

Lea Character and settlement breaks assessment

Produced November 2016
for the Lea Neighbourhood
Development Plan by urban
forward ltd



urban forward ltd

Lea | Character and settlement breaks assessment

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About this
document

The purpose of this document

This document has been produced to support the spatial strategy and design policies in the Lea Neighbourhood Development Plan. It should be read in conjunction with the Plan document, along with the documents outlined in the appendices.

The intention of this document is to enable design teams to make their proposals specific to Lea, and to help avoid some of the common pitfalls associated with new development. The guidance within this document is not exhaustive, and we encourage design teams to undertake further studies should they wish to develop schemes within the village.

A key aspect to rural settlements is their separation, with the green gaps at their edges forming a key part of the settlement character. These are discussed, and how they should be treated going forward is set out. It also provides guidance as to how to manage change in the village, including how the existing built form and green spaces can inform new development should it come forward.

The distinctive landscape in the Plan area is a key defining characteristic that strongly informs the sense of place that people have when visiting the area. How this landscape informs the character of the settlements is set out in this document.



Structure

The document is set out in the following sections:

Section 1 sets out how to use the document, introduces the Plan area and explains the rationale behind the information contained within this Guide.

Section 2 examines the way 'green gaps' between the village and surrounding settlements are formed, where there may be threats to their integrity and the impact this might have on the character of Lea, and how they should be managed in the future.

Section 3 looks at character of the village, examining the aspects that make up its character and identity. This analysis is then translated into useful principles for future development, suggesting ways in which designers can ensure their proposals support rather than erode local distinctiveness.

Section 4 provides appendices, setting out suggested further reading and providing a glossary of useful terms and definitions.

The study area

The Neighbourhood Development Plan area takes in the village of Lea, within Lea parish, which sits to the south of Gainsborough. It is an historic village, small and quiet, set in an impressive countryside that includes the Trent Valley. There are no shops within the village, but it does have a village hall, playing fields and other facilities.

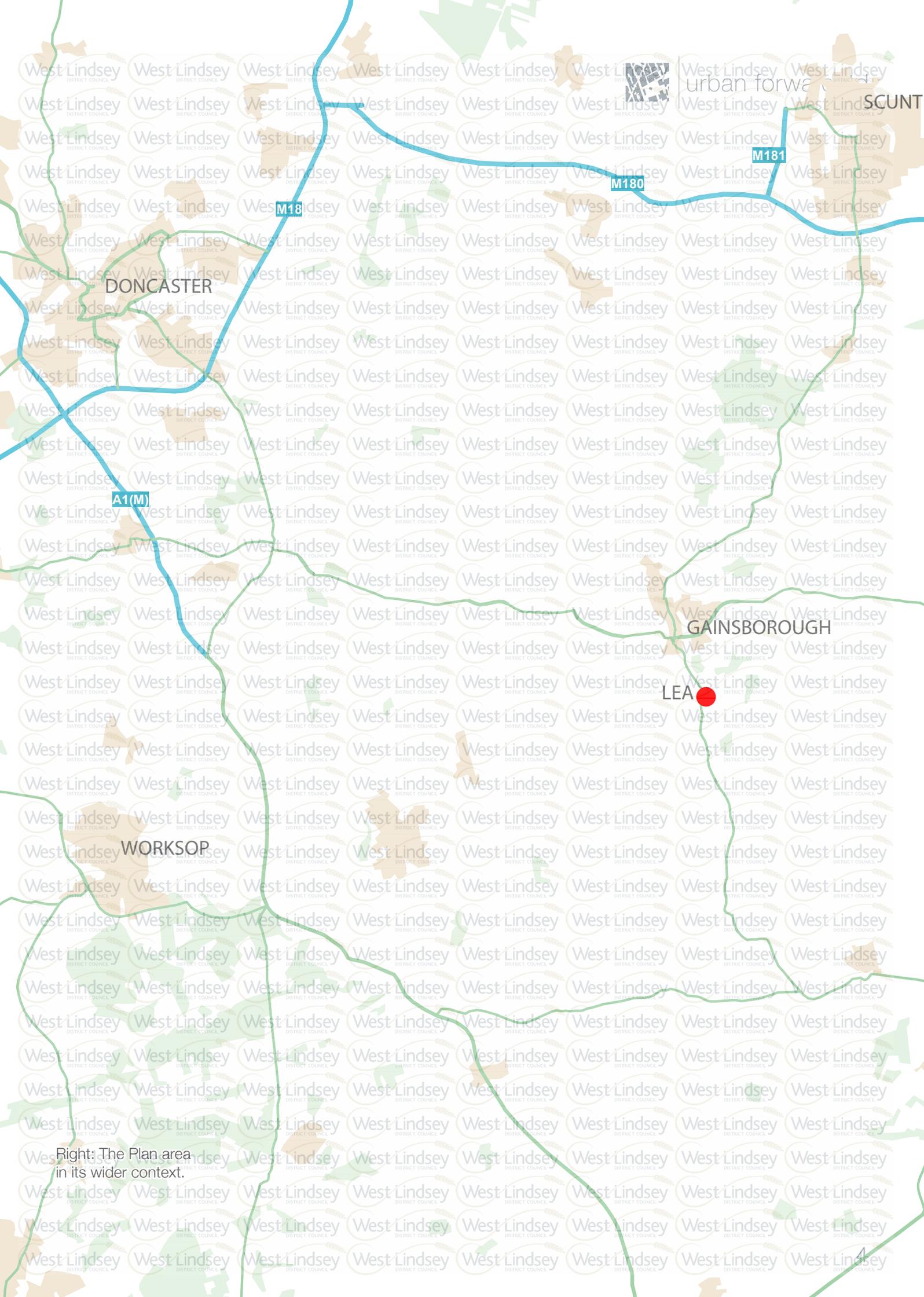
Section 4 looks at the following aspects of village character:

- Existing built up area
- Settlement pattern
- Relationship with the landscape
- Character area analysis

Lea Parish was designated a neighbourhood plan area on 22nd November 2016.



Key:
Parish boundary



DONCASTER

A1(M)

M18

M180

M181

WORKSOP

GAINSBOROUGH

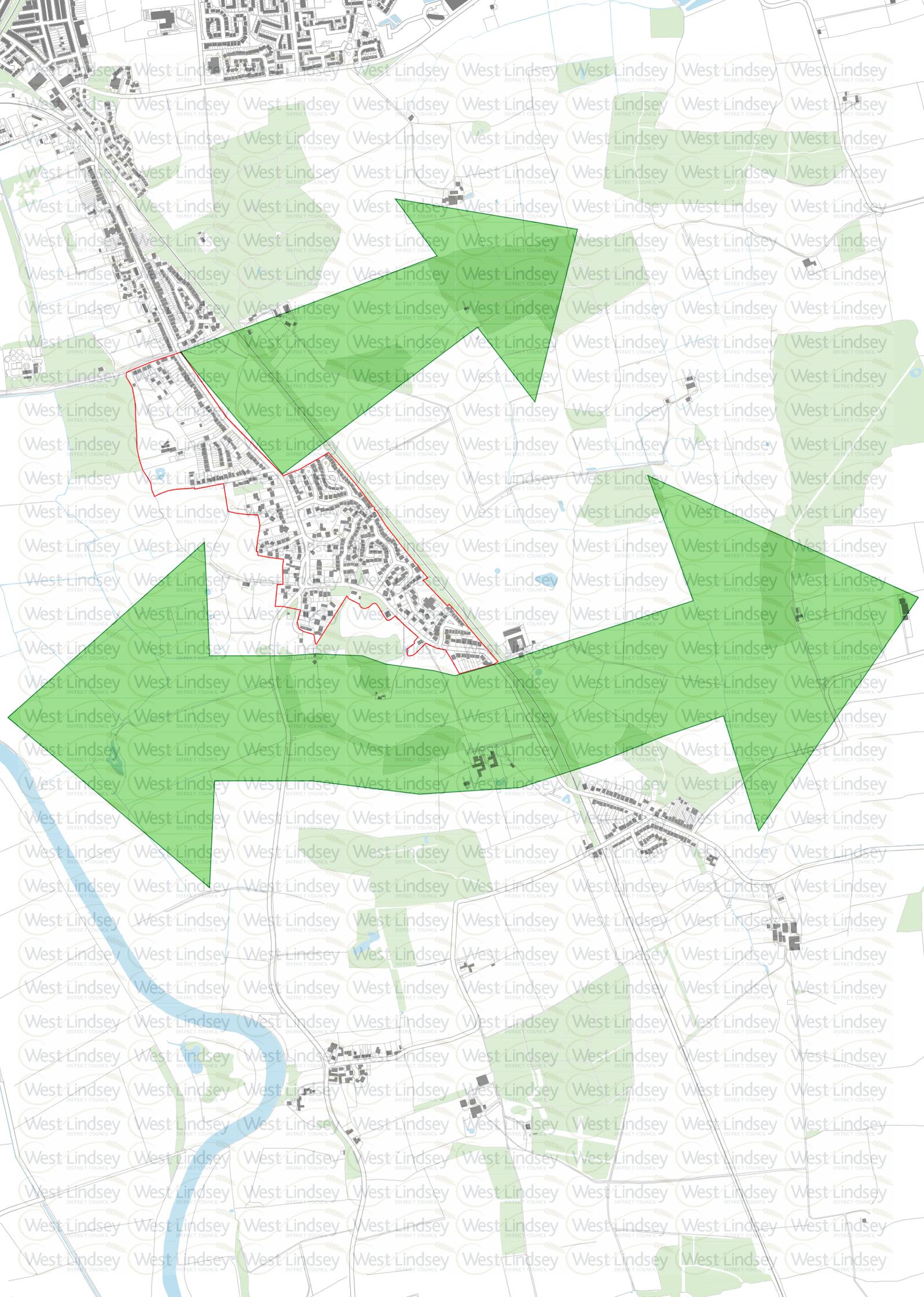
LEA

Right: The Plan area in its wider context.

SCUN



2 Settlement seperation





Separation

Beyond the village, much of the designated Plan area is open countryside. This aspect of sitting within the landscape is a key component of both the character of the village and of the quality of life that the residents enjoy. A key concern of the community is the coalescence of existing settlements, the subsequent loss of green space and the damage this might do to the identity of what are currently distinct places.

This section examines the 'green gaps' that act to provide a valuable amenity for residents, that connect other green spaces and features in the wider area, and which help preserve the village as a distinct place with its own character. These green connections are important wildlife corridors, and provide space for biodiversity and ecology to thrive.

