



Urban Design Proof of Evidence

Michael Carr BA HONS DIP LA (Dist) DIP/MA UD

Pegasus Urban Design

West Northamptonshire Development Corporation

Co-joined Appeals:
Danetree, Monkmoor, Church Fields.

REF:

APPEAL A – The Danetree Consortium
(APP/Y2810/A/08/2071504) & (APP/M9570/A/08/2071505)
Land to the East of Daventry and North of the A45 Road (Danetree)

APPEAL B – The Chapel House Property Trust Ltd
(APP/M9570/08/2082894)
Land at Monkmoor Farm, Welton Lane, Daventry (Monkmoor)

APPEAL C – Croudace Homes Ltd
(APP/Y2810/A/08/2083322) & (APP/M9570/A/08/2083327)
Land at Long Buckby Road, Daventry (Church Fields)

Pegasus Planning Group
Pegasus House
Querns Business Centre
Whitworth Road
Cirencester
Glos, GL7 1RT

Telephone: (01285) 641717 Facsimile: (01285) 642348

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Michael Carr. I am Partner in charge of Urban Design at Pegasus Planning Group LLP. I have 19 years experience of designing the built environment.
- 1.2 I hold a First Class Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree and received a distinction for my Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture. I subsequently studied for a Masters and Graduate Diploma in Urban Design. I am also a member of the Urban Design Group.
- 1.3 Pegasus Planning Group LLP is retained to provide a range of urban design services for a wide variety of schemes including residential, commercial, business, leisure and retail projects. We operate from offices in Cirencester, Birmingham, Bristol, Bracknell, Nottingham, Leeds and Cambridge.
- 1.4 I have been appointed by WNDC in order to review the Urban Design approach to the sites and to prepare evidence in relation to the applications. I was appointed to assess the validity of the urban design concerns given my experience designing and analysing the built environment. It is on this basis that I have prepared this evidence.
- 1.5 I am regularly asked to present evidence and this is commonly informed by my project work which involves design from concept to implementation.
- 1.6 My previous experience includes:
- Derby, Co-joined Inquiry – Expert witness at the co-joined inquiry for sites representing one of four sites being promoted.
 - Bracknell, Jennetts Park – Urban extension proposals for 1,500 houses including Masterplan, Design Statement, Design Codes and detailed RMA site layouts.
 - Milton Keynes, Stantonbury Park – Proposal for an urban extension of around 600 houses, mixed use local centre and associated open space.
 - Coalville, Bardon Grange – A mixed use sustainable urban extension development comprising 2,000 homes and associated facilities.

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- Milton Keynes, Western Expansion Area – Preparation of large scale masterplan proposals for 6,000 houses, associated employment, schools and shopping facilities.
- Seaton, Harbour Road Regeneration – Residential led contemporary mixed use masterplan proposals for regenerating a large area of the town.
- Chesterfield, Chatsworth Road – Preparation of a Masterplan (SPD) document and Design and Access Statement for sustainable redevelopment of a large industrial area.
- Huntingdon, Northbridge – Design Code proposals for an urban extension of around 1,000 homes.
- Coventry, WEHM regeneration – Pegasus prepared outline application proposals for over 3,000 houses and associated community facilities.
- Derbyshire, Melbourne – Proposals for a residential led urban extension.
- Weston-Super-Mare, Weston Park – Development master planning for a major urban extension site in Weston.
- Shrewsbury, Former Royal Shrewsbury Hospital Site - English Partnerships' Sustainable Homes Development set to achieve lifetime homes and Building for Life silver standard.

2. Scope of Evidence

2.1 My proof will analyse the Urban Design aspects of the three appeal sites known as Danetree (A), Monksmoor (B) and Church Fields (C) (see Figure 1).

2.2 My proof focuses on the built urban environment. It will:

- Review the policy context and other Urban Design terms of reference.
- Review Daventry's townscape and define important Urban Design attributes
- Analyse how each sites scale, location and urban design connectivity will (or will not) have a good physical relationship with the town and play a positive part in the Townscape of Daventry.
- Analyse the logic (or not) of the site's disposition of land uses, and how masterplanning of the sites accord with Design Policy providing acceptable scale, layout, density and urban form.
- Review the formal and informal quality and quantity of formal and informal open space.
- Review the design approach for the mixed use (district/neighbourhood) centres in Urban Design terms.
- Conclude which proposed development (or developments) will be the most appropriate in Urban Design terms.

2.3 A number of issues and concerns arose from the consideration of the appeal proposals by WNDC. The issues that relate to Urban Design and that are to be discussed within this proof are:

Danetree (see Figure 2)

2.4 An appeal was submitted against non-determination of the original application in April 2008, and the Committee considered a detailed report in June 2008 and agreed the case WNDC would prepare for the forthcoming Public Inquiry. At the time, it was resolved WNDC would take forward a case expressing concerns that can be summarised, so far as relevant to this evidence, as – (a) the location, scale and

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connectivity of the development in relation to Daventry; (b) the unacceptability of the development outside the built-up area of Daventry.

2.5 In October 2008, the appellant submitted revisions to the scheme together with additional information.

2.6 In December 2008 it was resolved that had the corporation been in a position to determine the application, it would have been refused for the putative reasons a – j as set out in the Committee Report (CD 5.22) specifically in relation to this evidence including the following;

Putative Reasons for Refusal in relation to Urban Design

(a) By virtue of its location, connectivity, scale, layout, density, urban form and physical relationship with the existing town (and town centre) of Daventry the proposal represents development which would fail to accord with the Development Plan.....

(b) For the reasons set out in paragraph (a) above the proposed development would fail to be in accordance with the development plan for the area in that it would result in unacceptable development outside the existing built up area of Daventry.....

(h) The proposals fail to demonstrate appropriate quantitative and qualitative provision for formal and informal recreation and open space as part of the development. As such, the proposals would be contrary to Daventry Local Plan 'saved' policies RC1 and RC12, the Daventry Infrastructure SPD, the WNDC Planning Obligations Strategy and advice in PPG17.

(i) The proposals fail to demonstrate that sufficient land would be made available within the District/Neighbourhood Centres to provide a full and appropriate range of community facilities that would contribute to the creation of a sustainable urban extension. As such, the proposals would be contrary to Policy 3 of RSS8 and advice in PPS 1 and PPS 3.

Monksmoor (see Figure 3)

2.7 The original scheme submitted to WNDC in July 2007 was considered at the WNDC planning committee in September 2008, following the submission of the appeal

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against non-determination. It was resolved that had the Corporation been in a position to determine the application, it would have been refused however the scheme has subsequently been amended to address the concerns arising.

- 2.8 WNDC putative reasons for refusal no longer apply in urban design terms. However the site is still included in the comparative assessment so that a balanced judgement can be made.

Church Fields (see Figure 4)

- 2.9 The original scheme was submitted to WNDC in March 2007. An appeal against non-determination of the first application was submitted in August 2008. It was considered at a meeting of the WNDC planning committee in September 2008, when it was resolved that had the Corporation been in a position to determine the application, it would have been refused. However the scheme has subsequently been amended to address the concerns arising.

- 2.10 WNDC putative reasons for refusal no longer apply in urban design terms, however the site is still included in the comparative assessment so that a balanced judgement can be made.

Accompanying Evidence

- 2.11 This evidence compliments other proofs produced on behalf of WNDC including Landscape (Will Reed), Accessibility (David Bird) and Planning (Eric Owens).

3. Policy and Urban Design terms of reference

Urban Design

- 3.1 Urban design is the process of shaping the physical setting for life in cities, towns and villages. It is the art of making places. It involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, and establishing the processes that make successful development possible.
- 3.2 Urban Design is about how places look and work. If done well, it sets out principles of good design that creates great places. Urban Design is the profession that can make the link between architecture and planning.
- 3.3 Urban Design advice at appeals is crucial to help make decisions on design issues in terms of how the place will, or will not, work, as stated by CABE guidance:

“When a scheme is examined at appeal, written or oral evidence will need to say why it is or is not seen as appropriate. The clarity of the rationale behind a proposed design, and how the need for good design has been taken into account, may be crucial to the decision maker’s conclusion”.

(Design at appeal: Advice on dealing with design issues within planning appeals. CABE)

Policy Context

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1)

- 3.4 PPS1 is considered relevant to Urban Design in respect of the application and this appeal, as it establishes a national policy aimed at:

“Ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources; and, ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community”.

