



Response to Countryside Partnerships' Proposals for  
development at Peel Hall, including draft  
Design Codes and Masterplan  
[www.ourgreenwarrington.com](http://www.ourgreenwarrington.com)

Countryside Partnerships has prepared a draft Masterplan and set of Design Codes in accordance with Condition 8 of the planning permission for development at Peel Hall. This is a large site with plans for 1200 homes and a range of services and social infrastructure. Countryside Partnerships has provided a website for the public as part of the consultation, which started in June 2023 and is ongoing. The website says as follows: *“The outline planning permission also included a number of conditions. Some of these conditions, including a Design Code and Masterplan need to be addressed before we can apply for the detailed design of the proposed development. This consultation is therefore to provide you with an understanding of what is being prepared and to get your thoughts and views on the Design Code and Masterplan.”* The Design Code is dated June 2023. We note that complaints have been made about the period allowed for the consultation with the public and the lack of public notice given about the opening of the consultation. We also understand that Countryside Partnerships are unwilling to extend the consultation period. This is unfortunate, given the extent and size of the development and the impact it will have on the local area.

It is not clear if this is an error but the Countryside Partnerships’ website for Peel Hall says “the consultation on the Design Code and Masterplan is now closed.” However, given the National Design Guide says the following: *“The design visioning process will be an important focus for consultation. This could be undertaken through a series of workshops across the local area that involve communities and stakeholders in the analysis of existing character and visioning of how this character may change. Wider surveys are likely to be necessary to ensure widespread local input beyond workshop attendees. This can include ‘walking workshops’, photographic surveys and visual preference surveys and sustainability/ environmental surveys to understand the aspects of local character that people value and those that they would like to change.”* and as the draft Design Code was only produced in June 2023 with consultation materials still being displayed in public spaces and with further public consultation events to be announced, already closing the consultation for the Design Code appears illogical, given that the Design Code and the Masterplan are the only proposal documents available on their website for the public to comment on.

As the consultation is ongoing with further consultation events to be announced Our Green Warrington submits the following response to the proposals for Peel Hall. A copy of this response will be forwarded to Warrington Borough Council Planning Department.

The National Design Guide sets out ten principles or characteristics that developers and planners should follow if they are to achieve a well designed place. These ten characteristics are:

**Context:** A well designed development will understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context. It will value heritage, local history and culture.

**Identity:** A well designed development will respond to existing local character and identity, with well designed, high quality and attractive places and buildings. It will create character and identity.

**Built Form:** It will prioritise a compact form of development, with appropriate building types and forms.

**Movement:** There will be a connected network of routes with promotion of active travel. There will be well considered parking, services and utilities

**Nature:** There will be a network of high quality, green open spaces with a variety of landscapes and activities including play.

**Public spaces:** There will be well located, high quality and attractive public spaces that are safe and support social interaction.

**Uses:** The development will contain a mix of uses, home tenures, types and sizes

**Homes and Buildings:** They will be healthy, comfortable and safe.

**Resources:** A good development will maximise resilience with careful selection of materials.

**Lifespan:** The development will be well managed and maintained, it will be adaptable to future innovation and will promote a sense of ownership

Countryside Partnerships has acknowledged the ten principles in the introduction to their draft Design Code:

#### **The claims made by Countryside Partnerships in their proposal documents**

- *The Design Code establishes a framework and set of design rules and requirements to ensure the or creation of a healthy, safe, green, environmentally responsive, sustainable and **distinctive place**, with a consistent and **high-quality standard of design**. It responds to the national policies on design set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as well as local policies in the Development Plan for Warrington and related guidance. In terms of the NDG, **specific regard has been had to the 10 characteristics of well designed places.***
- *The vision of this development is to develop and deliver a mixed use scheme comprising 1,200no. **houses of mixed** size, tenure and **character**.*
- *The proposed dwellings and community facilities will be divided into **distinct character areas**, each providing an easily distinguishable streetscape through material and typological variation. Visually distinctive **'vista' plots and streetscaping** will aid wayfinding through the development.*
- *A 'green thread' of landscaped public open space will run through the development, ensuring that all existing and future residents will have access to open space and play provision while **enhancing biodiversity and native species retention**.*
- *The final development will deliver a coherent, high quality urban environment **that will knit with the existing vernacular in a complimentary way**, providing improved amenity for existing and future residents that will provide a sustainable, modern living space.*

In this response we consider whether “specific regard has been had to the 10 characteristics of well designed places” set out in the National Design Guide. We have in mind the overarching principles in the National Design Guide – which is that there should be a “vision” for the development when drafting Design Codes, specifically that, **“Well-designed places and buildings come about when there is a clearly expressed ‘story’ for the design concept and how it has evolved into a design proposal. This explains how the concept influences the layout, form, appearance and details of the proposed development. It may draw its inspiration from the site, its surroundings or a wider context. It may also introduce new approaches to contrast with, or complement, its context. This ‘story’ will inform and address all ten characteristics.”** [para16]