This document does not seek to analyse all the green spaces in the area; there are too many of them and most are not faced with development pressures. The gaps identified and analysed are:

1. The gap between Lea and Gainsborough
2. The gap between Lea and Knaith

The role of each of this gaps in supporting the character of Lea is set out, and risks to the essential role of these spaces are identified so as to suggest ways in which these essential green spaces can be protected from erosion over time.



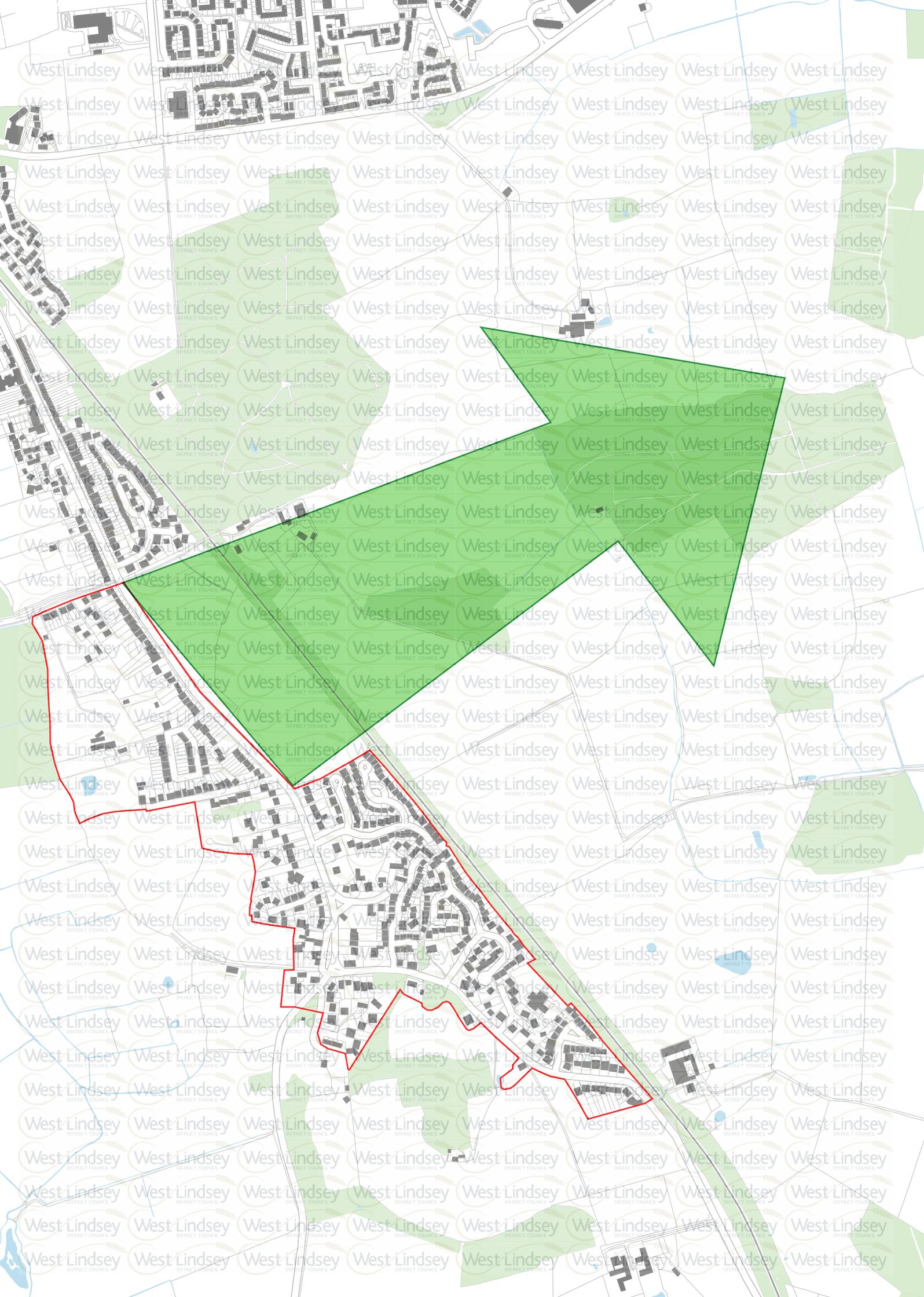
Left: Lea park, with seating and orchard planting.

Lea / Gainsborough

For settlements to maintain a distinctive character it is important to avoid coalescence, especially if the built environment is not distinct between the two places. The southern fringe of Gainsborough is notionally similar to the northern extent of Lea, with linear development of detached and semi-detached dwellings lining the street. There is, however, a break on the line of the street that helps to keep the two places separate, and this is more apparent on the eastern edge of Gainsborough Road where rolling fields that rise away from the Trent valley create a distinct area of separation.

This gap is critical not in landscape terms, but in how it reveals the distinct characters of the two places; Lea sits on the gently rolling ground to the south of this whereas Gainsborough occupies flatter ground further north. This helps to make Lea and Gainsborough 'read' as different settlements, and should therefore be protected from development that erodes this.

The extent of the existing gap between Lea and Gainsborough, showing its role in bringing the open countryside into the more urbanised area between the settlements.



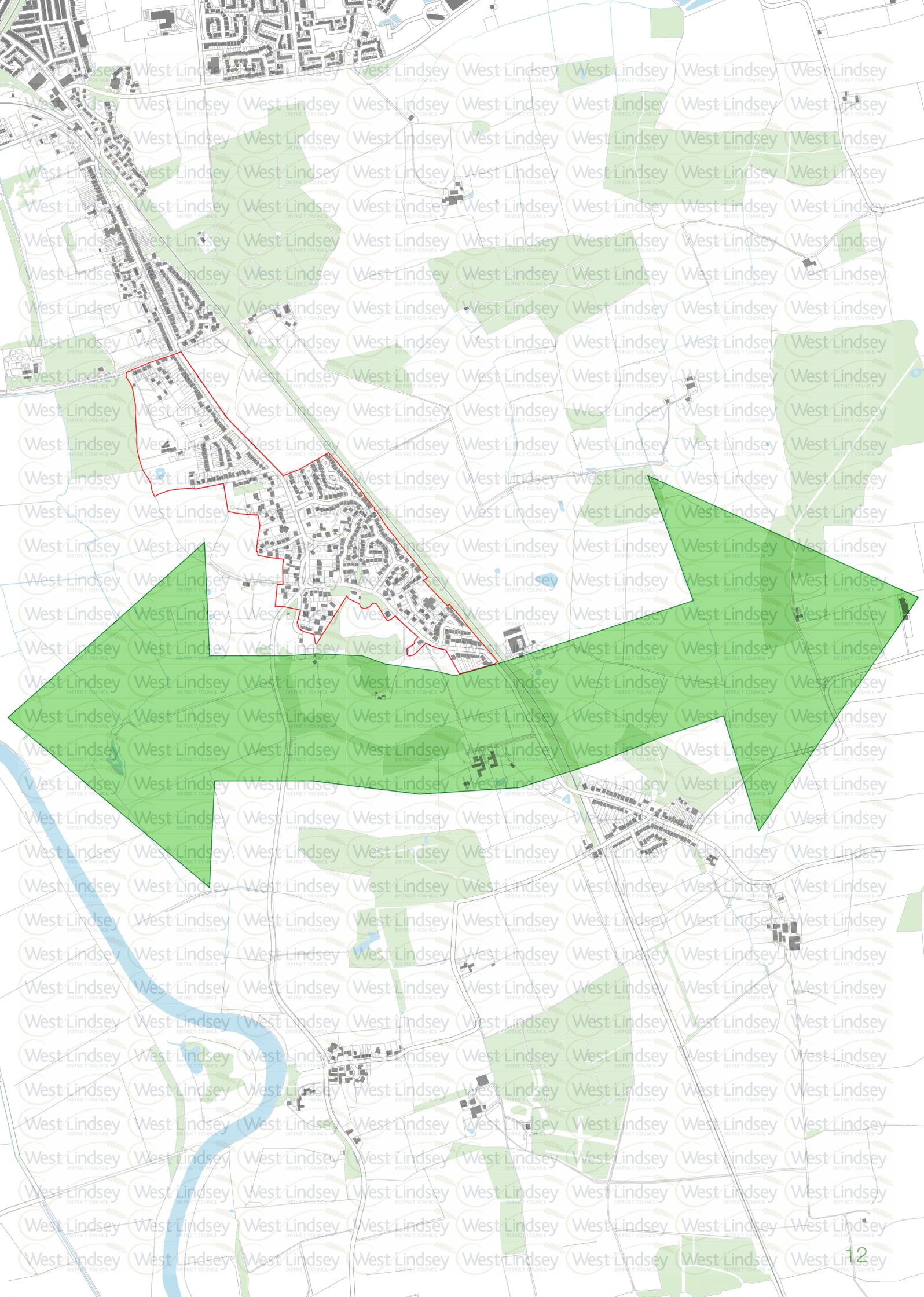
Lea / Knaith

The southern portion of Lea represents the break between the predominantly fragmented settlement patterns of the villages to the south and the urbanised expanse of Gainsborough to the north. It is made up of open fields and sporadic woodland that connect the Trent valley through to wider countryside beyond, and it tightly defines the extent of Lea village.

There are important walking routes within this area that are a key component of the resident's quality of life, and part of their appeal is the relatively undeveloped nature of the spaces through which they pass. If possible, a full Landscape Visual Impact Assessment of the area to the south of Lea would be beneficial for establishing the true value of these spaces in landscape terms and their sensitivity to change.

Developing within this space would begin to erode these spaces but more importantly from a settlement character perspective, would break the link between the underlying topography of the area and the way the settlement has grown over time.

The extent of the existing gap between Lea and Knaith, with recreation ground and Trent Valley forming important features within this landscape.







Conclusions and recommendations

The green gaps that separate the settlements within the area are **integral to the character of the village**, serving to both bring the countryside into the more built up areas and as important wildlife corridors that connect habitats and spaces in the wider landscape. They also help to keep the Lea as a distinct settlement, allowing it to have its own sense of place and providing easily accessible amenity space for residents and visitors.

Managing these spaces in a way that **does not critically weaken this important set of functions** is paramount in the maintenance of the identity of the area; any new development within these gaps will have to be carefully designed to avoid damaging these spaces, and it may be prudent to keep development away from these spaces all together unless it can be adequately demonstrated that harm can be minimised.