(PPS1, pages 2 and 3)

3.5 Good urban design is therefore an important aspect in government planning policy.

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS 3)

3.6 PPS3 expands on this objective to not just promote the rejection of poor design but actively encouraging good design stating:

“13. Reflecting policy in PPS1, good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted”.

(PPS3, page 8)

National Urban Design Guidance

By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice
(Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR, 2000))

3.7 By Design is a companion guide to national planning policy, and is listed as an appropriate reference in PPS1. It aims to promote higher standards in urban design. The objectives of urban design identified in By Design include:

“Character: A place with its own identity

Continuity and enclosure: A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished

Quality of the public realm: A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas

Ease of movement: A place that is easy to get to and move through

Legibility: A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand.....”

(By Design, page 15)

Urban Design Compendium

(English Partnerships and The Housing Corporation)

- 3.8 The Urban Design Compendium is a well regarded document covering many aspects of Urban Design, but of particular relevance to this appeal it stresses the importance of context, when it states:

“What is meant by context

Context is the character and setting of the area within which a projected scheme will sit. It is its natural as well as human history; the forms of the settlements, buildings and spaces; its ecology and archaeology; its location, and the routes that pass through it. Context also includes people, the individuals living in or near an area and how communities are organised so that citizens become real participants in the projected development. A thorough appreciation of the overall site context is the starting point for designing a distinct place.

Why context is important

Context is crucial. It is about understanding the position of development, and how to position a development. This involves a range of considerations and participants, directly or indirectly. High quality places will only emerge if the approach is cohesive and inclusive”.

(Urban Design Compendium, page 19)

It provides a summary of chapter 2 on the Appreciation of Context, by stating that -

“Appreciating the Context

A thorough appreciation of the overall site context is the starting point for designing a distinct place. Context is the character and setting of the area within which a scheme will sit”.

(Urban Design Compendium, also page 19)

Circular 01/06 Design and Access Statements

3.9 The circular 01/06, effective from 10 August 2006, sets out the formal requirements and changes to the planning applications process. The circular says that statements should explain the design principles and concepts that have informed the development and how access issues have been dealt with. It reinforces the importance of establishing good design principles even at the outline stage. The requirements are summarised as follows:

- use and amount; what the buildings and spaces will be used for and how much will be built on the site.
- access; vehicle and transport links, why the access point/points have been chosen, and how the site responds to road layout, links to public transport and how everyone can get to move through the development.
- layout; how the buildings and the public/private spaces will be arranged on the site, and the relationship between them and the buildings and spaces around the site.
- scale; the relationship between the buildings and spaces.
- landscaping; how open spaces will be treated to enhance and protect the character of a place.
- appearance; what the buildings and spaces will look like in detail, for example, building materials and typical architectural details to establish 'themes' that can be developed after outline approval.

Manual for Streets

3.10 The key recommendation of the Manual is that increased consideration should be given to the 'place' function of streets. The underlying theme when designing street layouts (as opposed to designing individual streets) is catering for movement. The movement framework is important for a number of reasons. It can affect how much people walk or cycle, the level of public transport use, the sustainability of the community and its environment, and quality of life.

“Internal permeability is important but the area also needs to be properly connected with adjacent street networks. A development with poor links to the surrounding area creates an enclave which encourages movement to and from it by car rather than by other modes”.

(page 42 para 4.2.5)

3.11 The propensity to walk is influenced not only by distance, but also by the quality of the walking experience. This will depend on how stimulating and attractive the environment is, together with how safe and secure people feel within it. Of particular importance to pedestrians is the ease with which they can use a route. As Manual for Streets states:

“Pedestrians generally feel safe from crime where:

- *Their routes are overlooked by buildings with habitable rooms;*
- *Other people are using the street;*
- *There is no evidence of anti-social activity (e.g. litter, graffiti, vandalised street furniture);*
- *They cannot be surprised (e.g. at blind corners);*
- *They cannot be trapped (e.g. people can feel nervous in places with few entry and exit points); and*
- *There is good lighting”.*

(page 67 para 6.3.18)

Regional Policy and Local Policy

3.12 Regional policy and materially relevant planning and development documents are dealt with in detail by my colleague Eric Owens. There are certain issues that are of particular relevance to Urban Design in Daventry including:

Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS 8)

3.13 At a regional level RSS Policy 4 promotes better design by:

“the use of design led approaches which take account of local natural and historic character, for example landscape character assessments, urban design frameworks, town and village design statements, local concept statements, countryside design summaries, and masterplanning exercises”.

(RSS 8, page 16)

Northamptonshire Structure Plan 1996

- 3.14 At the regional level the Structure Plan of 1996, emphasises a contextual approach so that new development complements and seeks that new development should be adjacent to and integrated with existing urban areas.

Daventry Local Plan (DLP)

- 3.15 The DLP outlines a number of strategic principles for shaping future growth in the District. In design terms I particularly note:

- “a) protecting the rural character of landscape and villages in the District*
- b) ensuring sustainability through strong public transport routes, safe and convenient cycle and pedestrian routes”.*

(Ref: Para 1.12)

Daventry Design Code SPD (2005)

- 3.16 The Daventry District Design Codes Supplementary Planning Document 2005 furthers these principles and also adds -

- “a) ensure appropriate scale and density of development along the settlement edge.*
- b) expansion areas should respond to local topography and reflect the organic nature of Daventry’s historic core”.*

(Ref: Page 111, Para 8.2.1)

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- 3.17 The document makes specific reference to the need to protect Borough Hill and Burnt Walls (Scheduled Ancient Monuments). The Guidance stresses the need for a site specific response and the importance of understanding context in the creation of distinct places that are in keeping with its surroundings.

Daventry Town and Parish Design Statement

- 3.18 The Daventry Town and Parish Design Statement was adopted as SPD in 2008. It sets out a number of design principles to be applied to all future developments and encourages provision of walkways/cycle routes to link all development sites within the town.

Norton Village Design Statement

- 3.19 This statement was adopted as SPD in 2008. It sets out requirements for new development in and around Norton, located to the north east of the Danetree Site, to protect and enhance the existing settlement and landscape. It encourages the retention of the visual relationship of the village with its landscape context. More specifically for this appeal it sets out requirements in section 5 which state:

“There must be a 1km (0.58 mile) buffer zone between the Village and any new developments. Developers should respect the settlement pattern and retain the important views identified on the map”.

(Norton Village Design Statement, page 13)

- 3.20 This document therefore emphasises that at a very local level there are concerns about protecting existing character and new development should take this into account.

Overview

- 3.21 Relevant Planning Policy establishes that Urban Design should be used to help shape the future of towns, with a particular emphasis on a context led design approach that responds to the character of an area and the way it functions.

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- 3.22 National Urban Design Policy establishes that design principles will need to be fixed at outline application stage, so that future reserved matters have an agreed appropriate framework from the outset.
- 3.23 Local Policy and SPD's clarify that there are specific Urban Design characteristics in Daventry including topography and the defined historic core, and that the surrounding villages will be particularly sensitive to change.

4. Daventry Urban Context

Daventry Pattern of Growth (see Figure 5)

- 4.1 Daventry began as a small Anglo-Saxon village in around 920 and by the 12th century had become home to a priory. In 1255 Daventry was granted a charter to become a market town and 1576 was granted borough status. The main roads from London to Holyhead passed through Daventry and the town for centuries flourished as a coaching town. However, the Industrial Revolution had little effect on Daventry owing to its poor transport links, notably rail connections (which were not built in the Town until the late 19th Century) and the distance from the Grand Union Canal.
- 4.2 The growth of Daventry primarily occurred from the 1960s onwards as part of a planned expansion of the town. In the early 1960s, Daventry was designated to house people and industry relocated from Birmingham and a planned expansion was carried out as part of an agreement with Birmingham City Council.
- 4.3 During the Town's early growth as a coaching Town, key road links were developed based on the through movement between Coventry and London in a northwest-southeast direction (a route which today is reflected in the location of the A45) and Oxford from the south (along what is now the A361).
- 4.4 A key characteristic of Daventry's historic development is its radial development, originating from the Historic core. As Daventry has grown over time, development has generally followed the key radial routes in and out of the Town and expanded from these areas.

Daventry and Topography

- 4.5 Topographic constraints have historically helped shape the development of the town. Daventry is defined by underlying topography within a valley head surrounded and defined by Borough Hill.
- 4.6 Borough Hill is a substantial barrier to development defining clearly the limit of urban development along a significant part of the eastern edge of Daventry. Its dominance over the Eastern part of Daventry makes it a significant town landmark.

