

Swainsthorpe

Design Guidance and Codes

Final Report
April 2026



Quality information

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Introduction 01

Landscape surrounding Swainsthorpe village.

1. Introduction

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Support Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Swainsthorpe Parish Council.

As the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 131) notes, *'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'*.

Following an analysis of the village of Swainsthorpe, a set of architectural and design qualities is identified. This set of qualities, combined with good design practice, forms the design guidelines that development within Swainsthorpe should follow in order to comply with this parish-wide design guidance and codes document.

1.1 Background and Purpose

This document sets out design guidance and codes based on the existing features of Swainsthorpe. The document is intended to sit alongside the Neighbourhood Plan to provide guidance for applicants preparing proposals in Swainsthorpe and as a guide for Swainsthorpe Parish Council and South Norfolk Council when considering planning applications.

Swainsthorpe expects very limited housing development to come forward in the village. There are no allocations in the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). Therefore, the guidance and codes outlined in this document relate mostly to building alterations and infill development. There are many energy projects planned in the surrounding area.



Figure 01: St Peter's Church sign in Swainsthorpe.



Figure 02: St Peter's churchyard.

1.2 Area of Study

Swainsthorpe is a civil parish and village, within the South Norfolk District Local Planning Authority. The village has developed along the A140. The village was recorded in the Domesday book as a fairly large settlement at the time. There are heritage assets standing from the 12th century. The parish has a total population of approximately 392 (2021 Census), with Swainsthorpe being the primary settlement. The village is located around 5 miles south of Norwich. The main village settlement has developed on the western side of the A140, with limited isolated development on the eastern side, closer to the Tas Valley.

Swainsthorpe contains a variety of architectural styles and housing typologies, with old workers' cottages along the railway line, the converted former workhouse at the Vale in double cruciform shape, individual Arts and Craft style residences, old agricultural brick structures, farmsteads, and more recent bungalows and detached redbrick homes among others.

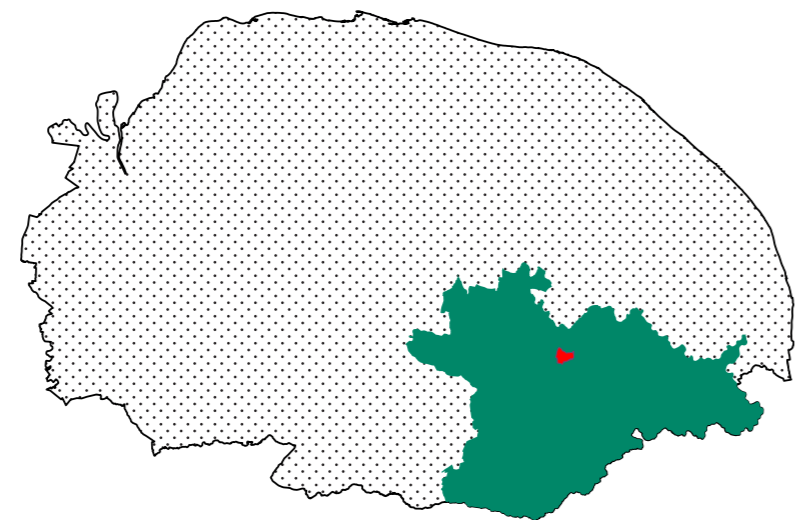


Figure 03: The Parish in context.




With a strong rural feel and character, Swainsthorpe retains much of its historic charm through its notable listed buildings, including St Peter's Church, and Swainsthorpe Hall.

Outside of the settlement areas, the landscape of the parish is influenced by the Tas Valley, with undulating hills and agricultural fields creating the long distance views around the settlement.



Figure 04: Aerial map of Swainsthorpe.

KEY

-  Norfolk Ceremonial County
-  South Norfolk District
-  Swainsthorpe Parish

1.3 Key Design Objectives

Neighbourhood Plan engagement was undertaken by the Swainsthorpe Parish Council and Swainsthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) by way of a drop-in session held in St Peter's Church in November 2024.

Responses were collated and have been used to identify the key design objectives, outlined below, which have been used to guide the development of the design codes in Chapter 3. Key themes noted by local residents are as follows:

- Retaining a rural feel, resisting urbanising elements;
- Projecting valued sightlines and views;
- Protecting mature natural features;
- Reflecting the scale and rhythm of the existing built environment;
- Encouraging sustainable features where appropriate.

A household survey was also undertaken with results collated in March 2025. This survey had a 60% response rate. The survey gathered factual data around the types of residents in Swainsthorpe, as well as resident views on what good design should look like in Swainsthorpe, or what areas of improvement are needed.

In particular, some key themes of good design that were identified included green spaces, vegetation, and small scale development. Areas of improvement for the village centre included speed restrictions, better parking, and maintaining a rural feel.

The household survey results have informed the design guidance and codes and the wider Neighbourhood Plan work.



Figure 05: Images from consultation with residents in Swainsthorpe courtesy of the NPSG.

1.4 Methodology

A one-day site visit took place on 3rd March 2025 commencing with an in-person meeting between AECOM and representatives of the Swainsthorpe NPSG to discuss what good design would look like in Swainsthorpe.

This was followed by a tour of the parish, on foot and by car. This activity allowed consultants to appraise local character and the features informing its sense of place, such as heritage and landscape features. The exercise also provided valuable local insight into the area’s pertinent design issues and opportunities, good and bad practice, as well as the overall context which the evidence-base of the Neighbourhood Plan will reflect.

This document has resulted from a collaborative effort between the Swainsthorpe NPSG and AECOM, reflecting the priorities of local residents. The design coding process includes the following steps:

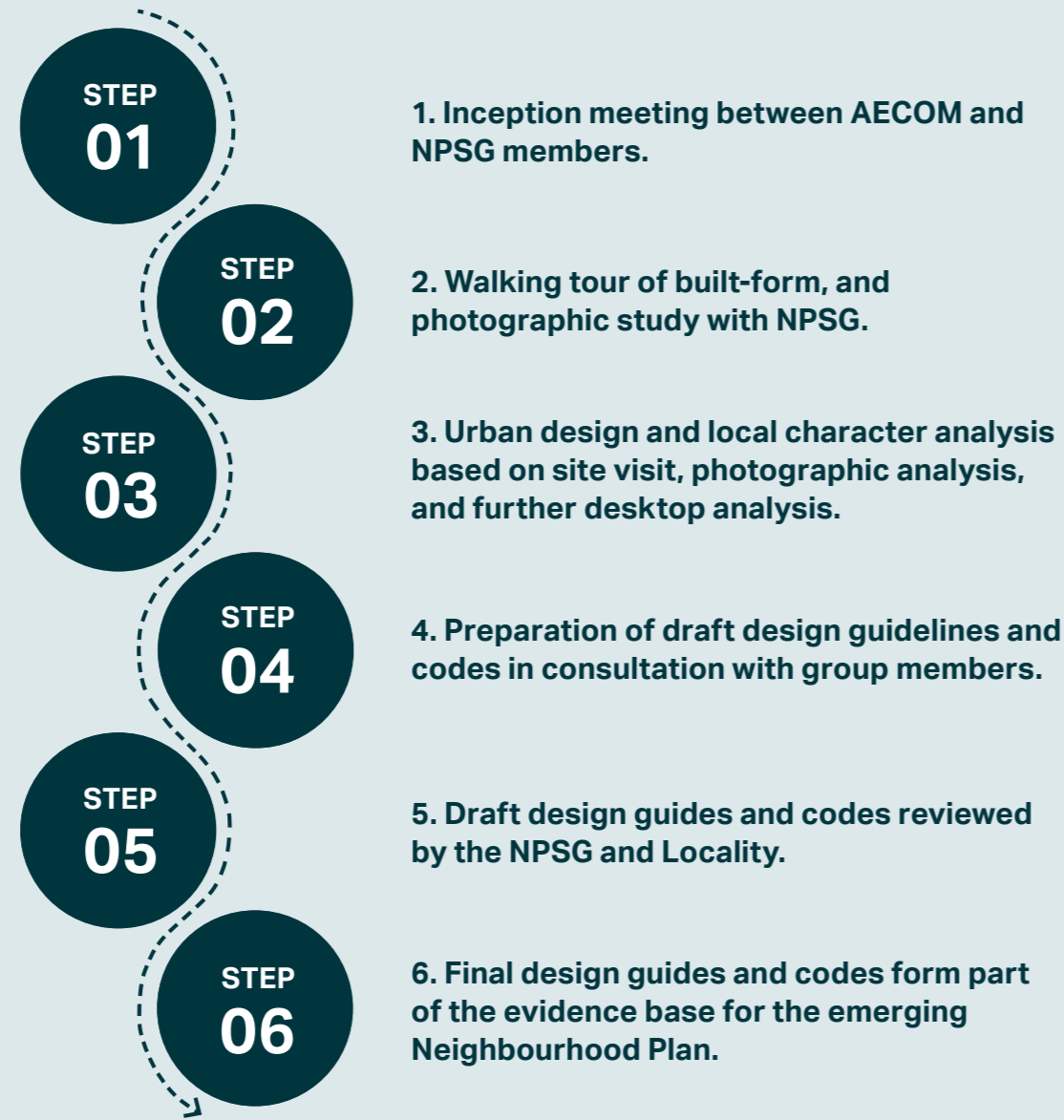


Figure 06: A brief chronological breakdown of the key elements and milestones used throughout the duration of the production of this document.