## Context and “Character” Areas

This is Chapter 2 of Countryside Partnerships’ draft Design Code. Here, you say that *“the purpose of this chapter is to inform any future developers and designers of the character of the adjacent urban grain.”*

LOCATION & CONTEXT

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### 2.1 Defining Area Types

The site is located to the south of the M62 motorway, adjacent to Junction 9. The site is currently predominantly a greenfield site but is within the urban area. The M62 motorway forms a strong northern boundary. The approved access points are from Birch Avenue in the west, two locations on Poplars Avenue, Grassmers Avenue, Blackbrook Avenue / Mill Lane to the west, and Mill Lane to the north west. These roads are already predominantly residential and the outline planning permission approved specific junctions from those roads, and defined the capacity of those junctions.


The purpose of this chapter is to inform any future developers and designers of the character of the adjacent urban grain.

A series of access limitations from the various site entrances determine the number of properties that can be served from each entry point:

- Two access points from Poplars Avenue serving 150 and 180 units;
- Birch Avenue access to serve 20 units;
- Proposed roundabout junction from Mill Lane / Blackbrook Avenue serving 700 residential units;
- Access road from north Mill Lane to serve 150 units.

The access limits listed above allow no more than 1200 residential units to be provided.


**Windermere Avenue:**  
A suburban road with a mix of semi-detached and mews houses branching from Poplars Avenue. The rear of these properties will back directly on to the development site. As with Poplars Avenue, large areas of greenspace and open front gardens widen the interface distances. A wide variety of boundary treatments allow the development to address the road in several ways.



**Poplars Avenue:**  
This road serves a large modern housing estate through which it is planned to access the development site in several places. The carriageway is 7.5m wide for most of its length with large areas of greenspace providing a broad boulevard space separating the build lines to either side. It is important to note that this road does not provide a through-route to Winwick Road.

**Elm Road:**  
A primarily suburban street serving a limited number of existing dwellings to the west of the site. It is intended for this road to provide limited maintenance access to the north of the development site. This road is characterised by a nominal 4.5m wide carriageway with footpaths on both sides. Generous front gardens allow for significant interface distances and a variety of boundary treatments.

**Mill Lane:**  
This is a semi-rural road with a more urbanised area to the north where it adjoins the development site. The carriageway is approximately 6m wide for most of its length. This is an extended through-route between the nearby settlements of Fildgate and Winwick. The character of this street varies from the rural interface with tree-lined roads to suburban housing to the north and southern extremities.



In your introductory chapter you say, *“The vision of this development is to develop and deliver a mixed use scheme comprising 1,200no. houses of mixed size, tenure and character. Non-residential use will form a ‘Local Centre’ of mixed uses, providing amenities such as shops, medical facilities, leisure and administrative facilities. Dedicated areas have been assigned for the provision of a Primary School, Care Home and a number of Community Allotments. The proposed dwellings and community facilities will be divided into distinct character areas, each providing an easily distinguishable streetscape through material and typological variation. Visually distinctive ‘vista’ plots and streetscaping will aid wayfinding through the development.”*

However, you have chosen as context images a number of the immediate residential areas that are not particularly distinctive, rather than considering the wider local context and selecting the most attractive elements of the wider area as a blueprint for future development. One can only assume this is to set a low bar for future developers to overcome.

This is not to criticise in any way those who live in these residential areas – but using elements from this housing as a precedent for future development as per below lacks vision and undermines Countryside’s claims to be creating a distinctive new development with a sense of place. Surely few would consider the precedents set out below are what we should be aspiring to in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?



These are the example design elements you have chosen from Enfield Park (C): it is not clear why these have been chosen as precedents for future development. Do you consider that these are design elements that should be used in future developments? If not, how do they aim “to inform any future developers and designers of the character of the adjacent urban grain.”? Why is it that you feel these elements should be replicated or reflected in future development?

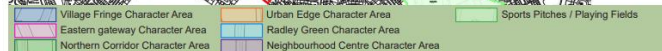
Because you have limited your context to residential areas in the immediate vicinity of the Peel Hall site, the foundation of the Design Codes are necessarily unimaginative and are unlikely to form the basis of a well designed development that has a distinct identity and sense of place. The purpose of considering “context” when drafting Design Codes is to achieve the aims set out in the National Design Guide, namely: **“Context: A well designed development will understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context. It will value heritage, local history and culture”** and **“Identity: A well designed development will respond to existing local character and identity, with well designed, high quality and attractive places and buildings. It will create character and identity.”**

For example, Mill Lane, which you have referenced in image (B), above, actually looks like this:



Dark brick, gable ends with chimney, wood detail, white exterior, natural clay tiling patterns, variety of character housing design.

## 5.1 Distribution



The Character Areas indicated above create a gradual transition across the site which blends different design principles through a logical sequence of settlements from West to East and vice-versa. Whilst the existing properties bounding the site are considerably different in their appearance between the Poplars Avenue and Mill Lane communities, the character areas shown above will seek to maintain the natural contrast in the new development through a more traditional, contemporary urban design.

