

PART A: Village Character, Identity and Built Form Information Guide



Part A is an information guide to accompany worksheet Part B. This should help to explain the eight design characteristics that help to explain the character, identity and built form of a place. This should assist you in defining building design elements of your village that help to shape the identity and character of your village. This will help to inform a sense of place and village distinction.

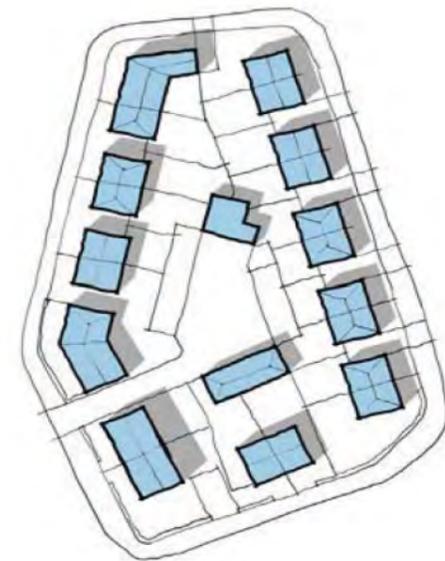
1. Built Form and Block Types: Building placement in the village context

The separation of public and private space and the use of blocks, including cul-de-sacs and gated communities. The design and types of block will vary in each village, blocks helps to distinguish the character of a village.

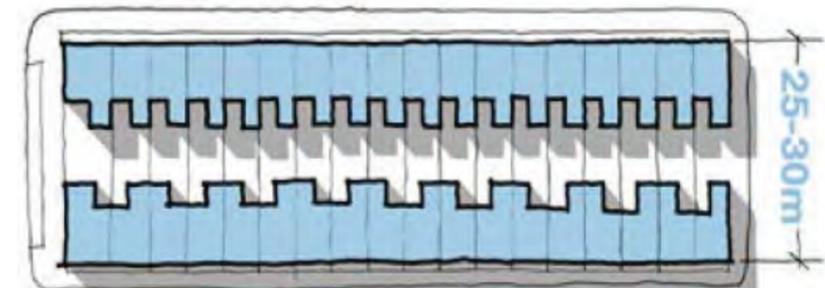
Perimeter block: A strip of development around a private courtyard/gardens. The private interior is not accessible to people from outside the scheme. It includes private and communal gardens and car parking.



Informal block: Blocks like this can be found in many modern housing schemes. The housing faces outwards onto the surrounding streets with front and back gardens. The extra width allows a parking court to be included alongside houses and garage blocks within the courtyard.



Terrace: The most common form is the typical English terrace, which may include a rear alleyway. Codes for area types that include existing terraced housing need to consider reductions in back-to-back distances, compared to common practice so that new development relates to the context.



Mews block: Mews streets run through blocks, originally accommodating stable blocks to the rear of large houses. Now they have generally been converted to separate homes and workspaces. Modern versions of mews blocks include smaller single aspect homes above garages within the block.



Courtyard block: Sometimes buildings join to each other (party wall) not just on either side but also to the rear. This is a characteristic form of many historic cities. There are also modern versions of this type of block with deep housing types with an internal courtyard.

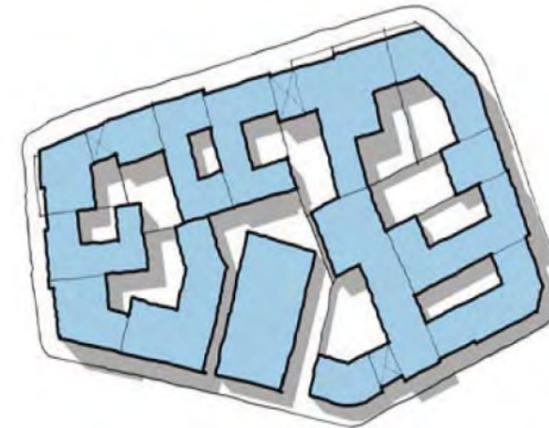


Fig1

Other: You may feel the blocks above are not characteristic of your village, and represented in another form other than blocks.

How would you characterise the block structure of your village area:

- Regular perimeter blocks
- Informal perimeter blocks
- Row blocks
- Courtyard blocks
- Mews blocks
- Cul-de-sacs
- Mixed
- Other

2. Streetscape: How buildings meet and connect to the street



Weobley High Street

- **How do buildings connect to the street at ground level?** Consider the placement of buildings, how are they set back from the street and/or boundary treatments.
For each of the following streets describe the character, looking at width, building height, enclosure ratio and active frontage:
- **High St** - Primary or Secondary street that acts as a focus for retail and other services
- **Secondary St** - Mainly carry local traffic and provide access into neighbourhoods; they are often the location of schools and community facilities and may also be residential streets in themselves
- **Local St** - Residential streets with managed traffic flows to prioritise active travel. They provide access to homes and support active travel, social interaction and health and wellbeing
- **Tertiary St** - With no through traffic, these are used for servicing or for access to small groups or clusters of homes. They can be lanes, mews courts, alleyways or cul-de-sacs.

