

Rennington Parish Council

Design Codes

Final report
2023

Quality information

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Revision History

Issue no.	Issue date	Purpose	Issued by	Comments received	Comments / approved by
1 - Draft sections 1-3	21.02.2023	For Review	Elliot Joddrell	-	-
2 - Full Draft	26.04.2023	For Review	Davide Colombo	02.10.2023	Alan Tremlett
3 - Full Draft	11.10.2023	For Review	Davide Colombo	01.11.2023	Alan Tremlett
4 - Final Draft	23.11.2023	For Review	Davide Colombo	11.12.2023	Alan Tremlett
5 - Final Report	12.12.2023	For Localiy Review	Elliot Joddrell		

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Contents

1	1. Introduction	5	4	4. Design guidance & codes	54
	1.1 Background	5		4.1 Introduction	54
	1.2 Objectives	5		4.2 Character & Quality in New Development	55
	1.3 Methodology	5		4.3 Responsive Design for Infill Development and Extensions	58
	1.4 Vision	6		4.4 Sustainable Design & Climate Resilience	61
	1.5 Area of study	7			
	1.6 Who will use the guide?	9			
	1.7 Planning policy and guidance	10			
2	2. Neighbourhood Area Context Analysis	14	5	5. Checklist	66
	2.1 Historic growth	14			
	2.4 Heritage	16			
	2.2 Landscape character	21			
	2.3 Water & Flood Risk	23			
	2.5 Movement hierarchy	25			
	2.6 Built form and density	28			
	2.7 Open Space and Amenities	31			
3	3. Character study and area guidelines	34			
	3.1 Character study	34			
	3.2 Rennington 2-5	37			
	3.3 South East Farm	39			
	3.4 Church View	41			
	3.5 16 -30 Rennington Village	43			
	3.6 Southfield, Rennington Village	45			
	3.7 Stamford	47			
	3.8 Rock Village Street	49			
	3.9 Rock Mill Farm	51			



Introduction

01

1. Introduction

This section provides context and general information to introduce the project and its location

1.1 Background

The Rennington Parish Council in Northumberland has established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) in order to shape and influence development within their area.

Through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to Rennington Parish NPSG to prepare this Design Code document which forms part of the evidence base for their Neighbourhood Plan.

In February 2023, AECOM delivered a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA). The

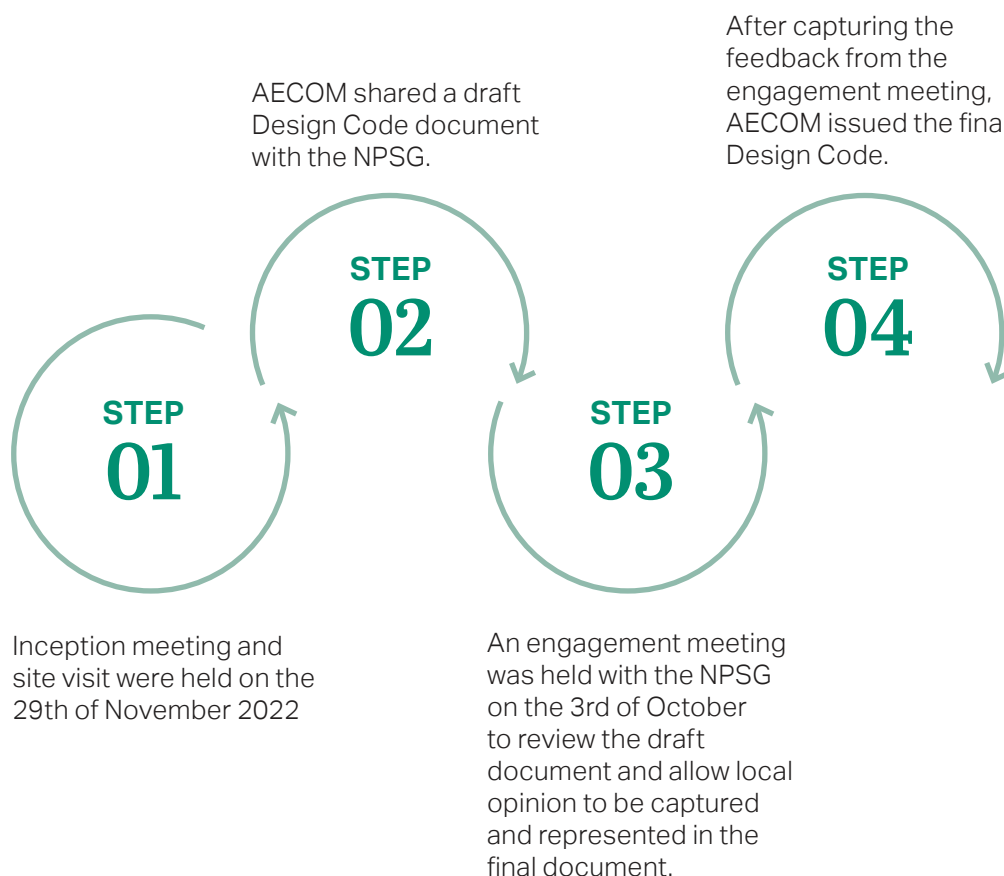
report describes the housing challenges that Rennington Parish will experience in the next 15 years.

1.2 Objectives

A Design Code is a set of illustrated design requirements that provides specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of an area. This Design Code sets out local design expectations and requirements informed by a clear understanding of the area's qualities and opportunities. It will be appended to the Rennington Neighbourhood Plan and will be given weight in decisions on planning applications in the Parish.

1.3 Methodology

The process that was undertaken to produce this Design Code document is as follows:



1.4 Vision

“Our vision is to ensure that Rennington Parish continues to protect those aspects that have attracted generations of people to choose the parish as a place to live and raise their families. Specifically by:

- Enhancing and protecting the natural living environment and promoting biodiversity;
- Ensuring any new development does not impact adversely on the important green spaces of the parish. Existing landscape features will be retained or enhanced, and important views and vistas preserved.
- Promoting easier accessibility and improving quality of life by supporting walkers, cyclists and horse riders with the development, upkeep and maintenance of footpaths and bridleways;
- Ensuring the design, materials, layout and appearance of any new housing supports and reinforces the character and distinctiveness of Rock, Rennington and the surrounding farmsteads. Developments should reflect the local architectural vernacular. Any new development will also protect the historic and heritage assets both in the Rock Conservation Area and the wider parish and will be designed to promote energy efficiency and sustainability;
- Sustaining Rennington Parish as a thriving community in its own right.”

1.5 Area of study

Rennington Parish is a civil parish in the County of Northumberland, located circa 6 km (3.73 miles) northeast of Alnwick and 54 km (33.55 miles) north of Newcastle upon Tyne. The parish is also only 5 km (3.11 miles) from the coast, and views of the sea are visible from the area. The parish boundary is partially defined by watercourses, precisely by Kittycarter Burn and the Embleton Burn to the north, the Stamford Cast to the east and Denwick Burn to the south. Two main villages can be found in the area, namely Rennington and Rock. Rock village is home to the only Conservation Area found in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Stamford and Broxfield are other settlements in the area.

The A1 crosses the parish to the west, representing the most strategic route in the area, while the B1340 (Millway Loaning, Orchard Loaning) and the B6341 are other key routes in the area. The Neighbourhood Plan area is also crossed by the railway, though no railway stations are located in the Parish. Chathill is the nearest Station to the parish.



Figure 01: View of the open landscape from Pasturehill Plantation



Figure 02: Sunset over the Neighbourhood area's natural landscape



*Rock
village*

*Rennington
village*

F.3 | **Figure 03: Study area**

1 km



1.6 Who will use the guide?

The Design Code should be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high-quality development in Rennington Parish. It will be used differently by different players in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table below.

A valuable way a Design Code can be used is as part of a process of co-design and involvement that seeks to understand and takes account of local preferences and expectations for design quality. As such the guidance and codes can help to facilitate conversations on the various topics to help align expectations and aid understanding and the balancing of key local issues. A design code alone will not automatically secure optimum design outcomes but should help all involved.

Potential users	How they will use the design guidelines
Applicants, developers, & landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
Local planning authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The Design Guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Parish council or neighbourhood plan group	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are complied with.
Community groups & local residents	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

Table 01: User groups and how they will use the guidance

1.7 Planning policy and guidance

This section outlines the national and local planning policy and guidance documents that have influenced this design guide and codes.

1.7.1 National Planning Policy & Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published on 27 March 2012 and updated on 24 July 2018, 19 February 2019, 20 July 2021 and September 2023. It sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF outlines the Government's overarching economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. These policies apply to the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and act as a framework against which decisions are made on planning applications.

The sections of the updated NPPF which are of most relevance to design and this design code are:

2. Achieving sustainable development

11a - all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;

12. Achieving well-designed places

126. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

190. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

Recent national design guidance documents that should influence the design quality of the built environment are; the National Model Design Code and Building for a Healthy Life (see inset focus boxes).

2021 - National Model Design Code DLUHC

National Model
Design Code

Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



This report provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide, which reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design.

2020 - Building for a Healthy Life Homes England



Building for a Healthy Life

A Design Toolkit for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces



Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the new (2020) name for Building for Life, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The new name reflects the crucial role that the built environment has in promoting wellbeing. The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed (and completed) developments, but can also provide useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

1.7.2 Local policy and guidance

Rennington Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the unitary authority of Northumberland County Council. The following local planning documents were reviewed to gain a better understanding of the area.

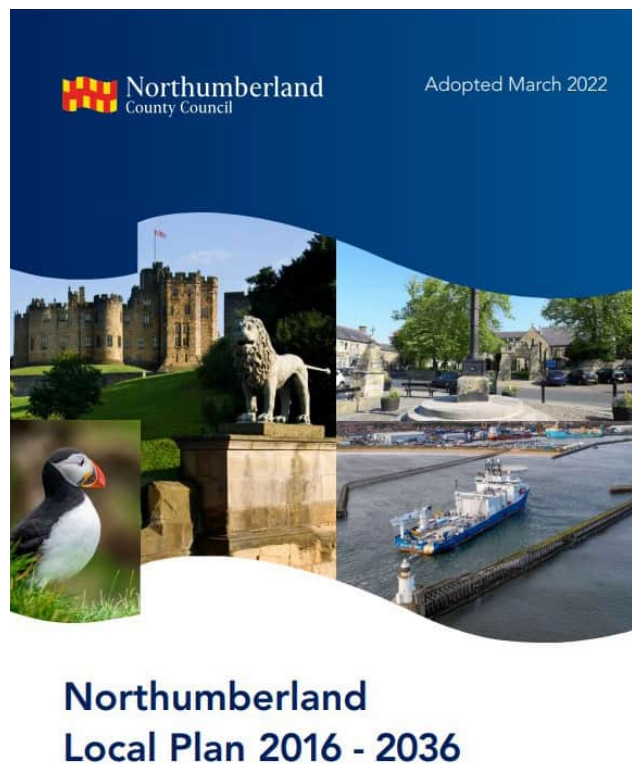
Northumberland Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (NCC, 2022)

This document replaces the policies set out in the previous Alnwick District Council Wide Local Plan (1997) and a series of other policies included in other former District, Borough and County Council plans. The plan defines a clear 'Spatial Portrait' to then move on to identifying a vision and strategic objectives and outcomes for the County. The Plan analyses a series of different topics, namely:

- Economic Development
- Town Centres and Central Services
- Housing
- Quality of Place
- Connectivity and Movement
- Environment
- Water Environment
- Pollution and Land Quality
- Managing Natural Resources
- Infrastructure and Delivery

Discussion Report: Rennington Neighbourhood Plan (Rennington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, 2022)

The report provides an overview of the context, including the planning policy, the Neighbourhood Plan Area, as well as the community engagement exercise carried out so far. The document then defines planning matters to be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan and non-planning matters to be separately managed. The report also sets out objectives and policy areas which might be relevant for Rennington Parish and help to deliver the vision defined in the Northumberland Local Plan 2016 – 2036. Relevant existing policies from the Northumberland Local Plan are identified, as well as areas where more detailed local policy could be provided.



F.4

Figure 04: Northumberland Local Plan 2016 - 2026 front cover

**Neighbourhood Area
Context Analysis**

02

2. Neighbourhood Area Context Analysis

This section outlines the broad physical, historic and contextual characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

2.1 Historic growth

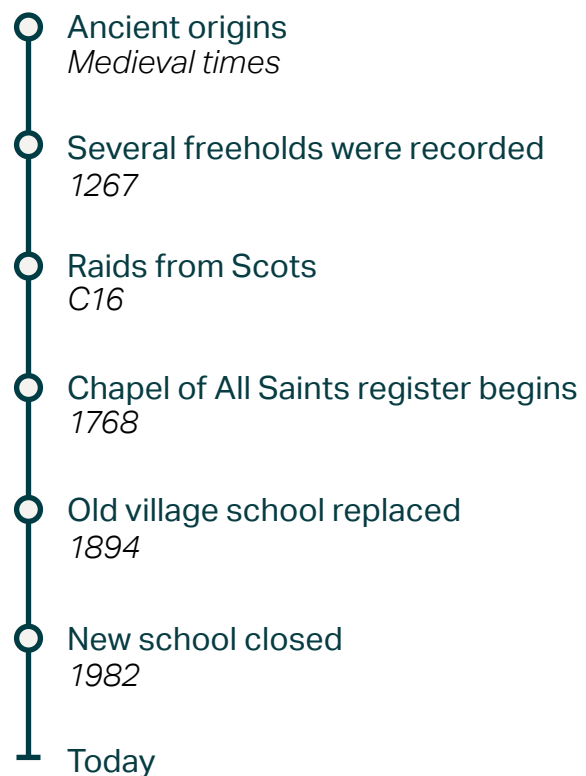
Settlements in the area find their origins in medieval times. The two key villages, Rennington and Rock were clearly separate, being part of different land ownerships. Stamford and Broxfield were considered hamlets on their own.

In 1267, several freeholds were recorded in the Neighbourhood area. Rennington village and Broxfield fell under the same ownership in 1414, when the land was transferred to the Percy family, part of the Barony of Alnwick held by The Earl of Northumberland.

In the late C16, both Rennington and Rock villages suffered raids from Scots. According to the Topographic Dictionary of England (Samuel Lewis, 1831), what is now referred to as Rennington Parish was a chapelry in the old parish of Embleton.

Another source, namely History, Topography, and Directory of Northumberland (1855) suggests that Rennington was also a township and a village 1,812 acres wide, with the Chapel of All Saints being an ancient building with its register beginning in 1768.

