

# Cannock Wood Design Code

March 2022



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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CANNOCK WOOD AND CANNOCK WOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cannock Wood Parish is wholly located within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and benefits from a beautiful scenic landscape with spectacular views. Apart from the main settlement, the Parish lies entirely within Green Belt. It is home to an established community, farming and horse pasture with access to the countryside through a network of footpaths and bridleways. It is also home to two Scheduled Ancient Monuments at Castle Ring and Courtbanks Covert, Redmoor Wood which are also Sites of Biological Importance. Courtbanks Covert is also an Ancient and Semi-natural Woodland.

Paragraph 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 states:

“When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.”

As such, larger development proposals may be unlikely to come forward, whereas smaller proposals may do and design principles will be important to ensuring that such proposals work well in the area.

Cannock Wood Parish Council is producing a Neighbourhood Plan which seeks to ensure that development proposals are of high quality, well designed, benefit the local community and visitors and protect and enhance the local character and scenic beauty of the Parish and wider AONB.

### 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN CODE

The purpose of the Design Code is to provide specific detailed guidance with respect to the design of proposals so that they better reflect the wants and needs of the local community as identified in the Cannock Wood Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives which follow.

#### VISION

Cannock Wood should

- be a village apart from urban sprawl surrounded by a sea of Green Belt,
- have long countryside views and ready access to open spaces,
- reinforce its local distinctiveness as a haven of tranquillity and wildlife.

Cannock Wood housing should be

- of a high standard of design and use appropriate materials,
- a mix of properties of appropriate size according to residents' needs,

- sustainably and sensitively developed within a tightly drawn settlement boundary to respect and enhance the AONB setting which is so important to the village.

Cannock Wood residents will have greater well-being

- as part of a friendly and cohesive community,
- as a mix of families and those of retirement age,
- by having access to important community facilities and services,
- by taking steps together to improve the village we call home.

#### OBJECTIVES

1. **HOUSING:** Ensure that any new housing is of high quality and well designed, is appropriate for the needs of the area and respects the character of the village.
2. **LOCAL CHARACTER:** New development should respect local character/protect landscape character and reflect local vernacular or high-quality contemporary design and be fully integrated into the Parish.
3. **VIEWS:** Views, in particular the long, panoramic views which are so important to the residents in Cannock Wood, should be protected and where possible enhanced.
4. **GREEN BELT:** Support the aim of the Green Belt to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
5. **CASTLE RING:** Protect and enhance Castle Ring.
6. **AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB):** Protect the scenic natural beauty, landscape character and wildlife habitats of the AONB.
7. **BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE:** Protect and enhance the biodiversity and wildlife of the parish including tree and hedgerow coverage.
8. **LIGHT POLLUTION:** Minimise light pollution wherever possible especially within rural areas.
9. **FOOTPATHS:** Seek to improve provision for pedestrians in the village in terms of accessibility, safety and quality.
10. **ROADS:** Seek to improve highway safety in the village for all users by working with the relevant authorities.
11. **COMMUNITY FACILITIES:** Strive to ensure that the community facilities and amenities are appropriate for the needs of the parish, allowing residents of all ages the opportunity to take part in activities that lead to a sense of individual and/or community well-being.
12. **PUBLIC REALM:** Support improvement to the public realm.

#### 1.3 HOW THE DESIGN CODE WAS PUT TOGETHER

This Code was written by PlanSpace Planning and Design Consultants who are members of the Royal Town Planning

Institute in conjunction with the Cannock Wood Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Support and feedback have also been provided through engagement with the wider community in the Parish as well as officers at Cannock Chase District Council, Cannock Chase AONB, Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

The Vision and Objectives identified through survey work for the Neighbourhood Plan in 2021 have been used to develop policies for the Neighbourhood Plan and this Design Code.

#### 1.4 EVIDENCE

This Design Code is supported by evidence including:

- the Cannock Wood Character Assessment
- Historic Environment Assessment Cannock Chase AONB, June 2015
- Cannock Chase AONB Design Guide, July 2020
- Cannock Wood Views Assessment, 2021
- Cannock Chase District Council's Website on Castle Ring site
- Review of AONB Landscape Character Framework, Stage 2 Landscape Character Type Descriptions, 2017, and
- The AONB Management Plan (2019-2024)

The Cannock Wood Character Assessment describes in detail the elements which contribute to the unique character of the Parish. It is an important piece of evidence which should be referenced in proposals and identifies a number of design

recommendations. While the Assessment does not itself identify Character Areas it does refer to the Landscape Character Types that are identified by the Stage 2 Review of Landscape Character Framework which is useful for interpreting policy and informing guidance in different areas. The Design Code refers to these Landscape Character Types in order to distinguish between different parts of the Parish where appropriate as well as the settlement boundary.

The development of this Code has also been influenced by National Policy and the Cannock Chase Local Plan Part 1, 2014.

#### 1.5 HOW TO USE THIS DESIGN CODE

This Design Code forms part of the Cannock Wood Neighbourhood Plan and supports the Plan's policies on housing design, landscape character, biodiversity, light pollution and movement.

