

Building for a Healthy Life - Uttlesford Assessment Tool

Land At Warish Hall Farm Smiths Green Takeley

UTT/21/1987/FUL

REV A - 19/10/2021 - Updates marked with yellow highlight

First issue - 16.07.21

Mixed use development including: revised access to/from Parsonage Road between Weston Group Business Centre and Innovation Centre buildings leading to: light industrial/flexible employment units (c.3568sqm) including health care medical facility/flexible employment building (Use Class E); 126 dwellings on Bulls Field, south of Prior's Wood; 26 dwellings west of and with access from Smiths Green Lane; 38 dwellings on land north of Jacks Lane, east of Smiths Green Lane including associated landscaping, woodland extension, public open space, pedestrian and cycle routes

Assessment by Jack Bennett - Principal Urban Design Officer

Integrated Neighbourhoods

Natural connections

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Create places that are well integrated into the site and their wider natural and built surroundings. Avoid creating isolated and disconnected places that are not easy places to move through and around.
Look beyond the red line that marks the extent of your site. Ordnance Survey maps along with satellite mapping software such as Google Earth are useful tools to help you understand the wider context and how you can best stitch a new development into a place.
Identify the places, facilities and services you need to connect to.
Draw points of connection into and through your site - creating a strong and direct street, path and open space network.
Create well-connected street and path networks, providing opportunities for these to be extended beyond the site boundary in the future.
Research and respond to how water flows and nature moves across your site and the wider surroundings.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Edge to edge connectivity
Respond to pedestrian and cyclist desire lines.
Connected street patterns. These work best when they include straight or nearly straight streets to makes pedestrian routes as direct as possible.
Filtered permeability. A useful technique that designs out 'rat running' and creates a pleasant low traffic environment around people's homes whilst still allowing pedestrian and cycle movement.
Continuous streets (with public access) along the edges of a development. Private drives can frustrate pedestrian and cycle movement along the edges of a development.
Connecting existing and new habitats; safeguarding existing or creating new movement corridors for nature.
Where retained, keeping hedgerows within the public realm, safeguarding their future retention and management.
Streets and routes that can be extended in the future.
Adoption to site boundaries.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Single or limited points of access for pedestrians and cyclists.
Extensive use of private drives.
Pedestrian or cycle routes that are not well overlooked and lit after dark.
Failing to respond to existing (or anticipate future) pedestrian and cycle desire lines.
No opportunities to connect or extend streets and paths if required by later development.
Internal streets and paths that are not well connected or are indirect.
Retaining existing hedgerows between the back gardens of individual homes.
Ransom strips

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 91a; 102c and e; 104d; 127b; 127f
National Design Guide: Sections B3; M1; M2; N1; R3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Streets and Roads; Landscape and Greenspaces; Highways Technical Manual

Officer comments

a	There should be potential for a pedestrian connection to the north from the commercial area, should any development come forward to the north of the application site. Pedestrian connection marked as 'recreational' from school to north of site would actually be functional (depending on any development coming forward to the north) and should be treated as such with regards surfaces, detailing etc. Existing PROWs not shown on access diagram in DAS, these should be shown and retained. Not all connections to Leyfield are shown in DAS access diagram. Concern raised about quality of connection between site and Leyfield with regards to active overlooking, lighting, surface etc - what mitigation measures are included?
g	Routes generally respond to desire lines apart from route around amenity green in commercial area - the desire line is across the green and through the car park - suggest this is reflected in the layout - currently a car friendly space rather than pedestrian. East of woodland neighbourhood: short path connection from turning head/edge lane to woodland path needed.
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g	Extensive private drives/culdesacs will need be clearly demarcated through detailing/layout etc as private to avoid being misunderstood as a through route.
g	Landscape officer to comment further
g	Hedgerow appears to be retained but existing PROW not marked on plans, also this hedgerow and PROW are addressed by rear garden walls which is not ideal
g	Most routes achieve this apart from car park at northern end of site.
a	Appears to be feasible but case officer/highways officer to confirm no ransom strips etc remain