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- 4.7 Although there are some minor ridges within the valley head that contains the town of Daventry, the topographical form is largely that of a bowl, and in this Proof the valley head that contains Daventry is referred to as the “Daventry Bowl”. This is further discussed and illustrated in my colleague Will Reed’s evidence.

The Pattern of Daventry’s Townscape

- 4.8 Daventry has therefore evolved over time to create a patchwork of development summarised below in the following paragraphs.
- 4.9 The High Street is the mixed-use focal point of the Daventry and part of the Town’s retail hub. Buildings are generally 2 and 3 storeys in height and form runs of terraces, based on narrow plot widths and a more vertical emphasis. The historic layout of this area has been maintained despite some recent infill development. A consistent line of buildings is evident creating a strong sense of enclosure, with minimal building set backs from footways.
- 4.10 The Market Square formed part of the original historic centre of Daventry and although less well defined today, it remains a key space. Built form in this area follows a similar character to that of the High Street, although extensive parking areas and new roads running through the space have lessened its function as public space.
- 4.11 The Church of the Holy Cross is an 18th Century building and is a landmark for much of Daventry. The Churchyard forms a strong landscape character within this area.

Victorian and Georgian Residential Development

- 4.12 These areas of predominantly 2 storey terraced properties, defining the edge of Daventry Town Centre. Narrow plot frontages help create a strong building frontage, which along with minimal setbacks from footways and limited landscaping help create a more urban character.

1960s and 1980s planned expansion to Daventry

- 4.13 These areas are characterised by an informal block layout based on long, curving roads. Building types are typically 2 storey detached and semi-detached properties

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and are generally set back 5-10 metres with front gardens creating a more suburban character.

- 4.14 During the latter stages of this period, development towards the urban fringe was characterised by small runs of terraced properties based on a more rigid rectilinear layout. This is most noticeable in the east and south west of the Town.

1990s suburban expansion

- 4.15 Areas to the north, west and south of the Town Centre have been subject to some typical late 20th century development with main serpentine access roads serving a number of cul de sacs with 2 storey detached and semi-detached dwellings.
- 4.16 Within the town centre there is a defined civic quarter. This area includes more contemporary, detached buildings, typically of 2 storeys set in a wide plot.

Industrial Perimeter

- 4.17 There are two principal Industrial areas within Daventry, located on the existing urban edge of the town in the south east (Marches Industrial Estate) and north west (Royal Oak and Drayton Fields). The Marches is typified by small to medium scale B2 and B8 employment uses with rectilinear buildings/warehouses following no particular pattern of development. Drayton Fields and Royal Oak Industrial areas include a similar range of uses, although building/plot sizes tend to increase towards the edge of town where there are some substantial warehouses, particularly within the Royal Oak Industrial Estate.
- 4.18 These two estates are linked by the A45 and form key gateways into the Town from both the south east and north west.

Future Development

- 4.19 The Interim Daventry Master Plan identifies a number of sites within the Town Centre for (re)development as part of a comprehensive regeneration.
- 4.20 The proposals include a new pedestrianised area along the existing High Street with a replacement Library. There are plans to rejuvenate Bowen Square and its links to

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the High Street, with new shops and the replacement of the current police building with further shops and flats or offices above.

- 4.21 There are further proposals for a series of high quality public spaces enclosed by predominantly residential buildings, although a number of leisure facilities will also be provided for, including cafés, bowling and/or a cinema. The focus of these public realm improvements will be a large level space (approximately four times the size of Market Square) for public events.
- 4.22 Work has recently begun on the construction of the 'iHub', which will be used for research and by businesses and will feature 60 innovation units, a conference room, exhibition spaces, meeting rooms and additional networking space. It will also be a leading example of energy-efficiency and sustainable building in its own right. There will also be a number of other uses in close proximity of the site including retail development, car parking, flats, a new police station and the proposed relocation of the Post Office.

Urban Character and Gateways to Daventry

- 4.23 A 'Gateway', in Urban Design terms, is generally defined as being the location on a route which indicates an entrance or arrival point into a settlement or area.
- 4.24 The existing 'Gateways' in to Daventry are of mixed quality. Urban growth has led to employment areas marking entrances to the Town, particularly from the south east and west, highlighting the need to create more attractive entrances to Daventry.
- 4.25 There are a number of main vehicular routes into Daventry (See figure 12), each of these routes is defined by a 'Gateway' or point of transition upon entering the urban environment. The gateways from the south along the A425, A361 and north along A361 and Welton Lane into Daventry are characterised by urban fringe development which is not memorable. Gateways from the west and east along the A45 are marked by industrial estates, although the eastern industrial estate still retains some views to Borough Hill. These industrial estates represent a poor 'anywhere' entrance to the town.
- 4.26 The 'Daventry Design Codes' (referred to in section 3.16) also identifies a series of 'gateways' into the historic Town Centre of Daventry. These are located at key entry

points to the centre at roundabouts and road junctions including the Eastern Way roundabout, A425/B4036 junction, the St James Street/Warwick Street junction, and the Oxford Street/New Street junction.

Connectivity and Legibility

- 4.27 Across Daventry there are a range of local landmarks. One of the principal landmarks in the town is the Holy Cross Church in the Town centre, where the Church and Spire form dominant features within the townscape of Daventry, visible from many parts of the town and beyond.
- 4.28 The Church allows orientation and helps identify the High Street and the Town centre focus.
- 4.29 Borough Hill is also a key visual landmark on a Town wide scale and in townscape terms defines the built limit of the town and a clear urban rural interface. It is not however a landmark identifying a main destination where there are urban facilities, it simply affords passive recreation. Borough Hill is on the site of what is thought to have been the original settlement in the area, with evidence of both an Iron-age hill fort (one of the largest in Britain) and later a Roman villa and farming settlement, highlighting both its physical and historic importance both locally and nationally.

Overview

- 4.30 The townscape of Daventry has evolved over time and there is no one predominant urban form. There is however a largely domestic scale to all but the town centre and, surrounding industrial areas.
- 4.31 The town centre has historically been the centre of town and will continue to be so. There will be a new emphasis to the north eastern edge of town centre where substantial new development is taking place.
- 4.32 The character of Daventry relies significantly on topography, the Daventry Bowl and Borough Hill, to enclose and define the town limits and promotes a defined sense of place, that might otherwise be difficult to achieve with a patchwork of development created over time.

5. Analysis of Design Approach

Methodology

- 5.1 I conclude from the Sections above that analysis of each site needs to focus upon Urban Design principles defined in policy and guidance but apply these in a Daventry specific manner.
- 5.2 The analysis needs to look at broad implications for the townscape of Daventry and then review the quality of the more detailed master planning solution put forward for each development.
- 5.3 My assessment therefore is grouped in two sections for each site, firstly under town wide issues (i) 'Daventry Town Scale Urban Design' and then secondly more specific (ii) 'Masterplan Approach' issues. After the section on Masterplan approach I will refer to the CABI review of these proposals, and the Taylor report, to which the Appellants have drawn attention.

Analysis Criteria - i) Daventry Town Scale Urban Design

- 5.4 Therefore having reviewed the policy, guidance and Daventry urban context it can be identified that at a Daventry Town scale, urban extensions should be located so that they maximise opportunities to create a good physical relationship with the Town.
- 5.5 In this context there are specific principles that need to be addressed principally:
- **Relationship to Daventry Bowl** – National Urban design policy and guidance states that urban design should be context led, therefore the significant topographic form of the Daventry Bowl should be a factor in considering where new development of significant scale should be located.
 - **Relationship to Borough Hill** – Urban Design policy and guidance promotes urban design that responds to the physical constraints imposed by existing context. Borough Hill is a physical barrier, the perceived limit of Daventry's Urban Environment, and therefore how development relates to this context will be critical.

- **Urban Character and Connectivity** – Urban Design policy and guidance encourage locally distinctive patterns of development. Urban extensions should therefore recognise and positively contribute to the townscape of Daventry and in particular relate well to Daventry’s established radial routes and have attractive legible links with the existing town centre.

Analysis Criteria – ii) Masterplan Approach

5.6 The Policy Guidance Section and Context Section also suggests there are certain principles that should be established and at a more detailed level the masterplans for urban extensions at Daventry should address whether or not there is a satisfactory proposal having regard to issues outlined in the putative reasons for refusal including:

- **Layout and Land Use Disposition** – Ensure the developments demonstrate an appropriate development mix with a deliverable layout.
- **Density and Urban Form** – Provide an appropriate context led density promoting an appropriate development form and character.
- **Public Open Space and Landscape Design** – Ensure developments demonstrate provision of the required public open space for the formal and informal recreation needs of the new communities, responding to site features including topography and existing landscape features as an integral part of the design approach. My colleague Will Reed deals with issues of landscape design.

