

Quality Design - West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document



Area Design Focus Halls Road / The Meadway / New Lane Hill, Tilehurst

Contents

Area Design Focus - Halls Road / The Meadway / New Lane Hill, Tilehurst

1.	Introduction	5
2.	Halls Road / The Meadway / New Lane Hill Context	6
3.	Protecting established neighbourhoods	7
4.	Protecting key frontages	8
5.	Protecting landmark buildings	8
6.	Enhancements to Pedestrian and Cyclist Environment	8

1. Introduction



Andover Road, Newbury



Speen Lane, Newbury



Salisbury Road / Atherton Road / Crescent Way / Church Way, Hungerford



Halls Road / The Meadway / New Lane Hill, Tilehurst

- 1.1 This document comprises part of several publications which form the West Berkshire Council (WBC) design guide series "Quality Design - West Berkshire". Together the series forms a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which supports the policies in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 and the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 – 2016. **As such, it is a material consideration in determining planning applications and if not followed, may lead to the refusal of planning permission.** It is intended that in the future this SPD series will also support relevant policies in West Berkshire Council's Development Plan Documents. It also complements other existing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) and SPDs, including any site specific development briefs which may be produced in the future.
- 1.2 This section, Area Design Focus - Halls Road, The Meadway, New Lane Hill, Tilehurst, is one of a series of Area Design Focus documents which aim to ensure that the cumulative effects of infill development do not harm the quality of residential neighbourhoods. To achieve this, the Council has identified the key elements that define the character of particular areas that could be susceptible to infill development. These include main arterial routes into towns, which make infill sites particularly attractive to developers or areas with particular characteristics that need to be preserved.
- 1.3 Key characteristics are included on the plans on the following pages and include important tree groups, landmark buildings and important frontages. In addition, the plans also identify sites where development schemes could enhance the character of the corridor or area.
- 1.4 The Area Design Focus documents examine in detail the key elements that define the character of these areas, such as;
- Important frontages, building line and set backs;
 - Gateways and landmarks;
 - Tree groups, landscaping, public open space, amenity space and garden characteristics;
 - Vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist movement and connections, parking and bus stops;
 - Materials, roof line, architectural detailing.
- 1.5 In addition, each Strategy provides an initial indication of what is important to protect or enhance in the consideration of new infill development.

1.6 The potential enhancements (*see text in italics*) are suggestions as to how the physical environment of the area **could** be improved. Therefore, they do not represent specific commitments of the Council and do not override any existing strategies or plans. If it is considered that the suggested improvements are desirable they could be secured and funded in a number of ways including direct involvement of the local councils, action by landowners and through developer contributions associated with developments. When development proposals are considered their possible contribution to securing potential enhancements should be assessed.

1.7 The Council will produce Area Design Focus Statements for other key areas requiring a more detailed approach, as appropriate.

2. Halls Road / The Meadway / New Lane Hill Context

2.1 The above three roads form the eastern boundary of West Berkshire with Reading Borough Council and as such, only development on the southern side of each road lies within the scope of this Area Focus. Environmental enhancement and infill development should respect the whole of the surrounding area and not just that within the control of this Council. However, due to the location of the administrative boundaries in this area, it is only appropriate to suggest general improvements rather than on a site specific basis.

2.2 This area lies on the southern edge of Tilehurst on the northern edge of Calcot Park Golf course and as such, presents a semi-rural character, particularly on the southern side of the roads and along New Lane Hill. Properties on the southern side are characterised by being large, detached, set in large plots with distinctively long front and rear gardens. There is an abundance of landscaping along the road boundary, with most properties retaining mature trees and dense hedgerows. In many cases, properties can only be glimpsed, down long driveways. There are wide set backs from the road and the long landscaped gardens present a very leafy, green setting for these properties.



Bath Road, Thatcham



Typical boundary of property on southern side of Halls Road - mature landscaping, low wall or fence



Entrance to driveway on New Lane Hill - long driveway, glimpsed property



Example of semi detached housing on north side of The Meadway



Example of semi-rural nature of properties on New Lane Hill

2.3 In contrast, the northern side of the road, in Reading Borough, is characterised by inter-war local authority style terraced and semi-detached housing, with an element of flat development at the junction with New Lane Hill. The comparatively short front gardens are generally set behind low brick walls or low hedges, with the more mature landscaping located on the wide grass verges between the pavement and the road. The majority of properties do have their own driveway and some have their own garages, although there is a marked difference between the semi-rural character on the south side and the suburban character on the north side.

