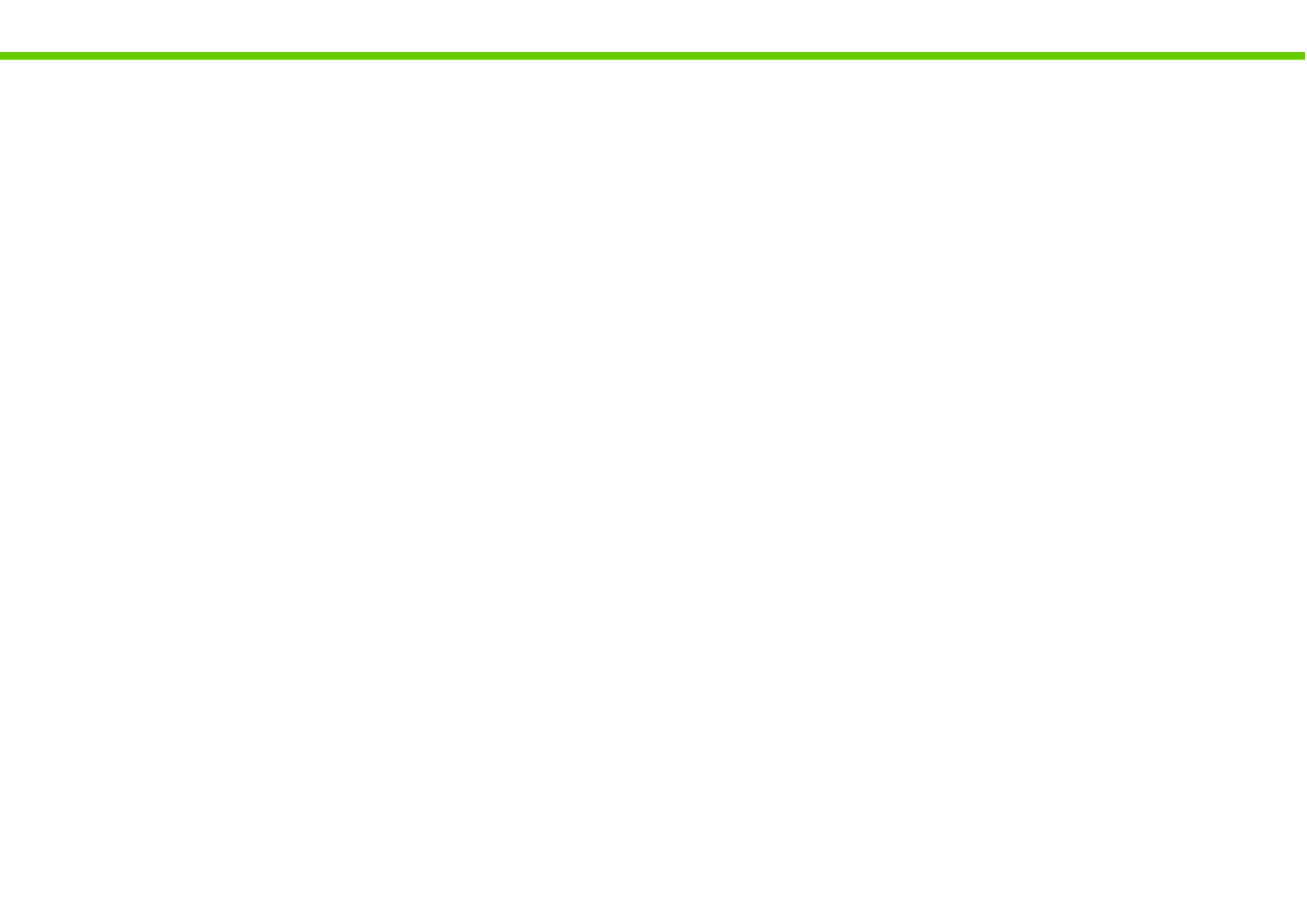


MALPAS CHARACTER STUDY

with Sample Site Guidance

October 2012





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Executive Summary

Introduction

In September 2012 IBI Taylor Young were appointed by Malpas Parish Council, supported by Cheshire West & Chester Council, to produce a Character Study for the village. This is being done to support the Parish Council in their neighbourhood planning process. This neighbourhood planning exercise is taking place in the context of developer interest in four sites at the edges of the village.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that neighbourhood and local plans ensure that development is based on an understanding and evaluation of an area's defining characteristics and should establish a strong sense of place. This Character Study will aid this process.

Planning Policy Context

The statutory development plan for Malpas is the Chester District Local Plan (2006). This includes relevant policies that deal with local distinctiveness, green space and archaeology. A large part of the village is designated as a Conservation Area and Malpas also has many listed buildings.

Community infrastructure

Malpas is defined as a '**key service centre**'. Although it has only a small population of 1,410 (ONS Mid Year Estimate, 2008) it serves a larger rural

hinterland (an area that relies on the village for shops and services). This means that it has a good range of facilities, making it a good location for sustainable housing growth.

Village Character

Figure 5 provides a townscape analysis of Malpas. This considers important factors such as topography, key views, gateways and key frontages. The following principal points emerge from this analysis:

- Historic role as a market town to surrounding rural area (market ceased mid 19th century)
- Castle Hill, St Oswald's, Cross and street pattern are all important survivals from the medieval era
- Positioned on southern end of sandstone ridge overlooking the Cheshire Plain
- Changing topography is a key characteristic
- Views to surrounding countryside are an important feature
- Landmark buildings and structures identified
- 10 Character Areas – some more important than others
- The strongest character is derived from the historic Village Core, and also High Street North and Church Street West.
- Key street frontages: Medieval, Georgian and Victorian buildings in the village core. Continuous street frontages here are important
- Several distinct building types in the Village Core: **surviving vernacular cottages, Georgian properties, simple Victorian properties** and **Victorian vernacular-revival style**. Another important

housing type is **Victorian rural cottages** (High Street North, Tilston Road and Well Street). These all offer cues for new development.

Character Areas

More in-depth analysis has been undertaken of all 10 character analysis. The 10 Character Areas are shown in Figure 6, they comprise:

1. Village Core
2. High Street North
3. Tilston Road
4. Chester Road
5. Oathills
6. Well Farm
7. Well Street
8. Springfield
9. Oldhall Street
10. Church Street West

Sample Sites

More detailed consideration has been provided for four 'sample sites' on the edges of the village, providing guidance, in the event that these are developed for housing, to ensure that their design responds to the village character. This guidance has been structured around the principles set out in the national guidance framework: **Building for Life 12**. This has included guidance on connections and integration with the village, accessibility to facilities and public

transport, establishing local character, working with the site and its context and creating well defined streets and spaces.

Within some of these larger sites it is appropriate for new developments to create their own 'character areas'. The character of these areas should be consistent with the general character of Malpas set out in the Village Character Appraisal section of the report. Guidance is also provided on an appropriate range of densities for parts of each sites. In general a range of densities should exist, which respond to the density of surrounding character areas and reflect an overall decrease in density from the centre of the village to the rural edge.

Transitional Areas

Within certain parts of the four sites there are 'transitional areas'. These are parts of the site that sit within established character areas and where development should respond to the character of these area. These areas, and the appropriate design responses, are set out below.

Sample Site 1: Northern Area.

Key cues for residential development on **Chester Road**:

- This is a wide road with grass verges and street trees, housing should be of a domestic scale and set back from the roadside to maintain its open feel.

- Buildings should typically be detached and set back within plots behind planting and front gardens.
- A range of architectural styles allows for freedom of expression within the context of the established character of Malpas.

Sample Site 2: Western Area

There are no transitional areas here, given the site's rather hidden location behind the Recreation Ground. The character of the site should respond to the following points:

- This character should refer to the general characteristics of Malpas described in the Townscape Analysis within Section 5.
- A more rural character in housing design would be appropriate in this location. The two simple Victorian agricultural worker's cottages on Tilston Road opposite the site entrance provide the most obvious reference point (see below). Key features include simple flat-fronts with no bays or porches, simple pitched roofs, horizontally-proportioned multi-paned windows with timber frames and segmental heads, traditionally pitched roofs without dormers, plain but strong chimney stacks on the gable ends.
- Development should present a tight street form around the southern access road, with development and boundary treatments tightly defining the street edge.



Houses on Tilston Road

Sample Site 3: Eastern Area

The established character of **Chester Road** should be followed namely:

- This is a wide road with grass verges and street trees, housing should be of a domestic scale and set back from the roadside to maintain its open feel.
- Buildings should typically be detached and set back within plots behind planting and front gardens.
- A range of architectural styles allows for freedom of expression within the overall character of Malpas.

Development on the part of the site fronting Well Street should respond to the character in **Well Street**, namely:

- A slightly higher density than surrounding areas consisting primarily of short terraces at two storeys.

- Buildings either set at back-of-pavement or set back a few metres behind hedgerows or fences.
- Reference to features from Victorian rural cottages including simple pitched roofs, a lack of projecting bays, some projecting porches with pitched slate roofs, horizontally-proportioned multi-paned windows at ground and first floors with segmental heads and dominant chimneystacks.



Southern edge of the site at Well Street

Sample Site 4: Southern Area

The area is small and closely related to Oldhall Street, which provides its only vehicle access. Therefore it is most appropriate for the area to follow the character of the **Oldhall Street** character area, namely:

- Vegetation to the roadside edge.
- Domestic or semi-detached two to three storey development on Oldhall Street, set back from the road within their own plots.
- Infill development of burgage-shaped plots behind the frontage, often at a slightly higher density including short terraces but also often at lower of one-to-two storeys.
- L-shaped groupings of buildings replicating the massing of farmhouses and subsidiary outbuildings or stables.
- Regularly-shaped green spaces surrounded on several sides by domestic scale housing.
- Use of slate roofs (typically steeply pitched), dormers, orange-red brick and white render/painted brick, black-and-white detailing

Next steps

This document forms part of a wider neighbourhood planning exercise being undertaken by the Parish Council, and supported by CW&C. The study will assist CW&C development management team in ensuring that any new development contributes positively to local character. This will particularly apply if any of the sample sites are the subject of planning applications for residential development. The character analysis within this document will be useful for housing development at any scale on any site within the village, including infill development.

1 Introduction

1.1 In September 2012 IBI Taylor Young were appointed by Malpas Parish Council, supported by Cheshire West & Chester Council, to produce a Character Study for the village. This is being done to support the Parish Council in their neighbourhood planning process. This exercise is taking place in the context of developer interest in four sites at the edges of the village.

1.2 Malpas is an attractive Cheshire village with an historic core and good views to the surrounding landscape. Its special character is reflected in the designation of a Conservation Area and the presence of many listed buildings. At the time of writing there is no current Conservation Area Appraisal for Malpas.

