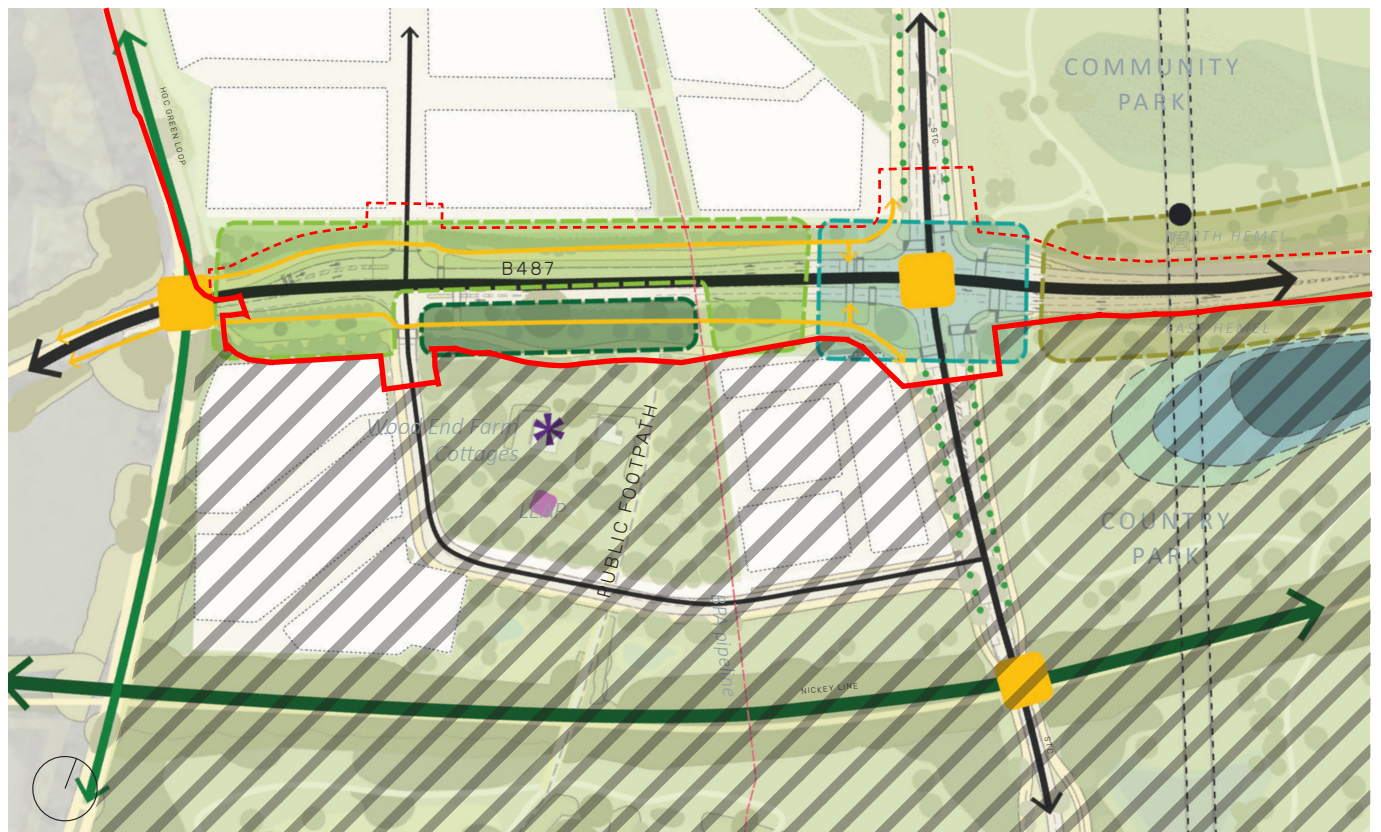




Key landscape character areas. Not to scale

- Application boundary
- - - Area subject to full details submitted and area of overlap with East Hemel Application
- /// North Hemel proposals outside of Application boundary
- Park frontage
- Gateway
- New development edge
- Wood End Farm Cottages edge
- Strategic pedestrian-cyclist routes
- Crossings
- Pedestrian / cycle path
- ✱ Gateway feature tree
- ✱ Existing feature tree

Park Frontages

The design of the park frontages will respect and have regard for the semi-rural character of the B487 corridor in the existing context to the east. Along both the Community Park to the north and the Country Park to the south, the frontage will form a unified landscape edge defined by a consistent, semi-natural, biodiversity-led character that reflects the adjoining open spaces.

The landscape approach for the park frontages will aim to retain existing mature boundary hedgerows and trees wherever possible, to preserve the established landscape structure. Where removal is unavoidable to enable delivery of the road improvements, such as the widening leading into the new junction, compensatory planting is proposed. This would include new native-species hedgerows and feature tree planting using medium to large canopy species to maintain the hedgerow lines and character of the route.

Additional tree planting, such as scattered groups and small copses behind hedgerows, would be introduced to further contribute to the adjacent park setting and enhance the visual quality and ecological value of the surrounding landscape.

Gateway

The gateway character zone is envisaged as a transition point between the semi-rural character of the corridor and the new settlement edge, at the new junction proposed between the two new neighbourhoods of North and East Hemel. The landscape intention for the gateway itself is establishing an open and green new approach to Hemel Hempstead.

Landscape design would include biodiverse meadow-planted verges and planting palettes with seasonal interest, complemented by threshold features such as estate fencing and signage which could reinforce a sense of place and orientation.

Feature trees would be located at the junction to mark the transition in character. Tree species would be large-canopy, long-lived native or naturalised species and would serve as focal features at the entrances to the northern and southern neighbourhoods.

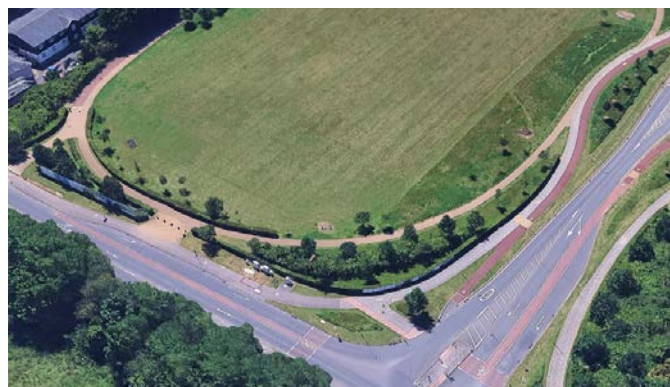
Tree planting along the STC verges, leading to the gateway junction, would feature a robust and hardy mix of species, with a high proportion of native varieties. The aim of the gateway landscape will be to establish a leafy and naturalistic arrival, rather than formal or regimented approach.