5.7 I will assess the proposals before this inquiry in relation to the analysis criteria set out above.

5.8 Each of the appeal sites will be analysed under the same issues so that comparative judgements can be made. The sites will be addressed in the following order;

- Danetree (appeal A);
- Monksmoor (appeal B) and;
- Church Fields (appeal C).

Danetree (Appeal A)

i) Daventry Town Scale (see figure 1 for context)

Relationship to Daventry Bowl

- 5.9 Whilst there is evidence of recent development extending to the rim of the 'bowl', the location of proposed development at Danetree would set an uncharacteristic precedent for new development, expanding large scale housing beyond the current perceived townscape limits of Daventry.
- 5.10 The Danetree proposals lie to the east of Borough Hill predominantly outside this townscape boundary of the existing Town and therefore mark a significant departure from the established townscape pattern of Daventry.
- 5.11 The scale of development beyond Borough Hill will have a significant urbanising effect on a large area beyond the town and establishes a precedent for growth east that has no built or natural limit, as evidenced by my colleague Will Reed.
- 5.12 A further effect of this proposed development east of Borough Hill is to bring development towards Norton. I have already noted that the Norton Village Design Statement states in Chapter 5 that there should be a 1km buffer zone between the Village and any new developments. The Danetree proposal brings development within that zone. About 41 ha of the Danetree site is within the 1km zone, including about 30 ha of proposed development. This will in my view have an adverse impact on the character of Norton.

Relationship to Borough Hill

- 5.13 In townscape terms the development will effectively build over a large proportion of the immediate setting of the Hill.
- 5.14 Borough Hill forms a physical barrier between the appeal site and the town of Daventry. There are limited views of the adjacent industrial estate (The Marches) from the far south-western part of the site, although there is no physical connection.
- 5.15 Including Borough Hill, there is between 700m – 1km between the existing residential areas in west Daventry and the proposed development parcels at Danetree. This

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distance combined with the gradients of Borough Hill will lead to there being a barrier between the new development and the existing Town and its facilities.

- 5.16 Given the site's proximity to Borough Hill, the development will create the perception that Borough Hill is a park within the town.

Urban Character and Connectivity

- 5.17 Whilst my colleague David Bird's proof details the accessibility of the development it is still important to reflect on the urban design 'quality' of the links as highlighted by guidance such as Manual for Streets.
- 5.18 Pedestrians and cyclists travelling from the centre of Danetree to the Town centre, will have to travel around Borough Hill, particularly in hours of darkness, either to north along Norton Road and the B4036 or along the A45.
- 5.19 Alternatively there is a link from the south via a proposed green route to the north of the Marches Industrial Estate, but this is primarily of rural character, poorly overlooked and not a good urban design link for a development of this scale.
- 5.20 Views towards the existing Town, will be prevented by Borough Hill, not just physically, as mentioned above, but also visually excluding Danetree from the existing Town and significantly reduce connectivity.
- 5.21 In terms of the urban character the Danetree proposals deviate from the local characteristic of development following radial routes out from the Town Centre, in favour of providing a dominant orbital route in a north south direction. Borough Hill effectively blocks what may otherwise have been an ideal location for a radial link.
- 5.22 Absence of this radial link highlights the poor relationship Danetree has to the town centre via streets and road links.
- 5.23 Danetree's relationship to existing road links is limited to a relatively narrow frontage to Norton Way and a similarly narrow frontage to the A45 London Road in the south. There is also no direct connection to the existing Marches Industrial Estate in the Burnt Walls area.

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- 5.24 As previously noted in Section 4, the existing gateways to Daventry are of varied quality at present. Notably in the south east of the Town along the A45 the gateway has a poor townscape value.
- 5.25 The proposals include further employment uses within the area along the A45, which will further reinforce an unattractive employment dominated gateway in this area, and would not provide a 'positive' (PPS1) design approach to Daventry, with large parking areas and employment buildings stepping up and down the complex topography in this location. Conversely a more attractive environment more in keeping with residential character of Daventry would be more appropriate.

Overview

- 5.26 The Danetree application is separated from the Daventry town both physically and visually outside the established Daventry Bowl.
- 5.27 Borough Hill will be largely enclosed by development and will form a significant barrier in townscape terms. This will result in Danetree being largely perceived as a detached settlement.
- 5.28 The perception of the site as isolated will be reinforced by the lack of connectivity to established radial routes and runs against the established pattern of development that is characteristic of Daventry.

ii) Masterplan Approach

- 5.29 The most recent committee report in relation to the Danetree scheme sets out a number of concerns about layout and land use disposition within the development. The main issues can be summarised as follows;
- density
 - massing and heights
 - movement structure and hierarchy of streets
 - form of district/neighbourhood centres, and location of community facilities
 - Issues concerning green infrastructure, recreation and open space.

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5.30 I will deal with the issues concerning green infrastructure, recreation and open space, in a separate sub-section. I will deal with the remaining issues listed above in the next sub-section, headed 'Layout and Land Use Disposition.'

Layout and Land Use Disposition

5.31 I begin by dealing with density. The revised masterplan reduces the amount of land given over to built development. The revisions increase open space at the expense of residential land (some 15 hectares).

5.32 However, the overall level of housing is not proposed to be reduced, and this has led to increases in density, especially in the northern neighbourhood. The average density will be 47.7 dph. That is an increase from the 41.7 dph of the original scheme. I should add that the average density figure of 47.7 dph was calculated based on the inclusion of a 1.17 ha. area of formal play space in the southern neighbourhood. In my view, that land should be excluded from the density calculation, because it is shown in green on the main masterplan and green space strategy. If this land, currently shown as being developed at 60 dph, were removed, the overall average density would increase to 48.2 ha.

5.33 I have set out below the density range across the site.

DENISTY	AREA (ha)	NO OF DWELLINGS	% OF RESI AREA	% of DWELLINGS
30 dph	10.69	330	10	6.4
35 dph	7.54	270	7.1	5.3
40 dph	11.98	490	11.2	9.5
45 dph	22.9	1050	21.5	20.4
50 dph	21.1	1010	18.7	19.6
55 dph	11.81	670	11.1	13
60 dph	21.9	1330	20.5	25.8
TOTAL	107.9	5150	100	100

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- 5.34 Figure 6 to my evidence shows that 31% of the residential areas will be over 50dph. Further, there are substantial areas of development at a higher density (50-60 dph), and the increased densities limit the opportunities for ‘feathering’ or gradual reductions in density nearer to site boundaries.
- 5.35 Overall, the revisions to the scheme will in my view result in a more intensive and visually intrusive form of development.
- 5.36 Density concerns link to the massing and height of the development. A substantial part of the development is proposed to be four storeys in height. That is so for density areas of 55-60 dph, and this point applies to a large section of the southern neighbourhood and a significant proportion of the central one. The town of Daventry is now mainly two and three storeys in height. I do not think that an urban design case for four storey building in this location has been made. It will result in development which does not reflect the layout, grain, and scale of existing development in Daventry and the surrounding villages. I accept of course that development needs to be ‘efficient’ in its use of scarce land resources, but it seems to me that the proposed Danetree development goes too far in this regard.
- 5.37 I should add that even with the reduction in built areas proposed in the revised masterplan, the overall development is relatively intense.
- 5.38 It is important to be confident that the masterplan will accommodate the uses proposed. In order to evidence the land use intensity we have analysed the percentage of different land use areas within the application boundary:

Residential	49.1
Employment	5.3
Village Centres	3.6
Schools	7.3
Green Space	30.6
Distributor Roads	4.1

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- 5.39 A total of 30.6% of the application site is made up of greenspace, therefore 69.4% is developed. This is a relatively high level of developed land that decreases the likelihood that space can be found to accommodate the required uses in a satisfactory urban form.
- 5.40 I now consider the issues of movement structure and the hierarchy of streets. While some improvements have been made, the submitted plans are unsatisfactory in a number of respects, namely
- there is not enough detail to determine the details of street hierarchy and typology;
 - it is not clear how footpaths connect with the existing areas of Daventry, nor whether those routes are deliverable. Further, links to the existing routes may physically impact the SAM of Borough Hill, and the safety, attractiveness, and convenience of these links has not been sufficiently analysed.
- 5.41 I now consider the district/neighbourhood centres. To begin with, I do not think the concept of three linked centres located along a main route is responsive to the site and location as an extension to Daventry. Furthermore, the form and content of the centres do not correlate to the neighbourhood type and size. The largest centre, the District Centre, is located in the smallest neighbourhood, the middle neighbourhood. Finally, in my view it has not been demonstrated that a critical mass of appropriate uses will be achieved within the centres, or that the District Centre will have a sufficient range and scale of facilities to enable it to sustain its intended role.
- 5.42 I would add that it is not clear where the community facilities referred to in the DAS are to be located-whether they are to be provided in area allocated for the centres, or within the area identified for schools. In the circumstances, it is not clear that there would be enough land available for the community facilities specified.