2.4 New Lane Hill is different again in character and there is a distinctive rural, village feel to this road. St. Michael's Church is a distinctive feature and landmark building and can be viewed from both northern and southern approaches. Progression southwards, past the cemetery entrance and a row of cottages, to the village green and the junction of Usk Road presents a very low density, green, rural feel to the road. Whilst properties have set backs closer to the road than along Halls Road (south), many are hidden behind mature hedgerows. New Lane Hill opens up onto a village green at the junction with Usk Road forming a recognisable gateway to this area.

2.5 In several parts of the Area Focus, infill development has taken place, with mixed success. Along Halls Road, some properties have been replaced with new build (generally one for one) and while, in general, setbacks, plot / building ratios have been respected, boundary treatment does not respect the heavily landscaped theme of the area, being replaced with high brick walls and electric security gates. Not only does this approach feel out of place with the traditional buildings, it adds to the feeling of an uncomfortable and an under-surveilled pedestrian environment.

2.6 Infill development (two new dwellings) has also occurred within a large plot of a property on New Lane Hill.

3. Protecting Established Neighbourhoods

- 3.1 The area on the southern side of each of the three roads is characterised by the mature tree planting and landscaping within large plots. Any infill development within these plots, or replacement dwellings, should seek to preserve these important natural features.
- 3.2 Future infill development should also protect the distinctive pattern of urban form along this side of the roads, with dwellings facing the road and presenting appropriate set backs, widths between properties and building / plot ratios.
- 3.3 Incidental features such as the wide grass verges on both sides of Halls Road / The Meadway, leading up to boundary hedges (south side) and retaining walls (north side) are also features which need to be protected and retained.

4. Protecting Key Frontages

- 4.1 Key frontages should be respected in all locations, particularly when a larger plot is developed with multiple dwellings. Each new unit should normally have its own driveway onto the main roads, avoid being hidden behind high walls and security gates and reflect surrounding landscaping. Any new development in this area should therefore consider surveillance onto the public realm as well as onto the street.

5. Protecting Landmark Buildings

- 5.1 *The setting of St. Michael's Church should be respected, particularly in this semi-rural setting. Key views to and from it should be considered if infill development in this area is proposed.*

6. Enhancements to Pedestrian and Cyclist Environment

- 6.1 The semi-rural feel of this part of Tilehurst lends itself well to walking and cycling. At present, parts of the area, such as New Lane Hill, present a narrow, slightly dark and uncomfortable (not overlooked) pedestrian and cyclist environment. *Enhancements such as good street lighting, signage and a cycle path could benefit this area.*



Example of new build wall and security gates, creating hostile pedestrian environment



High walls marking the entrance to new infill development on New Lane Hill



Mature landscaping which characterises New Lane Hill and the southern side of Halls Road and The Meadway



Views of landmark buildings such as the Church should be respected

Halls Road, The Meadway, New Lane Hill- Area Design Focus Summary

Set out below are the key design objectives for this area



To reflect and enhance the mature landscaping characteristics of the area throughout all new development



Reinforce the gateways through environmental enhancement of street furniture, legible pedestrian and cyclist routes and lighting



To ensure that development fronts the roads, to ensure natural surveillance of the public realm.