For the gap between Lea and Gainsborough **development should be resisted all together**, as this area is the only physical break between the settlements still remaining and the built form along the Gainsborough Road is such that should infill occur, then it would be difficult to tell where one settlement stopped and the other began.

The gap between Lea and Knaith is large and relatively undeveloped, and forms an important part of the wider green infrastructure of the village. Care should be taken if development should occur within this gap that it **does not critically undermine the quality of walking routes in the area**. The settlement pattern of Lea is linked to the landscape, and should development take place here then it should do so in a way that **maintains this morphological relationship**.



3 Village character

About this section

This section of the study aims to understand how the various elements that make up settlements combine to form a built environment of different characters. Much is made of the value of settlement character and identity, and a criticism often levelled at new development is that it lacks a distinctive character and does not speak 'of its place', instead looking much like anywhere else. Character and identity informs our experience of different places and helps us to differentiate one from another. The various elements that make up this image of a place are often shared between settlements, but with subtle but important variation. Variation within a settlement helps us to understand how a place is put together, which parts might be of interest for social and economic activities, which for more private living etc and affects the quality of experience when moving between each.

At the larger scale, settlement character is informed primarily by the landform and the landscape setting in which it sits. Topography, watercourse and other natural elements help define the shape of the settlements, and how settlements interact with these elements is a key 'first step' in developing a distinctive character. How lines of movement relate to underlying natural features is the next 'morphological layer' that defines character. How streets, lanes and linear green elements work with or against the landform changes between places and can generate distinctiveness.

Commonalities in design between places exist at all levels, with shared spatial and detailing relationships giving a feeling of familiarity and 'readability' even for new places. At the scale of plots and buildings this is especially true, but boundary detailing, materials, architectural styles and 'special' spaces all combine to distinguish one place from another, or more commonly, one region of the country from another. Local materials and detailing are especially important in this regard, with vernacular elements usually defined by locally sourced building materials and design flourishes at the building level. The areas within village have features which distinguish them from one another and the aim of this section is to distil those to enable new development to maintain and enhance the feeling of character. To do this, each of the distinctive areas is analysed in a to break down its character-forming elements, so that new development can draw inspiration from local types and forms to embed the character of Lea into their design approach.

The analysis in this document has been prepared as a result of consultation with the Steering Group, and is set out to cover the following:

- Existing built up area
- Streets and spaces
- Relationship with the landscape
- 19th century linear development
- Backland development
- The villas
- Village green
- 1970's estate
- Dispersed core
- 1990's estate
- Loose-grained linear
- Park Edge

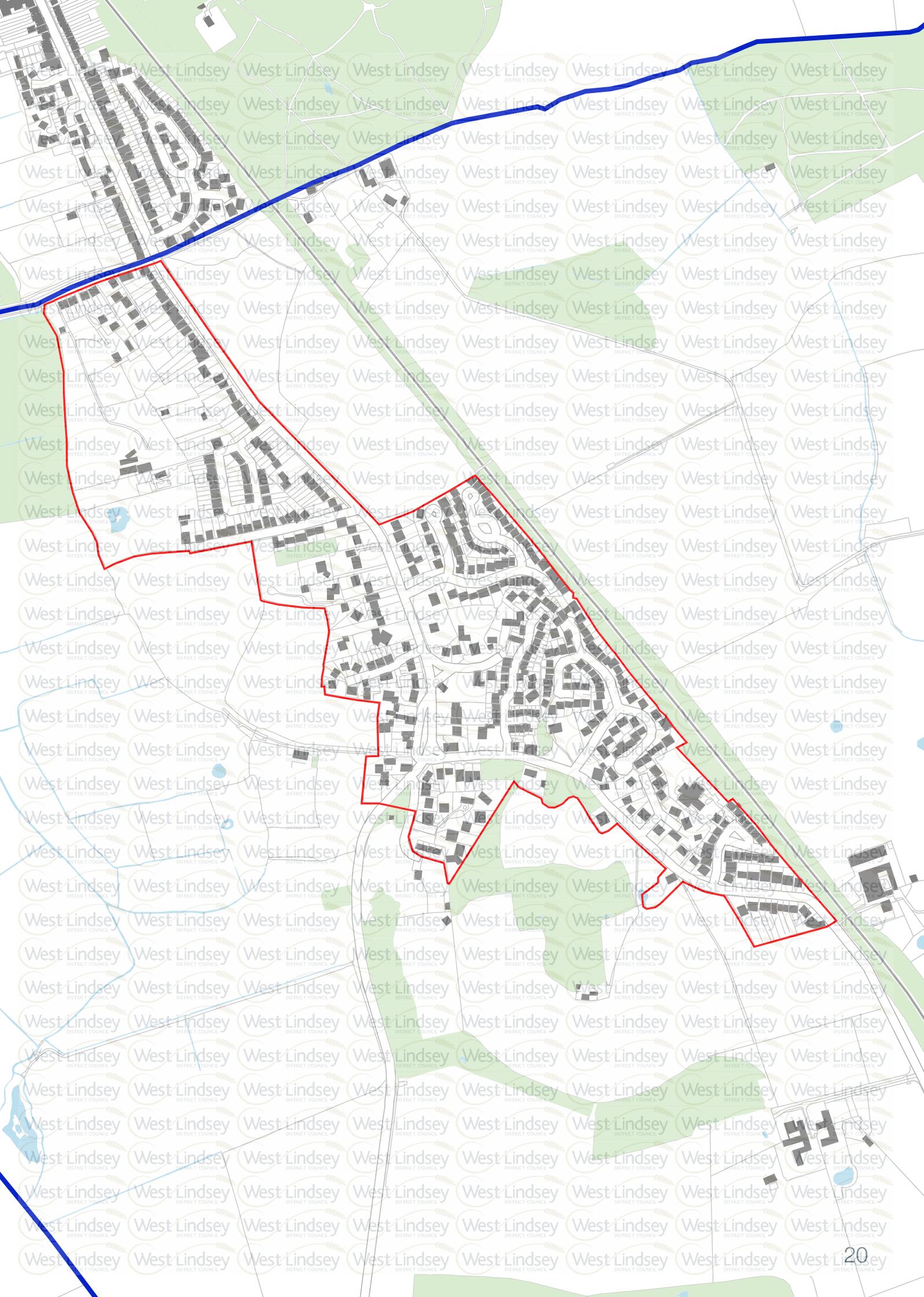


Existing built up area

The existing built up area of Lea can be defined reasonably tightly due to the way the settlement extent is defined by the local topography. Some areas do extend away from the local ridge along into small lanes (eg. Rectory Lane, Green Lane) but much of the development sits on streets that run with the contours, thus generating the predominantly linear form.

A notable exception is the development to the east of Gainsborough Road, which to some extent breaks the established relationship between Lea and its landscape setting. The inclusion of Meadow Rise, Anderson Way etc to the settlement weakens the relationship between settlement form and underlying topography, and care should be taken when releasing land for future development so that it does not further disrupt the linearity of settlement or the way the streets and spaces relate to the underlying land form.

Right: The settlement boundary of Lea, as prepared in consultation with the community.



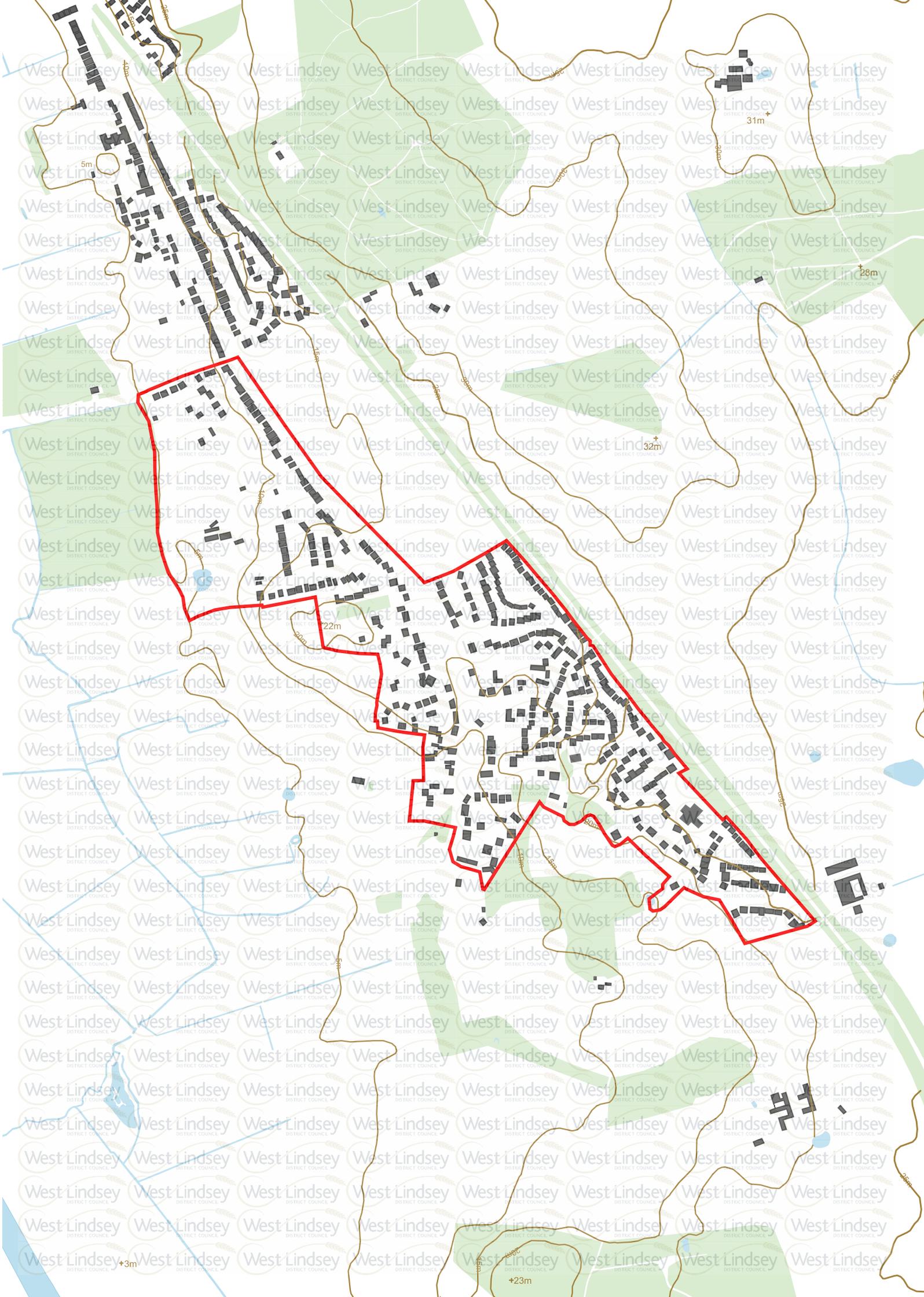
Settlement pattern

Historic Lea is a predominately linear settlement and its shape has a strong relationship with the underlying topography of the area. The main streets within the village run along the local ridge lines, with only a small amount of nucleation around the junction of Gainsborough Road and Willingham Road, where the topography begins to form a small plateau and village green can be found.