Green infrastructure, recreation and open space

- 5.43 The main issues concern recreation and open space. I begin with the relevant requirements. So far as formal pitch provision is concerned, policy RC12 of the Daventry Local Plan requires the provision of 1.6 ha per 1000 population. This basis of assessment is taken forward in the Daventry Infrastructure SPD. However, the WNDP Planning Obligations Strategy requires 1.88 ha per 1000 population. In those circumstances, it can be calculated that the proposed development would require between 20 and 22.5 ha of formal open space.
- 5.44 So far as informal open space is concerned, PPG 17 and NPFA guidance seek a network/hierarchy of attractive, accessible and safe open space. The Planning Obligations Strategy refers only to LEAPs and NEAPs, but the Local Plan and Daventry Infrastructure SPD include informal areas of green space as well as LEAPs and NEAPs. The Planning Obligations Strategy would require 3ha of LEAPs and NEAPs for this development. Policy RC1 of the Local Plan would required informal open space to be provided at the rate of 0.2ha per 50 houses, or 10% of the development area.
- 5.45 Considering the provision of formal open space, 14.5 ha is provided in four locations;
- to the north of the development, adjacent to Norton Road;
 - within the grounds of the proposed Secondary School, within the northern neighbourhood;
 - to the east of the central neighbourhood; and
 - a kick about area, in the southern neighbourhood.
- 5.46 In my view, the overall quantity of provision is insufficient and I have seen no satisfactory proposals for making up that deficit.
- 5.47 Further, a number of issues arise in relation to the proposed provision;
- The playing field provision in the southern neighbourhood is unlikely to be able to accommodate significant formal sports provision, and will be severed from surrounding residential areas as a result of its relationship to the road network.

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- The playing fields are focused to the north of the development, which will put people living in the south of the development at a disadvantage.
- A significant proportion of the provision is proposed within the Secondary School, in respect of which the County Council has advised that there is no guarantee that facilities will be permanently available;

5.48 So far as informal playing space is concerned, the DAS indicates that 63.42 ha of Green Space will be provided. It is difficult to ascertain how much informal open space there will be, but it seems unlikely that there will be a quantitative shortfall.

5.49 However, apart from the village green running through the central neighbourhood, there is no indication in the Masterplan or DAS that a network of accessible open spaces, including a hierarchy of children's play space, will be provided in the residential development areas. Furthermore, the illustrative information in the DAS does not show provision for open space in the residential areas. Overall, there is not enough information, in my view, to show that a network of informal open space of the appropriate quality, including children's play space, would be provided.

Masterplan approach; summary

5.50 Overall, I think that in addition to the unacceptability in principle of the Danetree site as a housing site, the scheme is unacceptable in relation to density, massing, movement structure, the centres and community facilities, and recreation and open space.

iii) CABE review and the Taylor report.

5.51 I begin with the CABE review. In a design review chaired by commissioner Piers Gough, the Danetree Masterplan was analysed. However, it seems to me that the review did not take account the wider issues concerning the planning of Daventry. The CABE review did not consider the spatial location of the Danetree site, save in relation to Borough Hill, when viewed from the site. The review does not consider in detail the wider townscape, and the issue whether the Danetree site is an appropriate location for a major urban extension to Daventry. Further, the review does not set out a comparative assessment of the merits of the Danetree, Church Fields and Monksmoor sites.

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- 5.52 The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing, entitled “Living Working Countryside” was published in July 2008, and is referred to in the Design and Access Statement produced for the Danetree proposals. This Review by Matthew Taylor MP was carried out for the Department of Communities and Local Government.
- 5.53 However, the Review has no status as policy guidance. Further, I am not convinced that the approach of the Review is contrary to the views expressed in my evidence submitted for WNDC, or that it is supportive of the Danetree proposals. I note in particular that the Review suggests that all extensions are to be planned in the context of the existing town centre (see e.g. box 2.1, page 60, and paragraph 32, page 60). The Review expresses opposition to inappropriate alterations to the character and functioning of existing towns (see paragraph 53, page 75). Further, I note that the Review encourages more development in and by way of extension to existing smaller rural settlements (see chapter 3, page 84 onwards). If anything, that approach would suggest an increase in the extent to which the area’s housing needs could be met in locations other than extensions to Daventry.

Overview

- 5.54 Danetree fails to demonstrate the mixed centres (district/neighbourhood) will deliver the required range of facilities in a satisfactory urban design form. The relatively high level of developed land (69.4%) decreases the likelihood that space can be found to accommodate the required uses in a satisfactory urban form.
- 5.55 The Danetree application fails to demonstrate that appropriate formal and informal open space provision is made in terms of quality and quantity. Given the location and scale of development the provision shown is currently unacceptable in Design terms.
- 5.56 The Danetree application proposes development densities that are inappropriate in this location, with a large proportion of the development (31%) being over 50dph. Danetree is a site where closer to 30 dph as an average would have been a more appropriate response.

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- 5.57 In combination the above issues give rise to significant urban design concerns. Efficient use of land is important but this should be counterbalanced with need to respond to the specific constraints of the site in question.
- 5.58 Overall, I think that in addition to the unacceptability in principle of the Danetree site as a housing site, the scheme is unacceptable in relation to density, massing, movement structure, the centres and community facilities, and recreation and open space.

Monksmoor (Appeal B)

i) Daventry Town Scale

Relationship to Daventry Bowl

- 5.59 The relationship of the Monksmoor development to the landscape context of Daventry is described and assessed in detail in the evidence of my colleague Mr Reed. Mr Reed's evidence clearly establishes that the Monksmoor site sits within the ridgeline of the Daventry Bowl and is contained within the perceived urban limit of Daventry.

Relationship to Borough Hill

- 5.60 It is also clear that the Monksmoor site is both physically and visually unrelated to Borough Hill. As such, the development of this site cannot materially harm the immediate setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and the Hill performs no function as a barrier to an urban extension in this location.

Urban Character and Connectivity

- 5.61 WNDC have been anxious in the course of their discussions with the Appellants to ensure that the overall urban design and master planning approach to the Monksmoor scheme is responsive to the existing urban context and reflects the important strategic role that the site should play as a major urban extension to the town. This approach has been reflected in the recent revisions to the masterplan, which has emphasised the key corners of the site through the introduction of landmark features or marker/key frontages. This is most notable at the north west

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corner at the canal bridge and at the frontage to the south west adjacent to the Ashby Fields/Lang Farm roundabout.

- 5.62 Notably, the proposed scheme incorporates a positive frontage relationship to Welton Lane which defines the western site boundary. This aspect of the scheme provides good connection to the existing townscape fabric of Daventry and ensures that the scheme has a visual relationship and physical presence along this radial route which connects with the town centre. The design approach to this important route into Daventry should ensure that the Monksmoor scheme will create a gateway of residential scale into the town along Welton Lane, which will also further enhance the sense of arrival at the A425/A361 roundabout.
- 5.63 The proposed mix of uses together with the introduction of key landmark buildings and frontages along Welton Lane should further enhance the vibrancy and legibility of this approach into Daventry. The development will also importantly provide the opportunity for the introduction of a landscape dominated edge to the existing Country Park.
- 5.64 The proposed boulevard and landscaped corridor through the new development will provide a pleasant environment for residents and visitors to travel through the site and, in particular, to gain access between Welton Lane and the Country Park. It is also important to note that the alignment of the main boulevard is intended to protect and retain the strategic view corridor to Borough Hill from within the established urban area.
- 5.65 The accessibility of the site is detailed in the evidence of my colleague David Bird. In urban design terms there are two main pedestrian/cyclist options for a resident travelling from Monksmoor to the Town centre. The first most attractive route is to travel southeast through the Country Park and to then link into the reservoir walk. I would acknowledge that this route through the Country Park may not be attractive in hours of darkness. I note, however, that there is an attractive and direct alternative available route south along Welton Lane and then following Northern Way to the Town Centre. Notably, the amended Design and Access Statement identifies improvements to east/west pedestrian links and there has also been recognition on

the part of the Appellant of the benefits in improving crossing points at the Northern Way Roundabout.