In 1894 the old village school was replaced by a new school, which closed in 1982 and is now the Village Hall. The settlements went through further extension in the last 300 years, particularly Rennington village.



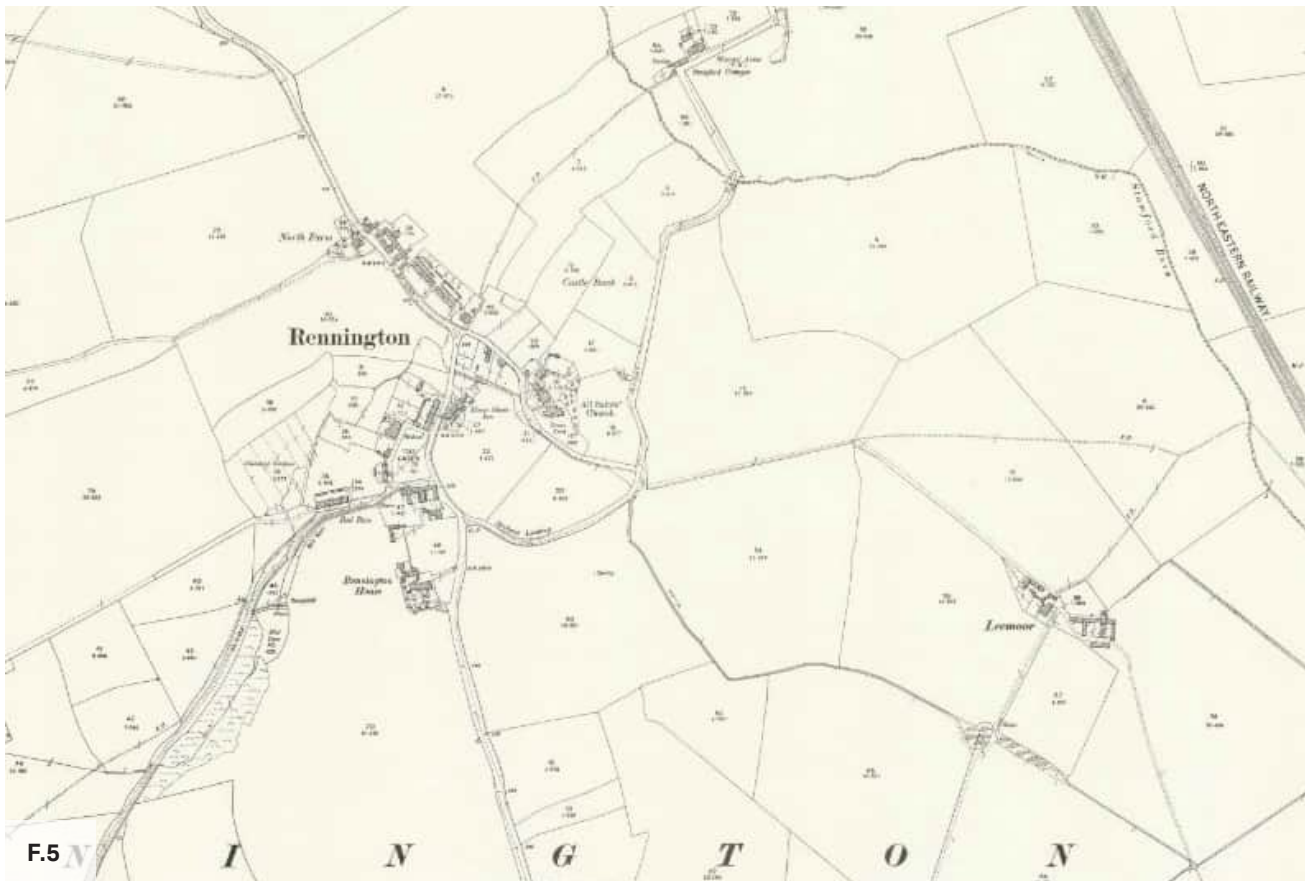


Figure 05: Rennington village in 1896



Figure 06: Rock village in 1896

2.4 Heritage

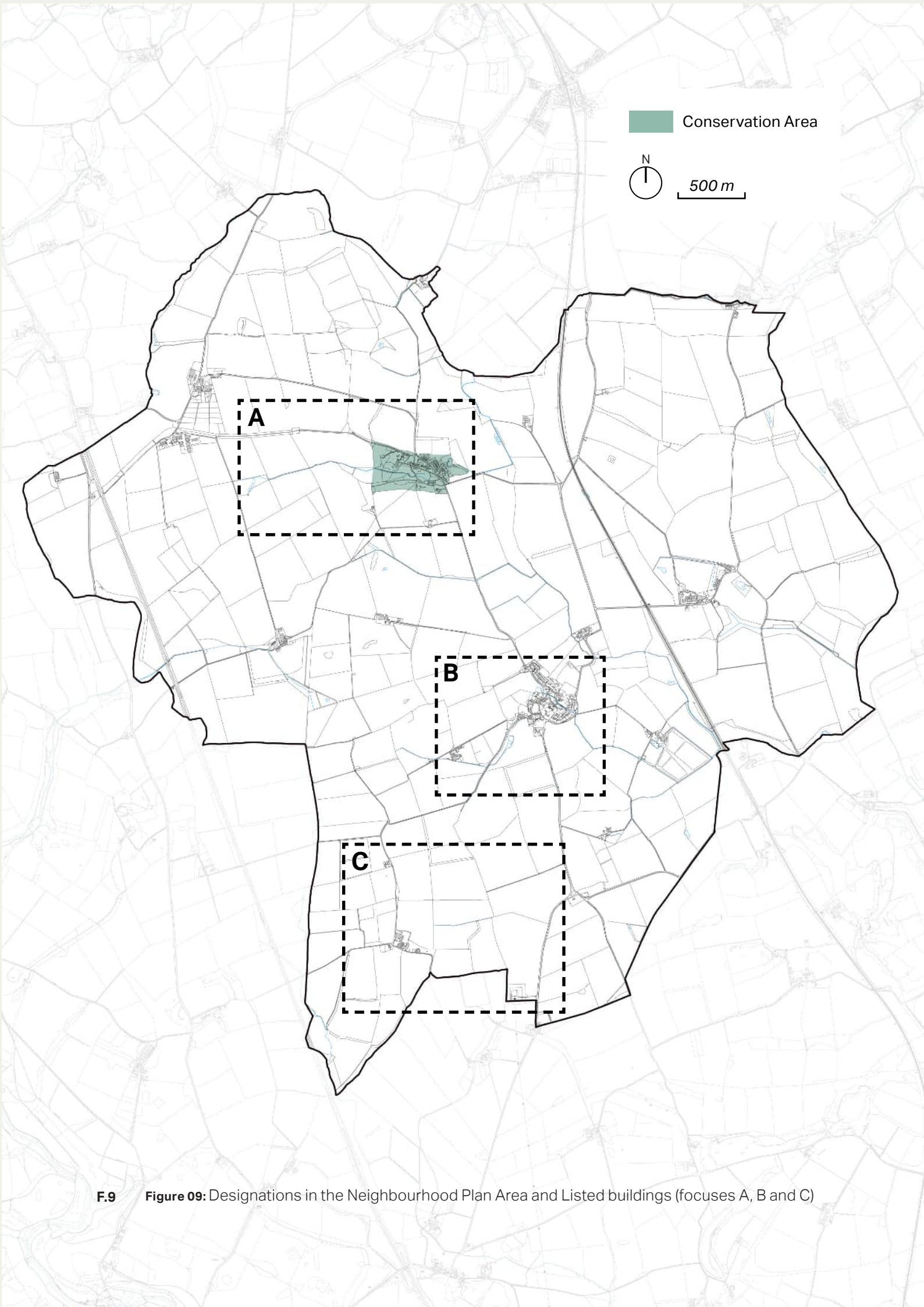
There is a total of 30 Listed Buildings in the parish. All the Listed Buildings are Grade II, except for two buildings in the Rock Conservation Area, namely the Church of Saints Philip and James and the Rock Hall. One Scheduled Monument is also located in Rennington Parish, namely the Ellsnook round barrow northeast of Heiferlaw bridge. The Rock Conservation Area is the only designated conservation area in the parish and encompasses 16 of the 30 Listed Buildings in the area.



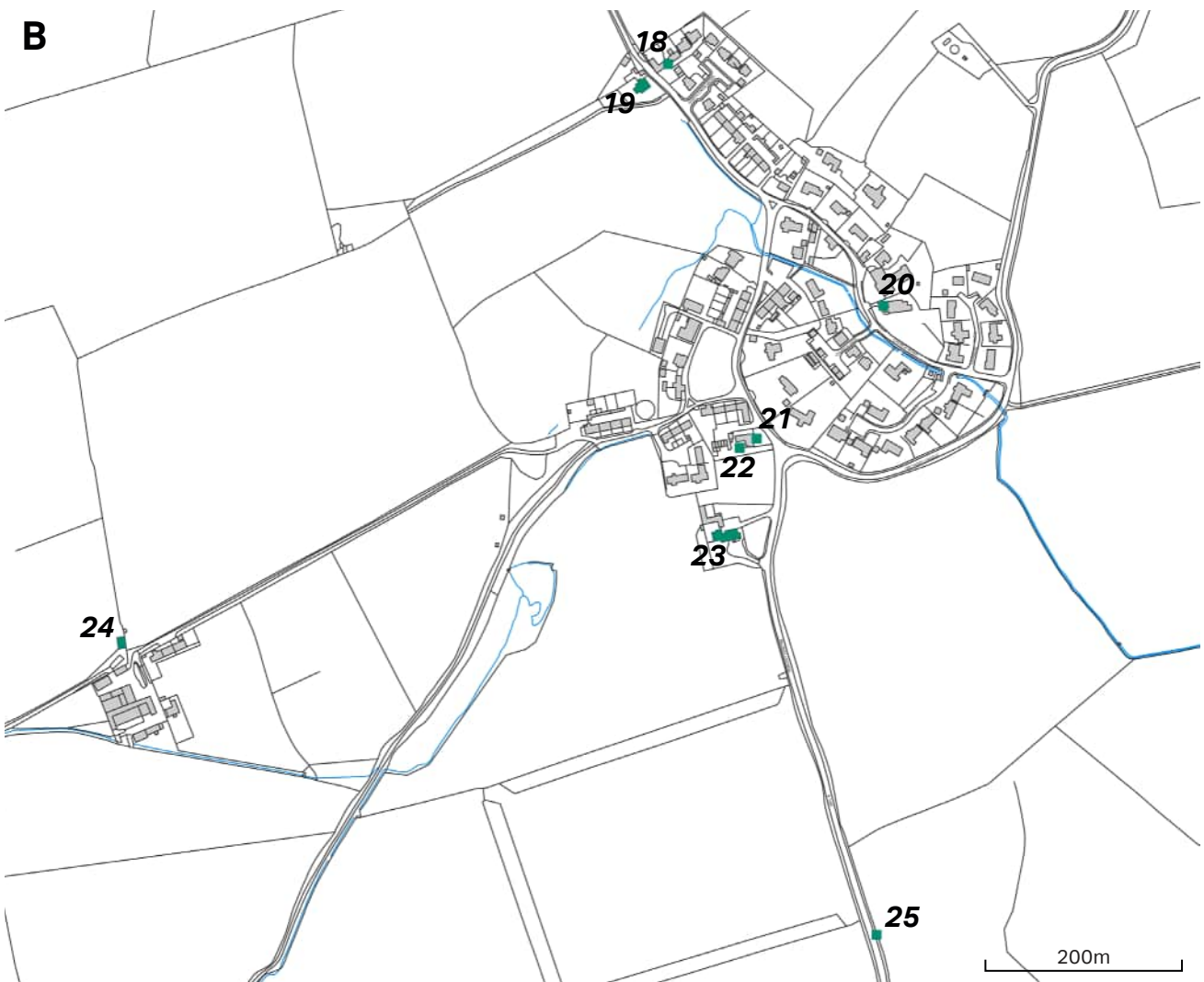
Figure 07: Church of Saints Philip and James



Figure 08: Rennington South East Farmhouse



F.9 **Figure 09:** Designations in the Neighbourhood Plan Area and Listed buildings (focuses A, B and C)