Street lighting, drainage, and signage will be coordinated with tree planting from the outset during future Reserved Matter stages, to avoid conflicts with canopies and ensure even illumination and ease of maintenance.

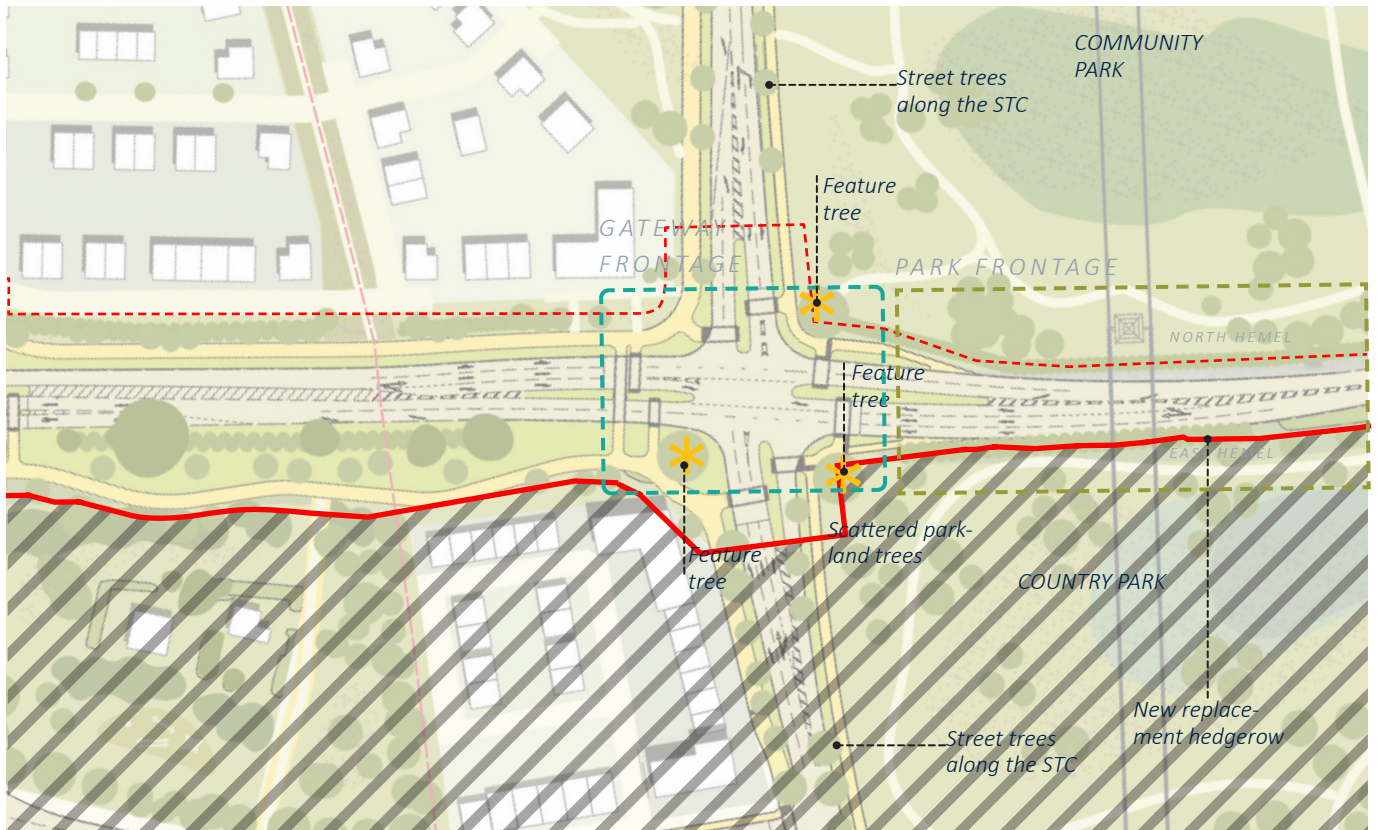
-  *Application boundary*
-  *Area subject to full details submitted and area of overlap with East Hemel Application*
-  *East Hemel proposals outside of Application boundary*



Strong landscape edge to park | Ebbsfleet Garden City



Green gateway | Eddington, Cambridge



Park and gateway frontages. Not to scale



View from B487 facing west along the highway towards the Site



Open, green gateway | Kings Barton, Winchester



Open green gateway | Ebbsfleet Garden City



Scattered groups of trees

New Development Frontages

New development parcels along the B487 corridor will be set back from the road edge to provide a continuous green frontage, respecting and complementing the existing urban context in Hemel where green verges separate built form from the B487. The landscape treatment within the set backs will be formed of retained hedgerows, trees, and grassland verges.

The proposed road layout is informed by the presence of a number of existing valuable trees in the hedgerow on the southern side of the B487; a key objective of the design is to retain these existing trees wherever possible. Therefore, the setback on the southern edge of the B487 includes existing hedgerows and trees, as well as their root protection areas (RPAs). The existing trees and hedgerow intended for retention are illustrated on the diagram opposite.

Some existing vegetation removal will be required to enable delivery of the roadworks including access points and for the retention of existing trees to the south. Where this occurs, such as along the northern edge of the road, replacement hedgerows comprising native species are proposed to maintain the green edge character.

In addition to the hedge lined structural landscape edge, supplementary native tree planting is proposed to further soften and filter views from the built form.

This landscaped setback will establish a soft, natural edge that integrates the new settlements edges into their setting, while contributing to biodiversity and visual quality along the corridor.

Wood End Farm Cottages Frontage

The southern edge of the B487 corridor also includes a unique edge condition where it runs along the Grade II Listed Wood End Farm Cottages and surrounding Country Park.