Overview

- 5.66 The Monksmoor scheme proposes a scale and location of development that will, in urban design terms, have a satisfactory physical relationship with Daventry.
- 5.67 Monksmoor will not affect the setting of Borough Hill and the Scheduled Ancient Monument does not act as a physical barrier between the appeal site and the main urban area of Daventry.
- 5.68 The Monksmoor scheme would, in my view, be readily perceived as part of Daventry, with strong connectivity and an overall character appropriate to its context.

ii) Masterplan Approach

5.69 The most recent committee report of 17 December 2008, in relation to the Monksmoor scheme provides an assessment of the layout and land use disposition within the development. The main issues can be summarised as follows:

- density
- massing and heights
- movement structure and hierarchy of streets
- form of district/neighbourhood centres, and location of community facilities
- issues concerning green infrastructure, recreation and open space.

5.70 I will deal with the issues concerning green infrastructure, recreation and open space, in a separate sub-section. I will deal with the remaining issues listed above in the next sub-section, headed 'Layout and Land Use Disposition.'

Layout and Land Use Disposition

5.71 The Monksmoor scheme seeks to secure planning permission for 1,000 new dwellings, together with employment provision, a local centre, primary school and community facilities. The local centre and primary school are located at the heart of the development at the convergence of the primary routes.

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- 5.72 The development is made up of three character areas, which can be refined through the formulation of the phased reserved matters and in discharge of Design Code conditions. The structure of the development has also taken into account the site constraints including floodplain, Country Park, strategic views to Borough Hill and retention of key hedgerows.
- 5.73 The proposed square is intended to form the heart of the development and will provide a mix of uses to create a vibrant communal centre. The proposed school, retail, community buildings, health facilities, live work units and associated residential development will be dispersed around the square to create variety in the building form and frontages. Apartments above the retail uses are also proposed.
- 5.74 The proposals demonstrate how the mix of uses can be accommodated within 'The Square' through a series of coloured plans on page 19 of the Development Strategy. The diagram on page 19 of the Development Strategy also shows the proposed land use location around the public square and allocates floorspaces to each associated use. This provides confidence that the amount of land proposed for the mix of uses is sufficient.
- 5.75 I have, in order to determine the extent of constituent parts of the proposed development, analysed the percentages of the different land use within the application boundary:

Residential	54%
Mixed Use Centre	0.49%
Schools	3.35%
Enterprise Units	0.39%
Green Space	41.77%

- 5.76 A total of 41.77% of the application site is made up of greenspace and, therefore, 58.23% would be developed.
- 5.77 The average PPS3 net density across the site is 36.5dph, which is higher than the average historic density of Daventry and marginally higher than the previous scheme

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for this site (see Figure 7). The adjustments in the distribution of the densities within the scheme have been made in response to detailed discussions between the Appellant and WNDC and this has, in particular, led to a reduction in the core density around the square from 70dph to a more appropriate level of 50-55dph. The density of development along the spine road is at 40 to 50dph. The lower density areas are at 20 to 30dph and are located to the northern and south eastern edge of the site. Notably, this density of development has been reduced in these locations to respond to the context of the existing Country Park and to limit the impact of development on the area of the Grand Union Canal.

5.78 I provide an overview of the proportions of high, medium and low density development comprising the appeal proposal in the table below:

Density Band	Area(ha)	Dwellings	% area	% total dwellings
20-30	5.53	136	20.2	13.6
30-40	12.63	442	46.1	44.2
40-50	8.01	361	29.3	36.1
50-55	1.19	61	4.4	6.1
TOTAL	27.4	1000	100	100

5.79 As can be seen from the above calculations the majority of dwellings are within the 30-40dph density range and only some 6.1% of dwellings would be within a density of development over 50dph. I am satisfied from my review of the planning application submission that the location and extent of the different densities is in response to the sites position at the edge of the town and, as such, is an appropriate context led approach.

5.80 The overall heights of the proposed across the development fall within the limits identified in the Daventry Design Statement, with higher massing up to 3.5 storeys within the central square. This scale of development is necessary to secure the critical mass and built form necessary to create an appropriate focus for the development. Higher levels of massing of up to 3 storeys is also proposed along the primary routes, which will reinforce the street hierarchy. The maximum building heights of 2 storeys are proposed to the northern, eastern and southern boundaries

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where the proposed density is lower and views into the development are to be minimised. Again, this approach is intended to ensure that the form and mass of development is informed by the sensitive relationship of the development with the existing Canal area and the proposed extension to the Country Park.

Green Infrastructure, Recreation and Open Space (See Figure 7 and 10)

- 5.81 Saved Policy RC1 in the Daventry Local Plan requires that the scale of development proposed at Monksmoor should secure informal open space provision of some 5.07ha. The Monksmoor proposals provide 5.17ha of informal open space, comprising a mixture of open space within residential areas, informal areas adjacent to the northern and eastern boundaries of the proposed residential development. A further 9.0ha would be provided for wildlife benefit. In quantitative terms, the appeal proposal is readily compliant with this policy requirement.
- 5.82 In qualitative terms, the appeal proposal will provide three equipped play areas, one in each of the of the northern and southern character areas, with the third located adjacent to the proposed primary school and sports pitches.
- 5.83 Saved Policy RC12 requires 1.6 hectares of formal playing field provision per 1000 population, which calculates at an overall requirement of 4ha. The Planning Obligations Strategy specifies a requirement of 1.88 ha per 1000, leading to a requirement in the case of these proposals of 4.7 ha. The proposals provide 4.9ha which is above the requirement and clearly in quantitative terms complies with Policy RC12 or the Planning Obligations Strategy.
- 5.84 The formal open space would be within a reasonable walking distance (less than 1km) of all the residential dwellings on the site, connected by a series of pedestrian, cycle and vehicle movement routes, and complemented by informal open space provision within each residential character area. The pitch provision would also relate well to that proposed in the adjacent Church Fields development and there is scope for providing linkages between the two, should both schemes come forward.
- 5.85 Small parks are proposed within the development that provide equipped areas of play and are within easily accessible and well overlooked locations.

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- 5.86 The Country Park will consist of a varied approach to habitat creation and will contain areas of formal open space, sports pitch provision, informal open space with wildlife benefit, a new wildlife area within species-rich lowland meadow and also a SUDs corridor that will contain native planting.
- 5.87 The setting of the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area is appropriately responded to by creating a linear open green infrastructure link that follow the alignment of the canal and physically separates the canal from the built form by some 40m (56m to the canal edge).
- 5.88 A Village Park will be provided adjoining the Country Park and Reservoir to the south, within a 45m wide green infrastructure corridor to be built between the edge of the new development and Daventry reservoir which will both retain existing planting and introduce new planting as part of an enhanced reservoir walk.
- 5.89 Importantly, the Monksmoor scheme proposed green links to improve connections to the National Trail alongside the canal to the north, the Country Park to the east, the reservoir walk to the south and also at the existing footpaths alongside Welton Lane at the western boundary of the site. These green links also provide wider connectivity and support to the surrounding wildlife corridors. Green links east/west will also provide connections between the Country Park and the existing settlement to the west. Many of these routes radiate from the new Village Centre.
- 5.90 The northern development edge of the proposed development has been setback by some 40 metres from the northern boundary of the Canal Conservation Area and a wildlife corridor has been incorporated within this part of the scheme. The recent scheme revisions have also introduced the additional setback of the southern edge of the development from the Reservoir and to respond to the setting of the existing Country Park. Views of this frontage of development will be filtered and will be set within associated planting to provide a buffer to minimise views from the Reservoir and the Country Park. My colleague, Mr Reed details the landscape impact of this element of the development proposal in his evidence.

Overview

- 5.91 Monksmoor's proposed layout and land use disposition is an appropriate response to the specific site constraints with substantial open areas set aside to mitigate its

impact on the wider environment, comprising some 41.77% of the proposed development area.

5.92 Monksmoor's DAS and masterplan approach demonstrate and illustrate that the mixed use centre will be deliverable and acceptable Urban Design terms.

5.93 The approach to density in the Monksmoor proposals is entirely satisfactory.

5.94 Monksmoor's public open space is within the prescribed standards and is clearly satisfactory.

iii) CABE Review

The Monksmoor application, August 2008

5.95 The CABE review comments are based on the previous Masterplan, the current masterplan has been revised to take on board many of CABE's comments from the review including:

- Connections with existing pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes and links to Town Centre.