1.5 How to Use This Document

This document will be used differently by different people in the planning and development process.

A valuable way codes and guidance can be used is as part of a process of co-design and involvement that seeks to understand and takes account of local preferences for design quality. As such the codes and guidance can help to facilitate conversations to help align expectations, aid understanding, and identify key local issues.

The resulting design guidance and codes can then set out how to adequately respond to these issues in future development.

Design codes and guidance alone will not automatically secure quality design outcomes, but they will help to prevent poor outcomes by creating a rigorous process that establishes expectations for design quality.

What follows is a list of potential users and how they should use the design guidelines:

Potential users	How they will use the design guidance and codes
Applicants, developers, & landowners	As a guide to the community’s and the Local Planning Authority’s expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
Local planning authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The guidance and codes should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Swainsthorpe Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the guidance and codes are complied with.
Local community organisations	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.

Table 01: A list of potential users of this documents and how they will apply the design guidance and codes.

2. Baseline and Context

This chapter provides a baseline analysis of Swainsthorpe and its context including heritage assets, landscape features and connectivity. Appraisal of the area was carried out through desktop study and fieldwork. The information in this chapter forms the basis of the Design Guidance and Codes in Chapter 3.

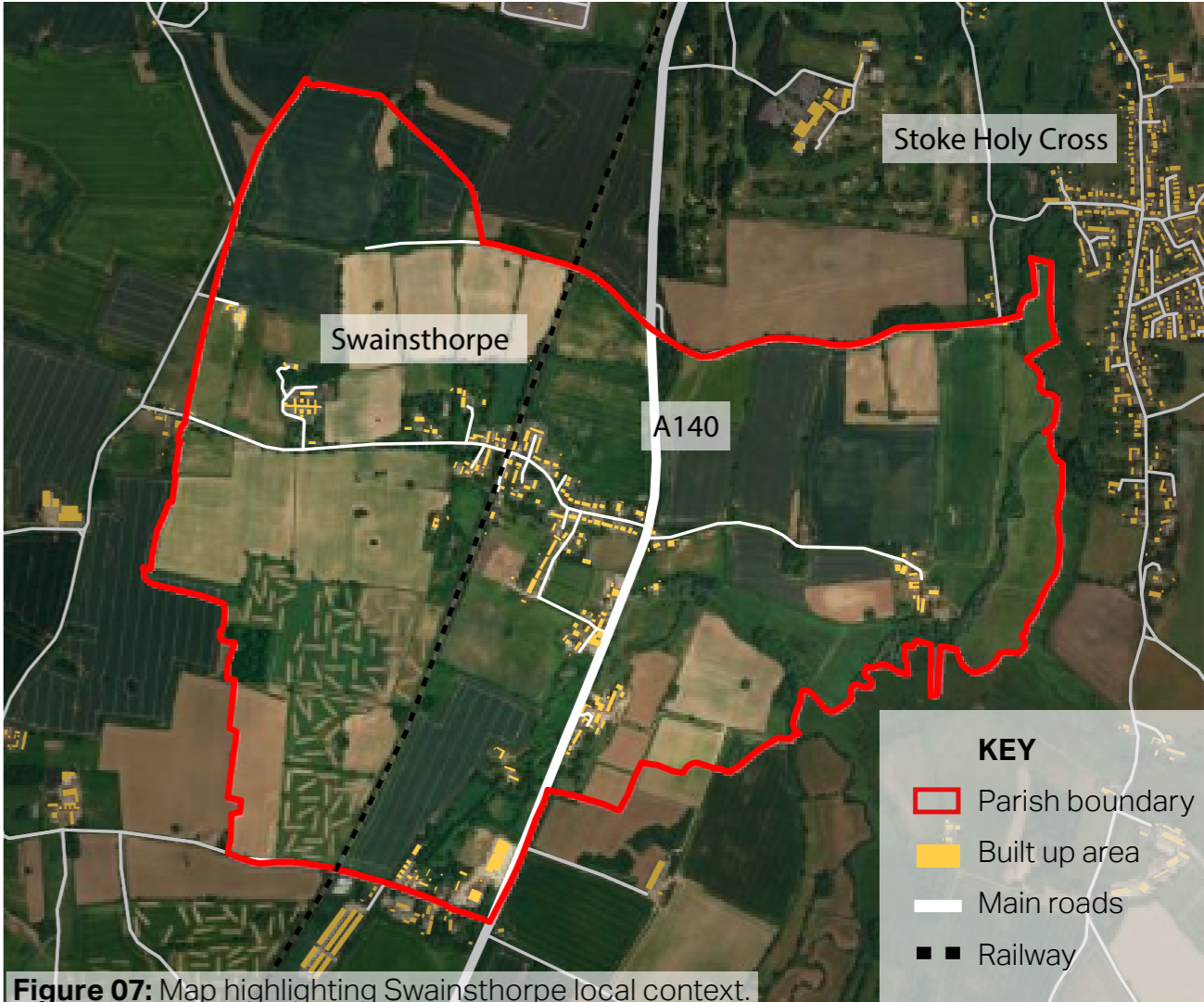


Figure 07: Map highlighting Swainsthorpe local context.



Baseline
02

Access road in Swainsthorpe.

2.1 Planning Policy Context

The NPPF 2024, paragraph 132 states that:

'Plans should... set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development...'

The Government is placing significant importance on the development of design guidance in order to set standards for design upfront and provide key principles regarding how sites should be developed.

Therefore this report's main objective is to develop design codes to sit alongside the Neighbourhood Plan to inform design proposals within Swainsthorpe and ensure that they remain sympathetic to its existing character.

Additionally, these following documents have informed the design guidance and codes within this report to ensure they are best aligned with the needs and opportunities identified for Swainsthorpe:

National Planning Policy

2020 - Building for a Healthy Life

Homes England

2019 - National Design Guide

MHCLG

2007 - Manual for Streets

Department for Transport

2

District Planning Policy

2024 - Greater Norwich Local Plan

South Norfolk Council, Norwich City Council, Broadland District Council and Norfolk County Council

2018 - South Norfolk Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

South Norfolk Council

2012 - South Norfolk Place-Making Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

South Norfolk Council

2012 - South Norfolk Local Landscape Designations Review

South Norfolk Council

Emerging South Norfolk and Broadland Design Guide

South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council

Emerging South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan

South Norfolk Council

2.2 Baseline

2.2.1 Movement and Connectivity

The village of Swainsthorpe is located approximately 5 miles south of Norwich. The A140 runs north-south through the parish, with the primary settlement lying to the west and some isolated rural development to the east. The A140 runs between Norwich and Ipswich.

Church Road and Brick Kiln Lane, both local roads, pass through the village to Mulbarton. Church Road has a footpath on one side, though it disappears in parts, creating safety concerns for pedestrians.

There is limited bus service in Swainsthorpe, however the 1, 36 and 82 provide connections to Norwich and Long Stratton. The main Norwich to London railway runs through the parish to the west of the main settlement, but does not stop in the village.

Swainsthorpe has some provision of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and bridleways which could be improved to increase pedestrian accessibility through the village.