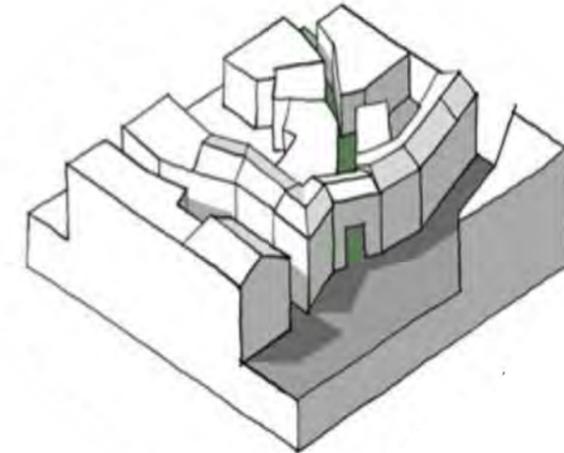
Rural streets/ Village lanes

These have a distinctive character. They may not have separate footpath or street lighting and may have constrained vehicular access, depending on local character. Design codes may seek to extend this character, particularly where lanes are to be incorporated into new development.



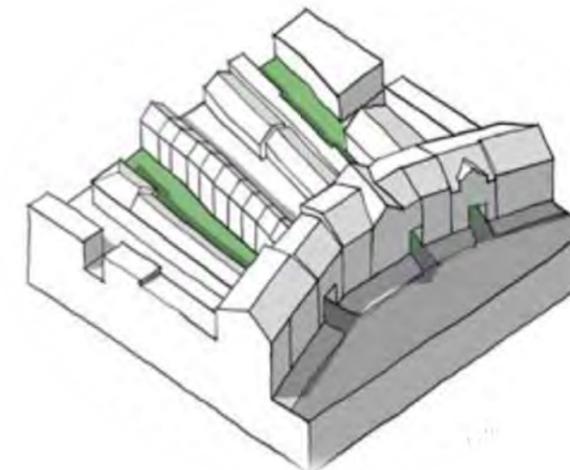
Alleyways

Many historic towns and cities include a network of alleyways. They can provide established and well-used pedestrian routes that need to be preserved in new development. 19th century housing areas can include rear alleyways that provide access to back yards.



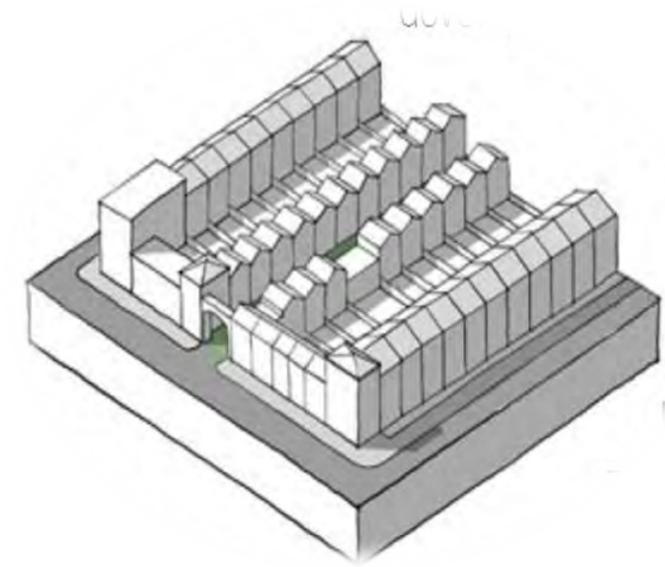
Burgage courts

Historic towns and villages can have burgage courts. They provide access into deep burgage plots and can be fronted by cottages. They provide access off the high street, often through an archway and may allow vehicle access.



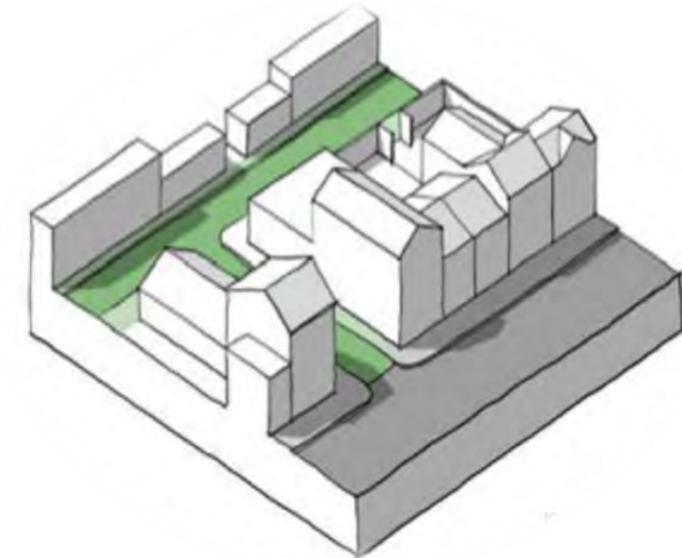
Mews streets

Traditional mews streets provided access to the rear of large houses. They can be accessed through an archway from the main street and have no pavements.



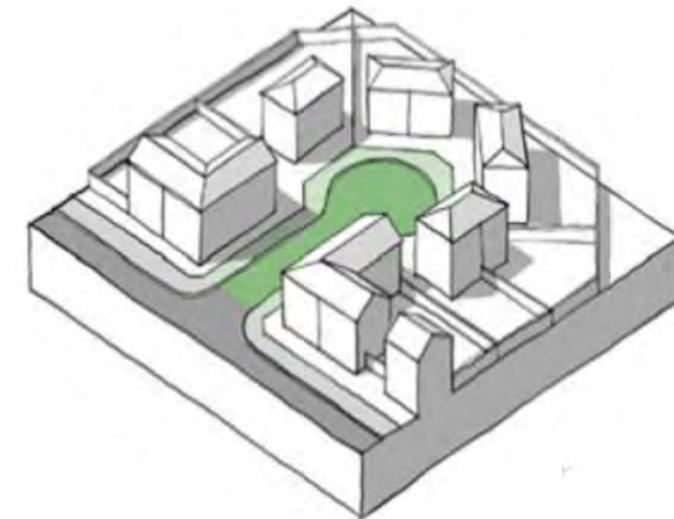
Back streets

A network of back streets provides access to the rear of properties for servicing. These are often narrow without pavements.