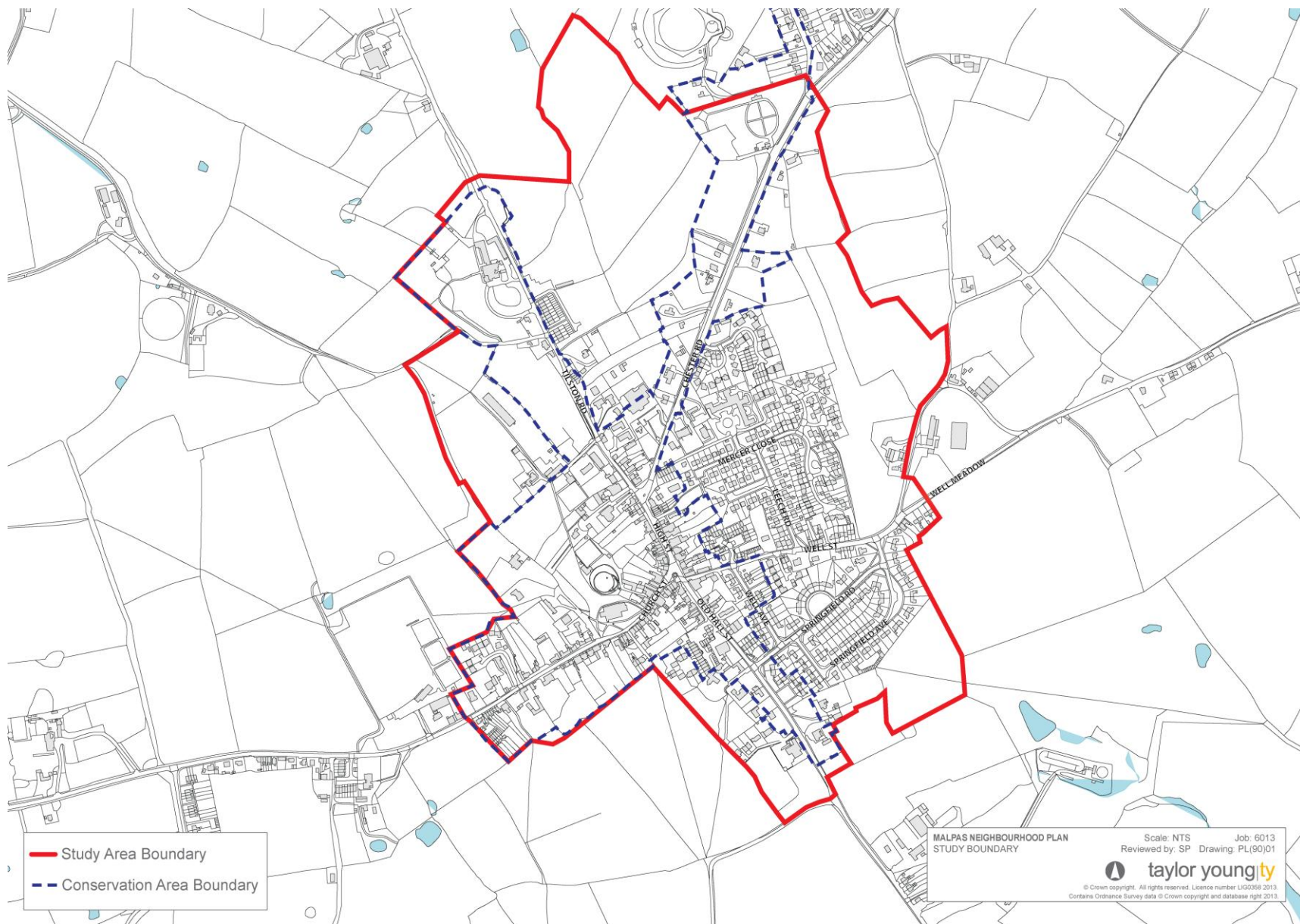
1.3 This exercise is being undertaken at a time of housing need and developer interest in several sites on the edge of the village. Sustainable housing growth is an aim of the Government. As expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), a key part of the sustainable growth strategy is that new housing responds to local character:

*"Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its **defining characteristics**. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:*

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *establish a **strong sense of place**, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while **not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation**;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."* [NPPF, p15]

1.4 It is therefore important to first understand and define the special character of Malpas and to then consider how new development should respond to this character. These aims are the purpose of this document.

Figure 1. Study Area Boundary





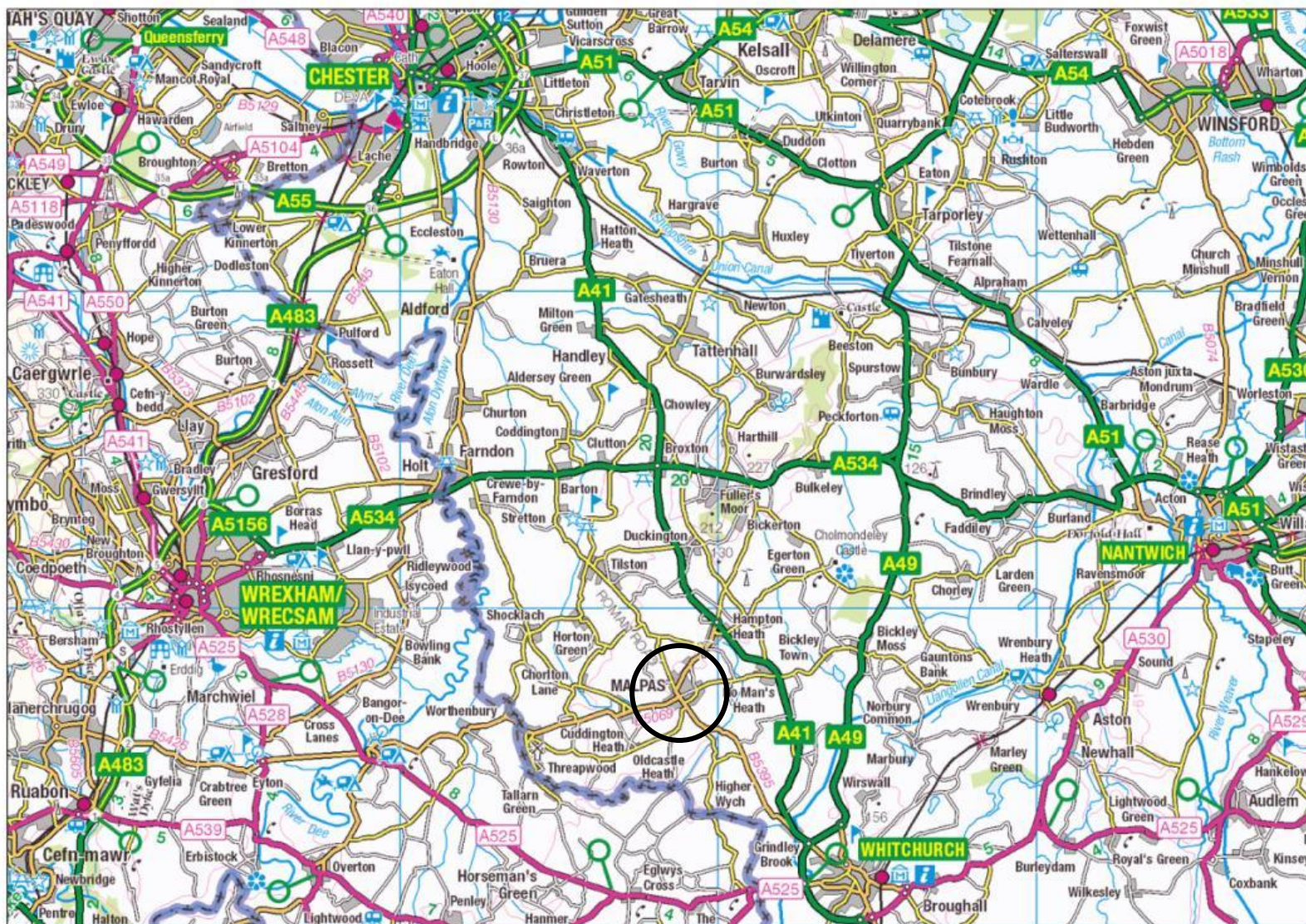
Aerial

Aerial photography imagery copyright GeoPerspectives 2010, as supplied to Cheshire West and Chester Council by Bluesky International.
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2 Local Context

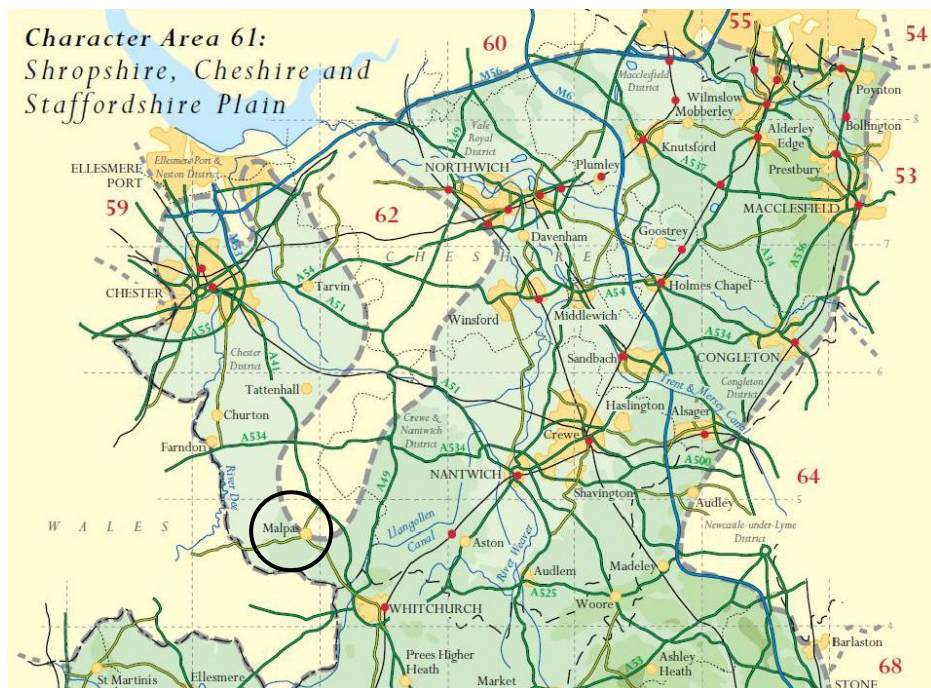
- 2.1 Figure 1 outlines the boundary of the study area. This is focused on the existing built-up area of the village and the surrounding land that has been the focus of development interest. The boundary includes almost all of the Conservation Area but is wider than this. The Conservation Area focuses on the historic parts of the village and, understandably does not include the post-war housing estates (i.e. Well Farm Estate and Springfield Estate) which today form a large part of Malpas but do not play a significant role in defining its character.
- 2.2 Figure 2 sets the village within its wider context. This shows that Malpas is located within rural Cheshire, close to Shropshire and the Welsh border, and between Chester, Wrexham and Whitchurch. Its position at a central point between these larger settlements means that Malpas has long acted as a service hub for the surrounding rural area. Malpas and its hinterland is also relatively less accessible to larger centres, with no railway connection and a series of B-roads providing road access, although the village is not far from the A41 Chester-Whitchurch trunk road. This means that Malpas has had to stand somewhat independently, providing the services that its catchment needs closer to hand. This has enabled a stronger local centre to emerge, and with it a stronger local identity to be preserved.
- 2.3 In the thirteenth century Malpas was granted a royal charter to hold a market. This wider service role continues today (although not the market itself, which ceased in the mid-19th century) and the centre of Malpas continues to serve a wide rural catchment.
- 2.4 This means that Malpas does have a claim to call itself a town, despite its small population size of 1,410 (the 2008 Mid Year Estimate from the Office of National Statistics). For the purposes of this report Malpas will be referred to as a village; this is to reflect the size of the population and the overall character of the settlement.
- 2.5 The surrounding rural area plays a large part in the character of Malpas. The small size of the village means that the open agricultural fields are always close at hand. Moreover, the local topography means that there are frequent views outward to the countryside from high ground in the village.
- 2.6 Malpas sits on the edge of two Landscape Character Areas (as defined by Natural England). To the south lies the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain Character Area (Character Area 61). To the north lies the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge Area Character Area (Character Area 62). A little further west is the Cheshire Plain and Dee Valley. It is the position of Malpas on this ridge that provides it with views across the lower lying Cheshire plain. See page 10 for further explanation of these landscape character areas.