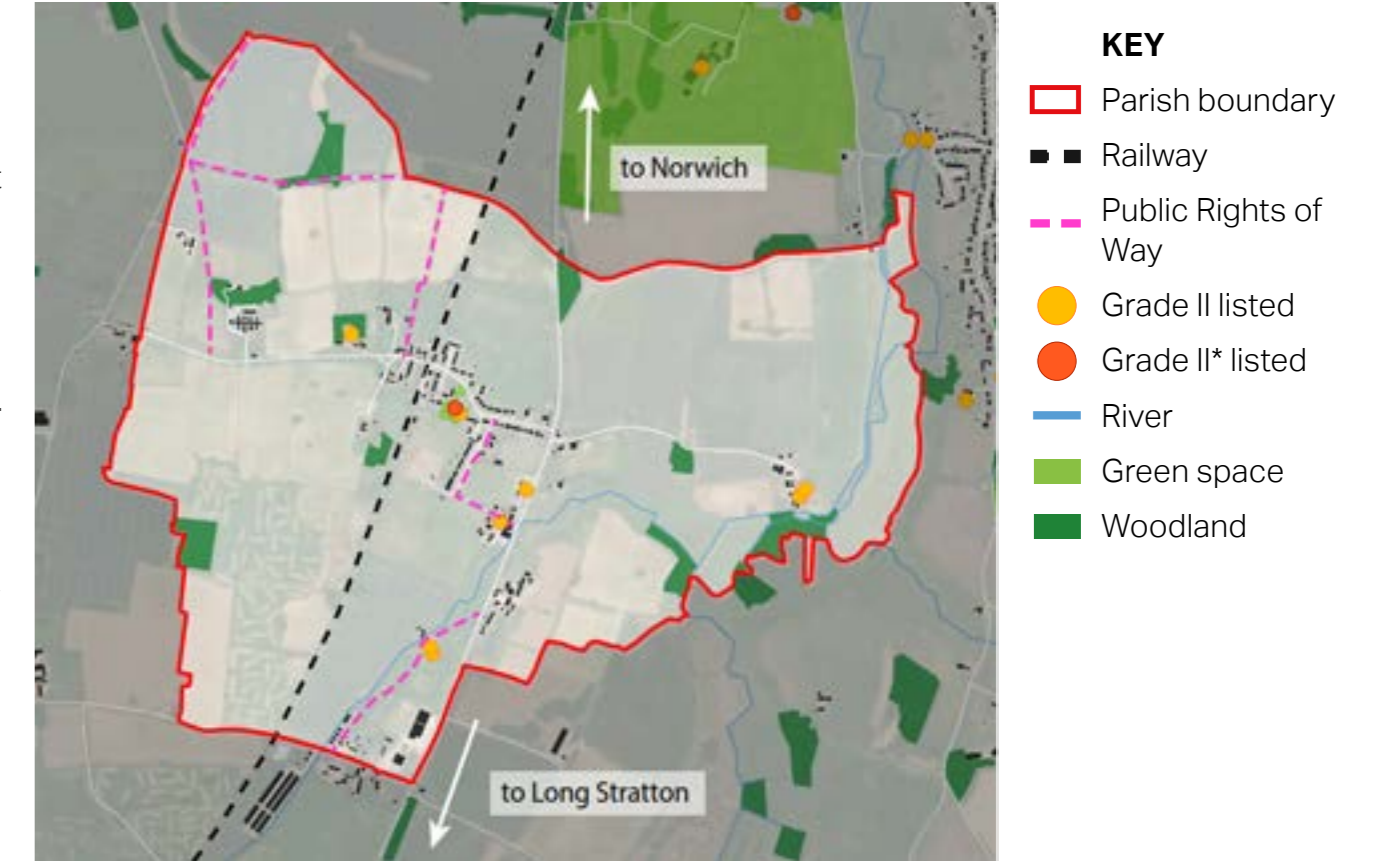


Figure 08: Map highlighting Swainsthorpe movement network, heritage assets, and natural assets.

2

2.2.2 Historic Development and Heritage

St Peter’s Church is a round tower church, one of 124 in Norfolk. It is thought to date to the Late Saxon, or early medieval periods. The church is also used as a community hub for the village.

Other buildings of historical importance include Swainsthorpe Hall which is thought to date to 1570, and later rebuilt after a fire. Several properties are thought to date to the 17th century.

To the west of the main settlement lies the Vale development, a 19th century development with a double-cruciform plan which would originally have been a work house, was then converted into a hospital in the 1970s, and has since been converted into residential dwellings.

2.2.3 Landscape and Natural Setting

Swainsthorpe lies predominantly in the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands National Character Area, with a small part of the north of the parish lying in the Mid Norfolk National Character Area.

The village lies in the Tas Valley, providing outward views over rolling hills to the southeast. The river Tas runs along the eastern boundary of the parish and cuts across the southern edge of the parish. The river is associated with large flood plains along its banks which mainly affect the east of the parish. Some areas of higher risk of surface water flooding are present along the A140 and in the east of the parish.

The landscape around Swainsthorpe is gently undulating. There are some areas of woodland as well as some areas of priority habitat including grasslands in the east of the parish and some priority deciduous woodland across the parish.

The main green space associated with the village itself is the space next to the Church.



Figure 09: St Peter’s round tower.



Figure 10: Example of agricultural setting around the village.

2.3 Character Areas

The Swainsthorpe NPSG have undertaken significant community engagement and baseline analysis work. Part of this has included establishing Character Areas for Swainsthorpe. Character Areas are specific areas that are distinctive based on their design qualities, materials, or layout. The Character Areas in Swainsthorpe are as follows:

1. The Vale;
2. Millennium Green;
3. Village centre;
4. St Peters;
5. Swainsthorpe Hall and Rookery; and
6. Brick Kiln Lane.

The following pages provide descriptions of each Character Area with the information provided by the NPSG. These descriptions provide a better local understanding of the distinct areas that make up Swainsthorpe.

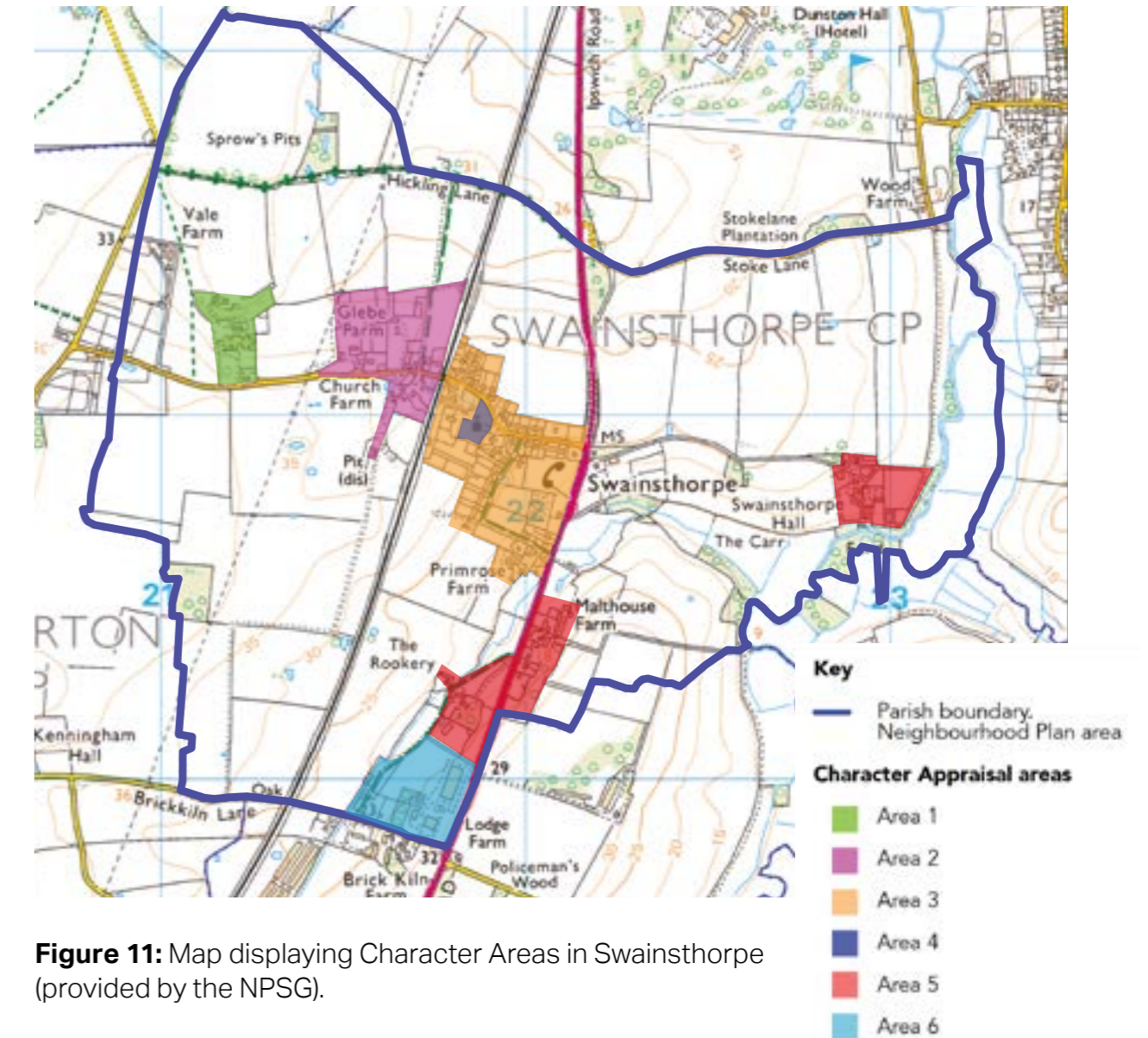


Figure 11: Map displaying Character Areas in Swainsthorpe (provided by the NPSG).