It should be read alongside the Cannock Wood Neighbourhood Plan, the current Cannock Chase Local Plan and when adopted, the next Local Plan for the District.

The Code provides various design approaches to inform development proposals and the management of Cannock Wood's public realm, highways and public spaces. Cannock Wood Parish Council expects proposals to show how they have incorporated the design approaches set out in this Code.

Cannock Chase District Council have produced Design guidance in their Design Supplementary Planning Document. There is already general design guidance for the AONB as a whole in the AONB

Design Guide which covers many aspects of design of buildings which should be referred to alongside this Cannock Wood specific Design Code.

There are also extensive Landscape Guidance points in the Review of Landscape Character Types.







## SECTION 2: DESIGN CODE

### 2.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND BIODIVERSITY

#### 2.1.1 Landscape

##### Landscape Character Types

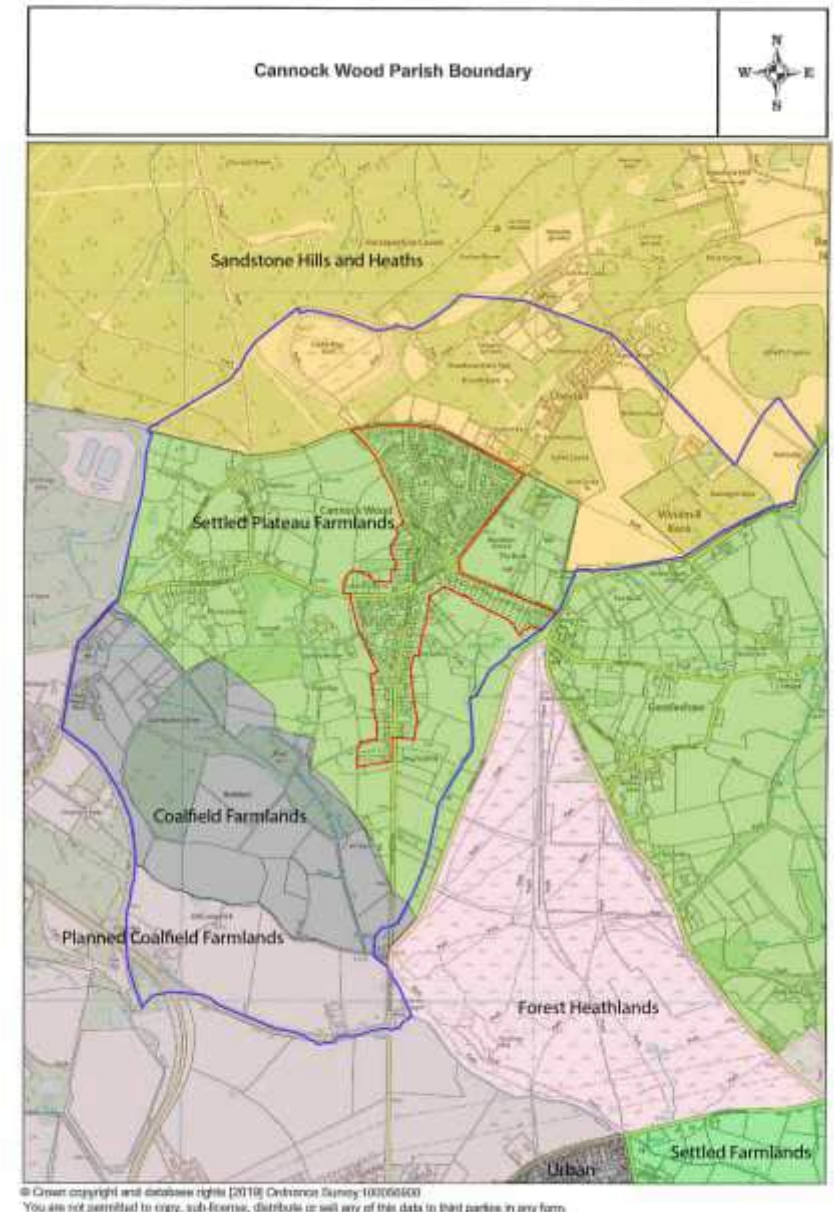
Proposals should respond to, protect and enhance the landscape character of the immediate surroundings, the wider Neighbourhood area and the rest of AONB.

The landscape varies from one part of the Parish to the other and proposals should be appropriate to the specific area.

Landscape character types have been identified by the Review of AONB Landscape Character Framework, Stage 2 Landscape Character Type Descriptions, 2017. The section on Landscape and Topography in the Cannock Wood Character Assessment examines how these types work in the Cannock Wood Parish including recommendations about appropriate management and other interventions for each type. Reference should be made to these Landscape Character Types to determine what is appropriate for the specific area.

There are four Landscape Character Types within the Parish boundary and which are shown in the map opposite:

- Sandstone Hills and Heaths,
- Settled Plateau Farmlands,
- Coalfield Farmlands and
- Planned Coalfield Farmlands



## General Approaches to Landscape

Below are some general approaches to design throughout the Parish with respect to proposals which impact on the landscape. Elsewhere this Code provides further details about approaches to designing various elements which can also protect and enhance the landscape.