Walking, cycling, and public transport

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Short trips of up to three miles can be easily made on foot or bicycle if the right infrastructure is in place, helping to improve public health and air quality whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions.
Cycle and walk the neighbourhood to understand where off-site interventions will be most useful. Local residents and councillors can help you understand where investment in improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure might have most impact.
Invite people to cycle within the site and beyond to destinations within at least a three mile radius; with routes through green spaces, quiet streets alongside prioritised and protected routes on busy streets, junctions and roads.
If there is an existing protected cycle network, connect to it. Alternatively, begin a new one by building or funding routes to key destinations.
Ensure access for all and help make walking feel like an instinctive choice for everyone undertaking short journeys (such as the school run or older generations accessing local facilities and services).
Streets and paths that connect people to places and public transport services in the most direct way, making car-free travel more attractive, safe and convenient.
Make sure that all streets and routes pass in front of people's homes rather than to the back of them – creating a well overlooked public realm.
Exploit existing (or planned) public transport hubs, such as train stations and bus interchanges, to build at higher densities and channel a higher percentage of journeys to public transport.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Share street space fairly between pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles.
Cycle friendly streets (see Local Transport Note 1/12) with pedestrian and cycle priority (and protection) with across junctions and side streets.
Nudge people away from the car. Offer cycle (and cargo bike) parking closer to the entrance of commercial, leisure and community facilities than car parking spaces.
Provide scooter and cycle parking at schools. Scooters can encourage younger children to get active on the way to school.
Design out school runs dependent on cars.
Demand Responsive Transport car clubs and car shares.
Start or contribute to the delivery of a Local Cycle and Walking Strategy Infrastructure Plan.
Short and direct walking and cycling connections that make public transport an easy choice to make.
Zebra, parallel and signalised crossing.
New or improved Park and Ride schemes.
Tight corner radii (<3m) at street junctions and side streets.
20mph design speeds, designations and traffic calming.
Concentrate new development around existing or new transport hubs.
Protected cycle ways along busy streets.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Travel Packs that fail to influence people's travel choices.
White line or undivided shared pavement/cycle ways.
Pedestrians and cyclists losing priority at side junctions.
Oversized radii corners on streets that are principally residential that allow motor vehicles to travel around corners at high speeds.
Streets that twist and turn unnaturally in an effort to control vehicle speed but make walking and cycling routes longer than they need to be.
Streets principally designed around waste collection vehicles.
Overwide carriageways that reduce space for pedestrians and cyclists, making it more difficult for people to get around easily especially when social distancing restrictions are in place.
Serviced parcel developments where pedestrian and cycle connections between different phases of development are frustrated.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 20c; 91a; 91c; 127e
National Design Guide: Sections B1; B3; M1; R3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Highways Technical Manual

Officer comments

g	
/	Highways officer to comment
g	
	n/a
g	Good pedestrian/cycle connectivity to existing school
/	Highways officer to comment
/	Highways officer to comment
g	Generally good
/	Highways officer to comment - noted that some pedestrian crossings on woodland boundary don't appear to have raised tables - raised tables now added in revised drawings
/	Highways officer to comment
g	Highways officer to confirm but there could be improvement in some areas to conform with general principle of minimising corner radii to slow vehicle speeds to create pedestrian friendly streets
g	Highways officer to comment - raised tables and road narrowing noted - suggested 10mph limit to 'garden village' area
g	Relatively good walking and cycling connectivity to buses, rail, primary school, local centre, employment, food retail
g	Good within development - highways officer to confirm if any provision made to improve wider routes

Facilities and services

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Places that offer social, leisure and recreational opportunities a short walk or cycle from their homes.
Developments that provide community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, health facilities, co-working spaces, parks, play spaces, cafés and other meeting places that respond to local community needs.
Locate any new facilities in the best location for those walking, cycling and using public transport.
Consider whether improving existing facilities will add more value to the local community than adding new ones.
Assess or identify what sport and leisure provision there is for people of all ages, paying particular attention to the needs of children, teenagers and older people.
Create places where people can meet each other such as public spaces, leisure facilities, community buildings, cafes and restaurants to provide opportunities for social interaction – helping to improve public health by encouraging physical activity and helping to tackle those affected by loneliness and isolation.
'Play on the way' can make car-free trips more fun for children making them want to walk or cycle to school.
Sustainable drainage schemes that contribute towards an attractive and accessible network of streets and public spaces.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Intensifying development in locations that benefit from good public transport accessibility, in particularly around public transport hubs such as train stations and bus interchanges.
Reserving land in the right locations for non-residential uses.
Active frontages.
Clear windows along the ground floor of non-residential buildings (avoid obscure windows).
Mixing compatible uses vertically, such as placing supported accommodation at the heart of new developments above active ground floor uses.
Giving places where routes meet a human scale and create public squares.
Frequent benches can help those with mobility difficulties to walk more easily between places.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Local centres that are not easily accessible and attractive to pedestrians and cyclists.
Non-residential developments that are delivered as a series of individual parcels with their own surface level car parks set back from the street.
Where routes converge, avoid creating places that are of an inhuman scale and that frustrate pedestrian and cycle movement.
Inactive street edges, dead elevations, service yards next to the street and obscure ground floor windows.
Play and other recreational facilities hidden away within developments rather than in located in more prominent locations that can help encourage new and existing residents to share a space.
Not anticipating and responding to desire lines, such as between public transport stops and the entrances to buildings and other facilities.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 102; 103
National Design Guide: Sections B1; B3; N1; P3; U1; U3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details