The current Masterplan maximises links;

- Legibility of development

"Many of the roads are cranked at different angles, which in turn, creates awkwardly shaped urban blocks. This will make way-finding in and around the development difficult..."

The block structure of the current masterplan has been amended;

- Hierarchy in the routes which makes it difficult to distinguish the vehicular routes from the pedestrian and cycle routes. A refined solution has been proposed in the current Masterplan;

- Density; concerns

"that the masterplan is too displaced, taking up more land than is necessary"

There are specific constraints on the site that dictate the approach to density;

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- Edges of the development;
“The development needs to work harder to make the best use of its setting in such a wonderful landscape; the strategy for dealing with these edges needs to be looked at again”

The current Masterplan has been pulled back from edges and more landscaping has been integrated;

- Character areas;
“It is not clear how the character areas respond to the landscapes that they are trying to emulate”

Further detail has been provided in the updated Design and Access Statement; and

- Open spaces;
“Further work is also required to show how the open spaces interact with the built form”

As above further detail has been provided in the updated Design and Access Statement.

Overview

- 5.96 Monksmoor’s proposed layout and land use disposition is an appropriate response to the specific site constraints with substantial open areas set aside to mitigate its impact on the wider environment, comprising some 41.77% of the proposed development area.
- 5.97 Monksmoor’s DAS and masterplan approach demonstrate and illustrate that the mixed use centre will be deliverable and acceptable Urban Design terms.
- 5.98 The approach to density in the Monksmoor proposals is entirely satisfactory.
- 5.99 Mooksmoor’s public open space is within the prescribed standards and is clearly satisfactory.

Church Fields (Appeal C)

i) Daventry Town Scale

Relationship to Daventry Bowl

5.100 Church Fields proposal sits to the northwest of the major ridgeline that defines the rim of the Daventry Bowl. Copses are proposed along this ridgeline to mitigate any potential views of the development from the east. I consider therefore that in townscape terms the development is acceptable and reflects the past development of Daventry well related to the Daventry Bowl.

Relationship to Borough Hill

5.101 In response to public consultation, a landscaped link and corridor will be created between the reservoir and Borough Hill, along the alignment of a historic hedgerow. This will provide a visual and physical connection to the hill.

5.102 The built development is set back from the lower slopes of the northern edge of Borough Hill and the predominantly open use of the secondary school located at the adjoining point of Borough Hill reinforces the open nature of developments in this area.

5.103 Importantly Church Fields is not separated from Daventry by the Hill itself.

Urban Character and Connectivity

5.104 From the open space to the north west Church Fields there are potential views towards the Town Centre and in particular the church which reinforces visual connection to the existing town.

5.105 The proposals will front one of the Eastern gateways into Daventry and this will be defined by the realigned B4036 running through landscaped parkland and residential development. I consider the mix of land uses and emphasis on development set back behind open space along the realigned B4036 to be a good design approach.

5.106 Church Fields will therefore provide a suitable gateway to Daventry from the east.

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- 5.107 Along the northern edge of the development an extended Country Park will provide an attractive recreational resource and an attractive route to the Town Centre along the western edge of the development parcels. Green links are also proposed on a northwest south west axis connecting the development to the schools and District centre.
- 5.108 As detailed in the evidence of my colleague David Bird the development provides good linkages to the Town Centre. Pedestrian/cyclists will have the option of travelling south west along the Primary Street to the B4036 and west into the Town Centre or utilising the new routes through the Country Park which connect with the B4036.
- 5.109 The layout of development parcels can be seen to work with the topography curving around the undulating land form. Many of the streets within the steeper areas of the site will require careful design and should be orientated closely to the existing topography but I consider the extent and distribution of land parcels to be acceptable practice.

Overview

- 5.110 Church Fields has a proposed location and scale that will in Urban Design terms, have a satisfactory physical relationship with Daventry Bowl.
- 5.111 Church Fields will not be separated from Daventry by Borough Hill.
- 5.112 Church Fields will in my view be perceived as a part of Daventry with good layout and connectivity and an overall character appropriate to its context.

ii) Masterplanning Approach

5.113 As with Danetree and Monksmoor sites, I will deal with the relevant issues under two headings which reflect the approach taken at the most recent committee report of 17 December 2008, namely Layout and Disposition of Land Uses, and Green Infrastructure, Recreation and Open Space.

Layout and Disposition of Land Uses

5.114 I believe that in overall strategic terms the development is acceptable. The revised proposals develop a creative vision for the site. They also address connectivity with Daventry town centre and the adjacent estate of Southbrook. There is also a good relationship with the realigned B4036 and a positive contribution to the townscape of Daventry. I further believe that the revised proposals give more clarity than before as to the form of the development, the disposition of uses, and treatment of space envisaged for the area adjoining Daventry Country Park.

Density and Urban Form (See Figure 8)

5.115 I provide an overview for comparative purposes of the proportions of high, medium and low density development comprising the appeal proposal in the table below:

Density*	Area(ha)	Dwellings	% total	% area dwellings
35	21.37	756	25.2	18.9
45	27.94	1257	33.0	31.4
50	25.74	1287	30.4	32.2
72.5**	9.65	700	11.4	17.5
TOTAL	84.7	4000	100	100

(* Density assumed from Figure 34, Page 87, Illustrative Density Plan

**Assumes 80% of district/local centres as residential. Calculations same as Danetree for comparative purposes)

5.116 As can be seen from the above calculations the majority of dwellings 88.6% are within the 35-50dph density range. A total land area of 11.4% is over 50 dph. The placement of 700 dwellings within the district centre and local centres creates a high

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density, but this is relatively limited in extent. The disposition of these density ranges can be seen by reference to Figure 8 that is contained in my Appendices.

- 5.117 Medium density blocks follow the contours stepping down from the ridgeline to the Country Park. To respond to the more visually sensitive part of the site to the north, lower density blocks within a landscape dominated environment create the development's northern and north eastern edge.
- 5.118 The scheme follows a traditional urban structure where the building heights are greatest at the functional centre of the development and reduce to towards the edges next to the open space and countryside. Building heights take into account views into the site and potential visual impacts to the setting of Borough Hill. Buildings directly adjacent to the hill have been restricted to 2.5 storeys.
- 5.119 To create a defined and memorable core to the development, 3 storeys with occasional 4 storey buildings are located within the district centre. The higher density residential areas towards the Town Centre will accommodate predominantly 3 storeys. Buildings in areas towards the Country Park will be a mix of 2 and 3 storeys. The buildings to the northern extent of the development within a more visually prominent position will be restricted to 2.5 storeys. My colleague Will Reed's evidence reviews the impact of this approach on the wider landscape.
- 5.120 While, as the committee report points out, the proposals are in some respects not wholly clear so far as density and massing and heights are concerned, I agree with the latest Committee report (see paragraphs 9.152-9.161) that these matters are capable of resolution by conditions.
- 5.121 So far as movement structure and hierarchy of streets is concerned, the revised proposals are an improvement over the previous ones particularly in terms of the form of the District Centre and the provision of a linear high street. However, there are outstanding issues, including the layout of the primary route and of the minor routes and how the gradients and contours of the site have been taken into consideration in the layout. I believe those issues can be resolved at the detailed stage.

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- 5.122 Turning to issues of layout and the form of the development, when the application was first considered by WNDC, there was a specific reason for refusal relating to development along the ridgeline of the B4036. The revised Masterplan shows that the built development has been pulled back from the ridgeline and now sits within the Daventry Bowl.
- 5.123 Development is also pulled back from Norton, with a buffer of some 800metres between the village and the development. Detailed design and planting proposals will be needed to secure a suitable edge treatment and visual mitigation.
- 5.124 The revised Masterplan shows a more broken edge to the built form along the eastern edge, and a series of copses to provide screening. Again, the detail can be resolved at reserved matters stage, as can that of the planting along the south eastern boundary.
- 5.125 An important green link has been identified between Borough Hill and Daventry Country Park to serve as both a recreational route and a wildlife corridor. Whilst WNDC originally had concerns regarding the width of this corridor, negotiations have been on-going with the appellants and it is accepted that revision to the proposals for this link are required. The appellants have agreed to revisit the issue and, due to the minor amendments required, I am satisfied that this can be dealt with at the detailed design stage.
- 5.126 The appellants have, in general, provided an acceptable design vision for their scheme with the site split in to two distinct halves: the urban area closest to the existing Daventry town and the northern part of the site which has a lower density and reflects a transition to the rural landscape beyond the site. I agree that this general approach is acceptable in urban design terms and respects the site's location and context. However, there remain concerns about how the proposed development will relate to Daventry and its surrounding villages, particularly in relation to the building typology and layout proposed for rural clusters. As the application is for outline permission I am satisfied that these issues can be dealt with at the detailed design stage, particularly in satisfaction of the condition requiring submission of design codes.