Approaching the scheme from the Mill Lane access, the 'Village Fringe' is a natural extension to Houghton Green village immediately to the east. The style of properties here will feature larger, executive homes that are primarily detached and semi-detached ranging between 2 and 5 bedrooms. Traditionally elevated, these homes will link seamlessly from the village into the new scheme.

The 'Eastern Gateway' settlement effectively bridges Houghton Green & Cinnamon Brow. The properties along Mill Lane and Radley Lane are very individual in their appearance, featuring old farm buildings, cottages and properties constructed in more recent times (1990s - 2000s). Whereas the Cinnamon Brow houses of Ballater Drive, Dundee Close and Shelland Close are mainly exclusively 1990s construction typologies.

The Eastern Gateway creates the main access point for the highest number of homes on the development. We will create a sense of differentiation and wayfinding structures throughout the site, so whilst both the Village Fringe and the Eastern Gateway have a similar surrounding environment

the development will use the natural break either side of the main east-west spine road entering the site between the Village Fringe and Eastern Gateway to ensure that different parts of the scheme are easily identifiable. To this end the style within the Eastern Gateway will focus on a mix of primarily larger family homes, with modern open plan living space and attractive quality green spaces. Properties will be a mix of 2, 3 and 4 homes.

The main sales area will be positioned immediately from the junction to the roundabout entrance to the Eastern Gateway.

Moving From East to West through the site, the next natural break occurs within the retained woodland and Radley Plantation, which is where allotments and the largest swathe of public realm open space will be situated. It is within this location that we have created the next character area - 'Radley Green'. This part of the site is most disconnected and uninfluenced by any existing built form with it being surrounded to its Northern, Eastern and Southern boundaries by greenspace and are therefore proposing a style of property which respects this and at the same time is modern and of higher density. Strong, safe street scenes are proposed with pedestrian focused hierarchy. Elevations will be a mixture of traditional materials with modern elements to create visual interest.

This area also forms one of the last points in the site which uses its access and egress from the Eastern main roundabout off Mill Lane / Blackbrook Avenue.

Entering the site from the Central Poplars Avenue access point the immediate environment is comprised of mixed use, including leisure, retail, extra care and educational provision. Therefore, the arrival into the residential settlement reflects a more contemporary character. The 'Neighbourhood Centre' serves as the non-residential core of the development, with direct access to the Local Centre, School and Care Facility, the residential provision is focused on a high-quality family environment with direct access to open space and sports facilities. A mix of predominantly 3 and 4 bedroom homes with some 2 bedroom houses create a stable family orientated development.

In the western-most part of the site or the 'Urban Edge', the existing surrounding massing and properties are denser and much more built-up in their nature. As such this has been reflected within this part of the development with properties plotted in a more linear fashion and at a higher density than the eastern sections. A higher proportion of smaller properties has been included to appeal to first time buyers and young families. The housing mix will also include some 1 and 2 bedroom apartments for young purchasers and entry level homes. The built form and elevations will be similar in style to the Neighbourhood Centre so as not to contrast too heavily, but to create a natural transition between both character areas.

The 'Northern Corridor' spans the whole of the aforementioned character areas and is impacted by the presence of the M62 across its full length. This lends itself to a uniform and linear approach in terms of a consistent plotting methodology across the development. This will act as a natural 'buffer' that residents will be able to utilise as a signpost at their arrival towards the top of the site and the ecological corridor beyond. The design elevations here will have a continuous theme and will take their elevational treatments from the character areas which sit below them. The acoustic impact of the motorway will influence the design principles here and homes will be positioned and orientated to mitigate against motorway noise without impact on occupation and living experience. Properties will be a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes facing outwards onto the large area of open space.

In addition to the built form and style of the house typologies the designs will draw out distinctions between each character area through varied use of external works features, landscaping and boundary treatments. The proposition is to have external treatments capturing clusters of character areas rather than a different style for every single one. So, for instance, the Village Fringe & Eastern Gateway will have one theme, the Radley Green will have another, the Neighbourhood Centre will have its own and both the Urban Edge & Northern Corridor will have a collective style.



In the chapter above you say, *“The Character Areas indicated above create a gradual transition across the site which blends different design principles through a logical sequence of settlements from West to East and vice-versa. Whilst the existing properties bounding the site are considerably different in their appearance between the Poplars Avenue and Mill Lane communities, the character areas shown above will seek to maintain the natural contrast in the new development through a more traditional, contemporary urban design.”*

This is, of course, an opportunity for you to set high design standards for future development in compliance with guidance in the NPPF, National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. This is also an opportunity, within a vast area of land, to develop a unique and distinctive village that, in the words of the National Design Guide, *“brings delight”, one which will “understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context”, the “history and heritage of the site, its surroundings and the wider area, including cultural influences”*. One which will *“have a positive and coherent identity that everyone can identify with, including residents and local communities, so contributing towards health and well-being, inclusion and cohesion; have a character that suits the context, its history, how we live today and how we are likely to live in the future”,* and which is *“visually attractive, to delight their occupants and other users.”*

## Countryside Partnerships' Design Codes for the various "Character" areas at the Peel Hall site

### Mill Lane - Village Fringe "Character Area"

You say, "Approaching the scheme from the Mill Lane access, the 'Village Fringe' is a natural extension to Houghton Green village immediately to the east. The style of properties here will feature larger, executive homes that are primarily detached and semi-detached ranging between 2 and 5 bedrooms. Traditionally elevated, these homes will link seamlessly from the village into the new scheme."

