

DRAFT (Revision D – 07/07/17)

LEDBURY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DESIGN CODE



SECTION 1 – ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Ledbury currently maintains the character of a traditional Market Town. The town centre contains a collection of historically important buildings and more recent development generally enhances this quality although there are pockets of low quality infill development. Likewise, the housing stock of Ledbury is generally of high quality, although it is important that new developments aim to enhance and maintain the character of Ledbury as a Market Town.

This section is not intended to impose an architectural style, but ensure that new developments are respectful of this character. This does not mean that new developments should be a pastiche of older styles either, as Ledbury derives much of its character from individuality and variety. New buildings in the 21st Century should continue this tradition.

LDC 1.1: In order to enhance and improve the existing character of Ledbury’s town centre, the design of new retail/commercial developments within the town centre should:

- 1.1.1 Avoid blank shop windows to ensure they integrate and enhance the street frontage.
- 1.1.2 Enhance the street frontage by using signage that is ‘conservation in style’ and sensitive to Ledbury’s character.



Shop frontages should avoid brightly coloured signs and favour ‘conservation type’ signs sensitive to the historic environment of the town. Shop windows should engage with visitors by not blanking out windows.

- 1.1.3 Be designed to be respectful of the historical buildings in Ledbury whilst being clearly ‘of their time’. This may include taking cues from historical styles, but with a modern interpretation.
- 1.1.4 Be high quality in terms of materials and finishes and sympathetic to heritage colours. (See Appendix 2.0 for information on the standards which would be expected to be applied.)
- 1.1.5 Demonstrate the use of locally sourced materials where possible.
- 1.1.6 In terms of the built form and height be respectful of adjacent buildings.

LDC 1.2: The Design and Access Statement should demonstrate how the public realm has been designed in such a way that:

- 1.2.1 Parking does not dominate the external spaces, especially where the introduction of parking would conflict with the pedestrian environment or where it would detract from a specific feature of historical importance.
- 1.2.2 Outdoor spaces should enhance the public realm through increased interaction.
- 1.2.3 Natural features are incorporated and are appropriate to the location, including water features and the use of native Herefordshire species and trees that do not dominate street frontages when fully grown.
- 1.2.4 Consideration has been given to supporting and encouraging wildlife friendly habitats and biodiversity as an integral part of the development. This could, for example, be incorporating Swift boxes or Bat boxes into the design of new buildings, showing how lighting should be best included and managed to encourage wildlife and setting aside areas for wild flowers which particularly attract pollinators.

LDC 1.3: The design of new residential developments should:

- 1.3.1 Reflect local and historical context and should not be from a standard palette of developer house types that are non-specific to anywhere in the country.



New houses should not be generic house types used all round the country but should be informed by local and historical context and local materials should be used where possible.

- 1.3.2 Be clearly of their time, of variable design and not a pastiche mix of so called 'traditional' styles.
- 1.3.3 Fully integrate 'affordable housing' into the development sites without grouping in specific areas.
- 1.3.4 Deliver 'affordable housing' in such a way that it is not identifiable from market housing in terms of quality and design.

- 1.3.5 Provide building frontages that offer natural surveillance over the 'street' and any areas of public space, avoiding the use of tall boundary treatments adjoining those spaces.
- 1.3.6 Demonstrate how innovative design and the increased use of natural materials, incorporating features such as green roofs, have been considered and incorporated wherever possible.

SECTION 2 – LANDSCAPE

Ledbury is bounded by beautiful countryside. It has wooded hills to the east, the River Leadon to the west, is surrounded by agricultural land and is on the edge of the Malvern Hills AONB. The natural environment defines the character of Ledbury more than the built environment and is therefore a key element to informing the future development of the town.

LDC 2.1: Applications for the development of all sites should be accompanied by a Drainage Strategy. The strategy should be agreed with the water authority, Herefordshire Council and the appropriate Environment Agency and set out:

- 2.1.1 Details of the integration of a sustainable drainage strategy (SUDS) to address all surface water run-off from the development site.
- 2.1.2 Details of the enhancement and integration of existing watercourses on or adjacent to development sites with the site's SUDS strategy.
- 2.1.3 The approach to foul drainage.
- 2.1.4 Any proposed infrastructure improvements and how these will be delivered.

LDC 2.2: Maintaining the landscape character of Ledbury is important and developments should:

- 2.2.1 Demonstrate how the landscape design responds to a typical Ledbury rural environment.
- 2.2.2 Demonstrate the use of high quality and durable surfaces that are sensitive to the Ledbury environment.
- 2.2.3 Demonstrate how the use of boundary treatments is sensitive to the Herefordshire countryside or the specific environment (see Appendix 1.0 for further definition).
- 2.2.4 Utilise a variety of parking formats so that car parking does not dominate the landscape and avoids the use of rear parking courtyards.
- 2.2.5 Demonstrate how the external and street lighting design is appropriate to the area and minimises light pollution whilst providing a safe environment.

