

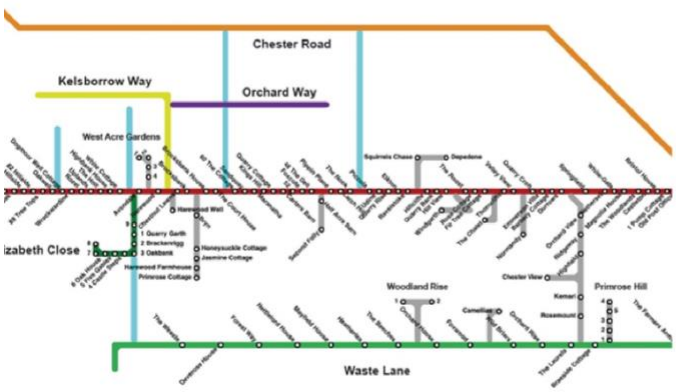




Kelsall design code

DRAFT

September 2026





CREATE streets

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Kelsall Parish Council

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Kelsall and Willington neighbourhood plan

Design Code Draft Text

1. Introduction

This Design Code is part of the Kelsall and Willington Neighbourhood Plan, delivering on policy D1 and setting clear expectations for the design of new development. It provides clear rules translating the Neighbourhood Plan's policies into practical expectations setting out what good development should look like so that it integrates with existing places, responds to local character and contributes positively to the villages of Kelsall and Willington.

The Neighbourhood Plan establishes the planning policy framework for development including settlement boundaries, housing density, local character and infrastructure. This Design Code provides more detail showing how development should be designed in order to comply with those policies.

The draft *Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan* (2025) identifies Kelsall as a location for growth, whereas Willington Parish is designated as open countryside under Local Plan policy STRAT 9, and is an Area of Special County Value. As the village evolves, it is important that new development reinforces the qualities that residents most value, creating a good place to live for current and future residents.

This Code does not repeat borough-wide guidance already set out in the Cheshire West and Chester Borough-wide Design Code. It should be read as a local layer of additional and more specific guidance for Kelsall and Willington, focused on matters of local character, topography, landscape setting, views, movement patterns and settlement edge.

The guidance for Willington draws on the Willington Village Design Statement (2018), which identifies the features that make up the special character of the parish.

Planning applications within the Neighbourhood Plan area must demonstrate how they have addressed the relevant principles of this Code, which will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.



View looking east over Kelsall showing a new development around Kelsall Green.

2. How to use this code

Relationship to National Design Guidance

This Design Code should be read alongside the borough-wide design guidance prepared by Cheshire West and Chester Council. It provides a locally specific interpretation of national policy in the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* and the *Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan*, setting out how these principles should be applied in Kelsall and Willington. The policies and guidance in this Code apply across the Neighbourhood Plan Area, unless specified otherwise, eg '(Applicable only to Kelsall Parish)' or '(Applicable only to Willington Parish)'.

Each section includes the most relevant national policy references that support the principle being set out. This includes, but is not limited to:

- *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, August 2026)
- *National Design Guide* (NDG, 2021)
- *Manual for Streets* (MfS 2007)
- *Manual for Streets 2* (MfS 2, 2010)
- *Building for a Healthy Life* (BfHL, 2026)

Must, should and could

There are three levels of design policies to follow:

MUST	Mandatory design practices and parameters that must be adhered to. Where policies are designated as a MUST, these are essential requirements which proposals must meet.
SHOULD	Practices and parameters that SHOULD be adhered to whenever possible unless there are specific reasons for not doing so. This would generally be due to physical constraints. If a SHOULD is not adhered to evidence must be presented by the developer to justify why not.
COULD	Design practices which are recommended to ensure high-quality design is achieved.

This language will be used throughout the document.

Where this code applies

This Design Code applies to planning applications for new mixed use and residential development of all sizes and to extensions and in-fill development. Where specific requirements apply to a particular scale of development, this is stated within the relevant policy. This code uses three categories of scale for mixed-use and residential development:

- Minor sites (1-9 homes);
- Medium sites (10 to 49 homes); and
- Large sites (between 50 and 250 homes).

Policies that apply to medium or large sites are likely to only be triggered within the Kelsall settlement boundary. In the Open Countryside, including Willington Parish, most development is expected to be householder extensions, replacement dwellings, the conversion and reuse of agricultural and rural buildings

3. Greenery and nature

Both Kelsall and Willington sit along the sandstone ridge above the Cheshire plain.

The larger village of Kelsall steps down from the hilltop towards the surrounding countryside. This topography is a defining feature of the village, shaping its strong sense of openness, long views and the relationship between homes and the landscape.

Green spaces in new development must reinforce Kelsall's rural character. They should be designed holistically to support wildlife, drainage, recreation and climate resilience while working with the local landscape and topography.

Willington's very rural character comes from its elevated position, with far-reaching views over the Cheshire Plain; the backdrop of ancient woodland along the ridge; the steep wooded valleys of Little Switzerland and Rough Low; the orchards of Hillside Farm; and its ancient hawthorn hedgerows. A low-density settlement pattern and the absence of intrusive elements give the parish a tranquil landscape.

3.1 Working with the landscape and site features

Kelsall sits within a landscape of ridges, slopes and valleys. New development must work with this topography rather than against it, ensuring buildings sit comfortably in the landscape and do not dominate views.

MUST	**3.1.1.** Development must respond to the natural topography of the site and must not rely on excessive cut and fill, abrupt level changes or prominent retaining walls.
MUST	**3.1.2**. Development along the ridge or scarp must not remove the tree line or obscure or alter the skyline.
MUST	**3.1.3.** Development between Kelsall and Willington must preserve the visual distinction of the two settlements and create a 'softer' edge. This can be achieved through a 'looser' arrangement of homes, limiting height to two storeys in this location and tree planting. In Willington Parish, development on the Willington side of this edge must likewise maintain the separation between the two settlements.
MUST	**3.1.4.** Development must preserve the openness and visibility of key public views in Willington. These include views from Little Switzerland, the footpath past Kelsborrow Castle, the Sandstone Trail and Tirley Garth, and views from public footpaths as well as roads.
SHOULD	**3.1.5.** Streets, footpaths and public spaces within new developments should create such views out to the landscapes beyond the site including the Cheshire Plain, the Welsh hills and the Sandstone Ridge. *(Applicable only to Kelsall Parish)*

MUST

3.1.6. Buildings must be sited and landscaped so that they sit into the slope and remain nestled into the hillside, screened by trees and hedgerows. They must not stand out in views from the Cheshire Plain or from public footpaths. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish and Sandstone Ridge Character Area)*

MUST

3.1.7. Development must not close gaps between buildings that afford views over the Cheshire Plain and beyond for residents and walkers. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*



An example of a 'loose' arrangement of detached homes on the edge of a development, partially screened by planting to soften the development edge.



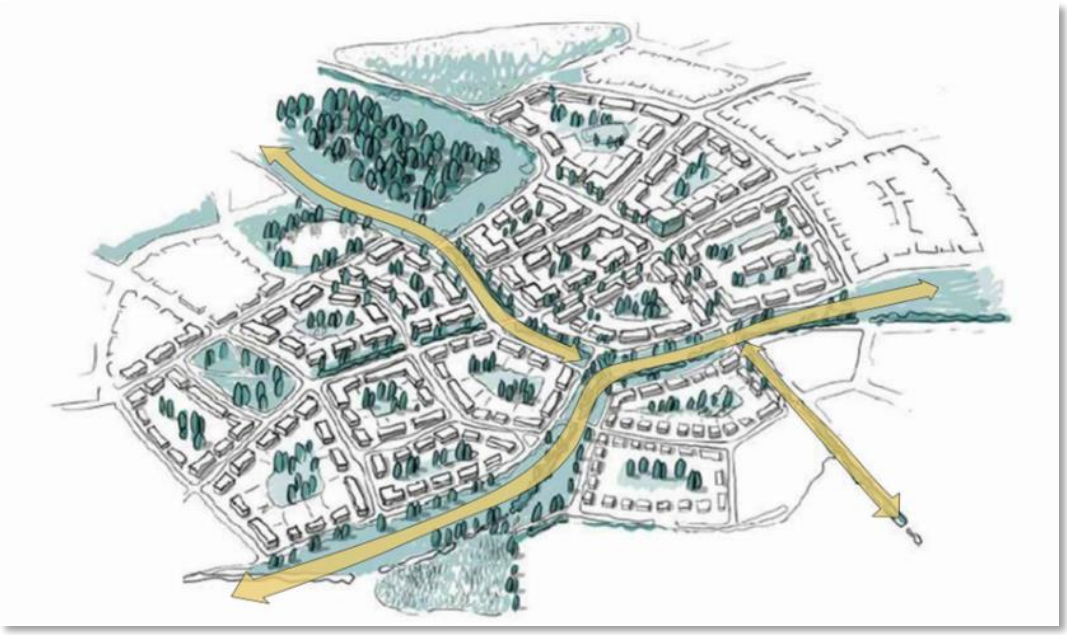
Examples of appropriate and inappropriate approaches to building on a sloped site

3.2 Green Infrastructure and biodiversity

Kelsall sits close to a network of important natural sites identified in Cheshire West and Chester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, particularly around the Sandstone Ridge. The open countryside either side of Willington Lane forms part of the Area of Special County Value (ASCV) designated in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One). Green infrastructure within and around development should strengthen habitat connections, support wildlife movement and contribute to the village's landscape character.