Closes and cul-de-sacs

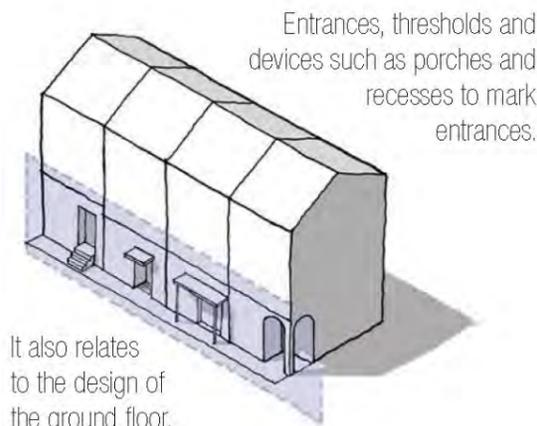
Short residential streets to open up sites where through streets are not possible.



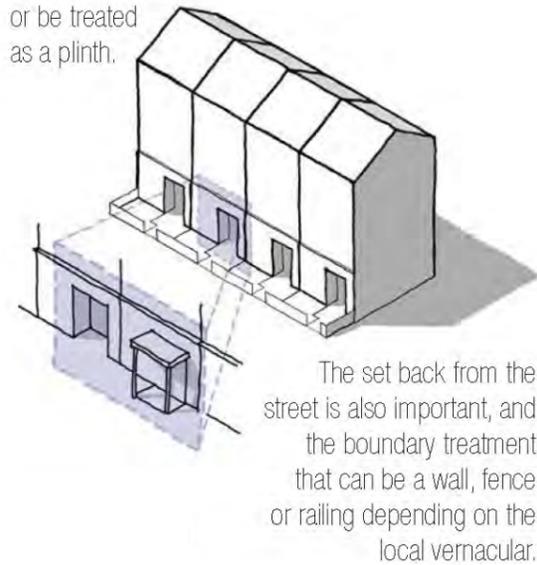
3. Boundaries and Party Wall: How space relate to the street along with neighbours

How do buildings connect to the street at ground level, are there walls or boundaries to break this up. Look at how the space between buildings and the street are connected or not.

Meeting the ground: It is important to consider how buildings are grounded and relate to the street. The following elements need to be considered:



It also relates to the design of the ground floor, which may use different materials or be treated as a plinth.



Walls



Railings



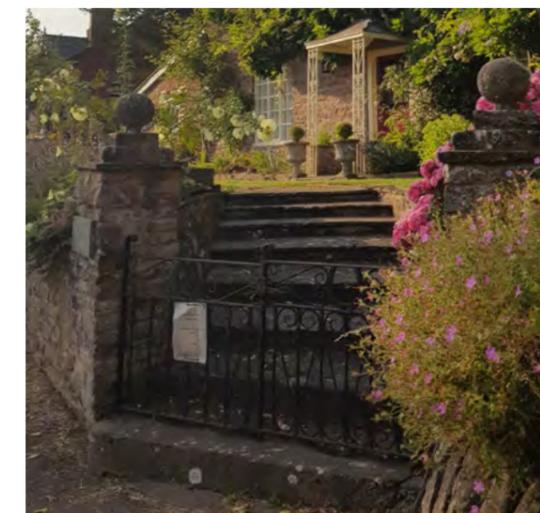
Fences



Green boundaries/ Hedges



Open Fronts

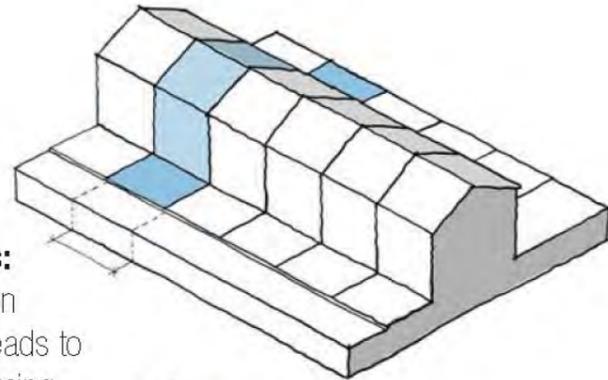


Consider height and depth

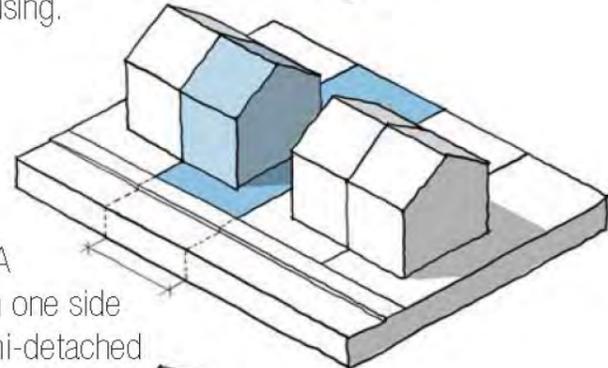
Fig 3

Boundaries Consider type of boundaries between building and street, these could be railings, walls, fences, grass verges, hedges, picket fencing, chain fencing. Also consider the height and depth of these, are they high or low walls. Materials of boundary treatments should be considered as well.