Figure 2. Wider Context



Landscape Character Areas

[Natural England, 2011, www.naturalengland.org.uk]



Malpas sits at the interface of two landscape character areas:

- **61. Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain**
- **62: Cheshire Sandstone Ridge**

Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain

General characteristics:

- Lowland character
- Widespread fertile and productive clay soils
- Generally low woodland cover - small broadleaved or mixed woodland on slopes of sandstone ridges or along watercourses.
- Strong field patterns defined by hedgerows, often with dense mature hedgerow trees. These are often in neglected condition.
- A series of wetland habitats across the landscape.
- Settlement pattern of small villages and few, dispersed hamlets spread along hedged lanes.
- Buildings are predominantly red brick with sandstone churches and occasionally very distinctive black and white half-timbered buildings.

Cheshire Sandstone Ridge

General characteristics:

- General characteristics:
- Steep-sided sandstone ridge, to the east the lower slopes are cloaked in deposits of glacial sand and gravel.
- Soils are free draining, thin, sandy and generally infertile.
- Woodland cover is relatively high compared with adjacent areas. This includes both broadleaved and coniferous trees in woods and along hedgerows.
- A pattern of hedged fields with scattered mature hedgerow trees. Field sizes are irregular in pattern. Hedgerows are well maintained.
- Diverse range of wetland habitats.
- Dispersed pattern of scattered farms and small villages.
- Red brick is the dominant building material, together with local sandstone. A few older half-timbered black and white buildings occur.

3 Planning Policy Review

3.1 This section sets out the current planning policy context for Malpas, highlighting relevant policies that planning applications for new development must respond to.

3.2 Before the merger of Cheshire West & Chester Council (CW&C), Chester City Council previously produced a Local Plan covering the whole of Chester District, including Malpas. The purpose of this plan was to provide a framework for considering planning applications, co-ordinating development and giving the public an opportunity to become involved with local planning issues.

3.3 Chester City Council adopted the Chester District Local Plan in May 2006. This Local Plan forms part of the wider "Development Plan", which currently consists also of the Structure Plan and the Waste and Minerals Local Plans, produced by Cheshire County Council, and North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021. This is still the statutory Development Plan today, and is important as in providing the primary basis for considering applications for planning permission.

3.4 In terms of the status of existing Local Plans (such as the Chester District Local Plan) the NPPF makes clear directions:

- Policies within the NPPF are material considerations for planning applications.

- Local planning authorities have 12 months (to 27 March 2013) within which they can give full weight to their Local Plan policies, even if there is a limited degree of conflict with the NPPF.
- After this, and where there is more than limited conflict, the weight given to policies within Local Plans should depend of their level of consistency with the NPPF.
- Weight can be given to policies in emerging plans (i.e. Cheshire West's emerging Core Strategy) according to the stage of their preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections and the degree of consistency with the NPPF.

3.5 The situation is complex but in summary, until 27 March 2013 the Chester District Local Plan has full status as the Development Plan. After this date the Local Plan policies will of primary importance unless they conflict with the NPPF, in which case the NPPF takes precedence. The emerging Core Strategy will carry some weight as it moves through preparation and consultation stages but as it is currently at an early stage of preparation it carries little weight.

3.6 The Chester District Local Plan refers to **Local Distinctiveness** in Policy **GE 7**, which requires development proposals to make a contribution to local distinctiveness and encourages the production of parish plans and village design statements.

3.7 The Local Plan has designated six areas of **green space** in the village of Malpas, identified on the Proposals Map. Policy **ENV17** states that these can only be developed if:

- the development of the particular greenspace is required to meet the essential recreational or community needs of local needs;
- the development is for a small-scale structure and the recreation, landscape, wildlife and/or cultural value of the space will not be significantly adversely affected.

3.8 Malpas is also affected by Policy **TR5** on **Cycle Network**. A number of roads are designated as a cycle route.

3.9 Malpas village includes a **Conservation Area**. The Chester District Local Plan sets out a number of policies for Conservation Areas.

ENV 35	Planning applications involving substantial or total demolition of a building (s) or structure (s) in a conservation area will not be permitted unless the demolition and any proposed replacement building would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.
ENV 36	Applications for planning permission proposing the complete demolition behind the façade of a building within the conservation area will be permitted only where all of the following criteria are met: the proposed redevelopment would not have a detrimental affect on the character or appearance of the conservation area; the design of the development acceptably integrates the retained façade; and the floor levels and internal subdivision of the building reflect the scale, design and proportions of the façade when viewed from the street during the day and night.
ENV 37	Development in conservation areas or affecting the setting of such an area will only be permitted where it will preserve or enhance its character or appearance.
ENV 38	Planning permission will not be granted for new development that will obstruct important views within, or views in or out of conservation areas.

3.10 Within the Parish, many listed buildings are designated. The Chester District Local Plan sets out a number of policies for Listed Buildings.

ENV 45	Planning permission will be refused for proposals that fail to have regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural interest which it possesses
ENV 46	Proposals for the change of use or alternative uses of listed buildings will be permitted where: the proposed use would not detrimentally affect or be likely to affect the architectural or historic character of the building; the proposed use would not be likely to require associated development which would damage the environmental setting and character of the building; the likely impact on the amenities of the surrounding area would be acceptable.
ENV 47	Proposals for development which fail to have regard to the special qualities of locally important buildings of architectural or historic interest, their features of interest or their settings will be refused

3.11 Two sites of national importance concerning **archaeology** are located in Malpas: Castle Hill motte and Malpas Cross at, the junction of Church Street and Oldhall Street. Other archaeological sites close to the village are at Overton Hall, Saxon Village and Hampton Motte and Bailey.

3.12 Within the parish, protected trees are identified as part of a Tree Preservation Order.

3.13 Within the Parish, Sites of Nature Conservation Values (SNCVs) have been identified in Policy ENV27.

3.14 A strategic wildlife corridor crosses the parish in the south. Policy ENV 30 covers this.

3.15 Policies concerning environment, transport, economy, housing, community facilities, recreation and leisure also affect the parish. Please find the relevant policies in the Chester District Local Plan.

3.16 The former Chester City Council has also produced Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) & more recently Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). They provide more detailed advice on particular topics. Key documents relevant to any proposed development in Malpas include:

- SPD Affordable Housing
- SPD – Reuse of Rural Buildings
- SPD – Design for Residential Development
- SPG - Planning for Community Safety
- SPG – Open Space
- SPD – Sustainable Development

appropriate level of new housing, and will be key to delivering sustainable development across Cheshire West and Chester. The Local Plan must be consistent with the principles and policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

3.18 There is an opportunity for local people to become involved in shaping this plan as it progresses, and this should be encouraged. Applications are determined in accordance with the Local Plan and so this would be a key way of influencing change in the area.

The Emerging Local Plan

3.17 Cheshire West and Chester Council are currently in the process of producing a Local Plan which, once adopted, will replace many of the saved policies of the existing Chester District Local Plan. The Local Plan will set out the long-term spatial vision for the Cheshire West and Chester area together with objectives and policies designed to achieve the vision. It will be central to the achievement of the Council's future goals in relation to a wide range of issues, including the delivery of an

4 Community Infrastructure

4.1 It is important to consider the community infrastructure of the village: shops, community and services, public transport, open space and recreation. This will inform the amount of housing growth that the village can support. The principles of sustainable development mean that new houses should be located where there is good community infrastructure. This means that the need to travel, especially by car, will be reduced. Increasing the catchment population will also help to support and grow existing shops and services within the village.

Key Service Centres Background Paper

- 4.2 This is a supporting document that has been prepared by CW&C as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. It identifies 9 key service centre as a basis for plan-making. Basing growth around key service centres will ensure that residents have good access to essential services and follows the principles of sustainability established at a national level by the Government.
- 4.3 Malpas has access to a wide range of services and facilities, a secondary school and a small employment area. This indicates that it is the key settlement in the south of the Borough, acting as a rural centre providing higher order services to surrounding villages.
- 4.4 Malpas is defined as a '**key service centre**'. Although it has only a small population of 1,410 (ONS Mid Year Estimate, 2008) it serves a

larger rural hinterland (an area that relies on the village for shops and services). This means that it has a good range of facilities, making it a good location for sustainable housing growth.

- 4.5 This has led to CW&C proposing a level of housing growth of **250 new homes between 2010 and 2030** in Malpas, representing an increase of 38% in the number of dwellings in the village.
- 4.6 It should be noted that this figure is currently under consultation as part of the Local Plan Preferred Policy Directions and that it may change prior to adoption (expected to be late 2014). This figure will take into account completions and commitments since 2010. This means that the 250 is likely to be reduced to take into account these completions and commitments. The final figure will be derived by CW&C in response to current figures and consultation responses. This consultation period ends on 12 November 2012. The figure is used here as an indicative figure, for the purposes of community infrastructure assessment.

Service Provision in Malpas

- 4.7 Figure 3 describes the services currently provided in Malpas. This includes a secondary school, primary school, GP surgery and a village centre with a range of shops, including a small Co-op foodstore and a bank. Given the population of the village this is a surprising good level of community infrastructure, explained by the larger rural hinterland that the village supports.

- 4.8 Analysis can be undertaken of the population required to support various elements community infrastructure. This is based on an approach set out by Barton et al in the publication 'Shaping Urban Neighbourhoods' (2003). The analysis considers the catchment population required to support each item. To create sustainable communities, this catchment population should be located within easy walking distance of these services (i.e. within 10 minutes walk). Obviously Malpas also serves a wider catchment that drives into the village (or uses buses) but given the need to create sustainable communities, the consideration of catchments within walking distance remains valid.
- 4.9 Table 4.1, right, provides this analysis for Malpas. It confirms that the village has a high level of provision (when only the population of the village itself is considered) and that the level of population growth envisaged by CW&C could be accommodated with the requirement for additional services. Any residents of new development within the sample sites, if these are considered appropriate for development, would be well served by existing facilities and would help to reinforce the existing village centre.
- 4.10 It should be noted that these conclusions have been based only on simple desktop analysis and has not considered existing and projected capacity at local schools and health facilities. Additionally a study of public transport provision (in the routes and timetables of buses) and projected increases in service in response to new development should be considered. This research should be undertaken in the context of

CW&C's Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan. These matters will need to be considered in detail in order to accurately assess the infrastructure capacity of the village and its consequent ability to support growth.

Table 4.1: Community Infrastructure Analysis

Local Facility	Illustrative Catchment Population	Present in Malpas (population: 1,410) ¹	Additional Services required in 2030 (population 1,946) ²
Primary / middle school *	4,000	1	0
Secondary school (large)	16,000	1	0
Health centre (4 doctors)	10,000	1	0
Post office	5,000	1	0
Community Centre	4,000	1	0
Public house	6,000	3	0
Local centre *	6,000	1	0
Supermarket	24,000	0	0
Leisure centre	24,000	0	0

Source: *Shaping Urban Neighbourhoods*, [Barton et al, 2003]

1. Office of National Statistics Mid Year Estimate 2008

2. Based on 38% increase 2010-2030 established in Key Service Centres Background Paper [CW&C].

* Local centre: a range of small shops and limited services of a local nature, serving a small catchment.

Figure 3. Community Infrastructure



5 Village Character Appraisal

- 5.1 Malpas dates from the early medieval period and the village is included within the Domesday Book (although by a different name). The former motte and bailey castle that once stood on Castle Hill was one of a chain of castles built after the Norman Conquest to control the Welsh borders. Malpas was granted a charter to hold a market by Edward I in the 13th century. St Oswald's Church dates from the 14th century and surviving vernacular cottages in the village date from the medieval period to the 18th century. These are accompanied by later Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings, which are typical in the styles of their period. However, Malpas did not grow significantly until the post-war period (see Figure 4 overleaf). Following some limited inter-war social housing, in the late 1940s the Springfield Estates started to be built, following by the Well Farm Estate in 1969-74. This resulted in a significant expansion of the village to the east. This expansion generally comprised housing of standard post-war designs and consequently it does not contribute significantly to the local distinctiveness of Malpas.
- 5.2 As a result of this history, Malpas can be divided into a number of distinct character areas, each with differing built form and character. Of these areas the 'Village Core' is by far the most important in defining the locally distinctive character of Malpas and its resulting identity. Other older parts of the village also make a significant contribution.

