the architectural integrity of the area.

Garages should be constructed to match village dwelling materials.

Roads and driveways should be of varied materials to sit in with the landscape, taking material examples from the village. Stone cobbles, stone sets, and gravel are all desirable. Tarmac should be used only in smaller areas. Hard standing should not comprise the entirety of property frontage and should be off set using planting or lawns to soften the visual impact and reduce surface water run-off. Boundary kerbs should usually be formed of stone to be in keeping with the village.

The use of new technologies that can minimise the carbon footprint of new dwellings whilst blending in seamlessly with their surroundings is positively encouraged. Grey water systems, low carbon technologies such as heat pumps and photo voltaic panels are actively encouraged subject to an appropriate consideration of local heritage and visual impact.

All development plots should support biodiversity and landscaping plans must respect local hedges, trees and wildlife considerations. Boundary walls should not usually exceed 1.8m in height where facing on to roads. Boundary fences should not usually exceed 1.2m in height where visible from public areas and the use of traditional metal rails and bar fences is preferable to picket fencing and timber boards

Colours of doors, windows and walls should be sympathetic to the village and thus bright hues and the use of bold colours should not form the dominant colour of the building or the majority of its design features.

Existing trees and hedgerows should be preserved and incorporated into the design where possible. Provision for new trees and other plants must be made where possible to encourage the development to blend into the rural setting and soften the lines between old and new dwellings.