Beyond the main streets are small lanes that run along local ridges, which generates a distinctive relationship between the orientation of the streets and the local landforms. This relationship also allows for some of the longer views west over the open countryside. Because the local topography strongly influences the street pattern, there is little interconnectivity between the streets, such as between Anderson Way and Caverndish Drive. Normally, this would be a significant detriment to the overall movement structure of the a place, but here it works to preserve the relationship between the pattern of the village and the landscape.

The figure ground diagram (right) shows that most streets are well 'constituted' by building fronts, with the lines of the streets discernible from how the buildings define their edges. This is an important lesson for new development should it occur; buildings positively addressing their street is a key feature of the village.

Right: A 'figure ground' of Lea showing only buildings, topography and the settlement boundary.



Relationship with the landscape

Lea village is well endowed in terms of accessible countryside to its edges, with footpaths and bridleways to the east of the village that link through to the village playing fields and orchard space. This is because of the way the original linear form follows the ridge associated with the Trent river valley to the west of the village. The Trent and its flood plain and marshes give residents of Lea direct access to countryside on lowlands to the west, and to the east there are wooded belts adjacent to Willingham Way that form a circular walking route between the park and the rest of the village.

There is the potential to formalise this circular route using signage and improved structural planting. Parts of this route are along the existing streets such as Willingham Road and Park Close, so wider footpaths could be installed along Willingham Road and this would add to the usability of the overall route. The route through the woods is already well-used, so adding bins for dog waste and allowing for the occasional bench or resting point may be feasible with minimal expenditure.



Left: An informal but important local walking route linking the fields and woodland to the south of Willingham Road with the playing fields and village green.



Left: The woodland to the south of Willingham Road, with existing footpaths and glimpses out through the understorey to open countryside.



Left: Looking across the recreation grounds to the south of the village, with a pleasant green backdrop and mature planting to the edges.

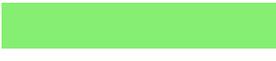


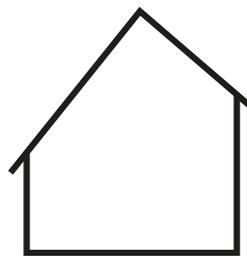
Left: Play facilities within the recreation ground could be extended along the walking circuit to create a play trail around the village.

Character areas

In order to understand and explain the townscape character of Lea, an 'area types' analysis has been undertaken. In all, 9 study areas have been identified. Where possible, these have been drawn so as to include whole streets or spaces and their edges.

Inevitably, there is some overlap between the character of one area and another, and although every effort has been made to define areas in a way that establishes difference, designers and developers should look to the complete analysis rather than focusing on just one street or space when considering how to bring forward new design.

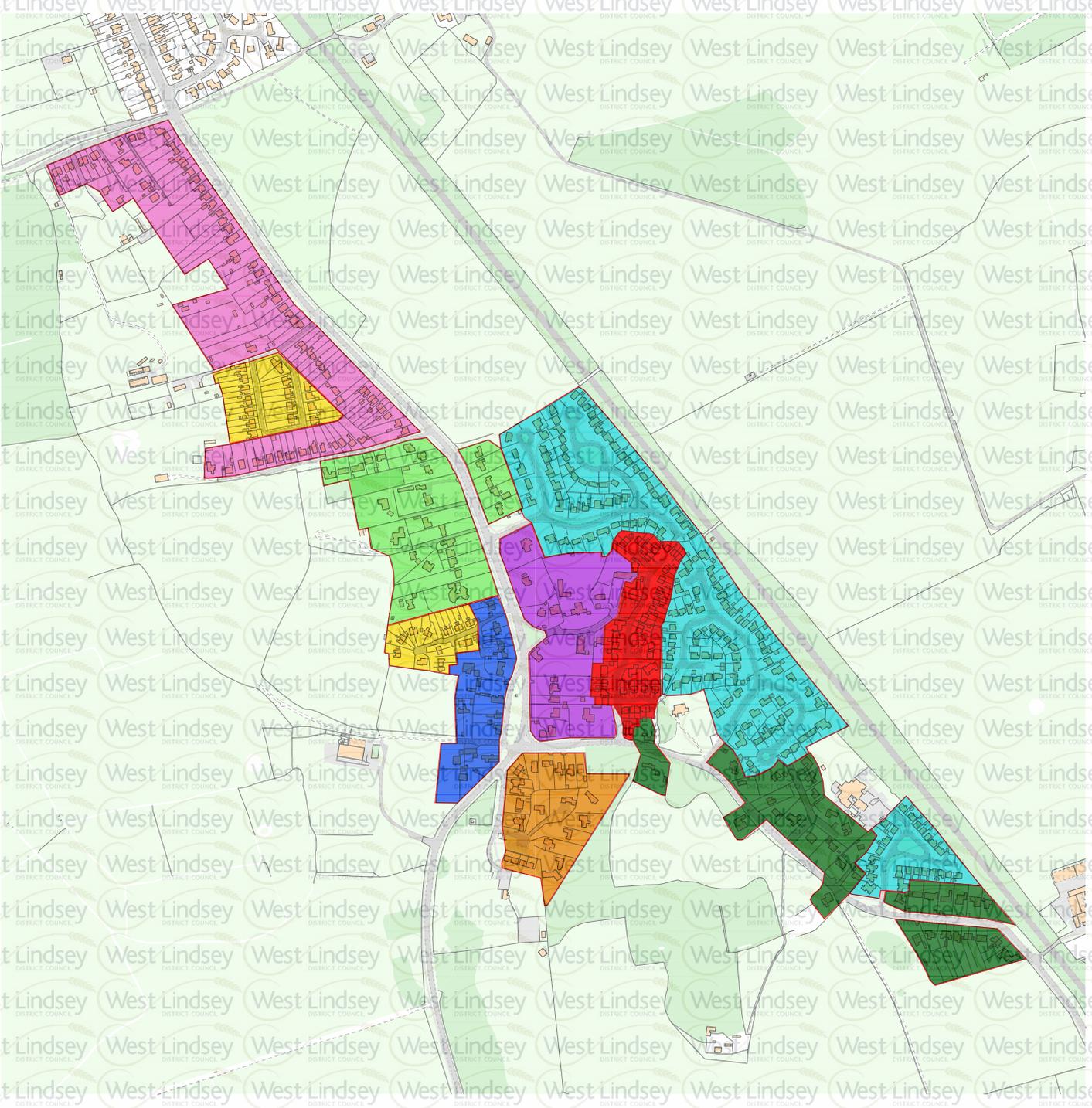
-  20th century linear
-  Backland development
-  The villas
-  Village green
-  1970's / 1980's estate
-  Dispersed core
-  1990's estate
-  Loose grain linear
-  Park Edge



Left and above: Although many styles of development exist within the village, a recurring theme is the use of 'salt-box' roofs. Deep roofs are common in 1970's development, but this style is more distinctive to Lea and can be found on newer development throughout the village.



Left: A segmented street, with straight segments of road joined by distinct deflections rather than sinuous curves.



Plot, building and street dimensions typically found in the area.

20th Centre Linear

The main approach to the village from the North is comprised of 20th linear development, with detached and semi-detached houses set within long, linear plots that line the street in a regular fashion. This development pattern is reflective of the fringe of Gainsborough. The arrangement is simple and repetitive, enabling on-plot parking and active frontages, and with gardens to the rear offering a soft transition between the built form and the open countryside to the west.

Materials



Mainly concrete roof tiles, although some red clay pantiles can be found.



A mix of red brick and render buildings, often within the same facade.



The brick tends to be red-brown, with some graining.

Details



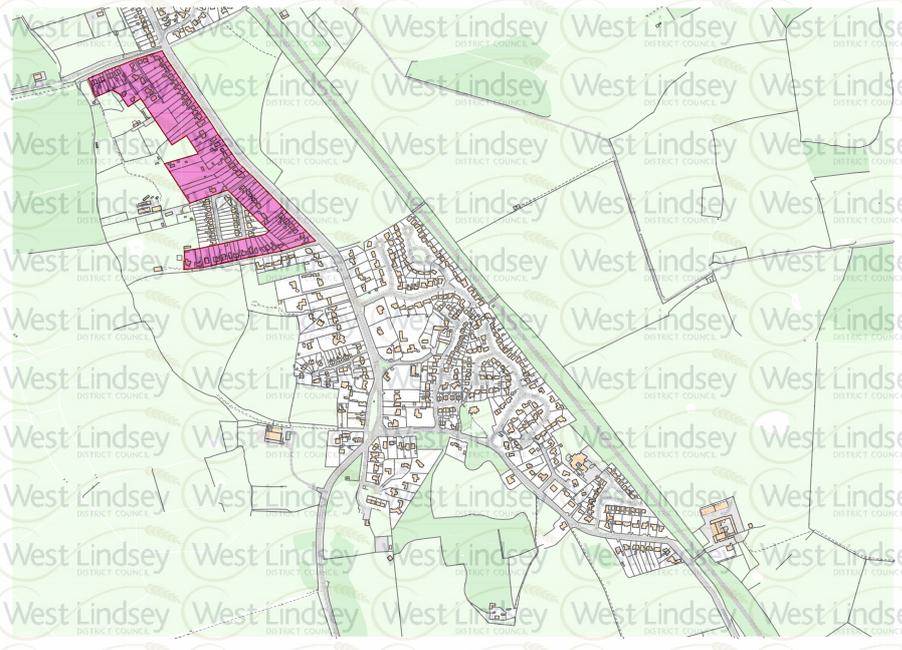
Hipped roofs or roofs with open gables and chimneys are commonplace.



Large front gardens with the building line common within clusters of dwellings.



Strong green boundaries to the street, with garden trees visible from the public spaces.