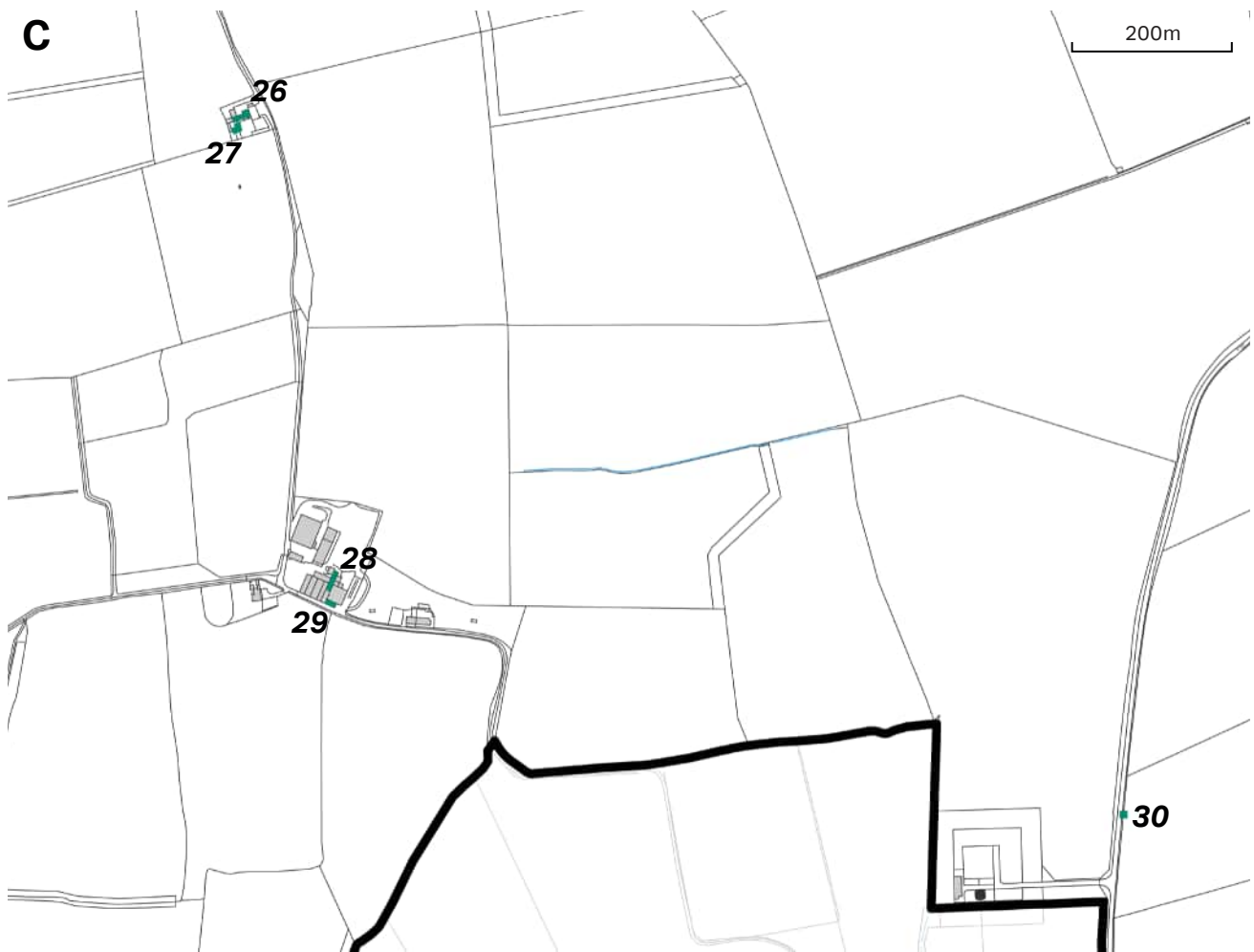


Figure 10: Rock Hall

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Entrance screen to Rock Hall | 20. Rennington War Memorial |
| 2. Church of Saints Philip and James | 21. Cartshed/Granary and bothy 100 metres north east of Rennington South East Farmhouse |
| 3. Bridge over stream 50 metres south of Church Saints Philip and James | 22. Privy and attached wall behind bothy 100 metres north east of Rennington South East Farmhouse |
| 4. 21 and 23, Rock Village | 23. Rennington South East Farmhouse |
| 5. 19, Rock Village | 24. Covered reservoir 100 metres north of Rennington West Farmhouse |
| 6. 15 and 17, Rock Village | 25. Mile post 400 metres south of Rennington South East Farm |
| 7. Village Hall | 26. Rennington Moor Farmhouse and attached farmbuilding |
| 8. 11, Rock Village | 27. Yard walls to south of farmbuildings |
| 9. 9, Rock Village | 28. Barn and engine house on north side of main farmbuilding group |
| 10. 10, 12 and 14, Rock Village | 29. Smithy at south east corner of main farmbuilding group |
| 11. Rock Farmhouse and adjacent estate office | 30. Milepost 300 metres north of Denwick Lane end |
| 12. Dovecote 30 metres south east of Rock Farmhouse | |
| 13. Signpost at road junction south of Rock Farm | |
| 14. Rock Hall | |
| 15. The Chapel outbuildings and yard walls at north end of Rock Hall | |
| 16. Walls of former garden to north of Rock Hall | |
| 17. Limekiln south of Kiln plantation 700 metres south east of Rock midstead | |
| 18. Cartshed/Granary opposite North Farmhouse | |
| 19. North Farmhouse | |

2.2 Landscape character

Rennington Parish is a rural parish with natural landscape covering the majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The landscape has gently rolling hills and slopes towards the sea, with the highest point being 109m and the lowest 40m. Views of the sea and the Northumberland Coast AONB are visible from specific points in the area. Woodland patches are located throughout the parish, particularly to the west and along watercourses. A number of plantations can be found in the area, namely: Middlemoor Plantation, Horseclose Plantation, Oakslaw Plantation, Ladywell Plantation, Kiln Plantation, Kittyarter Plantation, Stonedyke Plantation, Patten's Plantation and Whinny Plantation.

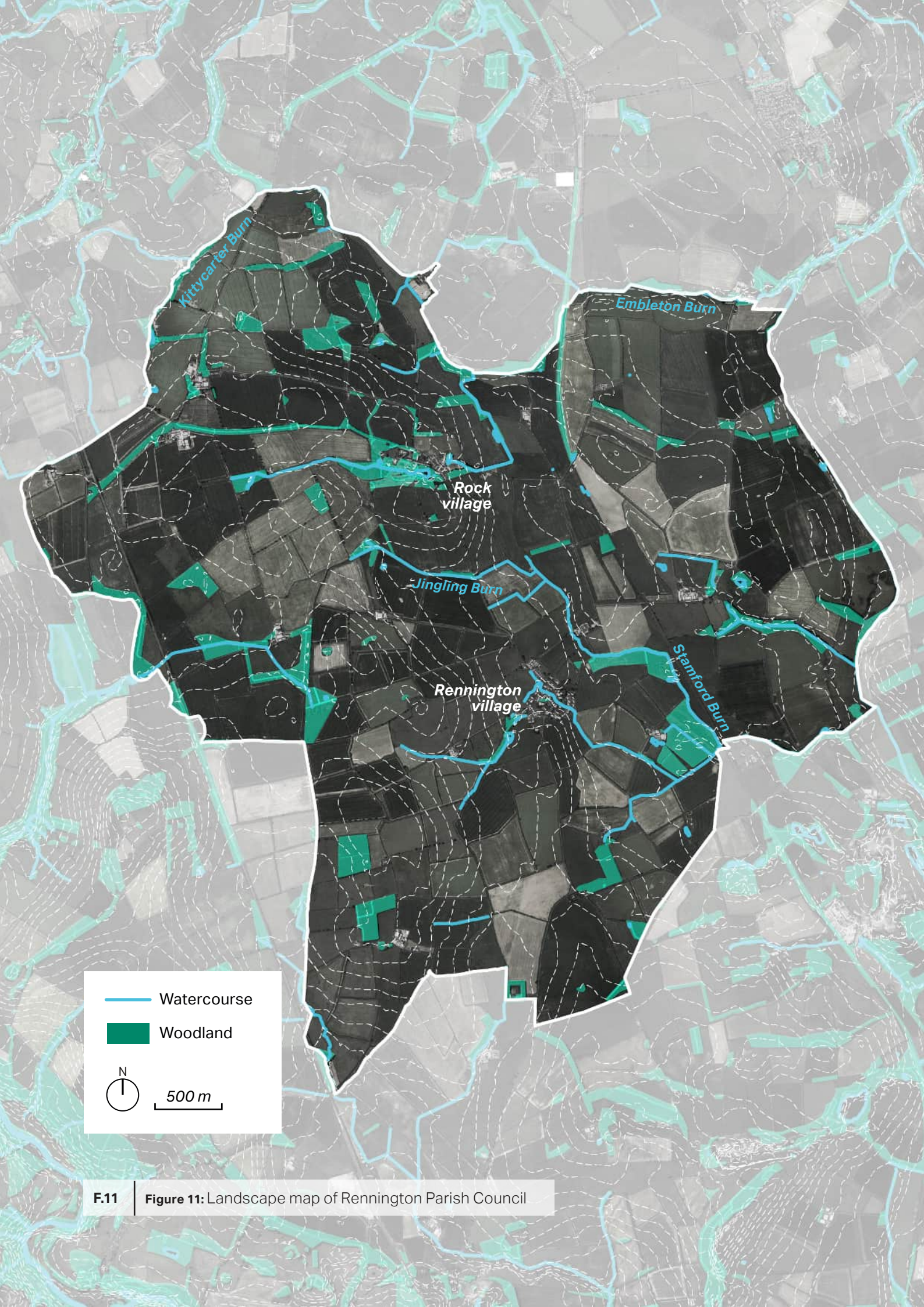
According to the National Character Area profiles, Rennington Parish is mostly included in the North Northumberland Coastal Plain, with just a small area being part of the Northumberland Sandstone Hills to the west.

The North Northumberland Coastal Plain NCA

The North Northumberland Coastal Plain NCA is included between the coastline and the North Northumberland Sandstone Hills NCA to the west and runs from the Scottish border to the mouth of the River Coquet to the south. It is characterised by gentle hills and large arable fields bounded by irregular hedgerows and sometimes sandstone walls. Woodlands are patched throughout the area and often distribute along watercourses. The coast is exceptionally diverse, including rocky headlands and cliffs as well as sandy beaches backed by dunes.

The Northumberland Sandstone Hills NCA

The Northumberland Sandstone Hills NCA is characterised by flat ridgetops offering views of the Cheviots to the west and of the sea to the east. The ridgetops and upper tops are covered with heather and grass alternated with large patches of conifer. At lower elevations pasture with some arable cultivation dominate, while broadleaved woodland is located on scarp slopes and along watercourses. The Sandstone Hills play an important role in recharging the Fell Sandstone Aquifer, which is fundamental for the provision of water locally.



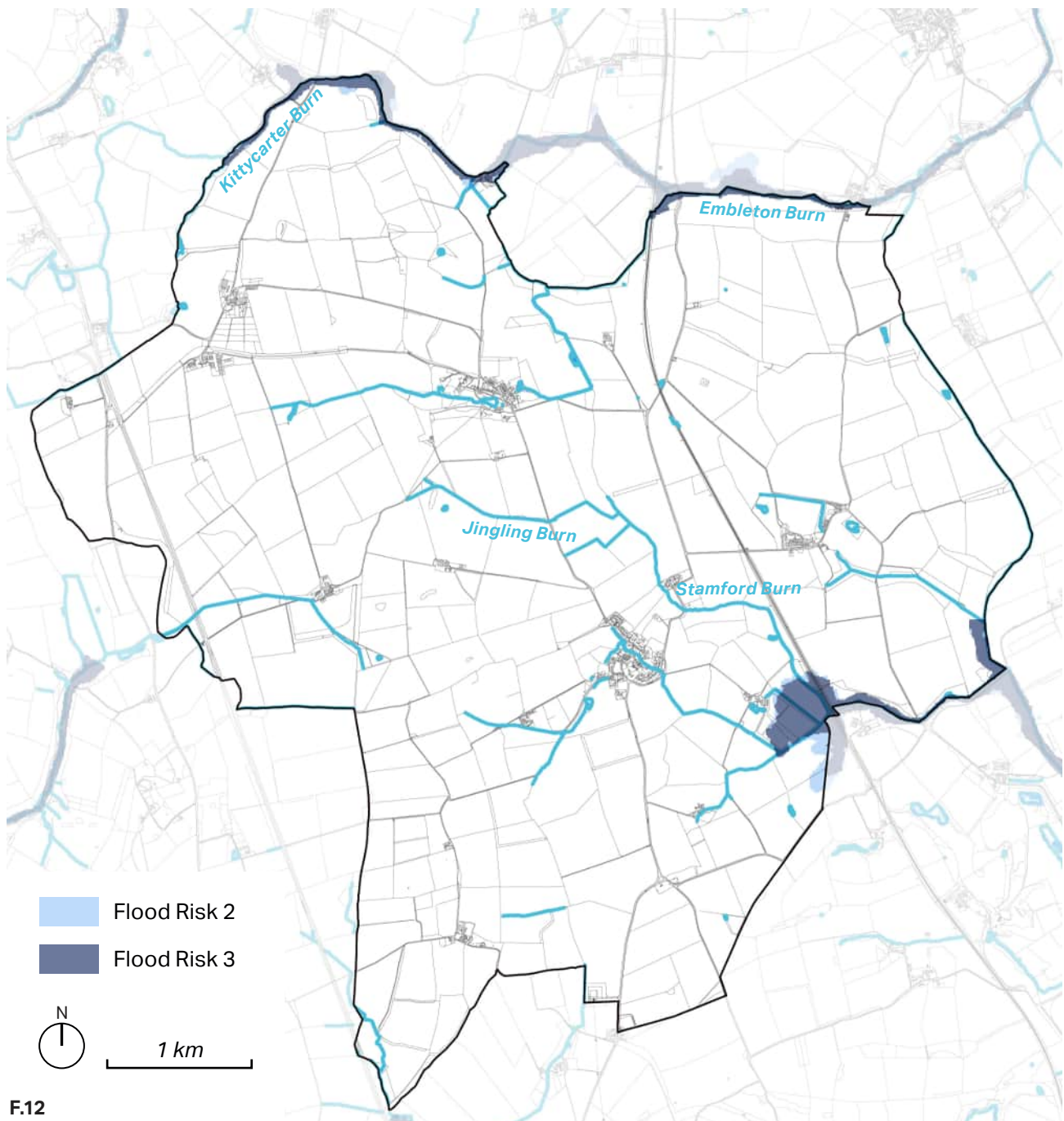
F.11 | **Figure 11:** Landscape map of Rennington Parish Council

2.3 Water & Flood Risk

Many minor watercourses and ponds can be found in the Neighbourhood area. The main ones are Stamford Burn, in the central part of the area, and Embleton Burn, which defines part of the parish boundary to the north. A number of other watercourses can be found in the area, namely Stamford Cast (branching out Stamford Burn), Jingling Burn, Kittycarter Burn and Denwick Burn.

Ponds are also distributed throughout the parish: the most notable is the pond located next to the Church of Saint Philip and James in Rock village.

Only limited flood risk zones can be found along the northern edge and the eastern edge, however they include properties: more precisely, Lee Moor is included in the Stamford Burn flood risk zone and Rock Mill Farm in the Embleton Burn one.