Proposals should seek opportunities to conserve and enhance hedgerow and tree cover to soften the impact of adjoining hard urban edges.

Landscaping (combined with the arrangement of houses) can be used to break up edges in order to keep the gradual change and look of the current urban fringe/edge.

New development proposals should protect and conserve the strong woodland belts within the Parish.

Roadside hedgerows and verges should be conserved and strengthened as valuable buffers alongside busy roads to maximise landscape and wildlife benefit (see Biodiversity, below).

Houses should be limited to two storeys or even just one storey in some cases in order to minimise their impact on views of the landscape.

The size of clusters of development should be limited including preventing clusters of development from linking up to form larger ones.

In the built up part of Cannock Wood there may be an opportunity to link green spaces with the countryside beyond visually and perhaps physically including through the use of green infrastructure and routes including cycle paths, footpaths and bridleways and this could be an aspiration. Glimpsed views of the landscape between buildings (see VIEWS, below) should be protected. Green spaces can form part of a wider biodiversity network and could be planned as such as part of a Green Infrastructure Strategy.

There may be an opportunity for existing or any new green space to have further uses such as play, performance, education, sports facilities etc. depending on the needs and wishes of the community.

Public access to the landscape via the established footpath network should be conserved and managed.

(see MOVEMENT, below).

Opportunities should be taken for improving linkages and access to the AONB from urban areas without creating undue pressures on landowners.

(see MOVEMENT, below).

Development should normally be set back from the edge of the road and allow for a pavement.

(see MOVEMENT, below).

## Enclosure

The impact of enclosure on character should not be underestimated and can be affected by the orientation of buildings as well as boundary treatments and trees.

As can be seen from the examples below, enclosure varies significantly from one part of the Parish to the other and greatly affects the character of the immediate surroundings.



Proposals should respect the nature and level of enclosure of the immediate surroundings.

## Views and Vistas

Cannock Wood's characteristic open views should be protected by ensuring any development has minimal impact. The potential impact of development on views should be considered when determining Planning applications in the area and Planning decisions should always attempt to maintain or where possible enhance key views and vistas.

A Views Assessment has been compiled to accompany this Code and the Character Assessment and this should be seen as a starting point and the potential impact on other views should also be assessed.

Some vegetation removal to enhance views may be possible. In the case of Castle Ring, the area in the centre is an important area of acid grassland but it is getting invaded by scrub which is also impeding views so it is important to consider both these issues together.



Similarly,  
buffer

planting, for example around the settlement edge, can be supported where it enhances the views across the Parish.

The design of developments and their sites can provide some mitigation by allowing planting to filter the impact of the structure on the view and by enhancing the site for biodiversity.

Proposed developments should be located away from prominent locations such as ridge tops or upper valley slopes.

As well as allowing Cannock Wood to retain its character as a distinct settlement, the green gaps that exist between areas of housing enable views into the surrounding countryside.

These views, together with the glimpsed views through smaller gaps between adjacent buildings enable the village to maintain a close link to the countryside and must be preserved from future development.

## 2.1.2 Biodiversity

Natural flora and fauna can be protected and encouraged by protecting and enhancing their habitats including hedges, ditches, ponds, woodlands, wild areas etc.

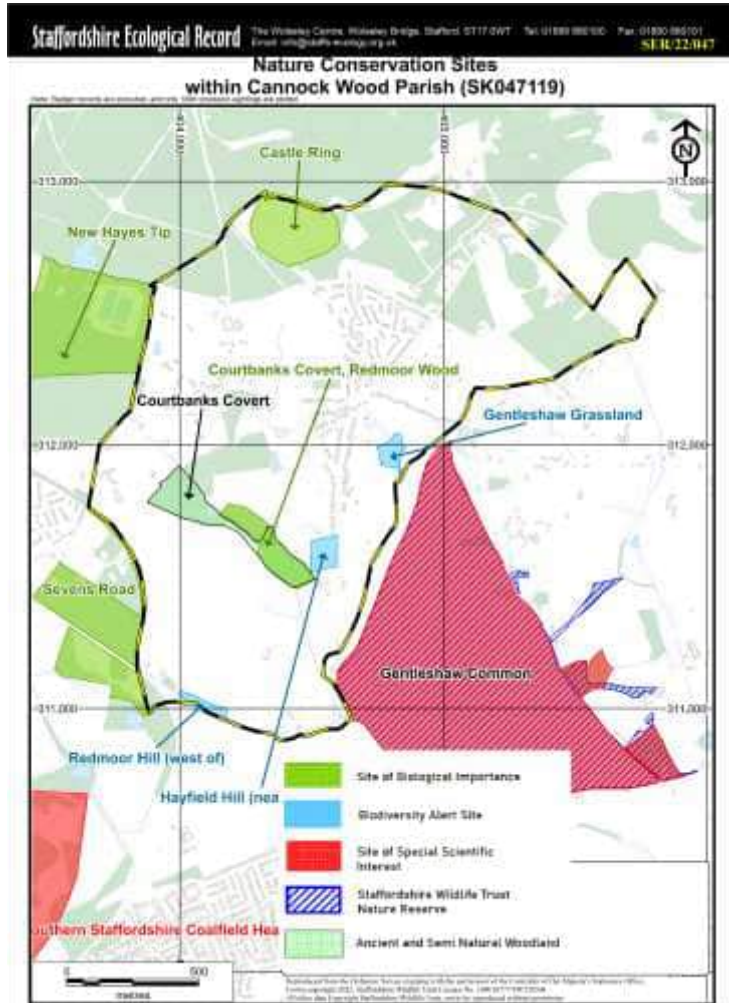
These elements should be seen as forming part of a connected system and opportunities to enhance it should be taken. In particular there may be opportunities to link the Site of Biological Importance (SBI) at Castle Ring with the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Gentleshaw Common and the SBI at the Moated Site and Bloomery in Courtbanks Covert as well as other Nature Conservation Sites.

