

Newbold Astbury- cum-Moreton

Design Guidelines & Design Codes

Draft report
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Quality information

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Contents

1	1. Introduction	5	3	3. Character study	37	5	5. Checklist
	1.1 Aims	5		3.1 Built form characteristics	38		
	1.2 Objectives	6		3.2 Character areas	40		
	1.3 Study area	6					
	1.4 Who should use the guide	8					
	1.5 Planning policy and design guidance	9					
	1.6 Site visits and engagement	14					
2	2. Neighbourhood Context	16	4	4. Design codes & guidance	51		
	2.1 Designations	16		4.1 Ensuring design quality	51		
	2.5 Topography and flood risk	20		4.2 Preserving rural identities	52		
	2.2 Landscape character	22		4.3 Development in the open countryside	54		
	2.3 Heritage assets	24		4.4 Conversions, extensions, and outbuildings	56		
	2.4 Buildings and open spaces	30		4.5 Preserving historic identities	58		
	2.6 Networks	32		4.6 Sustainable design and climate resilience	60		



Introduction

01

1. Introduction

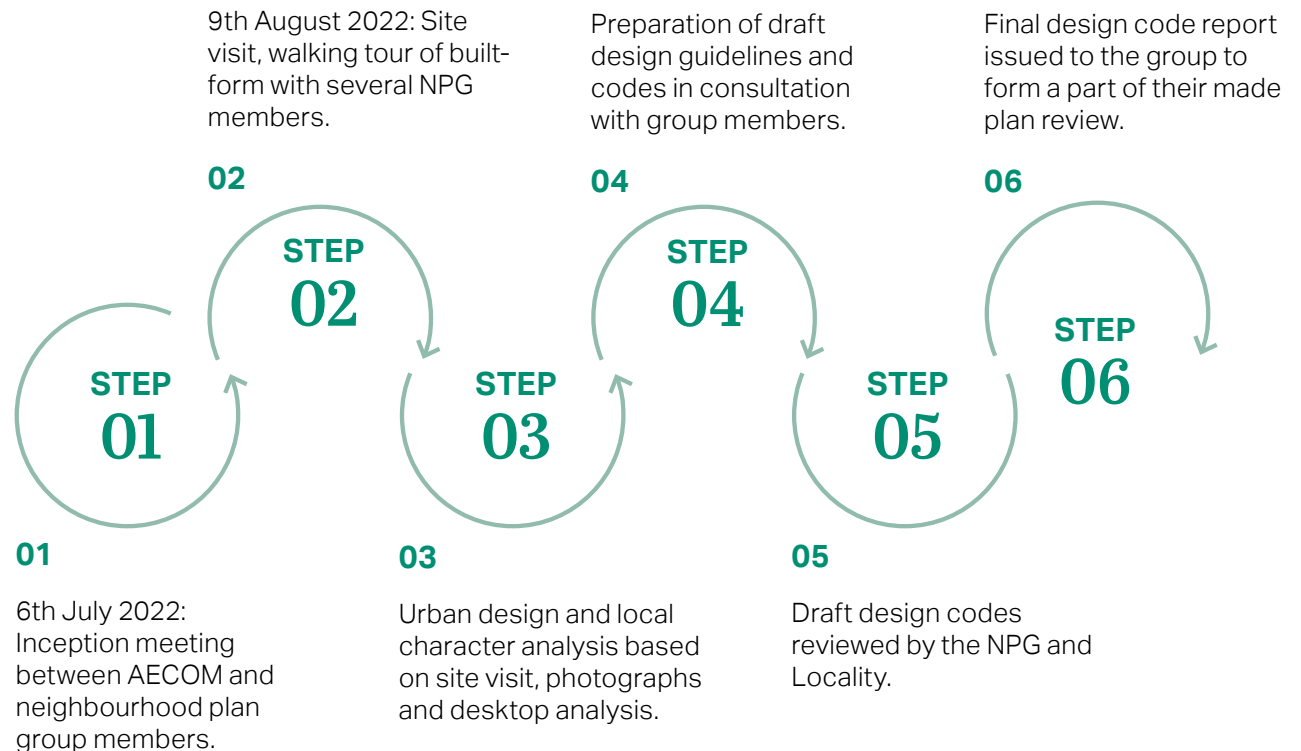
The Neighbourhood Plan Group (NPG) requested AECOM's support through Locality to establish a design guide with a number of design codes to influence the character and design of new development within the Neighbourhood area.

Design guidance will help unlock the development potential of the area by providing important design principles to describe key features and guide future development. The document focuses on the area's historic and natural environments, as these are defining features of the Neighbourhood area.

This design guide covers the whole plan area and is underpinned by a baseline assessment of the character across the Neighbourhood area, including that of the landscape and built form. Particular attention will be paid to the analysis of its natural and historic assets. As the neighbourhood area's primary settlement, the village of Astbury is central to the report's analysis and guidance. Similarly, development in the open countryside, including; isolated farmsteads, estates, and hamlets are analysed with guidance provided.

1.1 Aims

- To positively influence the character and design of new development within the Neighbourhood area.
- To identify the character and historic features of the Neighbourhood area.
- To produce detailed analysis of the Neighbourhood area's built form and landscape context.
- Provide design codes and guidance to support context driven and sustainable development.



1.2 Objectives

To successfully achieve the aims of the design code and guidance, several objectives were integral:

- Review of planning policy and landscape character studies covering the whole Neighbourhood area.
- Undertake a detailed character analysis of the area's built form, including identifying of its local vernacular and historic features.
- Categorising distinctive features based on elements identified in the character analysis.
- Implement design codes and guidance covering the Neighbourhood area.
- Delivering design codes and guidance focused on character, landscape, and sustainable development.

1.3 Study area

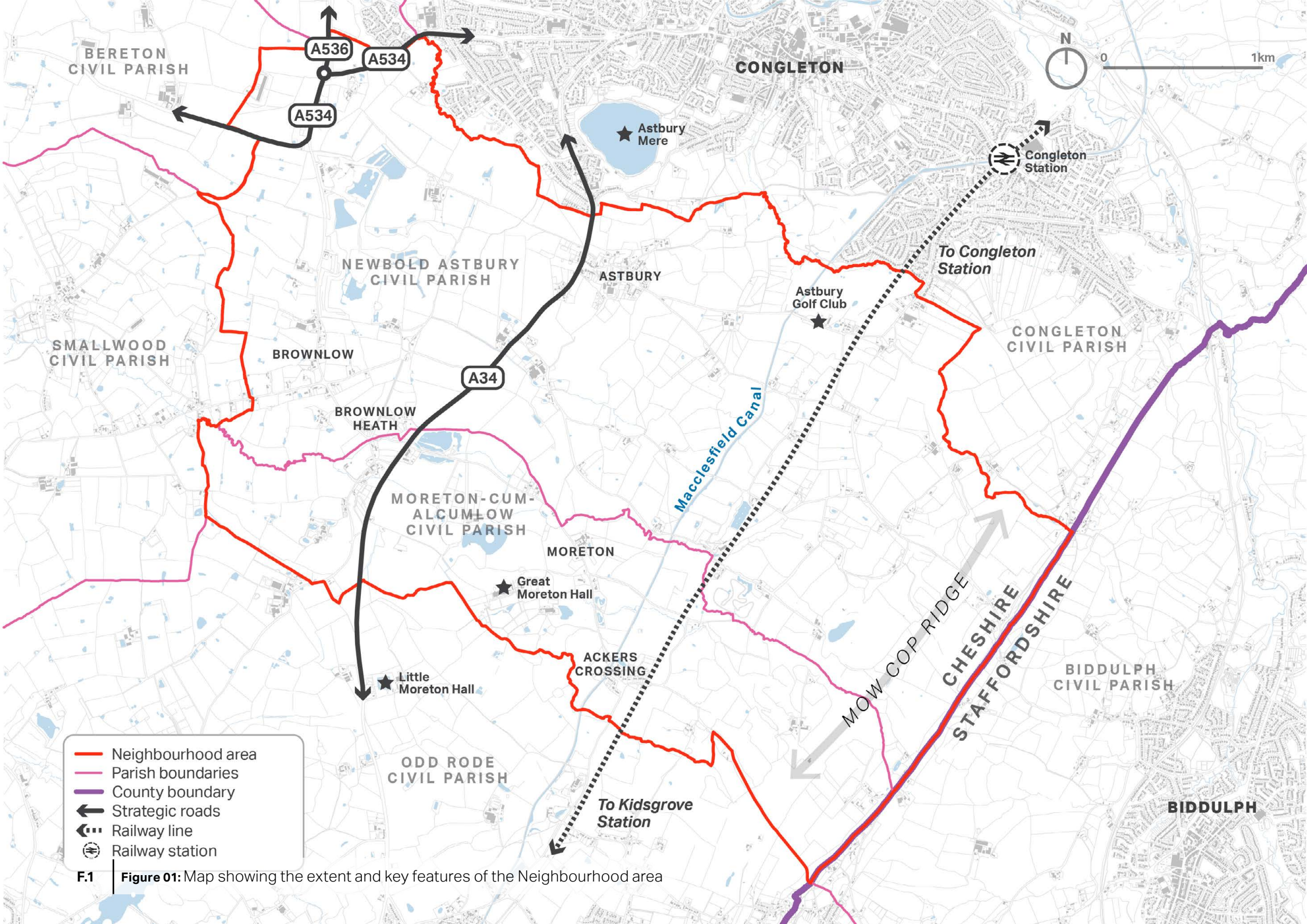
The Neighbourhood area is a combined area of two separate civil parishes: Newbold Astbury and Moreton-cum-Alcumlow under the single Parish Council of Newbold Astbury cum Moreton. The area is located in south-east Cheshire in Northwest England.

The area has a modest population of approximately 650 people. Astbury is the area's primary settlement, and is the only village in the Neighbourhood area. Services are limited to public houses, and several minor retail premises. The large market town of Congleton is in close proximity (approximately 1 mile north of Astbury) and provides key amenities to the Neighbourhood area's residents. A number of leisure and equestrian businesses are distributed throughout the area, making use of the open countryside. Other notable settlements include the rural hamlets of Brownlow, Brownlow Heath, Moreton, and Ackers Crossing.

The Macclesfield Canal flows through the area to the east and is well used by the community, particularly the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk which runs alongside the canal.

The area has a strong rural character, featuring a historic core, small settlements, farmhouses, a mere, open countryside, and rural communities sporadically distributed.

Despite the area's rural character, the A34 and railway line run through the Neighbourhood area. The A34 runs north-south to the west of the Neighbourhood area, providing connectivity to Congleton to the north and Kidsgrove to the south. The railway line stops at Congleton Station to the north and Kidsgrove Station to the south. There is no railway station in the Neighbourhood area itself.



F.1 **Figure 01:** Map showing the extent and key features of the Neighbourhood area

1.4 Who should use the guide

The design code and guidance should be a valuable tool in securing context driven, high-quality development in the Neighbourhood area. It will be used in different ways by different people in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table (see Table 01).

The document will be effective when used as part of a co-design process, actively involving key stakeholders, to establish local preferences and expectations of design quality. Through active participation and conversation, key stakeholders can use the guide to shape the key issues and ways to adequately respond to them in future development.

A design code and guidance alone will not automatically secure quality design outcomes but it will help to prevent poor outcomes by creating a rigorous process that establishes expectations. This document raises the standards and expectations for design quality.

Potential users	How they will use the design guidelines
Applicants, developers, & landowners	As a tool for community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the document as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy to help assess planning applications. The design codes and guidance should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application meetings.
Parish Council or Neighbourhood Plan Group	As a tool to help structure comments on planning applications, ensuring the design codes and guidelines are complied with.
Community groups & Local Residents	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

Table 01: Potential users

1.5 Planning policy and design guidance

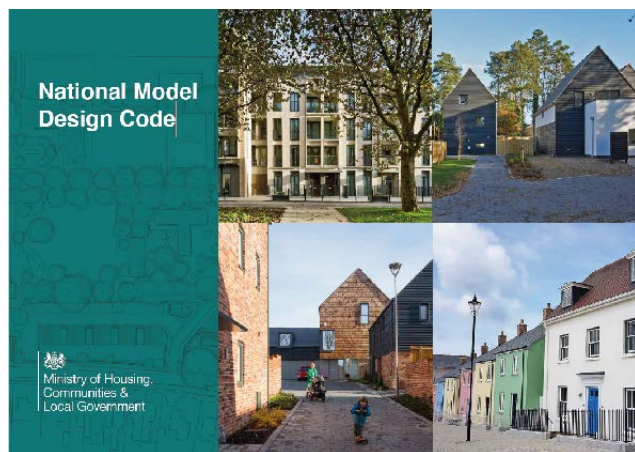
Several national and local planning policy and guidance documents were referred to in the development of this document. Most notably the National Design Guide and its 10 Characteristics of a Well-designed Place and Homes England's adoption of Building for a Healthy Life (formerly Building for Life) helped to frame the requirements of good design for high quality places.

