



KINGSMERE

Design Code

June 2008

FINAL DRAFT



Countryside
Properties

(Bicester) Ltd

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Preface

This Design Code has been prepared by Terence O'Rourke Ltd (in conjunction with WSP) on behalf of Countryside Properties (Bicester) Ltd, the lead developer.

It is a manual for the design of Kingsmere. It sets out the key issues to be addressed by designers and describes the types of places that must be created. The Design Code does not have all the answers, nor are there boxes to tick that will guarantee good design. With this document good designers will produce a high quality environment.

The design guidelines outlined within this Code comply with the vision and development principles set out in the Statement of Development Principles document endorsed by Cherwell District Council in March 2006, and the Amended Design & Access Statement, Transport Statement and Planning Supporting Statement submitted in November 2006 with the outline planning application (Ref 06/00967/OUT).

This Code should be read in conjunction with:

- The Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS) Technical Report, prepared by WSP.
- Requirements of Section 106 and other submissions made pursuant to conditions.

This Design Code is based upon Policy H13 and other associated policies contained within the unadopted Cherwell Local Plan.

The lead developer will implement the following:

- strategic infrastructure;
- primary streets;
- strategic foul and surface water drainage;
- structural landscaping;
- informal public open space (excluding LAPs not within open space or structured planting);
- greenways and landscaping works to retained public rights of way



Chapter 1:

Introduction

This Code is designed to assist in the delivery of a mixed-use master plan at Kingsmere. The scheme approved in outline comprises 1,585 new homes, a primary school and education campus, a mixed-use local centre, commercial / employment development, healthcare development and public open space.

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1.1 THE NEED FOR A DESIGN CODE

In January 2007, Cherwell District Council recommended that the proposed scheme be granted outline planning permission (Ref 06/00967/OUT). The decision notice was issued in **April 2008 (TBC)** with conditions attached requiring the submission and approval of further information regarding various matters, including design. The conditions state that a Design Codes is required to guide the development and the consideration of Reserved Matters applications for the development of the site. (The full condition is reproduced in Appendix 4).

This Code also performs an important function for the developer, Countryside Properties (Bicester) Ltd, in that it describes and illustrates the structure and quality of the development in its totality. The Code will ensure that a consistently high standard of development is delivered irrespective of the identity of the developer.

The document also has the function of explaining the outcome of discussions held with stakeholders and statutory consultees, such as Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, and the Environment Agency. A series of consultation events has informed the production of the Code including stakeholder workshops and public exhibitions.

Stakeholder workshops were held in June 2007 and January 2008. The latter involved a road test of the Code where hypothetical schemes for a part of the site were assessed using an early iteration of the code.

1.2 WHY CODE?

The practical transfer of a strategic vision from an outline application proposal to the detailed design stages on a development of any significant size requires a commitment to clarity and a degree of prescription on certain design-related matters.

Codes are not the sole means of delivering high quality environments but they are important in linking together the strategic planning and implementation stages.

Given the scale and nature of Kingsmere, which will be delivered over several years, there will be many individuals and agencies involved in implementing the development proposals. Whilst many stakeholders may change during the period of delivery, it is essential that the established high standards of design quality are consistently implemented.

To achieve this, it is important that the Code achieves a balance between the level of prescription required to provide a clear, concise and easy-to-understand set of rules and the need for flexibility to enable the proposed development to respond to changing local needs, market demands and sustainable design requirements over the period.

1.3 PURPOSE & STATUS OF THE CODE

This document aims to provide a degree of certainty and consistency for those preparing or commenting upon proposals for Kingsmere by providing detailed design requirements on the key design factors relevant to the delivery of the master plan.

The master plan and the Code have been developed in consultation with Cherwell District Council and other key statutory and non-statutory stakeholders (including the Environment Agency and the general public). The Code has also been developed in compliance with policy guidance and regulations (as identified within the Outline Application Planning Statement, November 2006), the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF), and other strategies and initiatives relevant to achieving sustainable growth.

Once approved, Cherwell District Council will use this Code as a material consideration when determining Reserved Matters within Kingsmere.

As such it is expected that this Code should be used as the starting point for dialogue between developers and their designers, Cherwell District Council, Oxford County Council and other statutory key stakeholders when developing proposals for Kingsmere.