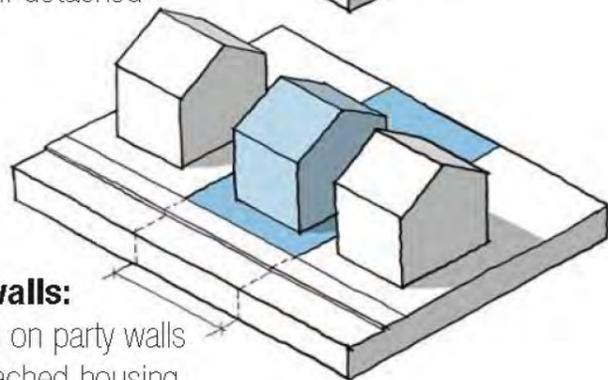
Party wall.-How buildings join or relate to their neighbours, are buildings terraced, semi-detached, detached? How are the areas connected or divided up.



Both sides:
Party walls on both sides leads to terraced housing.



One side: A party wall on one side leads to semi-detached housing.



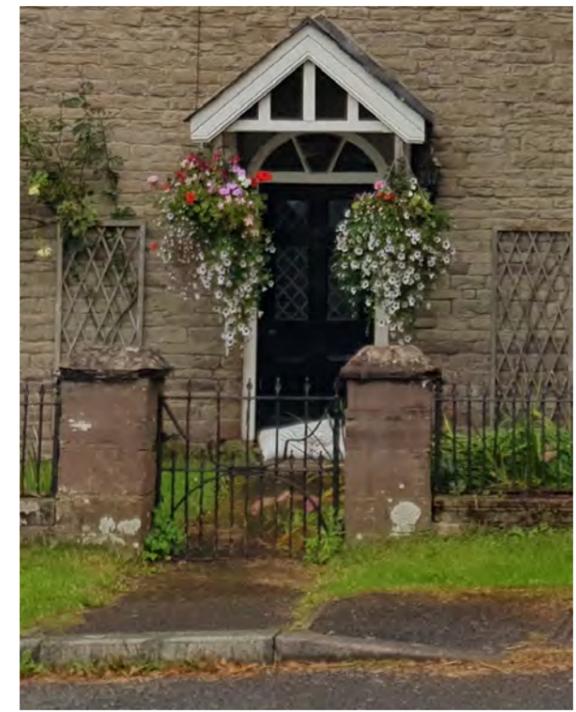
No party walls:
A prohibition on party walls leads to detached housing. A code may also specify the distance, say 1 m, to plot boundaries.



Fig 4

4. Thresholds and Entrances

Consider thresholds and entrances, and where there is use (or not) of front gardens and porches. Do doors enter directly on the street? Different types of porched traditional enclosed, open porch, storm porch or a door shelter. Are these features repeated or varied in the area? Do entrances have interesting or ornate composition, how have they used materials?



5. Roofscape and Skyline: How buildings meet the sky

Look at the village skyline and how roof heights and roof lines of buildings help form the character of your area. Look out for variation and repetition of roof heights and roof forms.

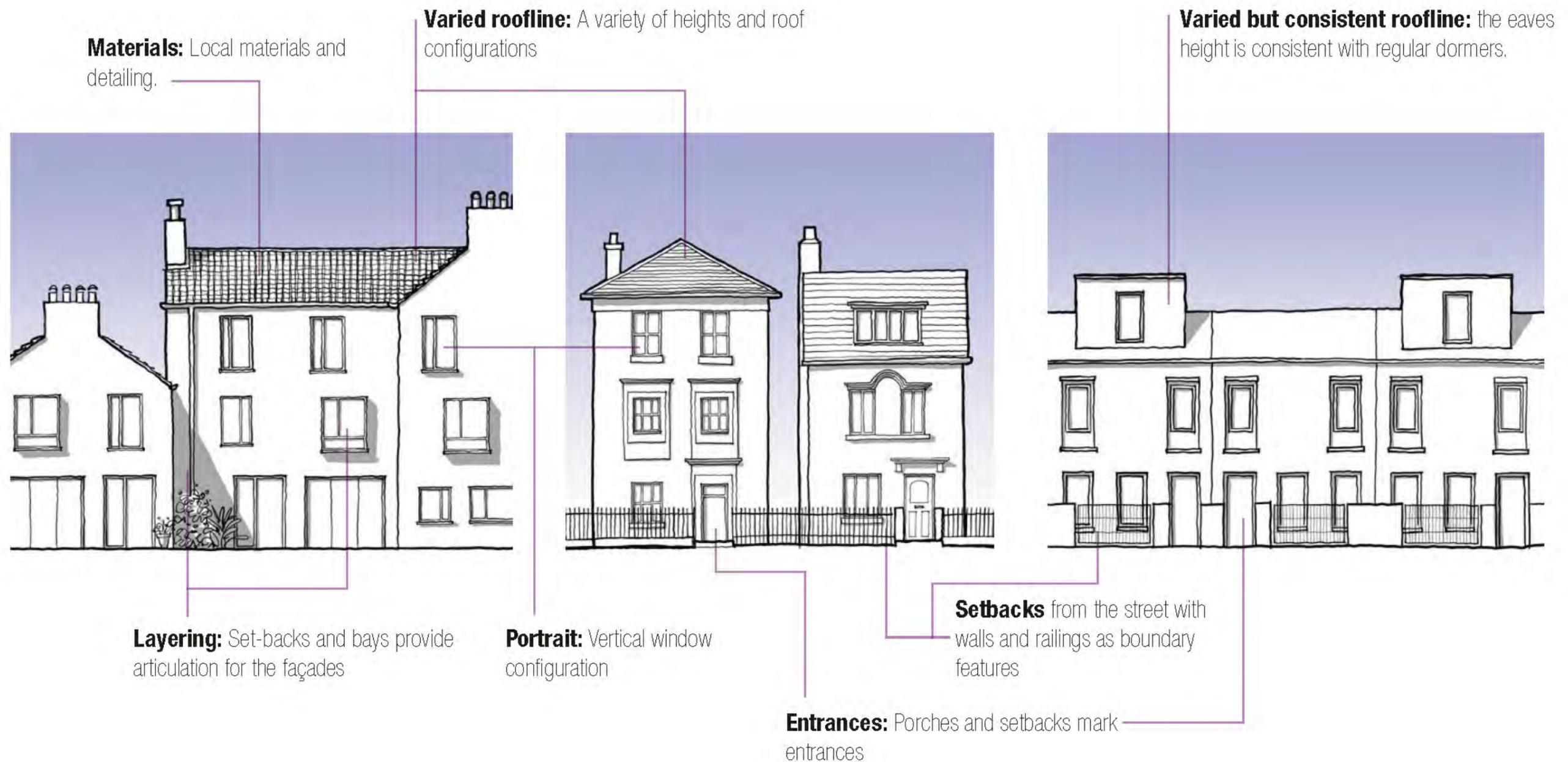
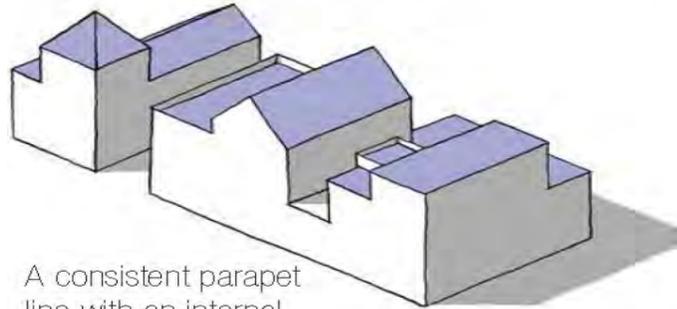


