

# four

character areas

# character areas

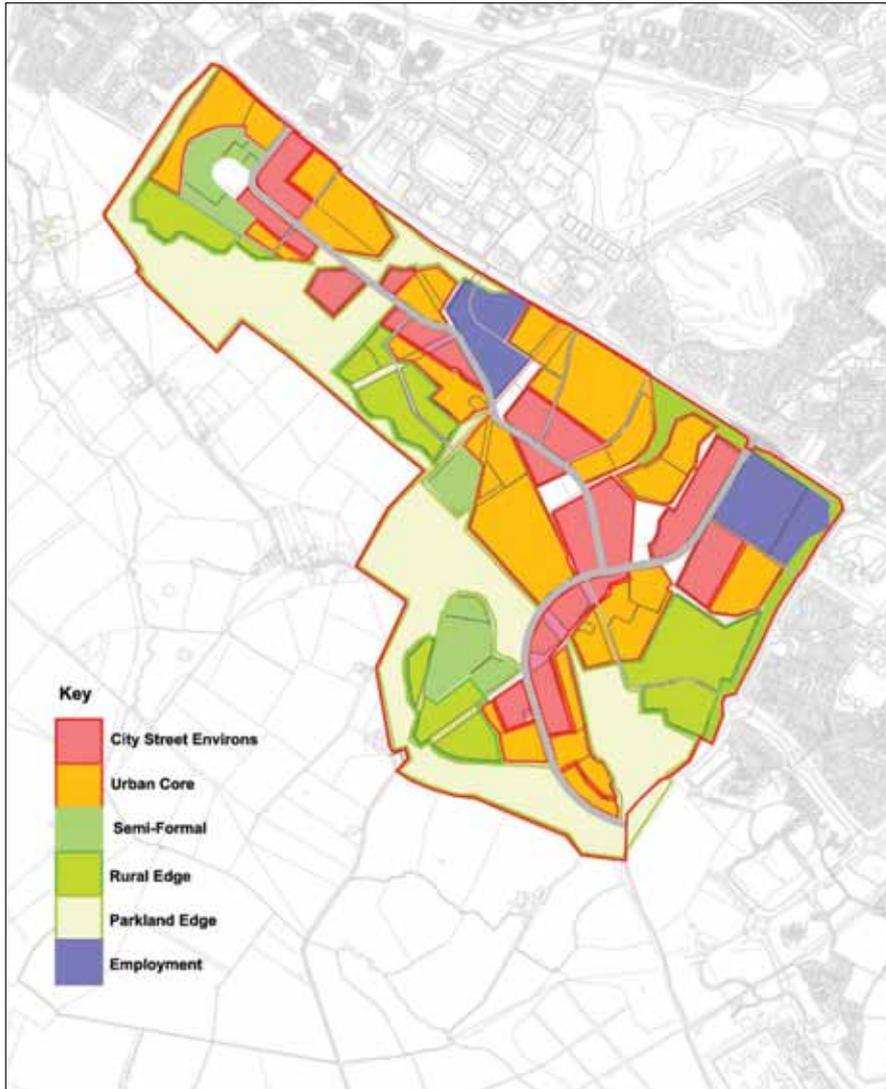


Figure 4.1 Character Areas Plan

## 4.1 Character Areas

4.1.1 The Development Framework is divided into a number of Character Areas. These areas are set out below;

- City Street Environs
- Urban Core
- Semi-Formal
- Rural Edge
- Parkland Edge
- Employment

4.1.2 The Character Areas take into account a number of factors which include;

- The landscape value and topography of the site;
- The need for public transport oriented development;
- The traditional urban forms and character of settlements in North Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes - through the introduction of higher density urban form, streets and squares.

- The proposed land uses and, in particular, the location of new facilities;
- The pattern of open spaces and location of retained vegetation;
- Nearby buildings and the surrounding landscape.

4.1.3 Each of these Areas will have a distinctive identity, which together will create a strong sense of place for this part of the WEA development. The broad concept for each of the Character Areas is described below. Planning Applications for individual developments which do not clearly meet the design strategy for each of the Character Areas, and which fail to respond to the design guidance contained within PPG3, will be refused. Character Areas will run across density boundaries thereby producing a variety of development forms within a specific character area.



The Character Areas are designed to respond to the inherent topographic and natural features of the site



Local towns and villages such as Woburn have provided the design cues for the Character Area guidelines



The traditional urban form of Stony Stratford provides strong references for the City Street and Urban Core Character Area

4.1.4 The photographs set out in this chapter are used to demonstrate how urban form, scale and massing should be arranged in each of the Character Areas. They do not seek to prescribe particular architectural styles or typologies. At a later stage, design guidance in the form of development briefs and design codes will build upon the character areas to define particular architectural styles.