Willington Parish lies wholly within the Area of Special County Value and contains four Local Wildlife Sites: Willington Wood, Jones's Wood, Dickinsons Rough and Tirley Wood. Given the small size of the parish, these sites show the importance of wildlife across the whole area.

MUST	**3.2.1.** Medium and large sites (10–250 homes) on the edge of Kelsall must provide 'green corridors' linking to the surrounding countryside, or key ecological features such as Salters Brook and the wildlife site at Pasture Close. Refer to Policy E2.1 and E2.2n the neighbourhood plan for a full view of these wildlife corridors.
MUST	**3.2.2.** Existing habitats on site (such as woodland, hedgerows or watercourses) must be strengthened through planting and new habitat creation. In Willington Parish this includes ancient hawthorn hedgerows and traditional orchards.
MUST	**3.2.3.** Garden boundaries must allow wildlife movement, including hedgehog access where fencing or walls are used.
MUST	**3.2.4.** New developments must not include artificial planting. Artificial grass must not be used in front and rear gardens or public spaces.



An illustrative diagram from the National Model Design Code (NMDC) showing (in principle) how green corridors can be designed into developments.

3.3 Trees and planting

Trees and hedgerows are a defining feature of the Neighbourhood Area's rural character and contribute to the villages well-wooded landscapes. Development should retain existing landscape features and reinforce this character through native tree planting to provide shade, greenery and enhance biodiversity.

In Willington Parish, outside the main settlement, most hedges are ancient hawthorns, which are protected wildlife habitats.

MUST	**3.3.1.** Mature trees, hedgerows and ponds must be retained and integrated into the layout of development, including trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders and significant trees within the Conservation Area. In Willington Parish this also applies to ancient woodland, traditional orchards and existing field boundaries.
MUST	**3.3.2.** Development of ten or more dwellings must plant at least one large native tree (with a girth of 16cm+ at planting) for every ten dwellings in public spaces.
SHOULD	**3.3.3.** Street trees and shrubs should be used to break up on-street parking and help 'calm' traffic.
SHOULD	**3.3.4.** New planting should use native tree and plant species that support biodiversity and long-term resilience. In Willington Parish, mature planting stock should be used where practicable.
MUST	**3.3.5.** Existing field boundaries and hawthorn hedgerows must be retained and, wherever possible, high hedgerow boundaries enhanced. Where a short length must be removed to form an access, equivalent native hedgerow must be replanted. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*



Street trees and planting integrated between on-street parking.



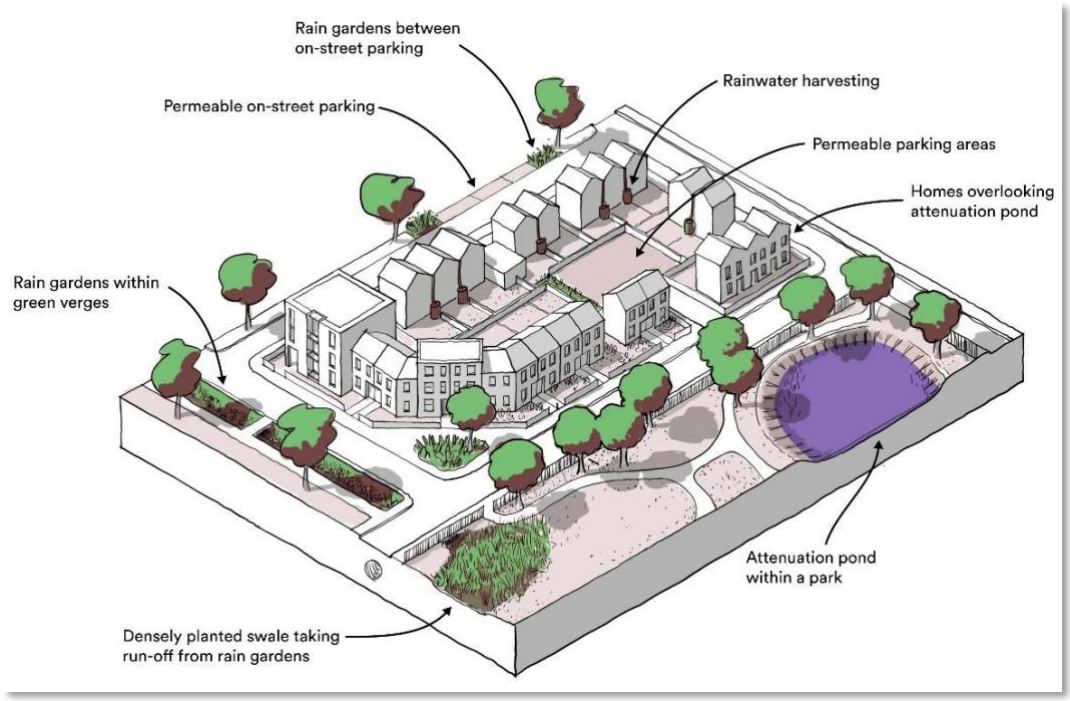
A well overlooked green anchored around a mature tree in Kelsall (left) and Heyford Park, Oxfordshire (right).

3.4 Water and Drainage (SuDS)

Surface water management is an important issue in Kelsall. Development should incorporate sustainable drainage features as part of the landscape and street layout so that water management also contributes to green space, village character, and amenity for residents.

In much of the Neighbourhood Area including Willington Parish, the steep slopes of the Sandstone Ridge make surface water run-off an important consideration, and permeable surfaces should be used so that water drains through rather than running off.

MUST	**3.4.1.** Sustainable drainage features such as swales, rain gardens or ponds must be integrated into the layout of new development. For single dwellings and extensions this may be met proportionately through soakaways, water butts or rain gardens.
MUST	**3.4.2.** Existing watercourses must not be narrowed or culverted.
MUST	**3.4.3.** Permeable surfaces must be used for drives, paths and parking areas, on development of any size including extensions, new and replacement driveways. In Willington materials must suit the rural setting, such as loose gravel or laid natural stone.
SHOULD	**3.4.4.** On sites over 50 homes, sustainable drainage features should be distributed throughout the site.
SHOULD	**3.4.5.** Development should minimise areas of hardstanding.
SHOULD	**3.4.6.** Attenuation ponds should include appropriate planting.
COULD	**3.4.7.** Homes could incorporate greywater recycling systems and rainwater harvesting systems for domestic use.



A diagram showing how sustainable drainage could be integrated into developments (Credit NMDC)



Sustainable drainage (SuDS) integrated throughout a site versus a single large SuDS pond. Integration is more efficient, improves the public realm and contributes to climate adaptation.



Well planted SuDS, integrated into the streetscape and overlooked by homes, Lincolnshire (left) and a large attenuation pond that is not integrated into the development, Cheshire (right).

3.5 Dark skies and tranquillity

Willington Parish values the tranquillity of the village and its surroundings and its dark night skies. Street lighting in the village has been replaced with down-lights, and new development should protect dark skies through sympathetic lighting.

MUST	**3.5.1.** External lighting must be designed to avoid polluting the night sky. Fittings must be downward-facing and shielded, of low intensity and warm colour, and controlled by motion sensors or timers. Floodlighting must not be used.
SHOULD	**3.5.2.** Large areas of glazing on elevated or ridge-side sites should be designed to limit light spill, for example through orientation, recessed glazing or blinds. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*
SHOULD	**3.5.3.** Development should not introduce noise, lighting or activity that harms the tranquillity of the parish. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*

3.6 National Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026)

- Policy F8 requires sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce runoff, while providing multifunctional benefits for water quality, biodiversity and amenity
- Policy N2 supports the conservation and enhancement of natural features, ecological networks, habitats, trees and hedgerows, and the use of green infrastructure to support biodiversity, surface water management, climate resilience and recreation.
- Policy N3 calls for new streets to be lined with trees, with space and long-term care planned from the start.

The National Design Guide (NDG, 2021)

Paragraphs 40 to 43 state that development should respond to its site and wider context, including local character, landform, landscape setting, views, topography, drainage, biodiversity and ecology.

