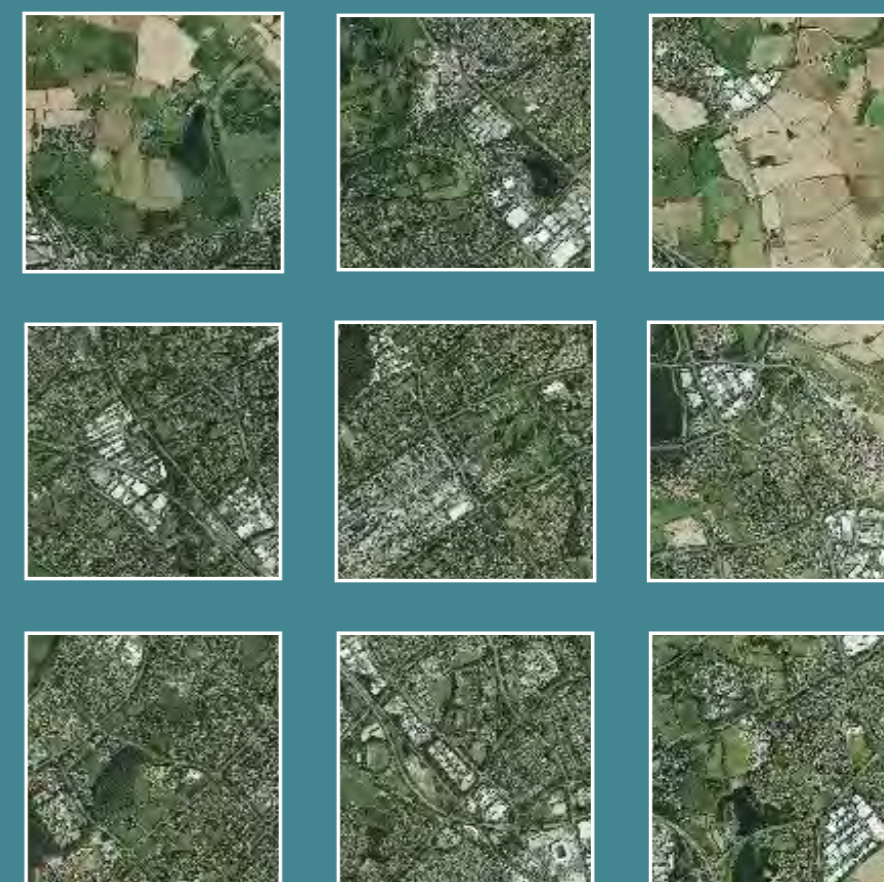


## Residential Characterisation Study: An Evidence Base for Plan:MK



[www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/udla](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/udla)

March 2017



This document has been prepared by  
Milton Keynes Council's Urban Design  
and Landscape Architecture Team.

For further information please contact:

David Blandamer  
Urban Designer  
Growth, Economy and Culture  
Milton Keynes Council  
Civic Offices  
1 Saxon Gate East  
Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ  
**T +44 (0) 1908 254836**  
**F +44 (0) 1908 252329**  
**E [david.blandamer@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:david.blandamer@milton-keynes.gov.uk)**

# Contents

SECTION 1	INTRODUCTION	SECTION 2	CONTEXT	SECTION 3	CHARACTER AREAS	SECTION 4	INNOVATION				
1.1	Aim of the Study	pg5	2.1	Introduction	pg9	3.1	Introduction	pg17	4.1	Introduction	pg45
1.2	What the Study Covers	pg5	2.2	Development of Milton Keynes	pg10	3.2	CMK	pg19	4.2	Energy Efficiency	pg45
1.3	National Planning Policy Framework	pg5	2.3	Density	pg14	3.3	Existing Towns	pg19	4.3	£60,000 House	pg45
1.4	National Planning Practice Guidance	pg5				3.4	Existing Villages	pg20	4.4	Flexible Homes	pg45
1.5	Building For Life 12	pg5				3.5	Rectilinear Layout	pg24	4.5	Oakgrove Millennium Community	pg45
1.6	MKC Policy and Guidance	pg6				3.6	(Part) Radburn Layout	pg32			
1.7	Structure of Document	pg6				3.7	Spine and Cul-de-sac Layout	pg36			
						3.8	Deformed Grid Layout	pg40			
						3.9	Conclusion	pg42			
SECTION 5	ARCHITECTURE	SECTION 6	CONCLUSIONS								
5.1	Introduction	pg49	6.1	Introduction	pg53						
5.2	Architects	pg49	6.2	Vision	pg53						
5.3	Self-build	pg49	6.3	Variety	pg53						
			6.4	Architecture	pg53						
			6.5	Innovation	pg54						

# SECTION 1

## INTRODUCTION

1.1	Aim of the Study	5
1.2	What the Study Covers	5
1.3	National Planning Policy Framework	5
1.4	National Planning Practice Guidance	5
1.5	Building for Life 12	5
1.6	MKC Policy and Guidance	6
1.7	Structure of Document	6

## 1.1 Aim of the Study

- 1.1.1 Good planning should seek to ensure that developments respond to local character and heritage.
- 1.1.2 The aim of this study is to describe the character of residential areas within Milton Keynes and to use this evidence to help design future development. The Study will be used to support policies in Plan MK with regard to local character.

## 1.2 What the Study Covers

- 1.2.1 The Study is not concerned with villages outside of the built-up area of Milton Keynes. The defining characteristic of Milton Keynes is the grid road network, which splits the built-up area into a number of grid squares. A key principle of the Milton Keynes masterplan was the separating of employment and residential uses, with employment spread around the settlement. Employment areas have not been considered in this Study.
- 1.2.2 The study does not consider aspects of Milton Keynes which establish character at a more strategic level, for example, linear parks, grid roads etc. Public art can also help to establish character within new development. However, this aspect of character is not covered in this Study.

## 1.3 National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.3.1 Paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states “Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;”
- 1.3.2 NPPF (para 60) states “Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.”

## 1.4 National Planning Practice Guidance

- 1.4.1 Paragraph 20 of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states: “Distinctiveness is what often makes a place special and valued. It relies on physical aspects such as:
- the local pattern of street blocks and plots;
  - building forms;
  - details and materials;
  - style and vernacular;
  - landform and gardens, parks, trees and plants; and
  - wildlife habitats and micro-climates.
- Distinctiveness is not solely about the built environment – it also reflects an area’s function, history, culture and its potential need for change.”
- 1.4.2 NPPG (para 7) states: “Development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, local man-made and natural heritage and culture, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
- 1.4.3 The successful integration of all forms of new development with their surrounding context is an important design objective, irrespective of whether a site lies on the urban fringe or at the heart of a town centre.

- 1.4.4 Local building forms and details contribute to the distinctive qualities of a place. These can be successfully interpreted in new development without necessarily restricting the scope of the designer. Standard solutions rarely create a distinctive identity or make best use of a particular site. The use of local materials, building methods and details can be an important factor in enhancing local distinctiveness when used in evolutionary local design, and can also be used in more contemporary design. However, innovative design should not be discouraged.”

## 1.5 Building for Life 12

- 1.5.1 Building for Life 12 (BfL12) is a government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Local communities, local authorities and developers are encouraged to use it to guide discussions about creating good places to live.
- 1.5.2 Q5 of BfL12 relates to “Character” and asks “Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?”

1.5.3 There are two sub-questions: 5a, How can the development be designed to have a local or distinctive identity?; and 5b, Are there any distinctive characteristics within the area, such as building shapes, styles, colours and materials or the character of streets and spaces that the development should draw inspiration from?”

1.5.4 BfL12 recommends “Exploring what could be done to start to give a place a locally inspired identity if an area lacks a distinctive character or where there is no overarching character.” It further states that “We recommend that you avoid using the lack of local character as a justification for further nondescript or placeless development.

## 1.6 MKC Policy and Guidance

### Core Strategy

1.6.1 Policy CS13 (Ensuring High Quality, Well Designed Places) states:  
**Character of Place**  
 All new development must be of high design quality in terms of layout, form and appearance, and make a positive contribution to the character of the area in which it is located.  
 All new development must be based on a thorough site appraisal and be sensitive to its context. New housing should be of an appropriate density for the area in which it is located.  
 Where there is no clear character

on the site or surrounding area, new development must be designed to create a distinctive sense of place by using existing site features, the layout of the development, and the appearance of buildings.”

### Residential Development Design Guide

1.6.2 Para 4.11.5 of the Design Guide states that “The overriding principle for the appearance of the built form is that the buildings are ‘of their time and place.’ Poor quality pastiche types will not be supported as they do not help create an identity for a development and do not reflect the city’s forward-looking ethos.”

1.6.3 Section 2.2 of the Design Guide requires that developers undertake a contextual character appraisal.

## 1.7 Structure of Document

1.7.1 The Characterisation Study comprises the following sections:

Section 1 – introduces the aims and scope of the project. It sets out the planning policy background.