Below are those which you have used as precedents / example images for the "Mill Lane Village Fringe" area with materials to be used in your Design Code:

#### General Considerations

Sited at the eastern edge of the development, the Village Fringe character area represents a more traditional approach that takes visual cues from the residential areas to the east of the site.



#### Streetscaping

The wider street interfaces allow for the provision of inboard landscaping including landscaped front garden spaces and boulevard-style trees. The Designer must consider the continuation of the boulevard planting.



What we have with this "Design Code" is basically a blueprint for more of the generic, identikit housing estates that we see across the whole of Warrington – with their red brick, white UPVC windows and masses of black tarmac. This isn't so much a Design Code as a green light for developers to continue to build the same bland housing estates the Design Code is intended to avoid. In what way does this Design Code result in development which will "have a positive and coherent identity that everyone can identify with, including residents and local communities, so contributing towards health and well-being, inclusion and cohesion; have a character that suits the context, its history, how we live today and how we are likely to live in the future", and which is "visually attractive, to delight their occupants and other users."?

#### Materials- Elevations



- 1. Kassandra Multi red facing brick**  
One of the optional finishing materials for the elevational treatments.
- 2. Olde Country Blend red facing brick**  
Another optional material for house type elevations.
- 3. Grey concrete roof tiles**  
The primary roofing material for the Village Street character area.
- 4. Buff concrete roof tiles**  
Secondary roofing material, to be used sporadically to break up the expanses of grey roofs.
- 5. White UPVC window frames and fenestration**  
Casement-style double glazed window panels in UPVC frames.
- 6. Buff stone window heads and cills**  
To be applied above and below windows on active elevations only.
- 7. Brick window heads and cills**  
Alternate window cill and head materials. Brick used should match the selected facing brick.
- 8. Brick soldier course**  
To be applied to active elevations only with 1.2m return to side walls. brick to contrast selected facing brick.

#### Materials- Streetscape



- 1. Black Tarmacadam**  
Primary surfacing material for vehicular routes and adjacent pedestrian footpaths.
  - 2. Concrete Kerbstones**  
Kerbstones and dropped kerbs will define the border between pedestrian and vehicular areas.
  - 3. Tegular setts traffic calming measures**  
Tegular setts will be used to mark transitional areas between road types where speed needs to be limited.
  - 4. Red chip Tarmacadam**  
Contrasting surface material to be used on private drives.
  - 5. Red brick paviours**  
Durable, hard wearing material for driveways and private parking bays.
  - 6. Black Tarmacadam with Cycle Path markings**  
Slip resistant, hard wearing material for use on cycle paths.
  - 7. Concrete flagstones**  
For use on private inboard footpaths.
  - 8. Seeded soil / planted turf**  
For infill areas of incidental Public open space and private front garden spaces.
- All materials on adopted highways will need to comply to Warrington Council specifications. Materials on non-highways will also have a minimum specification if they have a Council maintenance implication.



## Urban Edge Character Area

You say, "In the western-most part of the site or the 'Urban Edge', the existing surrounding massing and properties are denser and much more built-up in their nature. As such this has been reflected within this part of the development with properties plotted in a more linear fashion and at a higher density than the eastern sections. A higher proportion of smaller properties has been included to appeal to first time buyers and young families. The housing mix will also include some 1 and 2 bedroom apartments for young purchasers and entry level homes. The built form and elevations will be similar in style to the Neighbourhood Centre so as not to contrast too heavily, but to create a natural transition between both character areas."

Below are those which you have used as precedents / example images for the "Urban Edge" area with materials to be used in your Design Code:

### General Considerations

Forming the primary vehicular entrance from west Poplars Avenue and the westernmost part of the development, this represents an opportunity to create a visually distinctive character area that ties into the existing denser, built-up surrounding residential areas.



### Streetscaping

The wide street interfaces and planted verges allow for the provision of inboard landscaping including incidental landscaped spaces and a tree-lined boulevard. The Designer must consider the continuation of the boulevard planting and indirect access via private drives.



In other words, similar to the usual standard housing developments if the image above is the example, but with a slightly different coloured red brick and grey UPVC windows rather than white. This is not sufficient to create a development with distinct "character" areas. Neither housing design suggested is attractive, distinctive with a sense of identity, nor responsive to its context, unless the context is "volume developer housing estates".