F.12

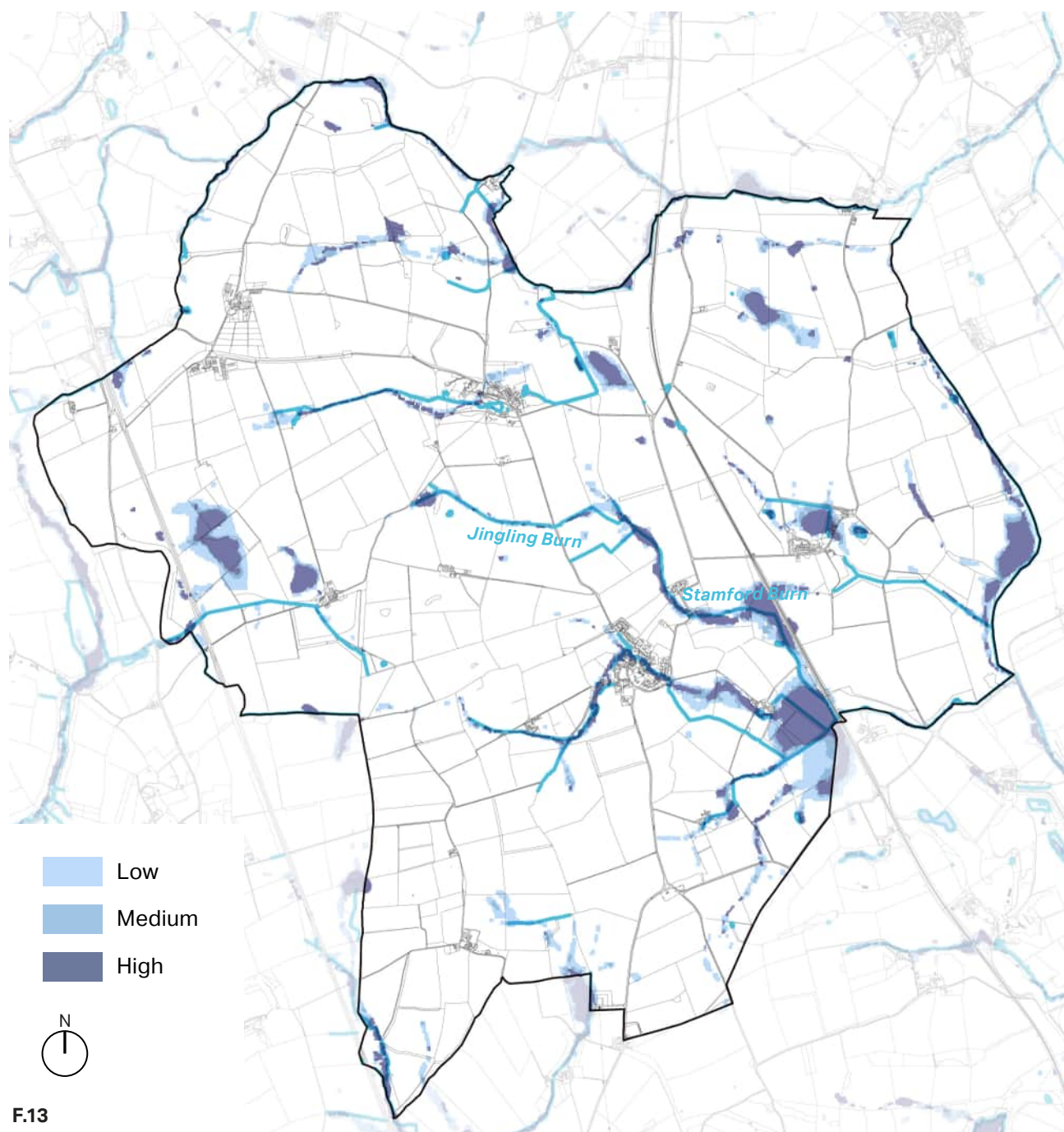
Figure 12: Flood risk map

Surface water flood zones include other areas within the parish. Stamford Burn is one of those, as it's identified as a high-risk flooding area for surface water. High-risk areas can be found in Rennington and Rock villages too, as well as in Stamford. Another wide high-risk area is found along the eastern boundary of the parish, in proximity to the railway.



F.14

Figure 14: Stream running next to Church View development in Rennington village



F.13

Figure 13: Flood risk map for surface water

2.5 Movement hierarchy

Rennington Parish is a rural parish, and therefore only one primary route can be found in the Neighbourhood Plan area, namely the A1, which connects the area to Alnwick and Newcastle upon Tyne to the south and Scotland to the north.

A number of secondary routes can be found in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The B1340 (Millway Loaning, Orchard Loaning) crosses Rennington village and connects it to Alnwick to the south and to Christon Bank to the north, while the B6341 branches out from the A1 and heads towards Alnwick.

C73 is another key route as it connects Rennington village with Rock village to the north. A series of farm tracks and private roads can be found all over the Neighbourhood Plan area, mostly providing access to farms (for example Broxfield Farm).

The A1 in Northumberland is part of the government's Roads Investment Strategy announced in autumn 2014. The proposed dualling of the A1 would implicate new access routes to Rock South Farm and Rock Midsteads. These changes to the local road network (if implemented) will have some effect on future development in the western boundaries of Rock. For further details, please refer to Highways England's *A1 in Northumberland* report.

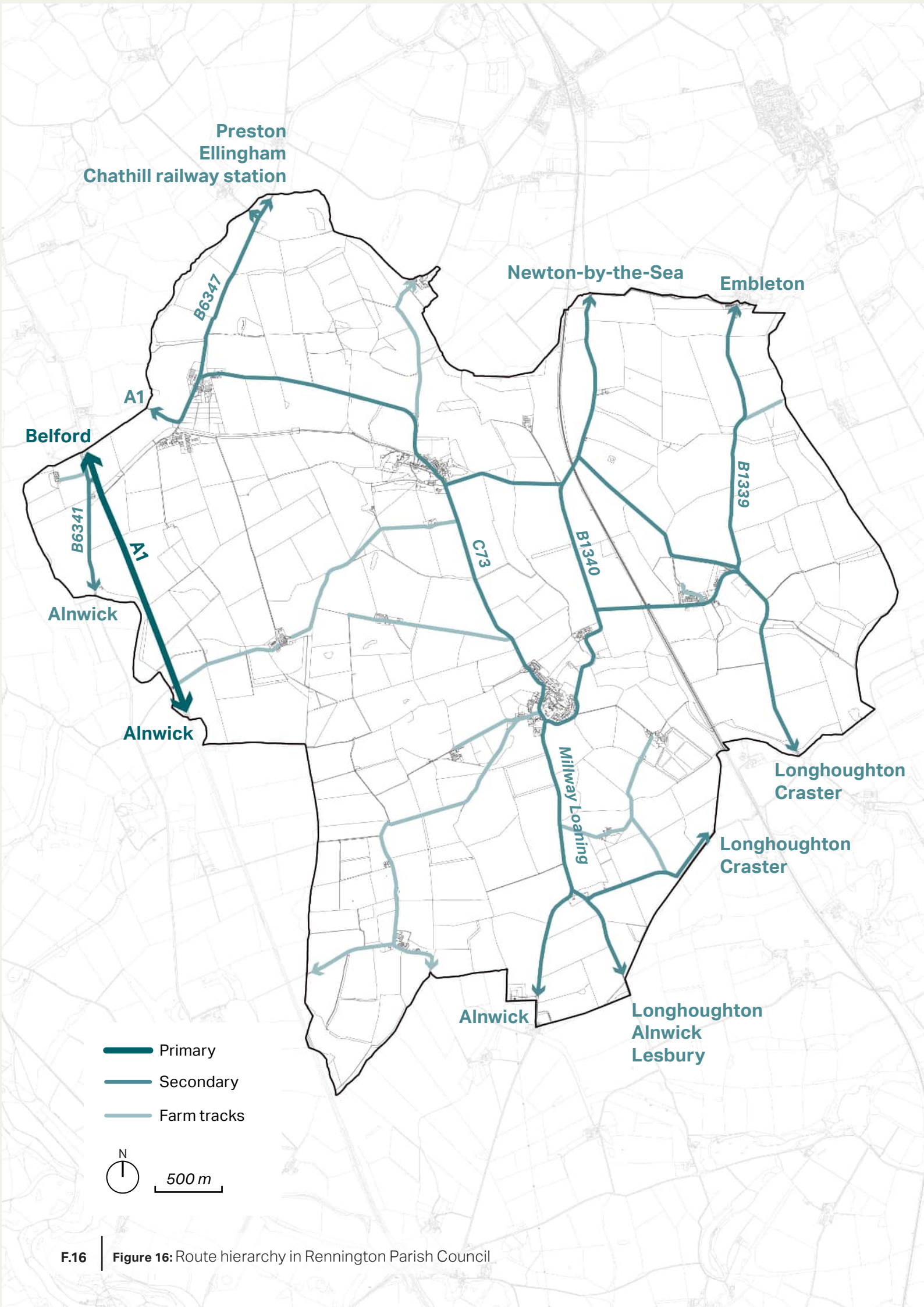
2.5.1 Pedestrian and public transport

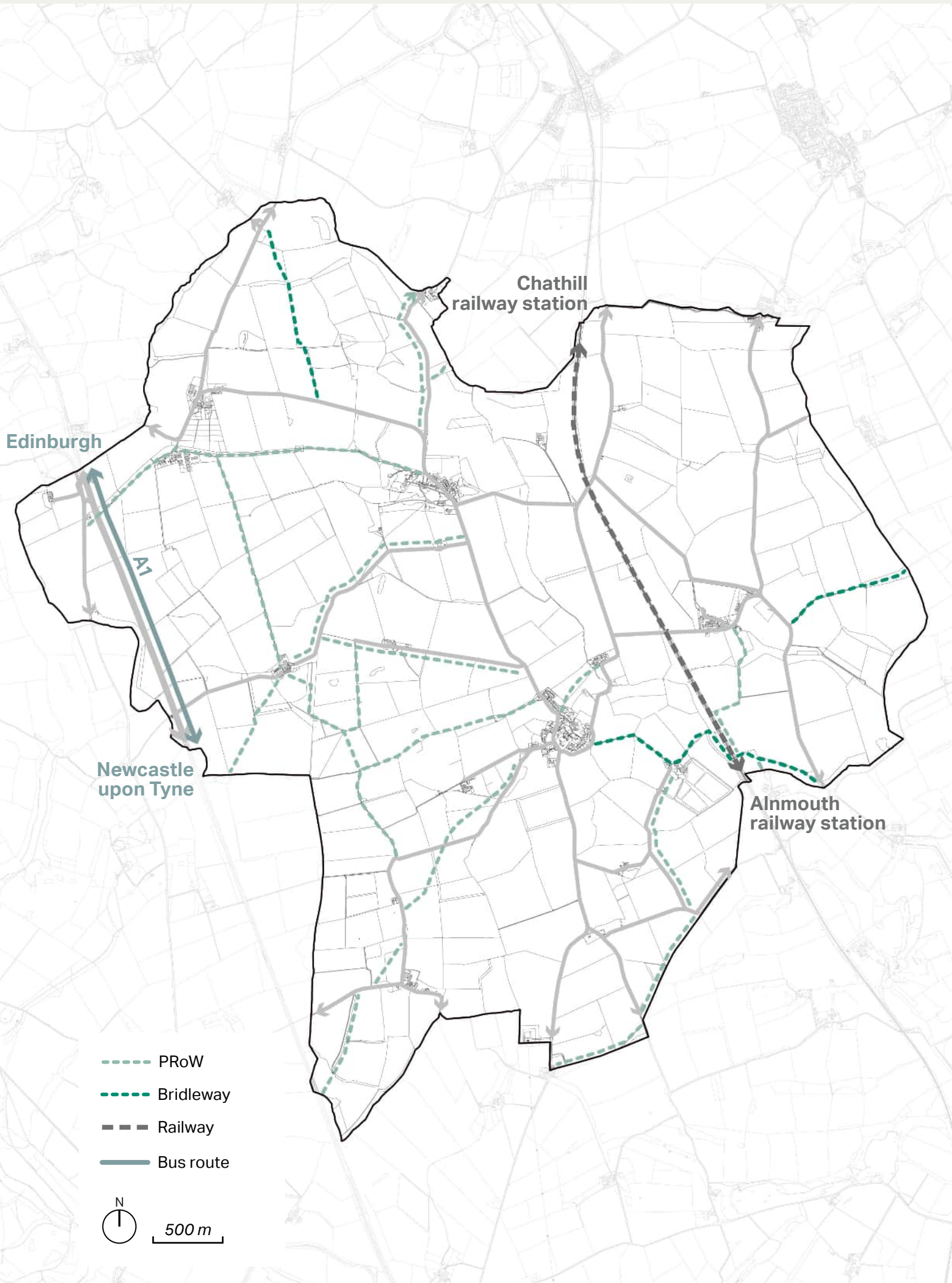
A network of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) is distributed across the Neighbourhood Plan area, particularly in its western portion, with many of them running next to secondary or tertiary vehicular routes. Two bridleways can also be found east of Rennington village.

No public transport serves the area, however the Mainline Railway crosses the Neighbourhood Plan area. The nearest stations are Alnmouth, 8.03 km (4.99 miles) to the south and Berwick upon Tweed, 40.44 km (25.13 miles) to the north. Services include the Northern Line which stops at Chathill Station and LNER which stops at Alnmouth.



Figure 15: View of C73





2.6 Built form and density

The Neighbourhood area is mainly occupied by landscape and nature, and its settlements are scattered across the area. Beyond several farms and minor settlements, Rennington and Rock are the main villages and thus register the highest densities in the area.

Orchard Loaning partially surrounds Rennington village, which is distributed around the main core of All Saints Church. Church Road is another important route cutting across the village with dwellings found along its length.

Density is generally low, ranging from 6 to 10 dwellings per hectare (dph).

