

BRIGSTOCK VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



Local concern for Brigstock led to a **Village Design Statement (VDS)** being produced in 2002. Its purpose was to promote best practice for the future development of the village by identifying ways in which new development could be designed to harmonise with and enhance local character.

The Neighbourhood Plan provides the opportunity to update the VDS to:

1. Ensure that new development is in harmony with existing village.
2. Enhance the sense of place which is evident in the older parts of the village.
3. Reverse the trend of anonymity that can be found in recent village developments.
4. Describe the distinctive style of the village and its surroundings.
5. Show how the character of the village can be identified in terms of landscape setting, settlement pattern and building form.
6. Draw up design principles based on the distinctive local character.
7. Promote best practice for future development.
8. Work in partnership with the District Council in the context of existing planning guidance.

The Design Statement establishes a baseline and provides guidelines which residents, developers and planners can all utilise to influence their design and development decisions. It aims to show how development should be carried out so that it is in harmony with its setting and makes a positive contribution to the local environment of Brigstock.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND BUILDING FORM

Brigstock is dominated by a single main street through the centre of the village, which is enclosed by an almost continuous frontage of buildings and boundary walls. Even some of the smartest old houses have been built hard up against their neighbours.



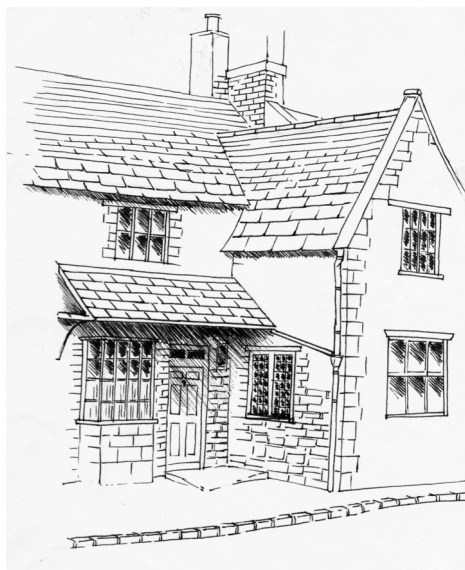
Other roads have developed parallel to the main street with connecting footpath links. There are very good reasons for this traditional form of continuous frontage as it was easier to construct, maintain and heat. The variations in ridgeline and the size of properties found serves to add interest and variety to the village.

Buildings in the centre of the village were in the main built right up to the street to maximise the garden space behind and it is mainly this characteristic that gives Brigstock its charm and visual interest. Some of the most attractive features found in Brigstock are the high stone boundary walls that are often built as a continuation of the main wall of a house. These walls shape the space between buildings and give shelter and drama to the street scene. Whilst it is recognised that boundary walls are often considered low priority elements by developers they have a great effect on the village.

The streets are defined by stone walls with subtle variations of line, height and texture with accents created by openings or unexpected gaps giving tantalising glimpses of what lies behind or beyond. Moreover, the variety of the rear yards, gardens and courtyards in Brigstock, glimpsed from the street, is a particularly precious part of the village scene. This open aspect, even within the centre, with walls and barns, is an essential characteristic of Brigstock and the enhancement and creation of these semi-private areas is important.

Local Green Spaces both within and outside the village are also important to the character of the village. They include the Meadow, the Rectory Paddock, The Park and allotments off Benefield Road.

There has been gradual evolution in the village perpetuating the variety of housing types. In the latter part of the 20th Century several housing developments have been built extending the village boundaries. More recent development on the fringes of the village has reflected the openness of the village character whilst using more contemporary building materials and methods resulting in buildings that are like each other in size and style. Much of this new development has been laid out as cul-de-sacs, which serves to isolate residents from the rest of the village.



A mixture of traditional materials - Welsh slate, Collyweston slate, stone and brick combine to create interest in the centre of the village.

Locally distinctive building types and materials give Brigstock its specific identity. There is a wide range of buildings to be found in Brigstock, from the modern brick built houses on the outskirts to the traditional stone buildings in the village core. The historic core has an identity of its own, the different sizes, heights, and styles of the buildings providing variety whilst the use of local stone and the close juxtaposition of the houses fronting onto the street provides continuity.

Although older houses portray a variety of styles they do share a number of common features. They mainly have a long frontage directly onto the street and are basically rectangular in pattern. Many of the houses have been extended to the rear with a one or two storey extensions resulting in an L-shaped ground plan. The houses are mainly 2 or 3 storeys high and some make use of the roof space with dormer windows. The buildings tend to link to their neighbours with occasional entrances to private yards providing a break in the frontage.