1.5.1 National Planning Policy & Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the Government's overarching economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. It is a high-level document that attempts to make good design pivotal and to put communities at the heart of planning. The policies within the NPPF apply to the preparation of Local and Neighbourhood Plan areas, and act as a framework against which decisions are made on planning applications.

The NPPF states that a key objective of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The parts of the NPPF which are of relevance to this Design Code are:

- Part 2: Achieving Sustainable Development
- Part 12: Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Part 13: Protecting Green Belt Land
- Part 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- Part 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment



2021 - National Model Design Code DLUHC

This report provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide:

Context, Identity, Built Form, Movement, Nature, Public Spaces, Uses, Homes & Buildings, Resources and Lifespan.

This guide should be used as an overarching reference for new development where topics are not covered in local guidance.



2020 - Building for a Healthy Life Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the new name for Building for Life, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The new name reflects the key role that the built environment has in promoting wellbeing.




The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed schemes, as well as useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

1.5.2 National Design Guide (2019) & National Model Design Code (2021)

These companion documents set out characteristics of well-designed places. They support the ambitions of the NPPF to utilise the planning and development process in the creation of high-quality places. The National Design Guide states that 'specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set at the local level'. The guides are expected to be used by local authorities, applicants and local communities to establish further design codes (such as this) and guides that can deliver this in line with local preferences.

1.5.3 Local Planning Policy & Guidance

The Neighbourhood area is made up of twin parishes Newbold Astbury and Moreton-cum-Alcumlow. The area is under the jurisdiction of two tiers of local government: Cheshire East Council and Newbold Astbury-cum-Moreton Parish Council. The following planning documents were reviewed to understand the policy context. These include key documents such as the district's Local Plan, Conservation Area (CA) Appraisals, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), and its Landscape Character Assessment (LCA¹).

	Cheshire East wide
	Supplementary Planning Documents
	Neighbourhood area specific

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010 - 2030	July 2017
Site Allocations & Development Policies Document	December 2022
Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment	May 2018
Cheshire East Design Guide SPD	May 2017
Local List of Historic Buildings SPD	October 2010
Affordable Housing & Mixed Communities SPD	April 2006
Sustainable Development SPD	April 2005
Macclesfield Canal CA Appraisal	January 2009
Astbury CA Appraisal	2008

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010 - 2030

This document supports the Council's priority of employment-led growth. The Local Plan Strategy sets out the overall vision and planning strategy for development and outlines the necessary policies to ensure new development achieves the social, environmental, and economic needs of the area. The plan has been developed to support the generation of jobs focused around key growth areas such as Crewe High Growth City, the M6 Corridor, and the North Cheshire Science Corridor.

Site Allocations & Development Policies Document

The draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) will form part of the Council's local plan, providing further detailed planning policies and site allocations to support the strategic policies and sites contained in the LPS. The document includes several policies relevant to this design code report including:

- *Policy PG 12 Green Belt and safeguarded land boundaries*
- *Policy PG 13 Strategic green gaps boundaries*
- *Policy GEN 1 Design principles*
- *Policy HER 1 Heritage assets*
- *Policy HER 3 Conservation areas*
- *Policy RUR 1 New buildings for agriculture and forestry*
- *Policy RUR 2 Farm diversification*
- *Policy RUR 7 Equestrian development outside of settlement boundaries*
- *Policy HOU 9 Extensions and alterations*
- *Policy HOU 13 Housing delivery*

Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment

Providing a description of the landscape character and necessary management strategy, the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA¹) provides an evidence base to inform policies and proposals in the area. The document categorises different landscape types based on key characteristics such as topography, land use, field pattern, and views.

Cheshire East Design Guide SPD

This document provides borough specific residential design guidance with a focus on larger scale housing proposals. The document's aim is to influence the development process from its early stages, in ensuring that high quality residential development is achieved across the borough. The guide supports Cheshire East to respond to residential design that does not meet the standards required by the Authority. The document is in two volumes with the first setting out the unique characteristics of Cheshire East and how developers and designers should respond to such. Volume two provides specific guidance on aspects of residential design in making attractive proposals that will positively impact its surroundings.

Local List of Historic Buildings SPD

This document encourages the retention and conservation of historically significant buildings that are not nationally listed. Cheshire East has compiled the list of buildings based on their reflection of local distinctiveness, identity, and historic value. The list includes 3 Local listings within Moreton-cum-Alcumlow and 6 within Newbold Astbury and include historic cottages, dwellings, and agricultural buildings.

Affordable Housing & Mixed Communities SPD

Originally adopted by the former Congleton Borough Council, the document provides guidance on all forms of affordable housing. It sets out a definition of affordable housing as well as the specific site requirements and development considerations for development. The document also stipulates the importance of mixed and balanced communities in response to Congleton's need to rebalance its housing provision (both market and social) by ensuring it can offer a variety of house types and tenures for its growing and diverse population.

Sustainable Development SPD

This document provides guidance on achieving sustainable development throughout Cheshire East. It offers guidance on protecting environmental assets, sustainable design and layout, environmental protection and water issues, and advice on the use of sustainable materials and site practices.

Note: *The document is not recent. Sustainable development guidance may be better sourced from more recent documents.*

Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area Appraisal

Astbury Conservation Area Appraisal

There are two CAs in the Neighbourhood area: the Macclesfield Canal and Astbury. Each appraisal document outlines the key characteristics of the area along with a rationale for its designation.

They also include management proposals and general guidance on how each area's historic assets can be conserved and/or enhanced.

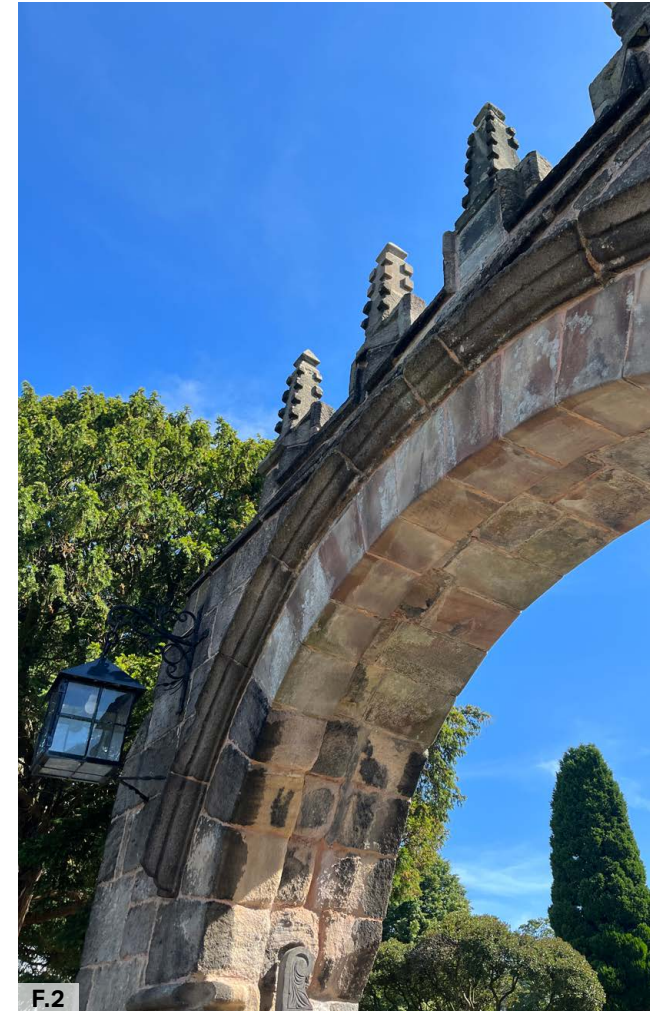


Figure 02: Grade II Listed gateway to churchyard of St Mary's Church in Astbury village

1.6 Site visits and engagement

A meeting in the village of Astbury took place on 9th August 2022 between local experts, community members, planning consultants and urban design consultants. This meeting allowed the external consultants to talk through the process of the study, and to listed to the needs and expectations of the Neighbourhood Plan Group. This was followed by a walking tour of Astbury and a driving tour of the wider Neighbourhood area. This provided the opportunity to appraise local character and key features informing its sense of place.

The walking tours and conversations in these initial meetings outlined the area's key issues and opportunities. They helped create the character areas and to establish topics that eventually became the code items in this document. Topics in these meetings included the heritage and historic built and natural environments, local character, landscape, views, open countryside, as well as the expectations for new or existing development.



Figure 03: Newbold Astbury-cum-Moreton Parish Council noticeboard outside Astbury Village Hall



Neighbourhood Context

02

2. Neighbourhood Context

This section presents analysis for the whole of the Neighbourhood area, regarding its settlement patterns, local character, heritage, landscape and views, movement systems, and open countryside.

2.1 Designations

The following designations are of importance when considering development constraints within the Neighbourhood area. Many of the designations have been formalised to create a degree of protection for areas with historical, environmental, geological, and social importance.

2.1.1 Sites of Special Scientific Interest

There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the Neighbourhood area: Gannister Quarry and Roe Park Woods. Gannister Quarry is a 4-acre site designated for its geological interest. Roe Park Woods is a 85.5-acre site designated for biological importance.

When proposing development nearby to SSSIs, Cheshire East Council will consult Natural England. Consultations should be sent to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk. If you are a developer, consultant or member of the public preparing to submit a planning application.

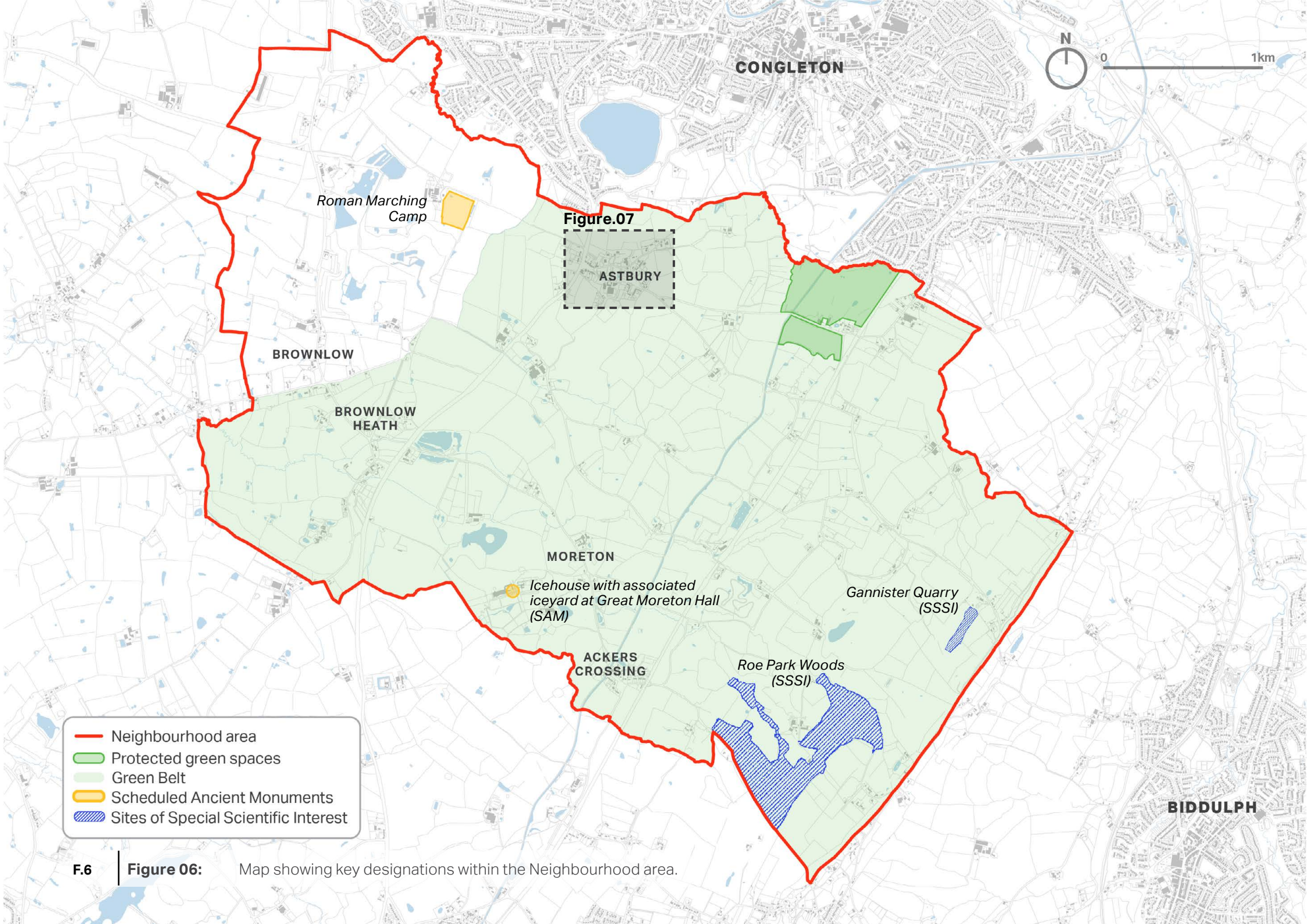
2.1.2 Green Belt

A majority of the Neighbourhood area is covered by Green Belt, including Astbury, Brownlow Heath, Brownlow, Moreton, and Ackers Crossing. Refer to Policy PG 3 (Green Belt) in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy document for further details.



