4. Sustainable Buildings and Good Design

Introduction

61. Residents of Wool Parish care deeply about how their area is developed to maintain and enhance positive features of its existing neighbourhoods and ensure that new areas of development create a positive contribution. The neighbourhood plan provides an opportunity to consider the positive design features that the local community want to promote more of, and the negative design features they would want to discourage.

62. The imperative for solid design policies in the neighbourhood plan is given extra force by the adoption of a National Model Design Code and the development of an area-wide design code being developed by Dorset Council. Wool Parish sits within the Purbeck Sub-Area, and it is to be expected that building styles and preferences of the Purbeck area are reflected in new development. The Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan identifies local traditions and preferred building design to be reflected in new development on local sites. It provides an opportunity to respond to community views on the local built environment.

63. Wool Village is a very old village which has for the most part the appearance of a modern settlement and is home to a wide range of post-medieval to post-war, and now modern, residential building styles. Development has largely been piecemeal and organic and so the shock of the large-scale and the new has been avoided, until recently. One recent development has raised concerns about the physical height of buildings in the development, about the perceived 'alien' design and, fundamentally, the quality of materials, construction and maintenance.

64. East Burton village is a small village partly connected to the adjacent Wool village. Site allocation options set out in the Regulation 18 Options Consultation Dorset Local Plan (January 2021) have indicated strategic site allocation options in the area to the west of East Burton village up to the east of the Dorset Police Headquarters and the Dorset Innovation Park. If pursued as a preferred option in the Dorset Local Plan, development in this area in would see the whole of the area in between East Burton village and these areas developed for housing.

65. Bovington sits apart and has been developed alongside and been wholly influenced by the development of the Bovington Camp. Much of the fabric of Bovington has developed to service and provide amenities to people working for the ministry of defence establishment there. That said. there is a delineation between operational areas (behind the wire) and public areas. For public areas, the neighbourhood plan can address any requirements to support improvements to the environment of Bovington through good design.

66. The emerging Purbeck Local Plan is at an advanced stage and should be adopted once nutrient neutrality issues are resolved. The site allocations in the plan place new planned development within and to the west of Wool and occupy prominent positions with long views into the site from the north, from currently open land subject to allocation proposals. Closer views of the site, which is seen as rising land, exist from adjacent properties to the east (from which it is prominent) and from the Dorchester Road.

67. In the face of potentially transformative development, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group want to ensure that lessons are learnt from recent development and that any new development respects local styles and scale so that the attributes which make Wool a nice place to live are retained, continued and enhanced in new development.

Design Policies for Wool Village, East Burton Village and Bovington

68. Work has been undertaken to document design styles and design opportunities in the built environment of Wool and East Burton Villages. Development within the Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone and within the MOD Estate at Bovington Camp (behind the wire) has not been considered in this work owing to their unique position and strategic status.

69. The aim of this work is to provide information on predominant development styles with a view to indicating how future development should be designed to complement it, strengthen positive design features and address negative design impacts.

70. It seeks to identify opportunities to increase the legibility (understanding of the structure) of the built environment of Bovington, East Burton and Wool, to recognise and strengthen gateways, routes and key destinations. It identifies components of design which work well in terms of layout, landscaping and green infrastructure within developments.

71. Two documents have been prepared as appendices to the neighbourhood plan. The first (**Appendix A**) reviews Wool's townscape character drawing heavily on the Wool Townscape Character Appraisal and the Bovington Townscape Character Appraisal. Some important priorities are drawn out from this as to how different parts of the parish should be managed in development terms and where opportunities may exist to enhance local character.