Characteristics	Description
Use	There are approximately 38 residences of which 80% are owner-occupied and 20% rental properties. Most of the houses are 2-3 bedrooms. In addition at the entrance to the site there is a detached bungalow called The Hollies and to the rear of the site is the converted water tower contemporary with the rest of the original buildings. There is a relatively slow turnover of the owner occupier properties, with many residents living in the Vale for over 20 years. There are a mix of households approximately 5 elderly, 9 families, 8 couples and 11 single occupiers.
Homes and buildings	Originally constructed in 1836 as a workhouse built with locally produced bricks. It was a Voluntary Aid Detachment hospital for the duration of WW1. In 1948 the site became part of the NHS as Vale Hospital providing care for elderly mentally ill patients. The hospital closed in 1984 and the buildings converted for residential use. All the properties, except the flats have a small garden area either laid out to garden or hard standing for outside eating and activities. There are large parking areas and substantial maintained community gardens.
Identity	Maintains the original setting of the workhouse which is set back from Church Road in a dip and is surrounded by fields with some wooded areas. The original external red brick structure and grey slate roofs have been maintained and no developments have encroached the site. There is a central three storeys block converted into four flats. From this centre are two storey terraced houses arranged in wings to the east and west, with further north and south wings. This arrangement maintains the original double cruciform design. To the rear there is a block of four single storey terraced houses. There are three detached properties, No 35 Tower House, No 1 The Hollies and number 11.
Built form	The Vale is a private development with no public right of way through it. The building line is in keeping with the original workhouse being a mixture of three, two and single storey buildings.
Movement	Entry to the development is off Church Road via an impressive large well signed entrance and driveway to the main part of the site. The road leads to large parking areas to the rear of the site. Within the houses are paved walkways that thread between the properties with interesting offset paths, fences and gates.
Nature	The development has privately maintained large green communal areas and there is a child size football goal net, plus plenty of seating. The development nestles in a pleasant large green open space of lawns, trees and shrubs. There is direct access to public footpaths across the adjoining fields.
Public space	The Vale is a private development with no public right of way through it. The Vale is approximately 700 metres from the centre of the village and as such is a self-maintained separate community that has its own management committee that maintains the infrastructure and grounds. Because of the central density of residences and the connecting walkways it gives the impression of a secure tight-knit community. There are no communal buildings on site.

Table 02: CA1 Analysis.

CA1: The Vale



Figure 12: The Vale as seen from the main road.



Figure 13: The Vale redbrick development © Evelyn Simak.

Characteristics	Description
Use	Entirely residential, surrounded by farmland. One property is also used for music tuition.
Homes and buildings	18 properties. 10 are pre-1900, 8 are infill from 1920s-1970s. Glebe Farm dates back to c.1570, and was originally the parsonage. Orchard Cottage (1645) may have once been the forge. Ivy House, Church Farm and Violet Bank are shown on the 1839 tithe map. 4 properties (4, 5, 7 Longbrooke Drive and 43 Church Rd) are converted from pre-1839 barns, and 45 Church Rd was a granary. The Croft was built in the grounds of Orchard Cottage in 1923, and is a Sussex house, built in the Arts and Crafts style. 64 Church Rd was built in the 1970s on the site of a Glebe Farm barn. All the properties have gardens and several have land of more than an acre.
Identity	Most of the older properties are set back from the road, but Orchard Cottage and Ivy House are visual indications of the area's past. The older properties have mainly been converted or updated to retain their original character. Small dormer windows with gable roofs are seen on a number of properties.
Built form	16 of the properties are two-storey, two are bungalows. There is an approximately even split in both pre- and post-1900 houses between rendering (white, beige or pink) and brick, mainly redbrick. There is occasional use of weatherboarding. The building lines are erratic. All the properties are owner-occupied.
Movement	The area is bounded on the east by the railway level crossing and by the fields between it and the Vale development to the west. A line of pylons runs north-south through the western part of the area. Church Road runs east-west through the area and is the principal village road. Longbrooke Drive is the only adopted side road. Traffic has a tendency to speed up on the slight decline after the level crossing and the 30mph limit is regularly exceeded. There is a footpath on a short stretch of the road from the level crossing, and a track runs through the wide wooded verge in the south-west of the area but stops well short of the Vale. A bridleway leads northwards from Church Road to Hickling Lane and is well-used, mainly by dog-walkers. All the properties have off-road parking, and visitors sometimes park on the track leading to the recycling centre.
Nature	The Millennium Green is a triangular piece of common land in the centre of the area, and the Trafalgar Oak (planted 2005) in its centre has a Tree Protection Order. There are a number of mature trees around the Green and a hedge hides the recycling centre from view. There are at least 8 ponds in the area, some of which are visible from the road. A large number of wild ducks live permanently on the ponds and travel between them, including on the road.
Public space	There is a single street light near the recycling centre. There is a sense of community amongst the residents, several of whom are strongly involved with the village. Three properties have security gates at their frontage.

Table 03: CA2 Analysis.



Figure 14: 2 and 3 Longbrooke Drive.



Figure 15: Ivy House, 52 Church Road.

CA3a: Church Road

Characteristics	Description
Use	A church which accommodates community activities. An industrial unit near to the railway line which has now been turned into residential usage. An ex-council property that at one point was used as a village post office which closed in 1960 and became a residential privately owned home.
Homes and buildings	Mixed styles, most properties were built in the 1960s and 1970s. Residential use. Gardens to the front and rear. Driveways and parking. Some of the ex-council properties were constructed in the 1920s evidence of this can be seen on the front-facing wall of the building.
Identity	Privately built and ex council properties. Brick construction with tiled roofs.
Built form	Most of the properties are detached except for the ex-council which are semi-detached. Single storey and 2 storey properties. Most are privately owned and occupied residential builds.
Movement	Church Road from A140 up to the railway line on the left side there are 3 junctions (Briar Lane, Church Close and Munnings Close) on the right side 2 junctions (Church View and Station Close). Farm machinery/tractors, large lorries, cars, motorbikes, pedal bikes, walkers, horse riders. Most properties have off road parking.
Nature	An area of common land in close proximity to the church, a children's play area, allotments and a small green space that is the Jubilee Garden. A privately owned pond used by waterfowl and other wildlife.
Public space	Entering Church Road from the A140, the road has a footpath on the left side - the footpath as it approaches the church has grass verge which in part has been worn away by visiting parked cars. There is street lighting at the junction of the A140, another near to Church Close on the left side; the next street lamp is situated near to Church View and one near to the industrial unit that has now been converted into a residential property on the right side. There is a post box, notice board, telephone post and dog waste bin in close proximity to Church Close, the village sign and a red telephone box that has been converted to house a defibrillator and books. There is another dog waste bin near to the junction of Munnings Close.

Table 04: CA3a Analysis.

CA3b: Briar Lane

Characteristics	Description
Use	Mainly residential privately owned properties. Many of which have back gardens that back onto open farmland. Farmhouse, with outbuildings still occupied but no longer a working farm. Industrial units - Swainsthorpe car wash, and auto services. One property was built on infill land - late 1960s. There are a cluster of properties known as Yew Tree one of them being a bungalow and not built at the same time as the original building. The older property was at one point a post office, date unknown when it closed and moved to another site in the village. Yew Tree was also a care home; eventually sold on to a private buyer and became residential homes. One of which is rented and the remaining privately owned. Rear gardens, slabbed parking area in front of properties and some parking to the side.
Homes and buildings	Detached bungalows and chalet style bungalows most of which were built in the 1960s. One property is/was running an equine business but for the most, they are residential. Farmhouse (age unknown). Cottages (age unknown). Yew Tree (age unknown). Most of the properties have front and rear gardens with a driveway and garage.
Identity	Most of the properties were constructed by private builders - 2 redbrick bungalows originally council owned - with 2 single garages in close proximity.
Built form	Mainly brick, whitewash or rendering. Tiled roofs. Single storey and 2 storey. Mainly private - one rented all of which are occupied.
Movement	Briar Lane is mainly a single track; in parts it can accommodate 2 vehicles passing - but at most single track; the lane leading down toward the A140, which then becomes a T junction onto the main road.
Nature	There is a field which is privately owned, some hedging has been removed and a gate and fencing has been installed. There is drainage ditch that runs alongside a hedge bordering a privately owned property - this leads to the next privately owned property and again there is a drainage ditch which is situated on the other side of the hedge. The water will then feed through into a pond which borders the privately owned field. Evidence of wildlife visually observed. Trees and mixed hedging surrounding properties. Wooden fencing, low walls some with front gates to the entrance of driveways.
Public space	The entrance to Briar Lane from Church Road is made up of tarmac - this soon turns into unmade road with potholes; following the road along to a sharp lefthand bend the remaining part of the lane leading toward the A140 becomes more suitable for off road vehicles/industrial vehicles. There is no street lighting. One property has security gates.