The National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS, 2025)

Principles 2, 3 and 5 of the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems support the use of a series of drainage features across a site, working together as a SuDS management train, rather than relying on a single attenuation feature.

Manual for Streets (MfS, 2007) and Manual for Streets 2 (MfS 2, 2010)

- Manual for Streets (2007), section 11.3, supports integrating trees and planting into street design to soften the street scene, create visual interest, improve microclimate, provide wildlife habitats and coordinate planting with maintenance, drainage and buried services.
- Manual for Streets 2 (2010), section 12.5.5 to 12.5.7, supports integrating street trees from the earliest design stage, with suitable species, space for growth, protection, maintenance, appropriate tree pit design and coordination with underground services.

Building for a Healthy Life (BfHL, 2026)

Points 1Ga–1Gg support the creation of connected green and blue infrastructure, with habitats, hedgerows, SuDS, street trees and walking routes designed together so that landscape supports both nature recovery and everyday movement.

4. Public Space

Squares, greens and small parks provide places for people to meet, rest and play. They help structure neighbourhoods and support everyday social life. New development should include simple, well-designed green spaces that are overlooked by surrounding homes and feel safe, welcoming and part of the village.

4.1. Creating well designed public spaces

MUST	**4.1.1.** Public spaces must be overlooked by surrounding buildings, with homes having front doors or windows facing the space.
MUST	**4.1.2.** The edges of a site along existing roads and open spaces must be designed to feel part of the settlement, with properties facing the street, overlooking, and two or more access points for medium and large sites.
MUST	**4.1.3.** Developments of 50 homes or more must have communal green space such as village greens or pocket parks.
SHOULD	**4.1.4.** On sites over 50 homes, green spaces and features should be distributed throughout the development.
SHOULD	**4.1.5.** Development should include opportunities for food growing spaces such as allotments or community orchards as part of their open space strategy
SHOULD	**4.1.6.** Public spaces should be open to management by a community group or the Parish Council, under a suitable agreement. The Parish Councils welcome the opportunity to discuss management of these spaces with developers.



Examples of small 'formal' (left) and 'informal' (right) village greens with a play area and seating, well-overlooked by homes.



An example of a junction designed as a 'place' at a key junction through a change of material and creation of a village green with an informal character. This could be designed to include play.



Example of a well overlooked public space, Poundbury (left) and a poorly overlooked space with blank facades, Chester (right).

4.2 Street furniture

SHOULD	**4.2.1.** Public spaces should include attractive, durable street furniture, providing a place to rest and opportunities for community-building and companionship.
MUST	**4.2.2.** Street furniture finishes must be restrained and consistent, typically black, dark grey or natural timber tones.
SHOULD	**4.2.3.** Benches should be located at the edges of public spaces, facing, not backing on to streets.
MUST	**4.2.4.** Benches must have backrests.
SHOULD	**4.2.5.** Benches should include a mix of those with and without armrests.
MUST	**4.2.6.** A 1 metre gap must be maintained between benches to enable wheelchair users to sit alongside.



Examples of appropriate public benches in a restrained palette.

4.3 National Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026)

- Policy DP3(2)(f) supports healthy, inclusive and safe places, including through opportunities for social interaction, active street frontages, high-quality public space, clear pedestrian and cycle routes, green infrastructure and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- Policy HC1(1)(d) emphasises the need for recreational land and facilities, including play, sport, informal recreation and allotments.
- Policy HC4(1)(b) gives substantial weight to development that promotes good health, reduces health inequalities or supports social interaction in the local community.

The National Design Guide (NDG, 2021)

- Paragraphs 104 and 105 state that public and shared amenity spaces should feel safe, with buildings, entrances, windows and balconies providing natural surveillance.
- Paragraphs 106 and 107 state that public spaces should support social interaction, comfort, relaxation and inclusion, and should connect into the wider movement network.

Manual for Streets (MfS, 2007) and Manual for Streets 2 (MfS 2, 2010)

- Manual for Streets, paragraphs 10.1.3 and 10.2.2 to 10.2.3, support seating and street furniture that encourage human activity, provide rest points, contribute to a sense of place and are located where people gather, with good lighting and natural surveillance.
- Manual for Streets 2, paragraph 1.2.1, supports streets as places for social interaction as well as movement.

Building for a Healthy Life (BfHL, 2026)

Bullet points 3Gg–3Gh and 11Gh–11J emphasise the need to create public spaces that are well connected, well overlooked and useful for everyday life, including places to sit, play, grow food, meet neighbours and move through safely

5. Movement

Streets are the village's main public spaces. In Kelsall they connect neighbourhoods, green spaces and the surrounding countryside. Many everyday journeys should be easy to make on foot. The village also benefits from an established network of public rights of way linking it to the wider landscape. New development should extend this network, creating clear walking and cycling connections that strengthen the existing network of paths and help reduce unnecessary car trips. This ensures new developments feel like part of the village rather than self-contained estates.

Detailed highway design is set out in Cheshire West and Chester's borough-wide design guidance. This section establishes the key principles that new development in Kelsall should follow.

Willington Parish has no amenities other than the Boot Inn and the Willington Hall hotel, no bus service, and only a single pavement on one side of Willington Road. Its rural lanes and public rights of way, including the path past Kelsborrow Castle and the Sandstone Trail, make the parish a haven for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. In Willington, the priority is to protect and improve this network and the rural character of its lanes.

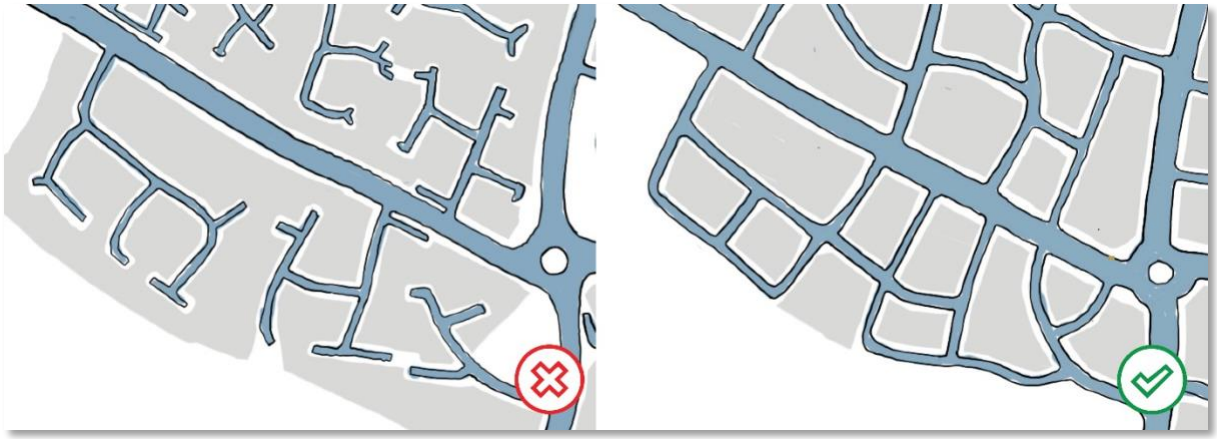
5.1. The Street network and connectivity

Kelsall is characterised by a network of rural lanes, streets and public footpaths that connect the village to its surrounding countryside. New development should extend and reinforce this pattern by linking clearly with existing routes and creating simple, direct connections within the site and beyond.

MUST	**5.1.1**. Developments must connect with surrounding streets, green spaces, footpaths and public rights of way; and where possible, improve the latter.
MUST	**5.1.2.** Developments must provide direct links to local amenities, bus stops, green spaces and the public rights of way network. *(Applicable only to Kelsall Settlement boundary)*
MUST	**5.1.3.** Developments on a site crossed by an existing footpath or bridleway, or including one along its edge, must preserve the footpath/bridleway and its amenity. These routes must not be enclosed with fences.
MUST	**5.1.4.** Development on the edge of the village must allow for future connections to potential neighbouring sites, helping the village grow as a connected whole. *(Applicable only to Kelsall Settlement boundary)*
MUST	**5.1.5.** New pedestrian and cycle routes within developments must be overlooked, well-lit and direct.
SHOULD	**5.1.6.** New pedestrian routes should include resting places and seating that are in visible locations.
SHOULD	**5.1.7.** Street layouts should reflect the informal grain of the village, with streets of varying width and alignment. *(Applicable only to Kelsall Settlement boundary)*