72. The second document **(Appendix B)** examines the density, scale and massing of different housing areas in Wool Parish, based on their period of development. Within Wool and East Burton, this shows a predominance of certain building and development approaches:

- The overall height of development in Wool is low with many properties at 1 or 1.5 storeys.
- Two-storey properties are low height also.
- Developments are often of mixed heights.
- Apart from the Black Bear Inn, there were no three storey properties before Purbeck Gate
- A range of densities are apparent dependent on the age of properties, location and how they were developed.
- High densities can be achieved using traditional development form (although this was not applied to Purbeck Gate)
- Most properties in Wool sit well within their plots with private gardens to front and to the rear. This approach is maintained whether properties are larger or smaller.
- The approach to development form lends an open character with low massing to most parts of Wool (although this was not applied to Purbeck Gate).
- Topography on Wool's southern slopes has influenced development design resulting in a mix of 1, 1.5 and 2-storey properties arranged to work with the topography and landscaping to maintain openness of estates.
- Some parts of proposed allocation sites will need to consider similar topographical influences in relation to existing development and the wider landscape.

73. Within Bovington, the following general building and development approaches are evident:

- Generally, two-storey housing with some taller elements
- Larger institutional buildings in public areas and behind the wire in MOD operational areas.
- Variety of modern styles of low to medium quality, which lack details.
- Extensive landscaping, some very good and other areas poor.

- Spread-out neighbourhood centre with extensive set-backs.
- Important surrounding woodland provides setting and screens Bovington from nearby areas.
- Some areas lack direct walking routes to the neighbourhood centre.
- Some areas have poor provision for car parking.

Residential Development Form

74. The work undertaken to support the neighbourhood plan shows that, whilst a wide range of housing development styles have been applied across time, there are core design features which have guided development in Wool and which are reflected in the built environment of Wool, East Burton and Bovington today. Recent development has shown how impactful generic approaches to development can be on a locality and due regard is needed to ensure new development can integrate with existing communities and built forms.

75. The work to establish priorities for the maintenance and enhancement of local character areas in Wool, to show how high densities have been achieved using traditional development forms, and to identify key positive design and materials approaches, is the basis for local design priorities and policies in the neighbourhood plan. This will apply at all levels including infill, small scale redevelopment and across larger developments.

WOOL 1 - New residential development form

Proposals for new residential development should demonstrate due regard to existing character of local areas in Wool Parish identified in Appendix B as expressed through proposed density, layouts, massing, plot arrangement to afford private space, car parking and other services, particularly in relation to waste storage. Proposals should demonstrate how they meet the following principles:

a) The height of new development should not be overbearing in relation to neighbouring development and should not result in significant changes of character currently based on low height development giving an open character, recognising that these can also achieve higher densities.

b) High densities should be delivered alongside the provision of private space to the front of dwellings and should be based on legible, understandable street patterns which afford private rear garden and living space which is not overlooked. Appendix B identifies parts of Wool where this is achieved.

c) New development form should respect topography to reduce the potential for impacts on existing neighbouring properties and address wider landscape considerations. New development should follow the approaches taken by previous developments identified in Appendix B, which respect topography within planned developments.

WOOL 2 - New development design and materials

Proposals for new development should demonstrate the inclusion of details and use of materials on new buildings and boundary treatments which are of good quality and are durable. This should be undertaken in accordance with the review of townscape character in Appendix A which sets out key positive and negative design detailing and materials present in Wool Parish, indicating priorities for the design and layout of future development.

Improving the local public realm

76. Taking a view across **Appendix A, Appendix B** and a photo survey of Wool to show character and quality variations across different areas, some priorities are identified for improving specific places within Wool, in co-operation with partners, or as new development arises:

- Improve the function and environmental quality of Neighbourhood Centres for users.
- Improve the Level Crossing, Wool Railway Station and its Environs.
- Improve the quality of the public realm/local environment on the main pedestrian route along Dorchester Road to the shops, services and railway station, through a co-ordinated approach to the provision of street infrastructure and surfacing, to landscaping and planting and to boundary treatments of important sites.
- Encourage the owners of the BT Exchange and The D'Urberville Small Business Centre to improve the maintenance of their sites.