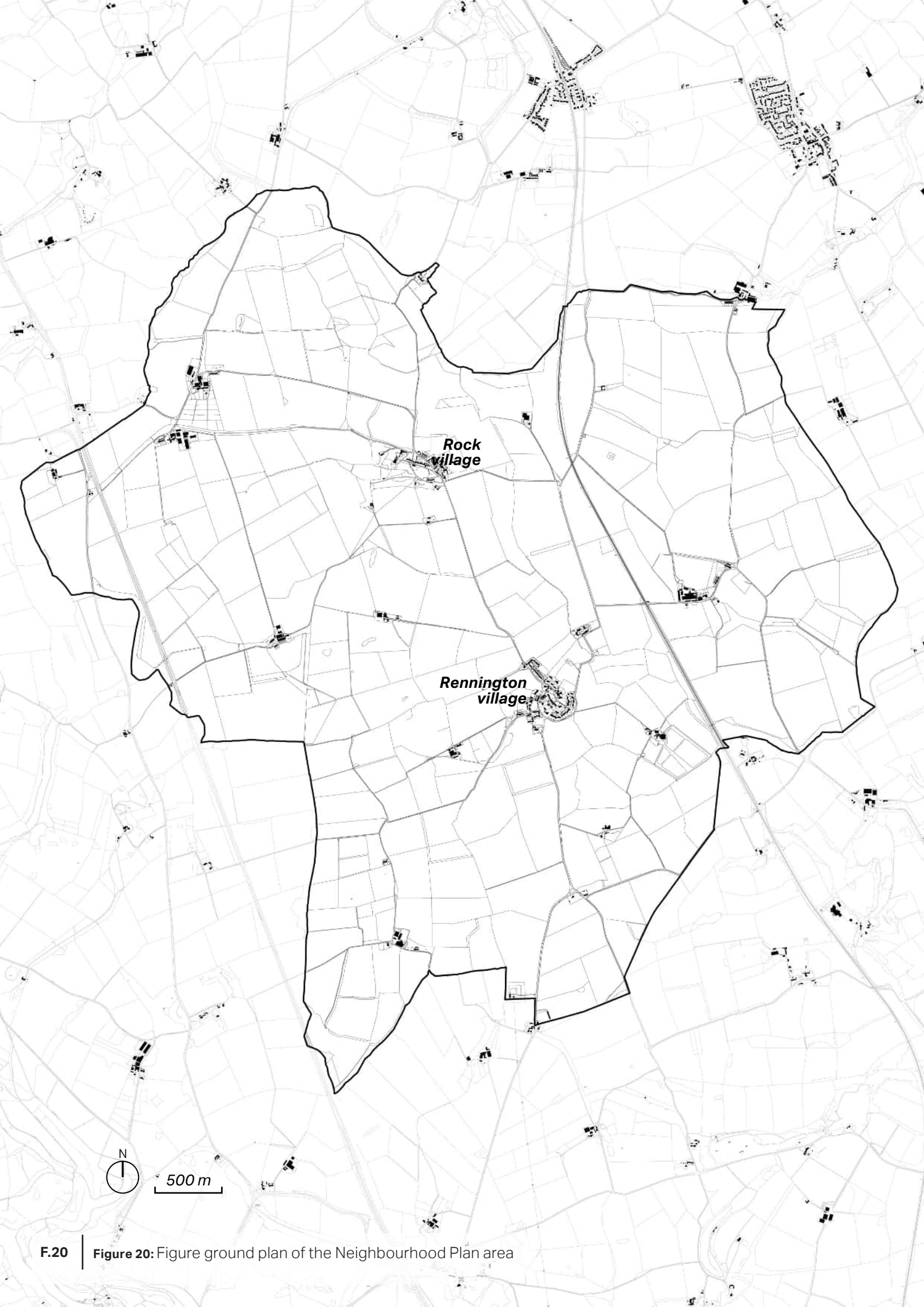
Rock village is more linear compared to Rennington village, and maintains a compact settlement area. C73 is the main route of the village. Rock village records the highest density in the Neighbourhood Plan area, which is 13dph, registered in Rock Home Farm.



Figure 18: Rennington village's circular shape



Figure 19: Rock village has a more linear distribution



F.20 | **Figure 20:** Figure ground plan of the Neighbourhood Plan area



F.21

Figure 21: 1 ha housing density samples in Rennington village



F.22

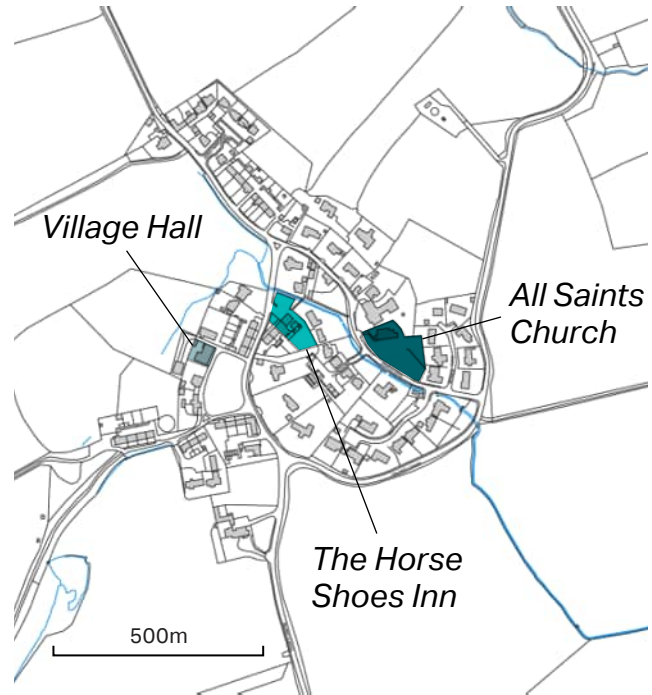
Figure 22: 1 ha housing density samples in Rock village

2.7 Open Space and Amenities

All the settlements located in the area are predominantly residential or farms, however some amenities can be found in the parish.

In Rennington village, the All Saints Church is located on Church Road, while Rennington Village Hall is located at the village green, which represents a key open space for the settlement. The only pub in the area is The Horse Shoes Inn, located west of the church. There is also The Grange Retirement Home situated on Church Road

The key amenities in Rock village are the Church of Saints Philip and James and the Rock Cricket Club. The Rocking Horse Café and Gallery are located at Rock Midstead out of the main settlement.

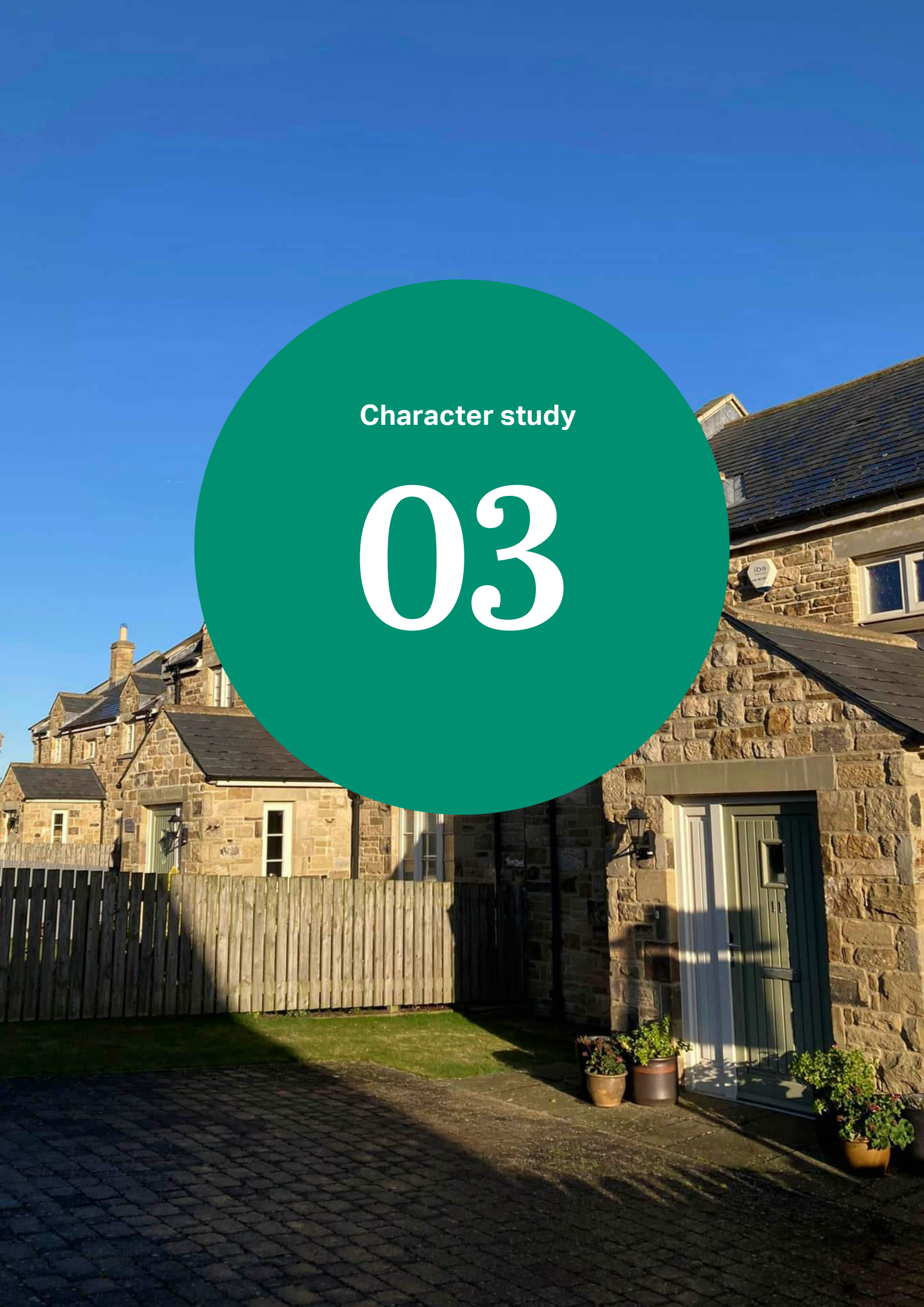


F.23



Figure 23: Open spaces and Amenities in Rennington village (above) and Rock village (below)

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The background image shows a row of stone houses under a clear blue sky. A large green circle is centered over the image, containing the text 'Character study' and the number '03'. The house in the foreground has a green door and a wooden fence in front of it. Potted plants are visible near the door.

Character study

03

3. Character study and area guidelines

This section presents a study of the character of the Neighbourhood Plan area through the analysis of local design examples.

3.1 Character study

Rennington Parish is historically a rural and agricultural parish and its built form reflects that characteristic. Development is focused on two key villages, Rennington and Rock, but other scattered farms comprising a main farmhouse with subsidiary buildings such as barns, workers' cottages, stables and dairies can be found in the Neighbourhood area.

There are examples of modern and planned detached housing developments, however the following study will mostly analyse developments that reflect the rural character of the Neighbourhood area, which predominantly include sandstone elevations and walls and slate roof tiles. These local examples should guide the design of new development in the parish area and make sure that the local character is preserved and enhanced.

The following examples will explore and clarify the main features of typical developments in Rennington Parish:

1. Rennington 2-5
2. South East Farm
3. Church View
4. Church Lane 16-30
5. Stamford Cottages
6. Rock terraces
7. Rock Mill Farm
8. Southfield, Rennington Village



Figure 24: Terraces in proximity to Rennington village green

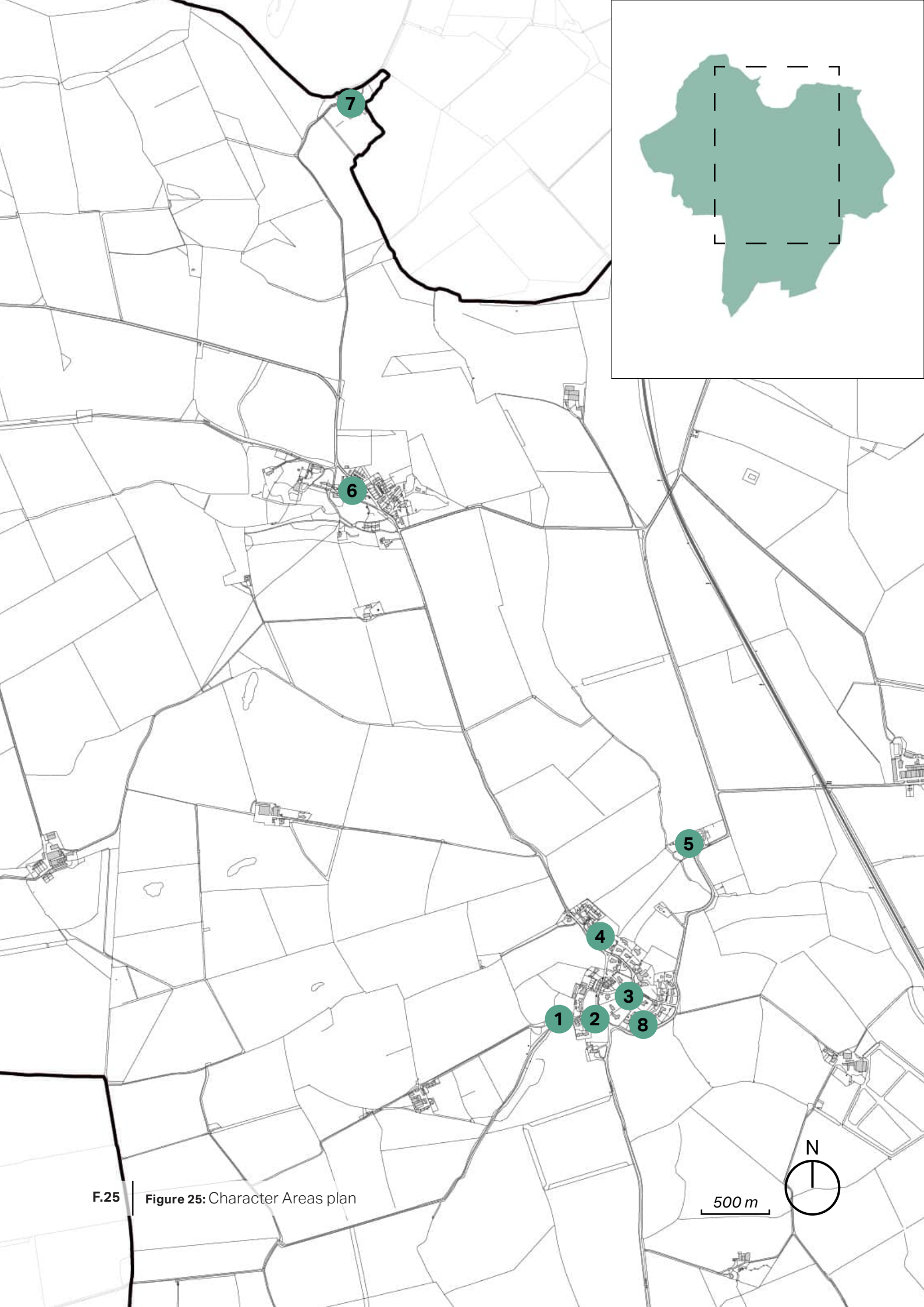




Figure 26: Windows often have lintels, architraves or quoins in the Neighbourhood plan area



Figure 27: Sandstone is the predominant elevation material used in Rennington Parish Council



Figure 28: Low sandstone boundary walls are a frequent boundary treatment in the area



Figure 29: Natural slate tiles are common in the Neighbourhood plan area

1

Rennington 2-5

3.2 Rennington 2-5

The following plan analyses Rennington 2-5, on the western edge of Rennington village.