SHOULD

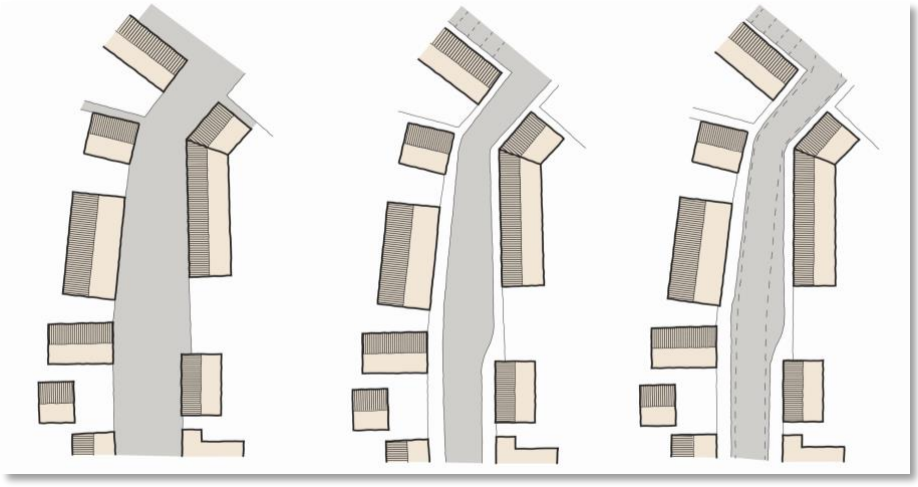
5.1.8. New or replacement signage, gateways and stiles on public rights of way in Open Countryside should be sympathetic to the rural setting, using natural timber posts with clear destination names rather than metal poles.



A disconnected street network (left) and a connected street network (right) (Credit: NMDC)



A well overlooked pedestrian route (left). Though this green route provides an important connection, the lack of active frontage, and of close board fencing, detracts from the place quality (right).



Defining the carriageway through built form helps create a varied street width (Credit: Manual for Streets).

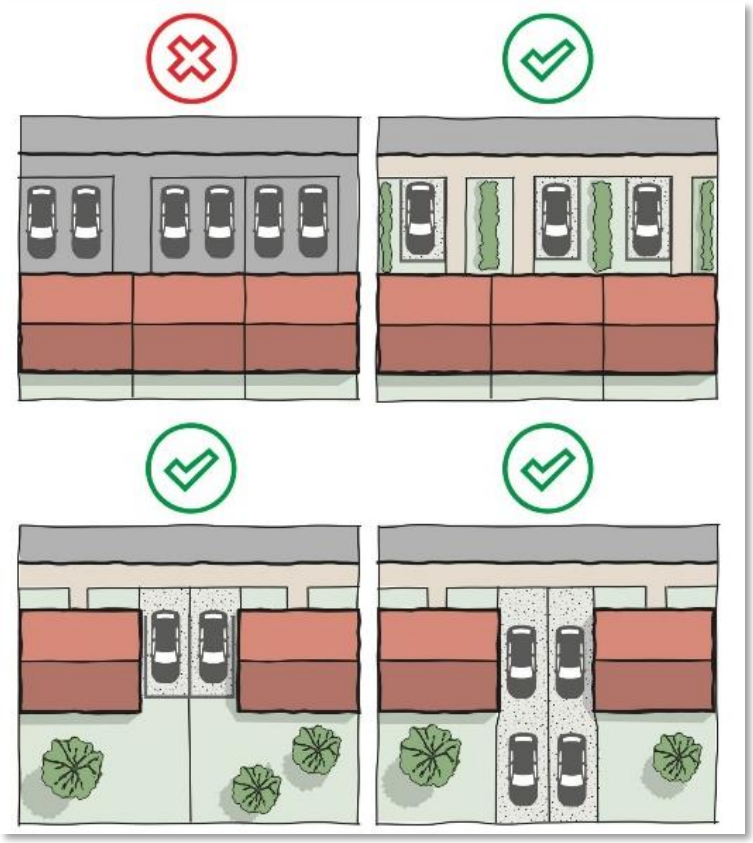
5.2 Car parking

Kelsall is a village where many households rely on cars for everyday travel and where public transport options are very limited. New development must therefore provide practical parking for residents, visitors and servicing. At the same time, parking should not dominate the street or undermine the character of the village.

It is acknowledged that there is no single best solution to providing car parking, a combination of on-plot, off-plot and on-street will often be appropriate. Homes England has published a revised version of *Parking: What works where* (2026). This sets out current best practice and includes case studies which show how parking can be incorporated sensitively into design.

In Willington Parish, which has no bus service, households depend on cars. Most properties have off-road parking, though often for only one car. Lanes are narrow and mostly have no pavements, so on-road parking should be avoided, and driveways are as important to the street scene as a building's façade.

MUST	**5.2.1.** Rear parking courts are not in keeping with the local context and must not be used.
COULD	**5.2.2.** Parking courts to the front of homes could be used for in-fill or courtyard style developments where they provide direct access to homes they serve. For example, for conversions of farm buildings arranged around a traditional yard.
SHOULD	**5.2.3.** Parking design should vary across the site, combining side parking on street and front curtilage arrangements.
SHOULD	**5.2.4.** Where front curtilage parking is used, it should be used for no more than four homes in a row.
MUST	**5.2.5.** Where parking is provided on street or in front of homes, planting or hedges must be used to soften its visual impact.
MUST	**5.2.6.** Shared driveways must not serve more than two properties.
MUST	**5.2.7.** Parking provision must include spaces for visitors and delivery drivers. In Open Countryside, all parking, including for visitors, must be provided off-road within the plot.
COULD	**5.2.8.** Additional space for unallocated or on-street opportunity parking (for guests or deliveries) could be provided by varying street widths, on sites for multiple dwellings
MUST	**5.2.9.** Outside the Kelsall Settlement Boundary, adequate off-road parking must be provided, set back from the highway frontage so that parked vehicles are less visually intrusive. Development that is likely to encourage on-road parking must be avoided.



Appropriate and inappropriate arrangements for on plot parking



An example of border planting between a driveway and house (left) and between driveways (right).



Front parking screened by greenery in Horsted Park, Kent (left) and excessive and overly uniform front parking and no street greenery, Northwich, Cheshire (right).



Varied street widths and build outs create opportunity for on-street parking, Harmston, Lincolnshire.

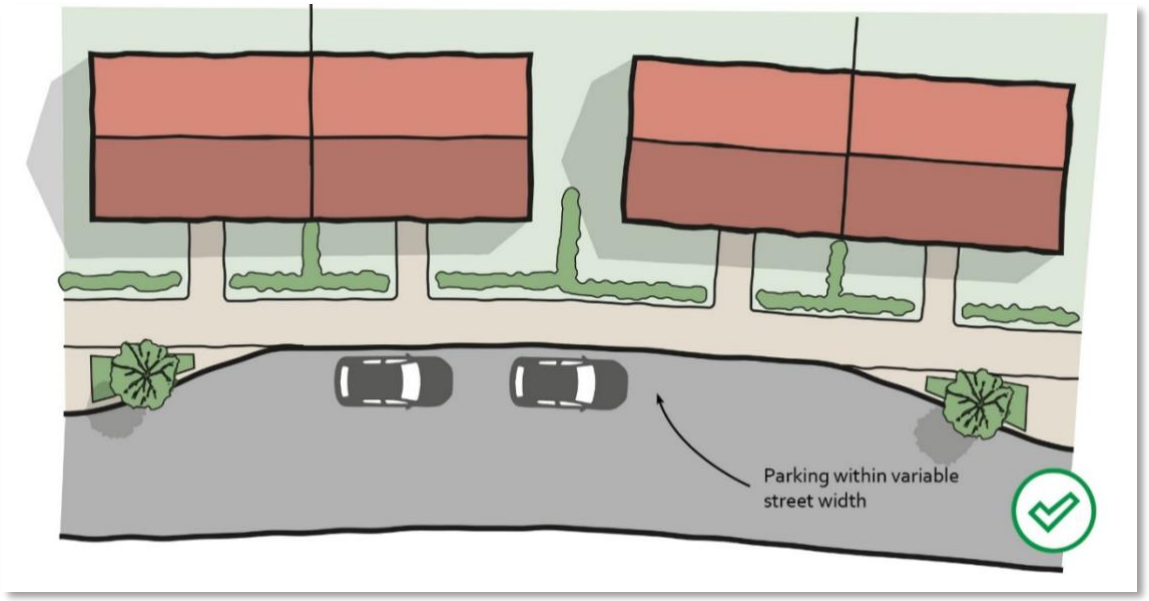
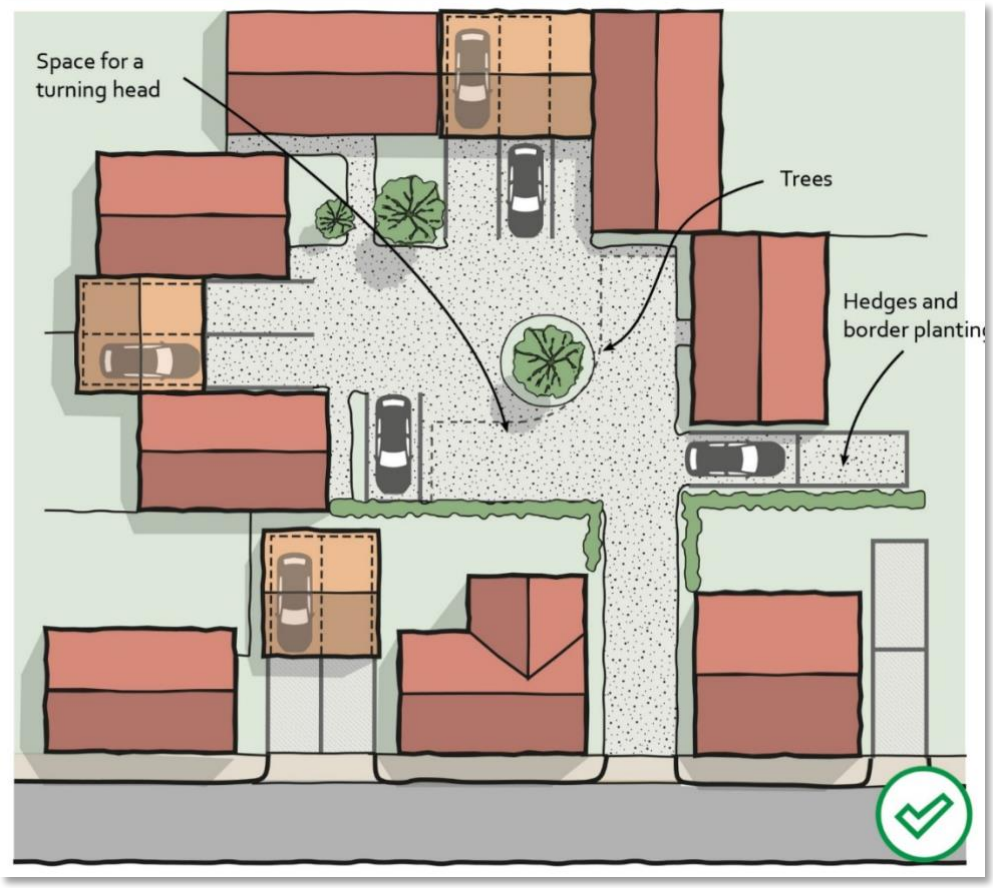