LDC 2.3: Planting and soft landscaping should be an integral part of new developments and should:

- 2.3.1 Utilise native Herefordshire species.
- 2.3.2 Introduce trees into the street scene that are carefully considered so that they contribute positively to the public realm and do not become dominant when fully grown.
- 2.3.3 Consider adding water features such as ponds and streams to support wildlife diversity and improve community quality of life.

LDC 2.4: All new developments should be designed so that they improve non-vehicular connectivity, both to and within the town and to surrounding countryside, and integrate into the wider cycling, pedestrian and disabled access footpath networks. Furthermore, they should demonstrate how they:

- 2.4.1 Connect to Ledbury’s existing footpath and cycle path network as a basis for their design.
- 2.4.2 Provide connections within the development to give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and disabled access over vehicle use.
- 2.4.3 Provide positive and appropriate connections to public rights of way giving access to the wider landscape.



This image shows how a development could be designed to meet these design criteria within a more rural area of the town. Roads have been designed as narrower shared surfaces to replicate a more typical Herefordshire lane, with hedgerow boundary treatments and native planting. Ditches provide above ground drainage and add to the visual interest. Houses take inspiration from traditional Herefordshire building styles whilst being clearly of their time and overlook and integrate with the public realm with parking being provided in a variety of arrangements in order to dilute the impact on the development.

LDC 2.5: To ensure all residents have the opportunity to grow food, developments should:

- 2.5.1 Include gardens to all houses which provide an opportunity for a growing area which still offers additional suitable private amenity space.
- 2.5.2 Where opportunities for growing areas are not possible for individual gardens, an equivalent accessible area should provide access to allotments or community growing areas (this also applies to apartments or mews style properties without gardens).

LDC 2.6: All new developments should be designed to carefully integrate waste and recycling facilities and should:

- 2.6.1 Incorporate dedicated storage for waste and recycling for residential developments at a suitable capacity for current or foreseeable collection levels. This should be in a manner that is discreet and carefully considered either within the ownership boundary of each dwelling or as central shared waste and recycling storage or a combination of both.
- 2.6.2 Provide adequate storage for commercial waste in a manner that does not impact on the public realm.

LDC 2.7: New developments will be supported that:

- 2.7.1 Protect and enhance existing natural features of sites that have importance with regard to their biodiversity and make them accessible to all.
- 2.7.2 Create new habitats within sites or the wider town, such as a small wetland nature reserve.

SECTION 3 – SUSTAINABILITY

Energy use in buildings accounts for almost half of CO2 emissions. However, there is the opportunity for new buildings to be designed in such a way that they reduce energy use through a 'fabric first' approach and where possible generate some energy from renewable sources. There is also an opportunity to encourage local recycling, energy production and more sustainable transport methods such as walking, cycling and public transport.

For Section 3, please refer to Appendix 2.0 for industry standard definitions and examples.

LDC 3.1: Applications for all new residential developments should demonstrate in the Design and Access Statement how measures have been taken to design energy efficient dwellings and developments which should achieve at least one of the following

- 3.1.1 Passivhaus certification or equivalent.
- 3.1.2 Meet national technical standards and necessary Building Regulations and achieve high credits for energy. Developments should also demonstrate how they have been designed to take into consideration building orientation, solar gain, high levels of insulation and airtightness as best practice for a Passivhaus design approach, which aims for zero carbon emissions.
- 3.1.3 Meet national technical standards and necessary Building Regulations in combination with achieving a minimum of AECB Silver Standard.

LDC 3.2: Applications for all new commercial developments should demonstrate in the Design and Access Statement how measures have been taken to design energy efficient buildings and should achieve at least one of the following:

- 3.2.1 Passivhaus certification or equivalent.
- 3.2.2 BREEAM Excellent or higher and achieve BREEAM Outstanding for the energy section of the assessment. Developments should also demonstrate how they have been designed to take into consideration building orientation, solar gain, high levels of insulation and airtightness as best practice for a Passivhaus design approach, which aims for zero carbon emissions
- 3.2.3 BREEAM Excellent in combination with achieving a minimum of AECB Silver Standard.

LDC 3.3: Refurbishment of existing buildings:

- 3.3.1 Achieving Passivhaus EnerPHit certification will be encouraged. Where this is not achievable it should be demonstrated, within the Design and Access Statement for such projects, how energy efficiency has been addressed and ensured.