Fig 5

When looking at the village roovescape consider the:

Overall roofline

Meeting the sky: Townscape can be enriched by using varied roof heights and forms. Alternatively, a more formal character can be created with a consistent roofline. This relates to both the roofline and the eaves line.



A consistent parapet line with an internal

Fig 6

Roof form-Is the roof form varied or regular?



Ridge heights do this vary or uniformed in areas



Roof type- are they flat, pitched, include dormers



Eaves line-are they overhanging/clipped and guttering



Materials used/typical colours-are they thatched, metal sheet/ use clay/ slate tiles.



Chimneys-Regular or irregular. Are they integrated or act as a feature.



Dormers-Are dormers featured in the roof? Do they vary or are they uniform?

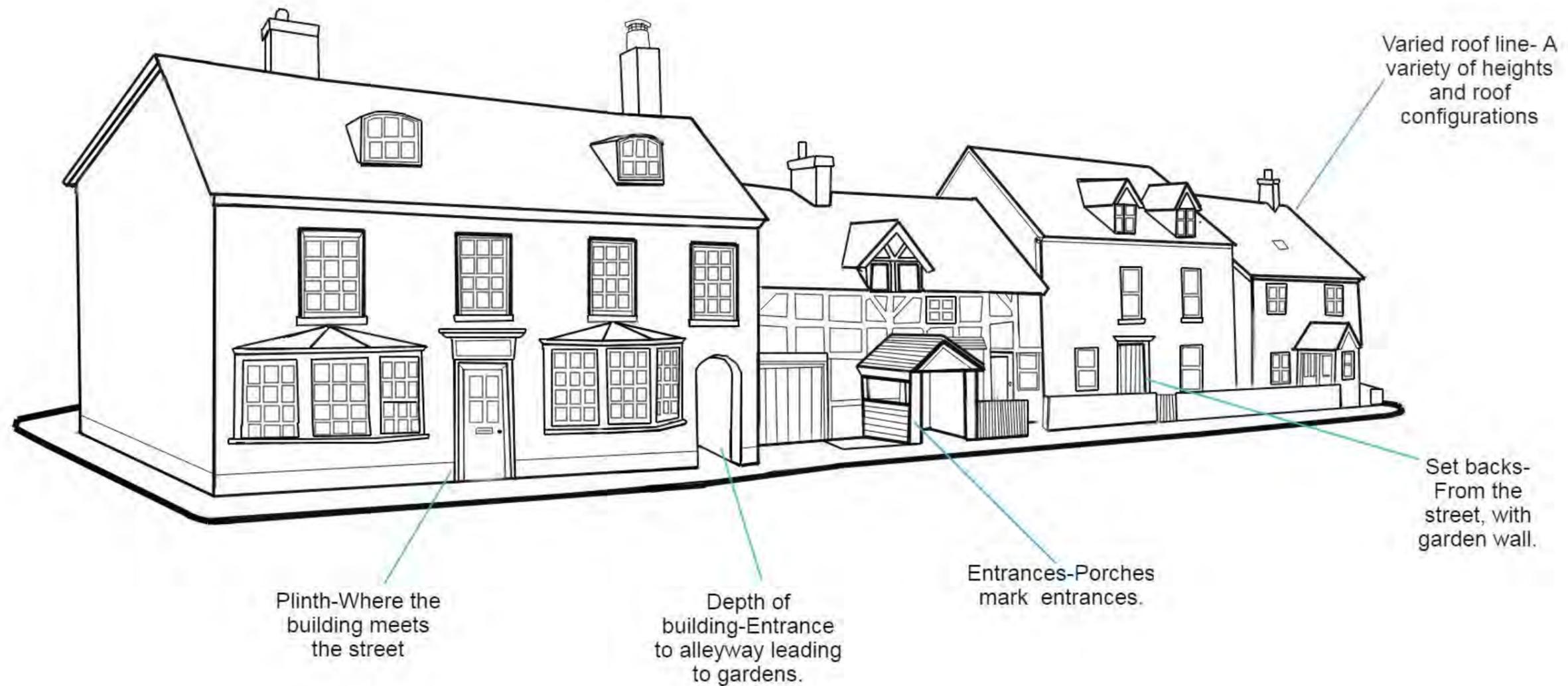


Decorative extras (i.e-gargoles/ ornamental gable ends)



6. Proportion and Scale of buildings in the village

Proportion and scale of buildings has an important part to play in the character of an area. The height and width of buildings help shape the built landscape, appearance and character of a village. The illustration below highlights some of the building elements to consider when looking at proportion and scale.