Where the Code identifies mandatory requirements, developers must comply with these. Where other guidance is given developers should use these to help shape their proposals and innovatively interpret them. **Variation or amendment to the Code will only be possible in agreement with Countryside Properties (Bicester) Ltd and the District Council.**

1.4 WHO SHOULD USE THE CODE?

The Code will be used by:

- Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council members, policy and development control officers, officers from other departments, agencies and organisations and their consultants, involved in determining proposals;
- Landowners, developers and their consultants and others involved in bringing forward development proposals; and
- Local residents who wish to gain a better understanding of the rationale behind the scheme and understand future development proposals.

When applied by a good designer, the Code will provide all the elements required to produce a good result. Good use of the Code will assist the local authority in avoiding poor design – it should not be used as a checklist, but as a guide to creating a new place at Kingsmere.

A summary user's guide to the Code is provided as Appendix 2.

CAUTION!

None of the plans within the Code should be scaled, nor should dimensions be taken from them, except where dimensions are specifically given. A separate series of proposals plans (outside of the Code) exist which are to scale and can be used to provide dimensions and sizes.

1.5 CONTENT & CODING

This document has a linear structure moving from analysis of local context and character, through three chapters of coding and guidance before considering implementation.

Chapters 3 and 4 are key in identifying coding at both strategic and character area levels.

To ensure the Code is easy to understand, the design guidelines and coding have been grouped into a logical structure addressing key chapters: Master plan; Character Area Codes; and Sustainable Construction.

This document is divided into seven chapters:

- **Chapter 1 Introduction:**
Explains the nature, purpose and planning context to the document.
- **Chapter 2 Context and character:**
Summarises the local context for the scheme as well as the characteristics and constraints which have influenced the master plan and Design Code.
- **Chapter 3 Strategic Design Code:**
Comprehensive design guidelines and coding for the master plan area, building upon the proposals outlined in earlier documents.
- **Chapter 4 Character Area Codes:**
Outlines the coding elements used to define each of the seven character areas.
- **Chapter 5 Sustainable development:**
Explains the key features and design techniques included to achieve the agreed sustainability standard.
- **Chapter 6 Delivery & Review:**
Explains how the development will be implemented and the review process for the duration of the Design Code.
- **Appendices**
 - 1:** Landscape Infrastructure
 - 2:** User's guide to the Code
 - 3:** Consultees and contact details
 - 4:** Town planning conditions