LDC 3.4: Renewables:

- 3.4.1 All developments should demonstrate in their Design and Access Statement that consideration has been given to renewable energy sources and justification provided if these have not been included.

LDC 3.5: Sustainable transport:

- 3.5.1 All developments should comply with design code clause LDC 2.4
- 3.5.2 All developments should demonstrate in their Design and Access Statement how sustainable transport methods have been considered and implemented in the layout and design of the site.
- 3.5.3 All houses, including social housing, must provide adequate and secure covered storage for cycles (allowing space for 1 cycle per bed space) and mobility scooters, with level access to the highway within the ownership boundary of each property. Secure and combined electric cycle, mobility scooter and electric vehicle recharging points must also be included at each property.

SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION

A meaningful community consultation process ensures that new developments can benefit from local knowledge and respond to community concerns resulting in developments that are truly integrated into their wider environment.

LDC 4.1: Developers wishing to submit applications for new residential developments larger than 10 dwellings and commercial developments larger than 500 square metres should:

- 4.1.1 Make contact with Ledbury Town Council and provide details of the proposed site and the nature of the development and, if requested, attend a meeting to discuss the application prior to submitting the consultation.
- 4.1.2 Undertake a minimum of 2 community consultations prior to a planning application being submitted. The first would be a session before any designs have been developed to gauge local opinion and gather information from the community in order to inform the design process. This would be followed by a consultation prior to the application to enable feedback on the design being submitted and how it reflects and responds to community concerns. Additional consultations between these should be considered if appropriate to the feedback and to refine proposals.
- 4.1.3 Consultation sessions should be advertised in the local media, be advertised on town notice boards and details provided on the Town Council website. Advertisements should be made at least 2 weeks prior to consultation sessions taking place.
- 4.1.4 If requested by the Ledbury Town Council, prior to final planning application, present the proposals prior to a planning application being submitted.

LDC 4.2: Development applications that fall within the criteria set out on LDC 4.1 should demonstrate in the Design and Access Statement:

- 4.2.1 How the criteria set out in LDC 4.1 have been achieved.
- 4.2.2 The number of people that have attended or responded to each consultation session.
- 4.2.3 What information was presented at each consultation session and the feedback received. All relevant feedback should be included (it is understood that not all concerns can be met).
- 4.2.4 How the proposals were developed at each stage to integrate feedback received at consultations and if relevant set out the reasons for not being able to integrate feedback into the designs.

LDC 4.3: *In order to prove their design quality, new developments will be supported if:*

- 4.3.1 They have been presented and developed with MADE or an appropriate similar body through their design review process.

SECTION 5 – DESIGNED FOR LIFE

The neighbourhoods that we live in are rarely large developments of limited house types and sizes. Often residential areas include, for example, houses suitable for disabled or elderly persons, houses with additional accommodation for elderly relatives and affordable housing for young people to get on the housing ladder. Allowing a mix of house types and tenures contributes positively to all new developments and their integration within the wider town.

LDC 5.1: Applications for all new residential developments should:

- 5.1.1 Achieve Lifetime Homes Standard. If this is not possible, as a result of significant site constraints for example, then reasons for non-compliance should be set out in the Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application.

LDC 5.2: Applications for all new residential developments which integrate the following will be supported:

- 5.2.1 Dwellings within the development that provide accommodation for elderly/disabled persons linked to other house types.
- 5.2.2 A mix of housing densities across large sites in particular, to avoid monotonous development layouts.
- 5.2.3 Dwellings of a suitable size and cost to allow local people to reside within Ledbury and to support first time buyers.
- 5.2.4 Dwellings or groups of dwellings for elderly persons within residential developments.

Appendices

Appendix 1.0 – Example of suitable development boundary designs

Boundary treatments adjoining public spaces or the highway should be high quality and reflect the character of Ledbury. They should be of a suitable scale to allow natural surveillance with buildings arranged to overlook open spaces.

The use of high timber fences or walls means a development turns its back on the public realm and creates visually uninteresting frontages, so should not be applied. The use of a variety of treatments such as hedgerows or low level brick walls and trees within the streetscape is more in keeping and can also increase the biodiversity of the natural environment.

Appendix 2.0 – Sustainable development industry standard terms and definitions

Passiv Housing

Passivhaus or 'Passive House' is the fastest growing energy performance standard in the world with 30,000 buildings realised to date with the majority of those since the turn of the century. The Passivhaus standards strength lie in the simplicity of the approach; build a house that has an excellent thermal performance and exceptional airtightness with mechanical ventilation.