Table 05: CA3b Analysis.

CA3c: Church Close

Characteristics	Description
Use	Small cluster of ex council properties - houses and bungalows
Homes and buildings	Single storey detached bungalows x2, the rear of the properties face into Church Close and there is a pathway that runs from Church Close through to Briar Lane - this is used by residents and deliveries. 2x semi-detached 2 storey houses, all likely built early/late 1950s/1960s. Residential use and occupied. Gardens front and rear.
Identity	Properties although in close proximity do have space and privacy. One of the bungalows is a rented property, another runs a house clearance business.
Built form	Red brick and tiled roofs. Privately owned and occupied properties.
Movement	The junction of the close leads onto Church Road. Church Close is for use by the residents and for deliveries. The houses have car parking to the front of their gardens. Bungalows have garage space which are situated in Briar Lane.
Nature	There are no open spaces. Church Close is lined with mixed hedging on the left, open driveways, wooden panelled fencing on the right.
Public space	Unmade road, potholes, street lighting close to the junction of Church Close - likely social interaction as the properties are within close proximity to each other.

Table 06: CA3c Analysis.

2

CA3d: Church View

Characteristics	Description
Use	2 properties in Church View, both of similar styles and both have driveways and garage.
Homes and buildings	Residential properties. Early 1970s, privately owned and occupied, garden front and rear. The rear gardens back onto fertile farmland.
Identity	Chalet style bungalows, with adjoining garage sited in a quiet cul de sac with a 5 barred gate leading onto fertile farmland.
Built form	Red brick and tile. Tiled roofs 2 storey. Privately owned.
Movement	T junction onto Church Road, private road. Parking for residents only.
Nature	Open farmland - rich with wildlife - hedging and trees.
Public space	No street lighting, tarmac drive. One property has an open driveway, the other has wooden fencing between the two properties and around the frontage.

Table 07: CA3d Analysis.

2

CA3e: Munnings Close

Characteristics	Description
Use	5 bungalows and 2 houses all of which are detached, all have front and rear gardens. All have garages attached to the properties.
Homes and buildings	Bungalows and houses, residential use privately owned and occupied, large gardens front and rear, 1970s/1980s
Identity	-
Built form	Single storey and 2 storey properties, brick with tiled roofs. Privately owned.
Movement	Staggered crossroads onto Church Road, the road is used for residents and deliveries. All properties have driveways, garages.
Nature	Privately owned pond with wildlife and waterfowl. Mixed trees and hedging.
Public space	Cul de sac, tarmac road, no street lighting within the close. Social interaction likely. Most of the properties sit back from the road, are well spaced out with open drives.

Table 08: CA3e Analysis.

CA3f: Station Close

Characteristics	Description
Use	Ex council properties 2x sets of semi-detached houses on left side, a terrace of 4 bungalows at the bottom of the cul de sac and further 4 semi-detached bungalows to the right one with decorative brickwork. Mainly residential. Privately owned and occupied.
Homes and buildings	Semi-detached houses and bungalows. Residential and a Photography business with a converted shepherd's hut and a landscaping business. Gardens front and rear - some backing onto open farmland - railway line - industrial unit.
Identity	Bungalows and houses - red brick construction - tiled roofs
Built form	Red brick, tiled roofs single storey and 2 storey properties, originally owned by the council most are now privately owned.
Movement	Cul de sac, junction leading onto Church Road - council garages - some properties have converted the front gardens into car parking space.
Nature	Jubilee Garden in close proximity - farmland and industrial unit - hedging and trees. At the bottom of the cul de sac on the left side there is cut through, here you will find further garages and a path leading onto farmland.
Public space	Road is unmade - street lamp is situated near to the industrial unit. It is very likely that there is social interaction with the residents. A majority of the properties have low fences, walls or hedging around the front gardens.

Table 09: CA3f Analysis.

CA3g: Railway Cottages

Characteristics	Description
Use	Cottages, bungalows, residential and business - shared walkway leading to small front gardens. Front doors are situated around the rear of the cottage properties.
Homes and buildings	Cottages (post 1887) bungalows 1980s and one as recent as 2019 that was infill. Gardens front and back. Residential and 2 cottages are also used for business use. Wild Tree Surgeon and Horticultural David Pownall.
Identity	4x Railway worker cottages - Number 1 & 2 have large gardens to the side containing business equipment. Number 4 having access to a paddock and fields to the side, adjacent to a private field/land joining Munnings Close and Briar Lane owners. Small front gardens, the gardens at the rear back onto the railway line (steep embankment). Workshop and sheds. 3x bungalows - property boundaries go to the railway wall/fence for bungalows 35 & 37 Church Road.
Built form	Cottage brick construction - tiled roofs - 2 storey - terrace - privately owned and occupied. Bungalows are all detached - brick - tiled roofs - privately owned and occupied.
Movement	Private land covenant access over first bungalow land. Allowing access to railway cottages for residents and deliveries.
Nature	Trees and hedging, low wooden fencing. Bungalows have open drives.
Public space	Gravel drive, private land for cottage resident parking. No street lighting.

Table 10: CA3g Analysis.

CA3: Village Centre

2



Figure 16: Historic building on Briar Lane (CA3b).



Figure 17: Housing at Station Close (CA3f).

Characteristics	Description
Use	1 residential property (Beehive), the Church of St Peters, Swainsthorpe (C of E, Tas Valley Benefice) surrounding Churchyard, village green, the village common and the children’s park and the allotments and the Charity Trust Shed.
Homes and buildings	St Peters Church, round tower church with porch and north isle extension, built 12th c. This building is very old and has been well maintained. Has been used as a church since 12th c. and since 1998 has also doubled as the village community centre. All public worship, meeting and events take place here. It is surrounded on all sides by the churchyard, which is an active burial ground for residents of the parish and includes a wildflower meadow and many mature trees. It is used by villagers and visitors for relaxation and contemplation. The green is an open space in front of the church, to the side of Church Road. This accommodates the village sign and gardens, and the village notice board for civic and public use. It has a post box with daily collections, a dog waste bin and a gritting box. It is also a place where village activities are advertised. There is a bench for resting. The allotments were redesignated when the village common was established and the play equipment renewed. There are 10 allotments, there is access to water, and most of the plots are currently cultivated. At the south end of the allotments is a large shed, which belongs to the Charity Trust. This is used for storing items such as chairs and tents, urns and etc. to be used for public events organised by the Charity Trust, such as the summer Fete, Carols around the Christmas Tree, etc. The Beehive is on the north side of Church Road, it is a detached domestic building surrounded by its own gardens and a tall mixed hedge.
Identity	The church is of Norman origin and is mentioned in the Domesday book. It is built of stone with a rough flint exterior. It is famous for its round tower which is unique to Norfolk. It has 4 bells in the tower, dating back to the early 1400s (they are currently a project for repair). The church is also renowned for its carved wooden angels on its interior roof. There is a good history of the church written by David Chapman which gives more fulsome details of the church architecture and history. The church stands at the centre of the village on a slight rise and can be seen when approaching the village from the A140, forming part of an iconic view of Swainsthorpe. The Churchyard has been well managed by the PCC and the Parish Council and includes an Art Deco gravestone and Commonwealth War Grave of historical interest. The Church represents the heart of the village and is central to its character. The village green has several village amenities, such as the village notice board and more recently a phone box, which houses a defibrillator and a book swap, and generally adds colour and character to the green. The green is bisected by a gravel path that provides a right of way for 1 house fronting onto the green and there is a good macadamed path leading along the north side of the gravel path from the pavement to the church.

Table 11: CA4 Analysis.