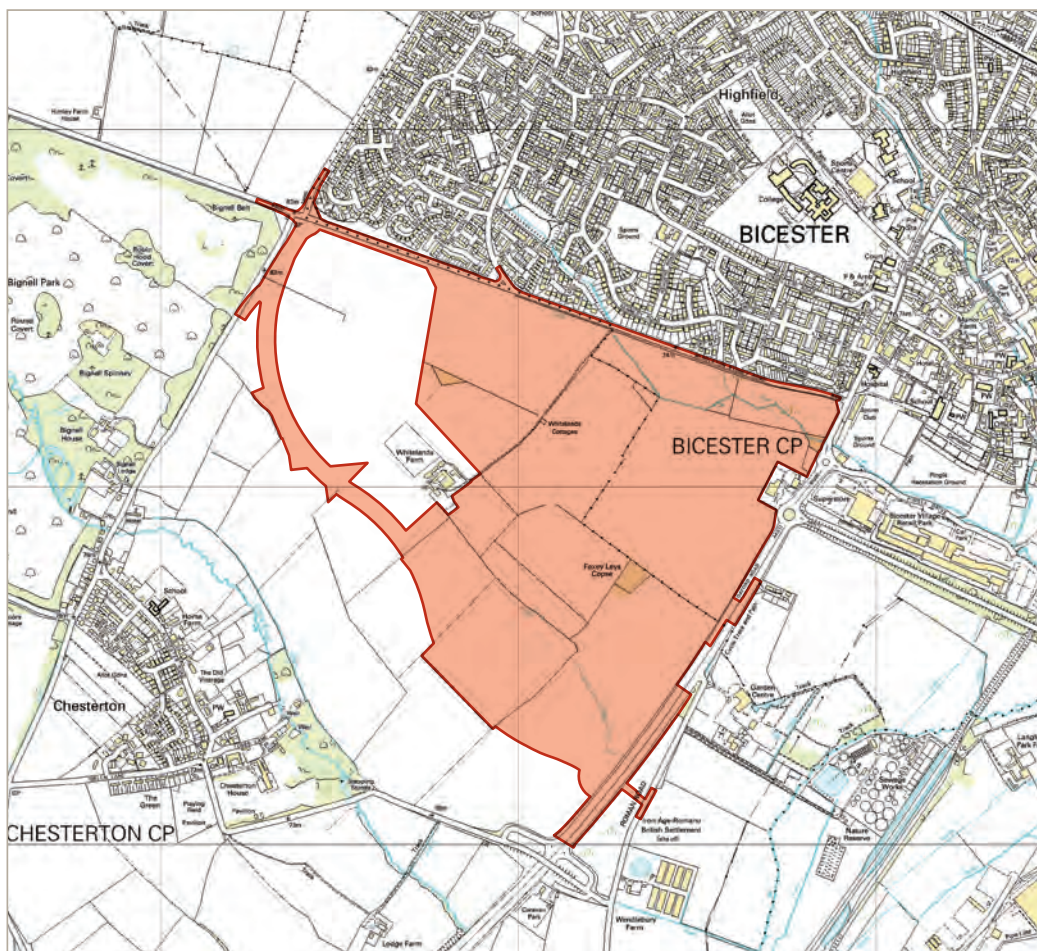


Figure 1.1 Site location plan. The red line shows the outline planning permission boundary.

1.6 CODE REQUIREMENTS

The Code specifies Mandatory design features which must be provided by developers.

These may include street dimensions, building or public realm materials or building types.



Where a page or image includes a mandatory feature this symbol is used.

WHERE TEXT IS MANDATORY IT IS HIGHLIGHTED IN RED.

The development area has been sub-divided into seven mandatory character zones. The primary residential area comprises four areas each with its own distinct set of landscape and townscape qualities. The three non-residential areas have their own use-specific design requirements.

1.7 CHARACTER AREAS



Figure 1.2 Character areas.