Officer comments

g	Relatively good walking and cycling connectivity to buses, rail, primary school, local centre, employment, food retail
g	Non-residential uses are in a logical location adjacent to existing commercial. Landscape officer to comment on impact of proximity to woodland. Planning officer to confirm quantum and type of use are appropriate considering wider context.
a	Entrance space does not appear to take the opportunity to create a good design following good placemaking principles. This is an important entrance threshold and is currently defined by blank commercial unit walls and dense parking. The vehicle route through has large radii and no pedestrian crossings or raised tables are shown. Space would benefit from using shared surfaces, changes in surfaces material, soft landscaping etc to define a distinct entrance square, defined by buildings and with parking hidden with buildings or landscaping as far as possible - raised tables now shown
g	The medical building appears well designed from an urban design perspective with large windows addressing the public realm
	n/a
g	Generally done
g	Benches specified but locations not defined (other than woodland and 'recreational area') - locations now defined

Homes for Everyone

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

A range of homes that meet local community needs.
A mix of housing types and tenures that suit the needs of the local community. This may include first time buyer homes, family homes, homes for those downsizing and supported living.
Maximising the opportunities offered by supported accommodation, placing these homes at the heart of new developments above active ground floor uses such as shops, community facilities and pre-schools.
Offering people access to at least some private outdoor space. This is particularly important for people's mental health and wellbeing especially when social distancing and travel restrictions are in place.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Designing homes and streets where it is difficult to determine the tenure of properties through architectural, landscape or other differences.
Apartment buildings might separate tenure by core but each core must look exactly the same.
A range of housing typologies supported by local housing needs and policies to help create a broad-based community
Homes with the flexibility to meet changing needs.
Affordable homes that are distributed across a development.
Access to some outdoor space suitable for drying clothes for apartments and maisonettes.
Consider providing apartments and maisonettes with some private outdoor amenity space such as semi-private garden spaces for ground floor homes; balconies and terraces for homes above ground floor.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Grouping affordable homes in one place (except on smaller developments).
Dividing places and facilities such as play spaces by tenure.
Revealing the different tenure of homes through architecture, landscape, access, car parking, waste storage or other design features.
Not using the space around apartment buildings to best effect and where these could easily be used to create small, semi-private amenity spaces allocated to individual ground floor apartments.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 60-62
National Design Guide: Sections B1; B2; U2; U3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Architectural Details; Internal Design Details; Layout Details

Officer comments

No obvious differences in architecture or detailing as same housetypes are used for affordable and market housing (apart from 2C bungalows)
n/a - apartments all affordable
Case officer to confirm housing needs and policies met - from a design point of view there are a good range of typologies however no evidence of innovative typologies that meet intergenerational/multigenerational needs, or live/work typologies etc
No evidence of this - housing typology document referred to in DAS but not found in submitted documentation - information now submitted
Affordable homes are grouped in a manner that could help to identify homes as affordable which is not in line with guidance - as same housetypes are used this should be straightforward to rectify - amended in revised drawings

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Distinctive Places

Making the most of what's there

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Understand and respond.
Allow time for good design, walk the site and the surroundings with the local planning authority. Discuss, understand and agree opportunities and constraints building a shared vision that makes use of the topography and other existing assets on and beyond the site.
Explore conceptual ideas before settling on an agreed way forward and producing a site layout. For instance, if there are existing site features explore how these might be best integrated into a place.
Identify any visual connections into, out, through and beyond the site.
Work with the contours of the land.
Understand how water flows across and pools on the site. Explore how water can be used to enhance biodiversity, create character and improve people's sense of wellbeing.
Draw all these considerations together to get the street, block and open space structure right from the start (a framework or concept plan).
Consider opportunities for natural lighting, cooling and ventilation. Take care not to compromise important urban design principles such as perimeter block structure.
Identify opportunities to integrate and reuse existing features of value, these might be natural or manmade, on or beyond the site.
Be careful that hedges are not simply retained and prevent a sensible and practical new development layout. It may be more effective to create and plant new hedgerows and tree belts into development proposals than work around existing hedges. A well thought out approach may even increase habitat and biodiversity.
Be sensitive to existing development but avoid creating buffer spaces between existing and new back gardens.
Using the landform and ground conditions (soil) in a considered way. For instance, low-nutrient subsoils are ideal to put to one side if you wish to establish wildflower meadows rather than importing new topsoil.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Taking a walk to really understand the place where a new development is proposed and understand how any distinctive characteristics can be incorporated as features.
Using existing assets as anchor features, such as mature trees and other existing features.
Positive characteristics such as street types, landscape character, grain, plot shapes and sizes, building forms and materials being used to reflect local character.
Sensitive transitions between existing and new development so that building heights, typologies and tenures sit comfortably next to each other.
Remember the 'four pillars' of sustainable drainage systems.
Protecting and enhancing existing habitats; creating new habitats.
Interlocking back gardens between existing and new development (where existing back gardens adjoin a site boundary).