This is a very low bar for developers and is low aspirational for what has been presented as a Design Code, It is basically the material and design used in all our current bland, generic, housing developments in Warrington.



## Neighbourhood Centre “Character” Area

You say, “the arrival into the residential settlement reflects a more contemporary character. The ‘Neighbourhood Centre’ serves as the non-residential core of the development, with direct access to the Local Centre, School and Care Facility, the residential provision is focused on a high-quality family environment with direct access to open space and sports facilities. A mix of predominantly 3 and 4 bedroom homes with some 2 bedroom houses create a stable family orientated development.”

Below are those which you have used as precedents / example images for the “Neighbourhood Centre” area with materials to be used in your Design Code:

### General Considerations

The southern fringe and central locus of the site provide important gateway vistas and focal points to the wider site. Located to the centre of the site, the entrance grouping presents an opportunity for a modern gateway development defined by materials and elevational treatments. The more modern approach will be replicated in the central core of the development as this area serves as a natural focal point between the east, south and western areas of the site where pedestrians and vehicular traffic will naturally converge as they travel through towards either the site exits or to the community facilities to the south.



### Streetscaping

The wider street interfaces allow for the provision of inboard landscaping including landscaped front garden spaces and boulevard-style trees. The Designer must consider the continuation of the boulevard planting through the adjacent character areas..



### Materials- Elevations



- 1. Red engineering brick**  
To be used below DPC level.
- 2. Aluminium Window boxing**  
Feature detailing to be used on vista plots.
- 3. Cream UPVC window frames and fenestration**  
Casement-style double glazed window panels in UPVC frames.
- 4. Plain white render**  
To be applied throughout.
- 7. Red roof tiles**  
Roofing material to be used throughout.
- 6. Contemporary canopies**  
To be used throughout to front doors only.
- 7. Square-Section black UPVC rainwater goods**  
To be used throughout.

### Materials- Streetscape



- 1. Black Tarmacadam**  
Primary surfacing material for vehicular routes and adjacent pedestrian footpaths.
- 2. Road Level Concrete Kerbstones**  
Level kerbstones and dropped kerbs will define the border between pedestrian and vehicular areas.
- 3. Tegular setts traffic calming measures**  
Tegular setts will be used to mark transitional areas between road types where speed needs to be limited.
- 4. Red chip Tarmacadam**  
Contrasting surface material to be used on private drives.
- 5. Grey brick paviours**  
Durable, hard wearing material for driveways and private parking bays.
- 6. Black Tarmacadam with Cycle Path markings**  
Slip resistant, hard wearing material for use on cycle paths.
- 7. Concrete flagstones**  
For use on private inboard footpaths.
- 8. Seeded soil / planted turf**  
For infill areas of incidental Public Open Space and private front garden spaces.

At least this housing design moves away from the usual, identikit housing we see across Warrington. We also think there is a place for white render in the development. However, the examples shown are not particularly attractive. We note that once again, the road surfaces are black tarmac.

## Northern Corridor “Character” Area

You say, “The ‘Northern Corridor’ spans the whole of the aforementioned character areas and is impacted by the presence of the M62 across its full length. This lends itself to a uniform and linear approach in terms of a consistent plotting methodology across the development. This will act as a natural wayfinder that residents will be able to utilise as a signpost at their arrival towards the top of the site and the ecological corridor beyond. The design elevations here will have a continuous theme and **will take their elevational treatments from the character areas** which sit below them. The acoustic impact of the motorway will influence the design principles here and homes will be positioned and orientated to mitigate against motorway noise without impact on occupation and living experience. Properties will be a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes facing outwards onto the large area of open space.”

Below are those which you have used as precedents / example images for the “Northern Corridor” area with materials to be used in your Design Code:

### General Considerations

Sited at the northern edge of the development, the Northern Corridor character area represents a more rustic, traditional approach that softens the urban interface with the adjacent greenspaces.



This character area is defined by its interface with the adjacent Habitat Zone, a more rustic materials palette and architectural features define the street typography. Due to the close proximity to the M62,

### Streetscaping

As it includes the adjacent greenspace, the streetscape will define the border between these two environs and as such will reflect a softer approach through materials and design.



**Materials- Elevations**

- Bedfordshire Mixture brown facing brick**  
One of the optional finishing materials for the elevational treatments.
- Olde Country Blend red facing brick**  
Another optional material for house type elevations.
- Grey concrete roof tiles**  
The primary roofing material for the Northern Corridor character area.
- Brown concrete roof tiles**  
Secondary roofing material, to be used sporadically to break up the expanses of grey roofs.
- White UPVC window frames and fenestration**  
Casement-style double glazed window panels in UPVC frames.
- Buff stone window heads and cills**  
To be applied above and below windows on active elevations only.
- Brick string course**  
To be applied to active elevations only with 1.2m return to side walls, brick to match selected facing brick.
- Plain white render**  
To be applied to active elevations only. Use to be limited to feature plots and dual aspect plots.
- Flat Portico-style canopies**  
To be used throughout to front doors only.
- Circular profile black UPVC rainwater goods**  
To be used throughout.