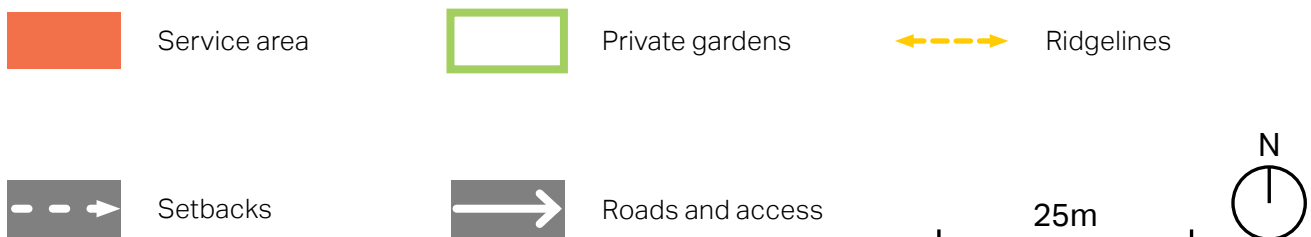


Figure 30: Rennington 2-5

Factors	Appearance characteristics
Layout and Setbacks	Building orientation is aligned with the main route. Buildings include a row of terraces and service buildings behind. Two key two components create an internal service area. The terraces have a 3m to 7m setback from the main route.
Elevations and Detailing	All buildings have sandstone elevations. Windows are sashes with sandstone lintels and quoins. Doors also have sandstone quoins and architraves. Quoins can be observed too.
Vehicular Access and Parking	There is one key access from the western side of the service area. Parking is located to the west of the terraces and in the internal service area.
Boundaries	Boundaries include low sandstone walls, native hedgerows and low timber fences.
Green Spaces and Landscape	Buildings are surrounded by open landscape. Terraces have formalised front gardens facing the main route, while back gardens are located behind service buildings and include allotments. No mature trees are included within the analysed area, however they can be found to its northeast and southwest.
Heights and Roofscape	Buildings are 1 storey high and all have grey slate gable roofs. Each terrace has slate ridges and stone chimneys, while timber roof fascias can be found on terraces.

Table 03: Rennington 2-5 character study table



Figure 31: Sandstone and grey slate are the key materials used for terraces



Figure 32: View of the terraces including their front gardens

2

South East Farm

3.3 South East Farm

The following plan analyses South East Farm.

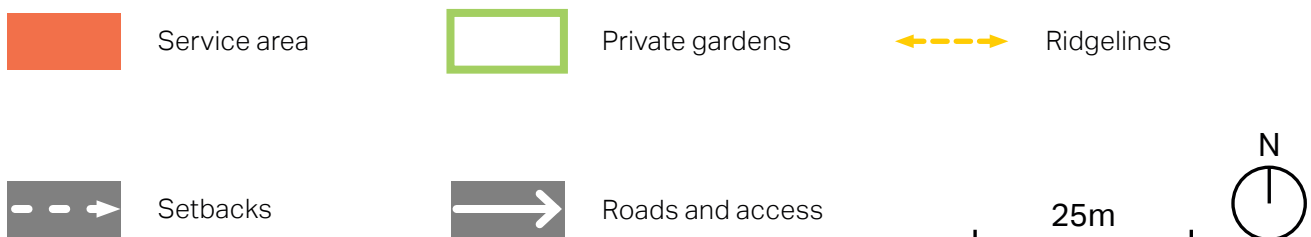


Figure 33: South East Farm

Factors	Appearance characteristics
Layout and Setbacks	Buildings are arranged orthogonally one to the other and the main row of terraces faces Rennington village green. Buildings include a row of terraces and refurbished farm buildings. The main body to the north creates an internal service area with the buildings to the south. Setbacks vary from 0m to 20m.
Elevations and Detailing	All buildings have sandstone elevations. Windows are sashes and casements with sandstone lintels, quoins and architraves occasionally. Roof dormers are located on the main row of terraces. Doors facing the Rennington village green have timber framed porches while all the remaining have sandstone quoins and architraves. Quoins can be observed too.
Vehicular Access and Parking	There are two accesses to the internal service area, one from Rennington village green and the other from the route to the east of the analysed area. Parking is located in the internal service area, where garages can be observed too.
Boundaries	Boundaries include low sandstone walls and low timber fences.
Green Spaces and Landscape	The main row of terraces faces Rennington village green, a key green space for the village, and open landscape surrounds buildings to the west and south. Terraces have formalised front gardens facing the main route, while back gardens face the internal service area. No mature trees are included within the analysed area.
Heights and Roofscape	Buildings are 1 - 2 storeys high, and natural slate gable roofs, chimneys and coped gables can be found on the northern terraces.

Table 04: South East Farm development character study table



Figure 34: View of the terraces from the Rennington village green



Figure 35: View of the terraces including their front gardens and low sandstone walls

3

Church View

3.4 Church View

The following plan analyses Church View development.

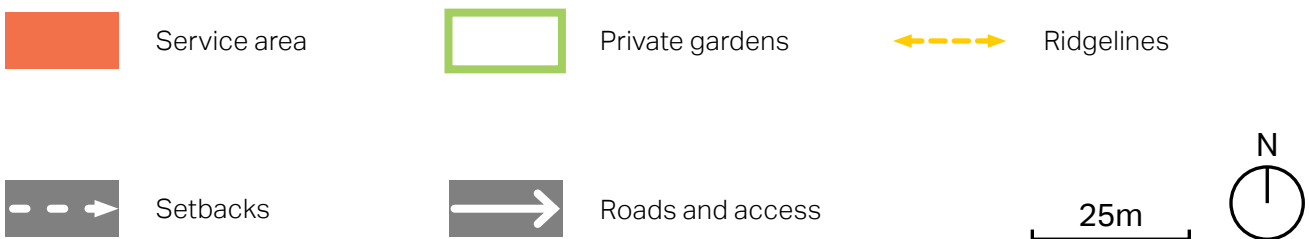


Figure 36: Church View development

Factors	Appearance characteristics
Layout and Setbacks	Buildings include a total of four detached houses and their garages. An internal service area with parking space and garages is located at the back of the properties. Setbacks vary from 25m to 30m.
Elevations and Detailing	All buildings have sandstone elevations. Windows are sashes with stone mullions, sandstone lintels, quoins and architraves. Skylight windows and dormers can also be observed sporadically. Doorways are generally unsheltered. Quoins can be observed too.
Vehicular Access and Parking	The internal service area is accessible from Church Road.
Boundaries	Boundaries include sandstone walls and hedgerows.
Green Spaces and Landscape	Each property has a formalised garden surrounding it. Two lawns can be found in front of the properties, and a stream separates them from the main road. Mature trees can be found in the surrounding gardens.
Heights and Roofscape	Buildings are 1 - 2 storeys high and have natural slate gable roofs. Chimneys, coped gables and roof fascias can also be observed.

Table 05: Church View development character study table



Figure 37: View of the rear of 3 Church View



Figure 38: View of the rear of 1 & 2 Church View and their low sandstone walls

4

16 -30 Rennington Village

3.5 16 -30 Rennington Village

The following plan analyses 16 -30 Rennington Village.



F.39

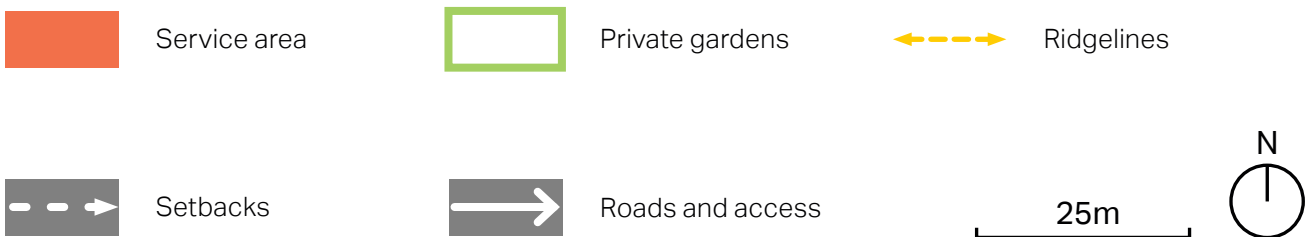


Figure 39: 16 -30 Rennington Village

Factors	Appearance characteristics
Layout and Setbacks	Buildings orientation is parallel to C73. Buildings include a row of terraces and service buildings behind. Two components create an internal service area accessible both from the side and from C73. The terraces have a 15m to 20m setback from C73.
Elevations and Detailing	All buildings have sandstone elevations. Windows are casements with lintels and no dormers can be observed. The only exception is represented by a building extension with a pebble dash render elevation.
Vehicular Access and Parking	There are two key accesses, one is from the eastern side of the service area and the other directly from C73. Parking is located in the internal service area.
Boundaries	Boundaries include low sandstone walls, native hedgerows and low timber fences.
Green Spaces and Landscape	Buildings are totally surrounded by open landscape both on the northeastern and southwestern sides. Terraces have formalised front gardens facing C73, while back gardens are located behind service buildings.
Heights and Roofscape	Buildings are from 1 to 2 storey high and all have natural slate gable roofs. All roofs have sandstone roof crests and chimneys, while roof fascias can be found on terraces, both in sandstone and timber. The building extension is the only exception with a flat roof.

Table 06: Rennington 16-30 character study table



Figure 40:
View of the terraces from C73



Figure 41:
View of the terraces C73 looking towards Horseshoes Pub

8

Southfield, Rennington Village

3.6 Southfield, Rennington Village

The following plan analyses Southfield, Rennington village.



Private gardens



Ridgelines



Setbacks



Roads and access

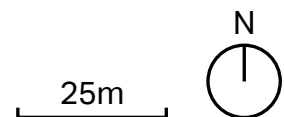


Figure 42: Southfield, Rennington village

Factors	Appearance characteristics
Layout and Setbacks	Buildings are aligned to the road, that is organic. Buildings include eight dwellings with garages and service buildings. Buildings are setback between 5m to 15m from the main route, allowing front gardens with greenery and grass.
Elevations and Detailing	Buildings have sandstone elevations. Windows are casements with glazing bars, sandstone lintels, quoins and architraves. Roof dormers are also recurrent. Doors are either unsheltered with sandstone architraves or recessed. Quoins can be observed too.
Vehicular Access and Parking	There is one main access to the area from Church Road to the north. Each property has car parking spaces at the front of the building and garages.
Boundaries	Boundaries include low sandstone walls, hedgerows and timber fences.
Green Spaces and Landscape	Each cottage has wide formalised gardens. Mature vegetation surrounds the area and separates it with surrounding developments.
Heights and Roofscape	Buildings are 1- 2 storeys high and have natural slate gable roofs. Chimneys and roof fascias can be observed.

Table 07: Southfield, Rennington village character study table



Figure 43: View of two detached houses in the Southfield development, Rennington village

5

Stamford

3.7 Stamford

The following plan analyses Stamford.

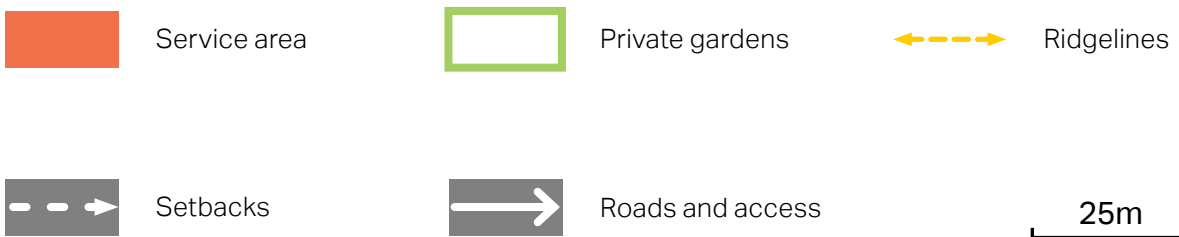


Figure 44: Stamford

Factors	Appearance characteristics
Layout and Setbacks	Buildings include a total of eight semi-detached houses and one detached house, that are either aligned to the B1340 or perpendicular to it. Their layout creates an internal service area used for parking. Setbacks vary from wide (25 metres) to minimal or no setback.
Elevations and Detailing	All buildings have sandstone elevations. The three properties on B1340 have sashes. Bay windows with sandstone lintels, quoins and occasionally architraves can also be observed. Skylight windows can also be found. Doorways are generally unsheltered or with sandstone porches. Quoins can be observed too.
Vehicular Access and Parking	The internal service area is accessible from the B1340 and has parking space.
Boundaries	Boundaries include low sandstone walls and timber fences.
Green Spaces and Landscape	Each property has a formalised garden: five properties have both a front and a back garden, while the remaining (to the northwest) have back gardens only. All the properties are surrounded by open landscape. Mature trees can be found particularly along Stamford Burn and the B1340.
Heights and Roofscape	Buildings are 1.5 - 2 storeys high and have natural slate gable or pitched roofs. Chimneys and coped gables can be observed too.

Table 08: Stamford character study table



Figure 45: View of the detached house from the B1340



Figure 46: View of the semi-detached house facing the B1340

6

Rock Village Street

3.8 Rock Village Street

The following plan analyses Rock Village Street.



Private gardens



Ridgelines



Setbacks



Roads and access



Figure 47: Rock Village Street

Factors	Appearance characteristics
Layout and Setbacks	Buildings are a row of terraces and one cottage arranged orthogonally to it. The terraces, the cottage and the sandstone wall opposite to them contribute to creating a service area space. Setbacks vary from 5m to 20m.
Elevations and Detailing	All buildings have sandstone elevations, except for two terraces covered in pebble dash render and stone. Windows are sashes and casements with sandstone lintels and architraves occasionally. Skylight and dormer windows can also be observed. Doorways are generally unsheltered or with sandstone / pebble dash render porches. Quoins can be observed too.
Vehicular Access and Parking	The internal service area is accessible from C73 and The Avenue. Parking space is not formally arranged but it is located both in the service area and on the back lane.
Boundaries	Boundaries include low sandstone walls, hedgerows and timber fences.
Green Spaces and Landscape	Each property has a formalised back garden and two properties to the east end have front gardens. The service area is partially occupied by a lawn. Mature trees can be found in the back gardens and around the pond opposite the terraces.
Heights and Roofscape	Buildings are 1.5 - 2 storeys high and have natural slate gable roofs. Chimneys, coped gables, roof crests, roof fascias and dentillation can be observed too.

Table 09: Rock Village Street character study table



Figure 48: View of the back lane from main road



Figure 49: View of the access road

7

Rock Mill Farm

3.9 Rock Mill Farm

The following plan analyses Rock Mill Farm.