4.1.5 It should be recognised that this is a development for the 21st Century which should seek to develop innovative, quality housing at the cutting edge of design. At the same time, the new housing will need to respect the traditional urban form and historic character of neighbouring villages and in the case of the Rural Edge areas, the integrity of the adjacent open countryside areas. It is envisaged that to achieve this, the design coding will promote sensitive use of traditional building materials in a contemporary manner.

# city street enviros



## 4.2 City Street Environs Character Area

1	Uses	Predominantly high density residential, including the High Street retail, employment and community uses.
2	Activities	Multi functional, accommodating a range of uses to create a vibrant and active area.
3	Role	The urban form and scale of buildings should reinforce its role at the 'heart' of the development.
4	Street Layout	Traditional urban form with a network of streets and a series of spaces and squares. This pattern of streets will provide direct, safe and attractive routes for cyclists and pedestrians.
5	Public Spaces	A rich and varied townscape will be provided by a complex pattern of spaces which will help to create a very strong sense of place. Located at Key Nodal Points.
6	Block Layout	Development will be arranged in the form of blocks with well defined perimeters and internal courtyards.
7	Linkages	There will be a high degree of integration between the High Street and Local Centres and the neighbouring residential areas.
8	Density	High density. The average density will be 50dph.
9	Building Heights	There will be a mix of three and four storey buildings. Along the Watling Street frontage building heights should be limited to a maximum of 3 storeys.
10	Building Types	Dwellings will be arranged in terraces.
11	Building Line	Development of the blocks and variations in alignment of the edges creates squares contrasting spaces and varied townscape. The streets will be linear with a well defined building line. There should also be variations in the angle of the building line and alternating enclosed sections of streets allowing the creation of small incidental spaces and squares to create interest and legibility. The urban character will be reinforced by minimal building set backs from the pavement edge.
12	Gardens	Development will comprise perimeter blocks with some private gardens for ground floor properties. The focus of the internal block space however will be shared private gardens for residents of the first floor and above. Beneath or adjacent to this space will be parking courtyards.
13	Parking	Courtyards at the back of blocks will provide access to other dwellings and serve as parking areas. On street parking is possible on all streets including the main City Street away from the High Street and Local Centres.
14	Security	There should be a clear definition of public and private areas. Dwellings located in the interior of blocks will provide natural surveillance over the internal space. Entrances to the courtyards should be through narrow gaps in the frontages, with a defined threshold from the street.
15	Landscape	To complement the character of the area the landscape treatment will have a strong urban quality.
16	Tree Planting	Trees will be planted within streets, squares and courtyards to provide a softening effect, focal point or help reduce the impact of on street parking.

4.2.1 The City Street Environs Character Area is situated along the City Street and covers the high density development and key facilities situated on either side of the corridor. The City Street Environs area also includes the High Street and Local Centre areas. This Character Area forms the 'heart' of the Development Framework Plan.



Examples of City Street Environs type development

# urban core

## 4.3 Urban Core Character Area

1	Uses/Activities	Predominantly medium density residential.
2	Role	An attractive residential environment
3	Street Layout	This area will have a traditional urban feel, with a network of streets and a series of spaces, squares and greens.
4	Public Spaces	A rich and varied townscape will be provided by a complex pattern of spaces which will help to create a very strong sense of place. Public spaces, local parks and play areas will be located at key nodes and overlooked by buildings.
5	Block Layout	The blocks will be orientated to create streets which provide direct access to nearby local centres and local parks. Within this character area there will be an opportunity for formal elements such as squares and crescents.
6	Linkages	A close relationship with the City Street
7	Density	Medium Density; The average density will be 40dph
8	Building Heights	A mix of two and three storey buildings with only occasional use of four storey buildings at prominent landmark locations, for example to terminate vistas. There can be variations in building height to create complexity and interest. Along the Watling Street frontage building heights should be limited to a maximum of 3 storeys.
9	Building Types	The majority of dwellings will be terraced with limited detached and semi detached buildings. Mews development will be located at the back of the block to overlook parking areas
10	Building Line	The streets will be linear with a well defined building line, with gaps in the frontages kept to minimum. There should also be variations in the angle of the building line and alternating enclosed sections of streets allowing the creation of small incidental spaces and squares to create interest and legibility. The urban character will be reinforced by minimal set backs to buildings from the back of shared surfaces, carriageways and footways.
11	Gardens	Development will comprise perimeter blocks with private gardens for ground floor properties. In higher density blocks the focus of the internal block space will be shared private gardens for residents of the first floor and above. Beneath or adjacent to this space will be parking courtyards.
12	Parking	Courtyards at the back of blocks will provide access to other dwellings and serve as parking areas. On street parking will be a key feature of this area and will be an integral element of the Home Zone street design.
13	Security	There should be a clear definition of public and private areas. Dwellings located in the interior of blocks will provide natural surveillance over the internal space. Entrances to the courtyards should be through narrow gaps in the frontages, with a defined threshold from the street.
14	Landscape	To complement the character of the area the landscape treatment will have a strong urban quality.
15	Planting	Trees will be planted within streets, squares and courtyards to provide a softening effect, focal point or help reduced the impact of on-street parking.
16	Street Design	The street will be designed to follow Home Zone principles

4.3.1 The medium density residential development will be defined by the Urban Core Character Area. It will differ from the City Street Environs Character Area by having a lower average density.