Figure 04: Views of the Green Belt surrounding Astbury from School Lane

Figure 05: The open cut of Gannister Quarry (SSSI) now flooded





- Neighbourhood area
- Infill Boundary Line
- Protected green spaces
- Green Belt
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments

F.7 | **Figure 07:** Map showing key designations in Astbury village.



2.1.3 Infill Boundary Line

There is a single village infill boundary designation surrounding the urban extent of Astbury. The designation can be found under Cheshire East SADPD's Policy PG 10 (Infill villages). Infill villages have a defined village infill boundary but are within the open countryside and do not have formal settlement boundaries.

There are no other infill village boundaries, as well as any settlement boundaries, within the Neighbourhood area. This reinforces the area's green and open character and is indicative of a lack of development.

2.1.4 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

There are four Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) in the Neighbourhood area. Two are in St Mary's churchyard including a canopied tomb and standing cross. Another SAM can be found off Bent Lane (adjacent Bent Farm) to the west of Astbury. This monument is the largest of the four and is the location of an ancient Roman camp.

The fourth SAM is not publicly accessible as it is within the privately-owned Great Moreton Hall estate. The monument is an icehouse with an associated iceyard.

2.1.5 Protected green spaces

There are five protected open spaces within the Neighbourhood area, with four within or surrounding Astbury, and the fifth encompassing the nearby Astbury Golf Course.

The designation can be found under Cheshire East SADPD's Policy REC 1 (Green/open space protection). Development is not permitted within these areas due to their recreational and amenity value to surrounding communities.



Figure 08: Standing cross adjacent St Mary's - both Grade II Listed and Scheduled Ancient Monument



Figure 09: Astbury Green - a protected open space in the centre of Astbury village

2.5 Topography and flood risk

2.5.1 Topography

The Neighbourhood area's landform rises gently from west to east before rising sharply up to the Mow Cop Ridge, forming much of its eastern boundary, separating Cheshire from the neighbouring Staffordshire. The highest point in the area is approximately 315m. Extensive views of the Cheshire Plains can be enjoyed from the ridge (at Cheshire View), with several long-distance landmarks such as Jodrell Bank and Fiddler's Ferry Power Station.

By contrast, the lowest point in the area is in north of Brownlow, where several waterbodies act as drainage pools from the surrounding inclined landform.

2.5.2 Flood risk

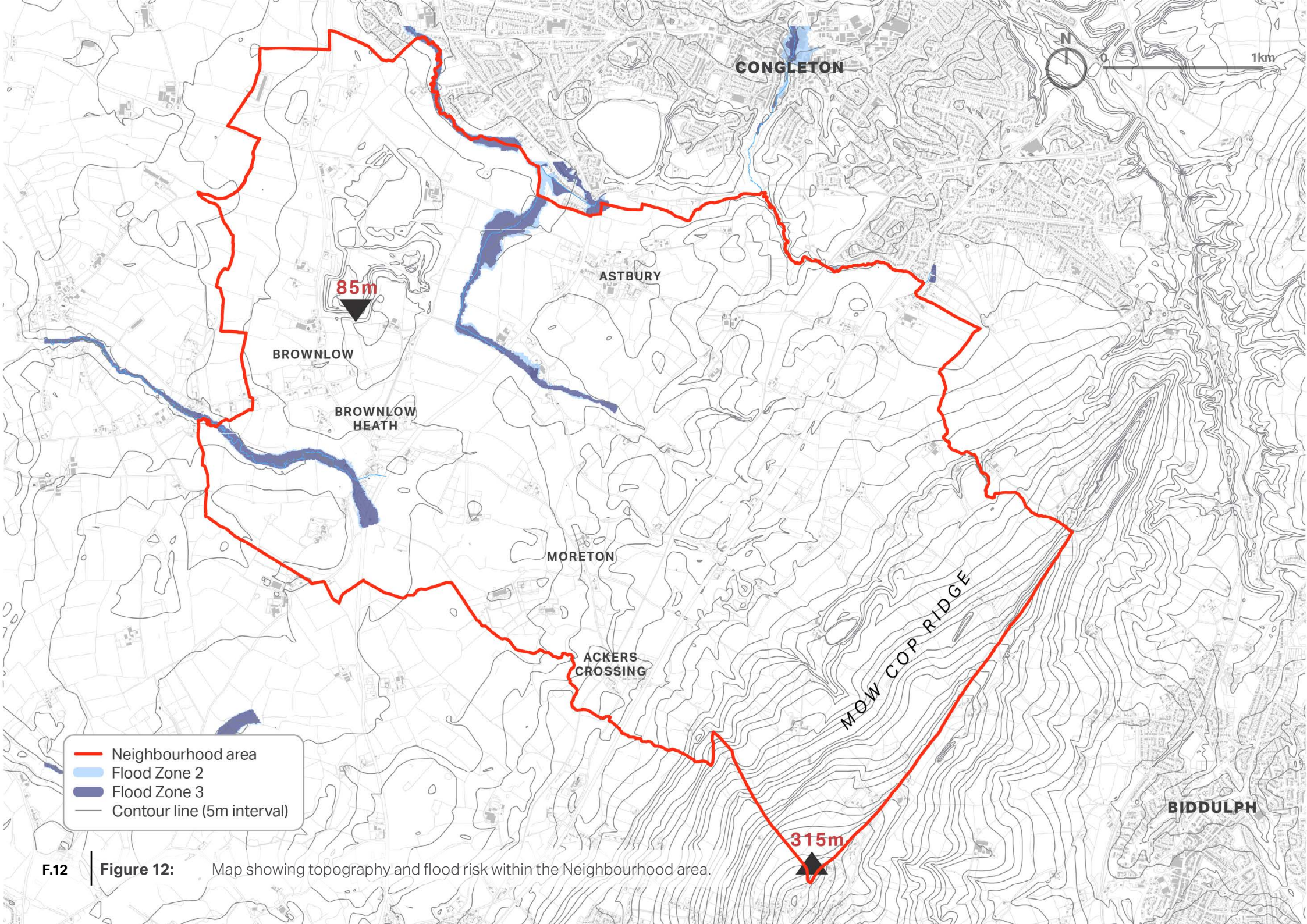
The relationship between landform and flood is evident in the location of flood zone designations outlined by the Environment Agency. Both Flood Zones 2 and 3 can be found to the west of Astbury, where topography is at its lowest.

The designations form two linear fingers which run parallel to two minor watercourses: Dairy Brook in the north and an unnamed stream to the west. Both waterbodies flow clear of major development, with only several isolated buildings in the vicinity of either flood zone designation. Overall, the Neighbourhood area is largely unaffected by major flooding due to the lack of any significant watercourses.

Figure 10: Cheshire View vantage point with trigonometrical point from upon the Mow Cop Ridge

Figure 11: Panoramic views of the Cheshire Plains from Congleton Road upon the Mow Cop Ridge





F.12 | **Figure 12:** Map showing topography and flood risk within the Neighbourhood area.

2.2 Landscape character

The area's rural character is characterised by its landscape, and its small-scale development. The idyllic Cheshire landscape includes fields, watercourses, native species and woodlands, hedgerows, boundary treatments, and wildlife create a sense of place and are a dominant feature, which must be integral to future development.

There are three Landscape Character Types (LCT) identified by the Cheshire East LCA¹, each with their component Landscape Character Areas (LCA²) that fall within the area. The LCAs provide a clear understanding of the area's identity and establish what is rooted in the place, e.g. local materials. It is important for all future development to consider the landscape character of the area and to inform development within the neighbourhood area's varying LCTs and LCA²s.

2.2.1 Lower Wooded Farmland (LCT 7) - Brereton Heath (LCA² 7e)

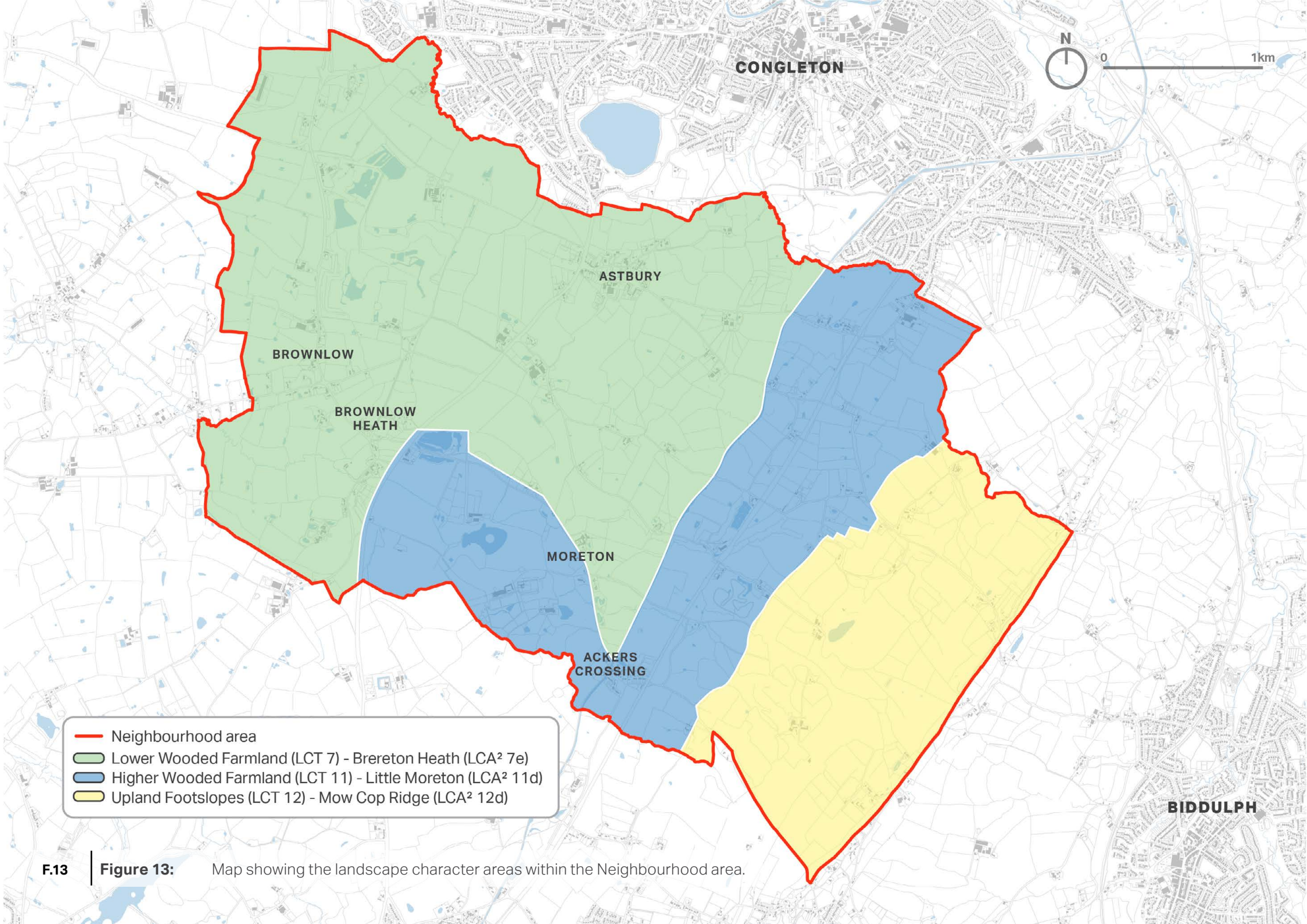
The Brereton Heath LCA² is the largest landscape type in the Neighbourhood area, covering Astbury, Brownlow, and Brownlow Heath. The area is characterised by medium density, a rural character despite proximity to Congleton, high density coniferous and deciduous woodland, and a mostly low-lying and gently rolling topography.