- 5.3 The special character of the village is largely derived from the presence of locally-distinctive vernacular buildings, good surviving Georgian development and landscape factors, for example views into the surrounding countryside.
- 5.4 The analysis in this section is provided on the basis of ten character areas that have been identified. First, of all though, follows a consideration of how the village functions as a whole.

Townscape Analysis

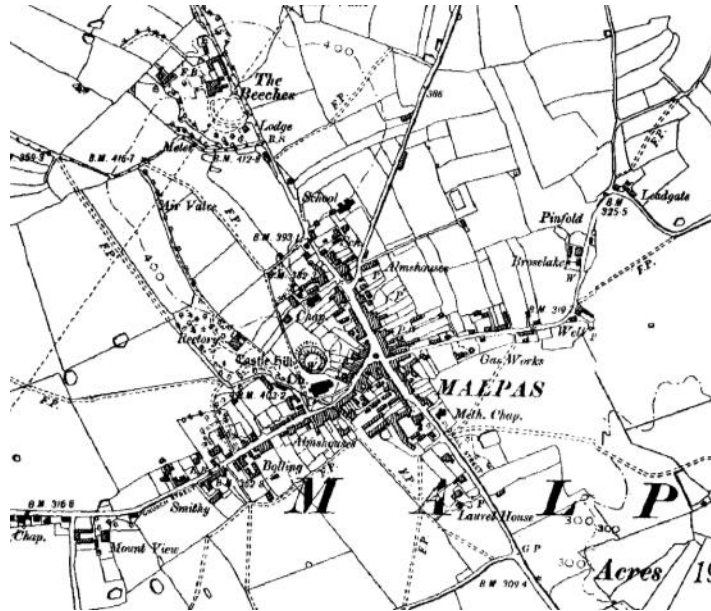
- 5.5 Figure 5 provides a townscape analysis of Malpas. This considers important factors such as topography, key views, gateways and key frontages. The following principal points emerge from this analysis.
- 5.6 **Topography** - Malpas is built on higher ground than most of the surrounding plain and the study area sits on a series of hills. This results in streets with fallings levels, often fairly steeply. This has several results in terms of character. Firstly, it means that a regular grid of straight streets is rarely possible as road alignments instead must take account of ground contours. Consequently, a street pattern of gently curving roads and shorter straight roads developed. These create vistas to landmark buildings and curving streets provide better views of built frontages. This is an important feature of local character which should be continued by new development. Secondly, the topography has an important effect in terms of views, as longer range views to the countryside are possible from higher ground.

Figure 4. Historic Mapping

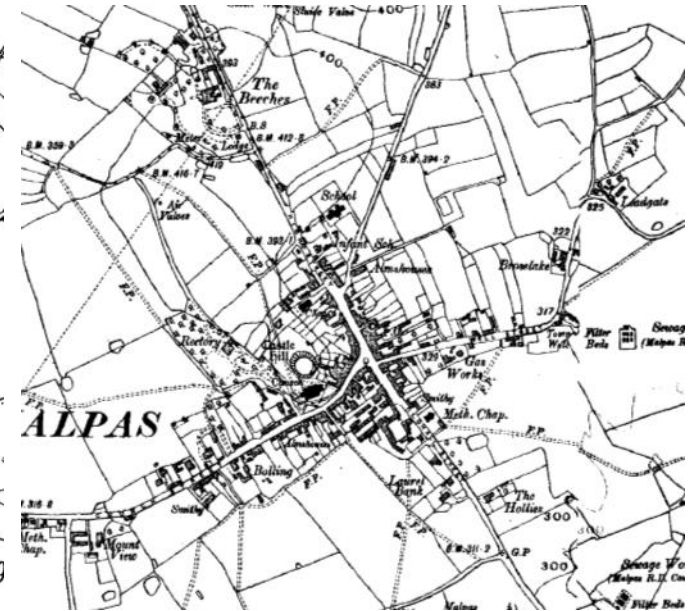
1874



1899



1912



Historic mapping reveals how little the village changed until the Inter-war period.

Figure 5. Townscape Analysis





Topography is a key factor in street form



Views to open countryside from the village are a key feature

5.7 **Key views** - views into the open agricultural countryside are frequent in the village. This reinforces the rural setting of the settlement and defines a 'village' character, rather than anything more 'urban'. These views are by no means universal though and are largely dictated by natural factors. The topography provides views from higher ground over the surrounding plain, and to more distant hillsides. This is especially prevalent on views eastward from the village. The open land to the east of the village is itself uneven with a continuation of the sandstone ridge extending south into the open land between Chester Road and Greenway Lane. Although not a dramatic feature, this results in the western slope of this ridge being more visible from the village, and the eastern slope being less visible from the village.

5.8 **Flora** - also plays a role in dictating the extent of views. In places there are thick bands of hedgerows and mature trees at the edge of roads, preventing views outward except where gaps occur (this is especially true on Tilston Road, Greenway Lane and Oldhall Street). A larger area of woodland occurs to the west and north of Castle Hill and this area lacks the openness of other parts of the surrounding rural fringe. Formal open space includes the St Oswald's churchyard, the Recreation Ground, Cemetery and a number of incidental open spaces within residential estates. The surrounding farmland is divided into an irregular field pattern by hedgerows. These are often mature and accompanied by mature trees. This is an important landscape feature.

- 5.9 **Street form** - As mentioned previously, the street form follows from topography and results in an irregular pattern of gently curving streets or short straighter sections. In the village core the medieval street pattern still perseveres, and even in the 20th century housing estates the form is not dissimilar. The exception is the longer straighter stretches of Tilston Road and Chester Road. This is itself a historic feature, as Tilston Road follows the alignment of a Roman Road. The structure of the village is still largely defined by this medieval street layout.
- 5.10 Within this street structure the building plots of the medieval village are remarkably still present, and still functioning as building plots. These were once 'burgage' plots: long narrow plots that allowed space for residents to grow vegetables behind their houses. The continuation of these long narrow plots reinforces the rural setting of Malpas and its village character.
- 5.11 **Gateways** - It is clearly possible to identify gateway points to the village from all directions. These occur where one first encounters continuous development on approaching the village (i.e. on Tilston Road, Chester Road, Church Street/Wrexham Road, Oldhall Street and Well Meadow). At present there is nothing to announce arrival at these points but the positions offer the potential to better define these gateways. This would enhance local distinctiveness.
- 5.12 **Key nodes** - Within the village core there are two distinct spaces that act as focal points in the village. These are created by the street layout

and the surrounding built form, and accentuated by activity and perception. The first is the area around The Cross. This is a centrepiece of the village and its heart. The change in levels, the quality and variety of surrounding frontages and the Cross itself all act together to create a townscape 'set piece' that is a key asset in local character.



The junction of Chester Road and High Street

- 5.13 The second key node is the Y-shaped junction of Chester Road and High Street. This is a less active space, at the edge of the retail centre, the space itself is dominated by highway space and the frontages are not as strong as at the Cross. However, the vista created to the facing frontage of High Street is an attractive feature. This space offers potential for enhancement.
- 5.14 **Landmark buildings and structures** - There are many listed buildings in the village, including fine examples of medieval/vernacular

and Georgian architectural styles. However, there are a few buildings and structures that play a larger role in defining the identity of the village - due to their visibility, uniqueness or community role. These are considered to comprise the following:

- Castle Hill (remains of the motte)
- St Oswald's Church
- The Market House, Church Street
- Old Printing House, Church Street
- The Cross
- The Crown Hotel, Oldhall Street
- Red Lion Hotel, Oldhall Street
- Tudor cottage, Oldhall Street
- Victoria Jubilee Hall, High Street (for its use rather than its architectural significance)
- Old Alport Schoolhouse, High Street
- Prospect House, High Street



Local landmarks

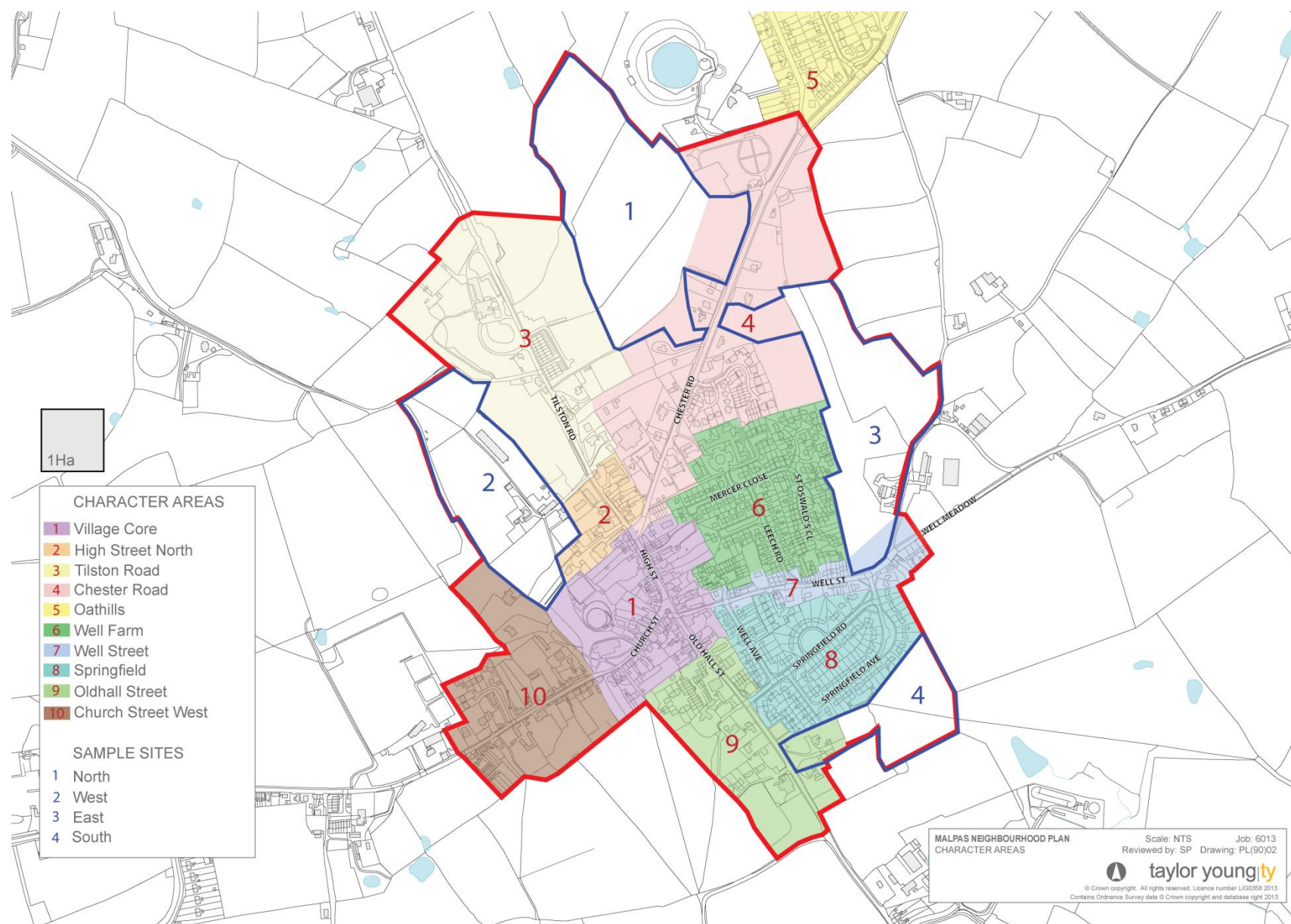
5.15 **Key frontages** - The character of the village is determined to a large degree by the buildings that front its key streets. This is provided not just by landmark buildings but by the totality of frontages in the village core. Many of these buildings are listed and almost all within this central area are historic (i.e. pre-First World War). The high quality of built form, which is in a variety of ages and styles, and the enclosure it provides to the medieval street form is one of the defining characteristics of Malpas. More detail is provided on architectural styles within the character area analysis, especially for the Village Core.