Examples of Urban Core type development

# semi-formal



## 4.4 Semi-Formal Character Area

1	Uses	Medium and Low Density Housing
2	Activities	Primarily a local domestic environment, designed for the enjoyment of residents
3	Role	To provide contrast and variety amongst the prevailing urban core character and assist in legibility throughout the expansion area
4	Street Layout	Formal arrangement of buildings with a network of streets spaces and squares. This pattern of streets will provide direct, safe and attractive routes for cyclists and pedestrians.
5	Public Spaces	A series of strongly defined crescents, circuses and squares connected by formal streets
6	Block Layout	Development will be arranged in the form of blocks with well defined perimeters and internal courtyards surveilled by mews development
7	Linkages	There will be a high degree of integration between the neighbouring residential areas, with direct vistas along streets
8	Density	Medium and Low density. The average density will range from 30dph to 40dph.
9	Building Heights	There will be a mix of two and three storey buildings with the possibility of four storeys at key corner locations
10	Building Types	Dwellings will be arranged in detached, semi-detached and terraced forms
11	Building Line	Strong - continual building line. Limited set backs from the footway edge to accommodate cast iron railings and threshold space for formal style shrub planting.
12	Gardens	Private rear gardens for all properties with limited shared garden space for apartments
13	Parking	Courtyards at the back of blocks will provide access to other dwellings and serve as parking areas. On-street parking is possible.
14	Security	There should be a clear definition of public and private areas. Dwellings located in the interior of blocks will provide natural surveillance over the internal space. Entrances to the courtyards should be through narrow gaps in the frontages with a defined threshold from the street.
15	Landscape	Formal Greens. Hard landscaped gravel spaces with low formal 'parterre' planting will provide an alternative to grass.
16	Tree Planting	Trees will be planted within streets, squares and courtyards to provide a softening effect, focal point or help reduce the impact of on street parking.

4.4.1 The Semi-Formal Character Area will be a key element of the urban design strategy adding to the townscape value of the new neighbourhood by creating an immediately apparent contrast with City Street and Urban Core Character Areas.



Examples of Semi-Formal type development

# rural edge

## 4.5 Rural Edge Character Area

1	Uses	Low Density Housing
2	Activities	Primarily a local domestic environment, designed for the enjoyment of residents but fronting structural landscaping and open countryside used by all.
3	Role	Reasons for identifying low density development in these areas are three fold. Firstly the alignment of the City Street moves away from the extreme east of this area leaving some development outside the 400m catchment area, albeit within 400m of the bus routes along H4. Secondly much of the area is defined by the significant plantations of woodland along the southern and eastern edges of this area and will be complemented by lower density development. Thirdly the Rural Edge Character area will primarily be composed of larger properties with higher values. Having some lower density development in this sector of the WEA will provide a greater socio-economic mix in this sector of the WEA development area.
4	Street Layout	An informal arrangement of buildings with a network of streets, spaces and squares. The highway design should also respond to the character area through varied carriageway widths and informal footpath treatments.
5	Public Spaces	A series of informal squares and spaces located throughout the character area.
6	Block Layout	Development will be arranged in the form of blocks with well defined perimeters and internal courtyards surveilled by mews development. Frontages to overlook rural edge.
7	Linkages	Access to the open countryside should be a key factor to the design of this character area. The area will provide the transition between urban and rural. Because of this, existing rights of way have been retained and new more suitable points of access provided. These 'green links' will provide the basis for a pedestrian and cycle network throughout the development and ensure safe and attractive routes between Milton Keynes and the North Buckinghamshire Countryside.
8	Density	Low density. The average density will be 30dph.
9	Building Heights	There will be a mix of two and three storey buildings.
10	Building Types	Dwellings will be arranged in detached, semi-detached and terraced forms
11	Building Line	Informal building line with variations in set backs and limited front gardens
12	Gardens	Private rear gardens and small front gardens.
13	Parking	Courtyards at the back of blocks will provide access to other dwellings and serve as parking areas. On-street parking is possible.
14	Security	There should be a clear definition of public and private areas. Dwellings located in the interior of blocks will provide natural surveillance over the internal space. Entrances to the courtyards should be through narrow gaps in the frontages, with a defined threshold from the street.
15	Landscape	Informal green spaces
16	Tree Planting	Informal trees will be planted within streets, squares and courtyards to provide a softening effect, focal point or help reduce the impact of on-street parking.