Section 2 - considers the wider context of Milton Keynes as a whole.

Section 3 - divides the built-up area of Milton Keynes into different character typologies and describes the typical characteristics of these typologies.

Section 4 - considers the extent to which high quality architecture has been a characteristic of development in Milton Keynes.

Section 5 - considers the extent to which innovation has been a characteristic of development in Milton Keynes.

Section 6 - sets out some conclusions as to the key elements of character within Milton Keynes.



# SECTION 2

## CONTEXT

2.1	Introduction	9
2.2	Development of Milton Keynes	10
2.3	Density	14



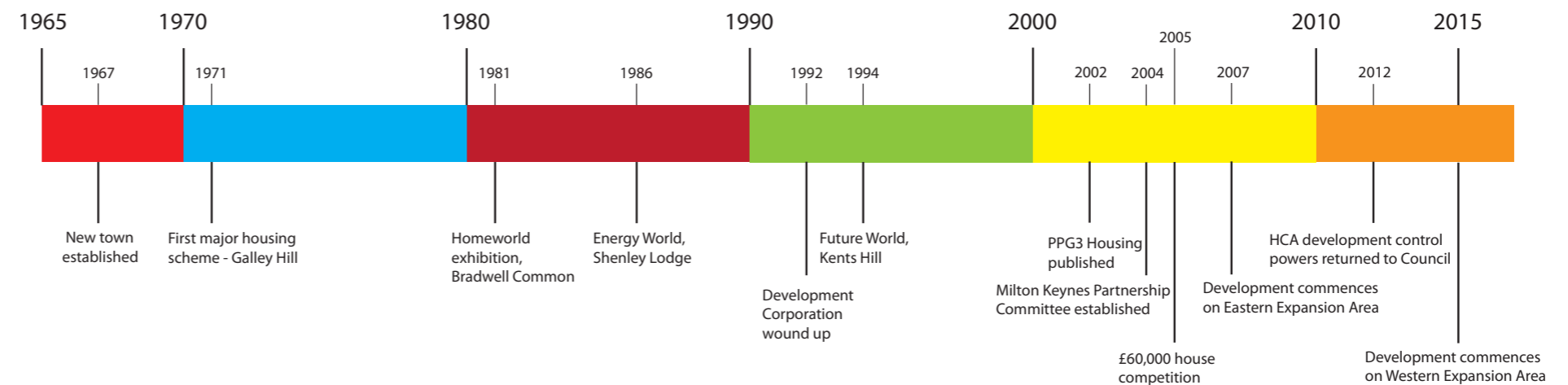
## 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Milton Keynes was established in January 1967. Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) was set up to plan and build the new town. MKDC had powers to buy land, to build (or get others to build) houses for rent or sale, and to borrow money from the Treasury to do all this.

2.1.2 The original Master Plan allowed for a degree of flexibility and as new estates were built over time, their design reflected the approaches and standards of the day, and social, economic and environmental changes that happened over time. As the Plan states, “It is considered likely that policies and patterns of building which are appropriate in the early years of development will have to change long before the city is finished.”

2.1.3 MKDC was wound up in 1992. Land assets were transferred to English Partnerships and responsibility for planning control passed to Milton Keynes Council.

## Timeline



2.1.4 In June 2004 Milton Keynes Partnership Committee (MKPC), was created by the Government and was a committee of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the national housing and regeneration agency for England. MKPC was created to ensure a co-ordinated approach to planning and delivery of growth and development in the ‘new city’. These development control powers returned to the Council in late 2012.

2.1.5 In January 2013, HCA land assets were transferred to the Council. The Council has set up Milton Keynes Development partnership (MKDP), a limited liability company, to promote the development of the land assets.

## 2.2 Development of Milton Keynes

- 2.2.1 Milton Keynes has not grown like a traditional town out from the centre. Grid squares have been developed in a more random fashion. There are still undeveloped sites within Campbell Park which is located adjacent to CMK.
- 2.2.2 By 1980, development had been completed at Coffee Hall, Beanhill, Netherfield, Fullers Slade, Galley Hill, Tinkers Bridge, Stacey Bushes, Hodge Lea, Stantonbury, and Bradville. Construction was underway in Simpson, Peartree Bridge, Conniburrow, Bradwell Common, Downs Barn, Neath Hill, Pennyland, Oldbrook, Fishermead, Springfield, Great Linford, Heelands, Bradwell and Eaglestone.



Netherfield (1970s)

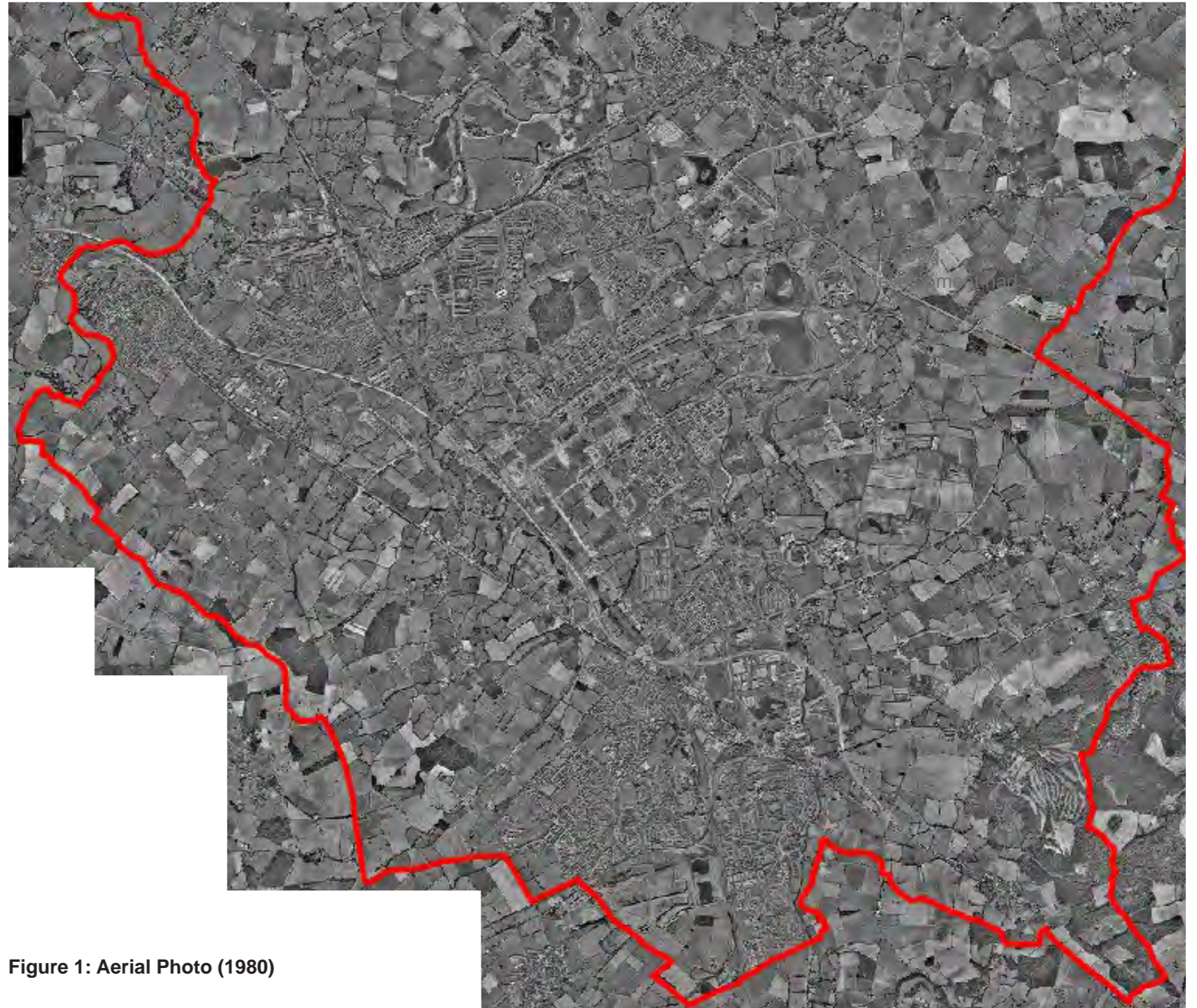


Figure 1: Aerial Photo (1980)

2.2.3 By 1990, the focus of development was the south-western edge (Furzton, Shenley Lodge, Shenley Brook End, Shenley Church End and Emerson Valley) and the south-eastern edge of the city (Walnut Tree, Wavendon Gate, Browns Wood, Old Farm Park, and Kents Hill). Areas such as Willen, Willen Park, Great Linford, Downhead Park, Bolbeck Park, Great Holm, Two Mile Ash and Woolstone had also been completed by this time.



Woughton on the Green (1978)



Figure 2: Aerial Photo (1990)

2.2.4 By 2005, development was underway in Broughton, Oxley Park, Westcroft and Grange Farm. Areas such as Medbourne, Tattenhoe, and Kingsmead had been completed by this time.