2

Characteristics	Description
	The village sign was recently restored and shows the identity of the village as being strongly rural. The seat nearby provides a resting and meeting place for villagers and visitors. The Common is green open land managed by the Charity Trust and the north-east corner provides a children’s play area. This is fenced off and contains its own picnic tables. This is used by the children of the village and can be safely reached by walking along the pavement. The Parish Council has exciting plans to extend the park and replace most of the play equipment in the coming year. The plans have been approved by SNDC and a grant for some of the work has been obtained. The Beehive has a mock Tudor black and white facade to the first floor of the building and is traditional red brick below. It is sheltered by its own hedges but provides a shy glimpse of itself to passersby.
Built form	The Church doubles as a building of worship and community use. It stands alone in its own grounds back from the road and is the tallest building in the village and can be seen from almost anywhere in the village, especially in winter. It is a public building and is open to the public every Saturday and Sunday, and at other times by arrangement. There is the Charity Trust shed, which is a wooden single storey building, owned by the Trust. There is a church shed, which is a small single storey garden shed to house the lawn mower. The village green and the gravel and macadamed paths are common land, and therefore public. It should be noted that the pavement running towards the A140 runs out for 200m beyond the village green, which means pedestrians have nowhere safe to walk until they rejoin the pavement below Briar Lane. The Beehive is a private dwelling, consisting of 2 storeys, standing alone on the north side of Church Road.
Movement	The church and common land, park and allotments are to the south side of Church Road and form a central cluster of the village amenities. Everyone walking or driving through the village pass these buildings and will get pleasure from the view (only the allotments cannot be seen from the street). The common land which is the village Green is used for parking for church and community activities, cars also park along the roadside on the grass strip. This is not ideal as the village road is on a curve, but it rarely causes access issues.
Nature	The church, the green, the park, the common and the allotments are the green heart of the village. There are native hedges surrounding the church on 3 sides and the south side borders a lovely meadow. There is a further native hedge along the side of the village common and around the allotments. These hedges are beautifully cared for by the Parish Council. There are many mature trees on the village green. The green provides a large play space for all the village and is used all year round. There is a great deal of biodiversity in this central green block, and there is an information board listing the unusual plants in the church flower meadow. This green space provides a

2

Characteristics	Description
	corridor for insects and wildlife to reach the farmland surrounding the village. There have been no flooding issues in Area 4, probably because it is the highest in the village.
Public space	There are 2 streetlights here, one by the public notice board and one outside the Beehive. These have recently been upgraded and do make the space safer to walk on at night. There are also solar lights on the Church Gates to keep safe those using the church after dark. The Village green is a place for social interaction as it has a pavement and seating and the beautiful green space. There is access to the allotments from Church Road and from the churchyard, The Charity Trust Shed is safely/strategically located between the church and the allotments. The church has an enclosed boundary with 4 gates, the village green has wooden bollards to demarcate the traffic using the gravel drive and Church Road from pedestrians (soon to be upgraded by the Parish Council).

CA4: St Peters

2



Figure 18: St Peter's Church.



Figure 19: The green and amenities next to the church.

CA5a: Rookery

Characteristics	Description
Use	This area comprises of ten residential properties and a collection of farm buildings to the east and west of the A140 Norwich to Ipswich Road, a designated corridor of movement. These are surrounded by farmland.
Homes and buildings	The Rookery is a three storey 16th century manor house with red tile roof and white washed walls. The adjoining semi converted barn has red tiled roof, a flint gabled end and black painted clay lump walls. Rookery Hollow, a former grain storage barn of similar age, of red brick and red tiled roof has been converted to residential use. Malthouse Farm House, a listed building, has been converted into three residences and has red tiled roof, red brick walls with a central Tudor white and wood section. A detached house of modern design, Malthouse Cottage, has been erected to the rear. Other former farm buildings are undergoing conversion to residential and some farm buildings appear still to be in use. To the south is Glenview, a 1960s/70s detached bungalow. Next are semi-detached Hillside Cottages which have black tiled roofs, one with rendered walls and the other of flint work both being white washed. The last property is The Dell, an old cottage with close tiled roof, red brick walls with feature windows.
Identity	The Rookery and Rookery Hollow are set 150m back from the road with long driveways, have large gardens and open spaces and represent their history as Manor House and Rookery Farm. Malthouse Farm House and adjoining properties form a natural group and as with the other properties to the east are set back from the road to varying degrees and all have gardens.
Built form	The Rookery and Malthouse Farm House are three storey buildings, the rest with the exception of Glen View are of two storey.
Movement	All properties enter and exit from the main road which has a 50mph speed limit starting from the south by The Dell. A pavement from here northward to the east side of the main road extends to the bus stop, then the crossing point with central reservation and then to opposite Church Road. Crossing the main road can be difficult. A grass verge to the west side allows access from the north to the bridleway which links through to Brick Kiln Lane. Walking on either side of the main road is not pleasant due to the close proximity of fast moving and heavy traffic making the use of the bridleway untenable for many.
Nature	The area is surrounded by fields with trees and natural hedging with some post and rail fences. The land has a rise and fall which gives good views over farmland. A stream runs through Rookery Hollow and the surrounding low land is in a flood plain. Nature thrives in this area which is rich in animal and bird species.
Public space	There is no street lighting and all properties enter and exit from the main road. There are no public spaces apart from the bridleway.

Table 12: CA5a Analysis.

2

CA5b: Swainsthorpe Hall

Characteristics	Description
Use	This area comprises of five residential properties, two with old farm buildings within their curtilage, situated together along a single track road approx a third of a mile from the cross roads junction of the A140 and Church Road. This road terminates at Swainsthorpe Hall. Beside this group of residences are three redundant metal grain silos and a large block and metal farm building. The area is known as Hall Farm.
Homes and buildings	Swainsthorpe Hall was built in Tudor times and became the main manor when the two manors in Swainsthorpe, the Cursons and Fulbourne manors combined. An imposing building of red tile and red featured brickwork it stands at the furthestmost point with old farm buildings nearby. Hall Barn next door is a residential conversion with outbuildings both of red brick and tiled roofs. Opposite there are semi detached two storey cottages of old red brick set back from the road. The last property is a bungalow of block construction, the most recent building probably dating from the 1960s. All have gardens with the Hall and Hall Barn being gated.
Identity	All these properties sit well together giving the feeling of a farm environment.
Built form	With the exception of the bungalow which has a dark grey tiled roof, all buildings are of red brick and tiled roofs. All are set back from the road and in private ownership.
Movement	This area is serviced by a single track road with a passing place. All properties are set back from the road with sufficient room for parking off road. The nearest bus stops are on the main road.
Nature	This group sits on higher ground which slopes across fields down to the river Tas. It appears isolated, being surrounded by farmland and extensive views across open land. The road has hedges and trees with an area of woodland halfway along. This is particularly supportive of wildlife and nature.
Public space	There is no street lighting to this area.

Table 13: CA5b Analysis.

2

CA5: Swainsthorpe Hall and Rookery



Figure 20: Old barns at Malthouse Farm (CA5a) © Evelyn Simak.



Figure 21: Entrance road to the Rookery (CA5a) © Adrian S Pye

CA6: Brick Kiln Lane

2

Characteristics	Description
Use	There are 9 properties in this area, which is bounded by Brick Kiln Lane on the south and the A140 on the east. There are 3 residential properties, a line of 5 industrial units occupied by 3 companies, and a mushroom farm.
Homes and buildings	The 5 industrial units are modern, and built on the site of the original Brick Kiln (shown in a map of 1839). The buildings associated with the mushroom farm have been converted (or rebuilt) from the sheds of a nursery on the site of Lodge Farm. Two of the residential properties are semi-detached and may have been pre-1900 cottages. The third is a modern bungalow. The residential properties have large front and back gardens.
Identity	The area has no sense of identity, with well-spaced, highly individual buildings. The south of Brick Kiln Lane (in the parish of Newton Flotman) comprises two farms and a motor servicing garage.
Built form	The 5 single-storey industrial units are black breeze block with corrugated iron roofs. Their neighbouring property is a modern bungalow of red brick with tiled roof. The semi-detached houses are two-storey rendered in cream, with tiled roofs. All the residential properties have security gates.
Movement	Brick Kiln Lane is single-track, and Heavy Goods Vehicles delivering to the industrial sites are often forced to pull in to passing places. They are mostly too large to go under the railway bridge on the south-west corner of the area. There is a footpath leading north alongside the line of 5 industrial units, which emerges on the A140 at the Rookery entrance. There are no footpaths along the road itself, which culminates in a crossroads on the busy A140. There is no parking on the road.
Nature	There are no public open spaces in the area. Brick Kiln Lane is lined with mature trees, mainly oaks. Several properties are hidden behind high hedges.
Public space	There are no street lights. It appears unlikely that there is much social interaction between the residents or users of the area, as only three properties appear to be inhabited and they are enclosed by high walls, hedges and gates.

2

Table 14: CA6 Analysis.

CA6: Brick Kiln Lane



Figure 22: Game Meadow house, Brick Kiln Lane.



Figure 23: Units 3 and 4, Brick Kiln Lane.



3. Design Guidance and Codes

This section sets out the principles that will influence the design of potential new development and inform the retrofit of existing properties in Swainsthorpe. Where possible, local images are used to exemplify the design guidelines and codes. Where these images are not available, best practice examples from elsewhere are used.

3.1 Overview

The general guidelines outlined in this chapter aim to apply to the whole of the village of Swainsthorpe. These have been derived from current urban design best practice and are considered essential for a successful development.

The themes of these guidelines and codes were chosen based on meetings with the steering group and results from community consultation events to best reflect the interests of the residents of Swainsthorpe.

These guidelines advocate the use of context for design cues. In this sense, it is expected that a design proposal will make reference to various local design elements such as the form and layout of buildings, building envelope / facade, materiality, colour palette, roof treatment and fenestrations.