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Designing without walking the site first.
Funnelling rainwater away in underground pipes as the default water management strategy.
Unmanaged gaps between development used as privacy buffers to existing residents.
Placing retained hedges between rear garden boundaries or into private ownership.
Building orientations and designs that fail to capitalise on features such as open views.
Not being sensitive to existing neighbouring properties by responding to layout arrangements, housing typologies and building heights.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 122d; 127c; 127d; 153b; 184
National Design Guide: Sections C1; C2; I1; B2; R3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Understanding Context; Layout Details; Landscape and Greenspaces

Officer comments

a	Concern has been raised about the development along Smiths Green and the impact on heritage buildings and landscaped verges. Priors Wood is respected with appropriate distances (with pinch point due to site constraints) and wood is enhanced with addition - Landscape officer to provide further comments.
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g	Notwithstanding heritage concerns, proposals along Smiths Green do reflect local character to some degree, although double the density with 2 rows of houses rather than 1. Opportunity for these rear homes to address POS is not taken, and rear garden fences are shown which is not acceptable. Density generally deemed appropriate balance between providing new homes and reflect existing character.
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	Landscape officer to comment
	Landscape officer to comment
a	Generally acceptable however some concerns about northern edge of 'garden village' could these homes work harder to address the PROW to the north rather than turn their back. General lack of clarity around southern boundary of 'woodland neighbourhood' with some boundaries formed by walls, others open, others timber fencing, strips of left over land shown as meaningless open space - requires detailed plan showing ownerships, access, uses etc.

A Memorable Character

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Create places that are memorable
Create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character.
Review the wider area for sources of inspiration. If distinctive local characteristics exist, delve deeper than architectural style and details. Where the local context is poor or generic, do not use this as a justification for more of the same. Inspiration may be found in local history and culture.
Understand where positive local character comes from: streets, blocks and plots (urban grain), green and blue infrastructure, land uses, building form, massing and materials often underpin the essence of the distinctive character of settlements rather than architectural style and details.
Using a local materials palette (where appropriate) can be a particularly effective way to connect a development to a place. This is often more achievable and credible than mimicking traditional architectural detailing which can be dependent on lost crafts.
Brownfield sites can offer sources of inspiration for new development. Greenfield and edge of settlement locations often require more creativity and inspiration to avoid creating places that lack a sense of local or otherwise distinctive character.
Character can also be created through the social life of public spaces. Create the physical conditions for activity to happen and bring places to life.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

A strong, hand drawn design concept. To find the right solution a number of different ideas and options might need to be explored.
Drawing inspiration from local architectural and/or landscape character.
Reflecting character in either a traditional or contemporary style.
Structural landscaping as a way to create places with a memorable character.
Memorable spaces and building groupings.
Place names that have a connection to the locality can help stimulate ideas and design thought. A place name like 'Valley View' will always be more helpful on larger, multi-developer developments than generic terms such as 'Parcel R5.1'.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Using a predetermined sequence of house types to dictate a layout.
Attempting to create character through poor replication of architectural features or details
Arranging buildings next to each other in a way that does not create a cohesive street scene.
Referencing generic or forgettable development nearby to justify more of the same.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 122d; 127c; 127d
National Design Guide: Sections C2; I1; I2; I3; B3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Architectural Details; Internal Design Details; Layout Details; Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Landscape and Greenspaces

Officer comments

A process has evidently been followed.
A thorough analysis of local architecture has been undertaken which references quality examples and draws inspiration from them. Poor quality examples are also shown (for context) but it is important inspiration is not drawn from them e.g. UPVC windows will not be allowed.
Housetypes successfully create distinct character in a contemporary style. Windows shown are generous and would help create good quality of internal spaces. Detailing shown is restrained, neat, and appropriate for materials shown. Would suggest pitched porches shown to housetypes 3B, 3C, and 3D are incongruous with successful contemporary aesthetic. More details required on material specification particularly windows and weatherboarding - no plastic or UPVC allowed. Pale brick is not evidently drawn from local precedent however is supported as contributes to variety and distinct character using quality materials. Overall reviewing local precedent and responding with a variety of bespoke housetypes over a number of logical character areas is a process which is strongly supported.
Central open space and linear park well considered, recreational space has issues as outlined in earlier comments. Garden village open space is compromised by blank garden walls addressing it in some locations. Trees and verges as shown to pedestrian and cycle routes would help create character. Landscape officer to provide further comments
Variety of housetypes, character areas, and successful landscaping do support this aim, but there are missed opportunities for placemaking at the commercial/recreational entrance square as outlined previously, and around apartment blocks where shared surfaces, surface material changes, benches, structural landscaping etc could be used to create a public square central to this part of the scheme - this would help create character through social interaction, especially as on key route to school - raised tables in revised drawings go some way to addressing this