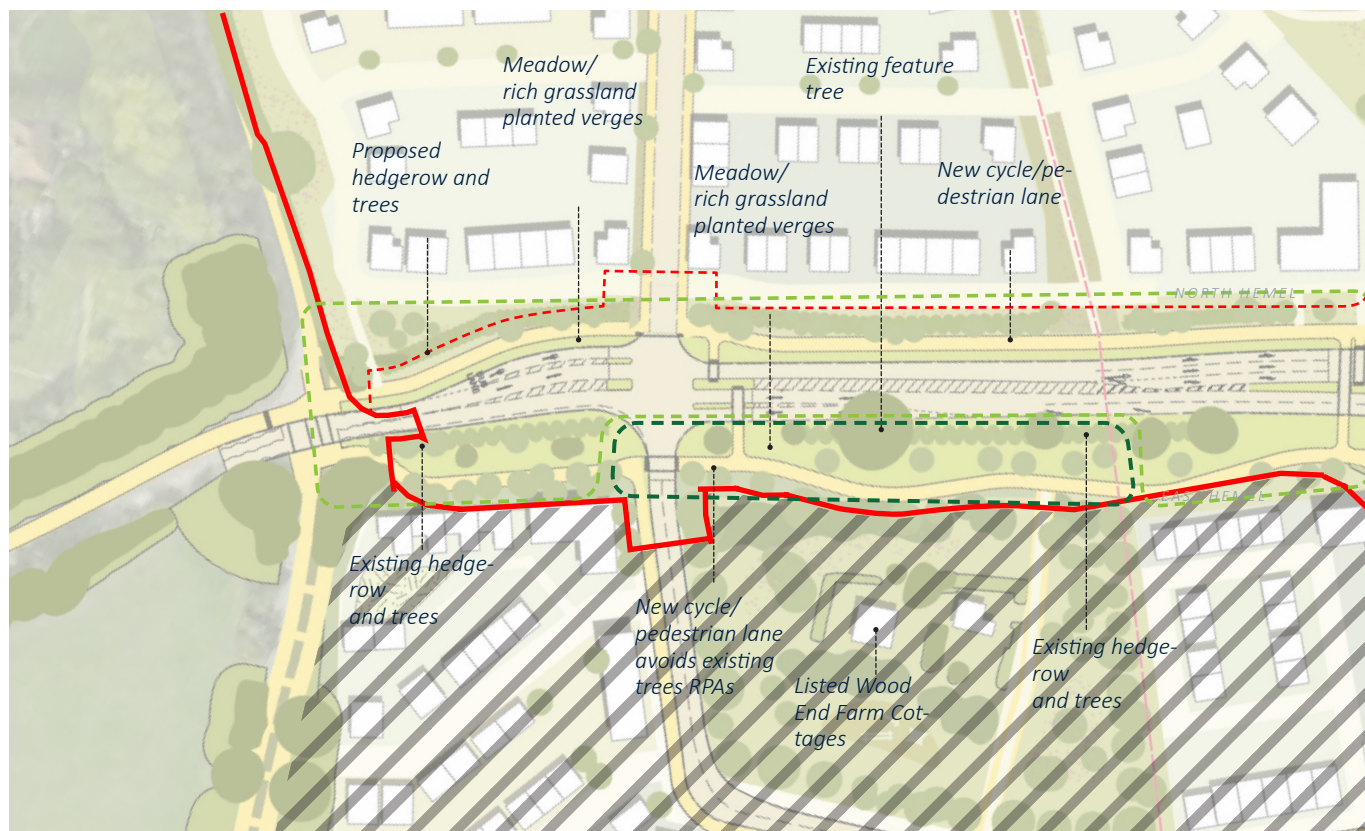
Along the frontage to the listed Wood End Farm Cottages, a wide landscaped setback is proposed to create an enhanced, continuous structural green edge between B487 corridor and the listed buildings and Country Park.

The existing hedgerow along this frontage contains mature, valuable trees, including a large Oak tree, which are intended to be retained.

In line with this aim, the southern cycle / footpath is proposed to run to the south of the retained hedgerow, carefully aligned to avoid root protection areas and minimise disturbance to retained trees.

Existing hedgerows are also proposed to be retained except where removal is required to deliver of the road works, such as access into the Sites.

Additional planting, including groups of scattered trees and small copses, are proposed behind the existing hedgerow, to reinforce the semi-naturalistic park character and to positively contribute to the setting of the listed building along this frontage.



Development and Wood End Farm frontages. Not to scale



Mixed hedgerow

- Application boundary
- - - Area subject to full details submitted and area of overlap with East Hemel Application
- /// East Hemel proposals outside of Application boundary



Existing hedgerow and smaller trees



Existing feature oak tree

Urban Form

Overall Approach

The overall approach to layout and built form along the B487 is to create a gateway that clearly marks the entrance into the urban extent of Hemel Hempstead, and into both East and North Hemel sites. It also has the aim of introducing a new frontage onto the B487 to reflect this transition into an urban condition.

Built Form and Frontages

A built gateway on the western side of the new junction will define the new edge of Hemel Hempstead and the entrance to the North and East Hemel sites. Two gateway buildings with heights of up to three storeys north of the B487 and four storeys south of the B487 will mark and frame the junction.

A set-back, predominantly continuous frontage onto the B487 will mark the transition from semi-rural to an urban condition, encourage lower vehicle speeds, overlook pedestrian and cycle routes, and define the entrance to Hemel Hempstead

At the eastern junction, along the north and southern arms of the STC, a short gateway frontage combined with views across the Community and Country parks will draw visitors into both the North and East Hemel sites.

Access and parking fronting onto the B487 will be minimised and screened when required, in order to prioritise the landscape setting and reduce visual impact onto the road.

Buildings fronting the B487 will be designed using complementary colours, material palettes and massing to ensure a coherent scale and character across both sites while responding to their respective landscape settings.