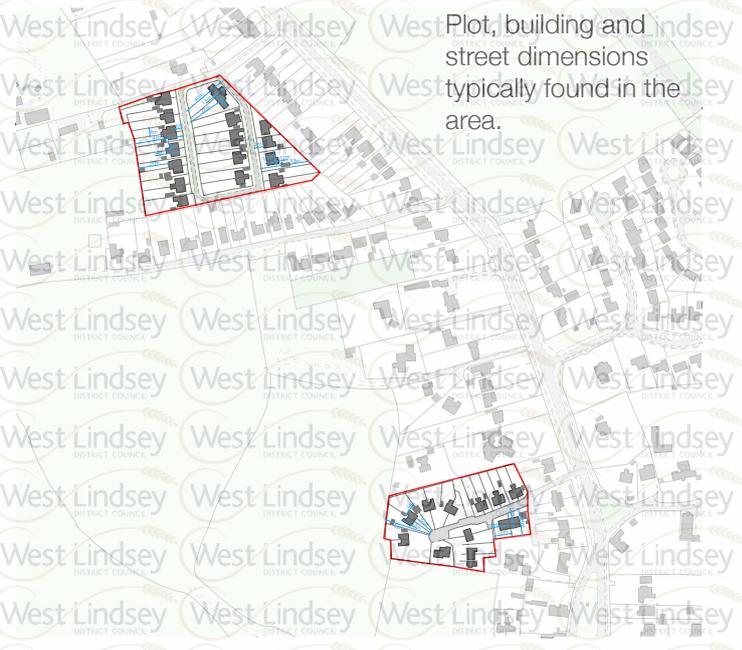
Street role and form.	Global integration, with connecting power between the village and other places and spaces beyond the extend of the settlement. Sight lines are very long at around 300m.
Plot range	Narrow, generally regular but with some wider plots on corners; more uniform between these. Generally within the range of 8-12m and with 30m gardens.
Building to plot ratio	High, typically 70-80%, some semi-detached and some detached units.
Building set back	Generally uniform at 6m, but with some pockets further back at around 10m. Buildings tend to be clustered, so that set backs are uniform across neighbours.
Roof scape	Mainly open gables with the ridge running parallel to the street. Hipped roofs on some dwellings. Roofing materials are concrete tiles or red pantiles. Most properties have chimneys placed centrally.
Parking	All on-plot, mainly placed side-of-plot. Some on-plot to dwelling fronts. Garages placed to the side, or deep within the rear of gardens.
Landscape and boundaries	Front boundaries consist of mature hedges, many of which are high and thick. There are also low walls in some instances. Garden trees add extra greenery to the street, and the view looking along the street is very green.
Scale and massing	Mainly two storey, with some bungalows. Some porches, although no uniform approach to scale and massing. All buildings are of a domestic scale.

Lessons

The scale of the plots and way buildings sit on them help to establish this street as an important movement corridor for the whole village. Buildings sit set back from a clearly defined boundary, in generous plots with ample on-plot space for parking. The larger gardens allow for bigger tree specimens, and these help define the street edge and reduce the appearance of built form. New development should seek to replicate the overall scale and approach when looking to provide new streets with a high movement function.



Plot, building and street dimensions typically found in the area.



Backland development

There are instances of backland development within Lea, where infill occurs at the back of plots on the street edge. These are small 'pockets' of development that are served from short lanes. In Lea, these tend to be quite dense, with smaller plots clustered around narrow streets. These add useful infill to the village, but create isolated areas that are not well integrated into the village. The Crescent (to the south) is a private, non-adopted street.

Materials



Mainly concrete roof tiles, although some red clay pantiles can be found.

Details



Hipped roofs with centrally located chimneys are commonplace.



White window frames are used on most homes, with simple rainwater goods.



Reasonable front gardens with a uniform building setback.



Almost exclusively red brick, with some graining within the bricks.



Good sight lines along the street, but with inconsistent boundary treatments.



Street role and form.	Local movement only, with no connecting power to other places or space within the village. Sight lines are short at around 50m or less.
Plot range	Narrow, generally regular and with shorter gardens than the plots found to the main streets.
Building to plot ratio	High, typically 80-100%, some semi-detached and some detached units.
Building set back	Generally uniform at 2-5m but with some pockets further back at around 10m on cul-de-sac splays.
Roof scape	Mainly open hipped roofs with centrally placed chimneys. Roofing materials are concrete tiles or red pantiles.
Parking	All on-plot, mainly placed side-of-plot. Some on-plot to dwelling fronts. Limited scope for on-street parking.
Landscape and boundaries	Front boundaries consist of a mix of open frontages, low fences, low walls and hedges. Most properties have a clear boundary, with open types uncommon.
Scale and massing	Mainly two storey, with some bungalows. Some porches and bay windows, although no uniform approach to scale and massing. All buildings are of a domestic scale.

Lessons

These minor streets offer a useful lesson for adding infill development to the village, maintaining the simple relationship between buildings and streets found elsewhere within the village, but doing so from very local streets. The repetition of the simple arrangement helps to generate character, but the front boundary treatments could be more cohesive to strengthen this.



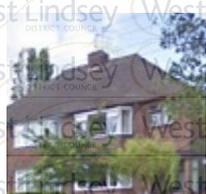
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Plot, building and street dimensions typically found in the area.

The villas

The linear development near to the historic village core features grand dwellings in large plots with a high degree of setback. These are still arranged in a linear fashion, similar to the 19th century patterns found further north towards Gainsborough, but here the scale gives them their own distinct character.

Materials



Red clay pantiles are more commonplace here, but some properties have concrete roof tiles in brown.



Mainly brick to the buildings, in either browns or reds. Some multi-grain units.



Some full render buildings in places. Occasional buff brick units can also be found, although uncommon.

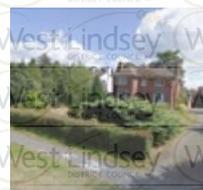
Details



A very varied roofscape, with some hipped roofs, some gables arranged parallel to the street, and some front-projecting gables.



Bay windows with tile hanging to bays can be found.



Generally hedge boundaries, with green front gardens and a high degree of setback.



Street role and form.	Global integrator, with connecting power to the rest of the wider area. Long sight lines at around 200m. Verges here soften the street scene. Front to front distances are very high, but enclosure is achieved through the boundaries and trees.
Plot range	Wide, with a large degree of variation in width and depth. The arrangement is regular, with the narrow edge of the plot facing the street.
Building to plot ratio	Generally low, with as little as 50% in places, although some properties cover around 80% of the plot width.
Building set back	High, and with a high degree of variation. Many buildings sit 20m back from the street within large landscaped front gardens.
Roof scape	Very varied, with hipped roofs dominant but with some front-projecting gables and limited open gables with ridges aligned parallel to the street.
Parking	All on-plot, mainly placed side-of-plot. Some on-plot to dwelling fronts. Some garages within the plots, either deep within the garden or to the side of the main dwelling.
Landscape and boundaries	Front boundaries consist of low walls or hedges, with the overall impression being of a green boundary. Large trees within the plot help to green the street.
Scale and massing	Mainly two storey, with some bungalows. Some porches and bay windows, although no uniform approach to scale and massing. All buildings are of a domestic scale, although many of the buildings here are large, with some double fronted with a central doorway.

Lessons

The very grand development here arranged in a regular structure demonstrates a useful approach to low density development that respects the overall character of it's area; it's still linear, has building fronts facing the street and works to create a rhythm to the street. The clear boundary unifies the street scene, and the space within the gardens for trees is extremely beneficial to the public realm.



Plot, building and street dimensions typically found in the key area.

The village green

The village green has a unique townscape and relationship between the built environment and the open space in the area. It is a 'set piece' on the western edge of a linear green space, with a service road to the rear of the main street giving access to the dwellings.

Materials



Roofing materials here are mainly red clay pantiles.



The buildings fronting this space are white render, simple in detailing.



Green painted window frames and shutters help unify the dwellings, which contrasts with the white render.

Details



Local service road, and the greenery here is within the public space rather than on plot.



Planting within the main green helps to maintain the enclosure to the main street whilst also filtering views onto the buildings.



Spaces to the side of plot - either as parking or gardens - are a key feature of the way plots are arranged within this area.



Street role and form.	This area contains both a global integrator with access to the wider area, plus a service road that gives local access to the properties in the area. Sight lines are still long at around 150m.
Plot range	Wide, although the arrangement means this is not easy to discern from the street due to the arrangement of buildings. Plot space sits adjacent to the street, with spaces between the buildings.
Building to plot ratio	Very varied, but generally low with buildings occupying less than 60% of the plot width.
Building set back.	Very low, with most buildings sat directly to the back edge of the footpath. Generally, the feel given along this street edge is of a continuous frontage, although not quite a terrace.
Roof scape	Either open gabled, but with the ridge arranged perpendicular to the street, or hipped roofs, but with short edge adjacent to the street edge.
Parking	On plot within small courtyards, but unusually for the main streets in the area, there is on-street parking within the service road.
Landscape and boundaries	The boundaries here are hard, with low walls to around 1200mm or building fronts making up the demarcation between public and private space.
Scale and massing	1.5 to 2 stories, with some deep roofs with accommodation within the roof scape.

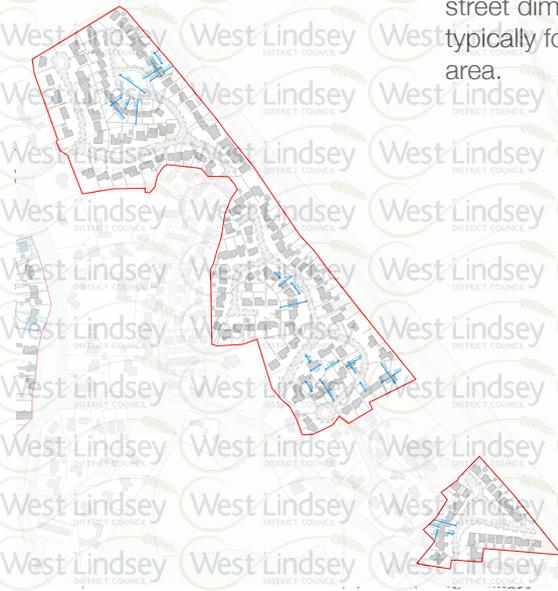
Lessons

The village green area demonstrates how open space and built form can work together to create a 'set piece', with each element supporting the overall character of the area. The wide green still feels enclosed due to the building sitting closer to the back edge of the footpath than is found elsewhere. The narrow range of materials and colours allow different building types to feel connected to each other, and the arrangement of streets allows for both global and local movement within the same corridor, whilst also allowing for on-street parking.



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Plot, building and street dimensions typically found in the area.