Figure 3: Aerial Photo (2005)

2.2.5 By 2012, development had been completed at Broughton and Broughton Gate in the Eastern Expansion Area. Construction was underway in Brooklands, Oakridge Park and the Northern Expansion Area.



Figure 4: Aerial Photo (2012)

### 2.3 Density

2.3.1 Figure 5 shows the gross densities of grid squares across the built-up area of Milton Keynes. Gross density of grid squares is generally quite low, as a result of the amount of structural landscaping and open space.

2.3.2 The normal transect of traditional settlements sees densities decrease as you move away from the centre. However, this does not apply within Milton Keynes. The grid squares adjacent to CMK generally have the highest gross densities (e.g. Fishermead 22 dph). However, densities within expansion areas on the edge of the city are as high (e.g. Broughton Gate 22 dph).

2.3.3 Table 1 (overleaf) shows net densities for selected grid squares. Net densities within the early years of development of Milton Keynes were relatively high (e.g. Fishermead 35 dph, Netherfield 46dph) with most housing being social housing for rent. Densities in later grid squares were lower (e.g. Caldecotte 26 dph, Wavendon Gate 28 dph). With the publication of PPG3 (Housing) in the 1990s, net densities of new development has increased (e.g. Broughton 53 dph, Monkston Park 36 dph).

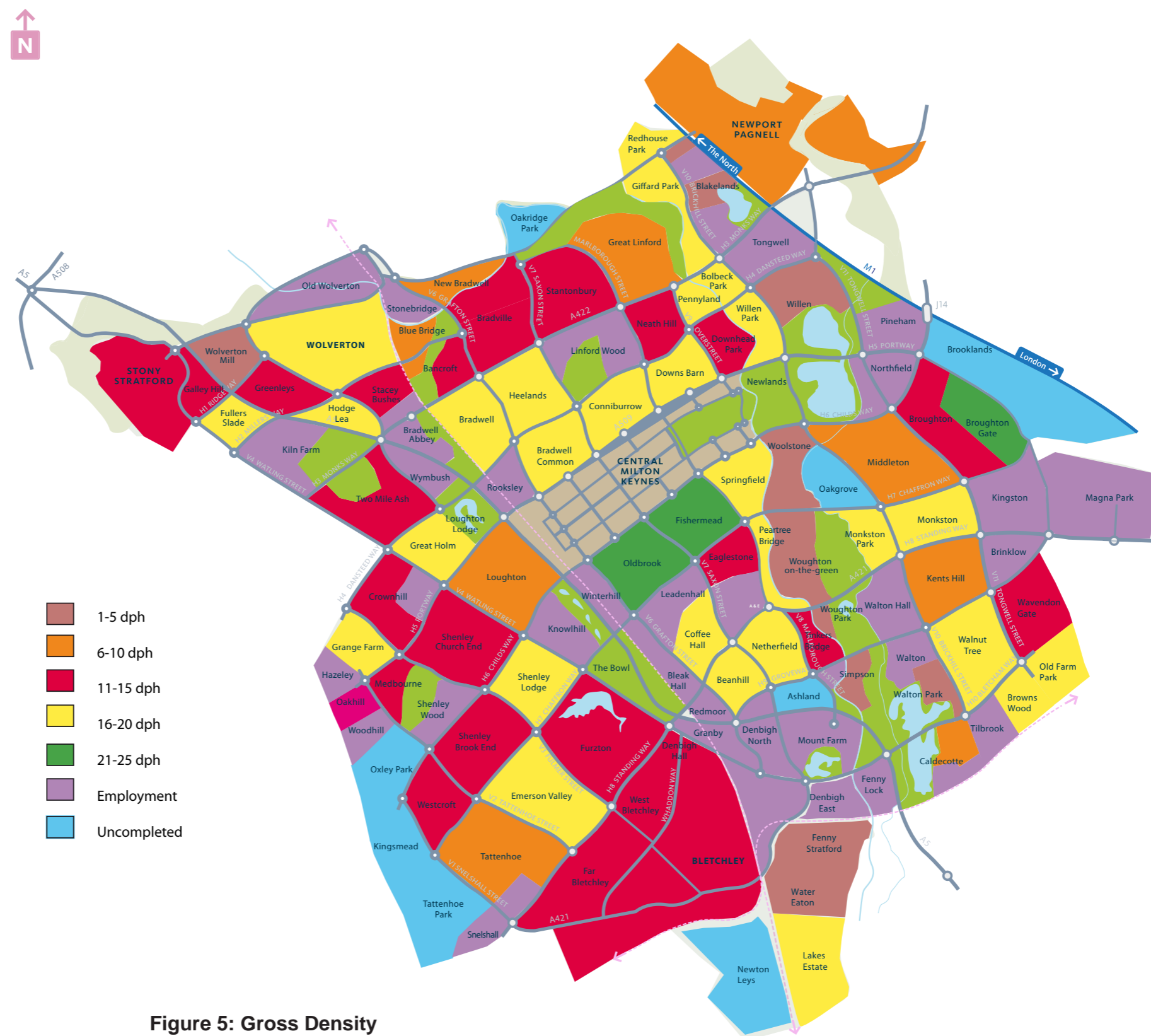


Figure 5: Gross Density

	Gross density (dph)	Net density(dph)
Beanhill	18	28
Broughton	15	53
Broughton Gate	22	32
Brooklands	-	33
Caldecotte	6	26
Fishermead	22	35
Middleton	9	21
Monkston Park	16	36
Netherfield	19	46
Oakgrove Phase 1	-	44
Wavendon Gate	13	28
Woolstone	5	12

**Table 1: Net and Gross Densities\* of Selected Grid Squares**

\*Net dwelling density is calculated by including only land which will be developed for housing and directly associated uses (i.e. access roads within the site, incidental open space and landscaping, private garden space, car parking areas, and children's play areas). Gross dwelling density is calculated by including all land (i.e. not just housing land but also land for schools, employment, open space, etc.).

# SECTION 3

## CHARACTER TYPES

3.1	Introduction	17
3.2	CMK	19
3.3	Existing Towns	19
3.4	Existing Villages	20
3.5	Rectilinear Layout	24
3.6	(Part) Radburn Layout	32
3.7	Spine and Cul-de-sac Layout	36
3.8	Deformed Grid Layout	40
3.9	Conclusion	42



### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Character typologies have been identified for the urban area of Milton Keynes (see Figure 1). Settlements and neighbourhoods within each of the typologies display a number of common characteristics (see Table 1).

Typology	Settlements	Characteristics	Period
1. CMK	CMK, Campbell Park		
2. Existing Towns	Stony Stratford, Wolverton, New Bradwell, Bradville, Newport Pagnell, Bletchley, Fenny Stratford, Water Eaton		
3. Existing Villages	Bradwell, Willen, Great Linford, Shenley Church End, Loughton, Shenley Brook End, Woolstone, Woughton-on-the-green, Simpson, Middleton	Incorporation of existing villages within new settlement	1980s/1990s
4. Rectilinear Layout	Bradwell Common, Conniburrow, Downs Barn, Oldbrook, Fishermead, Springfield Galley Hill, Fullers Slade, Stacey Bushes, Stantonbury, North Bradville, Coffee Hall, Beanhill, Tinkers Bridge, Netherfield	Rectilinear street layout Innovative building forms and construction methods	1970s/1980s
5. (Part) Radburn Layout	Hodge Lea, Eaglestone, Lakes Estate, Greenleys	Segregation of car and pedestrian (Radburn)	1970s
6. Spine & Cul-de-sac Layout	Blue Bridge, Bancroft, Neath Hill, Pennyland, Bolbeck Park, Willen Park, Downhead Park, Two Mile Ash, Great Holm, Crownhill, Shenley Lodge, Furzton, Emerson Valley, Tattenhoe, Monkston, Kents Hill, Peartree Bridge, Walnut Tree, Wavendon Gate, Old Farm Park, Browns Wood, Woughton Park, Walton Park, Giffard Park, Heelands	Spine road with cul-de-sacs Significant street planting Incorporation of strategic landscape features (linear parks, hedgerows)	1980s/1990s
7. Deformed Grid Layout	Ashland, Monkston Park, Wolverton Mill, Grange Farm, Medbourne, Oakhill, Oxley Park, Westcroft, Kingsmead, Tattenhoe Park, WEA, Oakridge Park, Redhouse Park, Brooklands, Broughton, Broughton Gate, Newton Leys, Oakgrove	Perimeter blocks Small setbacks Continuous frontages Rear parking courts	2000s/2010s