Marking the transition from countryside to urban | Trumpington, Cambridge



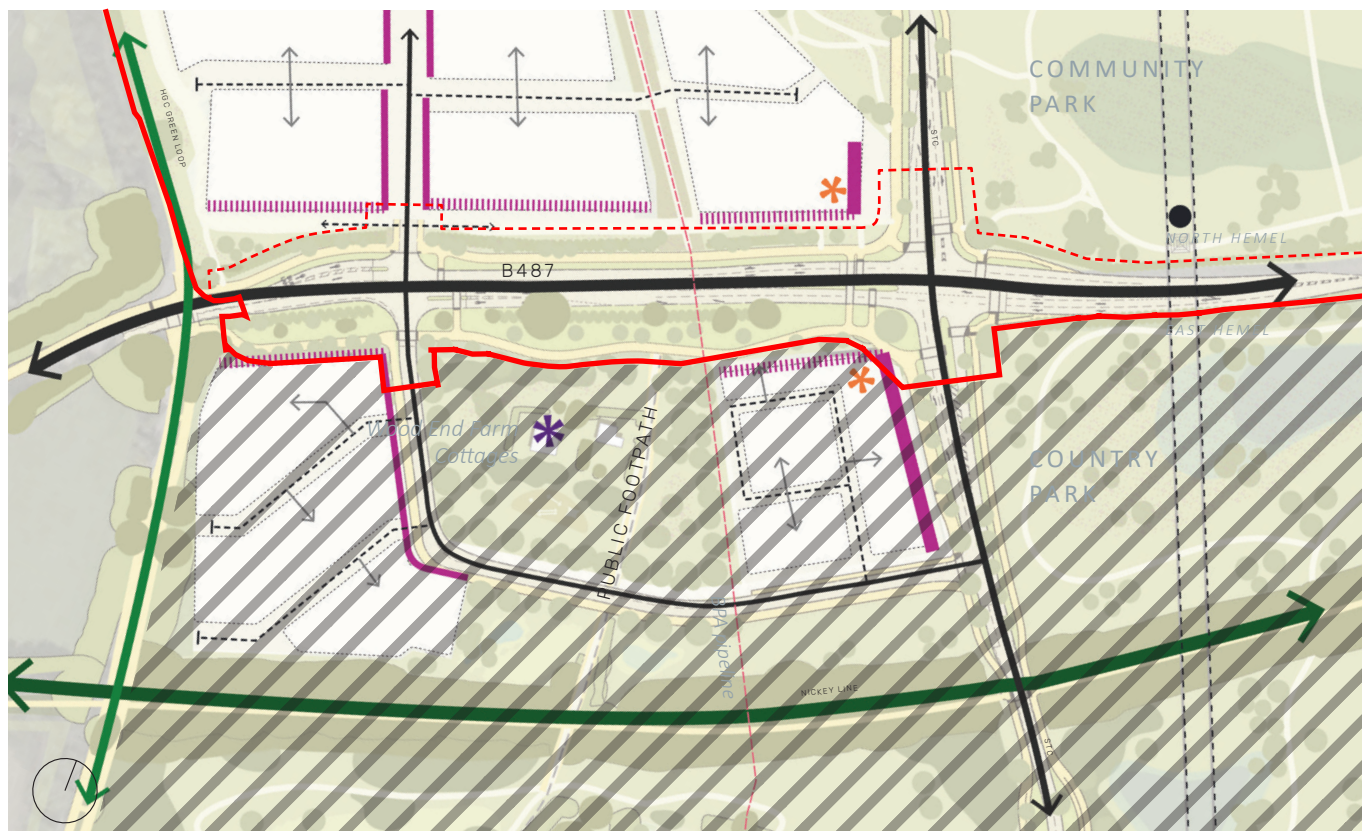
Marking the transition from countryside to urban | Trumpington, Cambridge



3-4 storey massing framing a new major junction | Darwin Green, Cambridge



3-4 storey massing framing a new junction | Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire



Urban form and frontages. Not to scale

- Application boundary
- - - Area subject to full details submitted and area of overlap with East Hemel Application
- /// East Hemel proposals outside of Application boundary
- ✱ Potential gateway buildings
- Urban frontages
- - - Setback frontages
- Strategic pedestrian-cyclist routes
- Primary and secondary streets
- - - Tertiary / access streets
- Plot access



Setback residential frontage with filtered views | Fairlinch Close, Winchester

Movement

Overall Approach

The need for a revised road layout and junctions in this location is to provide access to both East and North Hemel sites, and to connect the STC across the B487 to deliver a continuous and strategic connection throughout the entire Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Growth Area, as defined in the HGC Framework. The access strategy has been designed to balance active and sustainable travel with the needs of vehicles. Walking, cycling and public transport connections are prioritised and integrated with new junctions, while ensuring safe and efficient vehicle movement along the B487 and adjoining routes.

Pedestrian and Cyclists

Along the B487, a shared footpath and cycleway will be introduced on both sides of the road, west of the easternmost new junction.

South of the B487, the cycleway will be set back from the carriageway by existing planting to the south—in order to protect existing feature trees and hedgerows and their RPAs—and by new landscaping to the north.

A pegasus crossing of the B487 providing a connection to the HGC Green Loop between Holtsmere End Lane and Cherry Tree Lane will be provided as part of a suite of off-site improvements.

Additional pedestrian crossings will be introduced on the eastern and western sides of the easternmost new junction, and on the eastern side of the bus-only junction.

A continuous cycle crossing over the B487 will be provided on the western side of the junction.

Bus

A bus-only junction will be introduced onto the B487 between the new primary junction and the Green Loop. This will provide bus-only access to and from the B487 Redbourn from both sites to prioritise public transport movement in this strategic location.

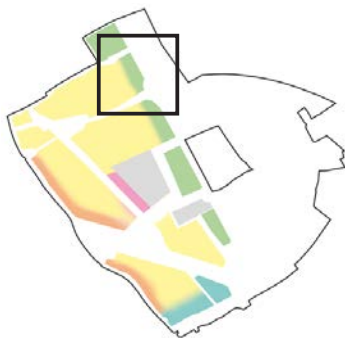
-  Application boundary
-  Area subject to full details submitted and area of overlap with East Hemel Application
-  East Hemel proposals outside of Application boundary
-  HGC Green Loop
-  Nickey Line
-  Pedestrian/cyclist movement
-  Pedestrian-only movement
-  Bus movement
-  Vehicular movement
-  Tertiary streets
-  Plot access
-  Modal filter
-  Pegasus crossing



Area 5: Countryside Interface



- Landmark building
- Primary frontage
- Secondary frontage
- ➔ Key view
- ✱ Drainage feature
- Secondary pedestrian and/or cycle route



Key masterplanning area keyplan.
Not to scale

Key objectives

Landscape-led – Create a soft, natural transition between built development, the Community Park, and the surrounding countryside through planting, topography, and open space design.

Community and Safety – Orient homes to overlook and connect with the Community Park, ensuring activity and natural surveillance along the park edge.

Ecology and Drainage – Integrate planting, green corridors, and sustainable drainage features to enhance biodiversity and reinforce the ecological value of the eastern boundary.

Built Form and Character – Apply lower building heights and densities to achieve a gentle roofline and a harmonious relationship with the wider landscape.

Access and Connectivity – Provide publicly accessible green spaces and footpaths that connect seamlessly into the Community Park and wider movement network.



Key principles



Urban Structure and Legibility

- Establish a clear perimeter block structure with homes fronting onto the Community Park to create an active, well-overlooked park edge.
- Orient buildings to follow the contours of the land, creating a natural and varied roofscape that steps with the topography.
- Define a legible edge to the development while maintaining visual permeability through planting and framed views to the landscape beyond.



Landscape and Green Infrastructure

- Integrate the Community Park as a defining green space, forming part of a wider network of multifunctional landscapes across the masterplan
- Retain and reinforce existing hedgerows and tree belts where possible to soften the park edge and strengthen ecological corridors.
- Incorporate sustainable drainage features such as swales and shallow basins within the green corridor to manage surface water naturally.



Parking

- Locate parking primarily to the side or rear of dwellings to maintain open, landscaped frontages facing the park.
- Minimise the presence of vehicles along the park edge to preserve views and reinforce a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Apply lower-category street types, such as shared surfaces and private drives, wherever possible to create a soft transition from development to the Community Park.