WOOL 3 - Priority schemes and interventions to improve local environmental quality

Proposals which would improve facilities and buildings, surfacing, landscaping/planting, street furniture, boundary treatments, car parking, the local public realm in the following key locations will be supported:

a) Neighbourhood Centres in Wool Village, Braytown and Bovington.

b) Level Crossing, Wool Railway Station and its Environs.

c) Key pedestrian route along Dorchester Road.

d) The BT exchange on Station Road.

e) The D'Urberville Business Centre.

Sustainable Buildings

77. The climate emergency creates an imperative for local communities to take action to combat climate change and to mitigate its effects through design of new development. Wool Parish is no different and wants to support the development of new sustainable buildings and to support existing development to become more sustainable through measures to increase energy efficiency and incorporate low carbon and renewable energy technologies. It is important that new buildings in Wool are built ready for renewable or low carbon heat technologies, and should incorporate renewable energy generation to reduce fossil fuel energy demands and improve energy efficiency.

78. The government is regulating on home insulation and heating and is also providing incentives for homeowners to improve energy efficiency and reduce domestic emissions of greenhouse gases. Higher levels of energy efficiency and lower carbon emissions will be required in new buildings when Parts F and L Building Regulations requirements are applied from 2025 to meet the Future Homes Standard. There is no reason why new development design cannot incorporate these features now, or at least ensure that new development is ready to meet new requirements.

79. The occupants of new housing are often left with significant costs and difficulties in adapting newly-built homes to meet future requirements or take advantage of government initiatives to support change. New homes could be routinely built with roof top solar panels on them now. New homes will need space to be provided for heat pumps and this needs to be designed in – many new homes have little space to the front and at the back and it is not currently clear they could incorporate heat pumps.

80. Many smaller homes are designed with final entry doors to the front and rear which open directly into living spaces, which undermines the way heat pumps work to gradually heat spaces. New homes are often provided with plumbing and wiring which is not capable of accommodating new heating technologies which require greater water flow to heated water storage tanks. They don't have the space for the large water tanks. Radiators are too small and underfloor heating is not provided. Electrical wiring does not support renewable technology installation.

81. It is a truism that energy efficiency UK homes is poor. Building Regulations practices are poor where sign-off for whole developments can be secured with an inspection of just one building, often after repeated tests and liberal use of the filler gun to plug gaps. Designed standards are often not achieved as a result of poor materials use and poor construction quality.

82. All this can render sustainable technologies unworkable or can be disruptive and costly to address. This could be avoided if required features and infrastructure are designed into new developments now, and they are built to good standards. Efforts to reflect these needs in planning policies are often objected to by developers who think that requirements should be laid out clearly in Building Regulations, and this might work if Building Regulations practices were better. This was certainly the response of developers to Regulation 18 policy options in the emerging Dorset Local Plan.

83. What can a Neighbourhood Plan do to encourage better development design, built with good quality materials to good standards of construction? Wool Parish supports local efforts to improve the area's carbon footprint. Neighbourhood plan policies can support homeowners and developers to install renewable and other low carbon technologies within existing and on new developments. It can do this by encouraging high environmental performance in the development of new buildings and alterations/extensions to existing buildings.

WOOL 4 – Environmental Performance of Buildings

New Buildings and alterations/extensions to existing buildings are expected to achieve high standards of environmental performance. This includes where possible in relation to listed buildings where positive support will be given to proposals within the existing framework of protection of heritage assets.

New development design in Wool should be future-proofed to support the achievement of lower carbon emissions, improved energy efficiency, better heat management and lower operating costs with new heating and energy generation technologies.

Proposals for development which include the following measures will be supported:

a) Provide space within plots for heat pumps which should be positioned to ensure the amenity of occupants and neighbours is maintained.

b) Incorporate design features to maintain heat balance within buildings, avoiding external doors opening directly into living spaces.

c) Provide internal electrical and plumbing to specifications required for use with sustainable heating and energy generation technologies.

c) Incorporate roof top solar on new homes.

d) Consider the potential for community energy schemes to provide heat and power to new developments.

e) Provide Electric Vehicle Chargepoints to serve the occupants of every new home and to serve the users of all non-domestic buildings.