Table 2: Character Area Typologies

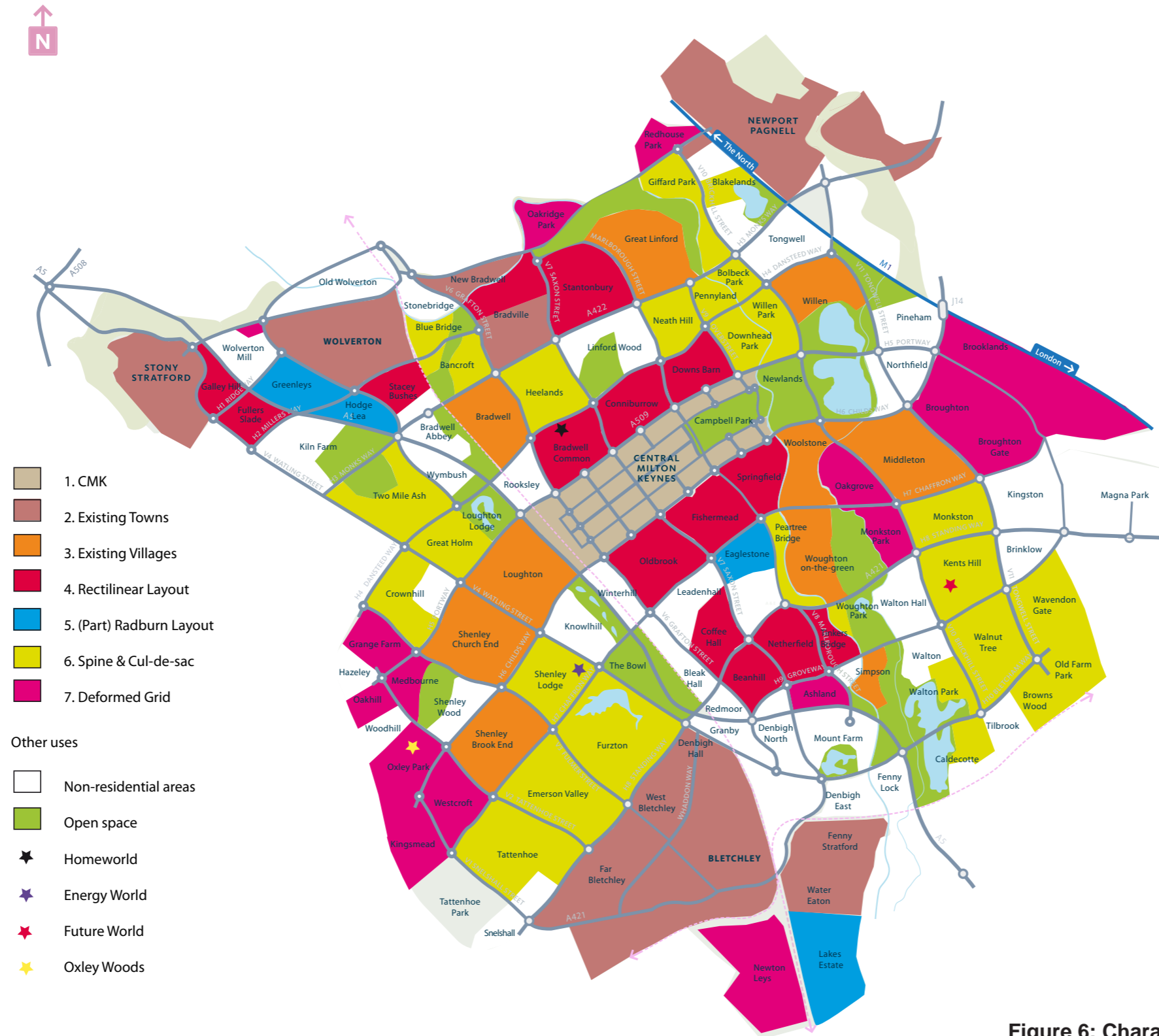


Figure 6: Character Area Typologies

## 3.2 CMK

- 3.2.1 CMK forms the retail and business hub of Milton Keynes. There are small pockets of housing within CMK.

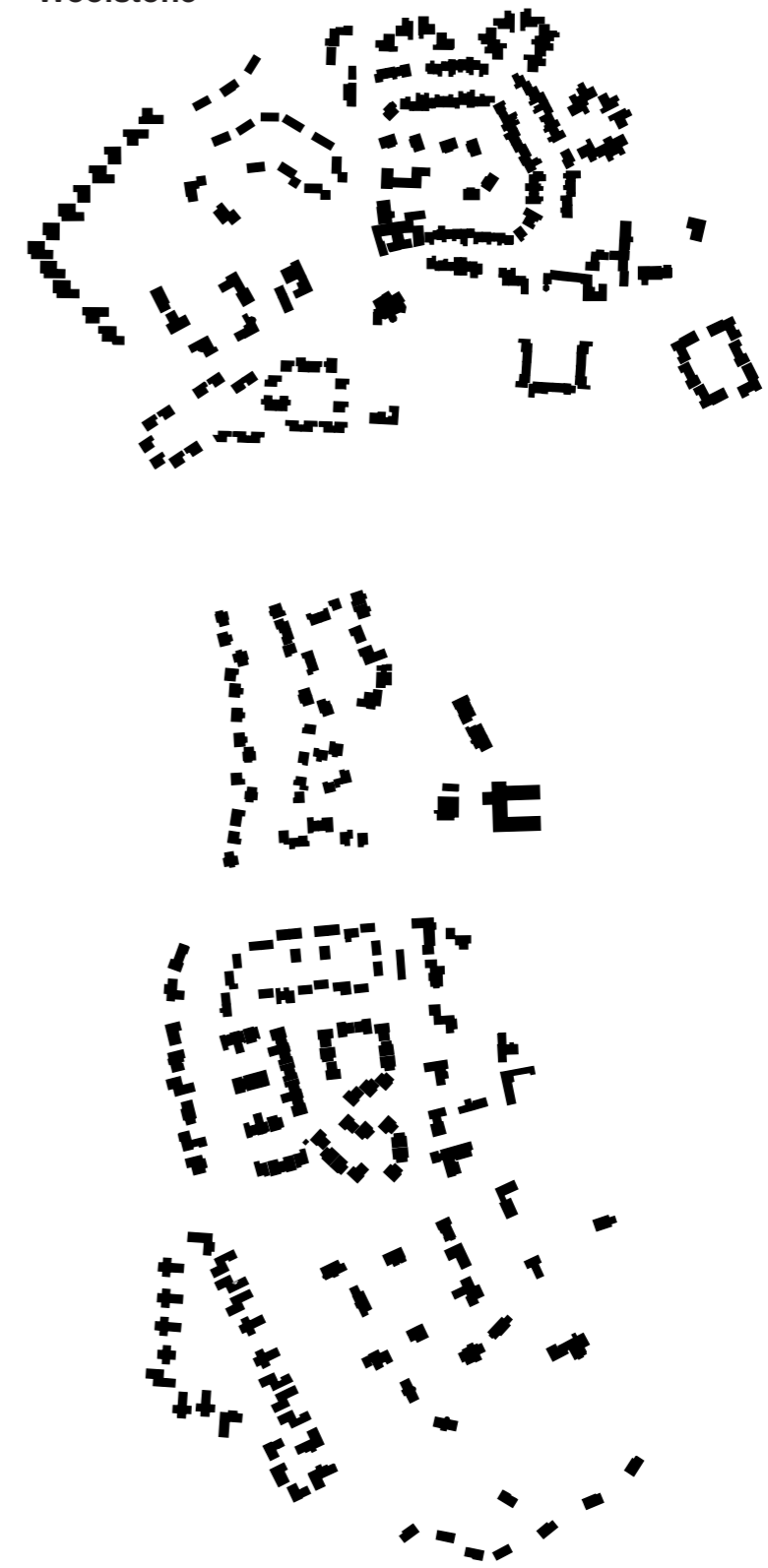
## 3.3 Existing Towns

- 3.3.1 The designated area of Milton Keynes included a number of existing towns. The grid road structure circumvented these areas.
- 3.3.2 These existing towns were substantially built-up before the establishment of the new town. Any subsequent development has been in the form of infill development. New development has responded to the local context.

### 3.4 Existing Villages

- 3.4.1 Existing villages were incorporated into grid squares. Space was retained to maintain the setting of the original settlement. New development respected the character of the existing village, in terms of layout and materials.
- 3.4.2 Woolstone and Great Linford are typical examples of this character typology.
- 3.4.3 Woolstone consists predominantly of detached dwellings. It has a linear form of development arranged along two north-south roads. A buffer of open space around the edge and east-wedges of open space help to maintain its village character.

