

Paired houses, wide-fronted

Paired houses, narrow-fronted

Three-house terrace

Four-house terrace

Grouping and Composition

As with most British townscapes, the local distinctive vernacular in and around Bicester comprises simple groups of buildings with little in the way of formal composition. Most historic streets comprise buildings erected singly, as pairs or as part of small groups.

This results in a fine urban grain with frequent changes in form, scale and architectural expression.

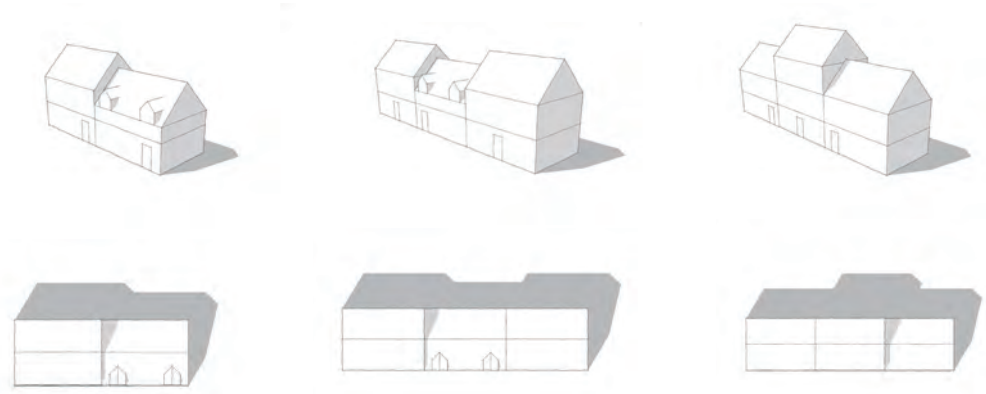
The simple groups illustrated here show those that are most frequently used. These are not mandatory within this Code but the principles they embody should be employed throughout the scheme.

Longer terraces will be acceptable close to the local centre on the Primary Street where taller buildings are focused.

The principles for grouping and composition are that proposals must include either:

- **short groups or terraces – normally no longer than three or four buildings. Longer terraces on the Primary Street will be acceptable, particularly in combination with taller buildings.**
- **connected buildings with a common front building line – presenting a seamless street frontage.**
- **connected buildings of differing width and depth as well as height to create an organic character.**
- **streets comprising a limited series of similar building groups or compositions – to ensure a calm and cohesive townscape.**

Figure 3.24 Key housing groups.



Large and small pair

Large, small, large terrace

Small, large, small terrace.

3.3 continued:
Urban form

Scale

Scale is a key influence on townscape. Larger scale buildings or elements will often create a sense of grandeur and wealth as, traditionally, more spacious environments have been more expensive. Smaller scale often indicated artisan cottages and more modest social standing. This is no longer the case in residential settings, particularly as the nature and size of households has changed dramatically in recent years.

Building scale mainly relates to the size of the building and in particular the height of each storey. Buildings with greater floor-to-ceiling heights will tend to look especially imposing.

Two buildings with the same overall height can be different in scale depending on their architectural treatment (see Figure 3.25). Greater scale can be conveyed on a building if a larger scale element, such as a grand bay window, is integrated in to the design. With a series of co-ordinated elements, such as a bay window, raised roof parapet and large scale architectural details, a building will acquire a grander scale – particularly if it is next to buildings without such elements.

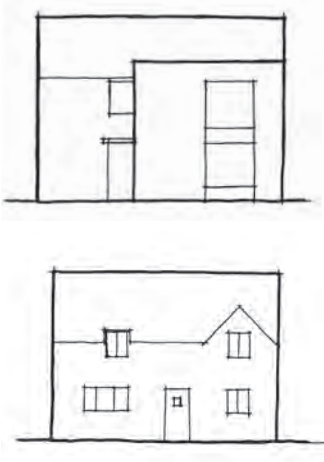


Figure 3.25 Building scale does not rely on size but rather the architectural treatment of a façade

Location will also often combine with significant scale to create the premium properties in any town or village. Primary town locations would typically be the broad, main streets whilst primary village locations may be quiet, peripheral grounds.