The historic core of Brigstock is essentially constructed of local limestone. Being particularly hard and difficult to work this has led to the limestone being laid as coursed rubble in fairly narrow courses. Where the limestone is dressed it is generally used on quoins, chimneys, lintels and cills. However there are a few grander than normal buildings faced entirely of dressed stone.



Houses are built hard up against each other and front the pavement. Varying roof heights add interest.

There are some brick built buildings in the centre of the village mainly dating from the 19th Century and many of the older houses have brick details incorporated into stonework. Roofs in Brigstock are very much more variable than the walls and historically materials used are Collyweston slate, Welsh slate, thatch and pantiles.

Over the years, many outlying developments have been built in brick of various types and colours and this has had a negative affect on the coherence of the village. Recent 20th century developments have mostly been constructed in facing brickwork the style of which reflects the developer rather than the village. Thus the estate built by the local authority reflects local authority design thinking of its time and the private schemes do likewise. Whilst in itself the new housing is generally good quality, its appearance usually reflects nothing of its locality and could have been built anywhere in Britain. Where developers have been willing to work more closely with the Parish Council some more appropriate housing has been built e.g. Back Lane where the developer agreed to construct a row of terraced houses instead of larger four-bedroomed

properties. This maintained the characteristic village street scene whilst providing smaller houses which have proved very popular.



DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Recommendations for New Developments

New developments can use the characteristics of the older heart of the village not only to help create a link with the existing village's shape and style, but also to give the new buildings added charm and interest. The use of the traditional forms should be seen as liberating and inspiring rather than restrictive to the designers of individual houses, extensions or large-scale developments. The design preferences are for local materials and the use of traditional techniques. The overall design of buildings, be they extensions or large-scale developments, need not slavishly copy what has gone before. A contemporary design using traditional materials is more likely to be acceptable than a poorly executed pastiche.

The following recommendations should influence all design and development decisions:

The Northamptonshire Countryside Design Guide produced by CPRE sets out broad recommendations for building styles in different parts of Northamptonshire.

The Joint Core Strategy Place Shaping Principles (Policy 8) sets out general principles for local developments.

In addition:

- Any proposed development should be judged against the village's existing settlement pattern for scale, positioning within its plot and alignment to adjacent buildings.
- Architectural style and building materials should be of the best quality, be in keeping with local village design and sympathetic to adjacent buildings.
- It will not be acceptable to implement pattern book design. If several new buildings are permitted on one site, variation in design and layout will avoid monotonous repetition of one house type.

Alternatively a small terrace sympathetic to the character of the village might be considered.

- There must be variety of proportion and positioning of individual buildings in new developments to reflect existing patterns and this includes the spaces around and between buildings so that views within the village and from the village are interesting and dramatic.
- The importance of the skyline on the setting of the village is important and new development needs to respect this.
- Pedestrian circulation within the village is important, and new development should always be designed with the need of pedestrians and cyclists in mind, so that easy access to community facilities is possible.
- The blending of the natural and the architectural landscape must be preserved and enhanced by new developments.

WALLS

Stone

Stone walls are usually coursed rubble where the courses vary from 50mm up to 125mm and pointing is usually flush. The local limestone is hard and irregular and thus details are generally built using other easier worked materials. This leads to lintels of oak or ashlar stone, quoins of brickwork and ashlar and chimneys of brick or ashlar.

There is a preference for stone in any new development within or adjacent to the central part of the village. Detailing should be consistent with the village traditions in particular the style of pointing.

Reconstituted stone can be very effective provided it has several different course heights with proper randomisation. Pointing both in colour and style should match a pre-approved sample. Too often artificial stone is laid like brickwork and looks completely alien.

Pointing should be flush finished with a soft brush. It should be consistent and match a sample panel or selected existing example.

Brick

Brick has been used in the older parts of the village since the 18th Century but most brick buildings are 19th century. Brick used is generally the local red stock brick laid with tight mortar joints. Brick buildings almost invariably have Welsh slate roofs and some but not all have ashlar stone details such as lintels and cills. Some of the stone houses in the village have brick chimneys but one does not find stone chimneys on brick houses. Most 20th century buildings are built of buff bricks of varying shades depending on the developer's preference. In these areas of new development stone properties can look out of place. Some properties built by the local authority have recently been refaced in red brick similar in colour to that found within the village centre.

Where development is proposed in the various outer lying 20th century brick built estates, the facing brick should either match or complement the adjacent buildings.

