

APPENDIX B

Bletsoe Village Design Advice (VDA)

It should be noted the VDA provides general advice for developers and is not intended to be prescriptive. Each case will be judged on its own merit based on the circumstances of the individual site and proposal.

General guidelines

- New development must not detract from views of St Marys Church or Bletsoe Castle
- It is important to consider property frontages. Low brick walls, low hedges and open gardens are appropriate for Bletsoe
- The scale of new development should be appropriate to its location, this includes existing properties wishing to extend. Houses must not dominate neighbouring buildings in height or massing;
- Existing historic buildings should be conserved and their original features retained. This includes alterations and conversions of historic barns, outbuildings and agricultural buildings; their character is important and should also be conserved where appropriate.
- Existing planting that contributes to the character of Bletsoe should be retained, and where possible replaced if necessary.
- When altering residential gardens, the affect the changes would have on the character of the village should be considered.
- Unnecessary signage and clutter should be avoided as far as practicable.

Building design principles

- Architectural features must be genuine, and be an integral part of the building design. External features similar to the existing surrounding properties are preferred.
- Replacement doors and windows should accord with the form, proportion and style of the originals. External colour should complement the wall colour and original decorative features should be retained within the appearance of the property.
- Grouped buildings (ie: houses/houses and houses/garages) should form a mix of shapes and layout typical of the immediate area in which they are being built.
- Brick colours traditional to Bletsoe are soft red brick and stone work together with light coloured render.
- Brick bond and the colour and type of mortar should be considered, particularly for extensions to existing buildings.
- Natural Grey slate or red/brown clay plain tiles are preferred to maintain the original character of the village and roof windows should ideally only be positioned on rear slopes.
- Significant hard standing and hard landscaping can result in a stark appearance changing the feel of a rural setting to that of an urban area. Consideration should be given to the colour and style of paving and solid tarmac surfaces should be avoided where possible. Bricks or setts should be used as demarcation.

Residential parking

- New residential development should provide appropriate levels of on plot parking in accordance with BBC adopted parking standards unless it can be clearly demonstrated it would be impractical or the development would not result in an unacceptable increase in on street parking.
 - 1 bed properties should provide 1 on plot parking space
 - 2 bed properties should provide 2 on plot parking spaces
 - 3 bed properties should provide a minimum of 2 on plot parking spaces,
 - 4 bed + properties should provide a minimum of 3 on plot parking spaces, however 4 spaces are encouraged to provide space for growing families..
- Parking spaces should be generally be provided at a width and length to provide adequate space for larger vehicles to park. This is suggested as being 2.5m x 4m deep.
- Garages should ideally be constructed to a width of 3.3m and at least 6m in length so that they provide a usable parking space suitable for modern day vehicles.
- Cycle parking should be provided at a ratio appropriate to the size of the house and within a space that is covered and lockable.

Residential amenity space

On new developments, design should take into account the need to provide adequate spacing between new and existing dwellings and the minimum depth for all rear gardens should be at least 10m. This will ensure that suitable levels of privacy are maintained, and that reasonable sized gardens are created. For three and four bedroom homes rear gardens of about 100sqm are encouraged.

Smaller gardens will be appropriate for one or two bedroomed dwellings, particularly so for bungalows.

Regard should be had for any up to date recommended internal and external space standards set out by the Government.

Design likely to be unsuitable for Bletsoe

- Building heights that dominate neighbouring properties;
- Large buildings on a small site leaving little garden area where spacious gardens are predominant;
- High density development with no space between buildings, particularly on the edges of the settlement;
- Bright shades of brickwork or roofing materials;
- Flat roof buildings;
- Pastiche decorative features.