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5.127 I turn to the local and district centres, and community facilities. The centres are in my view acceptable in the revised proposals. In particular, as noted above the revisions to the District Centre represent an improvement on the previous proposals and present a considered approach to creating the anchor for the development. The District Centre will contain a range of retail, employment, residential and community uses. Whilst concerns have been raised as to how these uses will operate as neighbours, I believe that this will be addressed through the proposed Design Brief process to be secured by condition.

5.128 So far as community facilities are concerned, the DAS shows that a community centre would be provided within the District Centre, and will be a multi-functional facility. I note that the Town Council has raised concerns about the timing of provision of community facilities, and that the DAS indicates that consideration will be given to the provision of a short term temporary centre in the first phase of the development. I think this is essential.

Green infrastructure, recreation and open space

5.129 The general provision, type and distribution of open space is acceptable. The relocation of the playing fields inside the re-aligned B4036 is an improvement on the original proposals, because it overcomes the issue of severance. Further, the District Centre has been provided with a main public square and a formal park.

5.130 I have analysed the percentage of different land use areas within the application site boundary;

Residential	30.5%
District and Local Centres	4.9%
Schools	6.6%
Infrastructure	5.5%
Green Space	34.5%
Land retained as agriculture	18%

5.131 A total of 52.5% of the land within the application site area is made up of green space and agricultural land, so that 47.5% is developed. The green space will provide the

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required open space, buffers to the southern and northern nature conservation areas and the wider landscape, and a transition to the Country Park.

- 5.132 In terms of formal pitch provision saved policy RC12 of the Daventry Local Plan requires provision of 1.6 ha of formal playing field provision per 1000 population. The WNDP Planning Obligations Strategy requires 1.88 ha per 1000 population. The requirement of formal pitch provision, assuming maximum provision of 4000 dwellings, would be between 15.7 and 18.4ha
- 5.133 The proposed scheme would provide 10.22 ha of formal sports pitches, with a further 3.1 ha available through dual use of the playing fields associated with the schools. Accordingly, 13.22 ha is potentially available.
- 5.134 The Appellant has suggested justification for the shortfall, by suggesting a Synthetic Turf Pitch and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at the secondary school, and the possibility of a MUGA at each of the primary schools.
- 5.135 If such provision is made, then, given the generally good distribution of formal open space within the development, and subject to contributions to qualitative improvements at Southbrook through a section 106 agreement, the formal pitch provision will be acceptable.
- 5.136 So far as informal open space is concerned, the proposals would provide over 80 ha of outdoor recreation space of various types, which would exceed the requirements. Further, these areas would be of high quality, in my view. I am pleased to note that the revised Masterplan shows the provision of LEAPs and NEAPs spread throughout the development, and the DAS indicates that LAPs would be provided within a one minute walk time of all dwellings. There are areas which would be outside the recommended walk times, in the case of both LEAPs and NEAPs. However, the discrepancies would be acceptable, in my view.

Overview

- 5.137 In my view the Church Fields proposals represent an acceptable approach in urban design terms, which is responsive to its context, and which can be further developed at detailed stage.

iii) CABE Review

The Church Fields application, July 2008

5.138 In a design review by CABE, the Church Fields Masterplan was analysed. As with the Monksmoor proposals, the Masterplan has been revised since the review to accommodate the majority of CABE's comments. The current masterplan addresses the comments including:

- "Evolution beyond a two dimensional plan to integrate the topography and existing landscape with the built form"

More detail has been provided within an updated Design and Access Statement and the Masterplan amended to respond more closely to the site's topography;

- "Appreciation of important features such as the ridgeline and sloping topography and we cannot see, therefore, that the buildings on the ridgeline have been designed with the topography in mind"

Development has been moved back from the ridgeline and land to east of realigned B4036 is now retained as agricultural land;

- "We are not convinced, therefore, that the urban blocks, routes and spaces add up to a legible development that will make way-finding easy"

The Masterplan has been revised to create more legible development that responds closely to the character of Daventry;

- Response to the park and reservoir. "Perhaps the possibility of new housing overlooking the park could help to inform the layout and distribution of units over the site".
- The development has been pulled back from sensitive edges and new landscaping incorporated.

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Overview

- 5.139 Church Fields proposed layout and land use disposition is an appropriate response to the specific constraints of the site substantial open areas within the masterplan, 34.5% (excluding retained agricultural land 52.5% including it).
- 5.140 Church Fields DAS and masterplan approach demonstrates that the mixed use (District/Local) centre will be deliverable in Urban Design terms.
- 5.141 Church Fields average density is comparatively high (at 47 dph assuming 4,000 dwellings) but this is largely the result of a relatively small contained area of high density over 50 dph in the District Centre, a total of just 11.4% of the residential area.
- 5.142 Away from the District Centre a significant proportion of the site is at a lower density allowing a design approach that is an appropriate transition towards the open areas around the development and the wider landscape.
- 5.143 Church Fields public open space in our assessment is sufficient provision both in terms of quality and quantity.

6. Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 National Planning Policy establishes that Urban Design should be used to help shape the future of towns, with a particular emphasis on a context led design approach that responds to the character of an area and the way it functions.
- 6.2 National Urban Design Policy establishes that design principles will need to be fixed at outline application stage, so that future reserved matters have an agreed appropriate framework from the outset.
- 6.3 Local Policy and SPD's clarify that there are specific Urban Design characteristics in Daventry including topography and the defined historic core, and that the surrounding villages will be particularly sensitive to change.
- 6.4 The character of Daventry therefore relies significantly on topography to enclose and define the town limits, known as the 'Daventry Bowl' and promotes a defined sense of place that may otherwise be difficult to achieve with a patchwork of development created over time.
- 6.5 Furthermore Borough hill is a significant barrier to development defining the eastern extent of Daventry's urban area.
- 6.6 A comparative assessment of the 3 appeal sites has been carried out and concludes the following:

Danetree

- 6.7 The Danetree proposal is fundamentally flawed, in my view. It is in an inappropriate location, outside the Daventry Bowl, and separated from the town by Borough Hill, which has for so long formed a strong eastern boundary to the town. It will on a very substantial scale, radically change the overall urban development pattern of Daventry, as well as wholly altering the relation of Borough Hill to urban form.
- 6.8 In addition to being at odds with the urban character of Daventry, the Danetree proposals will have poor connectivity to Daventry town centre, thus compromising the sustainability of the urban extension.

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6.9 As well as my fundamental concerns in relation to the principle of the development, I have concerns about the masterplan approach to the proposals. In summary, I think the density, massing and height of the proposals will only make their impact more adverse, and in my view the proposals are not acceptable from the point of movement structure, form of centres, community facilities, and provision for open space and recreation.

Monksmoor

6.10 Monksmoor has a proposed location and scale of development that will in urban design terms, have a satisfactory physical relationship with Daventry located within the Daventry Bowl.

6.11 Monksmoor is not affected by the setting of Borough Hill and will clearly not be separated from Daventry by it.

6.12 Monksmoor will in my view be perceived as part of Daventry with good layout and connectivity and an overall layout appropriate to its context.

Church Fields

6.13 Church Fields has a proposed location and scale that will in Urban Design terms, have a satisfactory physical relationship with the Daventry Bowl.

6.14 Church Fields will not be separated from Daventry by Borough Hill.

6.15 Church Fields will in my view be perceived as a part of Daventry with good layout and connectivity and an overall character appropriate to its context.

Conclusion

6.16 In conclusion it should be noted that Danetree's outline application, supported by the accompanying DAS and Masterplan, will not be a satisfactory or appropriate response to the existing urban context.

6.17 Danetree is a development of significant scale in an inappropriate location with severely limited connectivity, with Borough Hill substantially restricting Danetree's ability to integrate with Daventry.

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- 6.18 The deficiencies of the Danetree Masterplanning approach will exacerbate the harm caused by this fundamentally unacceptable proposal.
- 6.19 In my opinion, the urban design concerns relating to the Danetree proposal are substantial, and the appeal relating to that scheme should be dismissed.
- 6.20 There is no reason in Urban Design terms to refuse either of the Monksmoor or Church Fields applications.