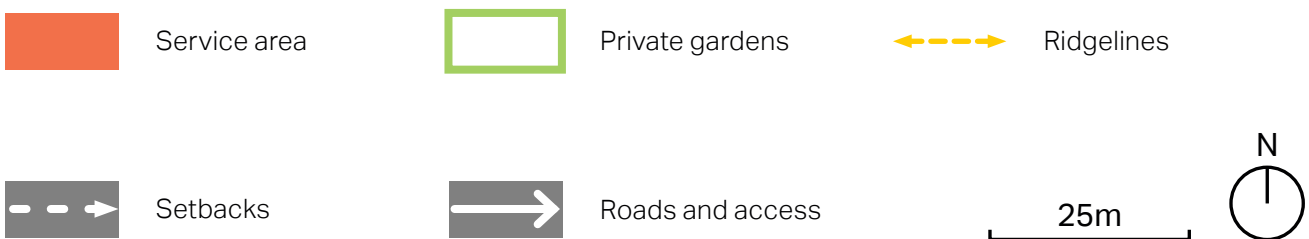


Figure 50: Rock Mill Farm

Factors	Appearance characteristics
Layout and Setbacks	Buildings are arranged orthogonally to the main route and are aligned to the access lane. Buildings include three cottages, a refurbished farmstead and other service buildings. The buildings to the south contribute to creating an internal service area. Buildings are setback between 10m to 20m from the main route.
Elevations and Detailing	Buildings have sandstone and render elevations. Windows are sashes and casements with sandstone lintels, quoins and architraves occasionally. Skylight windows can also be observed and a roof dormer is located on Rock Mill Farm. Doors are unsheltered and have sandstone architraves. Quoins can be observed too.
Vehicular Access and Parking	There is one main access to the area from the main route to the north. Parking is located in the internal service area and garages can be observed internally.
Boundaries	Boundaries include low sandstone walls and low timber fences.
Green Spaces and Landscape	Each cottage has wide formalised gardens. Unspoilt open landscape surrounds the area.
Heights and Roofscape	Buildings are 2 storeys high and have natural slate or Rosemary tile gable roofs. Chimneys and coped gables can be observed.

Table 10: Rock Mill Farm character study table



Figure 51: View of the cottages from the main route to the north

The background image shows a stone building with a prominent tower on the right side. The tower has arched windows and a crenellated top. In the foreground, there is a lush green garden with a small wooden bridge crossing a stream. The bridge has a decorative railing with a crisscross pattern. The overall scene is peaceful and well-maintained.

Design Guidance & Codes

04

4. Design guidance & codes

The design codes and guidance set out in this section prioritise the character and quality of new development, responsive design for infill development and sustainable design approaches. These design codes should be read in conjunction with the Character study in section 3.

4.1 Introduction

The previous section analysed the key design features of the Neighbourhood area. Although two key villages are located in the area, namely Rennington and Rock, the character remains unvaried and similar features can be found throughout the Neighbourhood area. This section will provide guidance to ensure the area's unique character is preserved as well as sustainability is promoted.

The following topics are addressed by design codes in this section:

- A - Character & Quality in New Development
- B - Responsive Design for Infill Development
- C - Sustainable Design & Climate Resilience



Figure 52: Sandstone building in Rock village



Character & Quality in New Development

4.2 Character & Quality in New Development

The design codes below set out how to respond to the local features defined in the previous section. These responses must help formulate and review design proposals in line with local preferences for high-quality design.

A1 - Preserve and Enhance Character Features

- Development must be respectful of local character features, that must be preserved and enhanced within the villages. These include:
 - The use of local materials for elevations: sandstone
 - Roofs: grey slate
 - Fenestration: sashes with lintels and quoins are predominant. Also, timber should be preferred over UPVC
 - Doorways (unsheltered / with sandstone or timber porches and quoins)
 - Boundary treatments (low sandstone walls and hedgerows)
 - Roof detailing and chimneys;
- Design of details and features must respond to the settlement in which it is sited or adjacent to (including the surrounding landscape) to enhance the positive qualities of the area; and
- Designers must consider landscape and the rural character of the villages as a main feature to be preserved and enhanced.

A2 - Massing and layout

- Development must reflect the massing and arrangement of surrounding buildings, including height, depth and setbacks;
- Development layout should respect Rennington Parish Council's rural context by aligning buildings to the main route to contribute to the streetscape.



Figure 53: Terraces following road alignment in Rennington village

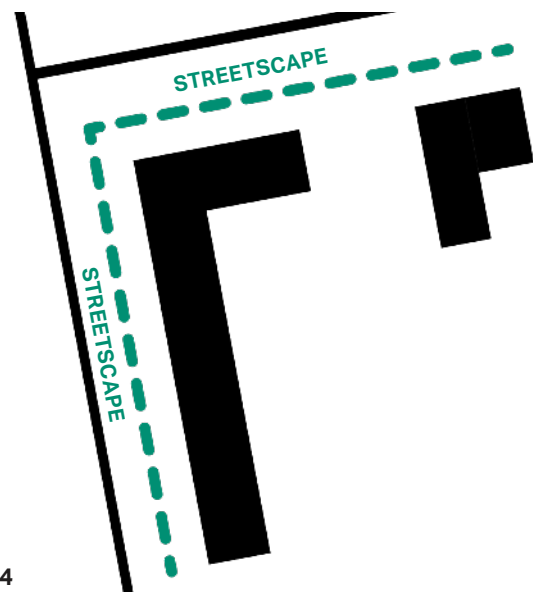
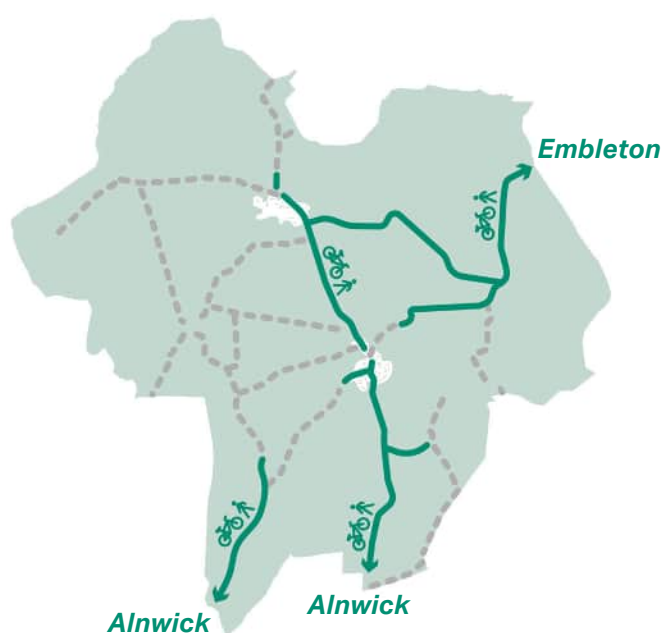


Figure 54: Alignment to the road contributes to the local streetscape

A3 – Local economy

- Promote and support local green power generation for community benefit, using sustainable methods;
- Small public-facing businesses (such as The Horseshoes Inn) are encouraged. However they must not disrupt the distinctive rural character of the village;
- Small rural enterprise projects, such as local shops and craft workshops are encouraged to bring vitality to the village;
- Improve circular walks and permissible walkways in the area to connect the different settlements, as they are an essential feature and contribute to strengthening the relationship between the villages and the surrounding natural landscape;
- Upgrade existing footpaths and create new connections to Alnwick and Embleton to create a new pedestrian network; and
- Consider the rural character of the villages as a distinctive feature and strengthen the relationship with the Northumberland Coast AONB to promote tourism.



F.55

Figure 55: Proposed new pedestrian network



F.56

Figure 56: The Horseshoes Inn

A4 – Car park

- Designers should consider different parking solutions, including:
 - Creating an internal service area where parking space is provided, keeping the front of the building clear for front gardens. Refer to local examples 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 illustrated in the previous chapter;
 - On-plot car parks located at the front of the building;
 - Garages. Refer to local examples 2, 3 and 7 illustrated in the previous chapter.
- Service areas provided at the back of the building avoid visual impact on the rural character of the area. This solution should be particularly considered where car parks can have a major impact on the character of the streetscape;
- Integrate car parking sensitively within the streetscene. Where parking is required at the front of the plot it should be afforded sufficient space and utilise hedgerows to screen cars from the street. A series of unscreened car parks at the front of the building could have a detrimental impact on the streetscape;
- On-street parking, apart from visitor parking, will not be permitted. Single garages will not be considered to be a parking space. Electric vehicle charging points should be accessible for cars on driveways, garages or carports;
- Porous surface and green parking spaces (for example grass-crete) are preferable to impermeable parking spaces; and
- Garages are sometimes used for storage rather than for parking and should be set to the rear of the plot in an internal service area if possible.



Figure 57: Internal service area Rock Home Farm



Figure 58: Garage at Rock Home Farm



Responsive Design for Infill Development and Extensions

4.3 Responsive Design for Infill Development and Extensions

Infill development is smaller scale development (Historically 1 or 2 homes within the NP area) within an existing developed context. This type of development commonly consists of three main types:

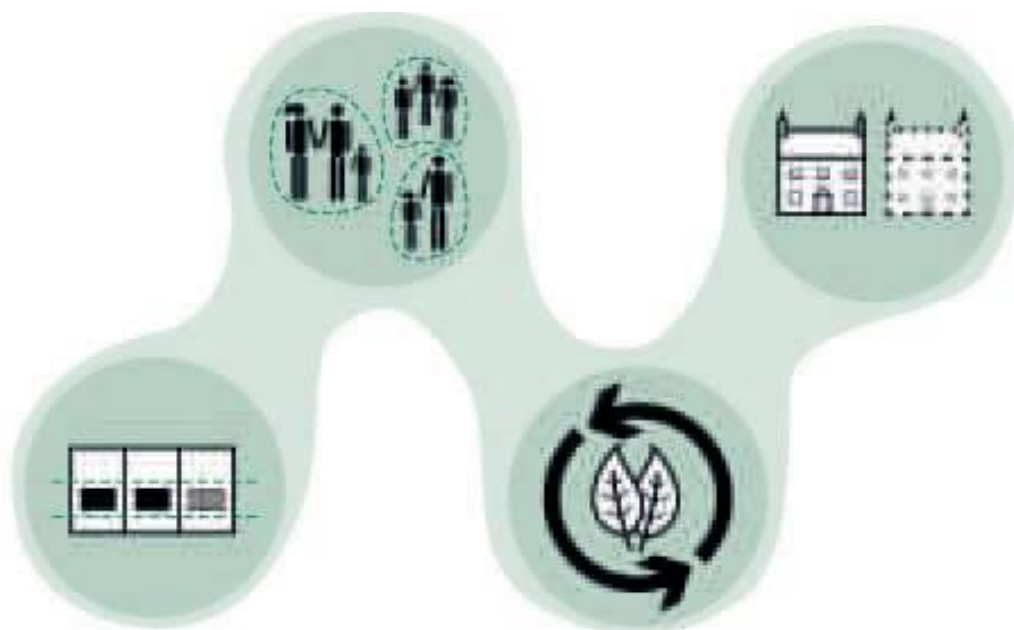
- Gap site development within a street frontage;
- Backland development; and
- Site redevelopment (for example, replacement of existing building/s).

Every future development should include environmental and social benefits, consider natural habitats, and include measures to combat climate change.

B1 – Overarching Aims

The overarching aim of these guidelines is to promote context-sensitive infill housing and extensions of a high quality. This should improve the street scene and locate new homes close to and in support of existing amenities. The following are key aims of the guidance:

- Protect residential amenities, both of new and existing occupiers;
- Contribute to the creation of distinctive and sustainable communities, places and spaces;
- Respect local vernacular architecture;
- Be of good design and encompass sustainability principles; and
- Respond to the context and character of the area.



F.59

Figure 59: Infographic about Infill development overarching aims

B2 – Design Principles

The following design principles apply to infill development and extensions that may come forward via applications within the neighbourhood area:

- Artificial architectural features will not be permitted (for example, fibreglass chimneys);
- Side extensions within the built environment will not normally be permitted but should be limited to a single-storey;
- Building scale and massing should be in keeping with the prevailing development pattern and not be overbearing on existing properties or deprive them of light, including over-looking or over-shadowing of both windows and amenity space;
- The building line should reflect the street and be set back no more than a maximum of 1.5m from adjacent buildings unless additional landscaping or tree planting is being introduced to the street scene;
- Where buildings are set back from the street a boundary should define the plot and link up to adjacent buildings / plots (for example hedgerows or low sandstone walls);
- Materials should reflect positive local characteristics and harmonise with adjacent buildings with matching or complementary materials. Sandstone for elevations and slate tiles for roofs are the predominant materials in the parish area and should be reflected in new development. Refer to all the local examples illustrated in the previous chapter;

- Building fenestration and pattern should be in keeping with the predominant buildings' character in the village or harmonise with adjacent buildings of positive character. Sashes with lintels and quoins are recurrent in the village and new development should seek to include them. Timber should be preferred over UPVC. Refer to local examples 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 illustrated in the previous chapter;
- Building entrances will address the street with a main access and main fenestration. Corner buildings should address both streets with fenestration but the main entrance could be on either subject to access requirements. Unsheltered doorways or doorways with sandstone or timber porches and quoins are recurring in the parish area and should be reflected in new development. Refer to local examples illustrated in the previous chapter;
- Building façade design should respect the horizontal rhythm of plots and building subdivisions on the street in order to integrate and maintain visual continuity or add to the visual interest where required;



F.60

Figure 60: Typical buildings on Rennington village green

- Building heights should vary between 1 - 2 storeys depending on adjacent plots. A variable eaves line and ridgeline is allowed to create interest but variation between adjacent buildings should be a maximum of 0.5 storeys in general;
- Front of plot areas and rear gardens should be of sufficient size and landscaped appropriately to fit in with prevailing planting pattern or to enhance the rural and natural character of the area. Refer to local example number 4 in the previous chapter;
- Rear or side plot boundaries which face public spaces must be hedgerows or sandstone walls to match adjacent plots and add to the streetscene quality. These boundary treatments should also be low to reflect the surrounding character of the area and allow natural surveillance. Refer to examples 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 illustrated in the previous chapter;
- Access and storage for bins should be designed to accommodate 4 wheelie bins and be located at the rear of dwellings or in a dedicated enclosure;
- Gaps between gables should be retained to preserve views of the surrounding countryside. Side extensions should also be limited to a single storey to preserve gaps between buildings. Extensions should never result in the loss of an on-plot parking space; and
- The 25/45° rule illustrated in Figure 57 should be used to ensure that there is no blocking of light or overbearing mass to adjoining properties when designing extensions or new dwellings.