In order to avoid confusion as to what is or is not acceptable, sample panels will be requested for all proposed masonry so that the colour, method of laying, pointing etc. can be approved.

ROOFS

Collyweston slate

The most common roofing material in the historic centre of the village is Collyweston stone slates laid in diminishing courses. Due to the great weight of Collyweston roofs they are built to a steeper pitch than slate or plain tiles, generally no lower than 50°. Collyweston is now the most expensive local roofing material and new Collyweston roofs are generally only found on listed buildings.

Production of Collyweston Slate has recently been resumed and thus genuine Collyweston slates are preferable, particularly in sensitive areas or where natural materials have been used on adjacent buildings. There are artificial alternatives on the market which, if laid with care, may be acceptable on unlisted or new buildings.

Thatch

The traditional local thatching material are reed and long straw although a shortage of reed around the middle of the last century has resulted in a predominance of long straw. Long straw does not lend itself to precisely cut edges and thus these roofs are generally without embellishment and often have plain flush ridges, swept skirts to dormers and wrap around verges. Patterned and block cut ridges are found in reed thatch which can be cut with precision. Thatch requires a steep pitch of 50° or more, and the historical use of this material can easily be seen in the steep pitches of the roofs that remain on many older buildings.

When re-thatching the underlying thatch should be examined to see if it is reed or long straw. The choice of top material can then be evidence based upon what existed originally. Thatch on new buildings, or as a replacement to artificial roofing materials on older buildings, will be encouraged.

Welsh Slate

Welsh slate probably came to Northamptonshire as a result of the early 19th Century canal traffic via the River Nene. The slate complements the local stone and if used with traditional verge, eaves and parapet details can be very effective. It can on the other hand appear coarse and crude especially in the form of reconstituted slates with modern dry-verge accessories, bargeboards and large eaves with over prominent fascia boards.

Pantiles

There are several shapes, sizes and colours of pantile used in the village and they appear almost at random on all sorts of different buildings. Pantiles have the advantage of being useable at low pitches and thus were most often used on outbuildings and additions so that the roof concerned did not have too great an effect on the main building.

Pantile roofs give an acceptable method of varying roof heights and pitches in the tradition of the village but the type of pantile chosen should be sympathetic to that used in the immediate environs of the development.

Clay Pantiles are an acceptable replacement for artificial materials on Listed Buildings or buildings in Brigstock's historic core.

WINDOWS and DOORS

There is a variety of window and doors found in the village. The majority of windows are either casement or double hung sashes constructed of painted timber but dormer windows are also common. Doors vary from humble planked doors to enriched oak doors in decorative dressed stone openings. In general sash windows appear on Victorian and later properties, while dormer windows are often found in the thatched cottages.



Unusual window feature in The Syke

Where new dormers are proposed they should not be flat roofed or wider than a corresponding window in the wall below.

Preferably dormer windows should have a masonry gable as an extension of the wall plane or placed within the roof slope, with a hipped roof of matching roof material.

Dormer sides should be either vertical slates, tiles or rendered.

PVCu windows are undesirable in older houses due to the size of the frames and the lack of decorative moulding, as well as the use of a plastic material which can clash with the original style of the property. Where traditional sash windows have been re-instated they enhance both the look and the value of the building. Wooden windows made from Accoya typically have a life of 50 years and are eco friendly.



Carefully chosen replacement windows match the period of the house.

The colour of paint used on windows can have a disproportionate effect on the whole building so sensitivity and common sense are needed when choosing external painting schemes.

The choice of door and door surround should be given the same critical appraisal as the design of the primary elements of a building as the wrong choice can ruin a good facade. Replacement or new door furniture should

reflect the age of the building, for example on older buildings wrought iron door furniture is favoured, while from the 18th century cast iron is appropriate, painted black. Brass and elaborate designs are more appropriate on 19th century and modern buildings.

CHIMNEYS

Chimneys are either brick or stone with different styles and heights. The mixture of styles creates an interesting skyline.

Brick chimneys are found on stone houses but not stone chimneys on brick houses.

PAVING

Paving found in the centre of the village is generally York stone slabs while yards have traditionally been paved with stable bricks, setts or cobbles. Yards with gravel have the disadvantage that it does not stay put and requires more maintenance than hard paving.

Considering the ready availability of good quality salvaged York Stone there is every reason to expect its continued use alongside the existing but it should be laid coursed rather than fully random.

Where gravel is proposed an acceptable method of restraining it to prevent stones from being scattered over the street will be required.

