

Quality Design - West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document



Area Design Focus Speen Lane, Newbury

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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 - Speen Lane, Newbury, 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.
- 1.8 This area design focus should be read in conjunction with the Speen Village Design Statement which provides important guidance about the approach to this area.



Bath Road, Thatcham

2. Speen Lane Context

- 2.1 Speen is a village situated on the north western outskirts of Newbury and although it is a village in its own right, its boundaries are blurred with those of Newbury. Speen Lane is a quiet road with no road markings or parking restrictions, running parallel to the A4 Bath Road, the main route out of Newbury to the north west. The part of Speen Lane subject of this Area Focus lies between Church Lane and the adjacent Conservation Area, towards its western end and the junction with Old Bath Road at its eastern end. Directly to the east of the lane lies Goldwell Park, a break in development between Speen and Newbury.
- 2.2 Housing development is apparent on both sides of Speen Lane, although development on the southern side forms the edge of the built up area of the town, with open countryside beyond. Properties on this side of the road are of a variety of eras, although, on the whole, are characterised by being two storey detached set within large plots of land, large rear gardens, short but spacious front gardens, driveways and dense mature trees and landscaping obscuring each from the road. The Speen Village Design Statement identifies the retention of hedges and trees as an important feature.
- 2.3 Parts of the northern side of Speen Lane are characterised by large plots fronting the road. However, there has been significant infill in the form of both cul de sac (Speen Place and Speen Lane Court) and frontage development, mainly undertaken in the 1960s / 1970s which gives the northern side of the road a different character, in part, than the southern side.



View eastwards down Speen Lane, characterised by mature landscaping and trees on either side, narrow road with out footpath in part



Characteristic housing on Speen Lane's southern side - large, detached, set within large plot, private driveway and mature landscaping



View southwards down Croft Lane, a narrow road characterised by mature trees and landscaping



1970s cul de sac development characteristic of the infill on the northern side of Speen Lane

2.4 **Area 1** on the plan incorporates an area of unused land and opposite is a cluster of long, rear gardens. Adjacent to these gardens, lies White Lodge, a dominant residential property of significant quality.

2.5 **Area 2** is located at the eastern end of Speen Lane, incorporating the landmark war memorial corner, which is the main gateway into the Speen Lane area on the approach from the east. This area also incorporates the northern end of Croft Lane and a small grassed area, which is used for informal parking, marking the entrance to Goldwell Park. On the northern side of Old Bath Road, the dominant frontage of Castle House frames this gateway.

3. Protecting established neighbourhoods

3.1 New development within the entire Speen Lane area should reflect the distinctive low density, mainly two storey detached property types, characterised by individual plots, within a mature landscaped setting. The defined set back and building line of neighbouring properties should be respected, along with similar spacing between each property. However, semi detached and terraced development should not be ruled out, as long as the principles of building heights, set backs, front and rear garden size, driveways and landscaping are apparent.

3.2 On the southern side of Speen Lane, new development should be sensitive to the edge of the settlement and should incorporate appropriate landscaping to ensure minimal detriment to views into this area. New development should consist only of styles reflecting the form of two storey detached and semi detached houses and where possible, should front Speen Lane.

4. Protecting key frontages

4.1 *The mature landscaped frontage along Speen Lane should be respected and new development should include an element of landscaping along this road frontage, to reflect the existing character of the lane.*

4.2 *New development should essentially face the lane, with front doors and windows providing surveillance. The existing building line should be respected, although in some cases, exact positioning of the building within the plot will be determined by plot width and length and the characteristics of adjacent properties. However, there should be an element of building set back from the lane, with front garden or driveway before the building.*

4.3 *Building to plot ratio will be a crucial factor, particularly on the southern side of the lane, which will need to reflect the existing spacious character.*

4.4 **Area 1** *should be developed with these principles in mind. There is a distinctive building line set by Holmby Cottages, Southbank, Southcroft and Holmby and any new property would need to reflect this, along with landscaped front gardens and private driveways.*

5. Settlement Edge

5.1 The southern side of Speen Lane forms a sensitive edge to the open countryside and valley beyond. When viewed from the south (Moor Lane), properties on Speen Lane are generally not visible, apart from in one particular area. This is where infill development has occurred and three new properties exist on the previous plot of an existing older one. This development is clearly visible from the south and does not sit congruously with the mature landscaped character of the rest of the settlement edge.

5.2 Any infill development along this southern edge must retain or install the mature landscape necessary to maintain the sensitivity needed in this location.

6. Reinforcing the eastern gateway

6.1 The war memorial corner is a recognisable gateway to Speen Lane at its eastern end and will be synonymous for many people as one of the key routes into Speen. However, this area has experienced some deterioration in places.

6.2 Further along Old Bath Road, on street parking serves Goldwell Park and the office complex on the north side of Old Bath Road.