Figure 7: Figure Ground - Woolstone



<b>Woolstone</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1980s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Pitched
Materials	Red brick, tiles
Windows	Dark wood, white plastic
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Large setbacks (5-15m)
Front boundaries	Hedges
Street layout	Spine and cul-de-sacs
Street types	Avenue, residential streets, courts
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings front the street
Car parking	On-plot to front
Continuity of frontage	Not continuous
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Village is buffered by open space. Wedges of green space.
Garden sizes	Generous sized rear gardens wide and >10m deep
Street trees	Planting in groups related to open space
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	12 dph (net)
Building height	2 storeys
Building type	Detached



3.4.4 Great Linford has a varied character. The predominant character is of detached dwellings, but there are significant areas of terraced housing. Housing turns its back on the main spine road and consists of a number of small enclaves of development, each with their own character. Generally speaking, due to the layout and landscaping, different character areas do not visually clash, as they are not viewed together. A number of these developments are architect-designed.

Figure 8: Figure Ground - Great Linford



<b>Great Linford</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1970s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Pitched
Materials	Red brick, tile
Windows	Dark wood, white plastic
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	
Front boundaries	Hedges, open plan
Street layout	Spine and cul-de-sac
Street types	Spine street, residential streets, lanes, courts
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings front the street
Car parking	Varied (front parking courts, on plot to front and side)
Continuity of frontage	Some areas of broken frontage, other areas of continuous terraces
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Significant areas of public open space
Garden sizes	Varied (depending on building type)
Street trees	Along spine street, in wide verges
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	21.3 dph (net)
Building height	2 storeys
Building type	Detached, areas of terraced housing



### 3.5 Rectilinear Layout

- 3.5.1 There is a grouping of grid squares located in a ring around CMK (the so called 'doughnut estates'). They are characterised by a rectilinear grid layout. Blocks often have a continuous frontage of terraces with flats at the corners. Semi-private open space is provided within the blocks. There is very high level of pedestrian permeability, sometimes at the expense of security.
- 3.5.2 There is a strong sense of enclosure. Parking is well integrated into the streetscene, within landscaped central reservations. Trees and planting help to mitigate the impact of vehicles within the streetscene. Consistent use of a restricted palette of materials provides a strong identity to the estate. Street trees are a feature of the main spine roads through the development which are characterised by wide (15 metres) verges and have a lack of dwellings fronting the street.
- 3.5.3 Conniburrow and Bradwell Common are typical examples of these estates.
- 3.5.4 Conniburrow is typified by rectilinear perimeter blocks with continuous frontages and open space within the centre of the block.

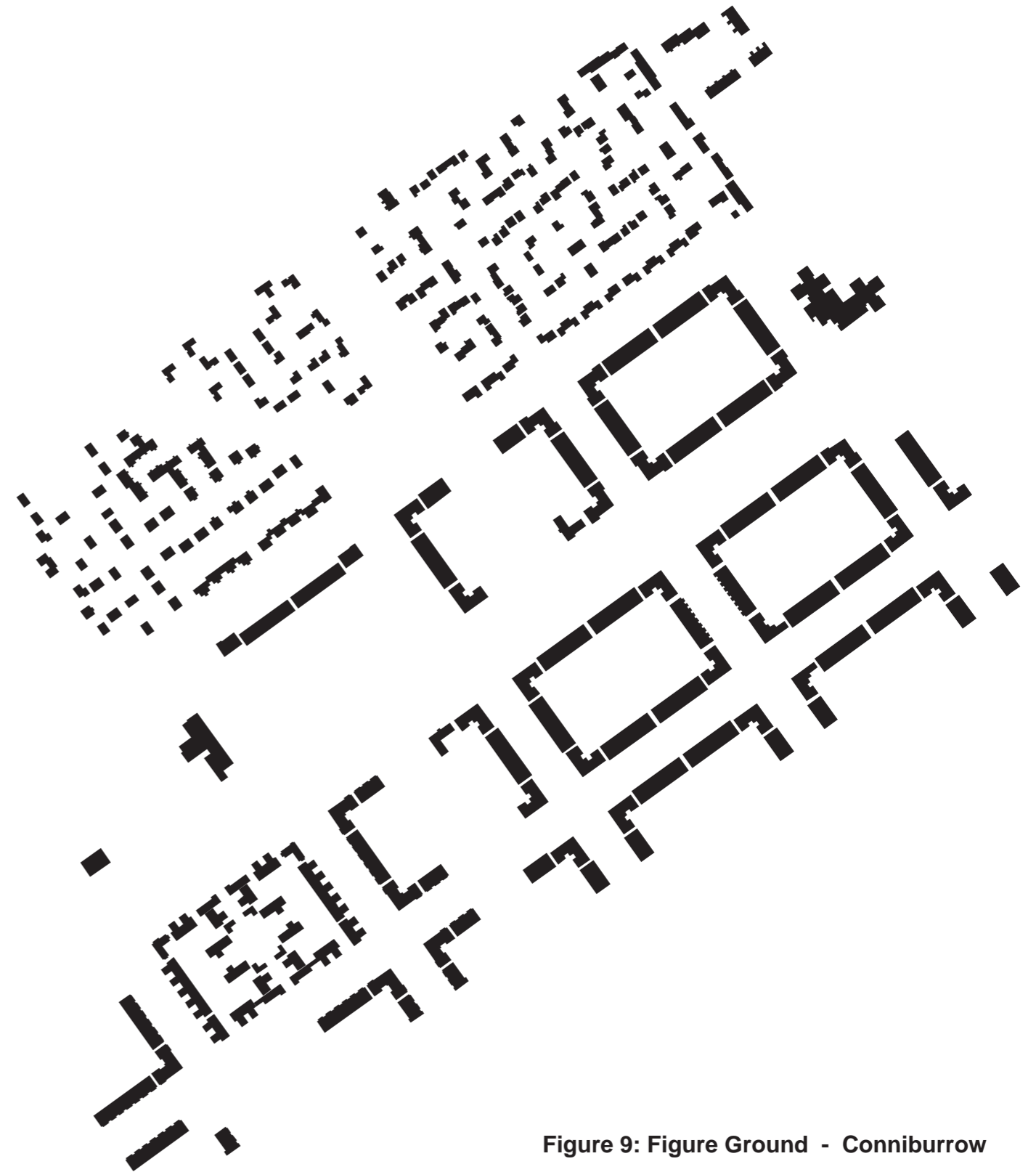


Figure 9: Figure Ground - Conniburrow



<b>Conniburrow</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1970s/1980s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Pitched
Materials	Buff brick, red tiles
Windows	White plastic, horizontal emphasis
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Predominantly small setbacks (3m) and consistent building line. In the northern part of grid square, larger setbacks (>8m)
Front boundaries	Open plan
Street layout	Rectilinear grid
Street types	Boulevard, avenues, residential street, mews
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings front the street
Car parking	Parking to front in car ports, on street in central median
Continuity of frontage	Continuous frontages
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Significant areas of open space at centre of blocks
Garden sizes	Small narrow gardens (10m deep)
Street trees	Trees within central median and verges
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	38 dph (net)
Building height	2-3 storeys
Building type	Predominantly townhouses/apartments, some semi-detached and detached



3.5.5 The area to the south of Bradwell Common Boulevard is more urban, with terraced dwellings located providing continuous frontages. To the north of the Boulevard is more suburban with garages providing continuity of frontage. Trees within roundabouts are a feature of the streets in this part of Bradwell Common.