4.5.1 The Rural Edge Character Area will occupy the western and southern edges of the WEA development area. This character area will comprise lower density development at an average of 30 dph. The character area has been devised to create a positive interface between the new development and the open countryside and, with the exception of some Semi-Formal areas, will define the new western edge of Milton Keynes.



Examples of Rural Edge type development

# employment areas

## 4.6 Employment Areas

4.6.1 The employment areas along V4 Watling Street will be highly visible parts of the WEA development area. As such, the employment development should front Watling Street and the adjacent City Streets.

1	Uses	B1 and B2 and ancillary uses
2	Activities	Employment
2	Role	This employment area will form a prominent frontage along the main V4 Watling Street. It is envisaged that the buildings will have a 'hitech' character which symbolises the dynamism of this 21st Century development. Existing landscape features and proposed balancing ponds will be expected to be integrated into the design.
3	Street Layout	Connected street layout linking into City Street.
4	Public Spaces	Public spaces for lunch time relaxation are to be strongly related to the linear parkland.
5	Relationship with adjacent areas	Close relationship with the a strong landscape boundary and Watling Street interface. Adjacent to the residential area and the City Street a more urban character is to be created by locating buildings closer to the carriageway with a more limited planting treatment.
6	Building Heights	Up to 3 storey buildings
7	Building Types	Pavilion office buildings should positively address the City Street and Watling Street with active frontages located on to the City Street.
8	Gardens	n/a
9	Parking	Any parking and vehicle turning/servicing areas should be located away from the public side of the development (ie the City Street). A central parking area should be positively and attractively designed, and integrated with other public areas and footways, to reduce the impact of the parking.
10	Security	The active elements of buildings will be orientated to maximise surveillance over public areas.
11	Landscape/ Public Realm	This area should have a very strong landscape boundary adjacent to the linear parkland which will maximise the opportunities presented by the creation of permanent balancing/storage areas.
12	Planting	Structural landscape and tree planting will play a key role in integrating these buildings into the parkland landscape.
13	Street Design	The City Street will run adjacent to this area.



# parkland edge



## 4.7 Parkland Edge Character Area

1	Uses	Parkland, allotments, playing fields, burial ground
2	Activities	Primarily formal and informal recreation
2	Role	The character area has been devised to create a positive interface between the new development and the surrounding countryside through the creation of an attractive parkland edge
3	Street Layout	N/a. Adjacent character areas should address this area positively.
4	Public Spaces	A rich and varied landscape should be provided by a mix of open space uses incorporating formal sports, informal walking/dog walking, the burial ground and habitat creation.
5	Relationship with adjacent areas	Pedestrian and cycle access to the parkland corridor should be a key factor to the design of this and adjacent character areas. The area will provide the transition between the rural edge residential character area and the surrounding rural landscape. The parkland itself will be a resource for formal and informal leisure and will provide a 'green link' for pedestrian and cycle movement throughout the development and beyond. The North Bucks Way forms part of this character type. The parkland edge is also an important space in terms of reducing the visual impact of development on sloping land.
6	Building Heights	Any buildings associated with this character area, such as changing rooms or buildings associated with the burial ground should be single storey in height to reduce the visual impact in the landscape.
7	Building Types	Any associated buildings should be small scale and be constructed of local materials to integrate new development into the rural landscape. Any facilities associated with sport or play should be sensitive to the rural context in both scale, materials and colour.
8	Gardens	This character area is strongly defined by the adjacent rural character. The burial ground should consist predominantly of native species to reinforce the semi-natural character of this area.
9	Parking	Any associated parking should be screened from the rural edge and broken up by a strong landscape treatment
10	Security	There should be a clear definition of public and private areas. The entrances to the burial ground should be well defined
11	Landscape/ Public Realm	This character type should have a very strong landscape structure integrating the adjacent residential character areas with the rural landscape. The hard landscape treatment should reinforce the informal character of this area with bound gravel surfacing to footpaths. The layout of paths should be informal.
12	Planting	Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained within the parkland edge character area to help reinforce the semi-naturalistic character of this area. New planting will be provided in the District Park, local play areas, burial ground and other areas of strategic landscape and incidental greenspace at an early stage. Planting should consist of predominantly native species and should strengthen existing hedgerows and woodland areas. New planting areas should also be used to encourage wildlife.
13	Street Design	The highway design within this character area should also respond to the informal character of the rural edge, through varied carriageway widths and informal footpath treatments.

4.7.1 The Development Framework identifies a strong parkland edge which acts as a buffer between the surrounding countryside and the residential development. This character type refers to the majority of parkland uses within this buffer area which includes the District Park, the burial ground, local parks, allotments and strategic landscape. The key feature of this area is a strong landscape structure which integrates the new development into the surrounding rural landscape.

