



Market Square



Sheep Street

Open space

Open space in Bicester is illustrated in Figure 2.5, page 14. Pingle recreation ground to the north of the site is important to the setting of Bicester, with views of the church being a feature.

Garth Park, open space near Bure Place and Bicester Fields all provide well used, pleasant, informal green space. The park proposed as part of Kingsmere, along Pingle Brook, will provide an important continuation of the open space network retained along the water course.

Squares and pedestrian streets

The market square at the centre of the town is a very prominent feature of Bicester and provides a good example to follow. The square is split in two by a central block measuring some 40m by 50m at the widest point, narrowing at the western end. The main shopping street, Sheep Street, has been pedestrianised and is the focus of retail activity in the town. Pedestrianised streets depend on very high pedestrian flows, which will not be found in Kingsmere. However the width and taller buildings in this street may be comparable to a primary street in Kingsmere.



LESSER ROUTES AND AVENUES

URBAN EDGE AND VILLAGES



2.5 continued:

Urban Hierarchy

CENTRAL CORE



Key attributes

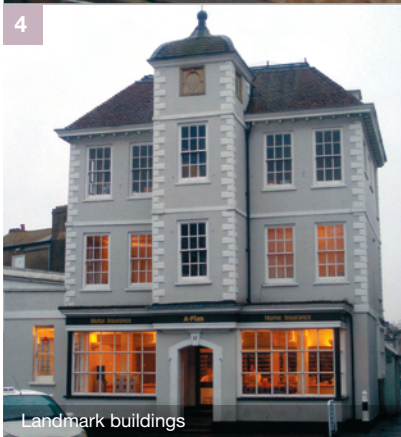
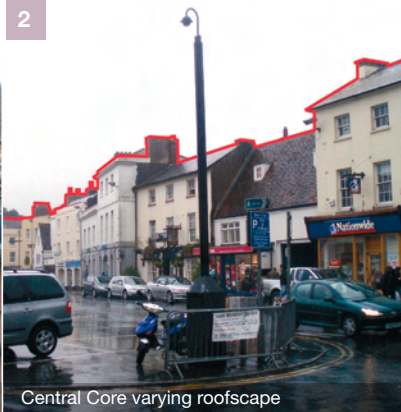
- Located at the convergence of key routes.
- Lively mixed use core located around the large market square that provides the focus for activities.
- Mix of architectural styles, mass and scale of buildings providing visual richness.
- Range of materials can be found but render is most prominent.

Summary

The commercial Central Core is the focus of Bicester and lies on the convergence of several key roads. The main square is flanked by predominantly cream and stone coloured, rendered, three storey buildings sited on the back edge of footways creating a strong sense of enclosure. The range of architectural styles provide a varying roofscape, whilst the dominant large plot widths result in a level of consistency with the occasional oddity. A concentration of landmark buildings and well-defined corners within the Central Core aid legibility, often terminating vistas. The market square includes surface car parking which has come to dominate the space. Greenery is limited within the Central Core but where it is used it softens the built form.

The varying roofscape created by changes in building height, roof pitch and style and the occasional gable end adds to visual interest. Broad plots, developed as tall three storey terraced buildings result in a significant sense of enclosure and some grandeur, reinforcing the market square's importance as the focus of the town.

The most common material used in the Central Core is normally white, cream or stone coloured render. Cherwell District Council produced a document in 1996 that dealt with colour and material (see reference on page 73). This consistency creates uniformity unique in comparison with other parts of Bicester. This feature will be found in the design of the central public space within Kingsmere.



Photos 1 to 6 Bicester Market Square

Townscape features that help define the Central Core and aid legibility in Bicester town centre.

DESIGN CODE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Large open space at the convergence of key routes
- Mixed use
- Three storey buildings predominantly
- Generally wide plot widths
- Mix of architectural styles
- Landmark buildings and defined corners
- Vistas in and out of central space
- Large window proportions
- Cream and stone coloured render interspersed with brick and stone
- Prevent surface car parking from dominating open space
- Use landscaping to soften building form
- Generally simple, flat fronted forms
- Predominantly shallow pitched roofs falling to narrow eaves
- Large windows (excluding shopfronts) with vertical emphasis, often shorter on top floors

Of most relevance to the Urban Village character area

2.5 continued:
Urban Hierarchy

MAIN APPROACHES



Key attributes

- Large range in styles, building heights and materials.
- Primarily terraced dwellings.
- Strong continuity of frontage and sense of enclosure.

Summary

The large range of architectural styles, mixed building heights and variable plot widths result in the main approaches being the most varied and visually rich parts of Bicester. Within these variations some relationships are clear. Frequent tall ground floors generate a horizontal rhythm along the street. The repetition of narrow fronted units creates a strong vertical rhythm. Terraced and linked buildings create a strong continuity of frontage and sense of enclosure. This is broken by occasional informal green space, typically formed by the set back to a larger building. The richness of these routes is echoed in the variety of building materials used with render, red brick and stone all used in equal measure.

As expected in such a central area, car parking is not specifically catered for. However, on street parking is supplemented with courtyard parking perhaps accessed through arches bridged at first floor retaining the continuity of frontage. Closer to the Central Core there are a number of mixed use buildings with residential use becoming more dominant further away. This mix adds another level of variation in the street.



The three building materials used in the Main Approaches add to visual richness.



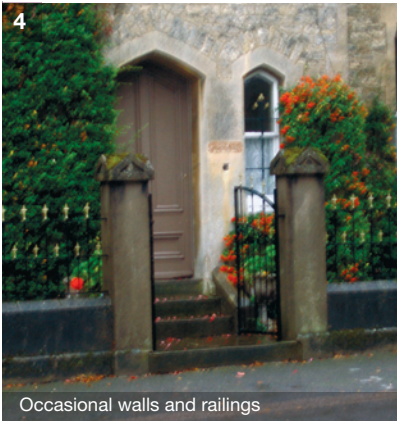
High level of variation on Main Approaches



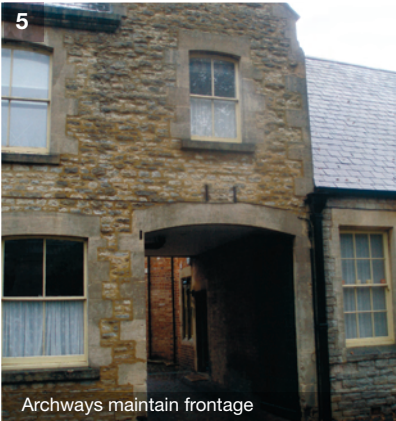
Varied storey height and plot width



Strong continuity of frontage



Occasional walls and railings



Archways maintain frontage



Setback exposes gable

Photo 1 Causeway
Photo 2 North Street
Photo 3 Priory Road
Photos 4, 5 & 6 Church Street

**DESIGN CODE
RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Scope for non-residential uses, especially close to the Central Core
- Mix of two and three storey buildings
- Predominately terraced buildings
- Varying plot width
- Strong vertical rhythms
- Strong continuity of frontage
- Significant sense of enclosure
- Mix of three local materials (red brick, render, stone)
- Use of informal and incidental green space
- Courtyard and on-street parking
- Generally simple flat fronted building forms
- Mix of shallow pitched and steep pitched roofs, the latter sometimes with dormer windows
- Mix of vertical and horizontal emphasis with windows of domestic scale

Of most relevance to the Urban Village character area