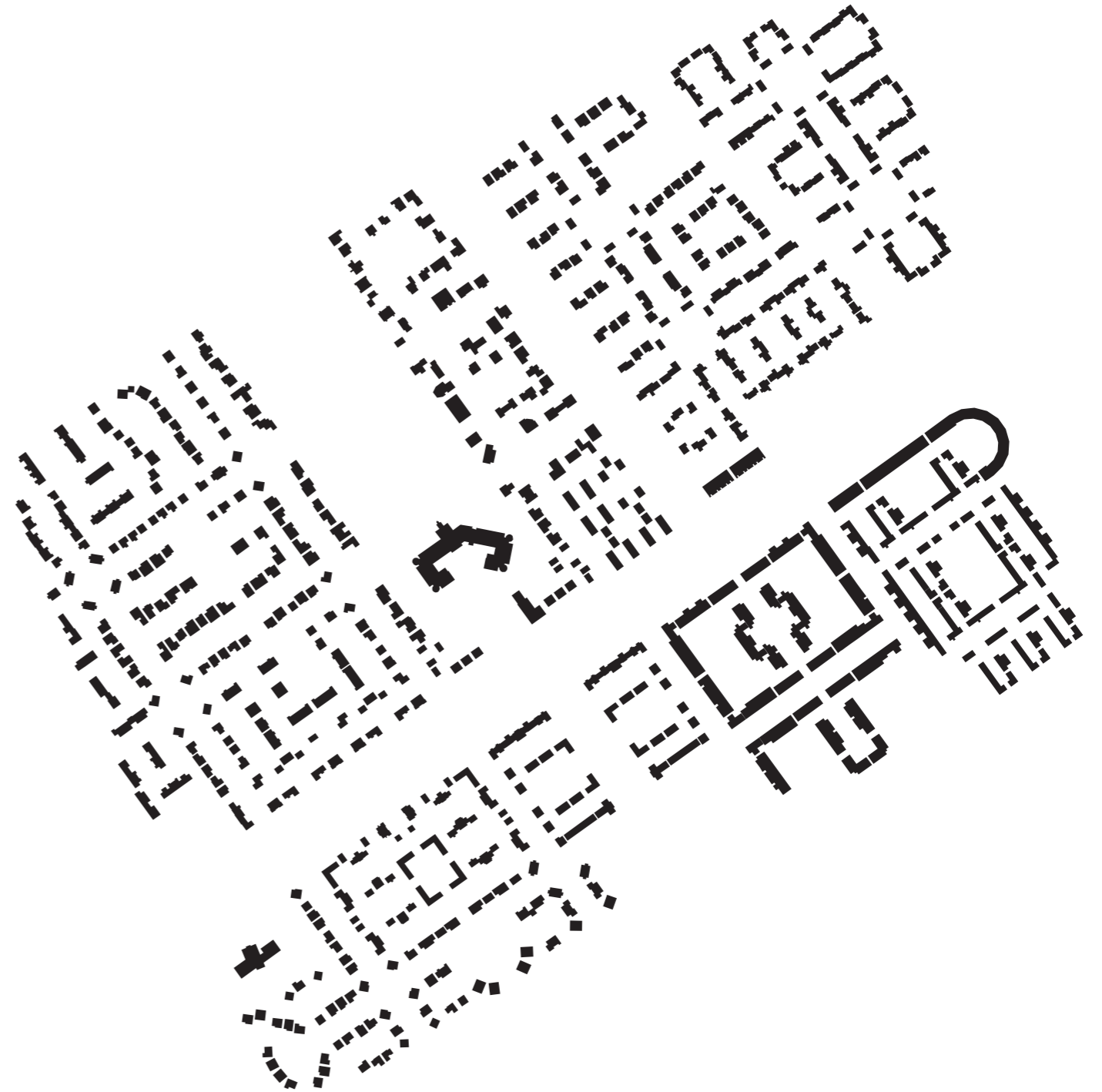


Figure 10: Figure Ground - Bradwell Common

<b>Bradwell Common</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1980s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Pitched
Materials	Red brick/red tiles, buff brick/grey tiles
Windows	White plastic, dark wood
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Setbacks >5m
Front boundaries	Varied (low hedges/brick walls, open plan)
Street layout	Rectilinear grid
Street types	Boulevard, avenues, residential street, mews
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings from the street
Car parking	Parking to front on plot
Continuity of frontage	Gaps kept to a minimum. Garages used to provide continuity of frontage, Continuous frontages in south-east corner of grid square.
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Green access route
Garden sizes	10m deep rear gardens
Street trees	Trees within roundabouts, within verges on boulevards/avenues
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	23.6 dph (net)
Building height	2-3 storeys
Building type	Predominantly detached, with some terraced and semi-detached. Concentration of townhouses within south-east corner of grid square.



- 3.5.6 There are other grid squares within this typology that were developed with a high proportion of social housing. They are characterised by a range of innovative housing forms, materials and layouts, not all of which have survived the test of time.
- 3.5.7 These estates generally have a strong identity through the use of a limited palette of materials. However, they tend to lack variety through the use of a narrow range of building forms and housing tenures.
- 3.5.8 Netherfield and Stantonbury are typical examples of these estates.
- 3.5.9 Netherfield has a rectilinear layout with terraced housing providing a continuous frontage. There is a strong distinctive character, with the majority of housing built as part of the same development.



Figure 11: Figure Ground - Netherfield

<b>Netherfield</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1970s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Predominantly flat, some pitched
Materials	Cladding
Windows	White plastic, horizontal emphasis
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Large setbacks (8m), consistent building line
Front boundaries	Mainly open plan
Street layout	Rectilinear grid
Street types	Residential streets
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings front the street
Car parking	Parking to the front or in rear courts
Continuity of frontage	Continuous frontage of terraces
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Significant areas of open space
Garden sizes	Small narrow rear gardens (8m-13m deep)
Street trees	In verges on east-west cross streets
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	46 dph (net)
Building height	2-3 storeys
Building type	Predominantly terraces



3.5.10 Stantonbury consists of a number of areas with different characters arranged around a central area of open space. There is a lack of legibility in the street hierarchy.



Figure 12: Figure Ground - Stantonbury

<b>Stantonbury</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1970s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Pitched/monopitched
Materials	Red/buff brick, render, tiles
Windows	White plastic, horizontal emphasis
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Setbacks 5-8m, consistent building line
Front boundaries	Mainly open plan
Street layout	Rectilinear grid
Street types	Residential streets
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings generally front the street
Car parking	Parking on plot to front, some rear parking courts
Continuity of frontage	Continuous frontage of terraces, garages used to provide continuity of frontage
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Areas of open space at centre of some blocks, green access route, central area
Garden sizes	Generally narrow and small (9-12m)
Street trees	Street trees in wide verges
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	33.2 dph (net)
Building height	2 storeys
Building type	Predominantly terraced, significant area of semi-detached, some detached



### 3.6 (Part) Radburn Layout

- 3.6.1 These grid squares were developed with a high proportion of social housing. They are characterised by a range of innovative housing forms, materials and layouts, not all of which have survived the test of time.
- 3.6.2 Radburn layouts are characterised by the fronts of houses facing pedestrian footpaths, often in a courtyard arrangement, with streets located to the rear of properties.
- 3.6.3 Parts of Eaglestone and Greenleys are typical of this character typology.
- 3.6.4 Greenleys is characterised by development arranged courtyards, with development turning its back on the spine road running through the grid square. The majority of these courtyards have dwellings fronting pedestrian paths, with parking provided in adjacent parking courts. As a consequence, dwellings back onto streets and public open space.



Figure 14: Figure Ground - Greenleys



<b>Greenleys</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1970s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Monopitched
Materials	Red brick in older part of estate, varied brick elsewhere
Windows	White plastic, horizontal emphasis
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Very small setbacks (3m) from footpath
Front boundaries	Open plan
Street layout	Series of courtyards accessed off spine street
Street types	Spine road, residential streets, courts
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings in courtyards to south of grid square do not front the street
Car parking	Parking to the front on plot in non-Radburn part of estate, parking in parking courts in Radburn part of estate
Continuity of frontage	Rear boundaries and parking courts front the street
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Significant area of open space runs through the middle of the development
Garden sizes	Small gardens within courtyard housing
Street trees	Within centre of some courts, and along spine road
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	30 dph (net)
Building height	2 storeys
Building type	Predominantly terraced, some detached, semi-detached



3.6.5 Eaglestone has a more organic nature than Greenleys. Dwellings front onto pedestrian routes which wind their way through the development. Parking is provided in parking courts accessed off the circular spine road which runs around the estate.



Figure 13: Figure Ground - Eaglestone

<b>Eaglestone</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1970s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Pitched
Materials	Red/buff brick, coloured boarding, tiles
Windows	White plastic, horizontal emphasis
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Very small setbacks (<3m) from footpath
Front boundaries	Generally open plan
Street layout	Radburn
Street types	Spine road, residential streets
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings do not front the street
Car parking	Off plot in parking courts
Continuity of frontage	Dwellings often fail to address street with side boundaries and parking courts creating gaps in the frontage
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Significant area of open space running through the middle of the grid square
Garden sizes	Generally small and narrow (<9m deep)
Street trees	Some trees in road that encircles the development
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	48.3 dph (net)
Building height	2 storeys
Building type	Mainly terraced, some detached, semi-detached and apartments



### 3.7 Spine and Cul-de-sac Layout

- 3.7.1 These estates are characterised by a looping spine street with cul-de-sacs serving individual residential properties. Spine streets are generally characterised by verges with street trees.
- 3.7.2 Kents Hill and Emerson Valley are typical examples of this character typology.
- 3.7.3 Kents Hill has a significant central area of open space. A looping tree-lined spine road runs north-south, with cul-de-sacs branching off. Dwellings are predominantly detached.



Figure 15: Figure Ground - Kents Hill

<b>Kents Hill</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1990s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Pitched
Materials	Red brick, tiles
Windows	Dark wood
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Varied
Front boundaries	Hedges, soft landscaping
Street layout	Spine street and cul-de-sacs
Street types	Avenue, residential street
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings front the street
Car parking	Parking to front and side
Continuity of frontage	Gaps between buildings, garages used to provide continuity of frontage.
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Substantial area of open space within the centre of the estate
Garden sizes	Varied depending on housetype but generally 10m deep
Street trees	Street trees along main connecting streets
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	30.1 dph (net)
Building height	Predominantly 2 storey
Building type	Predominantly detached, terraced



3.7.4 Emerson Valley has a linear park running through it. Dwellings are predominantly detached and suburban in character.