Please note:

Both design codes and guidelines are contained within this document, highlighted within boxes as shown here. The difference between codes and guidelines is summarised below:

- Codes: Design codes are mandatory requirements for design issues and are expressed with the word **must**.
- Guidelines: Design guidelines set out aspirations for design that is expected to be delivered and are expressed with one of two words:
 - **should** reflects design principles that are strongly encouraged.
 - **could** reflects design principles that are suggestions.

3.2 Built Form

BF 1 Character Area Specific Design

Development proposals will consider the special qualities of the identified Character Areas (see figure 24) by adhering to the below code:

BF 1.1 Planning applications **must** demonstrate how design proposals have been developed with regard to the Character Area analysis in section 2.3.

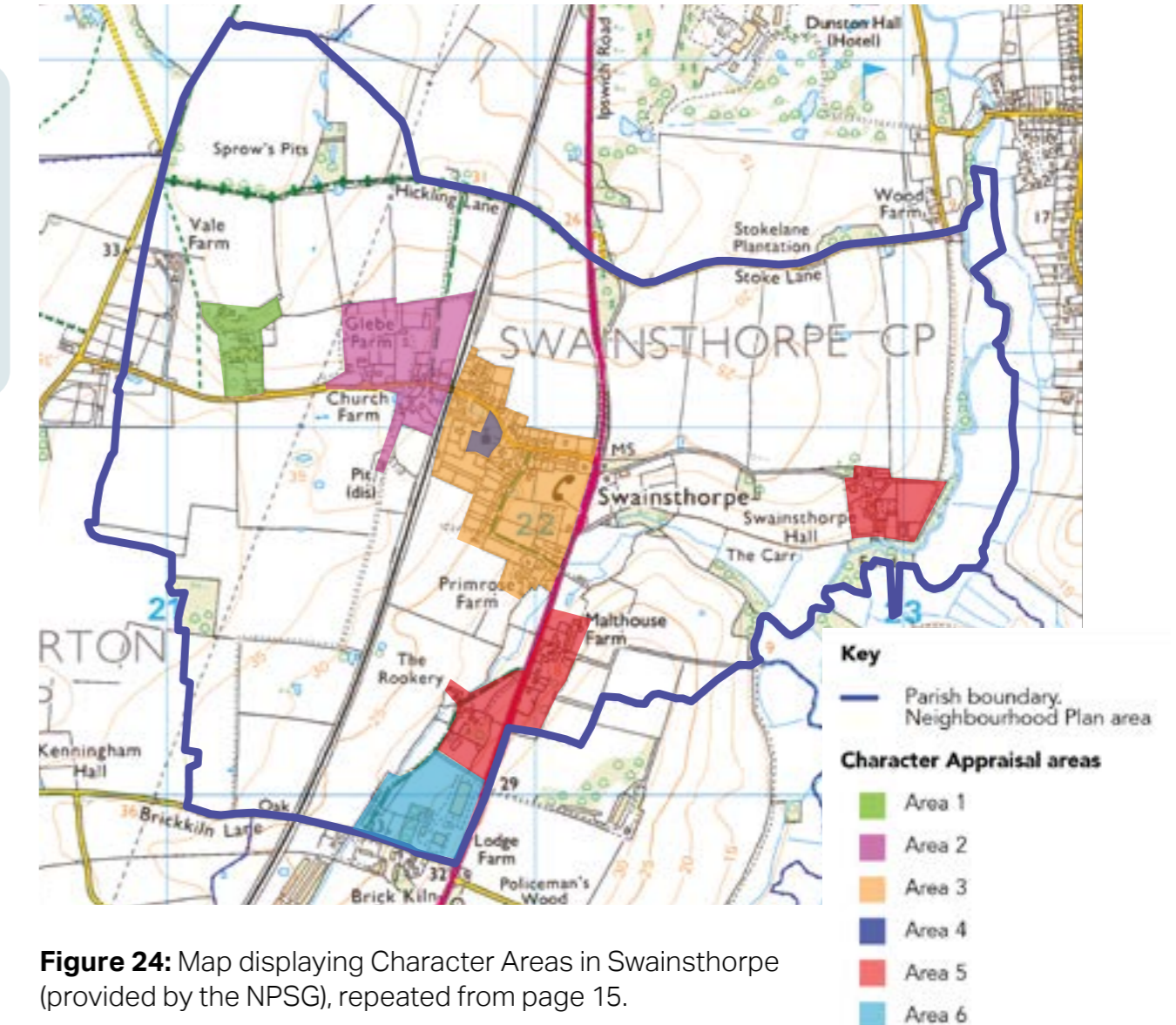


Figure 24: Map displaying Character Areas in Swainsthorpe (provided by the NPSG), repeated from page 15.



3

BF 2 Layout

Swainsthorpe is a small village, lying along the A140 with most development on the west side. Swainsthorpe is developed around the church and its churchyard as the heart of the village.

BF 2.1 New development **must** reflect the rural nature of the village;

BF 2.2 Cul-de-sac development **must** be carefully considered and well-integrated into the movement network, being short in length and with onward pedestrian and cycle connections;

BF 2.3 Future development within the village **must** keep suitable gaps between buildings to preserve short views, as losing these would harm the village's natural, rural character;

BF 2.4 New development **must** maintain visual connections to the surrounding landscape and long views out of the settlement by carefully considering the overall site layout. Important views of the church **must** be protected; and

BF 2.5 Development proposals **must** reflect the topography of the site, and **must** reduce any impact on nearby buildings of historic importance to maintain Swainsthorpe's characteristic open feel and rural character. Opportunities to improve the setting of heritage assets or to create new short- and long-range views of the landscape **must** be considered.



Figure 25: An example of a typical front garden and front-of-plot parking in Swainsthorpe.



Figure 26: Regular setback and building line along Church Road.



3

BF 2 Layout

The building line slightly varies throughout the village of Swainsthorpe, but remains still largely regular and aligned to neighbouring dwellings. Dwellings are mainly fronting onto the road.

BF 2.6 All future development **should** follow the informal or general building line (where there is a clear and obvious building line) relative to neighbouring dwellings and to the wider streetscape;

BF 2.7 Setback of new development throughout Swainsthorpe **must** allow for adequate space to accommodate front garden space;

BF 2.8 Pedestrian pavements **must** be provided wherever possible to facilitate active travel through Swainsthorpe;

BF 2.9 Front gardens **may** vary in size, however all dwellings should have a clear separation between private and public realm; and

BF 2.10 Careful consideration **should** be given to purposely designed refuse storage and cycle parking when allocated to the front of the building.



Figure 27: Building facing onto Briar Lane with front garden and on-plot parking.



Figure 28: Example of residential dwelling setback further with hedges providing privacy.



BF 3 Scale

BF 3.1 The height and scale of any new development **must** respect the overall scale and height of adjacent buildings to create a cohesive built environment. This is typically one-two storeys, with some three-storey exceptions;

BF 3.2 New development **should** create a similar street feel using building layout or natural features like hedges and trees;

BF 3.3 Large blank facades with no openings **should** be avoided, except where they have noise cancelling benefits such as when facing a road with fast moving traffic such as the A140;

BF 3.4 The scale and design of development, including landscape screening, **should** not be intrusive to internal or external views;

BF 3.5 Any new development **must** be proportionate to the rural nature of the existing village; and

BF 3.6 Development **should** ensure the roof design integrates with the surrounding development, with the scale and pitch referencing neighbouring dwellings. The most common roof typologies in the village are gabled and hipped. Development **should** reflect these typologies and **should** avoid overly complex design.



Figure 29: Example of two-storey building height.



Figure 30: Example of one-storey bungalow.

BF 4 Views

BF 4.1 Locally important views of the church from surrounding countryside and from the A140 to the north **must** be protected;

BF 4.2 Screening measures **must** be used, such as planting of trees and hedgerows, to mitigate the impact on the landscape or views of any development, including energy projects or industrial/commercial development;

BF 4.3 Any major changes to the landscape or view, which is temporary (for construction purposes) **must** be restored to its original or enhanced quality;

BF 4.4 Gaps between neighbouring tandem properties **should** be wide enough to maintain views of the countryside.



Figure 32: View of the church from eastern approach.



Figure 31: Views along Church Road towards the A140.



Figure 33: Views out to countryside and A140 to the north.