Well defined streets and spaces

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Create a network of streets and spaces that are well enclosed by buildings and/or structural landscaping, taking care to ensure that front doors and the principal facades of buildings face streets and public spaces.
A strong framework of connected and well overlooked streets and spaces.
Look beyond the plan and illustrative street scenes; what will you actually see and experience walking along the street?
Perimeter blocks with clearly defined public fronts and private backs.
Active frontages. Front doors, balconies, terraces, front gardens and bay windows are a good way to enliven and add interest to the street and create a more human scale to larger buildings such as apartments and supported living accommodation.
Carefully considered street corners.
Three dimensional models (physical or computer generated) and simple, hand drawn street cross sections can be particularly useful tools to understand and test the spatial qualities of a place.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Streets with active frontages.
Well defined streets and spaces, using buildings, landscaping and/or water to enclose and define space
Cohesive building compositions and building lines.
Front doors that face streets and public spaces.
Apartments that offer frequent front doors to the street.
Dual aspect homes on street corners with windows serving habitable rooms.
Perimeter blocks.
Well resolved internal vistas.
Building typologies that are designed to straddle narrow depth blocks.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Distributor roads and restricted frontage access.
Broken or fragmented perimeter block structure.
Presenting blank or largely blank elevations to streets and public spaces.
Lack of front boundaries, street planting and trees.
Apartment buildings with single or limited points of access.
Apartment buildings accessed away from the street.
Staggered and haphazard building lines that are often created by placing homes with a mix of front and side parking arrangements next to each other.
Street corners with blank or largely blank sided buildings and/or driveways. Street edges with garages, back garden spaces enclosed by long stretches of fencing or wall.
Buffers between new and existing development that create channels of movement between back gardens whether access is permitted or not.
Single aspect homes on street corners.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 91a
National Design Guide: Sections B2; M2; N2; N3; P1; P2; H2; L3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Highways Technical Manual

Officer comments

a	Woodland neighbourhood streets are generally well defined apart from key areas of concern which are NS street lined with FOGs and rear garden walls which also has issues with poorly defined corners, and would generally create a lonely atmosphere in this part of the plan. Timber boundary fences of rear gardens to 'rural lane' would not be acceptable (now revised to softer more permeable boundaries) suggest homes that address the POS or lower level soft landscaping forming boundary and secured in planning condition. FOG located in apartment car park is unfortunate. Terraces and apartments do not take the opportunity to create defined public spaces see previous point about memorable places (raised tables in revised drawings improve this). There are issues with street corners defined with meaningless green space, kinked rear garden boundaries, or car parking spaces which should be addressed - this is particularly problematic in the 'garden village' area (quality trees in revised drawings go some way to addressing this) There are many instances where this is dealt with well, the approach just needs to be consistent. Rural edge is essentially a long block severed occasionally by pedestrian routes which it does not properly address (revised boundary treatments improve this) homes with active sides have now been included which also improve the situation overall
a	See above
a	See above
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g	No evidence of this - some housetypes do show small windows to side elevations but not evident that these are used to turn corners 'Housing Typology Document' not found - this needs to be addressed (not clear if house type 3B or 3C used in key locations) - updated in revised drawings
g	Generally used
a	Some views are terminated well with landscaping, principal elevations, or considered corners of buildings. Others are unsuccessful as terminated with blank garden walls, blank gables. Entrance to scheme dominated by parking and commercial units is a missed opportunity. View along eastern edge of woodlands neighbourhood addressing park is successful.
g	Homes along Jack's Lane

Bits of left over land between the blank flank walls of buildings.