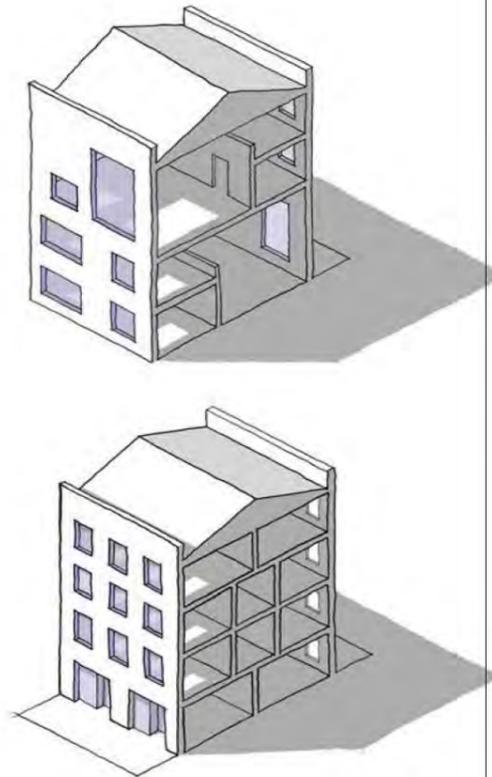
When looking at building composition things to consider:

- Size of buildings in relation to one another
- Height, width and depth of the buildings
- Look at the horizontal and vertical proportions of buildings
- Do the building proportions vary in the street scene
- Are there areas that have a sense of enclosure/ i.e courtyards/ cul-de sacs
- Low/ High density developments is there repetition or variation of this
- Are there open areas within the village- this could be a courtyards, village green/ square

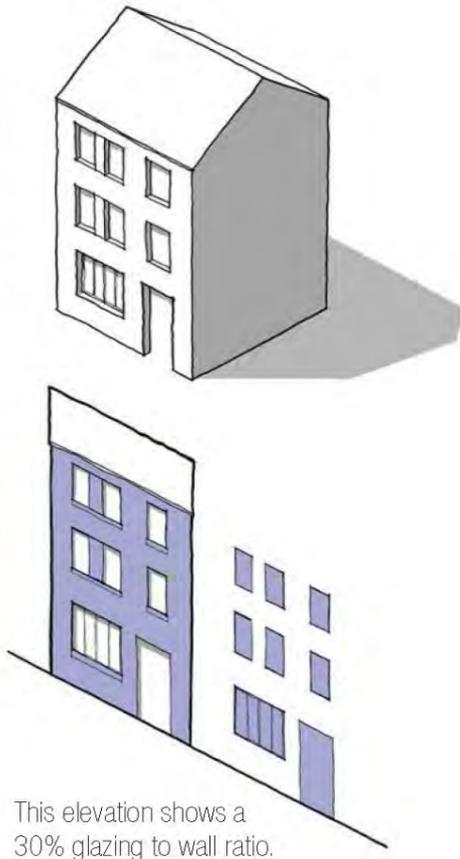


7. Building frontages and window layout (Fenestration)

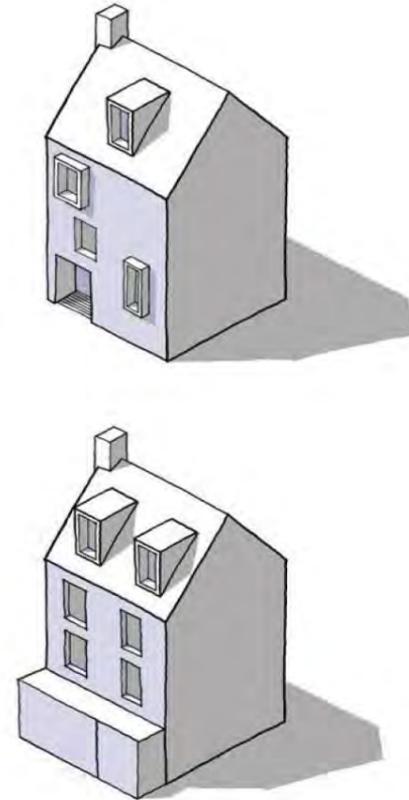
Composition: The façade needs to relate to both the external context and the arrangement of internal spaces. Windows need to be composed to reflect the daylight needs and hierarchy of these spaces.



Windows: Elevations work best with a wall to window ratio of 15-35%. The proportion and design of windows can shape the facade based on whether they are horizontal or vertical, and the depth of the reveals.



Articulation: Façades can benefit from depth and articulation. This may be achieved with architectural features such as setbacks, balconies, porches and bays. These set forward or back from the main facade that relates to the building line.



Materials and detail: The details of design combine to enhance the building. The choice of symmetry or conscious asymmetry, the use of colour, quality materials and detailing – preferably drawn from the surrounding context. A degree of complexity will ensure that buildings are attractive from a distance and close-up.