Transferring these rules-of-thumb to Kingsmere the principles for the Code are that:

- **buildings of largest scale must be located in prime townscape locations** – these include primary streets, on primary frontages, on primary focal spaces and at key gateways.
- **buildings of significant scale must be located on internal green spaces and greenways, and must be avoided on the rural edge.**
- **buildings of smallest scale must be located in minor streets, fronting minor public spaces and on the rural edge.**



Local building examples of verticality (above) and horizontality (top)

Verticality & horizontality

Orientating all of the component parts of a building to follow an imaginary vertical or horizontal line can have a profound impact on the appearance of the building. Where neighbouring buildings are all treated in the same manner then clearly the effect is magnified.

Local vernacular buildings in Cherwell may be of either vertical or horizontal emphasis. The classic stone buildings in the villages and towns are largely horizontal in emphasis with a wide frontage below a long parallel roof and wide casement windows set in to a largely featureless façade. Victorian or Georgian brick or stone buildings will tend to be more upright with narrow façades, often rising to a hidden parapet, and tall sash windows generally with slender glazing bars further emphasising verticality.

Deploying these traits is desirable within Kingsmere and should be done with great care with regard to the effect that is produced. The use of vertical or horizontal emphasis within each character is clarified within chapter 4.

The following sections provide an overview of the various building materials and techniques to be addressed when developing proposals for Kingsmere.

Roofs

Roofs should normally be simple, pitched and gabled, and should fall to an eaves with minimal projection. **Wide-fronted / shallow depth buildings must have a pitch of not less than 40°. Narrow-fronted/deep plan buildings must also have a pitch of not less than 40°.**

Abutting single-storey roofs must use a pitch to match the main building. Freestanding outbuildings or garages must have roofs that match the form, pitch and materials of the main building. Flat roofs will be limited within residential areas.

Eaves details must relate directly to the building type. On local vernacular-style buildings, walls may terminate in one or two courses of corbelled brick or stonework with the gutter above.

Gutters must be mounted directly on walls, sprockets or rafter feet, but can be concealed in a cornice or fall behind a parapet.

Small rooflights are acceptable only on rear slopes to limit views within the public realm. These must be parallel with the roof pitch and have minimal projection above the plane of the roof.

The optimum situation for solar energy panels or solar water heating panels is on a roof facing within 45° of south with a pitch of 30°.

Solar panels on roofs facing public realm will be acceptable because of the over-riding importance of sustainability. They must however, be integrated with the building architecture.



Roof-mounted solar heating panels (Upton, Northampton)

Chimneys

Buildings may be designed to incorporate one or more chimney stacks where possible. **20% of the houses in the Whitelands and Pingle Brook character areas must have chimneys. This is to increase to 40% for all buildings fronting the rural edge in the Whitelands character area.** These features can be used as traditional smoke extracts, can provide passive ventilation to habitable rooms or be used for air circulation as part of a sustainable heating and cooling system. These vertical elements also add interest on the skyline and should rise generously above the ridge line.

Entrances, including doors and porches

Building entrances must normally be in the front façade. This allows for natural surveillance and security, and ensures that access to the building is clearly legible for the visitor. side entrances may occasionally be used but the route to the door must remain simple, direct and unambiguous.

Local vernacular external doors are typically flush to the face of the building and expressed with minimal surrounds. Occasional exceptions will signify a building of special status, and will have a modest recess and/or a simple architrave.

Porches are important local features, particularly on wide-fronted vernacular buildings. These are generally of limited projection, simple in form and either cantilevered or supported on posts.