Frontages in the Village Core



Figure 6. Character Areas and Sample Sites



Character Areas

5.16 Figure 6 identifies 10 character areas in Malpas. These are focused on the existing built-up area of the village. Each of these areas has a distinct character from one another. The most significant areas in defining local character are areas 1, 2 and 10. Figure 6 also includes the Sample Sites (discussed in Section 6) to show how these interact with the character areas.

1. Village Core



5.17 The village core is the historic heart of Malpas and is characterised by a very high number of townscape buildings, in fact virtually every building in this area is of townscape significance. It is the character of this area, more than any other that defines the character of Malpas. Here the medieval past of the village (or rather a 'town' historically) is most clearly evident. This is seen in the narrow, winding street form and the survival of historic buildings and structures. This notably includes St Oswald's church and the Cross (medieval steps with Victorian cross) but also other significant buildings from the medieval period and several later eras (e.g. the early 18th century colonnaded Market House on Church Street).



Roofscape in the Village Core

5.18 The character of this area is defined by a steep and changing topography and narrow streets that are strongly enclosed by continuous frontages directly adjoining the back-of-pavement.

Sometimes there is even no pavement and the building line directly abuts the street. The street frontages comprise a pleasing variety of buildings and a near continuous frontage, including good examples from several eras.



The Old Fire Station is a small but interesting building that helps provide local character.

- 5.19 St Oswald's Church plays an important role in the character of this area, give both its history and the visibility of its tower. The churchyard on the southern side of the church is also important in wider townscape terms. The tightly enclosed narrow street to the south serves to enclose this space, which sits at a higher level raised up behind a stone retaining wall. The built form frames and enhances this space and the space acts a relief in the otherwise claustrophobic built form. The gates to the churchyard are themselves separately listed.

The gate adjacent to Market House forms a strong distinctive feature, especially when seen uphill alongside the Market House colonnade.



St Oswald's Churchyard and surrounding built form

- 5.20 Castle Hill is a significant landscape feature at the heart of the town. The origin of Malpas lies in the advantage of its position on a sandstone ridge overlooking the Cheshire plain. The high ground of Castle Hill was the site of a Norman motte and bailey castle that overlooked the Roman Road (Tilston Road) and played a strategic role in the subjugation of Wales. The site is now a Scheduled Monument. It is of historic significance and views from the hill are important. Castle Hill plays a key role in the history and identity of Malpas.
- 5.21 There is a variety of building ages and styles, but the following types are most common:

- **Surviving vernacular cottages** (16th to 18th centuries): black-and-white cottages with black-painted exposed timber beams and white-painted brickwork. Typically two-storey with traditionally pitched roofs. Roofs are slate, sometimes with flat-topped slate dormers.



- **Georgian properties:** there is a high number of Georgian properties providing excellent examples of 18th century domestic architecture. This is probably the dominant form in this area. Features are typical of the period. The properties are generally brick, with a simple square plan form and large vertical sash windows. Good original shopfronts often survive. Roofs are generally shallow pitched behind a cornice but sometimes there is a gable to the front elevation. The dominant material is local orange-red brick, though sometimes this is white washed. The Market House represents a much more individual style of Georgian development.



- **Typical Victorian properties** - are common, especially on High Street, These are generally two-storey in short terraces with traditionally pitched roofs. There are generally bay windows on the ground floor and traditional sash windows on the top floor, though sometimes much more plain. Chimneystacks are a dominant feature.





5.22 **Victorian vernacular-revival** - the use of black-and-white detailing on larger Victorian properties is common, especially in this part of Cheshire. This is typically applied to the upper storeys, leaving the ground floor in orange-red brick. Otherwise the plan form is often complex, with gable-fronted elements, porches and projecting windows. Tall chimneystacks are common. There is also often an excess of other detailing, such as stone quoins and lintels.



5.23 **Key cues for residential development from the Village Core:**

- Gently curving, narrow streets, with buildings set at back-of-pavement.
- A domestic scale of two to three storeys, often varying in response to topography.
- Simple pitched roofs, with the gable usually to the side but sometimes to the front of buildings.
- The density of the area is around 25 dwellings per hectare on average, however this is based on a high density street frontage with long open burgage plots to the rear, effectively creating a higher density at the street front.
- Consistent cues from one of four building typologies:
 - Traditional Georgian proportions and detailing, use of orange-red brick, traditional shallow-pitch roofs or gable-fronts.
 - Simple Victorian cottage form, orange-red brick, slate roof, bay windows, multi-paned horizontally-proportioned windows (especially at ground floor).
 - Black-and-white vernacular of painted timber beams and white render/painted brick in regular square beamed pattern with simple pitched roof.
 - Victorian vernacular-revival form that combines mock black-and-white timber detailing with orange-red brick at ground floor with stone detailing. Larger massing and more complex form, with gable-fronted elements.

2. High Street North

5.24 At the northern end of High Street, past the junction with Chester Road, the character changes somewhat. The urban form is somewhat looser, with buildings set back a little from the street. Planting to these frontages soften the streetscene. This area is clearly outside of the historic village centre and represents a transition to the agricultural area further north. Buildings here are residential or institutional. The defining built character is typical Georgian and Victorian rather than vernacular. There are a number of significant buildings, which are typically detached and have a more individual role than the group value buildings in the village core. Notably this includes Prospect House and the distinctive Old Alport Schoolhouse. The area also includes the Victorian St Joseph's church and surrounding buildings.



5.25 Key cues for residential development from High Street North:

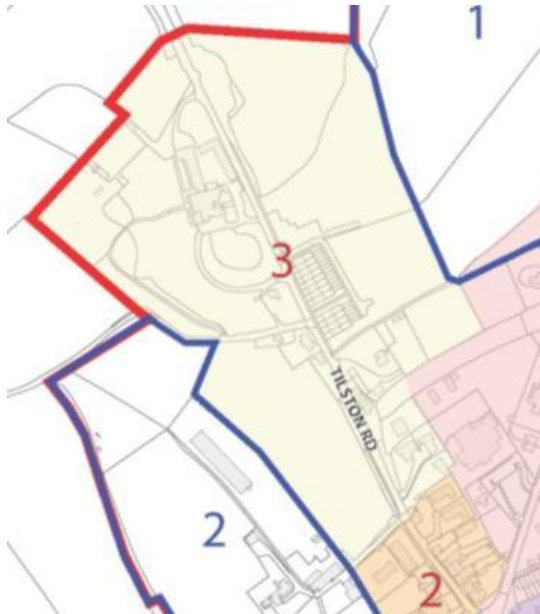
- Domestic scale two or three storey development.
- Buildings set back from the street, often behind low brick walls (with stone coping and piers), gates and hedgerows.
- Planting to the front of properties to soften the streetscene.
- Detached or semi-detached buildings with reference to either traditional Georgian proportions or simple Victorian rural cottage styles (simple pitched roofs, strong chimneystacks, horizontally proportioned multi-paned windows, hooded doorframes and segmental head windows).
- Use of warm red-orange brick and slate roofs.
- The average density of this area is around 15 dwellings per hectare.



Examples of Georgian (left – Prospect House) or Victorian cottage (above) styles in the area.

3. Tilston Road

5.26 Further north, Tilston Road is defined by a narrow road with heavy vegetation on either side. Properties are often hidden from view behind vegetation and are more dispersed, as this is now outside of the principal built-up area. Topography is often steep and is a dominant feature of this area. The dominant building form is Victorian and a mix of 20th century housing styles. Common features are the use of brick or white render, bay windows and slate continuous porches. The former St Joseph's College is a key building in the area, though this is largely hidden from view behind mature vegetation.



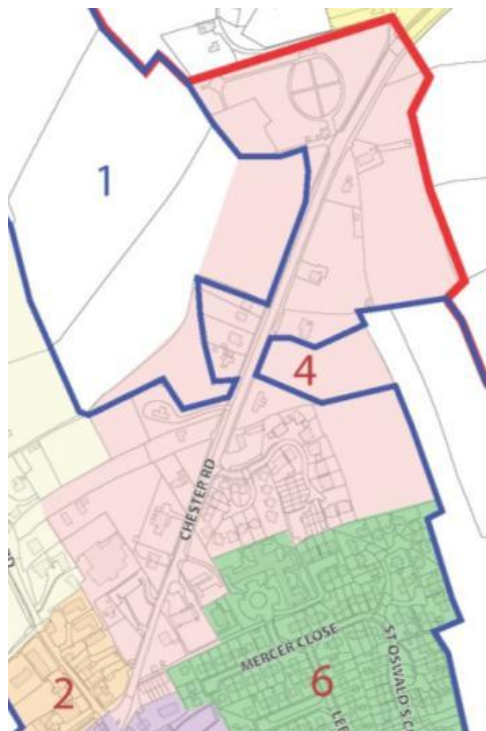
Tilston Road

5.27 **Key cues for residential development from Tilston Road:**

- Heavy vegetation to the roadside edge
- Dispersed detached dwellings or groups of short terraces.
- Buildings sometimes set back at a higher level to the road.
- Cues from Victorian rural styles (see previous character areas).
- Large parts of this area are undeveloped. The average density of developed area is around 10-15 dwellings per hectare - this varies from detached houses in their own plots to recent housing development in terraced form.

4. Chester Road

5.28 Chester Road is a relatively wide road with properties set further back than in other areas, giving it a much more open feel. Views out to surrounding countryside are an important part of the local character. There is a variety of development forms from the Victorian almshouses at the southern end of the area to the neo-Georgian new housing scheme to the eastern side of the road. The area includes the Cemetery in the north. There are also some institutional uses such as Alport Primary School and the fire station (and formerly the police station) which are all set back from the road in their own plots.



5.29 Overall this gives the area no strong architectural character. The set back of buildings from the road, planting in front gardens and the grass verges and street trees all create character, as does the sense of openness created by the width of the road and low height of

buildings. A view to St. Oswald's Church gives the area some identity and integration with the rest of the village.



Chester Road

5.30 Key cues for residential development from Chester Road:

- Wide road with grass verges and street trees, domestic scale housing set back from the roadside to give little enclosure and an open feel.
- Buildings typically detached and set back within plots behind planting and front gardens.
- A range of architectural styles allows for freedom of expression within the overall established character of Malpas.
- The average density for developed parts of the area on the road frontage is around 10 dwellings per hectare (dph). This low density is due large buildings set within generously sized plots. The new development on the eastern side of the road is around 20 dph.

5. Oathills



- 5.31 Oathills is a small pocket of housing to the north of the study area. This includes the Oathills Cottages: a distinctive group of 12 semi-detached houses built in 1884. These have a distinctive character in the Arts & Crafts style, unlike anything else in Malpas. This side of the street is within the Conservation Area, although these cottages are now much altered. Other than these houses the rest of this character comprises nondescript post-war housing and is of no special merit.
- 5.32 This character area offers no important cues for new residential development. The Arts & Crafts style of Oathills Cottages offers a potential source of reference points (notably the hexagonal-shaped gables, hipped roofs and strong stringcourses) but the lack of visibility of these cottages from outside the area means that there is no strong requirement for these to be followed.
- 5.33 The average density of this area is around 20 dwellings per hectare.