**Materials- Streetscape**

- Black Tarmacadam**  
Primary surfacing material for vehicular routes and adjacent pedestrian footpaths.
- Concrete Kerbstones**  
Kerbstones and dropped kerbs will define the border between pedestrian and vehicular areas.
- Tegular setts traffic calming measures**  
Tegular setts will be used to mark transitional areas between road types where speed needs to be limited.
- Woodchip Paths**  
Used to define recreational walks through the habitat creation area.
- Brown block paving**  
Used to define the limits of private driveways parking spaces
- Black Tarmacadam with Cycle Path markings**  
Slip resistant, hard wearing material for use on cycle paths.
- Yorkstone paving slabs**  
Mixture of sizes and orientation. For use on private inboard footpaths.
- Seeded turf**  
For infill areas of incidental Public Open Space and private front garden spaces.

Your Design Code says, “This character area is defined by its interface with the adjacent Habitat Zone, a more rustic materials palette and architectural features.” The above images do not have any “rustic architectural features” – there is simply some lighter orange brick. They are the usual identikit houses that could literally be anywhere.

Some of the materials proposed here are actually quite good: the woodchip paths, brown block paving and Yorkstone paving slabs are good ideas, but should be used on the public pavements, not just for private pathways. There should be more of this.

Similarly, Bedfordshire mature brown brick and Olde Country brick would work well – but not with those generic, identikit housing designs as precedents.

## Radley Green “Character” Area

You say, “This part of the site is most disconnected and uninfluenced by any existing built form with it being surrounded to its Northern, Eastern and Southern boundaries by greenspace and are therefore proposing a style of property which respects this and at the same time is modern and of higher density. Strong, safe street scenes are proposed with pedestrian focused hierarchy. Elevations will be a mixture of traditional materials with modern elements to create visual interest.”

Below are those which you have used as precedents / example images for the “Radley Green” area with materials to be used in your Design Code:

### General Considerations

Sited adjacent to the Public Open Space and existing Radley plantation at the centre of the development, like the Northern Corridor, this character presents an opportunity to soften the urban interface with the adjacent greenspaces through the use of reduced-traffic Private Drives and plot orientation. The adjacent public spaces must be faced by active elevations to ensure passive surveillance.



### Streetscaping

Given that Radley Green exists in relative isolation, the streetscape will be defined by the interface with the adjacent public spaces and provides an opportunity to create a distinctive as such the materials selection will be similar to the Northern Corridor with elements to tie the Radley Green Character Area back to the Neighbourhood Centre.



These are identical to the Northern Corridor housing design precedent images. There is nothing distinctive here that gives this character area a sense of place and identity. These houses could be anywhere. You mention this area being “the most disconnected and uninfluenced by any existing built form”– and that it is surrounded by green space, yet have suggested housing that is generic in design and material, with grey UPVC windows and black tarmac for roads and footpaths.

### Materials- Elevations



1. **Anglian Buff multi facing brick**  
One of the optional finishing materials for the elevational treatments.
2. **Harvest Buff multi facing brick**  
Another optional material for house type elevations.
3. **Grey concrete roof tiles**  
The primary roofing material for the Radley Green character area.
4. **Brown concrete roof tiles**  
Secondary roofing material, to be used sporadically to break up the expanses of grey roofs.
5. **Grey UPVC window frames and fenestration**  
Casement-style double glazed window panels in UPVC frames.
6. **Brick window heads and cills**  
Alternate window cill and head materials. Brick used should match the selected facing brick.
7. **Anthracite bricks**  
Contrasting bricks to be used for detailing only
8. **Brick band coursing**  
To be applied to active elevations only with 1.2m return to side walls, brick to contrast selected facing brick or Anthracite brick (7).
9. **Plain white render**  
To be applied to active elevations only. Use to be limited to feature plots and dual aspect plots.
10. **Pitched canopies**  
To be used throughout to front doors only.
11. **Square-Section black UPVC rainwater goods**  
To be used throughout.

### Materials- Streetscape



1. **Black Tarmacadam**  
Primary surfacing material for vehicular routes and adjacent pedestrian footpaths.
2. **Road Level Concrete Kerbstones**  
Level kerbstones and dropped kerbs will define the border between pedestrian and vehicular areas.
3. **Regular setts traffic calming measures**  
Regular setts will be used to mark transitional areas between road types where speed needs to be limited.
4. **Red chip Tarmacadam**  
Contrasting surface material to be used on private drives.
5. **Grey brick paviours**  
Durable, hard wearing material for driveways and private parking bays.
6. **Black Tarmacadam with Cycle Path markings**  
Slip resistant, hard wearing material for use on cycle paths.
7. **Concrete flagstones**  
For use on private inboard footpaths.
8. **Seeded soil / planted turf**  
For infill areas of incidental Public Open Space and private front garden spaces.