1970's / 1980's Estate

A large proportion of the village's housing stock is 1970's-style estate housing, arranged on sinuous streets within a nested hierarchy, where culs-de-sac are accessed via a main distributor road. Later additions in the 1980's mimic this pattern. Some of these streets have green spaces within them, and many of the streets have verges and occasional street trees. The dwellings here use a narrow range of materials and a relatively uniform approach to buildings and detailing. Some of these character areas are actually later development with their own materials, but the layout is common.

Materials



Whole areas of buff brick with white weather boarding and rainwater goods.



Concrete roof tiles, sometimes on deep roofs with accommodation within the roof void.



New parts of the area use red brick, but still with concrete roof tiles.

Details



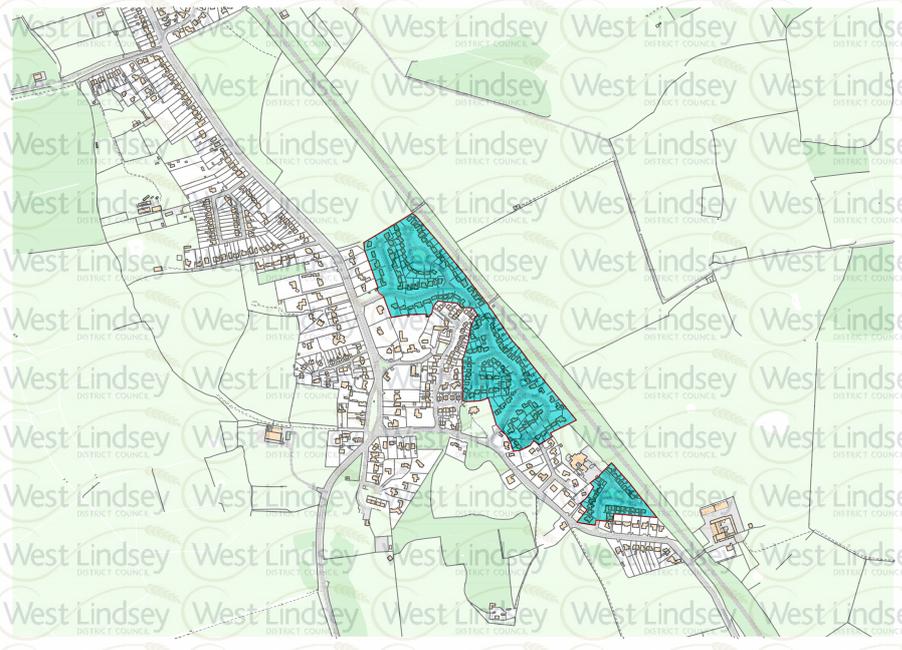
The streets here are sinuous, with gentle curves and deflections.



Some streets have green spaces within them, sometimes planted with street trees.



Newer parts of the character area use block paved street surfaces.



Street role and form.	Local access only using a 'nested hierarchy', with distributor roads feeding culs-de-sac. Sight lines reasonable at about 100m, but with sinuous curves and deflections.
Plot range	Reasonable narrow range of plots, with many similar plots in runs along the edge of the street. Properties tend to sit centrally within the length of the plot, with even front and rear gardens.
Building to plot ratio	Around 60-80%, with detached and semi-detached dwellings commonplace.
Building set back.	Medium, at around 5-7m, but arranged in groups with a common building line for most streets.
Roof scape	Steep pitched deep roofs common place, salt-box roofs used on some properties, large gables, some hip and valley roofs.
Parking	On plot within the front gardens, or to the sides of properties. Garages to the side or integrated into the dwelling also common.
Landscape and boundaries	Verges to the street edge, but generally open frontages with mown lawns. Some properties have low shrub planting.
Scale and massing	1.5 to 2 stories, with some deep roofs with accommodation within the roof scape. Some areas have bungalows, arranged in groups along the street.

Lessons

These estates are typical of their time rather than of the village as a whole, but still have useful design prompts that new development can incorporate into it's approach. The general rhythm of the streets works well, with the repetition helping to generate an overall character. Simple parking arrangements and a good relationship between buildings and the street. The deep roofs and simple pallet of materials helps to unify different building types within the same street.



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Plot, building and street dimensions typically found in the area.

Dispersed core

Part of the historic core of the village is arranged in an almost dispersed pattern, but the form is generally a loose-grained collection of plots in a roughly linear fashion, with parts of the streets having common building lines and with hedgerow boundaries helping to define the character area. Narrow lanes offer access to the backland development, and most of the dwellings here sit within large plots, with fragmented outbuildings.

Materials



A range of bricks, with course detailing and graining. Roofs in red clay or concrete tiles.



Grand buildings with buff brick, complex roofs and plinth detailing in white.



Outbuildings in render contrasting with the red brick. White windows with window bars.

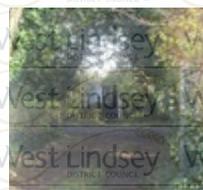
Details



Rural lanes, unmade surfaces and views to the green.



Buildings are glimpsed through the vegetation, with the boundaries and trees more visible than the buildings.



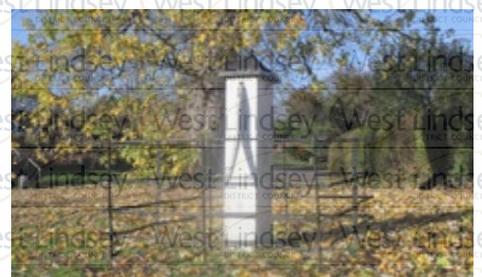
Narrow access, looking more like the driveway to country house than a street.



Street role and form.	Rural lanes, unmade roads and a narrow look and feel that offers only access to the backland in the area. The overall impression is of a private driveway to a grand house. A small village green with historic hand pump forms the entrance.
Plot range	Extremely varied, with no discernible pattern beyond some loose linear development to the main road. Plots tend to be wide, with space to the side of the dwellings.
Building to plot ratio	Very low, both in total coverage and in width. Some as low as 10%. The impression is of a greater coverage due to the outbuildings and high boundaries.
Building set back	Very varied, with some lines sat at around 7m but with other buildings pushed back into the interior of the plot, with the frontage space acting as the main garden.
Roof scape	Either hipped or hip and valley roofs, with chimneys and some front-projecting pitched dormers.
Parking	On plot within the gardens, or to the sides of properties. Garages to the side or placed deep within the plot.
Landscape and boundaries	Verges to the street edge, high hedges to the boundaries. Large trees within the boundaries, making for a very rural feel.
Scale and massing	Large, double fronted dwellings to 2 stories, with many single storey outbuildings.

Lessons

This part of the village has a disparate, fragmented form but common elements gives it a character of its own. The buildings, although impressive and historic, contribute a small amount to unifying the area. Instead, the large plots, lush boundaries and large trees define the area. The scale of the buildings is important here, with large units, often double fronted and with associated outbuildings. It's the generosity and grandeur of the components here that define the character, and should new development for individual, possibly self-build dwellings be planned for the village, the approach here is beneficial for informing the design.



Lea | Character and settlement breaks assessment

Plot, building and street dimensions typically found in the area.

1990's estate

An area of dense, smaller estate houses can be identified within Lea, and here a very uniform approach to materials and streetscape makes this a unique part of the village. The approach does not draw upon design cues from the historic village, but does have it's own character within the wider area.

Materials



Brown weather boarding and window frames are a unifying design feature of the area.



Red multi-grain brick and tile hanging make up the main building facade materials.



Boundaries are brick, matched to the main buildings.

Details



Block paved street and footpath surfaces, with low upstand to the kerbs and the look and feel of a shared surface.



Front projecting gables and dormers mean that some of the dwellings are 1.5 stories, with accommodation within the roofspace.



The footpaths and channelling to the street edges use coloured block paving to delineate the carriageway rather than a change in surface treatment.



Street role and form.	Local access only using a 'nested hierarchy', with distributor roads feeding culs-de-sac. Sight lines reasonable at about 80m, arranged in straight street segments.
Plot range	Narrow range, with generally smaller plots than found elsewhere within the village.
Building to plot ratio	Around 60-80%, with detached and semi-detached dwellings commonplace.
Building set back	Medium, at around 5-7m, but arranged in groups with a common building line for most streets.
Roof scape	Open gables, ridges parallel to the street, salt-box roofs used on some properties, front-projecting dormers with gables.
Parking	On plot within the front gardens, or to the sides of properties. Garages to the side or integrated into the dwelling also common.
Landscape and boundaries	Walls, either low to the front or high to the return frontage, with materials matched to the main dwelling.
Scale and massing	1.5 to 2 stories, with some roofs with accommodation within the roof scape. Buildings generally arranged semi-detached or short runs of terraces.

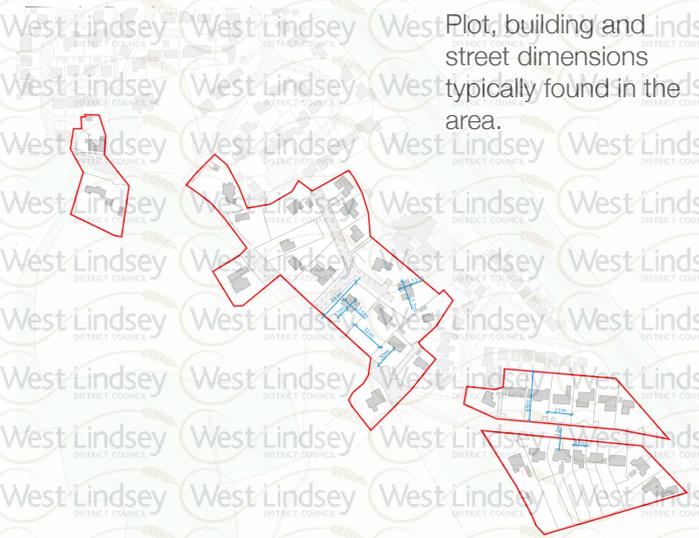
Lessons

This type of development is not reflective of the more historic parts of the village, but has an internal logic and cohesiveness that helps give it its own character. New development can replicate the 'of a piece' design approach used here, but draw more from the historic village to combine elements of Lea's distinctiveness with the kind of repetition needed to make a development cohesive.



Lea | Character and settlement breaks assessment

Plot, building and street dimensions typically found in the area.



Loose-grained linear

Unlike the development to Gainsborough Road, the approach to Lea from the east is a fragmented but still linear set of dwelling, most of which are set in generous plots (either narrow or wide). The boundary to the street and the reasonably consistent building line help the various sections of this street gel together.