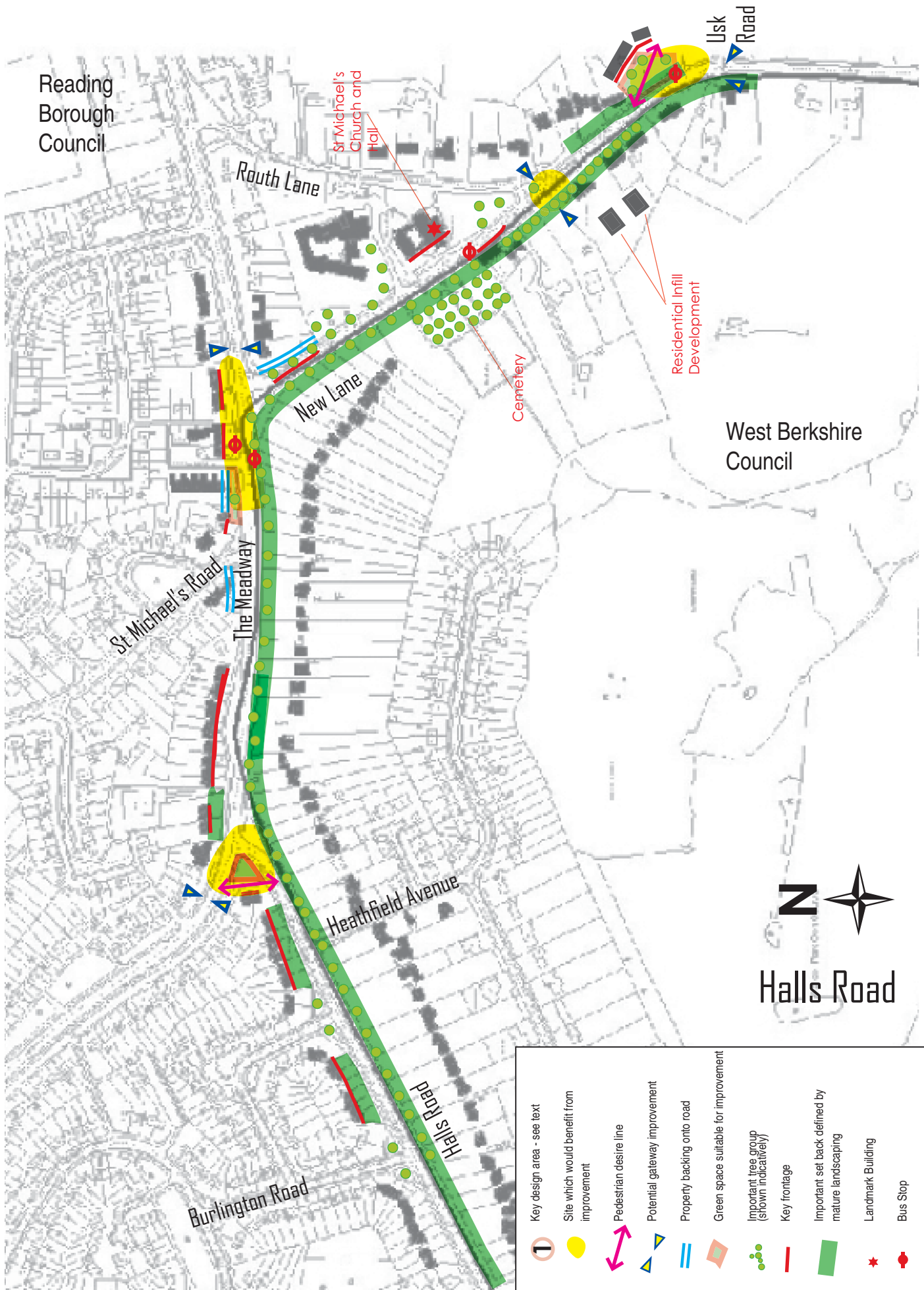
To respect key landmarks in terms of setting and views



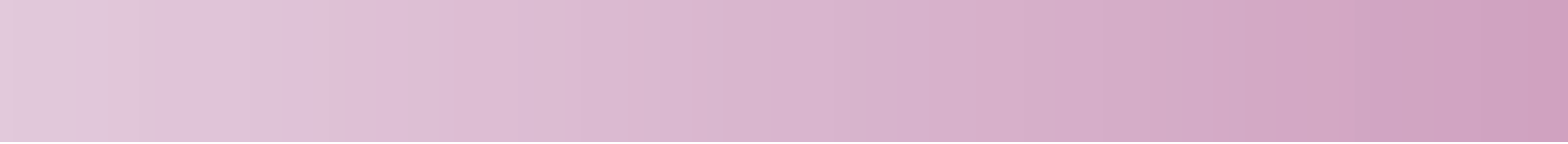
To improve the pedestrian and cyclist environment through seating, lighting, repair of vandalised equipment, signage etc



Parking regime along The Meadway, to include formal paved spaces, driveways and enforcement where necessary, ensuring definition of vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist realm



	Key design area - see text
	Site which would benefit from improvement
	Pedestrian desire line
	Potential gateway improvement
	Property backing onto road
	Green space suitable for improvement
	Important tree group (shown indicatively)
	Key frontage
	Important set back defined by mature landscaping
	Landmark Building
	Bus Stop
	Borough Boundary



Local
Development
Framework



Prepared by Halcrow on behalf of West Berkshire Council