6. Well Farm



- 5.34 The Well Farm area occupies a large part of the built-up area of Malpas. Although it predominantly consists of the Well Farm Estate, which was constructed in 1969-74, it also includes housing from the 1930s and some recent infill schemes. The housing in this area is typical post-war suburban housing, including semi-detached houses and short terraces. It is at a slightly higher density to the Springfield Estate to the south. The overall form is one of housing set back from roads within their own plots with gardens to the front. The topography creates some strong views eastward from higher points.

5.35 None of this housing plays a significant role in the distinctive local character of Malpas. However, the 1930s Council housing, on Well Avenue, is somewhat distinctive in form. Arranged in pairs or groups of three, these houses have distinctive half-hipped roofs, hooded porch canopies and gable-fronted dormers which bear the Malpas Rural District Council logo.

5.36 **Key cues for residential development from Well Farm:**

- Domestic scale detached, semi-detached or short terraces of three dwellings.
- Buildings set back from the street within their own plots with front gardens and walls/hedgerows.
- Distinctive 1930s properties offer reference points: triangular dormers, half-hipped gable roofs and hooded door canopies.
- An average density of around 25 dwellings per hectare.



Well Farm Estate



1930s Council housing on Well Avenue

7. Well Street



5.37 Well Street is a historical route that predates the surrounding post-war development and consequently has a different character to the Well Farm and Springfield Estates. Forming a direct link into the village core, with an agricultural history, from which several buildings remain, today this area effectively forms a link between town and country and also between historical and modern development. This will be important in considering the potential for new development to the east and how it can link in to the historic character of the village, rather than being associated with the less distinctive post-war development of the post-war estates.

5.38 Today this transition results in a mix of building forms, from surviving Victorian agricultural buildings and cottages to post-war development and more recent infill. Overall the character is one of buildings set

close to the street. The Victorian rural cottages, and remaining agricultural buildings, on Well Street are important in defining local character in this part of Malpas.

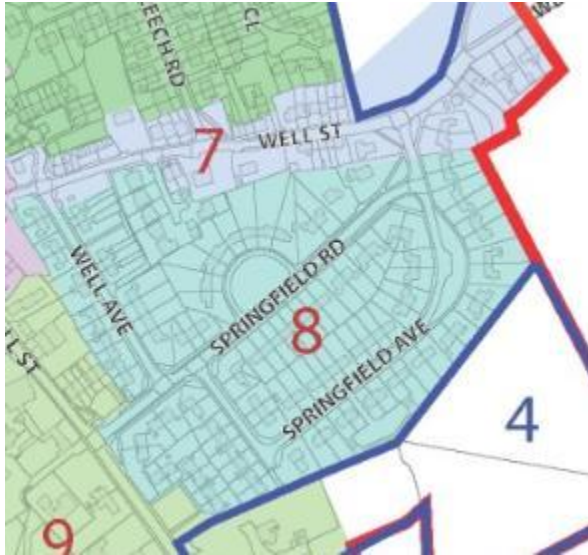
5.39 Key cues for residential development from Well Street:

- A slightly higher density than surrounding areas consisting primarily of short terraces at two storeys.
- Buildings either set at back-of-pavement or set back a few metres behind hedgerows or fences.
- A dominant style of Victorian rural cottages with features including simple pitched roofs, a lack of projecting bays, some projecting porches with pitched slate roofs, horizontally-proportioned multi-paned windows at ground and first floors with segmental heads and dominant chimneystacks.
- The average density is approximately 20 dwellings per hectare, although this is a mix of higher density terraces and green spaces at the junction of side streets.



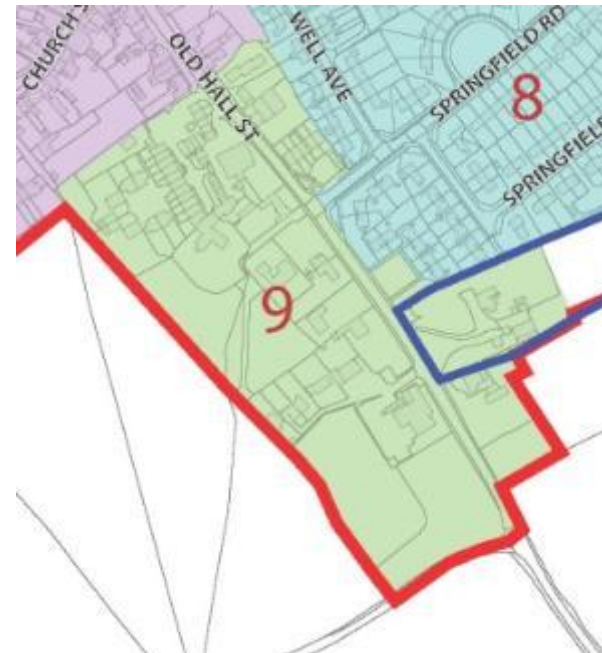
Well Street

8. Springfield



Springfield Road

9. Oldhall Street



- 5.40 The Springfield Estate is a planned post-war suburban development. Housing here is typical of its type and is not locally distinctive to Malpas. Development is around 20 dph on average and in places houses are arranged in crescents around green spaces. The topography offers some good views to open fields to the east.
- 5.41 The area offer no strong cues for residential development. Distinctive features include two-storey semi-detached housing set back from the road behind hedgerows and front gardens. The crescents formed around semi-circular green spaces is the strongest feature.

5.42 Oldhall Street changes character as one moves south out of the village. It takes on a much more rural feel. The frontages become much less continuous with properties set within their own plots further back from the street edge, often with heavy planting at the roadside edge. The historic burgage plots have given way to much to more infill development behind the frontage properties. The overall feel of the built form is much looser, as open space is brought to the road frontage and the arrangement of building takes on a more agricultural arrangement of L-shapes and courtyards.

5.43 Key features in the area include:

- the Oldhall Court development - where converted 18th century buildings are arranged around a courtyard behind the road frontage;
- the open space at the entrance to the Springfield Estate (and the L-shaped arrangement of built form here);
- and the L-shape arrangement of whitewashed cottages that front a small green space on Oldhall Street.

5.44 These latter two examples are modern developments that replicate the form established by agricultural buildings in this area.

5.45 **Key cues for residential development from Oldhall Street:**

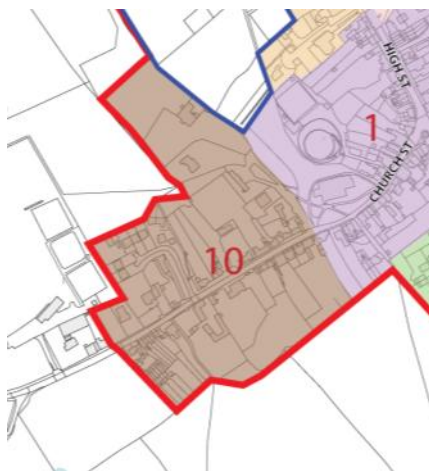
- Heavy vegetation to the roadside edge.

- Domestic or semi-detached two to three storey development on Oldhall Street, set back from the road within their own plots.
- Infill development of burgage-shaped plots behind the frontage, often at a slightly higher density including short terraces but also often at lower of one-to-two storeys.
- L-shaped groupings of buildings replicating the massing of farmhouses and subsidiary outbuildings or stables.
- Regular-shaped green spaces surrounded on several sides by domestic scale housing.
- A mix of architectural styles but common use of slate roofs (typically steeply pitched), dormers, orange-red brick and white render/painted brick, black-and-white detailing.
- The average density of development in the area varies from 15-20 dph. This includes a mix of farmhouses within their own plots to higher density terraces and courts.



L-shaped development fronting a green-space

10. Church Street West



5.46 On Church Street, the character changes to the west of the churchyard. Properties are set back a little further from the road edge, although only 1-2m. This has allowed some planting to the street frontage (often on a hard landscaped surface) which softens the street character. There is more variety in the street building line and the buildings themselves, although typically still adjoining one another, have a more individual feel. In contrast to the Village Core, properties here tend to have wide frontages and a shallow plot depth, rather than the narrow frontage, deep plot form of the Village Core. As in the Village Core, behind the properties are long burgage plots, a few of which have been infilled with development. Stone walls often complete the frontage and create a consistent streetscene.



Church Street

5.47 The built form is uniformly strong in this area and has a similar mix of surviving vernacular cottages, good examples of Georgian architecture and simple Victorian cottages described for the Village Core. In general though, the buildings here have a rather more domestic and rural feel here. Properties are rarely more than two storeys (with the exception of the Georgian two-and-a-half storey building known as The Bolling), and with many single storey elements. Roofs are traditionally pitched and often descend steeply to the street edge, The Victorian cottages are more rural in nature, with more irregular shaped windows, a lack of bays and are often faced in painted brick or render. The vernacular cottages have some distinctive gable-fronted first floor elements extending above the pitched roof. Cholmondeley Terrace is a distinctive local building in this area. In general, this is an area with a distinctive and strong character.



Vernacular cottages on Church Street

5.48 **Key cues for residential development:**

- Variety in the building line from back-of-pavement to a 2m set-back.
- Hard landscaping and planting to the front of dwellings but few formal boundary treatments.
- A domestic scale of one to two storeys.
- Steeply pitched roofs, often with projecting upper storeys above the roofline. These upper storeys have gable fronts.
- Victorian cottage features: flat-fronts without bays or porches, horizontally-proportioned multi-paned windows with segmental heads, simple but dominant chimneystacks.
- Dominant use of white-painted brick or render.
- Black-and white timber detailing in characteristic square pattern.
- Also properties faced in warm orange-red brick.
- The average density is around 15 dwellings per hectare. This is actually medium-density at the street frontage but the figure is made lower due to the long and often undeveloped burgage plots.

6 Sample Site Guidance

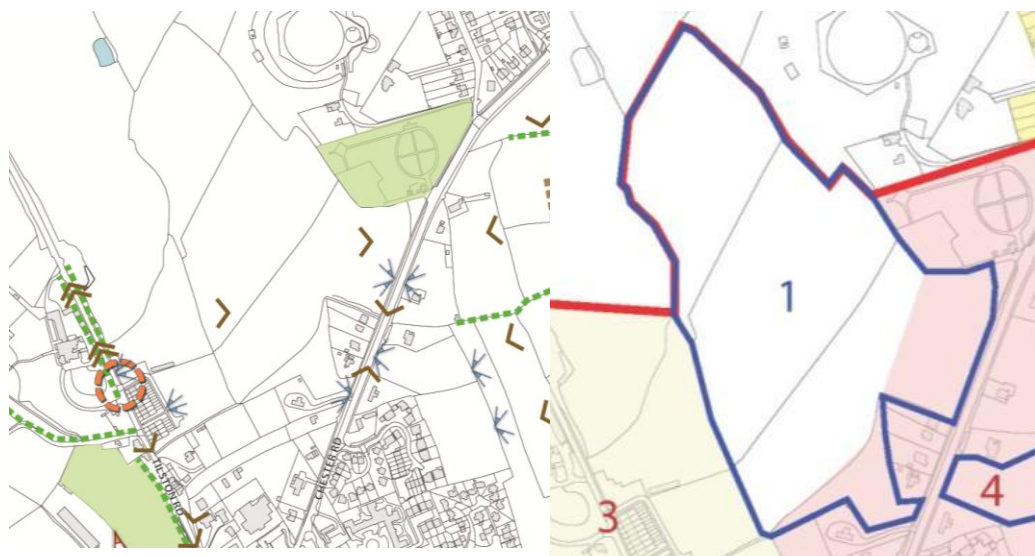
- 6.1 This section examines four 'sample sites' on the fringes of the village (see Figure 6). These sites have been selected in response to developer interest for new housing development. The sites comprise:
- Northern Area: land north of Chester Road and west of the Cemetery
 - Eastern Area: land between Chester Road and Well Street
 - Western Area: land to the west of the Recreation Ground
 - Southern Area: land to the south of the Springfields Estate
- 6.2 These are sites that may be identified for housing growth. The purpose of this section is to consider how, in the event of these sites being considered appropriate for housing, development should be designed in order to preserve and enhance the existing character of Malpas. This guidance is based on the understanding of distinctive character explained in Section 4. It is not the purpose of this document to define the extent of growth in and around Malpas; this is being developed through CW&C evidence and policy tools.
- 6.3 It is recommended that designers refer to the recently launched **Building for Life 12** when considering development on these sites. This is an industry standard guidance and evaluation scheme for well designed homes and neighbourhoods. Building for Life 12 replaces earlier versions of the Building for Life accreditation. It has been prepared by a partnership of 'Cabe at the Design Council', Design for

Homes and the Home Builders Federation. The guidance here draws on general points from this guidance and follows its general structure, but tailors it based on the place-specific analysis of Malpas that has been undertaken.