Figure 16: Figure Ground - Emerson Valley

<b>Emerson Valley</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1980s/1990s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Pitched
Materials	Varied brick and tile
Windows	White plastic, dark wood, glazing bars
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Varies (3-14m)
Front boundaries	Varied
Street layout	Spine street and cul-de-sacs
Street types	Avenues, residential streets
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings generally front the street
Car parking	Parking on plot to front and side
Continuity of frontage	Gaps kept to a minimum
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Linear park, playing fields
Garden sizes	Varies (8-15m deep)
Street trees	Trees within verges on avenues
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	27.9 dph (net)
Building height	2 storeys
Building type	Predominantly detached, some semi-detached and terraced



### 3.8 Deformed Grid Layout

- 3.8.1 These estates have a clear block structure which makes them well connected and legible within the grid square.
- 3.8.2 They are characterised by streets with a strong sense of enclosure. Parking is generally located to the side or within rear parking courts.
- 3.8.3 Kingsmead North and Monkston Park are typical examples of this character typology.
- 3.8.4 Kingsmead North has a well-defined block structure. It employs a traditional 'pastiche' approach to building design. There is a strong sense of enclosure of streets provided by continuous frontages. It has a tight-packed urban character with a formal circus providing the only area of open space.

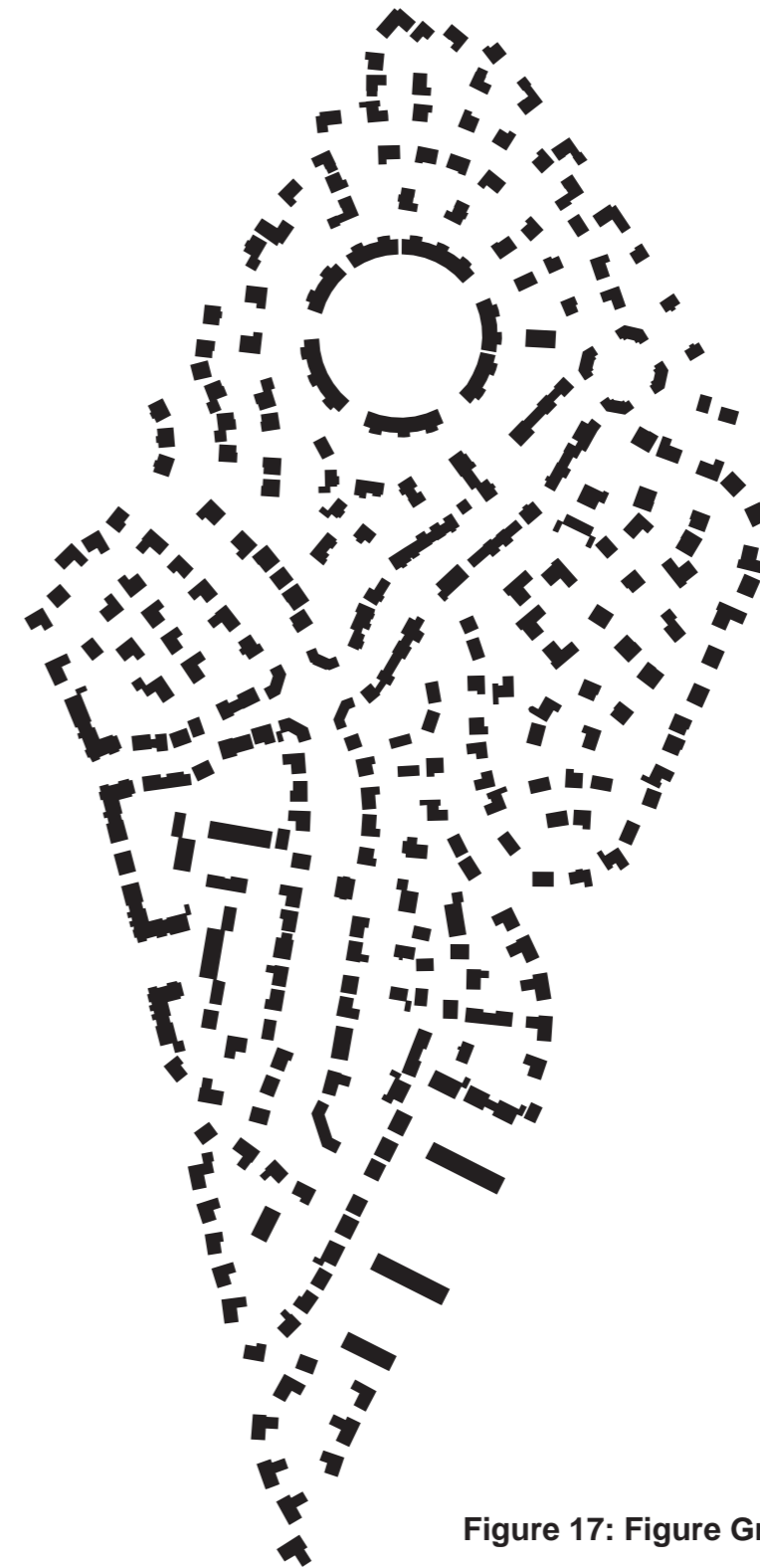


Figure 17: Figure Ground - Kingsmead North



<b>Kingsmead North</b>	
<b>Period</b>	1990s/2000s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Pitched
Materials	Brick/tiles
Windows	White plastic, glazing bars
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Setbacks generally small (<3m)
Front boundaries	Hedges/railings along spine street, elsewhere soft landscaping
Street layout	Connected deformed grid
Street types	Avenue, residential street, mews, edge street
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings front the street
Car parking	On plot to the side, some rear parking courts
Continuity of frontage	Gaps kept to a minimum
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Formal circus
Garden sizes	Varied (8-10m depth)
Street trees	Along main spine street
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	28 dph (net)
Building height	Predominantly 2 storey, some 3 storey
Building type	Mainly detached, good number of terraced, some semi-detached and apartments.



3.8.5 Monkston Park has a less well-defined block structure with, in places, the backs of dwellings fronting the public realm or street. It has a traditional 'pastiche' approach to building design, incorporating a wide range of building materials and forms.

3.8.6 This typology also covers the Northern, Western and Eastern Expansion Areas, Newton Leys, Oakgrove, Tattenhoe Park and Oakridge Park. Within these areas policy is provided by Development Frameworks, Design Briefs, and Design Codes.

### 3.9 Conclusion

3.9.1 These case studies help to illustrate the varied character across Milton Keynes. The lesson from these case studies is not that these layouts should be replicated in new developments. Rather it shows that no one layout form is typical of Milton Keynes, and that variety is a key defining feature of the city.



Figure 18: Figure Ground - Monkston Park

<b>Monkston Park</b>	
<b>Period</b>	2000s
<b>Style</b>	
Roof form	Pitched
Materials	Varied
Windows	White plastic, dark wood, glazing bars
<b>Layout</b>	
Setbacks/building line	Small setbacks (<5m)
Front boundaries	Varied (Hedges/landscaping, brick walls)
Street layout	Deformed grid
Street types	Residential streets, level surface street
Relationship of buildings to street	Buildings generally front the street
Car parking	Parking provided to the side on plot. Some rear courts.
Continuity of frontage	Gaps kept to a minimum. Garages and 'drive throughs' used to provide continuity of frontage.
<b>Open space/landscape</b>	
Public space	Village green, adjoining linear park
Garden sizes	Irregular garden sizes (8-12m deep)
Street trees	Within widened verge around village green
<b>Density</b>	
Dwellings per hectare	35.9 dph (net)
Building height	Predominantly 2 storey, some 3 storey
Building type	Mainly detached, good number of terraced and apartments, some semi-detached.



# SECTION 4

## INNOVATION

4.1	Introduction	45
4.2	Energy Efficiency	45
4.3	£60,000 House	45
4.4	Flexible Homes	45
4.5	Oakgrove Millennium Community	45

## 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Milton Keynes has a reputation for innovation in housing, particularly in the promotion of energy conservation. MKDC promoted innovative approaches to the layout of residential development and the design of buildings.

## 4.2 Energy Efficiency

4.2.1 During 1979 and 1980, 177 houses were built at Pennyland which incorporated low-energy measures, such as improved insulation, and more efficient boilers. The estate was laid out to take advantage of solar gain. The majority of houses faced south with the main living rooms located on the south side.

4.2.2 Open to the public during 1981, Home World was the first Housing Exhibition in the city showcasing innovation in energy efficient homes. Twenty developers built 36 houses for the Home World Exhibition at Bradwell Common.

4.2.3 Energy World was a demonstration project of 51 low-energy houses constructed in Shenley Lodge in 1986.

4.2.4 Kents Hill was the home of the Future World Exhibition sponsored by the National House Building Council in 1994. Architects, builders and producers of building products were invited to provide a glimpse of the way homes might operate in the 21st Century. As with the Home World

Exhibition 13 years earlier, the common themes of the exhibition were energy efficiency and conservation of the environment.