2.2.2 Higher Wooded Farmland (LCT 11) - Little Moreton (LCA² 11d)

The Little Moreton LCA² is part of the Higher Wooded Farmland LCT and covers the area of land to the east and south east of the Neighbourhood area. The LCA² follows the land surrounding the railway line as well as the Great Moreton Hall estate. The landscape is characterised by gently rolling and undulating landform, strong rural character, deciduous woodland, and traditional pasture for dairy farming but with an increasing arable cultivation for silage or feed crops (i.e. cereals and maize).

2.2.3 Upland Footslopes (LCT 12) - Mow Cop Ridge (LCA² 12d)

This landscape type is characterised by steep slopes and wooded stream valleys. The Mow Cop Ridge LCA² runs along the eastern edge of the Neighbourhood area. The LCA² is identifiable by its linear ridge, ancient deciduous woodland, and its minor valleys and waterways. The ridge is the highest point in the area making it a local landmark where panoramic views of Cheshire, and beyond. This LCA² contrasts with the other LCA²s due to the stark differences in topography, infrastructure, and overall development.



F.13 | **Figure 13:** Map showing the landscape character areas within the Neighbourhood area.

2.3 Heritage assets

The Neighbourhood area has numerous buildings, structures, and land of significant historic importance, which is reflected by the number of designations including: two conservation areas, four Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM), thirty-nine Listed buildings, and nine Locally Listed buildings.

These assets are a defining feature of the Neighbourhood area as they provide local identity, distinctiveness, as well as the sense of place. They contribute significantly to the area's placemaking capability and are a strong foundation for further enhancement through the conservation of both its built and landscape heritage.

2.3.1 Listed buildings

The Neighbourhood area's thirty-nine Listed buildings (or structures) range from Grade I to Grade II Listings. This includes the Grade I Listed St Mary's Church in Astbury, five Grade II* Listings, and thirty-three Grade II Listings.

2.3.2 Locally Listed buildings

Cheshire East Council's Local List of Historic Buildings SPD, identifies nine Locally Listed buildings within the Neighbourhood area which are mostly historic cottages and dwellings. Three of these are located across Moreton-cum-Alcumlow, with the remaining in Newbold Astbury.

2.3.3 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM)

There are four Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) in the Neighbourhood area including: the Roman camp at Bent Farm, the icehouse with associated iceyard at Great Moreton Hall, a standing cross in St Mary's churchyard, and a canopied tomb also within the churchyard.

2.3.4 Conservation Areas (CA)

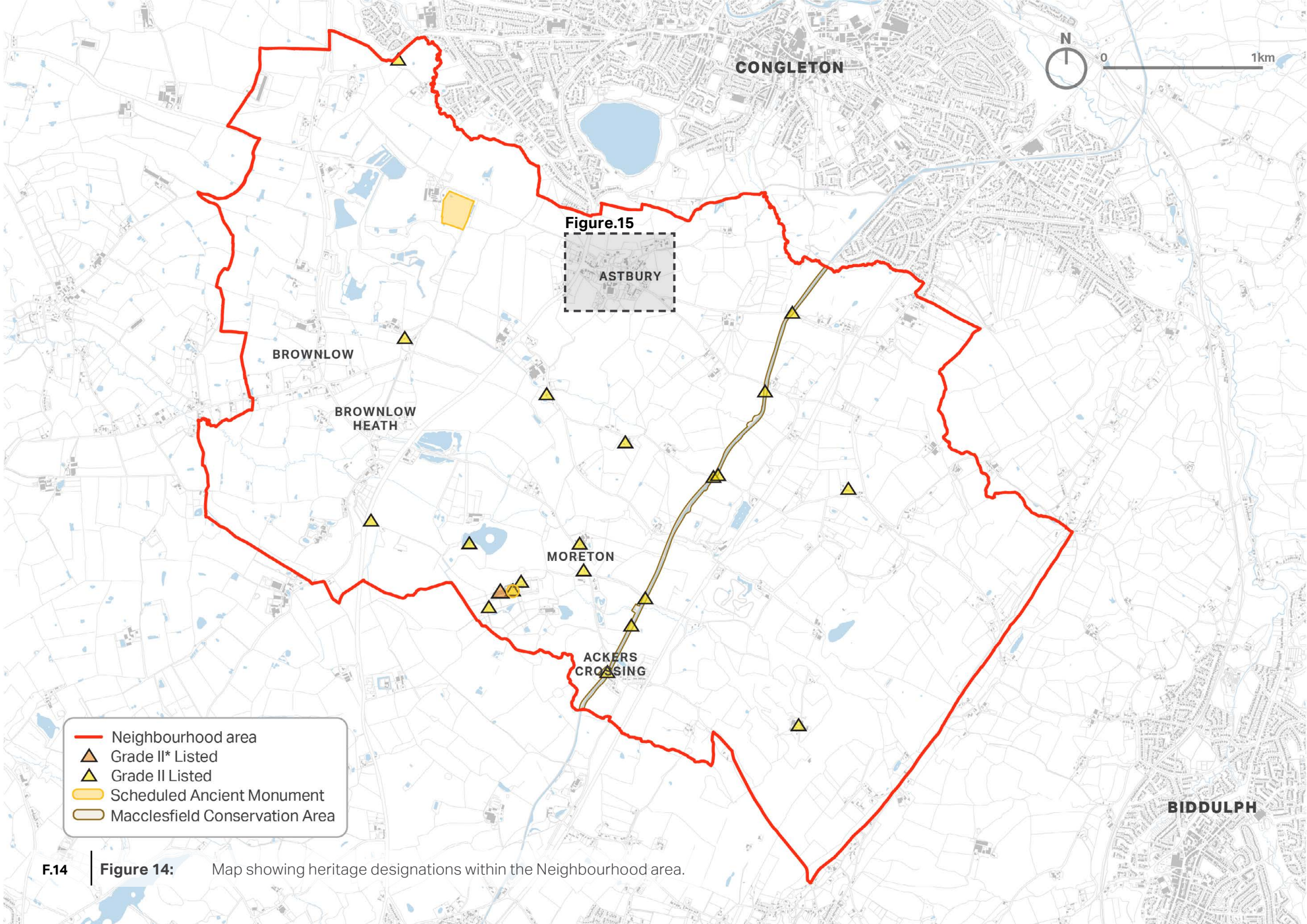
The Astbury Conservation Area (CA) and Macclesfield Canal CA are designated due to the historic significance of the heritage assets found within them, each host a number of Listed buildings and structures. Astbury CA covers most of Astbury village,

encompassing its historic core where there is the Grade I Listed St Mary's Church as well as several historic cottages. The Macclesfield Canal CA centres around the Victorian waterway itself and its associated infrastructure such as bridges, a milestone, and an aqueduct.

2.3.5 Historically significant buildings

As well as the formally designated heritage assets mentioned, the Neighbourhood Group have identified seven historically significant buildings including:

- Tanglewood (Dodds Lane)
- Tenement Farm (Fence Lane)
- Lesser Reeves Farm (Wall Hill Lane)
- Brownlow Heath Farm (Childs Lane)
- Brookhouse Farm (Puddle Bank Lane)
- Whitethorn Farm (Watery Lane)
- Limekilns, Astbury Sidings (Oak Lane)



- Neighbourhood area
- ▲ Grade II* Listed
- ▲ Grade II Listed
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Macclesfield Conservation Area

F.14 | **Figure 14:** Map showing heritage designations within the Neighbourhood area.





F.16



F.17



F.18



F.19

Figure 16: The looming spire of the Grade I Listed St Mary's Church in Astbury

Figure 17: Grade II Listed Black and White Cottages fronting Peel Lane

Figure 18: Grade II Listed (and Scheduled Ancient Monument) canopied tomb in St Mary's churchyard

Figure 19: View of the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area taken from the Grade II Listed Canal Bridge No.85



Figure 20: View to the centre of Astbury Conservation Area with Astbury Green taking centre place

Figure 21: Grade II Listed East Lodge at the entrance to the private driveway of Great Moreton Hall

Figure 22: Grade II Listed Home Farmhouse fronting New Road in Moreton

Figure 23: Grade II Listed Sycamore House (left) and Greenbank (middle)

2.3.6 Historic landscape character

According to the Historic Landscape Character (HLC) report of Cheshire, the Neighbourhood falls within Area J, characterised by an undulating landscape of glacial tills and glaciofluvial deposits slowly rising to the east to meet sandstones and gritstones of the Peak fringe.

A sizable area of lacustrine deposits are located between Congleton and Alsager with other small areas scattered over the area, including within the Neighbourhood area.

Settlements are generally dispersed and small. The Neighbourhood area's rural character reflects this, with only several very small settlements found throughout.

Astbury limeworks

The HLC report cites the local quarrying industry. The discovery of limestone at Astbury enabled a small-scale domestic lime industry to develop, providing supplies to much of Cheshire. A limestone quarry and several lime kilns were located just outside of Astbury, close to Baytree Farm, during the 19th century and into the early 20th century before its closure in the 1920s.

As well as using local limestone, several of the kilns utilised limestone imported from neighbouring Derbyshire and Wales. Despite the industrial activity in the kilns and quarry, it was never a major industry for the area.

The remaining structures of Astbury's limeworks (or Astbury Sidings) comprise a rare survival of the kilns, offices, a warehouse, and weighbridge of a small rural limeworks of the 19th century. It once had a functioning drainage system but the quarry has since overflowed and filled with water.



Figure 24: The last remaining lime kiln of Astbury Sidings

Figure 25: Extract of 1908 Ordnance Survey map showing the Astbury limeworks

2.4 Buildings and open spaces

In the diagram buildings are represented in black with open space shown as white. This provides a diagrammatic understanding of the relationship between buildings and space.

Built form is dispersed in small clusters or isolated as singular buildings separated by vast open space. Each settlement has an informal layout, often radiating from intersections or main roads with buildings often are oriented in a range of angles due to the irregularity of routes and plot sizes.

Many of the buildings in the neighbourhood area are large residential properties, mainly a farms with associated buildings such as farmhouses, barns, storage sheds, and livestock shelters. Several farmhouses have been converted and extended into dwellings, as well as businesses, notably Alcumlow Hall Farm and Glebe Farm.

There are several large detached dwellings in extensive plots, both conversions and new builds. The most significant is the Grade II* Listed Great Moreton Hall.