- 6.4 Other sources of good design guidance and best practice should also be referred to. These includes '**By Design**' (DETR/CABE, 2000) and the supplementary '**By Design – Better Places to Live**' (DETR/CABE, 2001); the '**Urban Design Compendium**' (English Partnerships & Housing Corporation, 2000) and **Urban Design Compendium II** (2007); '**Places, Streets and Movement**' (DETR, 1998) and '**Manual for Streets**' (DfT, 2007). At a local level, CW&C's '**Design for Residential Development**' Supplementary Planning Document (2007) and Sustainable Development SPD (2008) should be referred to.

1. Northern Area

6.5 The Northern Area comprises open fields to the north of Chester Road and to the east of Cemetery. It lies between the Chester Road and Tilston Road character areas. Development of all of this area would represent a significant northern excursion into the surrounding countryside. If only the large field closest to Chester Road was developed (and the adjacent small field on this frontage) then this could be more easily be accommodated into the urban form of the village.



(See Figures 5 and 6 for full plans)

Integrating into the Neighbourhood

- 6.6 This site is somewhat removed from the built-up core of the village. With most development to the south of Chester Road this would represent a shift in the distribution of development in the village if developed. It would function as an distinct and separate neighbourhood, in a similar way to Oathills at present. It is important then that it both creates its own sense of place, and a complimentary character to aid integration with the village.
- 6.7 **1. Connections** - the site has two frontages onto Chester Road. These are the only access points and so it is important that both are used to avoid effectively creating a large cul-de-sac with only one entrance point. Good pedestrian/cycle permeability should be maintained through the site, including the retention of existing public rights of way. Any development should present a strong frontage to Chester Road with buildings facing the street and following the existing building line and character of this road. The principal entrance to the site should be marked by a enhanced, architectural and landscape treatment. This part of the site is close to the primary school and it will be important to ensure that any new access does not compromise safety in the context of the school.
- 6.8 **2. Facilities & Services** - the site is within good accessibility of existing services. It is especially close to Bishop Heber High School. Please see Section 5 for further analysis.

6.9 **3. Public transport** - Chester Road is a bus route so the site has good accessibility, although the further reaches of the site will be somewhat more remote. It is best practice for all houses to be within a 5 minute walk (i.e. 400m) of a bus stop. It is therefore important to have good direct pedestrian access through the site to Chester Road. Bus stop locations on Chester Road should also be reviewed.

6.10 **4. Meeting local housing requirements** - the site is large and could allow a significant contribution to be made to housing need and affordability requirements. Existing housing density reduces further from the village core and surrounding development here is dispersed. However this will need to be balanced with the need to make efficient use of the site considered appropriate for development. A low/medium density would be appropriate. Density should vary across the site with an average density of around 20 dwellings per hectare (dph) at the street frontage and densities of 10-15 dph behind this, decreasing toward the northern part of the site.

Creating a Place

6.11 **5. Character** - The size and position of the site means that it will effectively form a new character area, although it must interface effectively with the Chester Road character area (see page 27). This means that development on this frontage should conform to the existing character of Chester Road and the Conservation Area.

6.12 Key cues for residential development on Chester Road:

- This is a wide road with grass verges and street trees, housing should be of a domestic scale and set back from the roadside to maintain its open feel.
- Buildings should typically be detached and set back within plots behind planting and front gardens.
- A range of architectural styles allows for freedom of expression within the context of the established character of Malpas.

View from Tilston Road



View from Chester Road



View from the Cemetery



- 6.13 **Working with site and its context** - The site is gently sloping. It is clearly divided into three fields. This internal structure should be preserved and the developers should work with existing contours. There are a number of mature hedgerows, mostly around the edge of the site. These should be preserved as they would help integrate development into the landscape (and also preserve ecological value).
- 6.14 The site is relatively exposed - being visible from certain points on Tilston Road (in the middle distance) and from Chester Road (although only the frontage will be visible after development). Most important would be the view of the site from the Cemetery. Here it would form the backdrop to the graveyard, behind the hedgerow. Development must be sensitive to this view and to the setting of the chapel here.
- 6.15 The topography offers the advantage to create views outwards to surrounding countryside and this should be maximised. Buildings should present an attractive elevation at the edges to the site. New housing on the site should be seen as sitting within the landscape, with retained trees and new planting serving to create glimpsed views and softening the built environment when seen from the surrounding area. Retaining the hedgerows will assist with this. The roofscape will also need to be well designed, given the visibility from Tilston Road.
- 6.16 **7. Creating well defined streets and spaces** - The street pattern should follow an organic structure following site contours, as elsewhere in the village. This should comprise of gently curving and

short straight streets. Loose blocks should be formed with buildings set back from the street edge. Given the size of the site, a small open space is likely to be required within the site, accommodating a children's play area. This offers the potential to create a focal point within a development. Tree planting and green space will provide the opportunity for the area to integrate with the surrounding landscape. It will improve its appearance when seen from Tilston Road.

- 6.17 **8-12. Street & Home** - Detailed design of streets and houses should follow best practice and the points set out in Building for Life 12. Reference to existing local architecture (as described in Section 4) should be made in a considered and contemporary manner. Use of appropriate colours, materials and correct proportions are more important than adding 'bolt-on' features that lack practical function or are inconsistent with the house design (i.e. fake chimneystacks or modern garage doors within mock-Georgian frontages etc). Following the existing relationship of buildings to streets, plan form of dwellings and roofscape provide good design cues.

2. Western Area

6.18 The Western Area site comprises land to the west of the Recreation Ground. The site is occupied by an egg-packing station and a chicken rearing facility that is now disused. This gives it a partial brownfield status, unlike the other opportunity areas. Development here could be accommodated positively without impacting significantly on the character of Malpas.



(See Figures 5 and 6 for full plans)

Integrating into the Neighbourhood

6.19 This site lies closer to the village core than the other opportunity areas, allowing potential for it to better integrate with the village. At present the site is somewhat hidden away and remote due to its position behind the Recreation Ground.



The site today (looking north)

6.20 **1. Connections** - the site can be accessed from both the existing access to West End Farm and from Love Lane. It would be important that both these accesses are used. For pedestrian access the southernmost of these two connections is most important as it will allow people to reach the village centre by foot.

6.21 The site has no main road frontage and is somewhat hidden from the village until one accesses it via the two routes mentioned above. This will give it an intimate feel as a distinct area within Malpas.

6.22 The southern part of the area is within the Conservation Area. This is sensitive in that development here could affect views to and from St Oswald's Church and Castle Hill. However, given the topography and dense vegetation around these features this is unlikely to be problematic so long as development is of a domestic scale.

6.23 **2. Facilities & Services** - the site has excellent accessibility to existing services in the village centre. Please see Section 5 for further analysis.

6.24 **3. Public transport** - the site is within a short walk of existing bus stops on High Street. The northern part of the site is a little more distant from bus routes. Good pedestrian accessibility should be provided through the site.

6.25 **4. Meeting local housing requirements** - the site is large and will allow a significant contribution to be made to housing need and affordability requirements. The position of the site closer to the core of the village, and the brownfield history of the site, means that a density of around 20 dph is appropriate on the southern part of the site and around 15 dph to the west of the Recreation Ground.

Creating a Place

6.26 **5. Character** - The site is removed from any other character area and is not visible from the principal roads. This means that there is some

flexibility for it to create its own character, within the wider context of the character of Malpas, as described in Section 5.

Key cues for residential development:

- This character should refer to the general characteristics of Malpas described in the Townscape Analysis within Section 5.
- A more rural character in housing design would be appropriate in this location. The two simple Victorian agricultural worker's cottages on Tilston Road opposite the site entrance provide the most obvious reference point (see below). Key features include simple flat-fronts with no bays or porches, simple pitched roofs, horizontally-proportioned multi-paned windows with timber frames and segmental heads, traditionally pitched roofs without dormers, plain but strong chimney stacks on the gable ends.



Houses on Tilston Road

- Development should present a tight street form around the southern access road, with development and boundary treatments tightly defining the street edge.

6.27 **6. Working with site and its context** - The site is relatively flat. It is bounded by mature hedgerows and there are also hedgerows and mature trees within the site. These should be retained wherever possible, especially the hedgerows at the edge which would aid integration into the surrounding landscape. The site is visible from Love Lane and should present a strong frontage that faces this road. New housing will also be seen from the Recreation Ground, behind some extensive existing planting. This interface needs to be carefully considered. It needs to present an attractive elevation to the open space but will also need to avoid nuisance and ensure security. Finally, St Oswald's Church is visible from the site. This is a positive feature and streets should be aligned to take advantage of it.



*View from the
Recreation Ground*

6.28 Additionally, there is an aqueduct pipeline that runs across the site and a possibility that the Roman Road traverses the site. All site constraints need to be investigated and suitably mitigated in any development.

6.29 **7. Creating well defined streets and spaces** - The street pattern here should be more regular than other sites given its more central location and the more regular field pattern that predominates here. Blocks formed by short straight or gently curving streets are the best solution. The interface with surrounding uses creates an intimate environment here. New development should face the street and create an outward-looking layout that integrates with the rest of the village. A good aim would be to create pedestrian linkages from the site to Castle Hill and St Oswald's Church. This would better open up these assets and better connect the village internally.

6.30 **8-12. Street & Home** - Detailed design of streets and houses should follow best practice and the points set out in Building for Life 12. Reference to existing local architecture (as described in Section 4) should be made in a considered and contemporary manner. Use of appropriate colours, materials and correct proportions are more important than adding 'bolt-on' features that lack practical function or are inconsistent with the house design (i.e. fake chimneystacks or modern garage doors within mock-Georgian frontages etc). Following the existing relationship of buildings to streets, plan form of dwellings and roofscape provide good design cues.

3. Eastern Area

6.31 The Eastern Area is a large expanse of currently open agricultural fields to the east of the village. This is an open area made more visible by the rising land within the site. Development here would have a significant impact on the form of Malpas and its relationship with the surrounding countryside. Separate smaller infill development on the land between Well Street and Broselake Farm and on the Chester Road frontage could more easily be integrated into the village.



(See Figures 5 and 6 for full plans)

Integrating into the Neighbourhood

6.32 Development of this area would result in a significant eastward expansion of Malpas. Following the post-war development of the Well Farm Estate, and of more recent smaller schemes, this could be seen as the latest phase of an ongoing eastward expansion. Greenway Lane would form a clearly-defined edge to this expansion and would represent a more defensible boundary between town and country.

6.33 **1. Connections** - Integration into the village will be difficult given the distance to the village core and the nondescript nature of the intervening Well Farm Estate. The key to achieving successful integration will be linkage via Chester Road and Well Street. It is vital therefore that any development makes a strong positive impression on both these roads and that strong linkage can be achieved - for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists - through the site and into the village via these roads. Given the large size of the site good, direct permeability through it will be important for pedestrians, although the designers must be careful not to create a rat-run from Chester Road to Well Street, i.e. by a road design that avoids clear lines of sight or long straight sections which would encourage use as a through-route.