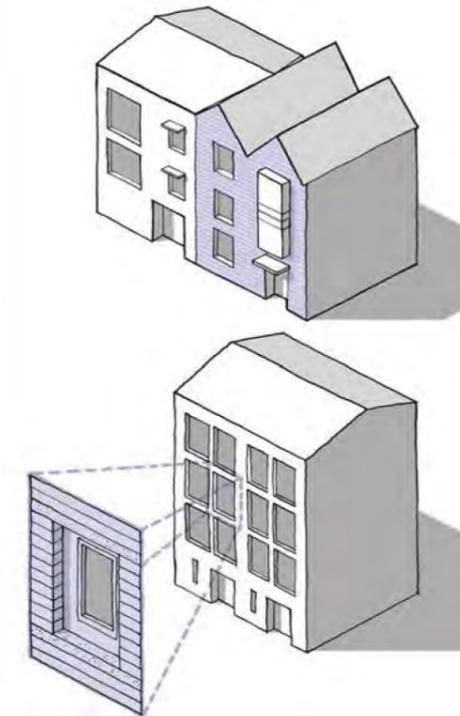


Fig7

There are a vast range of building styles developed over the centuries this helps to shape the character and identity of a place. Elevations/ façade of a building is the external face of building, the façade relates to both the outside and inside arrangement of a building. Consider the building line-A building line represents the alignment of the front face of the buildings in relation to a street or other public space. The nature of this line and its position in relation to the street contribute to the character and identity of a place. It may be straight or irregular, continuous or broken. A consistent approach to building line in an area type or street type helps to give it a coherent identity.

Elevations/ Façades - Front of buildings in the street scene

When looking at buildings elevations things to consider:

- Is there repetition/ continuity of building elevations
- Is there a contrast to building elevations
- Consider where there is use of bays, porches, balconies for example
- What cladding is used? could be timber tiles/ weatherboards
- Are there decorative extras/ such as decorative lintels?
- Is there a rhythm to facades/ repetition of building façade in streets
- Materials used/typical colours?
- Are balconies a common feature?



Fenestration- How windows are arranged

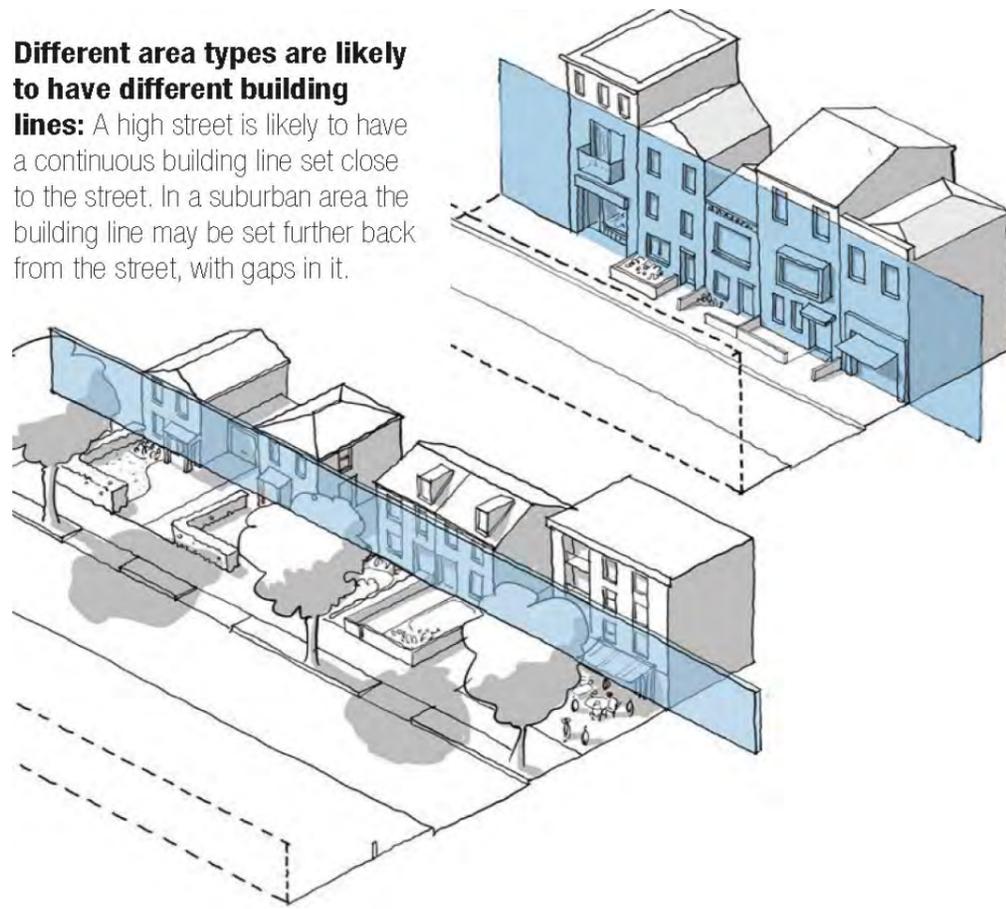
- Consider ratio of building to window, is it a low ratio /high ratio of void to solid
- Window proportion/ size and scale of windows in relation to building
- Window design -these could be bay windows/ windows with glazing bars/ contemporary windows/ frameless windows
- Vertical/horizontal compositions
- Is there a rhythm or randomness of window openings
- What materials used/typical colours