1
Whitelands



2
Pingle Brook



3
Avenue



4
Urban Village



5
Education Campus



6
Employment Zone



7
Health Village

Residential areas and local centre

Non-residential areas

1.8 EXPLAINING THE BLOCK PATTERN

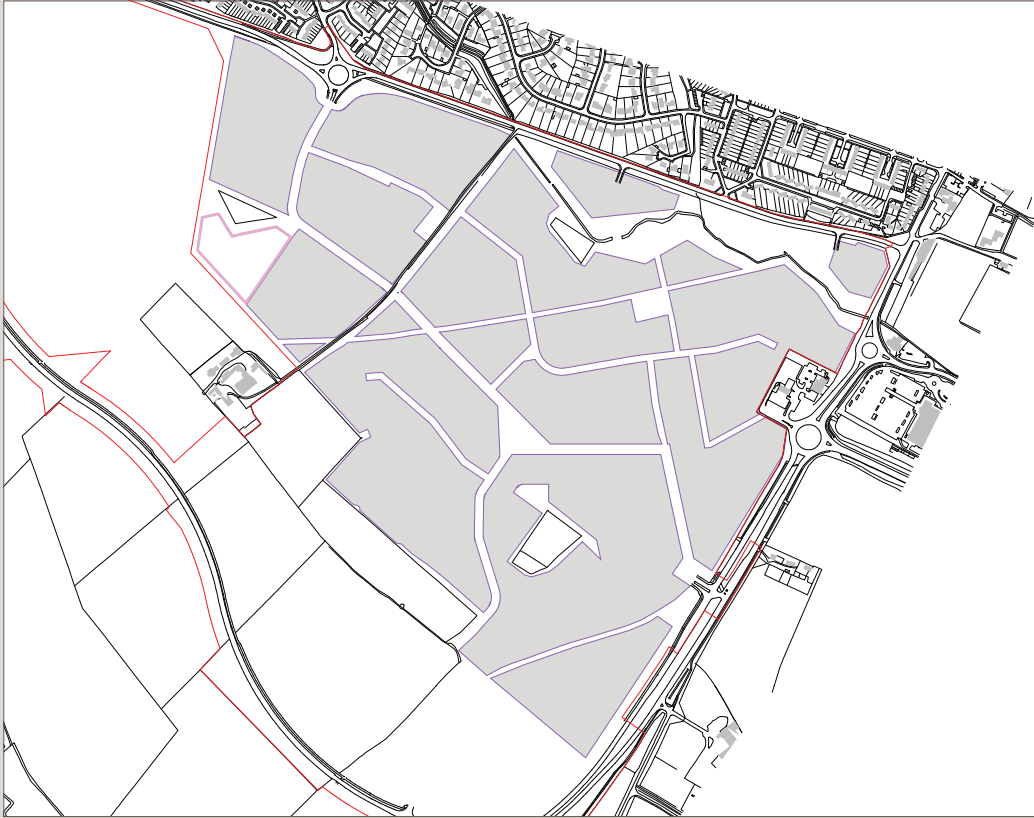


Figure 1.3 The development area is sub-divided by a number of mandatory infrastructure routes and connections that form a set of so-called MEGA-blocks. These relate to primary and secondary streets, greenways, rights of way, public open spaces and foul water drainage routes.

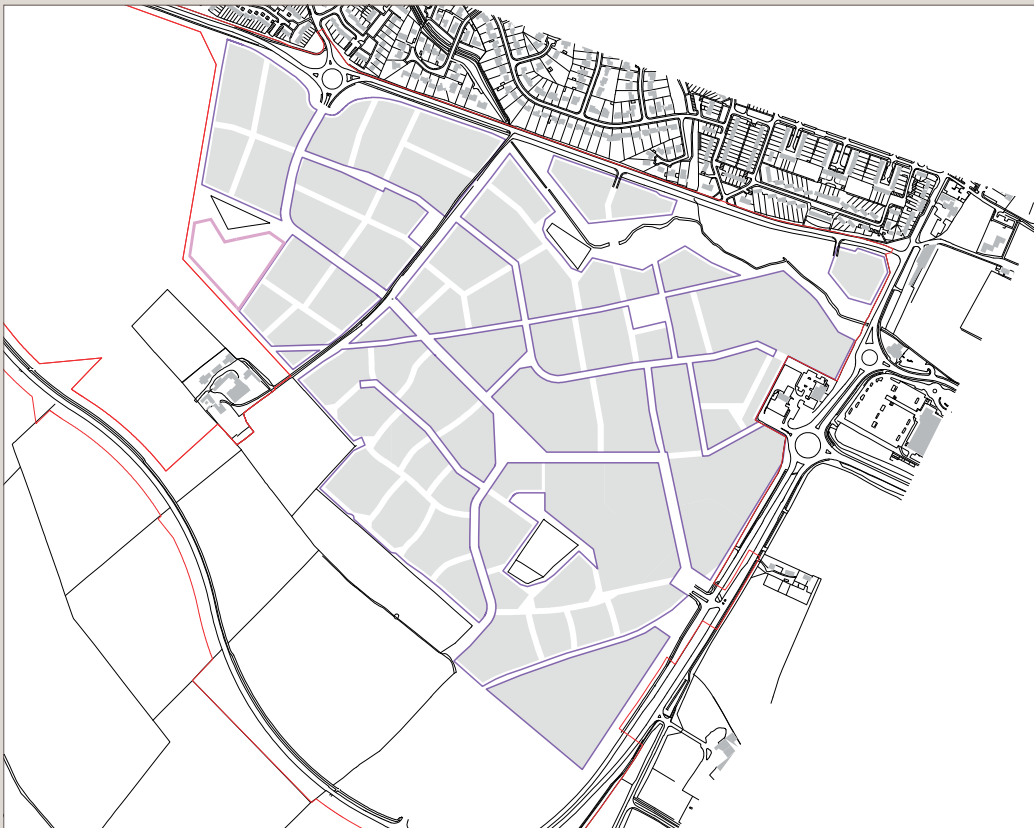


Figure 1.4 In order to create a permeable place these will be further sub-divided forming a set of smaller MINI-blocks. An indicative layout is shown left. Where this layout is used in the Code it is illustrative only.