Diagram of appropriate informal on street parking.



An example of how parking could be arranged in a 'courtyard' style development.



Well-designed front parking court Sherborne, Dorset (left) and a courtyard with no trees or greenery, Sudbrooke, Lincolnshire (right).

5.3 National Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026)

- Policy TR4(1)(a) requires development to prioritise walking, wheeling and cycling.

- Policy TR4(1)(c) requires streets and routes to be safe, inclusive and attractive for all users, including disabled people, older people and children, while avoiding unnecessary street clutter.
- Policy TR4(1)(e) requires suitable parking provision, reflecting the location and nature of the development, its connectivity and locally-set parking standards.
- Policy TR8 requires development to protect and enhance public rights of way and to take opportunities to extend, link or improve existing routes.

The National Design Guide (NDG, 2021)

Paragraphs 75 to 79 state that movement networks are integral to well-designed places and should provide safe, accessible and connected routes, while prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.

Manual for Streets 2 (MfS 2, 2010)

- Paragraph 1.2.1. states that street design must place the needs of pedestrians first and ensure routes are inclusive and reflect pedestrian and cycle desire lines.
- Paragraphs 11.1.2 and 11.1.3 highlight the importance of designing car parking to avoid visual clutter and ensure streets remain attractive and accessible for all users.

Building for a Healthy Life (BfHL, 2026)

Bullet points 2Ga–2Gm and 9Ga–9Gf require the design of new developments to prioritise walking, cycling and wheeling through connected routes, safe crossings, pedestrian priority at junctions and lower vehicle speeds, while ensuring streets remain sociable public spaces rather than traffic corridors.

6. Built Form

The Neighbourhood Area does not feature a strong vernacular, yet it values its diverse and informal character.

Kelsall is a village that has grown in stages. Early buildings were scattered within a rural landscape during the 1800s. Clusters formed around farms and along local lanes by the early twentieth century. The village expanded more rapidly during the 1930s, with ribbon development along routes such as Chester Road, Quarry Lane and Old Coach Road. Smaller infill development has continued through the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Because of this pattern of growth, Kelsall does not have a single dominant architectural style. Older sandstone cottages and converted farm buildings sit alongside twentieth-century houses and more recent development. Residents often describe the village as *"not a chocolate-box village but a bit of a hotch-potch."* This variety is part of its character.

What gives Kelsall its identity is less a single architectural style and more the way the village is arranged. Homes in the village are generally two storeys with many bungalows. There are some three storey homes and some newer two and a half storey homes. Many homes are set within generous plots and surrounded by greenery. Streets vary in their alignment, and buildings sit at different distances from the road, creating a village that feels informal rather than uniform. New development should build on these qualities to avoid the creation of 'bland' uniform estates.

Willington Parish likewise has no single architectural theme, with a mixture of styles ranging from traditional buildings over 150 years old, through typical 1950s and 1960s houses, to recent modern designs. Most properties are around Willington Corner, Chapel Lane and Willington Road. Beyond these, properties are spread out, mainly detached or semi-detached, in a low-density pattern set within farmland. New buildings, extensions and alterations should be sympathetic to the properties around them, to the density of the area and to plot size.



Kelsall celebrates a variety of buildings with no singular dominant vernacular

6.1 Heights

Variety is present in the height of buildings, with many bungalows, chalet-style bungalows (second storey contained within low roof) and two or two-and-a-half storey buildings.

Building heights must respect this character and avoid dominating surrounding homes or views. Due to the village's distinctive topography, it is essential that development works with the contours of the

land rather than against them to preserve existing views. This provides an opportunity for built form to creatively respond to the topographical character; thinking carefully about the roofscapes and how development might be viewed from below.

SHOULD	**6.1.1.** New buildings should generally be no higher than two and a half storeys. *(Applicable within Kelsall Settlement boundary)*
MUST	**6.1.2.** Three storey buildings must not be used in locations that impact on key existing views or on the edge of new development (though they may be permitted in other exceptional circumstances). *(Applicable within Kelsall Settlement boundary)*
SHOULD	**6.1.3.** Roof pitch should not be over 45 °. In Willington Parish, flat or shallow roof pitches should also be avoided, and roof pitches should blend with neighbouring buildings.
MUST	**6.1.4.** In Open Countryside, new buildings must be no higher than two storeys, or no higher than the building they replace. New three-storey buildings must not be used.

6.2 Planning application requirements

Given the Neighbourhood Area's topography and the number of important views, outline and full planning applications must demonstrate how building height will sit within the landscape- including replacement dwellings and prominent extensions.

MUST	**6.2.1.** Applications must include three-dimensional drawings or visualisations showing proposed building heights in relation to surrounding buildings and existing site levels, including views from below and above where the site is on a slope or near the ridge. (including extensions)
MUST	**6.2.2.** Applications for all sites on the ridge or scarp should make use of temporary height markers (Bauprofile poles) so the visual impact of building height can be assessed.

Bauprofile is a method of illustrating proposed building heights using temporary poles set to the height of the proposed building. It is widely used in Switzerland and Germany and has been piloted in the UK by Oxford City Council



Example of Bauprofile poles used to represent the height of a proposed building, Switzerland



Example of recent development in Kelsall that negatively impacts the skyline of the ridge.

6.3 Blocks

Well-designed blocks help create streets that are walkable, attractive and well overlooked. New development must integrate with the surrounding village and avoid inward-looking layouts that turn their backs on existing streets.

MUST

6.3.1. Blocks must have clear fronts and backs. Homes must face streets and public spaces, with back gardens facing other back gardens (including those of existing homes) and parking areas.

MUST

6.3.2. Corner buildings must address both adjoining streets and any public spaces. Blank side elevations are not permitted.