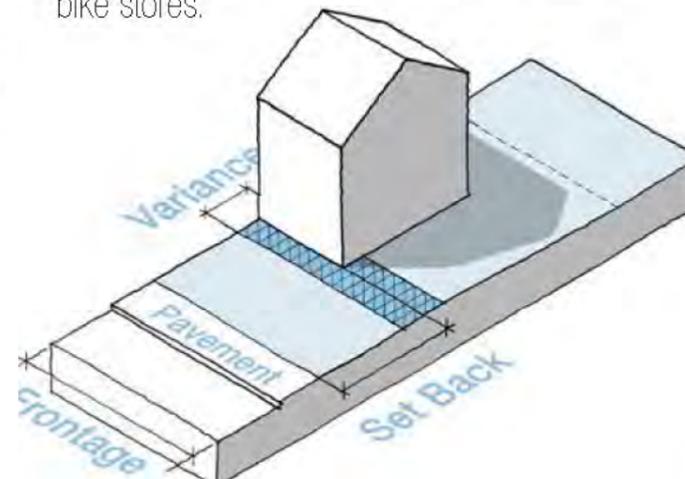
Building line-How buildings are aligned in the street scene

Things to consider

Different area types are likely to have different building lines: A high street is likely to have a continuous building line set close to the street. In a suburban area the building line may be set further back from the street, with gaps in it.



- **Set-back:** The building line can also be established by a set-back provision. This is the distance from the back of pavement to the building. The size of set-back will vary with the nature of the street. The code may include rules for what can be built within a set-back zone such as low walls, fences and bin and bike stores.



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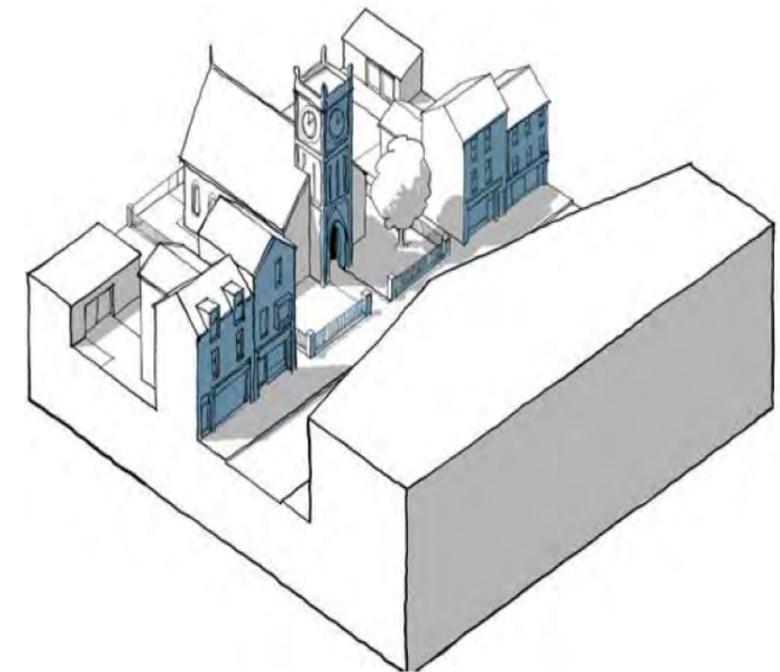


Fig 8

What is the character of the building line:

- Straight/curved/informal
- Variation
- Uniformed

What is the average setback of buildings from the back of the pavement?

- Are they close to a highway?
- Are they setback from highway with front gardens/ drives?

What is the predominant building height:

- Eaves height and level of variation
- Maximum height and level of variation
- Are there tall buildings present (church spire)

8. Materials and details

Building materials can help shape the identity and character of a village. There will be a range of different materials and techniques developed in the village over time. You may have a material that is dominantly featured throughout the village or a variation of materials that have used and developed over time. This will help to define what is the palette of local materials and how this shapes the character of the village. An example of what to consider is below.



Red brick, with chimney detail.



Chimney, constructed from local stone.



Dormer roof, with decorative gable.



Timber frame.



Open porch, with stone tiles.



Wooden windows, 2 over 8.



Wooden picket fence, painted white.

When looking at materials used in buildings consider:

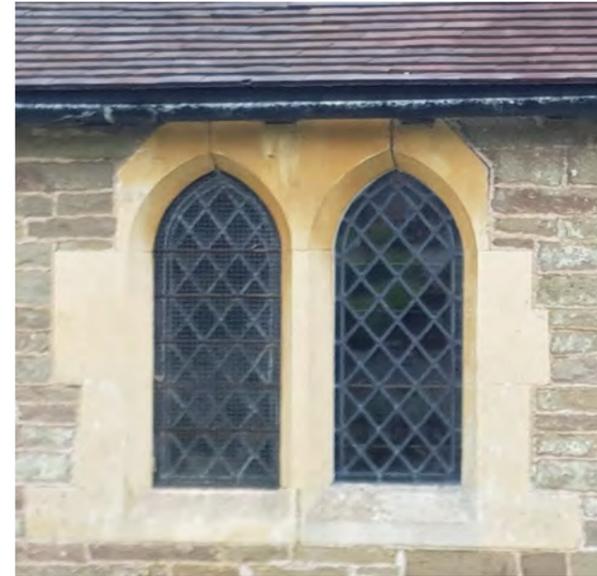
- Use of colour/ Are there contrasts or uniformity



- Detail of materials



- Quality/finish and style of materials



- Symmetric/ asymmetric patterns design



- Age of materials/ Historic/ Contemporary materials



- Use of local materials/ i.e local brick or stone



- Are there contrasting materials



- Are there a variety of materials use or continuity



References



Listed Figures 1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8. These have been taken from the National Model design guidance. Crown Copyright 2021. Used under the terms of Open Government licence.

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