Materials



Buff brick is used sporadically, with white weatherboarding and window frames.



Red-brown brick with graining and Flemish bond.

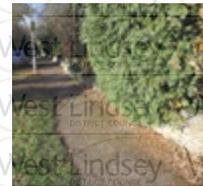


Generally concrete grey roof tiles, but some red clay pantiles.

Details



Garden trees help to green the street.



Large hedges to main street edge for most boundaries.



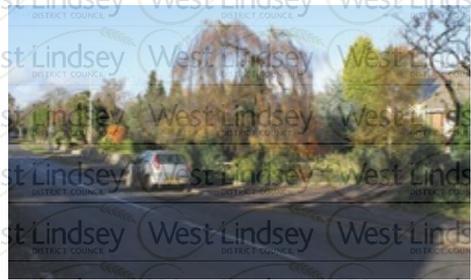
Changes in levels demarcated by rubble stone walls with planting above.



Street role and form.	Global integrator, connecting beyond the village. The street segments run for around 170m and are connected by distinct deflections in the carriageway rather than by overly sinuous curves.
Plot range	Wide range of plots but they are grouped by type, with clusters of narrower frontage plots together and wider frontage plots to the higher ground.
Building to plot ratio	Around 60-80% of plot width, with detached and semi-detached dwellings commonplace. Many properties are centrally placed within the plot.
Building set back	Generally high, with buildings sitting deep within their plot.
Roof scape	Steep pitched deep roofs common place, salt-box roofs used on some properties, large gables, some hip and valley roofs.
Parking	On plot within the front gardens, or to the sides of properties. Garages to the side or rear of plot also common.
Landscape and boundaries	Verges to the street edge, but generally open frontages with mown lawns. Some properties have low shrub planting.
Scale and massing	1 to 2 stories, with some deep roofs with accommodation within the roof scape. Some areas have bungalows, with the rest detached or semi-detached.

Lessons

The fragmented and disparate approach to the built form along Willingham Road means that the unifying factor here is the landscaping, with the strong planting to the edge of the street defining the look and feel of the area. The high setback, large plots and generous frontages give this part of the village a unique feel, and the way buildings sit within their raised plots is particularly distinctive. New development leading into the village should keep the generosity of landscaping and plots to help denote the key role this street plays in movement terms, and should seek to make the landscaping the key feature within the design.



Lea Character and settlement breaks assessment

Plot, building and street dimensions typically found in the area.

Park Edge

Development along the park edge is comprised of some historic buildings such as the Methodist church and former school, plus newer dwellings that use large plots and generous proportions. There is also a small collection of very modest retirement dwellings adjacent to the park and playing fields. The arrangement provides overlooking to the public open space in the area whilst maintaining a clear boundary to the street edge.

Materials



The historic buildings in the area have a combination of Tudor detailing, render and use complex roof forms.



The Methodist church is classically proportioned and wide-fronted, with render and concrete roof tiles, as are many of the residential dwellings.



The small run of bungalows use a buff brick and white weatherboarding.

Details



Long driveways to the dwellings are distinct to this area.



The bungalows provide a useful frontage to the park.



Low walls and fences form the plot boundaries in most instances. Some hedges present.



Street role and form.	Local access only with a low-grade lane leading to the park and access for the housing.
Plot range	For the most part, large, wide-fronted plots with generous gardens and very long driveways.
Building to plot ratio	Low at around 30% of frontage, with mainly detached apart from the collection of bungalows overlooking the park.
Building set back	Very high, some 50+m.
Roof scape	Steep pitched deep roofs common place, salt-box roofs used on some properties, large gables, some hip and valley roofs.
Parking	On plot within the front gardens, or to the sides of properties. Garages to the side or deep within the plot common.
Landscape and boundaries	Fences or low walls to the main street, some monoculture hedges, clipped.
Scale and massing	1.5 to 2 stories, with some deep roofs with accommodation within the roof scape. Some areas have bungalows, arranged in groups next to the park.

Lessons

These large park edge units help to make the built form and parkland work together, as the low density approach, fragmented buildings and large, soft garden spaces make the public space feel as if it continues as green space onto the plots. This approach makes the green space feel more generous than it is, and is a good way of supporting the feel of a rural space whilst still allowing development. Should new development fronting open space be developed in Lea, then this approach is useful for allowing the built form to support the spaces beyond the plot.



Overall findings and recommendations

Lea is historically a linear settlement, but newer development and begun to encroach onto higher ground to the east via a series of non-connecting lanes. These tend to work well with the local topography, occupying local ridges and helping to maintain the relationship between landform and development pattern. Should new development occur in Lea, then it should **respect this relationship and use topography to influence the street pattern.**

The green spaces surrounding the village are as much a part of its character as the townscape, and there is scope to improve the current walking and cycling routes in the area. Adding spaces for sitting, dog waste bins and incidental play trails would help **reinforce these routes as key amenities for residents.** Care also needs to be taken to ensure new development treats existing routes sensitively, including retaining their rural look and feel.

The main streets in Lea are distinctive, with their own architectural and design approach that helps denote their role in area-wide movement. Some of the more recent additions have used standardised street design that can be found anywhere in the country; better local **precedents can be found in the lane in Lea that should be used to inform the design of new streets in the area.** Should new public spaces be planned, then these should be positively addressed by buildings so they are **well overlook and feel safe and pleasant to use.**

The plot range in Lea is reasonably wide, but the arrangement is relatively uniform across the village, helping to build a cohesive character. Buildings face the front, with space for parking within the curtilage. New development should **allow for parking within the plot and should establish a positive relationship between buildings and the street.**

The more characterful parts of the village have a clear boundary treatment that help define public and private spaces within the village. There is also an abundance of front garden space that allows for trees and other landscaping within private plots to impact positively on the street scene. **New development should employ clear boundary treatments,** either in low brick walls or in hedges, and trees should be planted within front gardens in places where they can be seen from the street.

There are a wide range of building styles and materials within Lea, and some of this has eroded the overall character of the village, making it appear much like anywhere else. The use of red brick and red pantiles for the roofs, and the distinctive salt-box design of the roofscape all work well in producing a Lea vernacular, and **new development should keep to this simple range of materials and styles to reflect the existing character of the village.**



4 Appendices

Appendix 1: Manual for Streets

Manual for Streets (MfS) replaces Design Bulletin 32, first published in 1977, and its companion guide Places, Streets and Movement.

It puts well-designed residential streets at the heart of sustainable communities. For too long the focus has been on the movement function of residential streets. The result has often been places that are dominated by motor vehicles to the extent that they fail to make a positive contribution to the quality of life.

MfS demonstrates the benefits that flow from good design and assigns a higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists, setting out an approach to residential streets that recognises their role in creating places that work for all members of the community. MfS refocuses on the place function of residential streets, giving clear guidance on how to achieve well-designed streets and spaces that serve the community in a range of ways.

MfS updates the link between planning policy and residential street design. It challenges some established working practices and standards that are failing to produce good-quality outcomes, and asks professionals to think differently about their role in creating successful neighbourhoods.

It places particular emphasis on the importance of collaborative working and coordinated decision-making, as well as on the value of strong leadership and a clear vision of design quality at the local level.

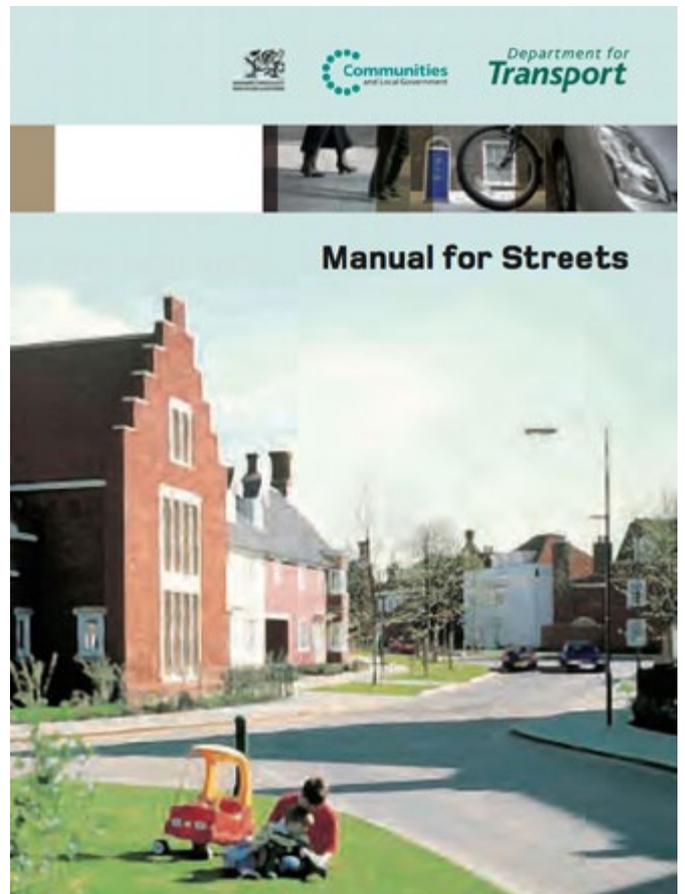
Research carried out in the preparation of Manual for Streets indicated that many of the criteria routinely applied in street design are based on questionable or outdated practice.

For example, it showed that, when long forward visibility is provided and generous carriageway width is specified, driving speeds tend to increase. This demonstrates that driver behaviour is not fixed; rather, it can be influenced by the environment.

MfS addresses these points, recommending revised key geometric design criteria to allow streets to be designed as places in their own right while still ensuring that road safety is maintained.



Manual for
Streets, TFL



Appendix 2: Building for Life 12

Building for Life 12 is the industry standard, endorsed by government for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods that local communities, local authorities and developers are encouraged to use to help stimulate conversations about creating good places to live.

The 12 questions reflect our vision of what new housing developments should be: attractive, functional and sustainable places. Redesigned in 2012, BfL12 is based on the National Planning Policy Framework and the government's commitment to not only build more homes, but better homes - whilst also encouraging local communities to participate in the place making process.

The questions are designed to help structure discussions between local communities, local planning authorities, developers and other stakeholders.

BfL12 is also designed to help local planning authorities assess the quality of proposed and completed developments; it can be used for site-specific briefs and can also help to structure design codes and local design policies.