Movement and Access

- Create direct and accessible pedestrian and cycle links from residential streets into the Community Park
- Ensure paths and routes are well-overlooked and integrated with green infrastructure to encourage safe and enjoyable use.
- Maintain permeability without compromising the green, open character of the park edge.



Building Orientation and Frontage

- Position homes to front directly onto open spaces and green corridors, providing active frontages and natural surveillance.
- Vary building lines and plot arrangements to create an informal, semi-rural character along the park edge.
- Maintain generous garden depths and soft landscape boundaries to blend built form with open space.



Character and Identity

- Vary front garden depths to create a natural rhythm and sense of openness along the park edge, with deeper gardens and softer planting where homes face open space.
- Apply high-quality materials and detailing to park-facing elevations, ensuring a consistent and well-articulated appearance across the edge.
- Introduce subtle variation in house types and rooflines to create visual interest, while maintaining a cohesive and tranquil character.
- Use landscape features, hedgerows, and planting to define boundaries and reinforce the landscape-led identity of the park edge.



HOW IS LOCAL CHARACTER REFLECTED?

The design for North Hemel Hempstead has been shaped by a detailed understanding of local character and context, as summarised earlier in this document and within the Character Context Study (Appendix A).

This analysis examined the historic evolution, landscape setting, urban form, and built character of Hemel Hempstead and its surrounding area. It identified the qualities that define the town's identity and the lessons that should shape its future growth.

The study concluded that Hemel Hempstead's distinct character lies in the balance between built form and landscape, the continuity of its walkable neighbourhoods, and its enduring "City in a Park" identity. These lessons have directly informed the masterplan, ensuring that North Hemel Hempstead grows as a natural, integrated extension of the town.

Topography and Landscape Setting

The Character Context Study highlighted the importance of the valley and ridgelines as defining elements of the local landscape. The masterplan interprets this by using the valley as the central organising structure, embedding green and blue infrastructure throughout. Development has been positioned to step with the contours, ensuring buildings sit naturally within the landform and long views are preserved across the valley and towards the countryside.

Views and Visual Character

The Character Context Study identified long views across the Beane and Gade valleys as key to Hemel Hempstead's identity. The design responds by framing views along the valley corridor and towards surrounding ridgelines, using changes in height, open spaces, and tree planting to preserve the sense of openness while integrating the new neighbourhood into the wider landscape.

Settlement Pattern and Structure

Analysis of Hemel Hempstead's neighbourhoods revealed a pattern of compact, walkable communities framed by open space. The design reflects this by creating a series of walkable neighbourhoods connected by the Sustainable Transport Corridor, replicating the legibility and scale of existing areas such as Woodhall Farm and Grovehill while introducing improved pedestrian and cycle permeability.

Edges and Transitions

The study emphasised the importance of managing the town's outward edges through soft landscape transitions. This lesson has been directly applied through the creation of landscaped edges along Holtsmere End Lane and the Community Park, where lower densities, native planting, and open frontages blend built form into the countryside.

Green Infrastructure and Ecology

The local character study emphasised the ecological richness of existing hedgerows, woodlands, and the valley corridor. The masterplan reflects this by retaining key landscape features and linking them into a network of green and blue infrastructure, providing habitats, play spaces, and SuDS features that define the site's landscape-led identity.

Built Form and Scale

Local character is defined by modest, consistent building heights and simple roof forms. The masterplan interprets this by adopting a two- to three-storey structure, with variation used sparingly to mark focal points such as the Local Centre and Sustainable Transport Corridor.

Architecture and Detailing

The Character Context Study identified a local pattern of simple forms and consistent rooflines, articulated through brick detailing and subtle variation. The design interprets these features through well-proportioned facades, corner-turning buildings, and consistent use of materials to create visual coherence and reinforce Hemel Hempstead's enduring architectural character.

Materials and Detailing

The Character Context Study identified a consistent palette of red and brown brickwork, buff accents, and dark tiled roofs. This has informed the proposed material strategy, which adopts these tones across all character areas, ensuring continuity with Hemel Hempstead's architectural vernacular.

Movement and Connectivity

The analysis found that green corridors and footpaths are integral to Hemel Hempstead's identity. The design responds by embedding an interconnected network of pedestrian and cycle routes, linking new homes with local facilities, green spaces, and the wider Hemel Green Loop..

Community Identity and Placemaking

The study highlighted the value of Hemel Hempstead's New Town principles, self-sufficient neighbourhoods, local centres, and access to green space. These lessons have been applied through the Local Centre and Community Park, which bring together education, care, community, and leisure uses to create a socially cohesive and sustainable hub.

New Town and Garden Community Legacy

The Character Context Study highlights Hemel Hempstead's origins as a post-war New Town, influenced by the ideals of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement. Its structure of self-contained neighbourhoods, generous green spaces, and walkable centres has defined the town's enduring identity. The design for North Hemel Hempstead builds upon these principles, interpreting them through a contemporary lens that aligns with the Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision.

The masterplan reflects the New Town pattern of distinct neighbourhoods connected by green corridors, supported by a central Local Centre that combines education, care, and community uses. Open spaces, tree-lined streets, and a clear movement hierarchy ensure that the development continues Hemel's legacy as a "City in a Park", a place where homes, landscape, and community life are seamlessly integrated.

Character Area Expression

The interpretation of local character is expressed through the five defined character areas and key masterplanning areas, each reflecting its location and relationship to landscape, movement, and community infrastructure. Together, these create a coherent yet varied townscape that feels distinctly of Hemel Hempstead.

Together, these design responses directly reflect the key lessons and conclusions of the Character Context Study: that Hemel Hempstead's identity is defined by the interplay of landscape and built form, the legibility of its neighbourhoods, and the simplicity and consistency of its architecture. The proposals for North Hemel Hempstead build upon these foundations to create a place that is distinctly new yet unmistakably Hemel, a green, connected, and enduring extension of the town.





SECURED BY DESIGN: RESIDENTIAL GUIDE 2025

Designing in crime prevention from the outset is key to creating a new socially sustainable development at North Hemel Hempstead.

Introduction

Secured by Design achieves a reduction of crime risk by combining minimum standards of physical security and well-tested principles of natural surveillance and defensible space. The guide also reflects upon the Home Office 'Violence Against Women and Girls' (VAWG) agenda, so that consideration is given through environmental design.

The design of North Hemel Hempstead has incorporated the key elements of safe and sustainable design appropriate to the outline planning application stage to create a successful community where people will enjoy living and visiting. Reference has been made to Secured by Design, Residential Guide 2025 and its principles have been integrated into the project masterplanning and urban design approach. As the project moves forward, it is strongly recommended that the reserved matters project team work with Hertfordshire's Secured by Design crime prevention officers to ensure the scheme meets Secured by Design principles.