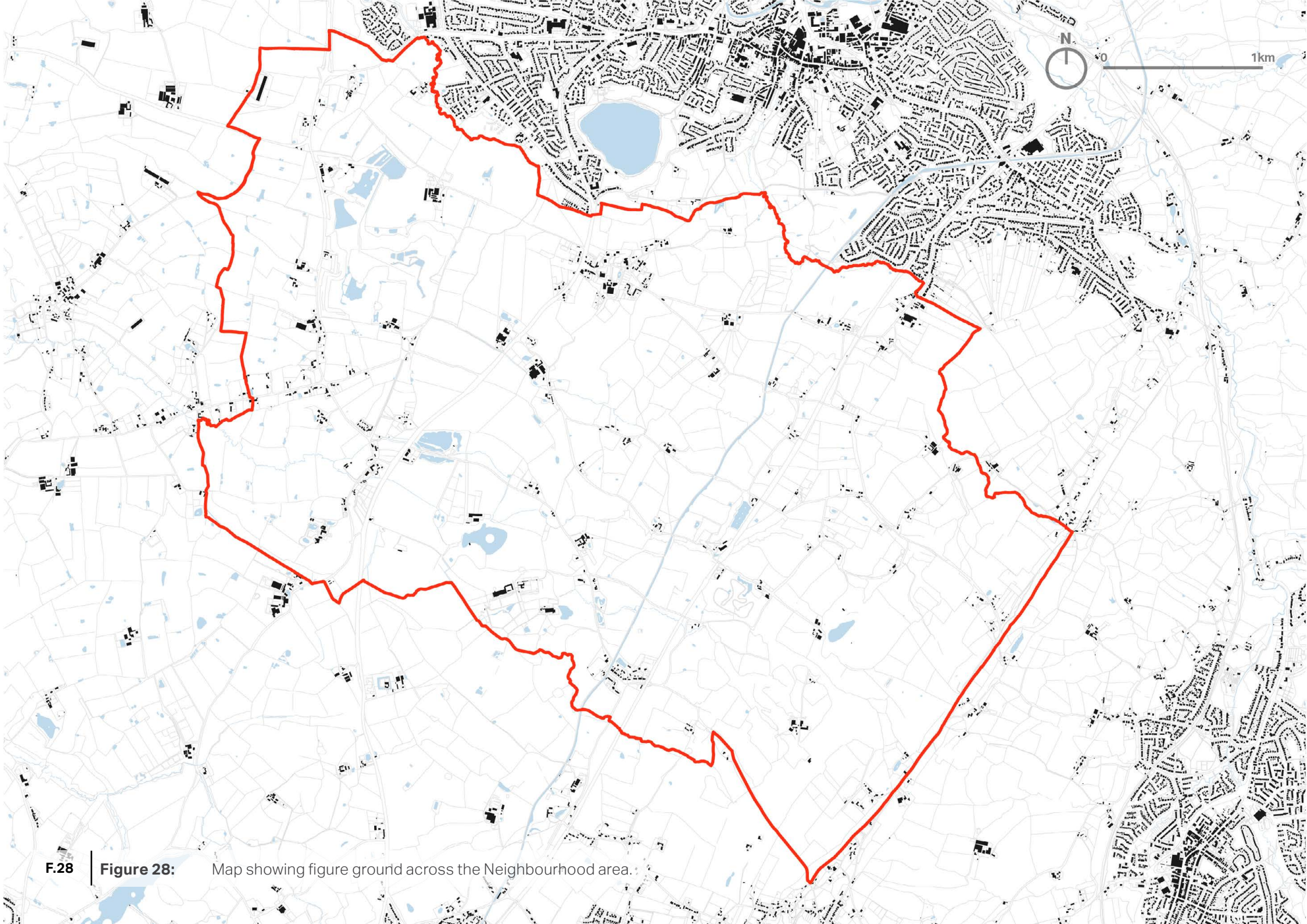
The figure-ground diagram provides a clear indication of the difference between the neighbourhood area's built form and countryside, which starkly contrasts with the settlement patterns and scale of the neighbouring Congleton (north) and Biddulph (east). In these more urban areas street patterns and built form are formally arranged within blocks and much compact.



Figure 26: Sign for Alcumlow Hall Farm with its cluster of hospitality buildings in the background



Figure 27: Typical agricultural cluster of barns and storage sheds, as well as a silo



2.6 Networks

Movement in the Neighbourhood area are reflective of its defining rural and green character. Open unspoilt landscape is in abundance with only a small number of routes providing connectivity between its sparsely distributed built form.

With development coverage and population size significantly low in comparison to neighbouring areas such as Congleton and Biddulph, vehicular routes and services are limited. Most roads provide connectivity to isolated developments as well as providing localised connectivity between larger settlements outside of the Neighbourhood area, principally Congleton and Biddulph, as well as a handful of small rural villages and hamlets.

2.6.1 Vehicular network

The area's vehicular network is limited and contrasts to the extensive network of roads found in neighbouring Congleton. As development in Congleton has extended towards Astbury, greater pressure has been applied on the A34. The area is host to several strategic roads; the A536, A534, and the A34. The A34 dominates the area's vehicular network with it being one of the longest, widest, and busiest routes. It runs from the A33 and M3 in Winchester, to the A6 and A6042 in Salford, and is therefore a long-distance route providing strategic connectivity both regionally and nationally. It bisects the area connecting to Congleton in the north and Kids Grove in the south.

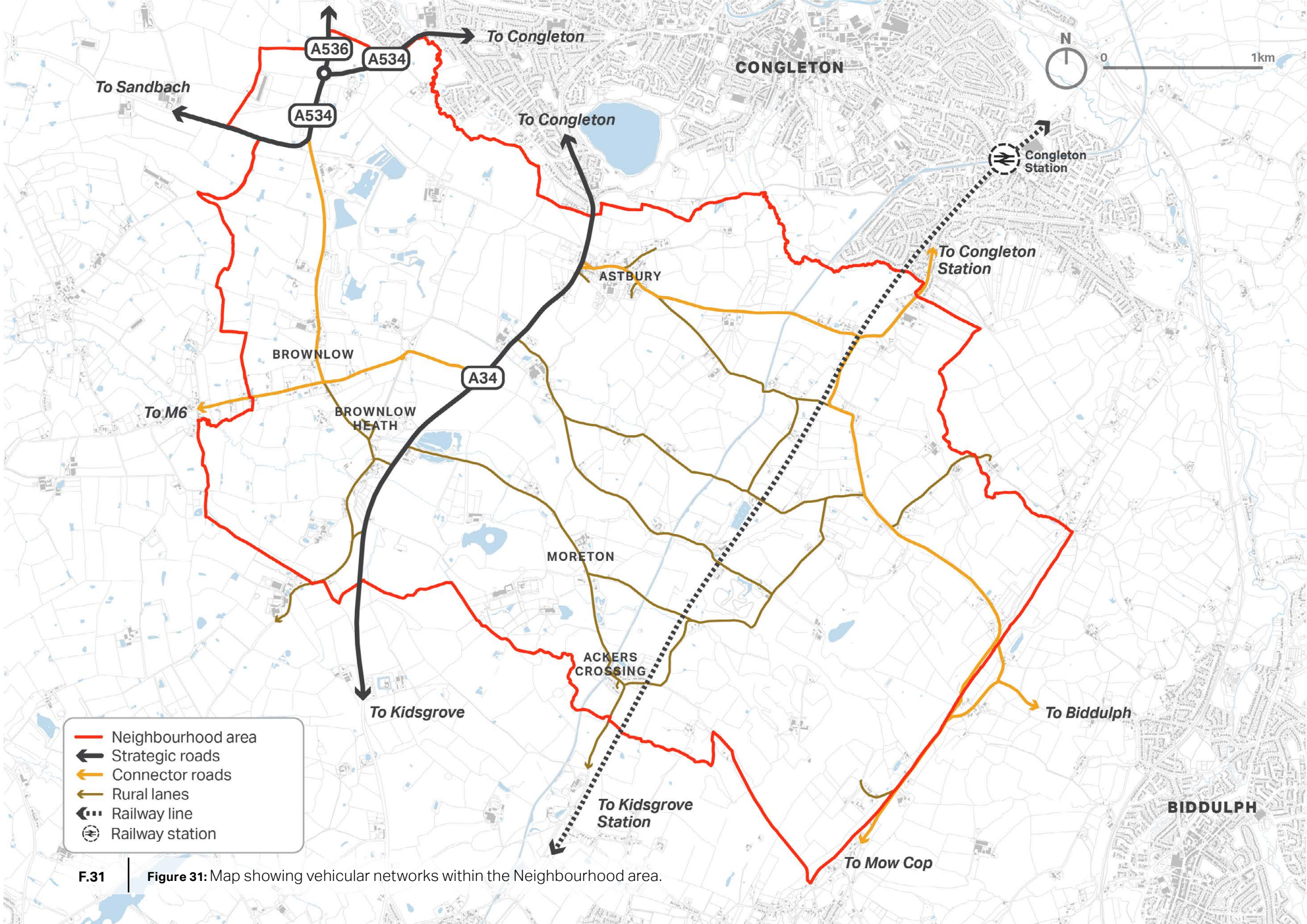
There are also several connector roads which provide more localised connectivity to nearby villages and towns. Finally, there are rural lanes. These lanes have an informal character and are often single-track, bounded by hedgerow/planting, and provide connectivity to the most isolated places in the Neighbourhood area, such as farms, small hamlets, and stand-alone dwellings.



Figure 29: Strategic road - Congleton Road (A34)



Figure 30: Rural lane - New Road



2.6.2 Non-vehicular network

The abundance of open space provides the area with an attractive landscape for walking and cycling.

Public Rights of Way

The Neighbourhood area has a network of Public Rights of Way (PROW), as well as a popular cycle route. Most of the PROW are footpaths along with several bridleways distributed across the Neighbourhood area. Notable pedestrian routes include the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk, the South Cheshire Way, and the Gritstone Trail. The Cheshire Ring Canal Walk runs parallel to the Macclesfield Canal, the South Cheshire Way runs from Moreton and through Roe Park and the Hanging Wood, and the Gritstone Trail runs along the Mow Cop Ridge.

They also provide strong links to several landscape attractions (e.g. the Mow Cop Ridge and Macclesfield Canal), distributed throughout the open countryside, as well as connecting to settlements both within and outside of the Neighbourhood area.

Most notably, several of the footpaths to the north provide direct pedestrian links to the large market town of Congleton.

Cycling

As well as a popular walking spot, cyclists readily pass through the area from a route stretching along Child's Lane via Brownlow and the length of the A34, which extends north towards Congleton.

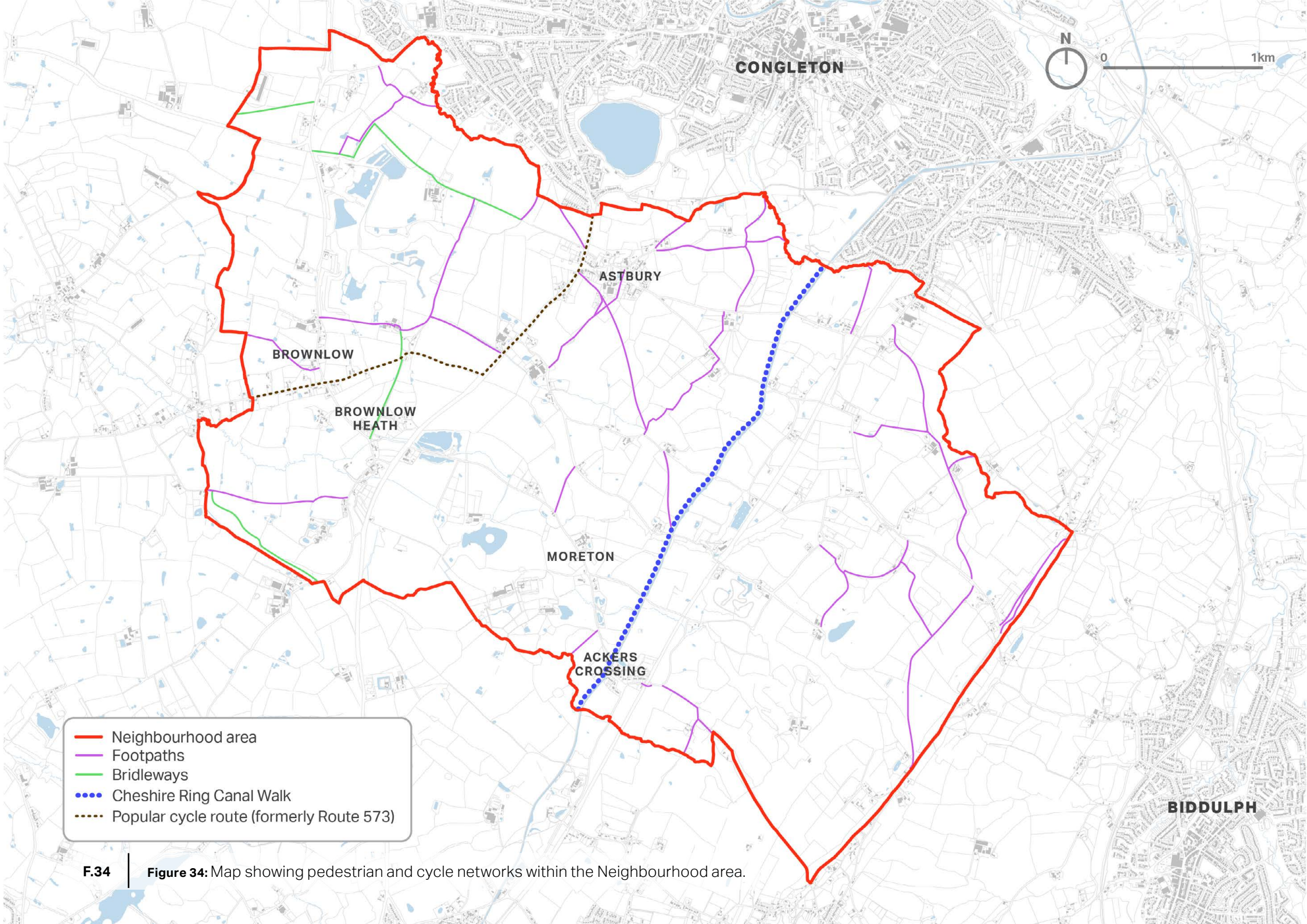
While this route is not an official cycle route recognised as part of the National Cycle Network, it once formed part of Route 573, which remains an active route running to the north and south of the Neighbourhood area.