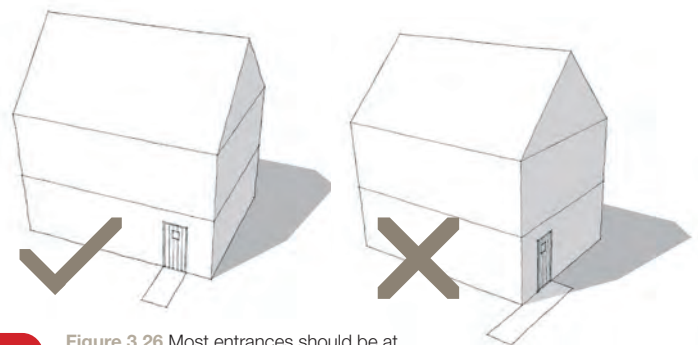


Figure 3.26 Most entrances should be at the front of the building, rather than the side.



Figure 3.27 Most entrance doors should be set close to the front façade in accordance with local precedents. Planked doors should normally be used on wide-fronted Oxfordshire vernacular style buildings alongside casement windows and steep roofs. Panelled doors must be used on narrow fronted houses alongside sash-type windows and shallower roofs.

Figure 3.28 A range of acceptable porch styles.



3.3 continued:

Urban form

Windows, including surrounds and materials

Windows and their subdivisions must relate to the proportions of the host building.

In traditionally-designed residential buildings, windows must be either vertical sashes or side-hung casements, whilst more contemporary, community and commercial buildings may have more variety.

Windows on front façades must be to principal rooms on all floors, including the kitchen, ensuring they contribute to surveillance of the street.

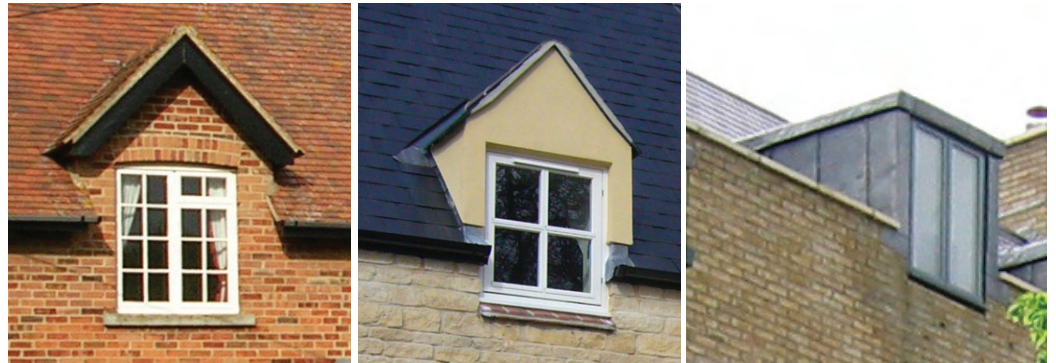
Windows to bathrooms should not normally face the street.

Windows on top floors will normally be smaller in height than those below. Dormer windows should not be larger than windows below and housings should be no longer than the window requires.

On brick and stone buildings, window reveals should generally be a minimum of 75mm where a subcill is used and minimum 50mm where there is no subcill.

In vernacular buildings with casement windows, external lintels must be expressed in timber or red brick. In buildings with vertical openings and sash windows, lintels must be expressed with stone or brick. In contemporary designs the need for and type of lintel must relate to the style of architecture.

Windows must be coloured white or off-white. Where other colours are used the colour must be applied rather than integral thereby providing flexibility for the future.



Above: Various semi-dormer window designs.

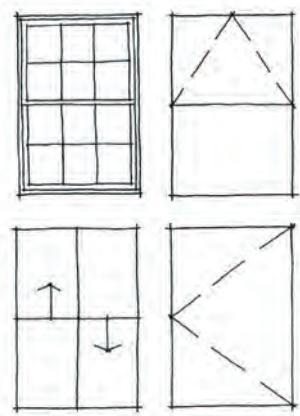


Figure 3.29 Vertical windows (examples above) will normally have vertical sub-division. Vertically-sliding sashes will be used in vernacular buildings, whilst other opening systems may be employed with contemporary architecture. Horizontal windows (examples below) will follow similar rules. Top hung false sash windows are not allowed.