Approaches could be identified for the Parish with respect to biodiversity such as those identified in the 2010 Lawton Report: Making Space for Nature which highlights five key approaches to rebuild nature and addresses the weaknesses of the current series of wildlife sites:

- (i) Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management.
- (ii) Increase the size of current wildlife sites.
- (iii) Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones'.
- (iv) Create new sites.
- (v) Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites.

All these options can be used in isolation or in combination with others and examples of achieving this are explored below.

The Plan below shows Nature Conservation sites in and around the Parish.



Defining Habitat Corridors (or Green Corridors or Wildlife Corridors)

Habitat corridors are areas of land connecting habitats or habitat fragments some of which are isolated. They allow wildlife to move between these habitats enabling the areas to work more like a larger habitat area. Barriers such as roads, arable fields, car parks, fences and buildings can make it difficult for wildlife to move safely from one habitat to another and wildlife corridors are an attempt to solve this problem. Corridors can be man-made or naturally occurring.

#### Design principles for Habitat Corridors in Cannock Wood

- Ideally they should be designed with specific species in mind and an understanding of their needs and the habitats being linked
- Structure is important – logs, rocks, stumps, mixture of trees etc. and this depends on the target species
- Vegetation – again this will depend on the target species
- Ideally they are continuous but sometimes they can work as stepping stones depending on species – birds and flying insects can cross barriers more easily than ground based animals
- Pollinators such as bees, wasps and flies are crucial for the health of habitats and helping them to move between flowers can help the wider ecosystem. Sometimes very small interventions can help this.



- Lack of Barriers such as roads and buildings, although buildings can be designed to work with a wildlife corridor through green roofs and walls or landscaping. Wide streams over 3m or ditches can be a barrier for some species.
- They can be very large or very small.
- Generally the wider the better. However, this depends on the species. For example deer will require a wider corridor than smaller mammals or reptiles.
- Generally the shorter the better but distance between habitats may be a constraint.
- Some examples of small and very small corridors or stepping stones are:
  - Toad tunnels underneath roads
  - Flowerpots and gardens
  - Putting out food in gardens for wildlife
  - Garden ponds.
- They can be 'green' or 'blue' i.e. land based or water based or a combination as in this example.
- Some features can act as habitats as well as corridors such as hedgerows

- Asymmetrical corridors tend to work better than straight corridors.
- Habitat corridor creation can combine with rewilding. See 'Rewilding' below.
- Wildlife corridors can be combined with footpaths as in this example from the Wirral.





- Potential negative impacts need to be assessed, for example, the possibility of extending deer runs has to be assessed carefully as overgrazing by deer could prevent some wildlife habitats from developing.
- The following could act as wildlife corridors within the Parish:
  - Hedgerows
  - Grass verges – see 'Rewilding' below
  - Field margins
  - Wetland
  - Streams and Brooks
  - Gardens
  - Woodlands

(Adapted from Fleury and Brown, Landscape and Urban Planning 37 (1997) 163-186;  
Keeping Wildlife Connected – National Trust, <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lodge-park-and-sherborne-estate/features/keeping-wildlife-connected-> and  
Wildideasuk <https://www.wild-ideas.org.uk/2020/10/24/wildlife-corridors-in-urban-habitats/>)

### Reducing Light Pollution

Light pollution can have a negative impact on wildlife by impacting their behaviour patterns. Reducing light pollution can help provide a more natural environment for both nocturnal and diurnal animals. Ways of dealing with Light Pollution are dealt with in the Policy on light pollution and under the Housing sub-section of this Code under 'Windows'.

## Re-wilding

Re-wilding projects have enhanced the biodiversity of waterways, for example in the Ribble Valley among other places, and this idea could be explored with a number of stakeholders including Cannock Chase District Council (owners of Castle Ring SBI and Nunswell Park), Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Cannock Chase AONB, adjacent Parish councils and District Councils and the Forestry Commission who manage land around the northern edge and other land owners in the Parish.

Rewilding can be achieved in many ways and in Cannock Wood there would appear to be a number of opportunities:

### *Grass Verges*

Grass verges can be rewilded through a combination of design and appropriate management and could potentially act as habitat corridors.