The route was reclassified due to high motor traffic speeds and vehicular volume along the A34.

Figure 32: Footpath (Priesty Trail) leading from end of School Lane in the direction of Congleton

Figure 33: The Cheshire Ring Canal Walk running parallel to the Macclesfield Canal





- Neighbourhood area
- Footpaths
- Bridleways
- Cheshire Ring Canal Walk
- Popular cycle route (formerly Route 573)



Character study

03

HORSE SHOE

3. Character study

This section identifies Character Areas. These were informed by the analysis of existing built form, landscape and key infrastructure.

Character Areas identify local character, distinctiveness, and the different types of development in the area. Character Areas will be used to understand how future development responds to its immediate and wider contexts.

The Character Areas describe the key features relating to landscape setting and the detailed pattern of settlement growth. They are supported by images of good design or appealing contexts. These features act as a guide to future development.

Each Character Area may require a subtly different design response, in-keeping with its distinctive local context, to appropriately develop within an existing villagescape or meet future challenges regarding sustainability and biodiversity.

The formation of the areas was based on site visits, walking tours, photographic studies, policy reviews, and baseline analysis. This analysis was informed by the local people and Neighbourhood plan members.



Figure 35: The neo-gothic architecture of School House in Astbury, School Lane



Figure 36: Small cluster of post-war era dwellings in Astbury, Peel Drive

Built form characteristics

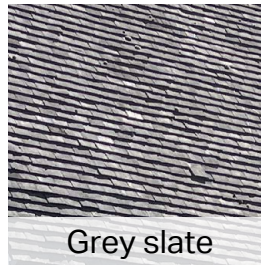
3.1 Built form characteristics

The neighbourhood area is characterised by its built form, whether this is its historic buildings or its more recent residential development.

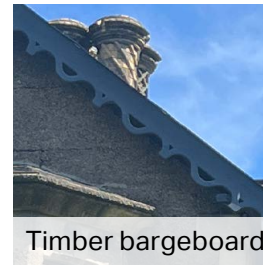
There is a variety of architectural styles and features, which are presented here. The photographs are a visual glossary of the local vernacular and overall built character. As they are illustrative of local character and place distinctiveness, they are best practice examples.

Proposals coming forward within the area should cross reference these features with the design codes (Section 4) to guide the choice of materials, detailing, scale, and overall design of individual buildings.

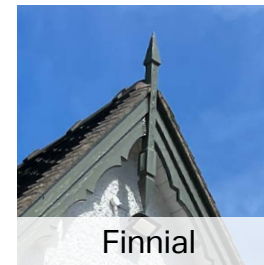
Roofs



Grey slate



Timber bargeboard

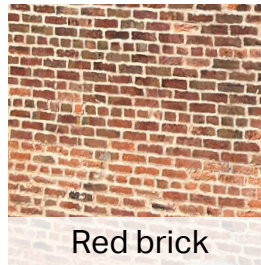


Finnial

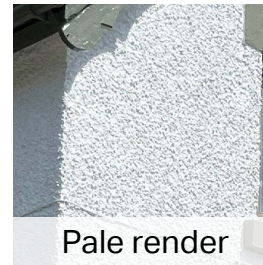


Pitched gable

Façades



Red brick



Pale render



Name plaques

Boundary treatments



Red brick wall



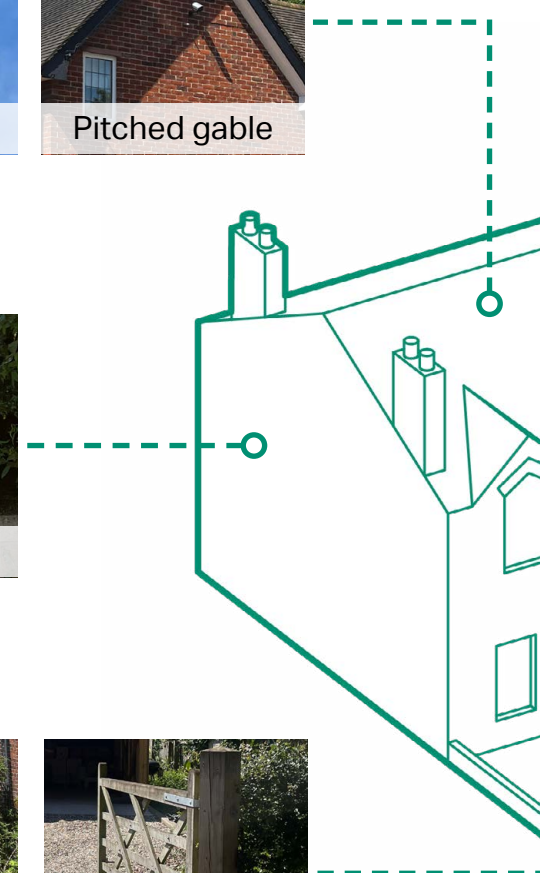
Hedgerow

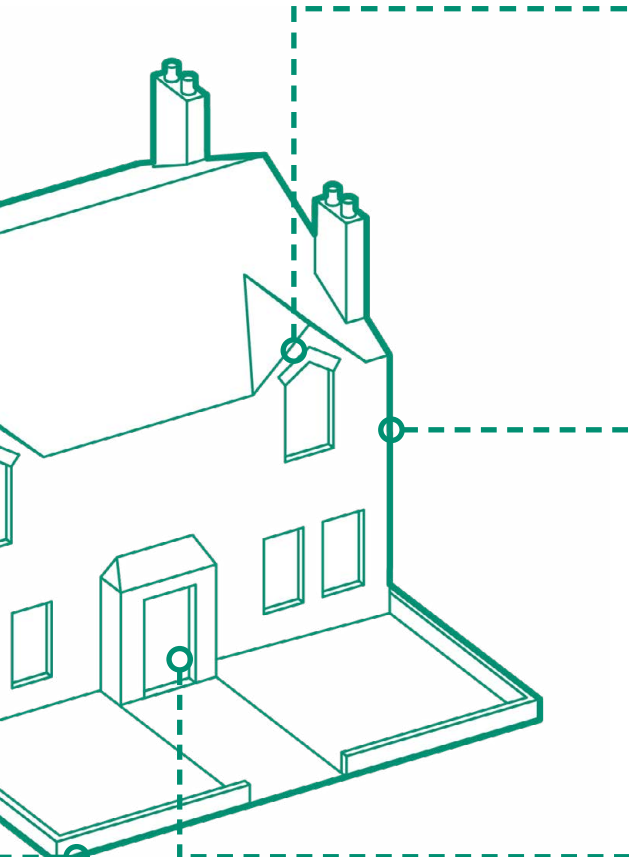


Wrought iron gate

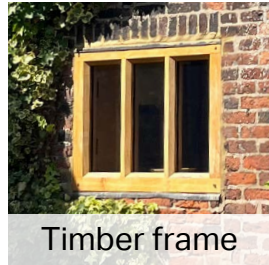


Timber gate





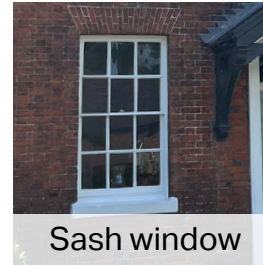
Window treatments



Timber frame



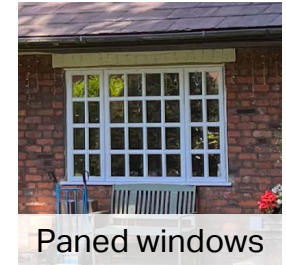
Gable dormer



Sash window

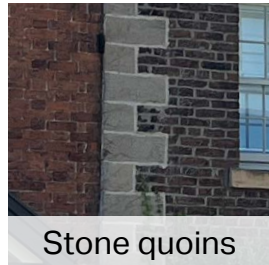


Stone lintel / sill

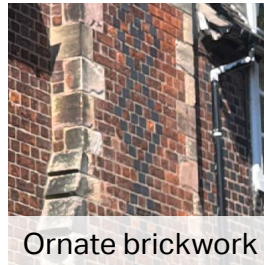


Paned windows

Façade detailing



Stone quoins

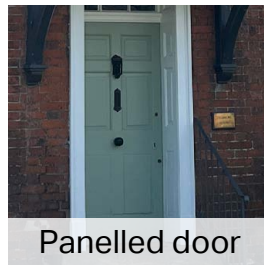


Ornate brickwork

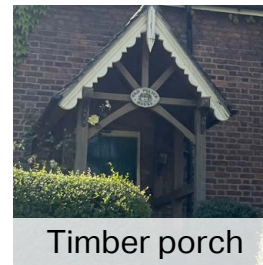
Door & porch treatments



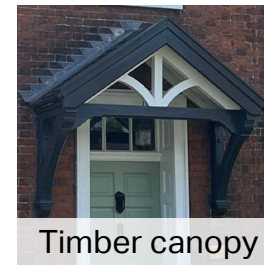
Timber door



Panelled door



Timber porch



Timber canopy

3.2 Character areas

There are eight Character Areas, each describing the context, indicating its key features regarding topography, landform, land use, landscape and infrastructure. Each is supported by photographs.

1. Rural Lowlands

Largest of the character areas encompassing the largely flat-lying land of the open countryside and its isolated developments.

2. Congleton Fringe

A series of fields abutting the urban extent of neighbouring Congleton. They are in close proximity to Congleton's residential suburbs.

3. Astbury

Encompassing all of the buildings and plots surrounding Astbury village; the Neighbourhood area's largest settlement.

4. A34 Corridor

This area covers the land either side of the A34, constituting the Neighbourhood area's primary infrastructure corridor.

5. Great Moreton Hall Estate

The private estate of Great Moreton Hall including the hall itself and several associated buildings such as lodges and outbuildings.