SHOULD

6.3.3. Blocks should have an informal layout, reflecting the rural character and historic grain of the village.

COULD

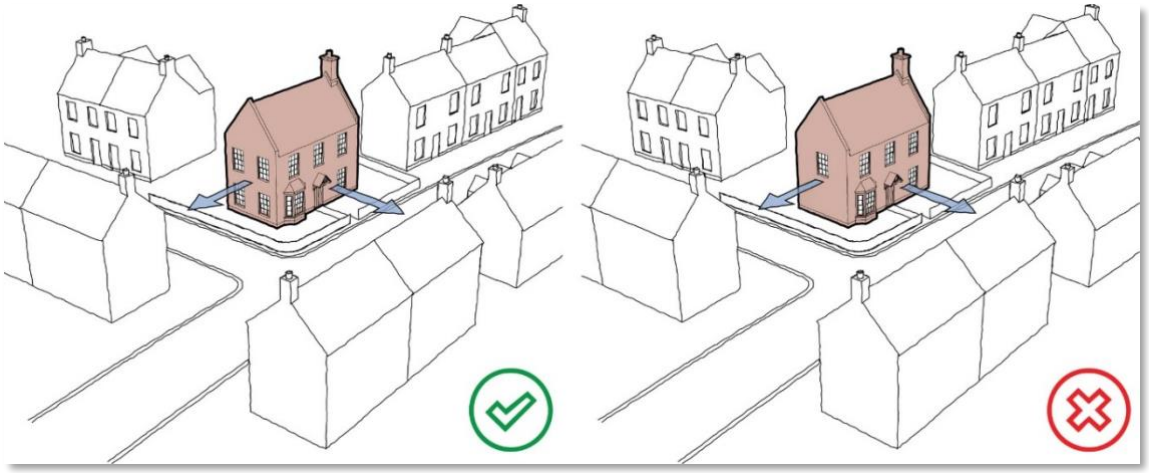
6.3.4. Courtyard layouts could be used in appropriate locations, reflecting traditional agricultural yard forms seen locally. Outside the Kelsall Settlement boundary this applies to the conversion or redevelopment of farmsteads.



Buildings not fronting the street (left) and houses addressing the street (right).



An example of a block with a successful back and front, with rear gardens facing a mews (left), and a poor resolution to backs and fronts (right), with rear gardens facing the street.



An example of a corner plot with active frontage on both sides

6.4 Building Lines

Building lines help define the character of streets. In Kelsall, buildings generally align with the street but with small variations in setback that create an informal village character.

SHOULD

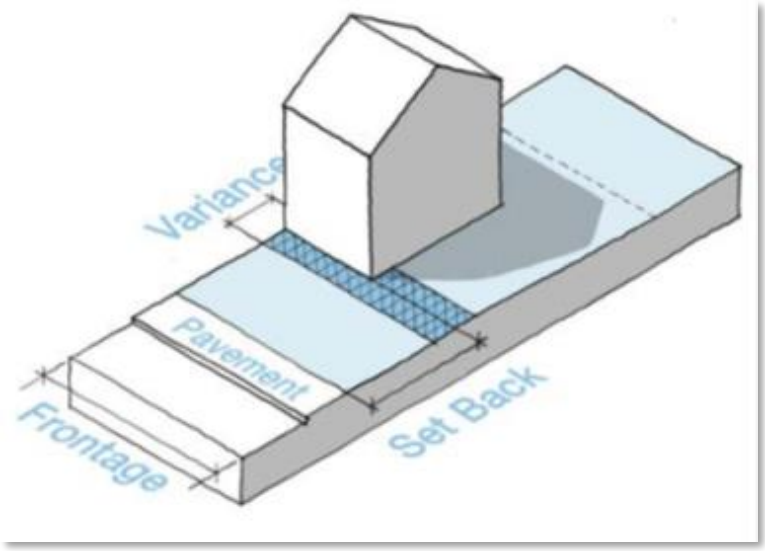
6.4.1. Building frontage should be continuous and uniform (i.e., buildings facing the same direction). *(Within Kelsall Settlement boundary)*

SHOULD

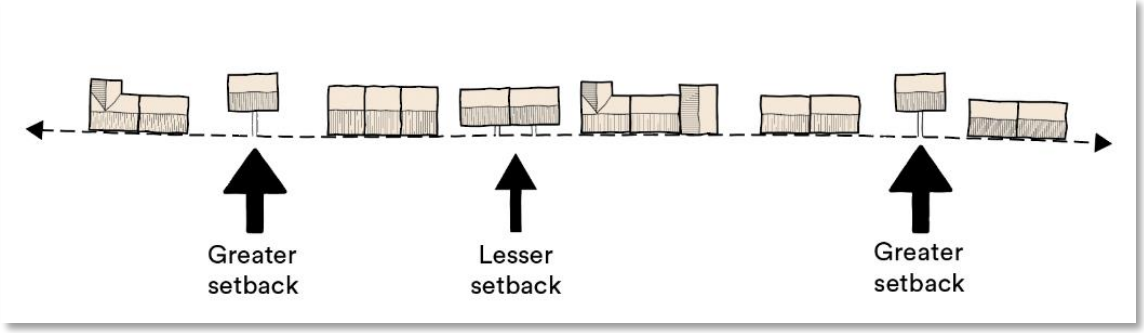
6.4.2. Setbacks should vary slightly (typically between 0 and 5 metres) to avoid rigid, uniform frontages and to reflect the village's informal pattern. *(Within Kelsall Settlement boundary)*

SHOULD

6.4.3. *in Open Countryside* new and replacement buildings should respect the setback and plot position of neighbouring properties, retaining frontage hedgerows and sandstone walls.



Definition of set back and frontage (Credit- NMDC)



A variation in setback can create an informal, rural character.

6.5 Building Types and mix

Recent and piecemeal development in Kelsall has been dominated by larger four-and five-bedroom houses. Residents have identified the need for a broader range of homes, including smaller properties suitable for younger households and older residents wishing to downsize. The Parish Council supports the provision of smaller homes, bungalows and retirement or sheltered housing where these are well integrated into the village.

MUST	**6.5.1.** Buildings within a development of ten homes or more must vary in height, form, orientation and massing.
MUST	**6.5.2.** The same house type or façade must not be repeated more than four times in a row.
MUST	**6.5.3.** Developments of 50 homes or more must provide a mix of dwelling sizes and types through a mix of smaller homes, bungalows, flats and retirement or sheltered living.
SHOULD	**6.5.4.** Terraces should be broken into shorter groups. Long terraces of more than four homes should not be used.
SHOULD	**6.5.5.** Flatted developments should be broken up vertically to avoid large, bulky built forms, with private outdoor space provided for all residents.
SHOULD	**6.5.6.** Existing brick- or sandstone-built barns, and other traditional farm buildings, should be retained and incorporated in new developments. (see 6.12).



A block of flats with an imposing character not suited to a rural context, Chester, Cheshire.



Example of a 'large' building which has been sensitively designed. The façade has been broken up and detailing has been used to soften the appearance, Tattenhall, Cheshire.

6.6 Affordable housing:

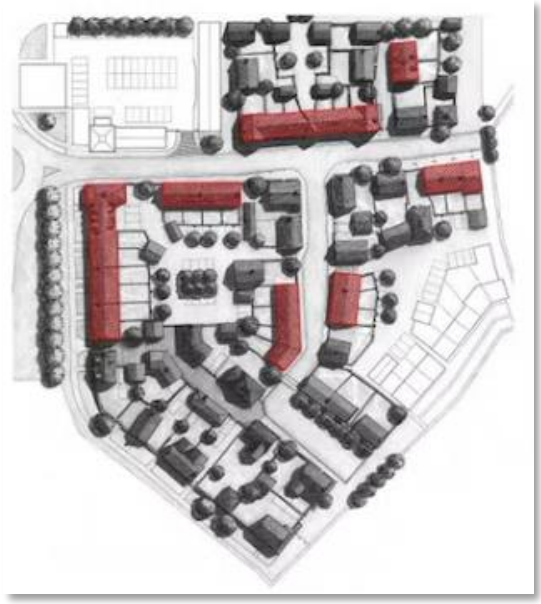
To ensure development in Kelsall and Willington supports a mixed and balanced community, affordable housing must be tenure blind.

MUST **6.6.1.** Affordable housing must be distributed ('pepper potted') throughout a development rather than being grouped in a single location.

MUST **6.6.2.** Affordable housing must be indistinguishable in design quality from market housing.



An example of poorly integrated affordable homes (on the right of the image), with a clear differentiation in style and material palette.



Affordable housing is dispersed through a development in Poundbury, Dorset (Credit: ESHA Architects).

6.7 Mixed-Use Buildings

The provision of shops, services and community facilities is primarily addressed through planning policy. However, the design of buildings can still play an important role in supporting village life. Mixed-use and adaptable buildings can provide opportunities for small businesses, services and home-based work, and allow places to evolve as local needs change over time. The Neighbourhood Plan encourages buildings that are capable of accommodating different uses as local needs change.

On suitable brownfield or infill sites close to Kelsall village centre, proposals that provide or support local services, small business space, accessible housing for older residents or other community-serving uses will be particularly encouraged.

Willington Parish has no village centre. Design guidance for the reuse of rural buildings and for rural business and farm diversification in Willington is set out in section 6.12.