BF 5 Streetscape

BF 5.1 Infill development can influence the layout, density, views and cohesion of the village, and therefore **must** be designed with consideration to the surrounding context and the wider village setting;

BF 5.2 Built gaps **must** also provide adequate separation distances between facing windows to ensure privacy from overlooking is maintained;

BF 5.3 The building typology of any infill development **must** respect the existing surrounding context. Development **should** ensure that there is diversity and variety in scale and bulk informed by the building types of the surrounding context;

BF 5.4 Parking **should** be integrated on-plot and with parking spaces set behind the building line, generally preferably to the side of the plot. Courtyard parking may also be suitable. For narrow dwellings where front-of-building parking is the only possible option, ensure

does not dominate the street frontage. It is also best practice that this parking is placed in front of ground floor windows;

BF 5.5 Car parking ports **could** be a good addition to create formalised on-plot parking. These **should** be designed to sensitively complement the surrounding dwellings, considering form, materiality and placement;

BF 5.6 On-street-parking **should** be avoided wherever possible, particularly within the village centre. As this creates an unattractive streetscape and traffic congestion, especially when larger agricultural vehicles are needing to pass through, which **could** pose risks to pedestrian movement and safety;

BF 5.7 All external lighting **should** be kept minimal, at low level and at low intensity.

BF 6 Light Commercial Development



3

BF 6.1 Commercial development **should** be designed with regard for scale and layout;

BF 6.2 Screening **should** be carefully designed to mitigate the impact of development on the landscape. This can include natural elements such as hedges or trees, or low brick or stone walls; and

BF 6.3 Any light commercial development **should** be designed to mitigate impact on landscape views.

3.3 Green Spaces

GS 1 Trees and Hedgerows

GS 1.1 Development **should** avoid the loss of trees and hedgerows and **must** protect and enhance local habitats and wildlife corridors;

GS 1.2 Design **should** connect existing landscape features and promote biodiversity through the planting of local trees, plants and hedgerows, the creation of habitats and the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) where appropriate;

GS 1.3 Wildlife corridors **should** help increase movement between isolated populations;

GS 1.4 Gardens and boundary treatments **should** be designed to allow the movement of wildlife and provide habitat for local species. For that reason, rich vegetation is suggested, instead of continuous solid fencing;

GS 1.5 Verges on the roads **should** be enhanced to increase biodiversity and act as wildlife corridors of safe passage for wildlife;

GS 1.6 Development **should** provide bat, owl and bird boxes and bat friendly lighting to maintaining foraging routes.



Figure 34: Example of a structure used as a frog habitat.



Figure 36: Example of a hedgehog corridor in a garden fence.



Figure 35: Example of a Swift brick under an eave.



Figure 37: Example of a bat box on the side of a building.



3

3.4 Detailed Design

DE 1 Architectural Features and Materiality



DE 1.1 Development proposals **must** demonstrate that the materials used have been selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment and refers to the outlined Swainsthorpe material and vernacular palette presented overleaf;

DE 1.2 The roofline **should** have a rhythmic pattern of chimneys as is present throughout the parish and which should be preserved in the older properties, however, variety is encouraged to preserve rural character; and

DE 1.3 The style of a dormer, whether added later or included in the original scheme, **should** reflect the form of the main roof, such as gable and shed dormers. These dormers must be of an appropriate and proportional size to the original building and **must not** increase the overall height of the dwelling. Additionally, they should be placed so that they are symmetrical to the roof and aligned with fenestration on the facade.



Figure 38: Dwellings along Church Road that have a consistent roofline in terms of height, mass and form. The consistent orientations are complementary to each other and frame a view towards the Church. Chimneys are of a consistent scale and placement.

3

DE 1 Architectural Features and Materiality



Façades



Redbrick



Weatherboarding and light render



Light painted brick with brick lintel arches



Light render



Light brick and render

Fenestration



White uPVC casement windows



Flush 3-panel casement window with timber lintel



Timber casement windows with brick lintel



Cat slide dormer with casement frame



Redbrick lintel above casement

Roofing



Hipped clay-tiled roof



Gabled cement-pantiled roof with skylight



Gabled clay-tiled roof with shed dormer



Gabled clay-tiled with gabled dormers



Cross-gabled roof



DE 2 Variety and Dwelling Mix

DE 2.1 New homes **should** ensure long-term sustainability by being accessible and inclusive to people of all ages and abilities.

DE 3 Modifications

DE 3.1 Modifications **must** respect or enhance the appearance of the original building and the wider scene.

DE 4 Sustainable Features

DE 4.1 All new development **must** demonstrate that it is responding to climate change and reducing its carbon dependency - see diagram overleaf; and

DE 4.2 New developments **should** be sited away from any high-risk flood areas and mitigate increased risk of storms or flooding with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).



Figure 39: Local example of a bungalow dwelling with sustainable features (solar photovoltaic system).

DE 4 Sustainable Features

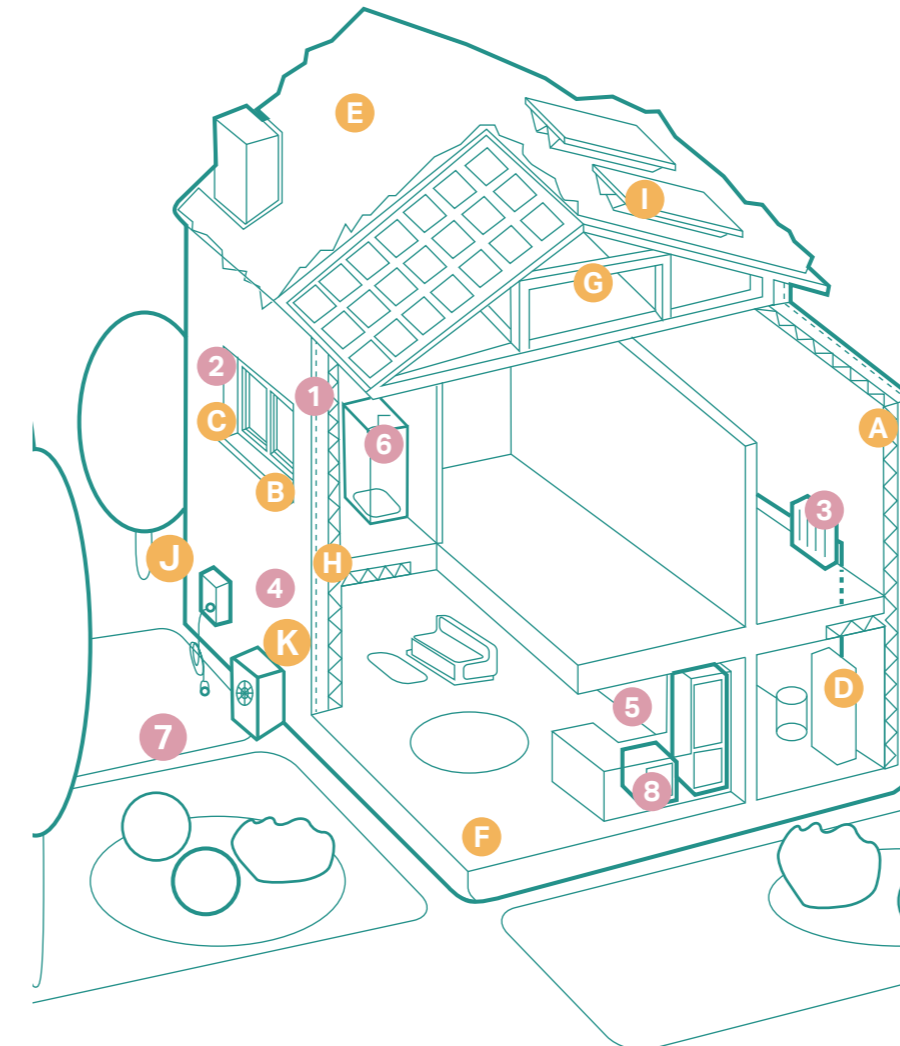


Figure 40: Diagram showing low-carbon features in both existing and new-build dwellings.



Existing homes

- 1 Insulation in lofts and walls (cavity and solid)
- 2 Double or triple glazing with shading (e.g. tinted window film, blinds, curtains and trees outside)
- 3 Low carbon heating with heat pumps or connections to district heat network
- 4 Draught proofing of floors, windows and doors
- 5 Highly energy efficient appliances (e.g. A++ and A+++ rating)
- 6 Highly water-efficient devices with low-flow showers and taps, insulated tanks and hot water thermostats
- 7 Green space (e.g. gardens and trees) to help reduce the risks and impacts of flooding and overheating
- 8 Flood resilience and resistance with removable air back covers, relocated appliances (e.g. installing washing machines upstairs), treated wooden floors

Existing and new-build homes

- A High levels of airtightness
- B Triple glazed windows and external shading, especially on south and west faces
- D Low-carbon heating and no new homes on the gas grid by 2025 at the latest
- E More fresh air with mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, and passive cooling
- F Water management and cooling more ambitious water efficiency standards, green roofs and reflective walls
- G Flood resilience and resistance e.g. raised electrical, concrete floors and greening your garden
- H Construction and site planning timber frames, sustainable transport options (such as cycling)
- I Solar panels
- J Electric Vehicle charging port
- K Heat pumps