BfL12 comprises of 12 easy to understand questions that are designed to be used as a way of structuring discussions about a proposed development. There are four questions in each of the three chapters:

- Integrating into the neighbourhood
- Creating a place
- Street and home

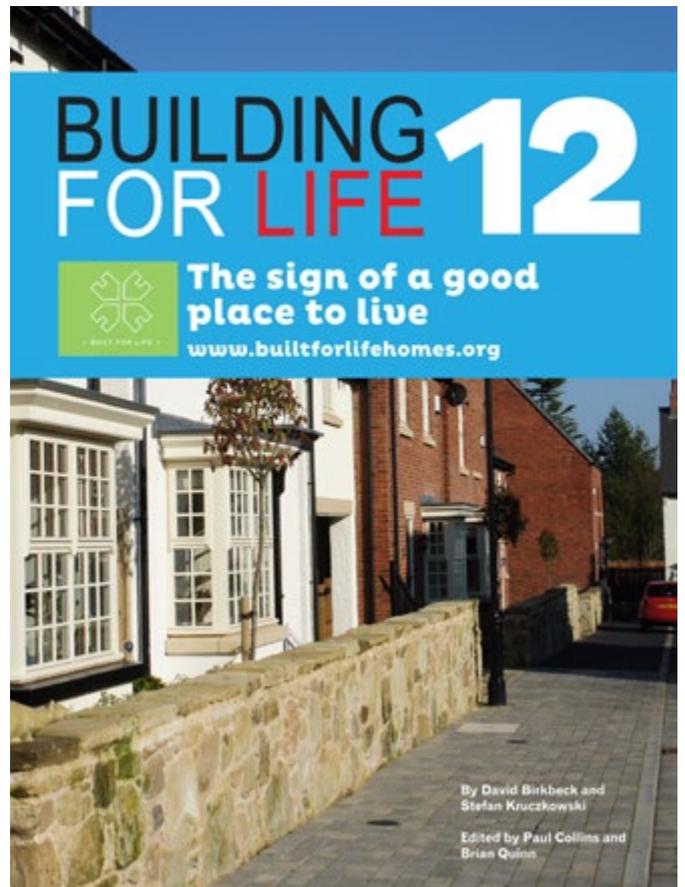
Based on a simple 'traffic light' system (red, amber and green) we recommend that proposed new developments aim to:

- Secure as many 'greens' as possible,
- Minimise the number of 'ambers' and;
- Avoid 'reds'.

The more 'greens' that are achieved, the better a development will be. A red light gives warning that a particular aspect of a proposed development needs to be reconsidered.



Building for
Life 12, the BfL
Partnership



Appendix 3: Glossary of terms

Shortened extracts from By Design (ODPM/CABE, 2000) and The Dictionary of Urbanism (Streetwise Press, 2003)

accessibility The ease with which a building, place or facility can be reached by people and/or goods and services. Accessibility can be shown on a plan or described in terms of pedestrian and vehicle movements, walking distance from public transport, travel time or population distribution.

adaptability The capacity of a building or space to respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions.

amenity Something that contributes to an area's environmental, social, economic or cultural needs. The term's meaning is a matter for the exercise of planners' discretion, rather than being defined in law.

appearance Combination of the aspects of a place or building that determine the visual impression it makes.

area appraisal An assessment of an area's land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics.

authenticity The quality of a place where things are what they seem: where buildings that look old are old, and where the social and cultural values that the place seems to reflect did actually shape it.

background building A building that is not a distinctive landmark.

backland development The development of sites at the back of existing development, such as back gardens.

barrier An obstacle to movement.

best value The process through which local authorities work for continuous improvement in the services they provide. Local authorities are required to challenge why a particular service is needed; compare performance across a range of indicators; consult on the setting of new performance targets; and show that services have been procured through a competitive process. Councils are subject to independent best value audits by the Best Value Inspectorate, an offshoot of the Audit Commission.

block The area bounded by a set of streets and undivided by any other significant streets.



block The space in between the streets, usually used for development but can also be used for parkland and open space. The shape can be regular (square) or rectilinear (longer and shorter sides).

brief This guide refers to site-specific briefs as development briefs. Site-specific briefs are also called a variety of other names, including design briefs, planning briefs and development frameworks.

building element A feature (such as a door, window or cornice) that contributes to the overall design of a building.

building line The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street. The building line can be shown on a plan or section.

building shoulder height The top of a building's main facade.

built environment The entire ensemble of buildings, neighbourhoods and cities with their infrastructure.

built form Buildings and structures.

bulk The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Also called massing.

character appraisal Techniques (particularly as developed by English Heritage) for assessing the qualities of conservation areas.

character area An area with a distinct character, identified as such so that it can be protected or enhanced by planning policy. The degree of protection is less strong than in a conservation area.

character assessment An area appraisal emphasising historical and cultural associations.

conservation area character appraisal A published document defining the special architectural or historic interest that warranted the area being designated.

conservation area One designated by a local authority under the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as possessing special architectural or historical interest. The council will seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of such areas.

context (or site and area) appraisal A detailed analysis of the features of a site or area (including land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics) which serves as the basis for an urban design framework, development brief, design guide, or other policy or guidance.

context The setting of a site or area.

countryside design summary A descriptive analysis explaining the essential design relationship between the landscape, settlement patterns and buildings. From this analysis the document draws principles that can be applied to development in the area and sets out the implications of the choices open to designers. As supplementary planning guidance prepared by a local authority, the summary can encourage a more regionally and locally based approach to design and planning. It can also provide the context for individual communities to prepare village design statements.

defensible space Public and semi-public space that is 'defensible' in the sense that it is surveyed, demarcated or maintained by somebody. Derived from Oscar Newman's 1973 study of the same name, and an important concept in securing public safety in urban areas, defensible space is also dependent upon the existence of escape routes and the level of anonymity which can be anticipated by the users of space.

density The mass or floorspace of a building or buildings in relation to an area of land. Density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial development); homes or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); site coverage plus the number of floors or a maximum building height; space standards; or a combination of these.

design code A document (usually with detailed drawings or diagrams) setting out with some precision the design and planning principles that will apply to development in a particular place.

design guidance A generic term for documents providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the planning and design policies of a local authority or other organisation.

design guide Design guidance on a specific topic such as shop fronts or house extensions, or relating to all kinds of development in a specific area.

design policy Relates to the form and appearance of development, rather than the land use.

design principle An expression of one of the basic design ideas at the heart of an urban design framework, design guide, development brief or design code. Each such planning tool should have its own set of design principles.



design statement A developer can make a pre-application design statement to explain the design principles on which a development proposal in progress is based. It enables the local authority to give an initial response to the main issues raised by the proposal. An applicant for planning permission can submit a planning application design statement with the application, setting out the design principles adopted in relation to the site and its wider context. Government advice (Planning Policy Guidance Note 1) encourages an applicant for planning permission to submit such a written statement to the local authority.

design-led development (or regeneration) Development whose form is largely shaped by strong design ideas.

desire line An imaginary line linking facilities or places which people would find it convenient to travel between easily.

development appraisal A structured assessment of the characteristics of a site and an explanation of how they have been taken into account in drawing up development principles.

development brief A document providing guidance on how a specific site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed in line with the relevant planning and design policies. It will usually contain some indicative, but flexible, vision of future development form. A development brief usually covers a site most of which is likely to be developed in the near future. The terms 'planning brief' and 'design brief' are also sometimes used. These came into use at a time when government policy was that planning and design should be kept separate in design guidance. The term 'development brief' avoids that unworkable distinction.

development control The process through which a local authority determines whether (and with what conditions) a proposal for development should be granted planning permission.

development plan Prepared by a local authority to describe the intended use of land in an area and provide a basis for considering planning applications. Every area is covered either by a unitary development plan or by a development plan comprising more than one document (a structure plan and a local plan, and sometimes also other plans relating to minerals and waste). The development plan sets out the policies and proposals against which planning applications will be assessed. Its context is set by national and regional planning policy guidance.

development Statutorily defined under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land'. Most forms of development require planning permission.

eyes on the street People whose presence in adjacent buildings or on the street make it feel safer.

facade The principal face of a building.

fenestration The arrangement of windows on a facade.

figure/ground (or figure and ground diagram) A plan showing the relationship between built form and publicly accessible space (including streets and the interiors of public buildings such as churches) by presenting the former in black and the latter as a white background, or the other way round.

fine grain The quality of an area's layout of building blocks and plots having small and frequent subdivisions.

form The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

grid (street pattern) A street system in which streets connect at both ends with other streets to form a grid-like pattern. Grids can be regular or deformed; regular grids have junctions that meet at crossroads, whereas deformed grids have their junctions offset from one another.

in-curtilage parking Parking within a building's site boundary, rather than on a public street or space.

landmark A building or structure that stands out from the background buildings.

landscape The appearance of land, including its shape, form, colours and elements, the way these (including those of streets) components combine in a way that is distinctive to particular localities, the way they are perceived, and an area's cultural and historical associations.

layout The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

legibility The degree to which a place can be easily understood by its users and the clarity of the image it presents to the wider world.

live edge Provided by a building or other feature whose use is directly accessible from the street or space which it faces; the opposite effect to a blank wall.



local distinctiveness The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

massing The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. This is also called bulk.

mixed uses A mix of complementary uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. 'Horizontal' mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. 'Vertical' mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

movement People and vehicles going to and passing through buildings, places and spaces.

natural surveillance (or supervision) The discouragement to wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to see out of windows. Also known as passive surveillance (or supervision).

nested hierarchy (layout) A type of layout common from around 1950 that, instead of traditional interconnecting grids of streets, uses a tiered order of streets, each with only one function (commonly distributor road, access road, cul-de-sac).

node A place where activity and routes are concentrated.
performance criterion/criteria A means of assessing the extent to which a development achieves a particular.

'Radburn' (layout) a type of layout developed in America for a scheme in New Jersey which used a segregated footpath network to separate cars from pedestrians. Commonly used in the UK in the 1960's, these types of layouts are identifiable by their garage parking to the rear of properties, often maze-like network of footpaths running along back fences and between buildings, and areas of 'left over' space with no obvious use.

urban forward ltd is a multidisciplinary planning, design and urban design consultancy dedicated to quality outcomes for the built environment. We offer a comprehensive range of services designed to deliver the best possible results for any project, from new developments to policy and research. Our team are leaders in the field, with a wealth of practical experience to help you realise the potential of your project. We work with both private and public sector clients as well as with community groups and those in the third sector.

urban forward ltd
The Studio
122 Newland
Witney
Oxon OX28 3JQ

w: www.urbanforward.co.uk
e: info@urbanforward.co.uk
t: +44 7980 743523
 @urbanforward



urban forward ltd