## Eastern Gateway “Character” Area

You say, “The ‘Eastern Gateway’ settlement effectively bridges Houghton Green & Cinnamon Brow. The properties along Mill Lane and Radley Lane are very individual in their appearance, featuring old farm buildings, cottages and properties constructed in more recent times (1990s - 2000s). Whereas the Cinnamon Brow houses of Ballater Drive, Dundee Close and Shetland Close are mainly exclusively 1990s construction typologies. The Eastern Gateway creates the main access point for the highest number of homes on the development. We will create a sense of differentiation and wayfinding structures throughout the site, so whilst both the Village Fringe and the Eastern Gateway have a similar surrounding environment the development will use the natural break either side of the main east-west spine road entering the site between the Village Fringe and Eastern Gateway to ensure that different parts of the scheme are easily identifiable. To this end the style within the Eastern Gateway will focus on a mix of primarily larger family homes, with modern open plan living space and attractive quality green spaces. Properties will be a mix of 2, 3 and 4 homes”

Below are those which you have used as precedents / example images for the “Eastern Gateway” area with materials to be used in your Design Code:

### General Considerations

Located to the far east of the site, this character area provides the site entrance from Mill Lane, as such the street typography and materials selection will be influenced by the local vernacular however, this area is sited immediately adjacent to the Village Fringe, Designers should ensure that the street typologies and design fidelity is maintained throughout.



### Streetscaping

As the primary access point for the largest number of units, the streetscape will provide a distinctive character that does not diverge too far from the established traditional character of Houghton Green to the east & Cinnamon Brow to the south.



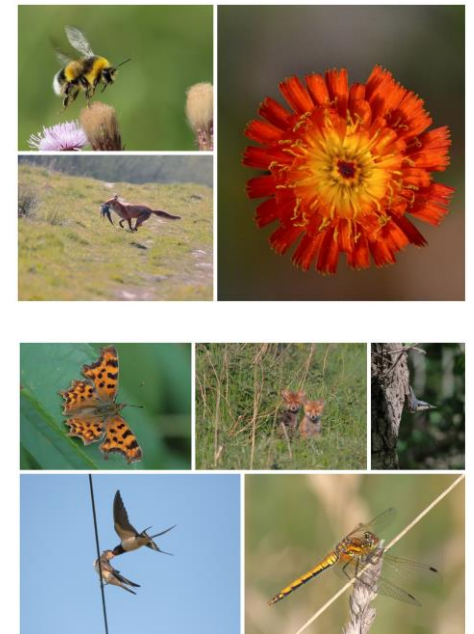
We are back again at precedent images identical to the generic, identikit housing developments already saturating Warrington. The coding and precedents set out here are not sufficient to create a development with distinct “character” areas. Neither housing design suggested is attractive, distinctive with a sense of identity, nor responsive to its context.

This is a very low bar for developers and is low aspirational for what has been presented as a Design Code. This is basically the material and design used in all our current bland, generic, new housing developments in Warrington.



## Our Suggestions

The site at Peel Hall has been used and cherished by the local community for decades as a place to enjoy nature, with its lovely woodlands, natural walking paths and a variety of wildlife. Countryside Partnerships' draft Design Code and Masterplan is an entirely **missed opportunity** to create a truly distinctive and attractive development at this site. If one is considering the local context and identity at this site, the focus should not have been the local indistinctive residential streets for context, but instead the stunning woodland on the site. Radley Plantation is a Woodland Trust site, and is described on their website as, *"A lovely quiet woodland with ponds around the edge, where the trees make it look like a petrified forest."* In terms of the National Design Guide's principle that a good development with vision will tell "a story" then **surely the obvious cultural, social, historical and geographical context is the woodland** and the wildlife it supports. It is from this that the Design Guide's "Vision" should have taken its cue, to give the development a real sense of identity and place.



*Photographs courtesy of Ste Dodd*



## Local and Wider Context from which to draw inspiration for the Design Codes and Masterplan





## Design vision and colour palette / materials suggested for Peel Hall #1

This would reflect the woodland, with a range of natural materials that are harmonious in their surroundings. A mixture of traditional and modern character areas, separated from each other with scenic footpaths and cycle paths.



## Design vision and colour palette / materials suggested for Peel Hall #2

This would reflect some of the Georgian and semi-rural properties in the wider area around Mill Lane, Delph Lane, Winwick etc and would work well in proximity to Mill Lane.



Use a range of natural colours – this reflects the wider semi rural area and brings character and identity to the development. It also speaks to the woodland.



**B**

Architecturally, there would be a range of modern and more traditional style housing.