The first dwellings to be completed to the Passivhaus Standard were constructed in Darmstadt, Germany, in 1991. The Passivhaus standard is a comprehensive low energy standard intended primarily for new buildings.

The following energy performance targets define the standard and should be met in order for certification to be achieved.

Energy performance targets and air changes per hour:

Specific Heating Demand - ≤ 15 kWh/m². yr

Specific Cooling Demand - ≤ 15 kWh/m². Yr

Specific Heating Load - ≤ 10 W/m²

Specific Primary Energy Demand - ≤ 120 kWh/m². Yr

Air Changes Per Hour - ≤ 0.6 @ n50

The Passivhaus standard can be applied not only to residential dwellings, but also to commercial, industrial and public buildings. As we become more aware of fuel poverty it becomes increasingly important to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

With fuel prices continuing to rise, the low heating demand of Passivhaus buildings of less than 15kWh per square metre per year means that annual fuel costs are reduced by a factor of between 5 and 10.

For example, a household living in a 70m² Passivhaus with gas heating could spend as little as UK£25 on space heating each year - for more information see the website www.passivhaus.org.uk

The Passivhaus standard can be achieved when refurbishing buildings, although this can prove costly. For more on Passivhaus refurbishment see the EnerPHit standard.

Non-residential Passive House buildings

The Passive House Standard allows for extremely high levels of comfort as well as enormous energy savings - and not only for residential buildings. The Passive House Standard has been successfully realised in many different types of buildings including offices, hostels, factories, administrative buildings, sports halls, schools and kindergartens.

Passive House office buildings are certified by the Passive House Institute (PHI) based on a standard occupancy level and corresponding internal gains of 3.5 W/m². A certain pattern of usage may change after a couple of years, but the building fabric will last for several decades.

The certified building should perform as a Passive House under all circumstances that can reasonably be assumed within this time span.

By planning the building for a typical use, a high level of efficiency is reached over the entire lifetime of the building. A higher occupancy level essentially leads to higher internal gains, which means that the 15 kWh/(m²a) Passive House criteria is in theory easier to reach. On the other hand, it can cause problems during hot summer periods.

Criteria for non-residential Passive House buildings are buildings in which comfortable indoor conditions can be achieved throughout the year with minimum energy input. Passive Houses should meet very stringent requirements regarding both their design and construction.

Passive House houses are certified based on a thorough quality check of their design. The certification criteria that apply for non-residential buildings are described below:

Heating;

Specific space heating demand - $\leq 15 \text{ kWh}/(\text{m}^2 \text{ a})$ or alternatively: heating load $\leq 10 \text{ W}/\text{m}^2$

Cooling:

Specific useful cooling demand - $\leq 15 \text{ kWh}/(\text{m}^2\text{a})$

Primary energy

Total specific primary energy demand - $\leq 120 \text{ kWh}/(\text{m}^2\text{a})$

Airtightness pressure test result - $n_{50} \leq 0.6 \text{ h}^{-1}$

EnerPHit Standard

This is a certification criteria for refurbished buildings. If the certification criteria for a Passivhaus are met when refurbishing a building then it is possible to certify the building as a 'Quality-Approved Passive House' based on the same criteria as for new buildings.

However, for various reasons it is often difficult to achieve the Passivhaus standard for older buildings with reasonable effort.

The use of Passivhaus technology for all relevant building components in existing buildings does lead to considerable improvement in respect of thermal comfort, structural protection, cost-effectiveness and energy requirements.

Buildings that have been refurbished using Passivhaus components and largely with exterior wall insulation can be certified to the EnerPHit standard as evidence of quality assurance and to verify achievement of the specific energy values.

Overarching sustainability standards

Passivhaus is sometimes compared to or confused with the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM ratings for non-domestic buildings. In reality the distinction is quite simple. Passivhaus is a specific energy performance standard that delivers very high levels of energy efficiency, whilst the Code and BREEAM are overarching sustainability assessment ratings which address a large number of environmental issues.

These standards are by no means mutually exclusive. Sub-sections within these sustainability standards account for energy and carbon dioxide emissions which are the most heavily weighted and most difficult to achieve.

The Code for Sustainable Homes

The Code for Sustainable Homes was the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. It had aims to reduce carbon emissions and promote higher standards of sustainable design above the current minimum standards set out by the building regulations.

It was launched as part of a package of measures towards zero carbon development, including an overarching consultation: 'Building a Greener Future on the shift to zero carbon'.

However, as set out in a ministerial statement of 25 March 2015, the Government created a new approach for setting technical standards for new housing in order to rationalise the many differing existing standards and reduce red tape associated with planning and housebuilding.