6. Canal Corridor

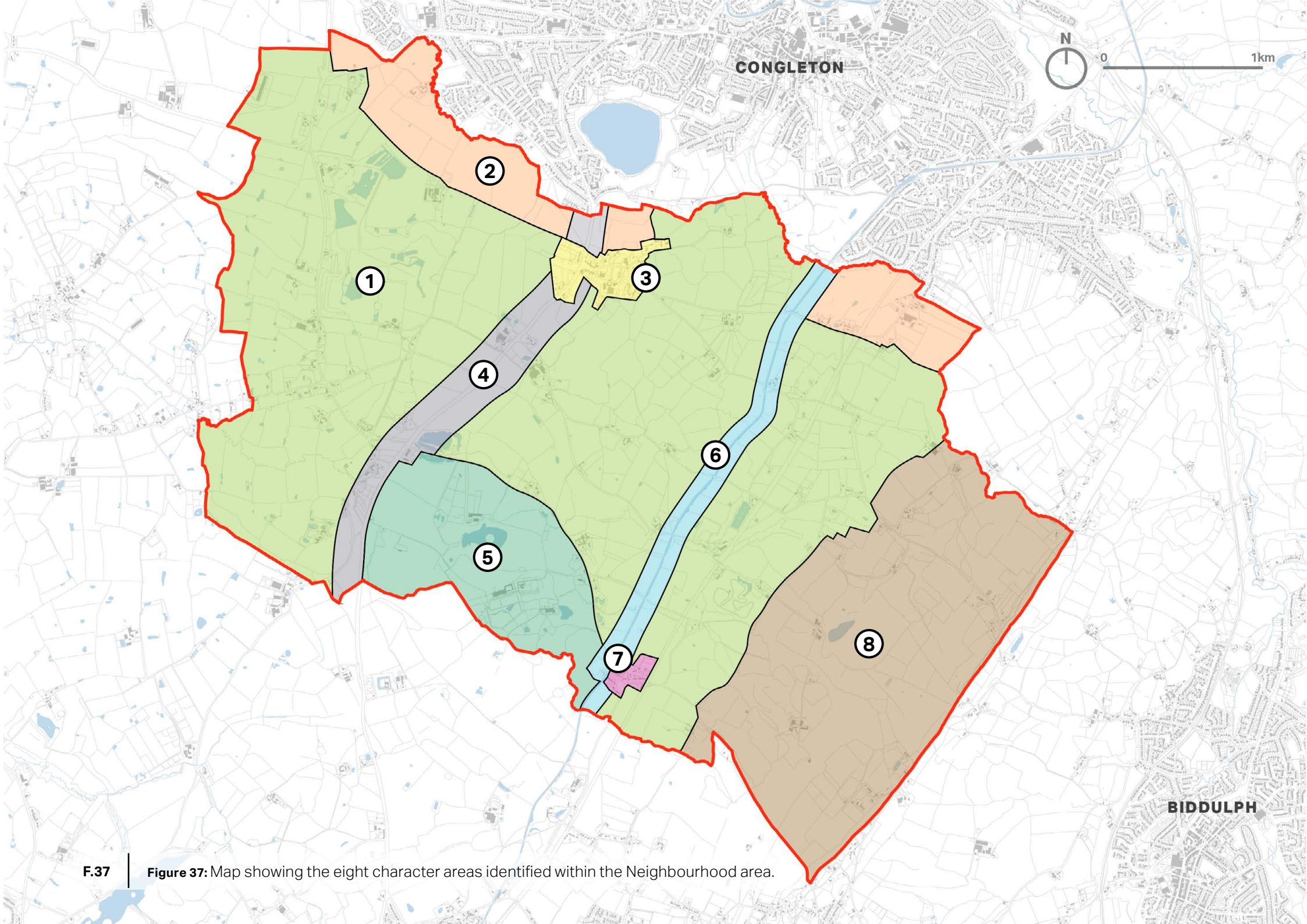
This area covers the land with a close relationship to the heritage, landscaping, and ecosystem of the Macclesfield Canal.

7. Ackers Crossing

A sizeable hamlet with a distinctive character defined by mid to late 20th century residential development, including layout and style.

8. Mow Cop Uplands

This area parallels the Mow Cop Ridge LCA² identified within the Cheshire East LCA¹. It is defined by the slopes of the Mow Cop Ridge.



1. Rural Lowlands

3.2.1 Rural Lowlands

The largest of all the character areas, the Rural Lowlands are defined by largely low-lying landform and open countryside. Development is limited to the sporadic distribution of isolated farms and clusters of buildings, including several hamlets including Brownlow, Brownlow Heath, Moreton, and part of Ackers Crossing.

The area has a strong green and open character due to its unspoilt landscape. The western section of the character area is the lowest lying and is host to a cluster of natural pools and ponds, with the surrounding land swamp-like in character.

Ancient field patterns are a prominent heritage feature with either mature hedgerow or aged drystone walls bounding them. Other heritage includes historic farms and cottages, some of which are listed, as well as a sizeable Roman marching camp.

Key features:

- Low-lying landform
- Strong green character
- Historic field patterns bounded by hedgerow and drystone walls
- Open countryside
- Sporadic distribution of isolated buildings (i.e. farms and cottages) and several hamlets



Figure 38: Brownlow Heath social housing



Figure 39: Ivy Cottages



Figure 40: Houses off New Road in Ackers Crossing

2. Congleton Fringe

3.2.2 Congleton Fringe

This character area is closely related to neighbouring Congleton, a large market town with residential suburbs extending towards the Neighbourhood area from the south. The area is made up of a line of fields abutting the Congleton's urban extent, following much of the Neighbourhood area's northern boundary. Despite the area's relationship to the sprawling suburbs of Congleton, it provides a strategic and distinctive separation between the Neighbourhood area and Congleton.

The area has a strong green character due to its unspoilt landscape, free of any significant development. Built form is limited to several small clusters of buildings such as those along Moss Road where several residential infill developments have begun to overspill from Congleton into the Neighbourhood area.

Key features:

- Low-lying landform
- Strong green character
- Historic field patterns bounded by hedgerow
- Open countryside
- Sporadically distributed buildings and small clusters of buildings



Figure 42: Small cluster of commercial and residential development on Moss Road



Figure 41: The beginning of Congleton's suburban extent (fringe development) taken from the A34

3. Astbury

3.2.3 Astbury

As the Neighbourhood area's only village and largest settlement, the Astbury character area is defined by its historic built form and village amenities, including a church, public house, village hall, farm, primary school, and village green, as well as multiple dwellings. A majority of these are fronting Peel Lane, the primary street running through the village from east to west. The character area is also host to Astbury Conservation Area, which includes a number of Listed buildings such as the Grade I Listed St Mary's Church.

The character area has a strong green character due to the presence of mature trees, grass verges, the village green, and the several fields which extend into the village at various points. The area subsequently has a strong visual and physical relationship with the open countryside enveloping it.

Key features:

- Astbury Conservation Area
- Strong historic and green character
- Largest settlement and concentration of buildings in the Neighbourhood area
- Mixture of architectural styles including Tudor, Georgian, Victorian & post-war
- Village amenities including primary school, public house, church, and village hall



Figure 43: Several Grade II Listed buildings reflecting the variety of architectural styles in the village



Figure 44: View of St Mary's Church and field from Glebe Farm extending into the village



Figure 45: The green character of the area represented by the village green, grass verges, and mature trees

4. A34 Corridor

3.2.4 A34 Corridor

This area constitutes a major movement and transit infrastructure corridor (A34 Congleton Road), as well as the land closely related to it on either side. The corridor bisects the Neighbourhood area, and is a substantial barrier to movement due to congestion and the speed of vehicles. The land either side of the route has been included within the character area as it is directly associated to and affected by it, due to noise pollution and its close proximity.

The fields abutting either side of the route are bounded by mature planting such as trees and hedgerow, acting as a natural buffer to soften the roads hard surfacing and noise pollution with the surrounding countryside. There are several buildings in the character area such as those at Alcumlow Farm, which are directly accessed via the A34.

Key features:

- Major movement and transit infrastructure corridor (A34 Congleton Road)
- Frequently used and congested route
- Linear corridor bisecting the Neighbourhood area
- Fields abutting it either side bounded by mature planting / green buffers



Figure 46: The A34 (Congleton Road) with natural planting buffers on either side



Figure 47: Fields belonging to Alcumlow Farm directly abutting Chance Hall Lane



Figure 48: Hedgerow and signage along the edge of the A34 (Congleton Road)

5. Great Moreton Hall Estate

3.2.5 Great Moreton Hall Estate

This character area is centred around the Great Moreton Hall Estate, encompassing a large privately-owned country house along with its surrounding land.

Despite changes in ownership and land use over the years, the area has served as a country estate since the 17th century, housing several well-to-do families over the centuries. A number of the buildings and structures within the area are of historical importance, including the Grade II* Listed Great Moreton Hall itself, as well as several associated buildings including gatehouses (or lodge), a summerhouse, an icehouse, a boathouse, and a perimeter wall which extends around much of the estate.

The area has a strong green character due to the vast open fields and private gardens surrounding the hall, which include a large boating lake, several wooded areas, and formal gardens.

Key features:

- Centres around Great Moreton Hall
- Strong historic and green character
- Privately-owned estate with no access for general public
- Views of Great Moreton Hall's three and four storey towers
- Low-lying landform



Figure 49: Limestone perimeter wall extending along New Road to the north of the estate



Figure 50: The towers of Grade II* Listed Great Moreton Hall are viewable from around the local area



Figure 51: The Grade II Listed East Lodge at the access to Great Moreton Hall's private driveway

6. Canal Corridor

3.2.6 Canal Corridor

The canal corridor includes the land abutting either side of the Macclesfield Canal. The Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area stretches along the whole waterway, including within it several listed structures, primarily foot and vehicular bridges. Development is limited to several dwellings in Moreton, Oak Farm and Upper Hulme Farm, which are all in close proximity to the canal edge.

As well as a strong historic character, the canal is a rich natural ecosystem for both plants and animals. As well as the fields abutting the canal, mature trees and planting line much of the canal. The Cheshire Ring Canal Walk also runs parallel to the west of the canal, providing an attractive recreational route along the waterway.

Key features:

- Victorian canal and associated infrastructure (i.e. multiple bridges, aqueduct, milestone)
- Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area
- Low-lying landform
- Strong green and blue character



Figure 52: View of the canal from the Grade II Listed Canal Bridge No.83 (Water Lane)



Figure 54: View of the canal from Canal Bridge No.85 in Moreton



Figure 53: Limestone boundary wall of the Grade II Listed Canal Bridge No.85 (New Road) in Moreton

7. Ackers Crossing

3.2.7 Ackers Crossing

A hamlet with a distinctive character defined by its mid to late 20th century development. Unlike the more historic buildings found in other character areas, Ackers Crossing is a much more recent settlement. Grass verges are a notable feature of Ackers Crossing, typical of the era in which they were developed.

Dwellings have red brick facades, with the exception of a few which have a mix of red brick and pale render. Building heights range between 1 and 2 storeys and the housing mix includes mostly semi-detached and terraces, as well as a few detached. Nearly all dwellings have front boundary hedgerow treatments, contributing to the area's near uniform character. Setbacks are also generally sizeable, with many having long front gardens with integrated driveways for on-plot parking.

Key features:

- Large hamlet
- Low-lying landform
- Strong green character
- Majority mid-late 20th century residential development
- Grass verges and greens in fronting dwellings



Figure 55: Row of terraced houses with large front gardens on New Road



Figure 56: Semi-detached dwellings fronting a large green on Station Road / New Road



Figure 57: A bungalow and terraced houses with hedgerow boundary treatments fronting New Road

8. Mow Cop Uplands

3.2.8 Mow Cop Uplands

The Mow Cop Uplands parallels the Landscape Character Area outlined in the Cheshire East LCA¹, named Mow Cop Ridge. The area is defined by its steep slopes rising from west to east, before peaking at the Mow Cop Ridge, forming the natural boundary between both Cheshire and the neighbouring county of Staffordshire. Extensive views to the west are subsequently a defining feature of the area, with regional landmarks and far away settlements viewable from upon the slopes.

The area has a strong green character due to its extensive woodland and heathland landscape. The Roe Park Woods, designated a SSSI, is the largest of the wooded spaces. Development is limited to several farmsteads such as Roepark Farm and Lodge Farm, as well as the small hamlet of the Pot Bank, situated to the north east of the Neighbourhood area's boundary.

Key features:

- High-lying landform
- Strong green character
- Panoramic unobstructed views of Cheshire and beyond
- Heathland and woodland landscape



Figure 59: The Gritstone Trail running through heathland upon the Mow Cop Ridge



Figure 58: Panoramic views of the Cheshire Plains and beyond from the Mow Cop Ridge



Design codes & guidance

04

4. Design codes & guidance

The design codes and guidance prioritise the character and quality of new development, sustainable design approaches, and several key topics of importance.

4.1 Ensuring design quality

The codes and guidance focus on ensuring future development is responsive to context and local character as well as its natural environment and landscape pattern.

New development is not viewed in isolation. The codes seek to encourage high quality residential development, a mix of uses, appropriate infill development, and a strong understanding of how development transitions into open countryside at the edge of settlements. A key consideration for the codes is to ensure barn conversions or the design of outbuildings and extensions are in keeping with their setting and existing buildings.

The following topics present the codes and guidance for the whole neighborhood area. While some codes will be more applicable to certain character areas than others, it is important to be mindful of all codes when producing proposals.

- A Preserving rural identities**
- B Development in the open countryside**
- C Conversions, extensions, and outbuildings**
- D Preserving historic identities**
- E Sustainable design and climate resilience**



Preserving rural identities

4.2 Preserving rural identities

One of the Neighbourhood area's defining features is its rural context. This is reflected by the size of Character Area 1: Rural Lowlands and Character Area 8: Mow Cop Uplands, as well as their relationship with the remaining character areas, which also have strong rural identities. The landscape within and surrounding each character area reflects the rural identity of each character area.

Landscape is a prominent feature of the whole Neighbourhood area and should therefore be protected from undue or poor-quality development. Both the character areas, the various designations outlined, and adjacent codes should be applied holistically in preserving the Neighbourhood area's rural identity.