While many roadside grass verges have little biodiversity value, they can offer significant potential. Structural diversity benefits both flora and fauna with ideally, a gradient of vegetation height, with shorter vegetation closer to the road and longer grass left at the back merging into hedges, banks or woodland.

Plantlife is a campaign promoting wildflower along roadside verges and provides detailed guidance.

[https://www.plantlife.org.uk/application/files/3315/7063/5411/Managing\\_grassland\\_road\\_verges\\_Singles.pdf](https://www.plantlife.org.uk/application/files/3315/7063/5411/Managing_grassland_road_verges_Singles.pdf)



*Fenced margins*

Fencing margins around certain fields can protect wildlife habitats such as in this example where the path is adjacent to a field margin that has been protected from grazing by horses in the field



*Nursery Fields*

Nursery fields for horses can be created. These tend to have greater biodiversity than horse pastures.

### *Open Space*

The provision of open space can perform a recreational and biodiversity function. Appropriate siting and design of open space can enhance its ability to perform these functions as well as forming part of wider walking and cycling networks and mitigate loss of views due to development and this should be explored in applications. A Green Infrastructure Strategy could help coordinate this.

With respect to use of fields, there are concerns about the extent of manèges due to their lighting and the size of buildings compared to other pastoral uses and this could be monitored and planning decisions should seek to control this if possible (See AONB Design Guide Chapter 2.7: Stabling and Manèges).

### Castle Ring

As noted above in the Landscape section, there are important views from Castle Ring Iron Age hill fort which would have had 360 degree views. The area in the centre is an important area of acid grassland but it is getting invaded by scrub and this is also impeding views so it may be appropriate to investigate ways to remedy both these issues. The site is owned by Cannock Chase District Council but most surrounding land is owned by the Forestry Commission.

The fact that Castle Ring is a Scheduled Ancient Monument should be a consideration in any decision about the scrub.

When considering site specific proposals for Castle Ring, decision makers should consider evidence from the Staffordshire Ecological Record as well as the Report on Geophysical Survey carried out at Castle Ring, Cannock Wood, Staffordshire, February 2019 (Mary Cartwright and Colin Evans).



## 2.2 HOUSING

### 2.2.1 Layout and siting

There should be no major developments in the Parish due to its location in an AONB as well as the Green Belt protection. However, smaller proposals such as limited infill or extensions may come forward.

Proposals should take a landscape lead approach and assess the impact of development on the landscape. Landscape Visual Impact Appraisal to Landscape Institute GLVIA3 guidelines can be used to identify opportunities and constraints.

Clusters of development should be limited in size and not link up to form larger ones.

Incremental development along roads could, if uncontrolled, ultimately lead to strips of development joining up which could effectively create a new block or coalescence between settlements and this would be detrimental to the open character of the area. This should be avoided.

Development should be set back from the edge of the road at an appropriate distance for the area. For example, outside the Settlement boundary houses are usually set back further from the edge of the road than those within the settlement boundary.

There is little room for altering block structure anywhere in the Parish. The settlement boundary is the only place where “perimeter blocks” are present, i.e. where houses back onto one

another creating an outward facing block rather than backing onto fields. Within the settlement boundary there is only one clear potential development site. The development of this site would consolidate the perimeter block at this point.



Where plots are large enough to be sub-divided and are on the edge of a perimeter block it is important that the resulting development respects this block pattern. Gaps between the buildings and those on adjacent plots should be maintained both to respect the pattern of built form and to protect glimpsed views (See Landscape: ‘Views’ above).

### 2.2.2 Visual Links

Glimpsed views between adjacent houses of the landscape beyond combined with green infrastructure around houses such as gardens and grass verges provide visual links between the built environment and the wider landscape. Such links should be encouraged through landscaping and gardens and maintaining gaps between buildings for glimpsed views.

### 2.2.3 Height and Scale

Buildings should be of a scale and proportion in relation to surrounding buildings and setting in the village and wider landscape so as to not dominate them.

There should be no major developments in the Parish due to the planning restrictions applicable in an AONB as well as the Green Belt protection. However, smaller proposals such as limited infill or extensions may come forward. Such proposals should seek to provide the most appropriate typology for the location in terms of the impact on views and the site of neighbouring properties.

According to the Housing Needs Assessment: *"In addition to the ageing of the population ... and the clear demand expressed in the survey, bungalows may be an appropriate typology for the Neighbourhood Plan Area due to its topography, protected views and residents' preferred housing densities."*

Buildings should normally be just one or two stories, and larger buildings are more likely to impact on views. Even 2 ½ storey buildings are likely to be inappropriate.

Extensions should be of an appropriate size to the building and the immediate character of the area and consideration should be given to the impact on the landscape and views when considering such proposals. Permitted Development Rights in AONBs are restricted, in particular rear and side extensions – see "Permitted development rights for householders: technical guidance", Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities.