The Code for Sustainable Homes was withdrawn (aside from the management of legacy cases) and replaced by new national technical standards which comprise new additional optional Building Regulations regarding water and access as well as a new national space standard (this is in addition to the existing mandatory Building Regulations).

These additional options (which are comparable with the requirements for the former Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4) can be required by a planning permission.

The new approach had immediate and future effects on policy making and decision taking in several areas. On policy making, new Local Plans, Neighbourhood Development Plans, supplementary planning documents and local validation lists should not include any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings.

This includes any policy requiring any level of the Code for Sustainable Homes to be achieved by new development as the Government has now withdrawn the code, aside from the management of legacy cases.

Existing policies on technical housing standards or requirements should be considered and updated as appropriate. Local validation requirements should also be checked to ensure they do not request information that is no longer necessary.

The optional new national technical standards should be required only through new Local Plan policies (not Neighbourhood Development Plans). They should only be included if they address a clearly evidenced need and where their impact on viability has been considered.

BREEAM

BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method), first published by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) in 1990, is the world's longest established method of assessing, rating and certifying the sustainability of buildings.

It sets best practice standards for the environmental performance of buildings through design, specification, construction and operation. It addresses a number of lifecycle stages such as new construction, refurbishment and in-use.

BREEAM sets benchmarks for standard categories of development (such as offices, retail developments, educational buildings and healthcare buildings) and offers a bespoke scheme for non-standard buildings. It can be applied to new developments or refurbishment projects.

Local planning authorities may require BREEAM certification (or equivalent) either as part of a local plan, or as a planning condition imposed on developments. This kind of requirement is likely to become more common given the presumption in favour of sustainability in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Assessments are carried out by trained assessors. BREEAM assessments are based on a scoring system carried out against nine criteria:

- Energy.
- Land use and ecology.
- Water.
- Health and well-being.
- Pollution.
- Transport.
- Materials.
- Waste.
- Management.

Each of the criteria is scored and then multiplied by a weighting. There are minimum thresholds that should be achieved and additions can be made for specific innovations. The resulting overall score is translated into the BREEAM rating. BREEAM ratings include unclassified, pass, good, very good, excellent and outstanding.

Two stages of assessment and certification are carried out; a design stage assessment resulting in an interim certificate being issued and a post construction assessment resulting in a final certificate being issued and a rating awarded.

There can also be an optional pre-assessment report, which can help designers understand where the design needs to be improved to achieve the desired rating. See the website www.breeam.com for more information.

MADE design review

MADE's design review service helps developers, architects and local authorities speed up planning, save money and create high quality places. Design review provides independent, objective and expert feedback on the design of proposed developments.

The service works through a panel of experienced professionals (architects, urban designers, engineers, transport planners, sustainability experts, landscape architects). The panel meets regularly to consider schemes that will have a significant impact on their area.

They visit the site, study the designs, listen to a presentation from the developers and their architects, discuss the proposals and give feedback. This is followed by a report which summarises the panel's views.

The developers design review is an opportunity to save time and money and speed up proposals through planning by getting design issues resolved early. Increasingly, and in response to the National Planning Policy Framework, local planning authorities are relying on design review and requiring that schemes come to MADE. See the website at www.made.org.uk

Lifetime Homes Standard

The concept of Lifetime Homes was developed in the early 1990s by a group of housing experts, including Habinteg Housing Association and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The group was formed because of concerns about how inaccessible and inconvenient many homes were for large sections of the population. Lifetime Homes was developed to ensure that homes are accessible and inclusive.

Lifetime Homes are ordinary homes designed to incorporate 16 design criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life.

Housing that is designed to the Lifetime Homes Standard will be convenient for most occupants, including some (but not all) wheelchair users and disabled visitors, without the necessity for substantial alterations.

The Lifetime Homes concept is based on five overarching principles which inform and establish the functional basis for the statements of principle that have been introduced for each of the sixteen Lifetime Homes criteria: inclusivity, accessibility, adaptability, sustainability and good value. For more information see the website www.lifetimehomes.org.uk

AECB Silver Standard

The AECB Silver Standard and Passivhaus are two standards to which more homes are being designed and built. The AECB (Association for Environment Conscious Building) is a network of individuals and companies with a common aim of promoting environmentally sustainable building. The AECB Silver Certification is a self-certification scheme open to building projects that meet the AECB Silver Standard design and performance criteria.

The AECB self-certification route has been developed whereby the self-certifier takes responsibility for certification and for underwriting the Silver Standard claim. The AECB self-certification process is designed to make explicit the project's claim to be a low energy design and to provide the consumer with a degree of protection under trading standards. See the AECB website at www.aecb.net