MUST	**6.7.1.** Mixed-use buildings must not have blank ground-floor façades facing streets.
SHOULD	**6.7.2. S**chemes in the Kelsall village core, including in-fill (e.g. Chester Road and Church Street, see Neighbourhood Plan policy L3) should be designed with adaptable ground floors. They should provide floor-to-ceiling heights of around three metres or greater.
SHOULD	**6.7.3.** Ground floors on mixed use and/or adaptable buildings should include doors or windows facing the street.



An example of mixed-use buildings with commercial space on the ground floor and homes above



A row of terraces with ground floor shops, Chester Road, Kelsall.

6.8 Density

Densities in Kelsall vary across the village with a range of 5 to 35 homes per hectare. Some areas, particularly to the east of the village (Waste Lane, Hollands Lane and Quarry Lane), contain large houses set within generous plots with densities ranging from 5 to 15 homes per hectare. More recent schemes such as Blossom Close, Barbers View and Firecrest Way are around 20 to 35 homes per hectare and are characterised by smaller plots with smaller gardens.

Further analysis is available in the *Neighbourhood Plan Density Policy and Justification Statement Density section.*

In Willington Parish, density is low and properties typically sit within generous plots.

MUST

6.8.1. Density must respond to the surrounding context and character of Kelsall and the density ranges set out in Policy G1 of the Neighbourhood Plan. In Open Countryside, density must respond to the density, building scale and plot size of the immediate area.

MUST

6.8.2. Proposed densities above the prevailing village range must be clearly justified demonstrating how the development responds to the character of the site and its surroundings referring to Density Policy G1 and G2.

COULD

6.8.3. Higher densities could be appropriate in limited circumstances:

- Development is within 400m of the village centre (See NP Policy L3).
- It provides specialist housing (e.g. retirement housing).
- It is designed to avoid a bland suburban look.
- It includes well-designed flats with balconies.



Examples of an informal rural (left) and suburban (right) block patterns

6.9 In-fill and backland development

Infill and backland development may be appropriate where it reflects the prevailing character, plot pattern and spacing of surrounding development and does not overdevelop the site. This form of development must be carefully designed to ensure it integrates successfully with its surroundings and does not harm neighbouring amenity.

In Open Countryside including Willington Parish, under Local Plan policy STRAT 9, a new dwelling must first be acceptable in principle under Local Plan policy before the criteria below are applied.

Planning applications for new dwelling(s) within private residential gardens will be supported where the following criteria are met:

MUST	**6.9.1.** The scale, density and massing of development must reflect adjoining properties and the surrounding neighbourhood. In Willington Parish this includes plot size.
MUST	**6.9.2.** Safe access to the highway must be provided without significant loss of traditional boundary walls or hedges.
SHOULD	**6.9.3.** The development should be screened with planting to reduce overlooking of neighbouring homes and gardens.

6.10 Extensions

Extensions can have an impact on the village's look and character. Detailed guidance on house extensions and domestic outbuildings is set out in the Cheshire West and Chester House Extensions and Domestic Outbuildings SPD (2021). This guidance should be read alongside the Local Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan. The principles below highlight matters that are particularly important to the character of Kelsall.

MUST	**6.10.1.** Extensions must be subordinate to the original dwelling in scale and appearance.
MUST	**6.10.2.** Extensions must not create unacceptable overlooking or loss of amenity for neighbouring homes.
MUST	**6.10.3.** Balconies, roof terraces and raised platforms must be designed so that they do not overlook neighbouring gardens or habitable rooms. In Willington Parish, see also 3.5 on light spill from large areas of glazing.
SHOULD	**6.10.4.** Roof form and proportions should relate to the existing building and neighbouring houses. In Willington Parish, roof materials, pitches, dormers, gable ends, porches and chimneys must blend with the existing building and with neighbouring buildings. Dormer windows should be used with care and kept small and subordinate.
COULD	**6.10.5.** Potential issues of overlooking could be addressed through the use of frosted glass or the positioning of windows.
MUST	**6.10.6.** Original features of interest must be retained or enhanced. Additions must complement or match the character and features of the existing building, particularly its materials and the design of its windows and doors. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*

6.11 Replacement dwellings

In Willington Parish it has become popular to buy older properties, knock them down and build more modern designs. Roof lines are very important to the character of the parish and to views of and from the Sandstone Ridge.

MUST	**6.11.1.** A replacement dwelling must not exceed the ridge height of the dwelling it replaces, unless it can be shown that a greater height causes no harm to views, the skyline or neighbouring properties. *(A*
MUST	**6.11.2.** A replacement dwelling must be of a scale and footprint in keeping with its plot and with neighbouring properties, and in Willington Parish must remain nestled into the landscape (see 3.1.6).
SHOULD	**6.11.3.** Replacement dwellings should draw on the Willington materials and detailing set out in 7.2.7. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*

6.12 Conversion and reuse of agricultural and rural buildings

Local Plan policy STRAT 9 allows the reuse of existing rural buildings, small-scale farm diversification and buildings with an operational need for a countryside location. In Willington Parish, converted agricultural buildings should retain their general appearance and agricultural character.

MUST	**6.12.1.** Conversions of agricultural buildings must retain the building's form, roofline, materials and existing openings. New openings must be kept to a minimum. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*
MUST	**6.12.2.** Domestic additions such as dormers, porches, bay windows and prominent rooflights must not be added to converted agricultural buildings. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*
SHOULD	**6.12.3.** The garden and parking area of a converted building should be modest and keep the character of a farmyard, with rural boundary treatments. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*
SHOULD	**6.12.4.** New agricultural, forestry or rural business buildings should be sited next to existing groups of buildings, use recessive colours and materials, be screened by native planting and not break the skyline. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*

6.13 National Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026)

- Policy L3 requires development proposals to make efficient use of land, taking into account housing need, infrastructure, connectivity and local character.

- Policy DP3(1) requires development to respond to the history, character and features of its site and setting, so that it integrates with and enhances its surroundings.
- Policy DP3(2)(e) requires built form to clearly distinguish between public and private areas, create focal points within developments and, where appropriate, enhance views into and out of the scheme.

The National Design Guide (NDG, 2021)

Paragraphs 65 to 67 state that new development should make efficient use of land, optimise density and use the right mix of building types, forms, scale and public spaces for the context.

Manual for Streets (MfS, 2007) and Manual for Streets 2 (MfS 2, 2010)

- In Manual for Streets, paragraph 4.5.2 identifies perimeter blocks as an effective structure for residential neighbourhoods, helping to create direct, convenient, populated and overlooked routes.
- Paragraph 1.2.1 of Manual for Streets 2 supports streets that are designed around people first, with connected routes, clear layouts, local character and streets that work as places, not just traffic routes.

Building for a Healthy Life (BfHL, 2026)

Bullet points 7Ga–7Gk encourage layouts where buildings define streets, greens and public spaces, using perimeter blocks, active frontages, consistent building lines, strong corners, and regular doors and windows facing the public realm.

7. Identity

Kelsall does not have a single architectural style. The character of the village comes from a mixture of building types, forms and materials that have developed over time. Residents value this variety and wish to avoid development that feels bland or repetitive. New development should therefore focus on well-proportioned buildings, careful detailing and simple, coherent design.

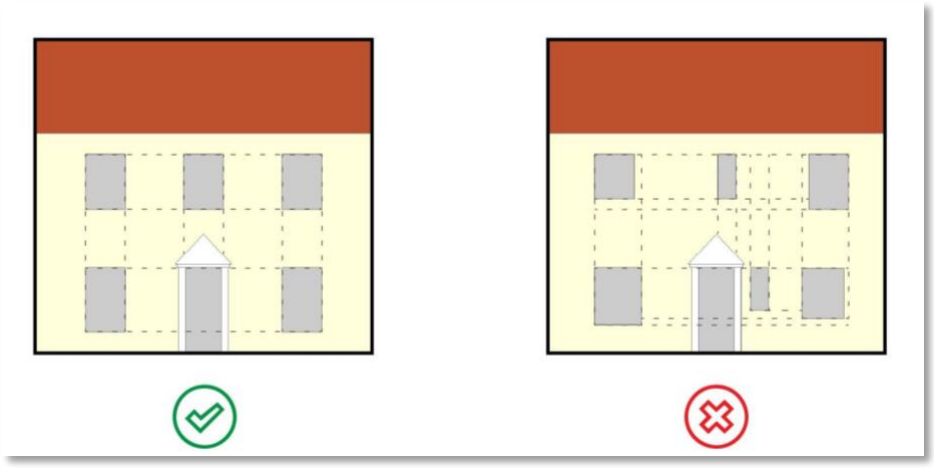
Developments of over ten homes should include variety in building form and appearance so that new neighbourhoods feel like part of the evolving village rather than uniform estates. *(Applicable only to Kelsall Parish)*

Willington Parish also has a mixture of styles. However, its traditional brick buildings share features that give Willington its defining character; these are set out in 7.2.7.