4.2.5 The Parks Trust have built a house at Tattenhoe, called The Passive House, to PassivHaus standard. Passivhaus is the world's leading standard for energy efficient construction. It is the first house of its type to be built in Milton Keynes and one of only a handful in the UK. The sustainable home aims to achieve zero carbon emissions through its PassivHaus construction, high levels of insulation, photovoltaic panels, water conservation, heat recovery and ventilation.

## 4.3 £60,000 House

4.3.1 In 2005, the then Labour government launched a competition which aimed to revolutionise housebuilding. The Design for Manufacture contest, was backed by deputy prime minister John Prescott and dubbed 'the £60,000 house'. The aim was to show that low-cost, sustainable homes could be produced through the use of 'modern methods of construction'.

4.3.2 Two sites were selected in Milton Keynes: one at Oxley Woods and one at Renny Lodge, Newport Pagnell.

4.3.3 Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners' designed a 122 home development for Wimpey Homes at Oxley Woods.

4.3.4 Renny Lodge was a development of 68 dwellings designed by architects Sheppard Robson. The developers were the SIXTYK Consortium, led by the housebuilder Crest Nicholson Plc with Kingspan providing off-site construction.

## 4.4 Flexible Homes

4.4.1 The development of Tattenhoe Park includes the pioneering use of 'super-flexible' homes which have been built with future extension or adaptation in mind. This will allow people and families to easily adapt their homes to meet their changing needs over time.

4.4.2 Adaptability has been facilitated either through the potential to extend into atelier space over detached garages, into the attic or to the rear of the dwelling.

## 4.5 Oakgrove Millennium Community

4.5.1 The Millennium Communities Programme was an English Partnerships initiative to construct 7 new 'villages' that were intended to 'set the standard for 21st Century living, and to serve as a model for the creation of new communities' in England.

4.5.2 Oakgrove in Milton Keynes was chosen as one of the seven millennium communities.

# Innovation



Oxley Woods, Oxley Park



Energy World, Shenley Lodge



Homeworld, Bradwell Common



Tattenhoe Park



Renny Lodge, Newport Pagnell



Future World, Kents Hill



Pennyland



Tattenhoe Park



# SECTION 5

## ARCHITECTURE

5.1	Introduction	49
5.2	Architects	49
5.3	Self-build	49



## 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The Plan for Milton Keynes (para 142) stated that “it is the responsibility of the Corporation to encourage high standards in the design and layout of houses. The best results are achieved, as a rule, by a combination of good developers and good designers rather than by detailed control. The Corporation will therefore encourage such a combination and allow freedom for architects and their clients to develop their own ideas.”

## 5.2 Architects

5.2.1 MKDC commissioned a number of talented architects in the early years of the development of Milton Keynes: such as Norman Foster, who designed Beanhill, Ralph Erskine, who designed Eaglestone, and Richard MacCormac. MKDC had its own design team, led by Derek Walker, which was responsible for the design of neighbourhoods such as Netherfield.

5.2.2 Architects were given a free rein which resulted in estates with very different characters. Places such as Coffee Hall and Beanhill had a strong geometric layout whilst Eaglestone had a more jumbled layout. Courtyard housing in Greenleys compared to street-based development of Netherfield.

5.2.3 Through the years there have been a number of architect designed schemes. MKDC encouraged the use of good architects to design schemes and gave them the freedom to be creative. More recently development has been built out by volume housebuilders. Where they have used architects, it has generally been only to reface standard housetypes.

5.2.4 Recent examples of architect-led schemes are few and far between. At Oakgrove, (developer: Crest Nicholson; architects: Gardner Stewart Architects), at Broughton Gate, (developer: Lagan Homes; architects: McBains Cooper) and Tattenhoe Park (developer: David Wilson Homes/Barratts; architects: IDP) bespoke schemes have been designed for the site.

## 5.3 Self-build

5.3.1 MKDC had a good track record of making plots available for self-builders. This provided the opportunity to design bespoke architect-designed dwellings.

5.3.2 More recently, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP) have made individual plots available to custom and self-builders.

# Architecture



Waterside, Pear Tree Bridge  
Architect: MKDC Architects



France Furlong, Great Linford  
Architect: Richard MacCormac



Bradwell Common  
Architect: Ted Cullinan



Glovers Lane, Heelands  
Architect: Henning Larsen



Rendlesham, Woolstone  
Architect: Aldington Craig & Collinge



Old Groveway, Simpson  
Architect: Phippen Randall & Parkes



Hartley, Great Linford  
Architect: Martin Richardson



North Row, CMK  
Architect: Derek Walker Associates



# SECTION 6

## CONCLUSIONS

6.1	Introduction	53
6.2	Vision	53
6.3	Variety	53
6.4	Architecture	53
6.5	Innovation	54

## 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The character of Milton Keynes's residential areas relates to:

- Vision
- Variety
- Architecture
- Innovation

## 6.2 Vision

6.2.1 The original Master Plan provided a strong vision for the establishment of Milton Keynes.

6.2.2 Milton Keynes likes to think of itself as a forward-thinking city. Today's development is potentially tomorrow's heritage. The spirit and design ethos of the time in which a building is constructed should therefore be embraced as a part of this ongoing continuum of design evolution.

6.2.3 There are two elements to character: time-distinctiveness and place-distinctiveness. Where there are no significant local elements, as may be common in Milton Keynes, the challenge will be to create new locally distinctive places. A lack of character in the surrounding area cannot be used as a justification for further nondescript or placeless development.

6.2.4 As a rule, development should always be time-distinctive. In practice, this means:

- No pastiche of historical architectural styles
- Reinterpreting vernacular features for modern day use
- Innovation in design, particularly in relation to sustainability agenda
- Avoidance of excessive architectural detailing, ornamentation and too many materials
- Visual richness provided by good quality materials and the use of texture and depth
- Use of modern materials and construction techniques
- Building typologies and designs that address current day housing issues and user aspirations
- Ensure that building elements are an integral part of the design and are not perceived as being 'stuck on' to the building

6.2.5 Development Frameworks and Design Codes should be prepared for new expansion areas/major urban extensions. Planning policy could set out what matters should be covered by Design Codes and include character as one of the key elements.

6.2.6 New development areas (expansion areas/grid squares) should set out a vision in development framework which provides a strong design concept for the area. Rules to establish character within the area should be set out in a design code.

## 6.3 Variety

6.3.1 The key structuring element of Milton Keynes is the grid road network. On the whole, individual estates are generally disconnected from each other and do not have a relationship with each other. Consequently, there is no need for individual grid squares to reflect the character of adjoining squares. They are not part of the context.

6.3.2 The different character typologies identified in Section 3 show that there is no one typical layout within Milton Keynes.

6.3.3 Milton Keynes as a whole reflects a "patchwork character" with many grid squares having their own unique character. Within some, such as Great Linford, the 'patchwork' character has an even finer grain with variety and layout within the grid square itself. This patchwork character is also reflected in the variation in gross density between different grid squares (see figure 5, page 14).

6.3.4 MKDC made available a significant number of individual building plots to self builders. In recent years, a small number of plots have been released by HCA and MKDP. In the early years of MKDC there was much variety in character of individual grid squares. In later years the impact of planning guidance and volume housebuilders has reduced the variety. Expansion

areas have been split between a limited pool of volume housebuilders which has reduced variety. Planning policies should encourage self-build and the splitting of larger sites into smaller parcels.

## 6.4 Architecture

6.4.1 In the early years of MKDC residential development was characterised by the use of architects that designed bespoke schemes. More recently, volume housebuilders have rolled out their standard housetypes, which has meant the continuation of the renowned 'patchwork' character of Milton Keynes has been more difficult to achieve.

6.4.2 The employment of qualified designers is not a guarantee of design quality. However, it is considered that if a step change in design quality is to be achieved, developers should use qualified architects, urban designers and landscape architects. The attitude of the client housebuilder to design quality is key, with architects given the freedom to use their creative talents. Whilst the Local Plan cannot control these aspects, policies should be included that seek to encourage high quality architecture.

## **6.5 Innovation**

- 6.5.1 An important characteristic of Milton Keynes has been its use as a test bed for innovation. MKDC promoted innovative approaches to housing, particularly with regard to low energy homes.
- 6.5.2 Innovation has been promoted by English Partnerships and HCA, through the £60,000 house (Oxley Woods/ Newport Pagnell), the Oakgrove Millennium Community and Tattenhoe Park Flexible Extendable Homes.
- 6.5.3 Planning policy relating to character should identify 'innovation' in housing design as a key element of the character of Milton Keynes that new development should seek to emulate.



**Urban Design & Landscape Architecture**

Growth, Economy and Culture

Milton Keynes Council

Civic Offices

1 Saxon Gate East

Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

T +44 (0) 1908 254836

F +44 (0) 1908 252329

E [urban.design@Milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:urban.design@Milton-keynes.gov.uk)



[www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/udla](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/udla)