### 2.2.4 Roofs and Chimneys

Roofs should be of a design, material and construction that is appropriate to the character of the area. Normally roofs should be pitched with a central ridge and gable ended roofs are generally more typical of traditional buildings in area. Flat roofs should be avoided as they detract from the character of the area but may be acceptable if a green roof is used and if the impact on views is acceptable.

Roof lights should be avoided due to the need to minimise light pollution in the AONB.

The AONB Design Guide could be usefully applied in Cannock Wood:

- The use of solar panels may be appropriate in some cases but the visual impact must be carefully considered.

- Solar panels should not be placed on prominent elevations and should be kept low on the roof.

Consideration should be given to minimising glare caused by sunlight reflecting off solar panels, especially with respect to the impact on views.

There are a range of photovoltaic cells which are designed to look like slates or normal roof tiles and these may be more appropriate than standard solar panels.

Chimneys should normally be of simple design and an appropriate size, scale and material for the building and the immediate character of the area.

## 2.2.5 Doors, windows and Porches

### *Doors*

Doors should be appropriate for the size and scale of the building, generally of simple design and where they are of timber construction either left as natural finish or painted in a colour in keeping with the immediate local character. Double patio doors may be best be restricted to rear elevations.

### *Windows*

Windows should be simple in design and can be horizontally or vertically oriented.

In addition some of the recommendations from the AONB Design Guide could be usefully applied in Cannock Wood:

- Window openings should be kept in proportion with the size and scale of the building.
- Smaller windows on the principal elevations should be used where possible. Larger windows or large expanses of glass should be kept to rear elevations only.
- Darker coloured windows may be acceptable where contrasted with lighter coloured render.
- Imitation lead windows should be avoided.
- The paint colour should be in keeping with the character of the AONB.
- Dormer windows should be modest in scale and appropriate for the style of the building.
- Dormer windows should be low on the roof and designed to let light into roof spaces as opposed to creating more space in the eaves.
- Simple, casement style windows should be used which should preferably be constructed from timber.

With respect to large windows



- Use of non-reflective glass will help to reduce glare and its impact on the surrounding area.
- Breaking up large areas of glazing with glazing bars will help to reduce the overall impact.

### *Windows and Light Pollution*

Proposals for development can reduce light spill from within buildings which can cause light pollution by:

- (i) avoiding or recessing large areas of vertical fenestration;
- (ii) avoiding glazing which is facing upwards (whether horizontal or angled) including conservatory roofs; and
- (iii) within a site, locating and orientating development as sensitively as possible.

### *Porches*

Porches should be of a design, material and construction that is appropriate to the character of the area and to the rest of the building including the size of the building and the door, and in the case of gable fronted porches, the pitch of the roof. A porch may not be suitable on certain buildings or in certain areas.

#### 2.2.6 Materials

Red/brown brick or render and blue/brown roof tiles should be the main materials on housing proposals. Following the AONB Design Guide, proposals should consider “the use of colour

studies to ensure that materials are appropriate to the AONB and do not cause undue impacts to the views and setting”.

With respect to brick work and brick bonding patterns and render, the AONB Design Guide offers relevant and useful guidance:

- The tone and texture of any brickwork should be carefully considered so that it complements the local characteristic brickwork.
- Proposed brick bonding should be appropriate for the character of the AONB and in keeping with the character of the settlement and the local context.
- Handmade or reclaimed bricks are preferable over machine made bricks and should be used where possible. However, traditional-style machine made bricks would be acceptable in order to reduce costs.
- Use of multiple shades of brick should be considered to avoid too much uniformity and emulate the varied tone and texture that is present within traditional clay brick buildings in the AONB. However, the brick tones should not be starkly different from one another.
- Render can be used but where coloured render is used, it must be respectful of the local colour palette.
- Earthy or muted tones are preferable over brighter colours, garish or reflective colours. Colours that appear

glossy or shiny or stand out in the landscape should be avoided.

### 2.2.7 Front Gardens and Parking including Paving

Front gardens are a common feature of the Parish and contribute to the local character. They vary in size depending on the location in the Parish and any new proposal should be appropriate in size to its locality.

In order to keep roads free of parked cars, any new development should provide off street parking. Off street parking can be screened by boundary treatments such as hedges and this can help reduce the visual impact of the parking on the character of the area including views.

Paving for parking should take up no more space than is needed to meet the parking requirements for the house. Paving should be permeable to avoid rainwater run-off. The remaining space between the front of the house and the back of pavement should be garden.

Unallocated parking spaces and parking courts should generally be avoided as they are often unused and often require extra circulation space compared to off street parking.

Garages nowadays are often not used for the purposes of storing vehicles and tend to be used for other purposes with cars stored on driveways. The inclusion of a garage should not normally be a requirement of housing proposals.

### 2.2.8 Boundary Treatment and public/private interface

Boundary treatments should be appropriate to the area and reflect those in the immediate surrounding area.

Hedges are likely to be an appropriate choice of boundary treatment in many cases and can form part of a network that supports biodiversity so should be encouraged where appropriate. Composition of hedges can be important with respect to biodiversity and character. Native species are likely to be an appropriate choice.