6.34 **2. Facilities & Services** - the site is within accessible reach (i.e. a 5-10 minute walk) of existing services in the village and at Bishop Heber High School. Please see Section 5 for further analysis.

- 6.35 **3. Public transport** - the site is within accessible reach of bus services on Chester Road and Well Street. It is best practice for all houses to be within 400m of a bus stop.
- 6.36 **4. Meeting local housing requirements** - the site is large and would allow a significant contribution to be made to housing need and affordability requirements. The size and position of the site at the edge of the village means that a range of densities should be provided, varying from a density of around 20-25 dph between Well Street and Broselake Farm; around 15-20 dph on the Chester Road frontage, around 20 dph on the central band of the site between these two areas; and around 15 dph in the roughly triangular eastern part of the site.

Creating a Place

- 6.37 **5. Character** - The position of the site means that it can define its own character, within the overall context of the character of Malpas. However, it will be important that it integrates into the existing character at Chester Road and Well Street. Development here should have a semi-rural feel, taking account of its position on the rural fringe. The site is largely outside of the Conservation Area, with the exception of the Chester Road frontage, which also benefits from views south-eastward to open countryside.
- 6.38 On **Chester Road** there is already recent change in this location with several new housing schemes. It is important that new development

compliments this new architecture. There is no established historical style here. The site frontage here is narrow and so a strong presence is required in order to define the gateway to the site. If the Northern Area is also developed then the two schemes should complement each other on their Chester Road frontages.



View towards the village centre along Chester Road – with the Church acting as a strong landmark and link to local character.

- 6.39 The established character of Chester Road should be followed namely:
- This is a wide road with grass verges and street trees, housing should be of a domestic scale and set back from the roadside to maintain its open feel.
 - Buildings should typically be detached and set back within plots behind planting and front gardens.

- A range of architectural styles allows for freedom of expression within the overall established character of Malpas.
- Views to open countryside are important and should be maintained.

6.40 The site has an interesting relationship with **Well Street**. At present the open field extends directly to the road frontage, bounded by white-painted Cheshire Estate railings and framed by facing development on the opposite side of the street. The change in orientation as Well Street becomes Well Meadow means that several houses face onto the site. The junctions with Springfield Avenue and Greenway Lane heightens the importance of this location and establishes it as the gateway to Malpas from the east.



Southern edge of the site at Well Street

6.41 All of this means that this is a more sensitive part of the site and it is consequently important that any development here makes a strong

contribution to character. This is positive in that it will allow development a good opportunity to integrate with the village.

6.42 Development on this part of the site should respond to the character in **Well Street**, namely:

- A slightly higher density than surrounding areas consisting primarily of short terraces at two storeys.
- Buildings either set at back-of-pavement or set back a few metres behind hedgerows or fences.
- Reference to features from Victorian rural cottages including simple pitched roofs, a lack of projecting bays, some projecting porches with pitched slate roofs, horizontally-proportioned multi-paned windows at ground and first floors with segmental heads and dominant chimneystacks.



View across the site to Well Meadow

- 6.43 **6. Working with site and its context** - Topography on this site is quite marked. A low ridge extends south into the site, making parts of the site more visible from the west and east. Development here should work with these existing contours although care must be taken not to place buildings of too greater height on the ridge, otherwise these will be exposed and visible over too large an area. Views from the site over the countryside to the east should be maximised.



View southward over open countryside from Chester Road

- 6.44 Views into the site should be carefully considered. The site is currently very visible when viewed from the east, from points on Chester Road and from high ground within the Well Farm character area, notably from new housing at the edge of this area. The open views enjoyed here will be lost if this site is developed. Any new development must be visually attractive when seen from these viewpoints. New housing on the site should be seen as sitting within the landscape, with

retained trees and new planting serving to create glimpsed views and softening the built environment when seen from the surrounding area. Retaining the hedgerows will assist with this. The interface to the existing dwellings on the western edge needs to be carefully designed, in order to preserve longer range views wherever possible and to maintain amenity, privacy and security.

- 6.45 The site is currently divided into a number of fields in an irregular pattern. These are bounded by a series of hedgerows with a number of mature trees. These hedgerows and trees should be retained wherever possible in the development of this site.
- 6.46 **7. Creating well defined streets and spaces** - street character should vary across the site. Agricultural style building forms should dominate in the Well Street area and along the Greenway Lane frontage - with buildings set close to the street, with L-shape and courtyard arrangements behind. Development on the Chester Road frontage should be set back from the street edge with landscaping to the frontage. Between these edges the internal streets should have a loose linear form with gently curving irregular streets that give an organic feel, responding to contours and established field patterns.
- 6.47 **8-12. Street & Home** - Detailed design of streets and houses should follow best practice and the points set out in Building for Life 12. Reference to existing local architecture (as described in Section 4) should be made in a considered and contemporary manner. Use of appropriate colours, materials and correct proportions are more

important than adding 'bolt-on' features. Following the existing relationship of buildings to streets, plan form of dwellings and roofscape provide good design cues. The simple Victorian cottages in the villages would represent the most appropriate reference form.

View of the site from the new housing to the west.



4. Southern Area

6.48 The southern site lies to the south of housing on Springfield Avenue. It is currently occupied by two farmhouses with outbuildings and associated land and two larger fields to the east. The western part of the site would be more appropriate for development than the two larger fields in the east, as this would more closely follow the pattern of infill development of burgage plots in this area.



(See Figures 5 and 6 for full plans)

Integrating into the Neighbourhood

6.49 This would represent a small extension to the village. The field boundaries here would allow it to be fairly naturally accommodated within the settlement form.

6.50 **1. Connections** - The site only has one access point, to Oldhall Street. The site frontage to Oldhall Street is narrow and bounded by heavy vegetation. Although difficult, it is important that a strong frontage to is made here. There should be a visible gateway to the site that follows the local character of this area.

6.51 There is limited potential for connection to the Springfield Estate but there is an existing footpath link to Springfield Avenue. It is important that this is retained and provides through access into the site in order to promote permeability and integration.



The existing access from Oldhall Street

6.52 **2. Facilities & Services** - the site has good accessibility to existing services in the village centre. Good direct pedestrian linkages from the eastern part of the site through to Oldhall Street will be important to increase accessibility. Please see Section 5 for further analysis.

6.53 **3. Public transport** - the site is within walking distance of bus routes on Oldhall Street.

6.54 **4. Meeting local housing requirements** - the site is small in comparison to the opportunity areas. Nonetheless if the whole site is developed it will make a significant contribution to meeting housing need. A density of around 20 dph is recommended on the part of the site fronting Oldhall Street, reducing to around 15 dph in the larger eastern part of the site.

Creating a Place

6.55 **5. Character** - The area is small and closely related to Oldhall Street, which provides its only vehicle access. Therefore it is most appropriate for the area to follow the character of the **Oldhall Street** character area, namely:

- Vegetation to the roadside edge.
- Domestic or semi-detached two to three storey development on Oldhall Street, set back from the road within their own plots.
- Infill development of burgage-shaped plots behind the frontage, often at a slightly higher density including short terraces but also often at lower of one-to-two storeys.
- L-shaped groupings of buildings replicating the massing of farmhouses and subsidiary outbuildings or stables.
- Regularly-shaped green spaces surrounded on several sides by domestic scale housing.

- Use of slate roofs (typically steeply pitched), dormers, orange-red brick and white render/painted brick, black-and-white detailing.

6.56 **6. Working with site and its context** - The site falls slightly to the east and then rises again, though these changes are relatively gentle. Any development here should work with these existing contours. The fields are bounded by well maintained hedgerows and there are a number of mature trees along these edges. These hedgerows and trees should be retained and new development should fit within this structure.

6.57 The edge of the site adjoining development in Springfield needs to be carefully considered. Development should back onto this edge and provide an interface that maintains amenity and security. Obviously these houses will lose their views over the open fields. The relationship of the Oldhall Street frontage to the adjacent green space and surrounding development on Oldhall Street needs to be well designed. The site offers the potential to complete the enclosure of this space, which would be welcomed. This may involve partial loss of the hedgerow here.

6.58 Vegetation at the road edge restricts many views of the site but it is visible from points on Oldhall Land where there are breaks in the vegetation. It will be considerably more visible in winter. Development should present an attractive frontage to these edges, behind the retained hedgerows. In general though, development would be well

sited here and the site could be developed without impacting negatively on views.



View from Oldhall Street (the site is on the left of this hedgerow)

6.59 **7. Creating well defined streets and spaces** - As explained above, the agricultural form of the Oldhall Street area should form the dominant pattern of built form. This would mean a series of buildings clustered together in courtyard and L-shape arrangements, with smaller scale garages and extensions resembling the massing of agricultural outbuildings. Short terraces resembling the form of workers cottages would also be appropriate. Internal roads should take on the form of semi-private lanes, meandering between buildings to naturally promote low vehicle speeds. These lanes should nonetheless be overlooked and positively addressed by development, which will in places closely adjoin the street edge, and elsewhere

provide boundary walls to the street edge. In general the site should have a low density with a high amount of planting and open space around dwellings, to reflect the rural edge location.

6.60 **8-12. Street & Home** - Detailed design of streets and houses should follow best practice and the points set out in Building for Life 12. Reference to existing local architecture (as described in Section 4) should be made in a considered and contemporary manner. Use of appropriate colours, materials and correct proportions are more important than adding 'bolt-on' features that lack practical function or are inconsistent with the house design (i.e. fake chimneystacks or modern garage doors within mock-Georgian frontages etc). Following the existing relationship of buildings to streets, plan form of dwellings and roofscape provide good design cues.

7 Conclusions and Next Steps

7.1 This study has assessed and described the character of Malpas. It has included the identification of 10 character areas with 1, 2 and 10 being the most significant. It has included the identification of character areas; analysis of the characteristic built form of the village; townscape analysis of the village; and consideration of the surrounding landscape and context. It has also considered the current planning policy context for new development and the capacity of existing community infrastructure to support growth.

Community Consultation

7.2 Community consultation on a draft version of this report was undertaken in the form of a drop-in day at the Victoria Jubilee Hall in Malpas on Saturday 13 October 2012. A public exhibition showing key content from the Character Study was on display and members of the Parish Council and IBI Taylor Young were on hand to explain the study and answers questions. Attendees were encouraged to complete feedback forms to record their comments.

7.3 The event was well attended with 64 people visiting. 36 respondents (56%) completed a feedback form. Of those that completed a form 94% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that "the Character Study accurately reflects the character of Malpas". 75% respondents didn't feel that any aspects of the character of Malpas had been missed.

7.4 Other people provided comments, both on the form and verbally, which have been reflected in the final version of this report. Sample comments include the following:

"I like the way in which the real variety of architecture of Malpas is reflected."

"A good idea to have reference to cues for developments so that the character of the Village is maintained."

"This is a most timely study as we are challenged to look at the village infrastructure due to possible developments."

Next Steps

7.5 The outcome of this piece of work is that the character of Malpas has been understood and defined. Guidance has been included setting out how new development should respond positively to this character.

7.6 This document forms part of a wider neighbourhood planning exercise being undertaken by the Parish Council, and supported by CW&C. It has benefited from a successful consultation exercise and will carry additional weight in the planning process as a result. The study will assist CW&C development management team in ensuring that any new development contributes positively to local character.

7.7 This will particularly apply if any of the sample sites are the subject of planning applications for residential development. This will be

dependent on other CW&C policies, the emerging Local Plan and on the identification of appropriate sites to meet housing growth. Nonetheless, the character analysis within this document will be useful for housing development at any scale on any site within the village, including infill development.