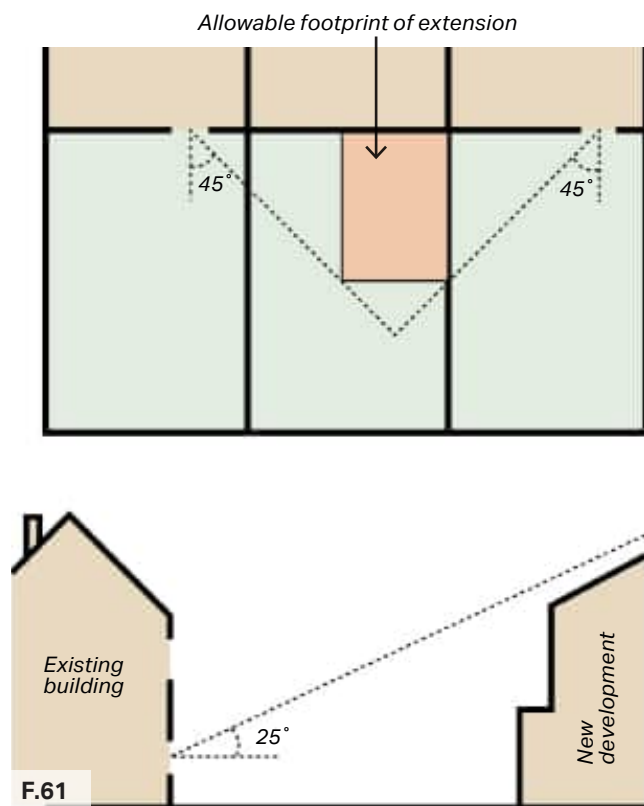


Figure 61: 25° / 45° rule

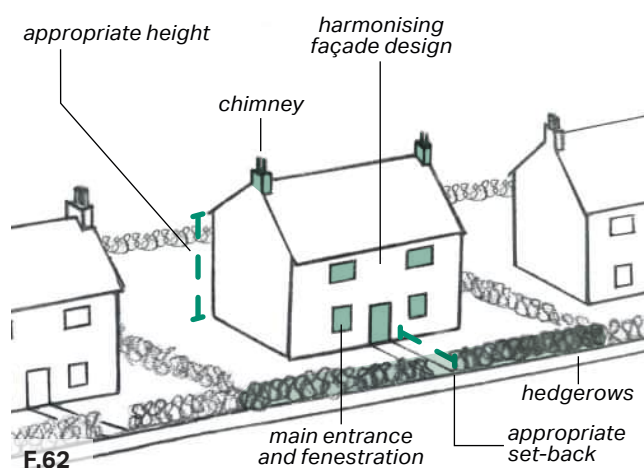


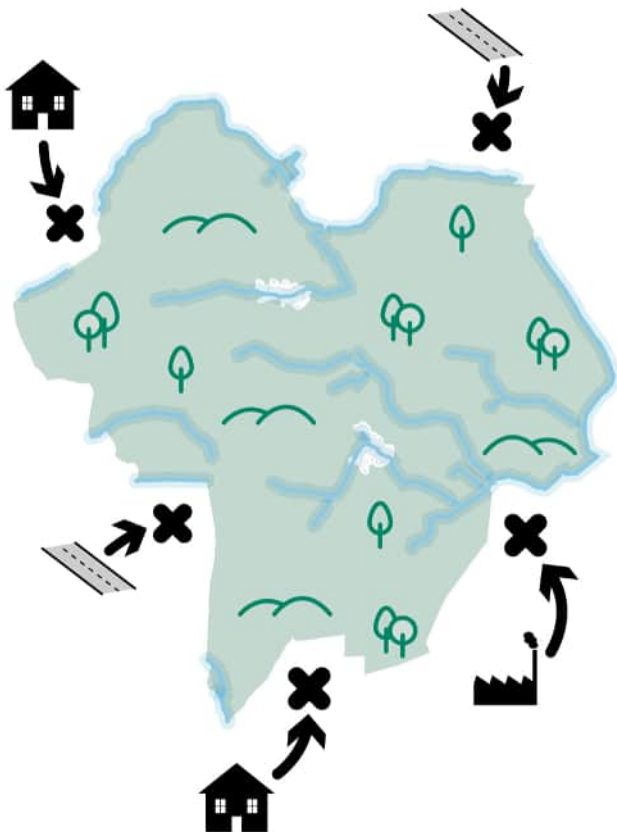
Figure 62: Positive example of infill development design



Sustainable Design & Climate Resilience

4.4 Sustainable Design & Climate Resilience

Climate change has created the need to decrease our carbon footprint towards net-zero by providing innovative solutions to transportation (electrification) and the energy use of buildings. Sustainable design incorporates innovative practices at all scales of design to achieve less impactful development footprints, whilst future-proofing homes, settlements and natural environments. Reducing the use of limited natural resources whilst increasing the utilisation of local resources and sustainable natural resources can help to achieve this.



C1 - Resilience to Climate Change

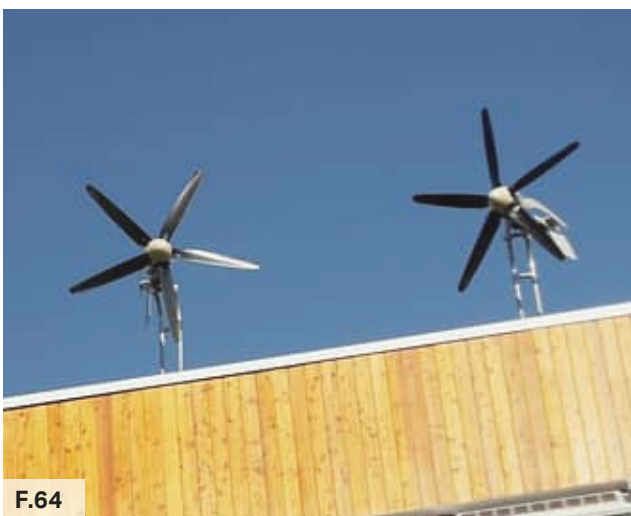
All new development should work to moderate extremes of temperature, wind, humidity, local flooding and pollution in the neighbourhood area:

- Homes should not be sited in high-risk flood areas nor in areas at high risk of surface water flooding. New developments must demonstrate how they intend to mitigate the risk of flooding with sustainable drainage systems. These reduce the amount and rate at which surface water reaches sewers/ watercourses. Often, the most sustainable option is collecting this water for reuse, for example in a water butt or rainwater harvesting system. This has the added benefit of reducing pressure on valuable water sources;
- Eco-systems cannot adapt as fast as the climate is changing leading to loss of biodiversity. Protecting and enhancing Rennington Parish Council's extensive natural landscape, including woodlands and watercourses can combat this; and
- Use street trees and planting to provide shading and cooling and moderate and improve micro-climate for streets and spaces.

C2 – Assessing Alternative Energy Sources

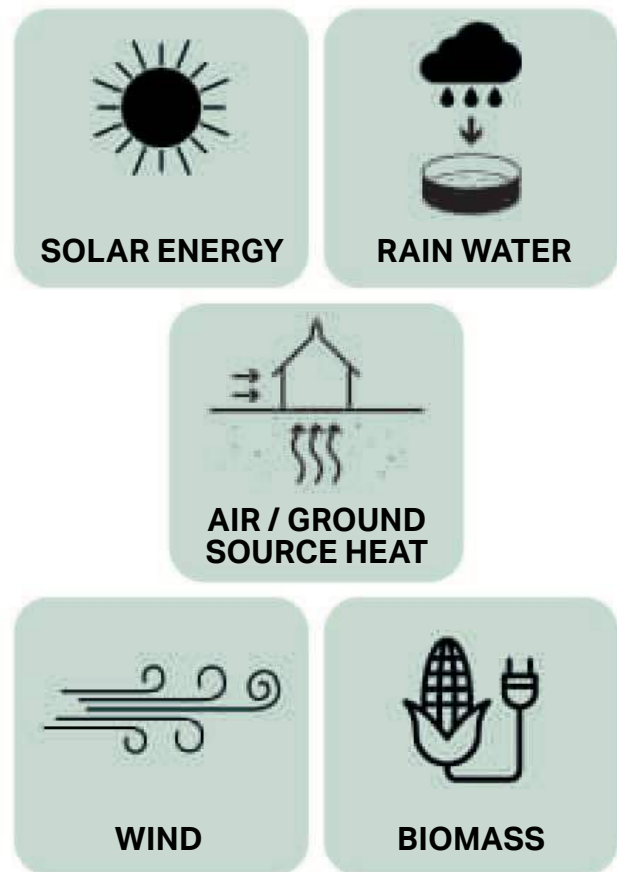
Key considerations in the assessment of alternative energy sources for development may include (but are not limited to):

- Optimise solar orientation of buildings. Aim to increase the number of buildings on site that are oriented within 30° of the south (both main fenestration and roof plane) for solar gain, solar energy (solar panels) and natural daylighting;
- Ground conditions to accommodate loops for ground source heat and space for air source heat pump units;
- Links to local estates for sustainable coppicing, harvesting or recycling of biomass fuels; and
- Local wind speed and direction in Rennington Parish Council for micro-generation wind turbines.

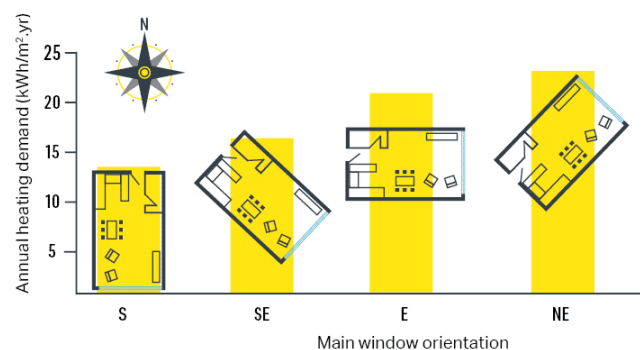


F.64

Figure 64: Micro-generation wind turbines can be discreetly applied on top of roofs



F.65



F.66

Figure 65: Key alternative natural energy sources

Figure 66: Building orientation influences the annual heating demand

C3 – Electric Vehicle charging

The current transition to electric vehicle technology and ownership comes with related issues that must be addressed by new development.

Design issues to address for Parking at the home:

- Convenient parking provided in internal service areas with charging points;
- Need to consider visitor parking / charging needs;
- If providing parking in service areas is not possible:
 - Potential to incorporate charging points under cover within car ports and garages;
 - Still need to integrate car parking sensitively within the streetscene. For example, parking set behind the building line or front of plot spaces lined with native hedgerow planting; and
 - Existing unallocated / on-street parking areas and feasibility of providing an on-street public vehicle charging infrastructure.

C4 - Energy efficiency measures towards Net-Zero carbon

By default, new development should adopt a fabric-first approach in line with the government's emerging Future Homes Standard, to attain higher standards of insulation and energy conservation.

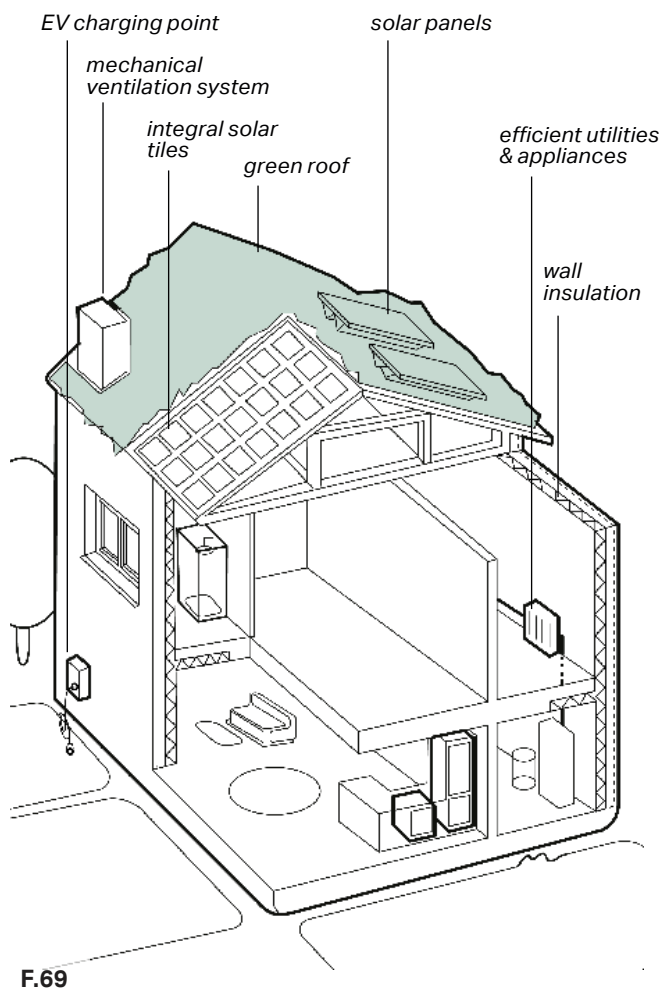
- Reducing energy demand further by employing passive design principles for homes is desirable and can make some forms of development more acceptable to the community (window orientation, solar gain, solar shading, increased insulation, ventilation with heat recovery);
- Maximise on-site renewable energy generation (solar, ground source, air source and wind-driven); and
- Consider building form and thermal efficiency: terraces, semi-detached and detached all have different energy efficiency profiles. This must be balanced with local design preference and character considerations to ease acceptance for development.



Figure 67: Home electric vehicles charging point



Figure 68: Solar panels on Church Road, Rennington village



F.69

Figure 69: Cut-through diagram of an energy efficient home and its features



F.70

Figure 70: Air source heat pump housing covers the unit and harmonises with the building aesthetic



Appendix

05

5. Checklist

This section sets out a general list of design considerations by topic for use as a quick reference guide in design workshops and

discussions. These considerations will be used by local communities, developers and decision-makers to guide them through the design process.

1

General design guidelines for new development:

- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
- Reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;
- Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
- Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
- Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;
- Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;
- Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind; and
- Seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation), before specification of energy efficient building services and finally incorporate renewable energy sources.

2

Street grid and layout:

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?
- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

3

Local green spaces, views & character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?

- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?

4

Gateway and access features:

- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

5

Buildings layout and grouping:

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?
- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles, with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night? This is to reduce peak loads. And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?

6

Building line and boundary treatment:

- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

7

Building heights and roofline:

- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now, or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over shading?

8

Household extensions:

- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of side extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?
- Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?
- Can any materials be re-used in situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?

9

Building materials & surface treatment:

- What is the distinctive material in the area?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?
- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?
- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.
- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced? E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

10

Car parking:

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?
- Can electric vehicle charging points be provided?
- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/ communal facility where appropriate?
- If covered car ports or cycle storage is included, can it incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels or a biodiverse roof in its design?

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