There should be a clear public/private interface i.e. where a public area such as a highway meets a private area such as a front garden, there should be a clear distinction between the two.

### 2.2.9 Heritage

Proposals could seek to preserve and enhance locally distinctive and historic features of buildings and respect and enhance the forms of historic farmsteads in their landscape context. The AONB Design Guide identifies a number of historic buildings in the Parish.

### 2.2.10 Rhythms, Building lines and roof lines

There are only a few areas where rhythms or consistent building and roof lines have been established. Due to the area's location within an AONB major proposals are unlikely to come forward and it therefore seems unlikely that any proposal could establish rhythms, or roof lines or building lines as it takes a number of

buildings to do this. However, in the case of infill development where surrounding buildings have established a rhythm or building or roof lines then it may be appropriate for the proposal to respond positively to this cue.

#### 2.2.11 Bin and Bicycle Storage

Cannock Wood does not appear to have a problem with bin storage or bike storage due to the fact that most of the housing has access to rear garden areas and/or spaces to the sides giving options as to where bins and bikes can be safely stored out of sight. New housing proposals should also allow this.

Adequate waste storage must be carefully designed into any development so that it meets the needs of the users, is unobtrusive and is safe without creating dark recessed areas which could lead to crime and anti-social behaviour.

#### 2.2.12 Lighting and Security

Better lighting can enhance safety. However, this can sometimes be at an environmental cost i.e. light pollution. As such, lighting solutions should be designed so as to keep light pollution to a minimum.

In its conclusions, the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report on Artificial Lighting Light, 27 November 2009, stated:

"6.12 ...We recommend that lighting standards should require the provision of light at an intensity no greater than the minimum necessary to deliver the intended benefits and that the light should be directed at only those areas which are intended to be illuminated (5.6)."

Artificial light should be considered at the planning stage. Decision makers should consult with a competent lighting professional to ensure that any proposed lighting installation conforms to the requirements of an area and its intended task, and so that appropriate planning conditions can be applied.

The following criteria should be met: to ensure that where external lighting is required, it protects the night sky from light pollution through:

- (i) The number, design, specification and position of lamps;
  - (ii) Full shielding (at the horizontal and above) of any lighting fixture exceeding 500 initial lumens and evidence of limited impact of unshielded lighting through use of adaptive controls;
- and
- (iii) Limiting the correlated colour temperature of lamps to 3000 Kelvins or less

The institute for Lighting Professionals provides a useful technical guidance note: Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011

<https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/>



## 2.3 MOVEMENT

### 2.3.1 Highway Design: Pavements and Traffic Calming

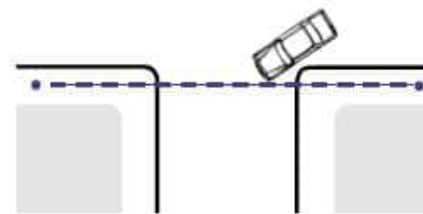
Pavements can be designed to promote ease of movement through:

- proper consideration of cross-falls so that pavements are sufficiently level
- design and placement of crossings
- sufficient width to enable people to pass one another comfortably
- appropriate surfacing
- rationalisation of street furniture so as to reduce obstacles
- active building frontages along streets to make walking and cycling safer and more pleasant
- attractive landscaping
- tighter radii of corners (see diagram below)
- respecting desire lines (see diagram below)
- design of kerbs that considers mobility and visually impaired people
- natural surveillance so that routes are safer (see below)
- traffic calming to make dealing with moving traffic easier and safer

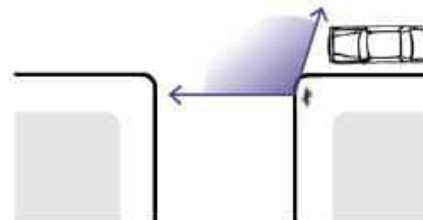
See Manual for Streets, 6.3: Pedestrians for more on design for pedestrians.

Traffic calming can help make roads safer by reducing car speeds and in turn encourage walking, cycling and horse riding. It can be achieved in a number of ways such as through horizontal deflection and tight radii on corners. What about speeding?

Small radius (eg. 1 metre)

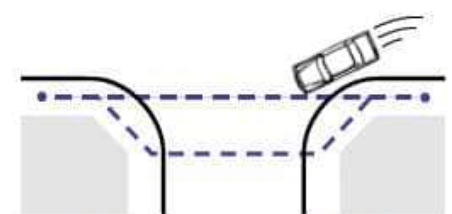


- Pedestrian desire line (---) is maintained.
- Vehicles turn slowly (10 mph – 15 mph).

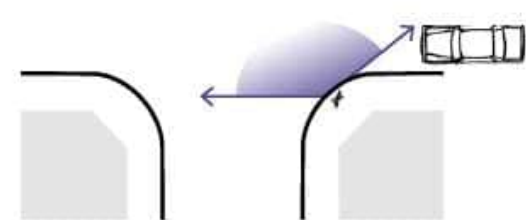


- Pedestrian does not have to look further behind to check for turning vehicles.
- Pedestrian can easily establish priority because vehicles turn slowly.