Design Consideration of Secured by Design principles

Layout of vehicular/pedestrian routes:

Features will be designed to identify routes through the development and clearly define areas of public and private space. This will be further explored during the preparation of the reserved matters applications.

Communal areas:

Communal areas such as public spaces and playgrounds will be designed throughout the development to allow natural surveillance from nearby dwellings and with safe and accessible routes to come and go. Public and private space will be clearly defined. Public spaces, SuDS and woodlands will be overlooked to ensure safety and create a vibrant setting for homes. This is explored in the illustrative masterplan and will be further illustrated in future reserved matters applications.

Dwelling boundaries:

The proposals are made with public and private areas clearly identified. To the front of homes, walls, fences and hedges will be kept low to ensure an open view to housing. This will be explored in more detailed plans and artworks and will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Layout and orientation of dwellings:

The proposal provides 'active frontages' of overlooked streets. The development has been arranged to provide activity and natural surveillance and will avoid, where possible, the creation of blank walls adjacent to public spaces.

Rear access paths:

Back gardens will be secure and any access to the rear of properties will be gated. However, this will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Dwelling identification:

There will be clear signage of properties to assist residents, postal workers and the attendance of emergency services. This will be developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Climbing aids:

Boundaries will be designed so as not to provide climbing aids to gain access into properties. It is not possible to explore this level of detail given the outline nature of the planning application and supporting material. However, this will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Parking:

The development has been designed to predominantly provide for vehicle parking in either garages or hard standing areas within the dwelling boundary. Where communal parking areas are needed, these will be in small groups near homes with natural surveillance or in parking courts. Adequate space for cycle parking will be designed in accordance with the advice given by Secured by Design officers. This will be explored in more detail at reserved matters.

Landscape planting:

The proposals include planting to create attractive and safe new environments without impeding natural surveillance. A detailed design and management plan for the open space will be agreed with Hertfordshire County Council. The detailed design for landscape will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Lighting:

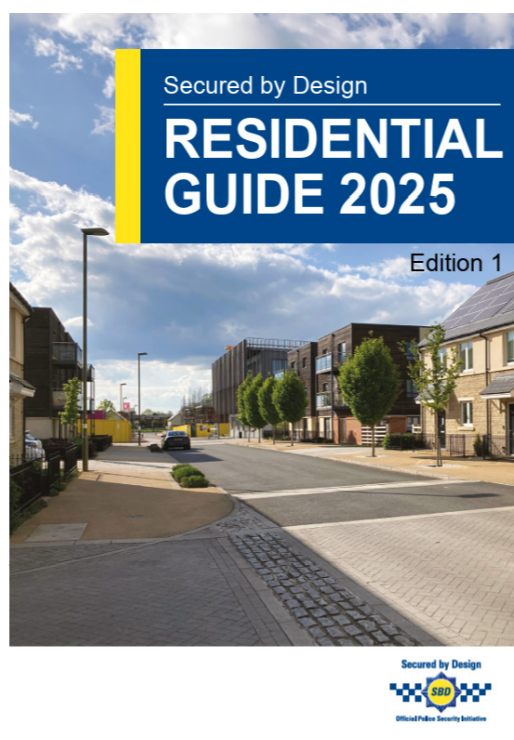
Street lighting will be designed according to Secured by Design principles to ensure public spaces are appropriately lit. Where possible, environmentally friendly light sources will be used. The development will provide lighting of external doors, car parking and garage areas. The detailed design for lighting will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Dwelling entrances:

The development will be designed with front doors that are visible from the public realm and promote natural surveillance. The detailed design for dwelling entrances will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications and will seek to locate communal entrance doors centrally and that they are visible from the public realm.

Windows:

It is not possible to explore issues associated with windows given the outline nature of the planning application and supporting material. However, the general principles for windows will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications having regard to Secured by Design principles. We acknowledge that proposals should ensure that ground floor and easily accessible windows are secured.





05 Conclusion

CONCLUSION

The proposals for North Hemel Hempstead represent a landscape led and community focused vision for a high quality new neighbourhood forming part of the Hemel Garden Communities programme.

The development will deliver a distinctive and well integrated place that respects the character of Hemel Hempstead and follows the aspirations and principles of the HGC, whilst responding sensitively to the Site's topography, setting and wider landscape context.

The masterplan provides up to 1,500 homes, a care home of approximately 70 beds, and a mix of tenures, supported by a new local centre, primary school, community uses, and a generous green and blue infrastructure network. The layout prioritises walking, cycling, and sustainable movement, creating a clear structure of connected neighbourhoods that enable active travel, reduce car dependency, and promote health and wellbeing.

A strong green infrastructure framework underpins the masterplan, delivering around 60 percent green and blue infrastructure, including the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), new parkland and ecological corridors, hedgerow enhancements, water management and nature based design interventions. These measures will increase biodiversity, support access to nature, and create a network of high quality public open spaces. The masterplan is designed to achieve at least 10 percent Biodiversity Net Gain.

The DAS demonstrates how the proposals can create a coherent and attractive neighbourhood that supports the delivery of Policy H1 and wider Hemel Garden Communities objectives, whilst ensuring that development can come forward in a phased, coordinated and deliverable manner.

Overall, the DAS provides a clear overview of the development principles, site characteristics, and the positive benefits it aims to bring to the local community and compliance with relevance policy and guidance concerning design.







06 Appendices



APPENDIX A: CHARACTER CONTEXT

The project team recognises that well-designed places emerge from a deep understanding of site context.

At North Hemel Hempstead, this means responding to the distinctive legacy of Hemel Hempstead as a post-war New Town, while also acknowledging the site's landscape setting, its relationship with the neighbouring village of Redbourn to the east, and its future role as part of the Hemel Garden Communities. This chapter explores how local character has informed the emerging vision and design response for H1 – North Hemel Hempstead.



Hemel Hempstead aerial image. Not to Scale

Overview of Hemel Hempstead's Character

Today, Hemel Hempstead is predominantly known as a post-war New Town, designated in 1947 and planned around a clear structure of neighbourhood units, green corridors, and self-contained communities. The majority of its urban form reflects mid-20th century ideals of modern living, walkability, and integration with the landscape, while its older core and surrounding countryside offer more traditional historic and rural character.

Historic Evolution

Origins and Medieval Foundations: Hemel Hempstead's history stretches back to the 8th century, with its name likely derived from "Haemele," possibly referencing a local landowner or the confluence of the River Gade and River Bulbourne. The town received its borough charter in 1539 under King Henry VIII, establishing its market town identity. St. Mary's Church, dating from the 12th century, remains one of Hertfordshire's most complete Norman churches.