Easy to find your way around

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Use legible features to help people find their way around a place.
Streets that connect with one another.
Streets that are as straight and as direct as possible.
Use street types, buildings, spaces, non-residential uses, landscape, water and other features to help people create a 'mental map' of a place.
Streets with clearly different characters are more effective than 'character areas' in helping people grasp whether they are on a principal or secondary street.
For larger sites, it will be necessary to use streets and spaces with different characters to help people to find their way around.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Designing for legibility when creating a concept plan for a place.
Using streets as the main way to help people find their way around a place. For instance, principal streets can be made different to more minor streets through the use of different spatial characteristics, building typologies, building to street relationships, landscape strategies and boundary treatments.
Navigable features for those with visual, mobility or other limitations.
Frame views of features on or beyond a site.
Create new legible elements or features on larger developments – further reinforce legible features where necessary through the landscape strategy, building and layout design, hard landscaping and boundaries.
Simple street patterns based on formal or more relaxed grid patterns.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

No meaningful variation between street types.
Disorientating curvilinear street patterns.
Disconnected streets, paths and routes.
Building typologies, uses, densities, landscaping or other features are not used to create places that are different to one another.
Cul de sac based street patterns

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 91b; 127b
National Design Guide: Sections I1; M1; M2; U1
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Highways Technical Manual

Officer comments

Not specifically referenced but generally legible in constraints of site
Streets do have general hierarchy but issues outlined in 'well defined streets and spaces' section undermine legibility of the place overall. Variety and character of houstypes and landscaping generally aids legibility and distinctive areas.
Not referenced specifically but site not overly monotonous with different character of homes and open spaces including woodland
Not referenced specifically - see other comment about views
See above.
Street patterns are generally simple and well connected. Extensive private drives/culdesacs will need be clearly demarcated through detailing/layout etc as private to avoid being misunderstood as a through route.

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Streets for All

Healthy streets

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Streets are different to roads. Streets are places where the need to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles is balanced alongside the need for people to move along and cross streets with ease. Activity in the street is an essential part of a successful public realm.
Low-speed streets and neighbourhoods with pedestrian and cycle priority.
The right balance between movement and place functions.
Rethinking the way we distribute street space. At times of more relaxed social distancing, demand for better quality cycle provision is expected to increase as public transport capacity reduces. Congestion caused by motor vehicles will make it unattractive for people to switch from public transport to cars creating a unique opportunity to change the way we move around our cities, towns and villages.
Healthy streets improve people's physical and mental health. Encouraging walking, cycling, outdoor play and streets where it is safe for younger children to cycle (or scooter) to school can create opportunities for social interaction and street life bringing wider social benefits.
Street trees.
Avoid streets that are just designed as routes for motor vehicles to pass through and for cars to park within.
Boulevards and streets with active edges rather than distributor roads and bypasses with no (or limited) frontage access.
Streets that are easy to cross; providing priority for pedestrians and cyclists across junctions and accesses.
Well overlooked streets with front doors facing streets and public spaces.
Provide conditions for cycling appropriate to the speed and volume of motor traffic.
Inclusive design: think about how people with visual, mobility or other limitations will be able to use the street confidently and safely.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Streets for people.
20mph (or lower) design speeds; 20mph designations.
Tree lined streets. Make sure that trees have sufficient space to grow above and below ground, with long term management arrangements in place.
Tight corner radii (3m or less).
Places to sit, space to chat or play within the street.
Pavements and cycleways that continue across side streets.
Anticipating and responding to pedestrian and cycle 'desire lines' (the most direct routes between the places people will want to travel between).
Landscape layers that add sensory richness to a place – visual, scent and sound (including SUDs)

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Roads for cars.
Failure to adhere to the user hierarchy set out in Manual for Streets.
Wide and sweeping corner radii (6m or more). 6m+ wide carriageways.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 91b; 102c and e; 110a-d
National Design Guide: Sections M1; M2; N3; P1; P2; P3; H1; H2
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Highways Technical Manual; Landscape and Greenspaces