Concrete block paving can over dominate areas but may be acceptable if broken up with bands of either stone or bricks. The choice of colour is important and samples and laying patterns should be submitted for approval.

BOUNDARY WALLS and HEDGING

Copings found on low boundary walls are generally thin stone, laid on edge, cut roughly into a semi-circular profile for low walls. Copings found on high boundary walls are generally pantiles laid at a slight fall to one side. Some high boundary walls have quite elaborate combinations of diminishing brick coursing and plain tile.

Any development must retain existing boundary walls wherever possible. New property boundaries should be in keeping with properties nearby.

The design, shape and materials used in boundaries must be carefully considered. A well-constructed stone wall can enhance a property and the general street scene. Hedges are best when planted with native species. Fast growing conifers are not acceptable as they can grow too large and be difficult to manage. Fencing materials should be appropriate to the location within the village.

GATES

Timber and iron gates are common in the village. The timber gates are usually robust and based upon traditional rural designs - there is even a 'Brigstock gate'. They vary from large functional double 'yard' gates to small decorative hand gates.

Ironwork should be similarly robust to complement the stone as too fine a pattern can detract from the quality of the stonework.

STREET FURNITURE

There are a few benches within the village on Park Walk and on Hall Hill some being made of timber and some in cast iron of a traditional design. There are a few signposts in the village of the black and white wooden fingerpost variety that fit in well with the village character.

Advertising signs can have a significant impact on the street scene. Traditional timber hand painted signs without illumination are the preferred option within the historic parts of the village.

The Parish Council should be consulted regarding any new street furniture in order to ensure consistency of design.

LIGHTING

The village has recently updated the street lighting to a uniform style of LED lighting.

Developers and statutory undertakers should work closely with the Parish Council when new developments require street lighting.

Whilst clearly required for safety and amenity purposes lighting should be discrete and well shielded to prevent undue light spill and glare to adjoining properties and into the surrounding countryside and night sky.

GENERAL

Modern TV satellite dishes should be carefully located to avoid being intrusive within the village street scene.

Rainwater goods - use of cast iron or aluminium is preferable on buildings in the conservation area or on listed buildings.

Eaves - avoid continuous soffits as far as possible. Open eaves are not only traditional they provide nesting opportunities for swallows and house martins.

Roof to wall abutments - use of soakers and mortar fillets, no visually intrusive flashings.

Where practicable incorporate bat and swift nesting boxes in new and repaired and extended walls. Several proprietary nest boxes are available for building into masonry with virtually no visual impact.

Soft landscape

Most developments would benefit from the inclusion of well designed planting schemes and the use of traditional hedgerows using locally appropriate native species for the boundaries of properties will be encouraged.

Where consent is required, permission will not be given for fast growing conifers as part of any landscaping scheme. Elsewhere their use is discouraged because of the long term impact they can have on the environment, the street scene and neighbouring uses.

Existing hedges and large trees should be properly managed to ensure that they remain healthy and continue to contribute to the street scene and setting of the village.

Consideration should be made to the creation of feature planting such as the Coronation Oak because a specimen tree in the right place can dramatically improve a building's setting.

Parking and Traffic Considerations

The parking of cars is an important consideration in any development proposal. Parking on the pathways discourages pedestrians and this eventuality should be avoided when proposals for development are prepared. Many residents work outside the village which means that a considerable number of households need two or more cars. Consideration should be given to garages and parking areas away from the street frontage so that cars and other vehicles do not dominate the environment.

Incorporating adequate parking space in new developments is extremely important. Developers should refer to **Northamptonshire Parking Standards September 2016** for full details. Those most relevant to Brigstock are detailed here:

Residential Car parking standards

Dwelling houses

1 bed - 1 space per dwelling, plus visitor spaces of 1 per dwelling across the development.

2/3 beds - 2 spaces per dwelling, plus visitor spaces at 1 per dwelling across the development.

4+ beds - 3 spaces per dwelling, plus visitor spaces at 1 per dwelling across the development.

Residential car parking dimensions

Cars have got larger over recent years, but parking spaces have not increased in dimension, hence there is a need to increase parking spaces to a minimum 2.5m (W) x 5m (L) and disabled parking spaces to a minimum 3.6m (W) x 6.2m (L).

The new parking space dimensions are as shown below:

Non - residential 2.5m (W) x 5m (L)

Residential 3m (W) x 5.5m (L) for driveways (11m long for tandem spaces)

Parking courts (individual spaces) 2.5m (W) x 5m (L)

If the parking space is located against a wall or similar solid structure or there is no separate pedestrian access, the driveway parking width will increase to 3.3m.