Industrial Growth and 19th Century Development: The 19th century saw Hemel Hempstead develop into an industrial hub, benefiting from its proximity to London. Paper mills and agriculture dominated the economy, while the Grand Union Canal and expanding railway network improved trade and accessibility.

New Town Era and Post-War Expansion: Following World War II, Hemel Hempstead was designated a New Town in 1946 to accommodate London's displaced population. Under Geoffrey Jellicoe's master plan, the town was developed as a "city in a park", incorporating neighbourhood planning principles, self-contained communities, and green corridors. This led to the creation of neighbourhoods such as Grovehill, Woodhall Farm, and Highfield, each structured around schools, local centres, and landscaped spaces.

Modern Development and Future Vision: Hemel Hempstead has evolved into a thriving commuter town, balancing historic sites like Old Town High Street with modern infrastructure, including Jarman Park's leisure facilities and Maylands Business Park. The town's expansion now aligns with the Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) programme, which seeks to create sustainable, walkable neighbourhoods that integrate with nature, enhance connectivity, and respond to 21st-century challenges



Hemel Hempstead historical mapping. Not to Scale

Settlement Structure

- The town is organised as a series of neighbourhoods, each designed to be self-sufficient with local centres, schools, and green space.
- Key neighbourhoods include Highfield, Grovehill, Woodhall Farm, Gadebridge, Bennetts End, Adeyfield, and Warners End.
- A strong road hierarchy exists, supported by a network of segregated pedestrian and cycle routes facing development.



Layout and Urban Form

- Neighbourhoods typically feature loop roads, cul-de-sacs, and inward-facing blocks.
- Many areas use radial or curvilinear street patterns with generous green buffers.
- The street scene can be weakly defined in some later neighbourhoods, particularly where buildings are not aligned with the street or where garages dominate.



Woodhall Farm neighbourhood area. Not to Scale

Housing Types

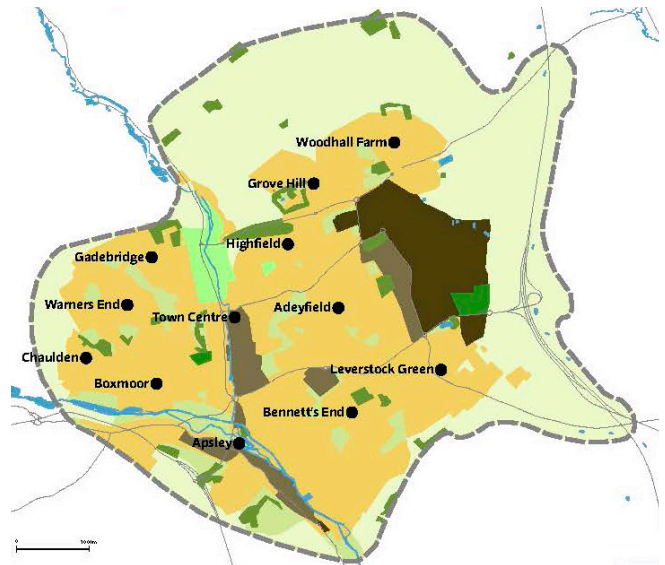
- Predominantly two-storey brick-built terraced and semi-detached houses, with some medium-rise flats.
- Older areas (e.g. Highfield) feature more formal street layouts and active frontages.
- Later areas (e.g. Grovehill, Woodhall Farm) have less architectural variety, with emphasis on functionality and green setting.



Public Realm and Landscape

Jellicoe's vision for a 'town in a park' included a substantial network of structural open spaces to provide a green setting and recreational space for the new residential neighbourhoods and town centre. While this green infrastructure network remains visible today, the extent of open space provision is significantly less than Jellicoe originally planned. It includes:

- Linear parks, green verges, mature trees, and retained hedgerows.
- Many footpaths and open spaces are legacies of the original New Town design.
- The town integrates existing landscape features wherever possible, reinforcing a garden suburb character facing development.



Extract from Hemel Hempstead New Town - Historic Context Study.
Not to Scale

Materials and Detailing

- Common materials include red and brown brick, and timber fencing.
- Outside of the older parts of the town architectural detailing is generally modest and consistent, particularly in housing estates.



Heritage and Rural Edges

- The old town of Hemel Hempstead retains a more traditional historic character with a tight urban grain and heritage assets.
- Beyond the town, the landscape includes open farmland, historic field patterns, and villages like Redbourn and Flamstead, which offer a contrasting rural vernacular.

Hemel Hempstead Old Town

Hemel Hempstead Old Town is one of the most historically significant areas of the town, retaining an intimate and traditional atmosphere influenced by its medieval origins and 19th-century expansion.

Unlike the modern New Town, which was developed post-war, Old Town presents a distinct contrast, featuring heritage architecture, a structured urban layout, and a strong sense of place.



Architectural & Urban Form

- **Period Architecture:** The area contains Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing, with historic 19th-century properties and some remnants of earlier periods.
- **Building Detailing:** Many buildings feature sash windows, slate roofing, decorative brick coursing, and angled front bays, reflecting traditional 19th-century town planning.
- **Density & Layout:** The tight-knit layout of buildings, arranged in a formal grid, creates a strong urban presence with close spacing (2m or less) between dwellings.



Townscape & Streetscape

- **Street Structure:** The main north-south road axis runs through Cotterells/Bury Road (east) and Heath Lane/Collett Road (west), with connecting east-west streets forming a semi-grid network.
- **Building Lines:** Houses are positioned close to the street, producing long perspective views and an enclosed, intimate townscape.
- **Paving & Frontage Treatments:** The absence of long front gardens in many parts of Old Town reinforces an urban character, aligning with traditional street-facing development.



Amenities & Urban Function

- **Local Businesses:** A mixture of independent shops, cafés, and pubs contributes to the area's community-focused feel.
- **Cultural & Historic Landmarks:** St Mary's Church, dating back to the 12th century, acts as a heritage anchor, reinforcing the area's historical depth.
- **Public Spaces:** The paved seating area at The Alleys provides a minor focal point, while connections to Boxmoor and Gadebridge Park extend its recreational offering.



Traffic & Movement

- **Road Network:** The grid layout supports local traffic movement, with most roads experiencing moderate flows.
- **Parking Pressure:** On-street parking is heavy, reflecting the historic street design, which lacks large-scale off-street provision.



Summary

Hemel Hempstead Old Town is defined by its dense, urban character, historic architecture, and structured street layout, contrasting sharply with the wider New Town character. Its Victorian and Edwardian influences, intimate built environment, and strong sense of heritage make it one of the most distinctive neighbourhoods in Hemel Hempstead.

Redbourn

Redbourn is a historic village located to the east of the site beyond the M1, within the rolling landscape of the Chilterns. While the site is separated from the village by landscape, it is important to recognise its character, as North Hemel Hempstead sits within Redbourn Parish and the village is the nearest neighbouring settlement to the east.