Officer comments

g	Generally good measures have been taken to create streets for people including tight corners, pedestrian and cycle lanes, desire lines, raised tables, continuous paths, shared surfaces, hidden parking, low speeds, play on they way, wider connections. Re. shared surface edge lanes: 6m width is only required to enable manoeuvring into car parking spaces, in other locations roads can be narrowed to enable more soft landscaping and reduce vehicle speeds (this must be confirmed with highways officer).
g	Streets should be designated as such
a	Some street trees shown however unclear if they are in private ownership. All street trees must not be conveyed to private ownership to ensure longevity. Must be covered by management company or adopted. Missed opportunity for streets trees along entrance street adjacent to woodland - streets adjacent to open space enjoy trees this way however
g	Highways officer to confirm but there could be improvement in some areas to conform with general principle of minimising corner radii to slow vehicle speeds to create pedestrian friendly streets
g	Benches specified but locations not defined (other than woodland and 'recreational area') good opportunities for play provided including potential LAPs, LEAPS, and play on the way. Confirm LAPs within 100m of homes
g	Achieved in some locations, whereas only indicated in others but needs to be confirmed with raised tables shown or similar more localised solution - tables now shown
g	Routes generally respond to desire lines apart from route around amenity green in commercial area - the desire line is across the green and through the car park - suggest this is reflected in the layout - currently a car friendly space rather than pedestrian. East of woodland neighbourhood: short path connection from turning head/edge lane to woodland path needed.
a	Many homes benefit from aspect over green open space/woodland. Unclear if pedestrianised route to school has any landscaping, currently shown as front gardens which would result in a lack of control of landscape quality along this route - rain garden shown as 'potential' - this would be a good addition if confirmed. Soft landscaping shown to parking courts which is good, but more trees would be beneficial (now included) - could be included in soft landscaping zones already shown. Turning arm of turning heads provided for refuse - suggest grasscrete (highways to confirm if acceptable) to reduce visual impact of turning head on open green space. Collection day refuse storage surface to be grasscrete or similar to reduce visual impact. Biggest issue is lack of structural landscaping to secondary streets - this could easily be resolved by reducing size of front gardens to provide managed verge with soft landscaping and tree planting - the management arrangements for this are still being resolved

Highways engineering details that make pedestrian and cycle movements more complex and difficult.
Street trees conveyed to individual occupiers.
Distributor roads with limited frontage access, served by private drives.
Painted white line cycle routes on pavements or on carriageways.
Speed control measures that rely on significant shifts in street alignment that contribute towards wasting land whilst also creating disorientating places.

Cycle and car parking

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Well-designed developments will make it more attractive for people to choose to walk or cycle for short trips helping to improve levels of physical activity, air quality, local congestion and the quality of the street scene. Well-designed streets will also provide sufficient and well-integrated car parking.
Provide secure cycle storage close to people's front doors so that cycles are as convenient to choose as a car for short trips.
Integration of car parking into the street environment.
Anticipate realistic levels of car parking demand, guarding against displaced and anti-social parking; thinking about the availability and frequency of public transport
Avoid confusing car ownership with car usage.
Creative solutions for attractive, convenient and safe cycle parking or higher density developments (such as apartment buildings).
Generous landscaping to settle frontage car parking into the street.
Shared and unallocated parking.

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

At least storage for one cycle where it is as easy to access as the car.
Secure and overlooked cycle parking that is as close to (if not closer) than car parking spaces (or car drop off bays) to the entrances of schools, shops and other services and facilities.
Shared and unallocated on street car parking. Landscaping to help settle parked cars into the street.
Frontage parking where the space equivalent to a parking space is given over to green relief every four bays or so.
Anticipating and designing out (or controlling) anti-social car parking.
A range of parking solutions.
Small and overlooked parking courtyards, with properties within courtyard spaces with ground floor habitable rooms.
Staying up to date with rapidly advancing electric car technology.
More creative cycle and car parking solutions.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Providing all cycle storage in garages and sheds.
Over reliance on integral garages with frontage driveways.
Frontage car parking with little or no softening landscaping.
Parking courtyards enclosed by fencing; poorly overlooked, poorly lit and poorly detailed.
Over-reliance on tandem parking arrangements.
Failing to anticipate and respond to displaced and other anti-social parking
Views along streets that are dominated by parked cars, driveways or garages.

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 101e; 127f; 105d
National Design Guide: Sections B2; M1; M3
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Parking Design; Streets and Roads; Highways Technical Manual

Officer comments

g	
g	
g	Some houses have 3 parking spaces facing the public realm which is undesirable as creates wide gaps between houses degrading street scene and creates car domination. Could 4 spaces at entry pinchpoint align with house in this location and be tucked behind landscaping. Would suggest that visitor parking shown in apartment car park is not placed in an intuitive location, this may be better on the NS street in a parallel arrangement as elsewhere as this would also reduce anti-social parking pressure (highways to confirm) this also create an opportunity to include a green verge to liven this otherwise fairly inactive street. Visitor car parking to be hidden with soft landscaping as far as possible. (visitor parking now included in more on-street locations)
g	This rule is generally adhered to but needs reviewing in some areas particularly the area currently shown as affordable (more trees added in revision)
g	Low-timber bollards specified to 'linear park' are supported. Rear parked homes whilst creating pleasant pedestrianised route create problems with anti-social parking. NS route through 'woodland neighbourhood' would need strong anti-social parking controls due to high level of rear parked homes - applicant to make proposals - timber bollards and visitor parking placed in intuitive and obvious places has been included
g	
a	Rear courts are overlooked by FOGs but not ground floor rooms. It is recognised that the rear parking courts create pedestrianised frontages to the school route but the courts rely on FOGs which deaden the street scene, and some surrounding streets are defined by FOGs, parking, and rear garden walls. Rear parking courts also create anti-social parking problems see point above. Rear parking courts also tend to be wasteful of space as two movement corridors are required per run of houses rather than one. On balance the benefits of the rear parking courts don't appear to outweigh the disbenefits and conventional streets could enable better placemaking however it is recognised that bollards to prevent antisocial parking are included, trees and quality boundary treatments are included, and visitor parking spaces are well placed to work towards preventing anti social parking.
a	Electric vehicle charging included for all dwellings but more technical detail required particularly in relation to on-street and rear parking courts.
a	Standard approaches shown

Car parking spaces that are too narrow making it difficult for people to use them.