Large radius (eg. 7 metres)



- Pedestrian desire line deflected.
- Detour required to minimise crossing distance.
- Vehicles turn faster (20 mph – 30 mph).



- Pedestrian must look further behind to check for fast turning vehicles.
- Pedestrian cannot normally establish priority against fast turning vehicles.

30 Figure 6.3 The effects of corner radii on pedestrians.

Source: Manual For Streets

“Natural surveillance” is where people are made safer in a public space by “eyes on the street” such as from houses oriented so that windows overlook streets or the presence of other people who can see what is happening. It both enables and is enabled by a good circulation of people accessing areas for legitimate activity and this requires good connectivity in the area as a whole.

A strategic approach to walking and cycling provision will ensure that interventions and policies work well together integrating local initiatives with the wider area.

### 2.3.2 Cycle Parking

Cycle parking needs for short stay purposes such as visitors to Castle Ring, shops, pubs and community buildings may be met through simple cycle loops such as a Sheffield Loop design on or near the street or other public area so that they can be easily seen. On pavements bike loops can be oriented along the street to the edge of the pavement so as not to impede pedestrians as shown below.



### 2.3.3 Wayfinding (or Legibility)

Wayfinding (or Legibility) is the ability of an area to be understood by people so that they know where they are and can find their way around. It can be enhanced to encourage and enable movement. Clear visual clues as to where you are such as distinct areas, edges, “nodes” of activity, landmarks and ‘paths’ (which includes roads, footpaths etc.) All help people find their way around an area. Views and gateways can also help.

There may be options to improve wayfinding with or without signage. There are opportunities for enhancing legibility in ways which are sympathetic to the predominantly rural character of the area including planting of flowers at certain points which could work as small informal local landmarks or to enhance ‘gateways’ such as key entrance points to the Village.

There are fairly clear edges to the Settlement boundary and these should be maintained.

There are a number of small landmarks in the area, mainly due to their prominent positions and appearance rather than size. Views of landmarks can aid legibility and should be maintained and enhanced where this supports local character.

While existing buildings can sometimes have their landmark potential enhanced through strategic use of lighting, this is not recommended due to the issue of light pollution which is to be avoided.



The Methodist Church and the Reservoir are just two landmarks in the area.

Nodes are areas where activity gathers around junctions and enhancing them can aid legibility.





Whilst the main visually noticeable distinction between parts of Cannock Wood Parish is between the rural areas and the suburbanised settlement area, there are also differences between parts of the rural areas and these are reflected in the landscape character types referred to above (see 2.1.1 Landscape: Landscape Character Types above. The Character Assessment outlines some differences between areas and can be used to guide development so that it enhances the distinctiveness between the areas thereby aiding legibility.

Ensuring that development reflects the character of the surrounding area it should make it easier for people to find their way around by making it clearer which part of the Parish you are in. This can be achieved through use of elements outlined elsewhere in this Design Code and the Character Assessment such as materials, colour of brick, detailing of houses, enclosure, density, etc.

Signage could enhance gateways into the parish and/or village and to different parts of the Parish.

It can also help to identify key routes around the village or to access the countryside but care must be taken to ensure that this does not lead to more street clutter.

### 2.3.4 Footpaths and Rights of Way

Footpaths offer important traffic free routes for pedestrians to get around the Parish and to enjoy the landscape and views.



Opportunities for improvement to Cannock Wood's network of public footpaths and bridleways should be explored, such as at the Right of Way Cannock Chase 2, to make it possible to get a pram or buggy through this swing gate without dismantling it and make it accessible for wheelchair use.

Consideration should be given to whether existing footpaths could be enhanced or better maintained. In some cases swing gates could be improved.

Planning decisions could support opportunities for enhancement of pedestrian links to surrounding rural areas including to key important features such as Castle Ring, the Village Hall, the local School and Church, local pubs and Courtbanks Covert as well as longer distance footpaths and the wider network of footpaths in and around the AONB and beyond such as the Heart of England Way.

Links to public transport, schools and shops both in Cannock Wood and beyond should be enhanced where possible.

There are many potential designs of footpath and it is important to choose the right type for the purpose and location.

Footpath and Right of Way design should consider key issues including:

- Impact on the Landscape - The design and siting of footpaths should take into account the impact on the landscape and views. Landscape Visual Impact Appraisal

to Landscape Institute GLVIA3 guidelines can be used to identify opportunities and constraints.

- Inclusivity - The more inclusive a footpath is, the more people it can benefit
- Construction and maintenance - Footpaths should be regularly maintained to the standards in the Rights of Way Charter.
- Land ownership and other legal issues - Rights of Way have to be kept open and unobstructed while other footpaths may be just permissive i.e. subject to the landowner's consent.
- Planning and other consents
- Biodiversity - opportunities for protecting and enhancing biodiversity such as through Habitat Corridors should be explored - see Biodiversity: Habitat Corridors above

More detailed design advice about traffic free routes is available from Sustrans at <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/infrastructure/sustrans-traffic-free-routes-and-greenways-design-guide/>