6.3 *This corner could benefit from environmental enhancement, which primarily could include the creation of formal parking bays near to the entrance to the park.*

6.4 *The area around and to the rear of the war memorial presents an opportunity for a larger amenity area to be created. A larger, better quality seating area with the war memorial as the focal point could significantly enhance this gateway.*



Wide set back incorporating a lay by for on street parking towards the eastern end of Speen Lane



Mature trees and landscaping characteristic of Speen Lane



Example of infill development on southern side of Speen Lane which does not respect the Speen Lane frontage and has removed mature landscaping



Front door and windows facing the lane provide surveillance



Infill development clearly visible from Moor Lane



Other edge of settlement development on Speen Lane / Hill Road corner, viewed from Hill Road



Landmark corner to Speen Lane incorporating war memorial



Glimpsed views of Goldwell Park and the valley to the south from Speen Lane

7. Retaining Views

- 7.1 *In general, the mature landscape obscures views of the valley to the south. However, glimpsed views should be maintained along the Speen Lane length, with particular regard to those mentioned in the Village Design Statement. These are;*
“Along Speen Lane from White Lodge towards the old railway bridge”
“From Speen Lane near Coppice House looking south”
“From Speen Lane and Hill Road south across the Kennet Valley”

8. Pedestrian and Cyclist Environment Enhancement

- 8.1 *At present, Speen Lane provides a pleasant walking and cycling route and a quieter alternative to the A4 Bath Road and Old Bath Road. However, users need to feel safe and secure along the lane at all times, particularly after dark and so consideration should be given to footpath maintenance, sensitive street lighting where appropriate and desired by the local community, and the placing of new development in relation to the lane frontage to provide surveillance. Methods such as broken landscaped boundaries, planting of mature trees rather than solid hedgerows, siting front doors and windows facing the lane and construction of driveways which include parking in front of the house could be considered.*



Example of mature landscaped front garden along Speen Lane



Informal parking on grassland corner at access to Goldwell Park

Speen Lane - Area Design Focus Summary

Set out below are the key design objectives for this area



Create frontage development which addresses the lane and provides surveillance and safety, particularly in areas of infill



Maintain set back to allow for front gardens and private driveways



Enhance the pedestrian and cyclist experience along the lane through footpath improvements, sensitive street lighting, ensuring safety and security



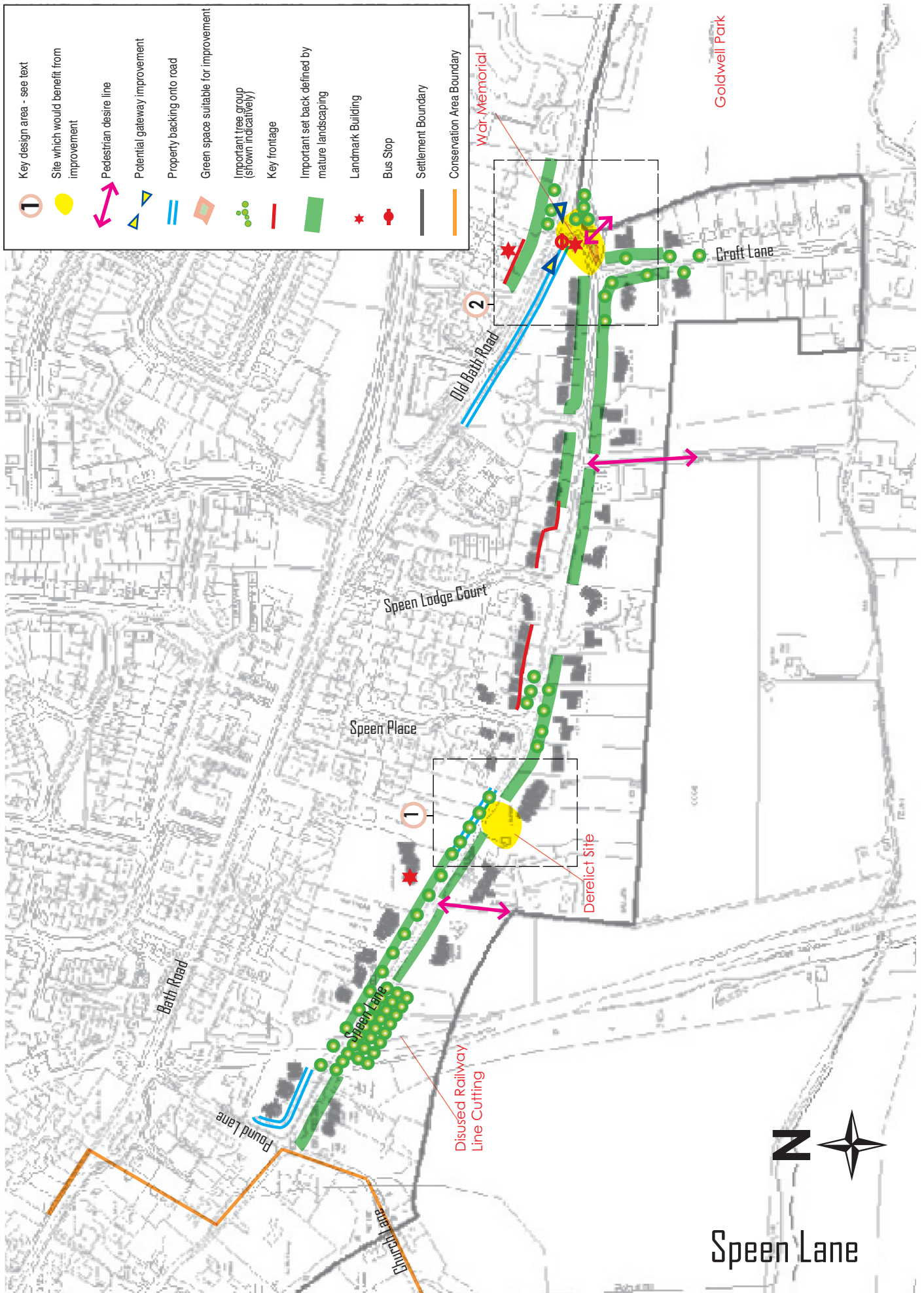
Enhance the eastern gateway, remove verge parking and to improve the pedestrian experience



Protect and enhance mature landscaping, particularly on the lane frontage and on the settlement edge



Maintain glimpsed views to south



Local
Development
Framework



Prepared by Halcrow on behalf of West Berkshire Council