Cycle parking that is located further away to the entrances to shops, schools and other facilities than car parking spaces and car drop off bays.

Relying on garages being used for everyday car parking.

Green and blue infrastructure

What's needed (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Creative surface water management such as rills, brooks and ponds enrich the public realm and help improve a sense of wellbeing and offer an interaction with nature. As the richest habitat for a range of flora and fauna, they are also a key play in achieving the net gain in biodiversity sought by the 2020 Environment Bill.
Create a strong landscape strategy that has impact from 'day one'. Don't 'layer' landscape onto a scheme at the end of the process. Landscape changes can offer opportunities to reintroduce lost habitats and species.
Create a network of different types of spaces.
Weave opportunities for habitat creation throughout the development. Plan these as movement corridors to support biodiversity.
Create food growing opportunities such as allotments and orchards on larger developments.
Have a sustainable drainage 'treatment train' thinking about the 'four pillars'. Capture water as close as possible to where it falls. Be creative with rain gardens, ponds and swales and avoid steeply-sided or fenced holes in the ground.
Well-designed multi-functional sustainable drainage will incorporate play and recreational opportunities.
Well-overlooked public open spaces with strong levels of natural surveillance.
Robust management and long term stewardship

What 'green' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Biodiversity net gain.
Movement and feeding corridors for wildlife, such as hedgehog highways. Bird boxes, swift nesting bricks and bat bricks may be appropriate.
Plans that identify the character of new spaces, such as 'parks', 'woodland', 'allotments', 'wildflower meadows' rather than 'P.O.S.' Be more specific about the function and character of public open spaces.
Create Park Run ready routes on larger developments and other ways to encourage physical activity and social interaction.
Capturing and managing water creatively and close to where it falls using features such as rain gardens and permeable surfaces. Allow people to connect with water.
Create a habitat network providing residents with opportunities to interact with nature on a day to day basis. Wildlife does not flourish within disconnected back gardens, artificial lawns and tightly mown grass.
Provide natural surveillance opportunities.
A connected and accessible network of public open spaces with paths and other routes into and through.
Sports and play facilities
Well considered management arrangements whether public or privately managed.

What 'red' looks like (from Building for a Healthy Life)

Surface water management by way of a large, steep sided and fenced holes in the ground.
Small pieces of land (typically grassed over) that offer little or no public, private or biodiversity value that over time become neglected and forgotten.
Large expanses of impervious surfaces.
Not designing paths and routes through open spaces where it is difficult for people to create distance between themselves and other people when social distancing restrictions are in place.
Buildings that turn away from open spaces.
Poor quality finishing, detailing and maintenance

Relationship of this section to policy:

National Planning Policy Framework: Clauses 20d; 91b; 91c; 127f; 155; 170d; 174
National Design Guide: Sections C1; B3; M1; N1; N2, N3; P1; P3; H1; R3; L1
Uttlesford Emerging Local Plan 2023: TBC
Essex Design Guide: Layout Details; Flood Management; Landscape and Greenspace

Officer comments

	Landscape officer to comment - plans appear to have good potential to achieve this
a	Landscape officer to comment - again plans do appear to have good potential to achieve this but couldn't find specification
g	Community allotments shown as hard-standing on coloured masterplan please confirm treatment specified here. Overall public open spaces have individual, considered, and appropriate characters/functions
g	Landscape officer to comment - 2 laps of SANG route would technically enable Park Run ready 5km route depending on suitable running surface
a	Landscape officer to comment - SUDs are shown as dry ponds also functioning as public open space which is potentially a good approach but the technical detail of how this would work needs to be secured in the planning permission and confirmed with Essex
a	Landscape officer to comment - would suggest more habitat and vegetation secured within street network with managed/planted verges and ensure private front gardens are not solely relied upon for street greenery
g	Notwithstanding previous points about lack of active frontages in some areas
g	
g	Facilities appear to have potential to be in accordance with Fields in Trust guidance pending confirmation of LAP locations
a	Adopted/private/managed plan not found