With origins in the Saxon period and a mention in the Domesday Book, Redbourn has grown from a rural farming and coaching settlement into a thriving modern community that continues to maintain its distinct village character. This character analysis explores the key historical, physical and social features that define Redbourn today, including its well-preserved Conservation Area, vibrant High Street, and much-loved open spaces such as Redbourn Common and the Nickey Line. It also considers how the village is managing change, and the important role of the local community in shaping a sustainable and well-balanced future.

History and Heritage

- An ancient, enduring settlement: Redbourn appears in the Domesday Book, with roots at least as far back as Saxon times and signs of Bronze Age and Iron Age activity. It developed around a Saxon church at Church End, later shifting toward Watling Street, today's High Street, thanks to a medieval priory and coaching routes
- Still visible heritage: The architectural mix is rich, Saxon-origin St Mary's Church, Georgian brick faced coaching inns, timber framed cottages and several listed buildings reflect the village's continual evolution.



Landscape & Sense of Place

- Green heart – Redbourn Common: A generous semi-natural green anchoring the village, gifted by the Earl of Verulam in 1948. It supports the centuries old cricket club and regularly hosts fairs, fete du velo, markets, fireworks and community gatherings.
- Edgelands and chalk streams: Nested in the chalk uplands of Hertfordshire, the village edges onto the River Ver valley, watercress beds, Nickey Line former railway (now greenway) and chalk grasslands.



Built Form & Modern Growth

- Conservation meets growth: The historic core, High Street, Church End, Common, is a formally protected Conservation Area. Surrounding it are sensitive infill housing schemes (1960s Park estate, 1990s Silk Mill/ Brooke End, newer downsizer and first time buyer homes) designed to respect local character.
- The Neighbourhood Plan (2020–38) reflects community desires to balance character with sustainable growth, emphasising eco design, green space protection, upgraded community facilities, widened walking/ cycling and reinforcing the High Street’s vitality. The Neighbourhood Plan does not include the North Hemel Hempstead site.
- Social Infrastructure: Redbourn offers a modest but well-rounded level of social infrastructure, reflecting its character as a large village with a strong community identity. According to the Redbourn Neighbourhood Plan 2020–2038, key elements include:
 - Community Venues: Facilities such as Redbourn Village Hall (est. 1921), the modern Parish Centre (built 2011), a leisure centre, local pubs and cafés, and active sports clubs (tennis, cricket, cycling, bowls) contribute to a lively and well-connected environment.
 - Thriving Social Fabric: Volunteer-led groups, including the Community Food Club, local charities, youth organisations, Christmas markets, Redbourn Classics Motor Show, and community transport, enrich daily life and encourage participation.
- Education: Redbourn Primary School and St. Luke’s School, a special educational needs (SEN) school for pupils aged 7 to 16, serve the village. Nearby secondary schools are located in Harpenden and St Albans.
- Healthcare: A GP surgery and pharmacy provide essential local health services.
- Community Services: The village also benefits from a public library and sports pavilion, supporting cultural, social, and recreational activities.
- Recreation & Green Space: Redbourn has an abundance of green space, including Redbourn Common, sports fields, and play areas- central features of village life.
- Shops & Services: Independent shops, cafés, and pubs offer day-to-day convenience and reinforce local identity.
- There are also plans to enhance infrastructure through future development, including proposals for a new primary school, community centre, and green infrastructure as part of a strategic housing site on the village’s northeast edge.

Woodhall Farm

Woodhall Farm is the only neighbourhood of Hemel Hempstead that borders the North Hemel Hempstead site. It is therefore important to understand its character and identify which aspects of its design and planning were successful or less effective. Woodhall Farm is a planned residential estate on the northeastern edge of Hemel Hempstead. Developed comprehensively in the early 1970s, it maintains a distinct and cohesive character compared to other areas of the town.



Urban Design and Layout

- The estate is structured around Shenley Road, a looped local distributor road providing access to smaller local collector roads and cul-de-sacs, forming an organised and hierarchical street network.
- Houses are arranged in informal groups, sometimes fronting treed amenity greens, but do not follow rigid building lines.
- Spacing between dwellings is generally 2m- 5m, contributing to a suburban feel with some openness.



Architecture, Housing Types and Density

- Woodhall Farm consists of a mix of housing types, including terraced houses, detached homes, semi-detached dwellings, and flats.
- The architectural style is simple, reflecting mass housing trends from the 1970s.
- Common features include shallow pitched roofs, painted wooden bargeboards, tile hanging, and large timber window casements.
- More recent development on the eastern side incorporates buff brickwork with darker decorative coursing, hipped-end roofs, and front gables, adding visual variety.
- The estate is primarily medium-density (25- 35 dwellings per hectare), though density rises significantly in areas with flats. Flats in the area rise up to three storeys, particularly in locations such as Cuffley Court/Bayford Close (approx. 50 dwellings per hectare) and Valley Green (approx. 88 dwellings per hectare), making them higher-density zones

Open Space, Landscaping and Views

- There is good provision of open space, with Brockwood School playing fields and High Wood (a designated wildlife site) situated within the area.
- The estate is adjacent to open countryside on its northern and eastern edges.
- The area has planned amenity greens, which integrate landscaping into the residential environment.
- Private landscaping is common, though public landscaping is somewhat lacking, creating a built-up appearance in certain locations.
- Roads generally curve, offering good serial views.
- The estate's elevated position provides attractive views towards open countryside and the surrounding urban landscape.

Parking and Transport

- Despite planned off-street parking, on-street parking is common, particularly around flats.
- Most houses have private driveways, while flats rely on communal parking areas and garage blocks.

Social Infrastructure

- Woodhall Farm is relatively well served, with amenities including a Sainsbury's supermarket, a Londis convenience shop, Ocean Fish Bar, a dry cleaner's, two medical centres, and a dental practice.
- Brockwood Primary School, Holtsmere End Junior School, and Holtsmere End Infant and Nursery School provide nursery and primary education.
- The existing provision of social infrastructure at Woodhall Farm should be carefully considered in the design and planning of North Hemel Hempstead's local centre to ensure that any new facilities complement, rather than compete with, those already in place.



Summary of character

Woodhall Farm embodies planned suburban development from the 1970s, with medium-density housing, curving roads, mixed dwelling types, and a structured but varied layout. Its adjacency to open countryside, presence of greens and amenity land, and use of simple but diverse architectural elements distinguish it within Hemel Hempstead. While its built-up feel in certain areas reflects its era of development, the planned greens, spacious frontage, and bordering natural landscapes maintain a semi-open suburban environment.