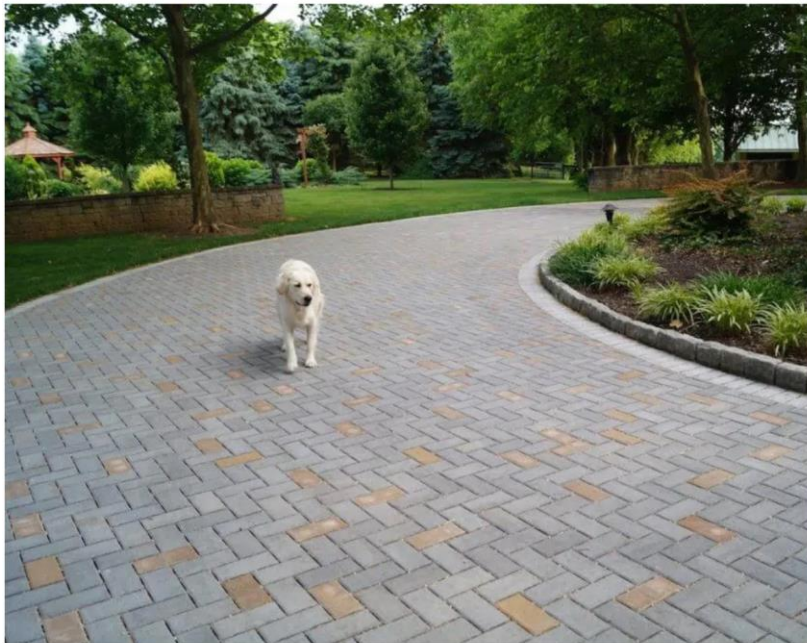


White – render, cladding and painted brick



## Pavement and public pathway materials

No black tarmac on public pavements and footpaths. Permeable surfaces where possible.



## Neighbourhood Centre

This should have a semi rural vision, with reference to local farms, barns, and of course, it should reflect the woodland. A woodland café would be great! There could also be a community barn for events and indoor visiting markets, local festivals. Shop architecture should reflect this – wood, brick, cladding, not steel and glass.



Care facility Ideas





## Play areas

The play areas should of course, reflect the woodland. There should be outdoor recreational facilities that will be inclusive to all ages and abilities.



## Public green space

While we are glad to see some generous public green space on the draft Masterplan, the Northern Corridor “habitat creation zone” is directly adjacent to the M62 Motorway. It is hard to conceive of any habitat existing, let alone thriving here. This should be far wider, with extensive tree planting, not only to give this “habitat zone” more depth, but also to protect residents from the harmful effects of traffic on the M62.

There should be a greater green buffer zone surrounding the Radley Plantation and the Radley Plantation should be linked with far more green infrastructure to the woodland at Radley Farm, to protect and enhance the ecosystems at both locations and to minimise the risk of edge effects by developing very close to the woodland.



Proposed additional tree planting and extended buffer zone.

## Summary of Our Green Warrington's response to Countryside Partnerships' draft Design Code and Masterplan

The Design Codes and proposed housing styles, together with the proposed materials for both the housing and the public highways and public pavements are uninspiring and do not meet the criteria and aim of the NPPF, the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Codes. The Design Codes you have set out here simply pave the way for more of the identikit, monocultural, bland housing with which Warrington is already saturated.

Specifically, we would say as follows:

**Context:** The proposed Design Codes do not demonstrate “an understanding of the context, history and cultural characteristics of the site”. They are simply materials used in the current generic developments built across Warrington couched in marketing language that ostensibly creates distinct “character” areas with a sense of identity, but in reality gives developers licence to simply build what they always build in Warrington. This should have been an opportunity to take as the real context of this development the extensive woodland and wildlife on the site, used for decades by local residents, and taken this natural asset as the basic guiding context for development at the site. Note should also have been taken of the wider, semi rural area and period building materials and colours.

**Identity:** The proposed housing styles, designs, materials and the materials for the public highways and public pavements are not distinctive and do nothing to create a “positive sense of place”, nor are they “influenced by and influence their context positively”. The local examples used for the housing types and materials do not add anything by way of informing developers of how the site should look – they are actually poor examples of local vernacular – when better examples could have been chosen from the immediate and wider local area as evidence of good design and identity.

It should be noted that none of the example images used in the National Design Guide are of generic, monocultural housing developments, such as that which you have proposed here, perhaps there is a reason for that.

We feel the scheme is low aspirational and that an opportunity has been missed to create a distinctive village, with a variety of warm colours, natural materials and interesting architecture that sits harmoniously with the woodland. Rather than considering local heritage and culture, these draft Design Codes simply reflect what is currently being built at new developments in Warrington – it does not feel like a Design Code.

If the woodland, local heritage and the wider area had been used as a basis for inspiration then we may have seen a more coherent and imaginative vision for this new development.

Why not be more groundbreaking and create a new development that beats the fact that it is next to a motorway – by extending tree planting around the boundary and planting hundreds more – and demonstrate that despite its location next to a motorway, an attractive, distinctive and sustainable new village can be created? The local community are about to be deprived of their cherished nature site – the least that could be done would be to offer an inspiring and interesting development for visit in its p