On plot tandem (in line) parking is inconvenient and is generally best avoided where possible as both spaces are rarely used. Tandem spaces should not be used in communal parking areas.

Where a residential development parking layout is incorporating on street parking, the street must be wide enough to accommodate parking without compromising access by emergency/waste collection vehicles and must not impair visibility at junctions or on bends. The street must be wide enough to

accommodate two lanes of traffic and the on-street parking space/layby. Dimensions for street width are as follows:

Residential 5.5m (W) plus 2m (W) lay-by

Garages

New-built garages must not obscure house fronts. New garages should relate to the houses to which they belong and be in sympathy with surrounding property in terms of size, design, materials and construction. Modern car construction and security means that vehicles can usually be left outside year round without particular risk of theft or damage from the elements. Garages also are often too small and/or are perceived as too inconvenient to make them attractive places for regular day-to-day parking. As a result, garages are most often used for purposes other than car parking (e.g. storage) or are converted to living accommodation and any additional household cars are parked on the street. For this reason designated parking on new developments is best provided on driveways, carports or allocated parking bays therefore garages are not included as designated parking within developments.



Garages well-integrated in this 20th C conversion using a mixture of traditional materials.

Where garages are provided they should be constructed to the following dimensions:

- Single garage - 3.3m (W) x 6.0m (L) x 2.4m (H)
- Double garage - 5.8m (W) x 6.0m (L) x 2.4m (H)

All garages must be set sufficiently back from the highway boundary so that a vehicle can be parked in front of the garage (whilst garage doors are opened/closed) without causing any obstruction to the highway. All garages must therefore be set at least 5.5m from the highway boundary.

Proper traffic management plans should be considered to control vehicle routes as new development takes place.

There is a need to consider additional safe pedestrian and cycle facilities where some of the footways in the village are inadequate.

A cycle path already exists which links the village to Stanion and Corby along the A6116, and extending the path to link Brigstock to Sudborough, Lowick and Thrapston would be of great benefit.

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The following principles should be applied when considering industrial or commercial development:

The present commercial and industrial sites should be retained. Further expansion into green field sites will only be acceptable under the Local Plan.

Any commercial activity should reflect the rural character of the village and not detract from residents' quality of life or pollute the environment.

It is recognised that new small-scale enterprises increase employment opportunities, but care needs to be taken that they do not adversely affect the village amenities and are appropriate to the village's style and character.

Where any new commercial or industrial unit is constructed it should conform to the following guidelines:

Construction materials should be consistent with the overall village appearance to minimise visual intrusion with brick and stone being the most appropriate materials.

Units must be appropriate to their location in scale, height, bulk and layout with the avoidance of buildings equivalent to 2 storeys or more in height being important.

Visual intrusion must be minimised by sufficient sympathetic screening using locally appropriate native deciduous tree and hedgerow species.

All night high-intensity illumination should be avoided as it is out of keeping with the village environment. Lighting should not be of the type or design which could cause 'light pollution' which can have an adverse affect on the environment and character of the village.

CONSERVATION OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT: A SELF-HELP GUIDE

Changes to the character of Brigstock are brought about not only by large-scale developments but also by smaller day-to-day changes to buildings, open spaces, gardens, paths and hedges that alter the look and feel of the village as a whole. Residents thinking about making external changes or alterations to their property, paintwork, signs, garden or surroundings should consider how these changes will affect the character of the building and the village.

The following steps are provided as a self-help guide for residents:

Is your property in the Conservation Area? If so, are you aware of the special conditions that apply to building works? Please consult East Northamptonshire Council planning department or the Parish Council.

Is your property a listed building? If so you will need to consult East Northamptonshire Council planning department.

Look at the front of the property from some distance and note any original distinctive features.

Are there any features that you think are more recent or out of character with the rest of your property or with neighbouring properties?

Stand closer and look at the details of the building, such as roof, chimneys, windows, doors, eaves, rainwater goods, brick or stonework and repeat this on each side of the building in order to get the full picture.

Look at the guidelines in this document and think about the changes that you wish to make. Will they be in keeping with the characteristics and details that you have seen on the building and identified in this document? If not, think about whether it is possible to make the changes in a way that retains the character of the property.

Would the changes that you want to make get rid of some of the uncharacteristic features that you have spotted? You may want to check your ideas with a builder, architect or East Northamptonshire Council who may suggest improvements.

Do you want to install a satellite dish or PVCu windows? If so please consult ENC or the parish council to see if planning permission is required.