7.1 Façades and architectural detailing

The façade is the 'face' of a building and plays a key role in shaping the character of streets.

MUST	**7.1.1.** Blank or featureless facades must not front streets or public spaces. In Willington Parish, this does not apply to the conversion of agricultural buildings, where existing solid walls should be retained.
MUST	**7.1.2.** Windows and doors must be arranged in a consistent pattern across the elevation. In Willington Parish, conversions and extensions to historic buildings should follow the existing pattern of openings.
MUST	**7.1.3.** Primary façades must include clearly defined openings and architectural detailing such as lintels, reveals, bays or porches to add depth and avoid featureless elevations. In Willington Parish, porches and bays must not be added to converted agricultural buildings.



A house must not have a random, haphazard series of window openings

7.2 Materials

Kelsall contains a mixture of building materials and finishes. The Parish Council does not require a strict material palette but places strong emphasis on durability and the careful use of materials so that buildings appear coherent and well detailed.

In Willington Parish, recent development has used reclaimed Cheshire common brick or similar bricks, slate or tiled roofs, chimneys with traditionally shaped pots, and timber and slate porches similar in design to the older properties.

SHOULD	**7.2.1.** Materials used in development should be varied within the site to achieve variety in appearance. *(Applicable only to Kelsall Settlement Boundary)*
MUST	**7.2.2.** Plastic cladding and plastic panelling must not be used as it deteriorates and discolours over time.
MUST	**7.2.3.** Materials must be used consistently across the façade rather than applied in small decorative panels.
MUST	**7.2.4.** Development affecting the setting of listed buildings must reflect the historic material palette of the surrounding area, including materials such as brick or sandstone.
MUST	**7.2.5.** Existing red sandstone features such as walls, gateposts, banks and wells must be retained and incorporated into development.
SHOULD	**7.2.6.** Brick walls should not use a random assortment of brick colours and tones. Brick walls should use one primary brick tone. In Willington Parish, reclaimed Cheshire common brick and feature brick bonding or patterns are acceptable.
SHOULD	**7.2.7.** New and replacement buildings should draw on the features that give Willington its character: feature brick bonding or patterns other than simple stretcher bond; mellow local Cheshire brick or Ruabon hard-faced brick; Victorian-style clay or brick chimney pots; natural slate roofs; exposed projecting purlins at gable ends and projecting rafters at eaves; black rainwater goods; and hawthorn hedgerows or sandstone walls to frontages. *(Applicable only to Willington Parish)*
SHOULD	**7.2.8.** Development affecting Willington's non-designated heritage assets should safeguard or enhance their character and setting.



Materials must be coherent, not arbitrarily arranged.

7.3 Boundary treatments

Boundary treatments are an important part of the character of the Neighbourhood Area's streets and lanes, providing a clear but permeable distinction between public and private space. The village is typically defined by hedges, sandstone walls and estate railings rather than close board fencing.

MUST	**7.3.1.** Boundary treatments facing streets or public spaces must remain low enough to allow these spaces to be overlooked from the ground floor. In Willington Parish, this does not apply to hedgerows; high hedgerow boundaries should be retained and enhanced.
MUST	**7.3.2.** Boundary treatments must respond to site levels and views, so that unnecessarily tall fencing does not block views or create overbearing boundaries (see illustration on page 38).
MUST	**7.3.3.** Tall, close-board fencing (e.g. above head height) must not face streets, footpaths or public spaces. It must only be used for rear garden boundaries within development blocks. In Willington Parish, where solid fencing cannot be avoided, it must be screened by native planting.
SHOULD	**7.3.4.** Boundary treatments should be in keeping with the local context e.g. hedges, sandstone walls or estate railing.
MUST	**7.3.5.** Boundaries along existing roads must not create a hard separation between the new development and the surrounding settlement. *(Applicable only to Kelsall Settlement Boundary)*
MUST	**7.3.6.** Cement pointing must not be used on stone walls.



Example of sandstone boundary treatments, Kelsall. Note the cement pointing is too prominent, and the material will damage the stone.



Examples of appropriate boundary treatments.



Poor examples of boundary treatments with unnecessarily high closeboard fences, Kelsall

7.4 National Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026)

- Policy DP3(1) requires development to respond to the history, character and features of its site and setting, so that it integrates with and enhances its surroundings.
- Policy DP3(2)(g) requires visually attractive, distinctive and characterful development, including through a coherent palette of materials, design features and planting.
- Policy HE1 requires plans to draw on the contribution which the historic environment can make to the character and quality of development and its context.
- Policy HE4 requires heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

The National Design Guide (NDG, 2021)

- Paragraphs 50 to 60 state that well-designed places should have a positive and coherent identity, shaped by local character, layout, grain, landscape, form, scale, proportions, materials, details, patterns and colours.
- Paragraphs 40 to 43 state that new development should be informed by local architecture, vernacular, landscape setting, views and the way buildings relate to streets and spaces.

Building for a Healthy Life (BfHL, 2026)

Bullet points 5Ga–5Gg and 6Ga–6Gg encourage development to draw character from the site and its surroundings, including local street patterns, landscape, building form, materials, views and retained features, rather than relying on token architectural details.

Glossary:

Active frontage: Ground floor uses that create interest and activity.

Area of Special County Value (ASCV): A local landscape designation in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan identifying landscapes of high quality. Willington Parish is designated as an ASCV.

Biodiversity: Means the variety of plants and animals.

Blocks: A group of buildings, or area, enclosed by streets.

Borough wide design code: A high level code that applies across the whole borough, rather than a specific development site or area. The code sets design parameters and rules to guide development, often with legal weight in the planning process.

Build outs: A raised section with kerbs built out into the carriageway to narrow it or demarcate parking. Normally contains trees, planting and / or street furniture.

Building line: The building line is created by the primary front face of buildings along a street.

Built Form: This is the main issue that varies by area type referring to density, grain, building line and height.

Character: The unique qualities that define the look and feel of a building or area. This includes architectural style, materials, size, and how buildings relate to each other and their surroundings.

Cladding: A material applied to the external surfaces of buildings to provide insulation, weather resistance or decorative finish. Common materials include timber, brick slips, metal, or stone.

Compliance checklist: A tool used to assess whether a proposal aligns with the mandatory and recommended design requirements of a design code.

Connectivity: In relation to transport, this means the effectiveness of the transport network at getting people from one location to another.

Dark skies: Night skies that are free from artificial light pollution.

Density: How many homes there are in a given area. Often expressed as dwellings (homes) per hectare (dph)

Desire line: An imaginary line linking facilities or places that people would find it convenient to travel along.

Footpath: The section of the street primarily for pedestrians and wheelchairs.

Layout: The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

Local Wildlife Site: A site of local importance for nature conservation, identified by the local authority.

Mixed-use: A mix of uses, usually complementary, within a building, on a site or within a neighbourhood. 'Horizontal' mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. 'Vertical' mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

National Model Design Code (NMDC): A national framework providing structured guidance on the design of new development, forming the basis for local design codes.

Neighbourhood: Within a town or city, an area of distinct character usually on a scale that makes internal movement easy for pedestrians.

Neighbourhood Plan: A community-led planning document guiding development in a local area, often including design guidance or codes.

Non-designated heritage asset: A building, structure or place of local heritage interest that is not statutorily listed.

PROW (Public right of way): A legally protected path that members of the public have the right to use, even if across private land, such as footpaths and bridlepaths.

Public realm: This is the space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.

Public Space: Publicly accessible outdoor space, including streets, squares, greens, parks and other spaces used by the community.

Rain garden: Shallow vegetation designed to intercept and filter surface water runoff.

Registered Park and Garden: A designed landscape of special historic interest included on Historic England's register, such as Tirley Garth.

Replacement dwelling: A new dwelling built in place of an existing dwelling that is demolished.

Scale: Scale is the height, width and length of each building proposed within a development in relation to its surroundings.

Setback: The distance that buildings are set back from the edge of the highway (usually the back of pavement).

Street furniture: The collective name used for all furniture, fittings and objects in the external areas of buildings, landscapes and streets for the benefit of the public. This can include benches, post boxes, cycle stands, traffic lights, street lamps, traffic signs, outdoor sculptures, and waste bins that are seen on the street.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): SuDS are designed to manage rainwater and surface runoff. This can include permeable surfaces, green roofs, retention ponds and raingardens.

Sustainable Transport: Forms of transport that have a low impact on the environment such as public transport, walking, cycling and electric vehicles.

Wheeling: Wheeling refers to use of wheeled mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, mobility scooters and walking frames. It also includes prams, buggies and other modes of transport which may travel on footways.