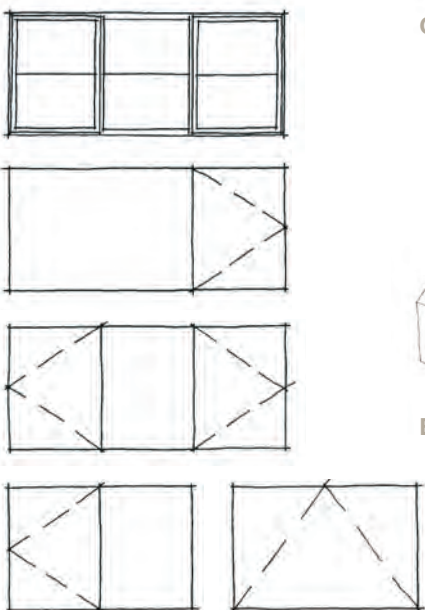


Figure 3.30 Dormer windows examples – A,B and C are well suited to local vernacular style buildings. D, E and F are best suited to vernacular-style brick buildings.

Building materials

Walls

On all buildings within all character areas external walls must generally be faced in brick, reconstituted or natural stone, or render. Modern cladding systems may also be used but must use local colours and tones. The materials specified should harmonise with those that typify this part of Cherwell District (see section 2).



Wall materials examples.

A traditional feature of stone buildings in the locality is that the whole opening is formed in red brick. This is an attractive feature and should be replicated.

Brick walls must be either English or Flemish bond and should generally be soft red to match historic buildings in Bicester with buff brick used occasionally or in certain character areas.

Where reconstituted stone is used, it must be a good colour and texture match for the local stone. Sawn stone may occasionally be used in string courses, window and door reveals and lintels.

Expansion joints in render and brickwork must be discretely incorporated in to the architecture. This may, for example, be at changes in facing material, behind rainwater down pipes, or in limited reveals.

Mortar joints must be pointed as appropriate for the brick type and architecture.

Copings should generally not extend more than 25mm from the plane of the wall beneath.

Flue extracts to boilers must not be used on front elevations.

External timber lintels may be used on key wide-fronted buildings above casement windows.

Similarly, barge boards and fascia boxes must not be used.

Roofs

Roof coverings shall be natural or reconstituted slate, clay, thatch or concrete tiles. Tile vents to slopes are not permitted, with roofs being ventilated via the ridge and eaves.

Colours of roofing materials must reflect the local vernacular.

Plain tile roofs should use a tilting fillet to flatten the roof pitch by 5° just above the gutter. **No interlocking tiles or slates will be acceptable on first or second tier frontages.**



Above: Examples of roofing materials.

Rainwater goods

Rainwater goods should be black coloured cast iron, aluminium or plastic. White fittings may be used over white render.

Colour

Paint and render colours within the built environment at Kingsmere should be partly based on the Colour Palettes document produced by Cherwell District Council in 1996, and partly based on the pastel creams and greys also found locally.

The Colour Palettes document explains that Bicester is notable for its variety of building styles and materials. The pale local stone sits alongside a variety of brick colours as well as renders painted in many colours.

Wall materials and colours at Kingsmere must match or harmonise with the local stone and brick. Renders should use the muted range of colours recommended in the above document as well as whites, creams and pale greys.

Street furniture must be painted black.

Decoration and detail

Consideration should be given to the level of detail that is appropriate on buildings and where it might occur.

In general residential buildings should have limited superfluous detailing emphasising their simplicity and allowing them to recede in to the streetscene. Landmark or marker buildings may be exceptions.

Buildings of strategic or community significance, such as the schools, sports pavilion or shops, may have extra adornment so that they become clearly legible as key buildings.

Figure 3.31 (Below) Appropriate render colours – other creams or pale greys will also be acceptable as well as white, subject to the agreement of the local authority.



BS 08B15	NCS S4010-G90Y BS 10B21	NCS S3020-G90Y	NCS S3010-Y10R
BS 08B17	NCS S2010-Y BS 10B17	NCS S 3010-G90Y	NCS S 010-Y

Based on Natural Colour System (NCS) Colour palette (British Standard references begin with BS).

Colours shown here are indicative only. All specifications must be done using either the BS or NCS reference numbers given.