A1 - Landscape character

area response: Designers must set out a clear response to the landscape character area/s in which development is sited or adjacent to. This should be achieved by respecting and/or referencing the landscape character features outlined within each landscape character area.

A2 - Softening built form: Provide a considered transition between built form and the landscape immediately surrounding them, particularly at the settlement edge. This can be achieved via a mixture of lower density development and using natural screening (i.e. hedgerows, tree cover, green roofs etc.) to soften a developments visual impact.

A3 - Utilising lower densities:

Proposals that include buildings of lower densities (i.e. 1 - 1.5 storeys) should be considered in areas with

key view and landscape sensitivities. This includes, must is not limited to, views from the Mow Cop Uplands (Character Area 8) and views of local landmarks such as St Mary's Church.

A4 - Protecting & creating views

for way-finding: Buildings should be oriented to maintain existing key views or to create new views/ vistas which can contribute to local way-finding. Views of both landmark buildings and landscape features should be utilised to promote legibility within the area.

A5 - Protecting views at the

settlement edge: Proposals on the settlement edge should be unobstructive of key views looking both inwards and outwards of the settlement. Key views of the area's landscape and built form are a locally defining feature that contribute to the legibility and way-finding credentials of the Neighbourhood area.

A6 - Avoiding settlement

coalescence: Development should avoid the coalescence of settlements by ensuring green gaps between settlements are maintained. This is particularly relevant to the north where Congleton's suburbs are extending towards Astbury. Astbury's rural village character should be protected by ensuring a green gap is maintained between itself and Congleton.

A7 - Focus of development: The focus of development should be within existing brownfield sites, the conversion of existing development, or pockets of land within existing 'urban' areas that are close to local services and movement networks such as within Astbury's infill boundary line, or hamlets such as Moreton, Brownlow, and Brownlow Heath.

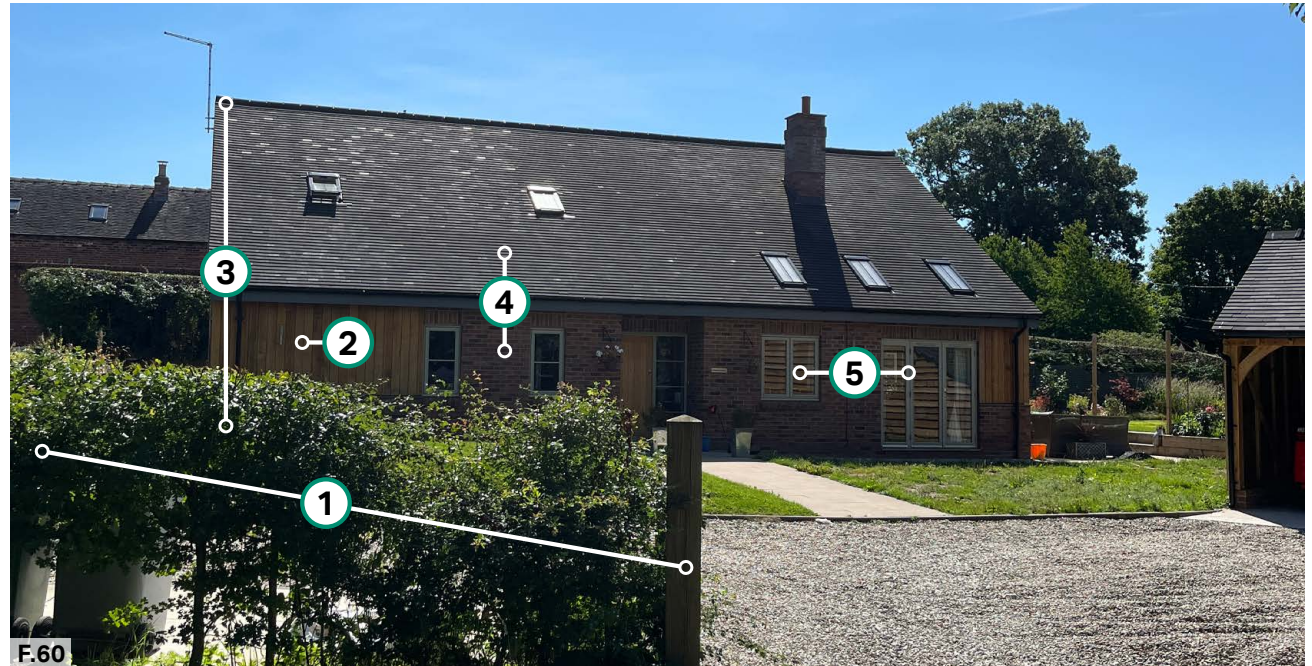


Figure 60: High-quality contemporary infill dwelling at the settlement edge (School Lane, Astbury)

- 1. Natural screening** - Hedgerow boundary treatment retained at front of plot, providing clear separation between public and private land, as well as creating a natural screening of the building.
- 2. Contemporary design** - Timber panelling used in a contemporary but contextual design, referencing the use of timber used on existing dwellings in the nearby area.
- 3. Bungalow** - The 1.5 storey bungalow typology at the settlement edge is encouraged as it provides a harmonious transition between village and landscape. This helps to preserve the village's rural setting, soften the settlement edge, and protect key views looking both inwards and outwards of Astbury (i.e. of St Mary's Church).
- 4. Materials** - Use of red brick, timber, and grey slate respects the Neighbourhood area's overarching materiality.
- 5. Muted colours** - the use of a muted green for the contemporary PVC windows helps the site blend with its rural surroundings.



Development in the open countryside

4.3 Development in the open countryside

This code directly applies to development proposals in the open countryside, which makes up the entirety of the Neighbourhood area's land mass, as it is inclusive of Astbury's infill boundary line. Policy PG 10 of the Cheshire East SADPD stipulates that infill villages such as Astbury are without formal settlement boundaries, and are therefore considered within the confines of the open countryside. Any development within the Neighbourhood area will have a visual impact on the open countryside's rural character. The adjacent codes seek to mitigate this, by ensuring contextual designed development.

A large portion of the Neighbourhood area is also covered by the Green Belt, meaning development within these areas must meet specific requirements outlined by both national and local policy.

B1 - Converting existing buildings:

The conversion or reuse of existing buildings in the open countryside should be encouraged. External works to any conversion should be mostly cosmetic and have a minimal visual impact on the landscape in which it relates.

B2 - Screening development in the open countryside: Proposals should be positioned behind natural screening (i.e. trees, planting) so not to obstruct views of the surrounding landscape. Additional screening should be incorporated into any given proposal where necessary.

B3 - Visual impact of agricultural & commercial development: Agricultural or commercial proposals should refrain from using materials and colours that contrast with the surrounding landscape. Muted and contextual colour palettes are encouraged so not to disturb the local landscape character.

B4 - Renewable energy sources in the open countryside:

Sustainable-led proposals such as renewable energy infrastructure should be considered on the grounds that its positive legacy will outweigh its impact on the open countryside. Small-scale renewable energy sources should be encouraged for providing power to rural developments. However, such infrastructure should be screened or integrated within developments, to mitigate visual impact on the open countryside.

B5 - Innovative and sustainable screening methods: Innovative and sustainable screening methods include green roofs and plant walls. Such screening will help outbuildings to blend into natural surroundings such as a domestic garden or open space.

B6 - Lighting and illumination

of development: Any lighting or illumination of a development must consider its necessity, as well as its impact on surrounding properties, particularly where powerful lighting is being proposed. Any lighting infrastructure must balance its necessity with that of the power, scale, and orientation being proposed. This is to avoid overly powerful lighting that can impose on the amenity of other plots, as well as mitigate undue light pollution in the open countryside.

B7 - Exceptional architecture:

Proposals showcasing exceptional and innovative architectural styling (i.e. contemporary) should be considered where they can provide harmony with the character of the surrounding open countryside, as well as showcasing high-quality sustainable design.



F.61



Figure 61: Examples of what high-quality development in the open countryside can look like. Referencing agricultural heritage as well as contemporary design via high-quality materials, windows, and size and scale.



Conversions, extensions, and outbuildings

4.4 Conversions, extensions, and outbuildings

The following guidelines are in response to the Neighbourhood area's number of conversions, extensions, and outbuildings. Outbuildings are typically separate from the primary dwelling and comprise a number of uses including garages, storage sheds, and stables. The demand for external home offices that are detached from the primary dwelling has seen a significant increase. This is in response to the shift towards home working since the COVID-19 pandemic. Given their scale and impact on surroundings, it is vital they too adhere to design guidance.

With most planning applications in the Neighbourhood area being either a conversion or extension, it is paramount they adhere to the Neighbourhood area's sensitive landscape and historic context. Outbuildings are also increasingly becoming a characteristic of many plots, making their impact on the surroundings a design consideration.

C1 - Quality and durable

construction: Conversions, extensions and outbuildings should be made from high-quality and durable materials so to maintain their integrity and aesthetics over time. They should use both the high-quality construction methods of nearby development as well as the latest sustainable construction techniques on the market at the time. The lifespan of any new construction should be maximised wherever possible.

C2 - Matching the existing

dwelling: Conversions, extensions, and outbuildings should emulate or reference the architectural detailing and character of the primary dwelling. The architectural details (i.e. finials, coping, string courses, and window and door surrounds) of the existing dwelling should be carefully considered in any new construction within the plot.

C3 - Dormers: Dormer windows should be modest in size and either match, complement, or reference the existing building.

C4 - Doors and windows: New windows and doors should reflect the rural character of each village, as well as that of the original dwelling. Both the material and colour of doors and windows are an important design consideration and should complement both plot and setting.

C5 - Chimneys: Chimneys contribute to the local roofscape and overall character of the area, particularly in Astbury. They should therefore be retained, referenced, or emulated.

C6 - Screening outbuildings: They should ideally be positioned behind screening so to be out of public view (e.g. trees, planting, existing buildings).

C7 - Positioning outbuildings:

Outbuildings should be positioned alongside, or close to, the primary dwelling. This will help to minimise the visual impact of any outbuilding due to screening provided by the dwelling.

C8 - Aesthetic quality of

outbuildings: Where screening is not possible, the aesthetic quality of the structure should be of a higher quality, so to positively contribute to the character and context of the surrounding area.

C9 - Outbuildings as secondary

tier buildings: There should be a clear building hierarchy with outbuildings being secondary to the primary dwelling within a plot.

C10 - Office conversions and

outbuildings: Offices can be housed within outbuildings, whether it be a converted building or new construction.



F.62

Figure 62: An outbuilding (garage - left) closely related, but obviously secondary to, the primary building (dwelling - right) within the plot.



F.63

Figure 63: High-quality car port reflecting the historic identity of Astbury through the use of timber and grey slate construction.



F.64

Figure 64: Alcumlow Hall Farm - a high-quality conversion of several agricultural buildings into a thriving leisure and retail business.



Preserving historic identities

4.5 Preserving historic identities

As well as the Neighbourhood area's rural context, there is a strong historic character amongst its built form, contributing to the area's local distinctiveness. Historic identities are place-specific and distinctive features that should, at the bare minimum, be conserved, and enhanced at any given opportunity. Despite the overall lack of development, many buildings and structures distributed throughout the Neighbourhood area reflect its agricultural heritage and historic origins over the centuries. Many of these are either nationally or locally listed, or found within one of the Neighbourhood area's two conservation areas; the Astbury CA and Macclesfield Canal CA.

Any new development must be sensitive to surrounding heritage, whether that be key views of historic buildings or ancient field patterns. Both built form and landscape features form the area's historic identity, and they should equally be respected in any proposals that may impact them.

D1 - Character area response:

Designers must set out a clear response to the character area/s in which development is sited or adjacent to. This should be achieved by respecting and/or referencing both the built and natural character features outlined within each character area.

D2 - Architectural detailing:

Decorative brick, stone and wood detailing is encouraged to provide references to the Neighbourhood area's local vernacular. Architectural detailing should reference the Neighbourhood area's historic built form and character features as outlined in section 3 (Villagescape & Character). This will however vary slightly depending on the area or settlement in which a site lies. Appropriate detailing includes: stone quoining, brick string courses, finials, and stone coping.

D3 - Avoiding pastiche: Designers are not required to mimic the existing design period of an identified character area in the form of pastiche (especially 'bolt-on' elements). However, this approach is not ruled out if done authentically to carefully respond to its context.

D4 - Avoiding low-quality precedent: Nearby examples of low-quality design should not be referenced or replicated. Instead, proposals should refer to high-quality contextual features such as those outlined in section 3 (Villagescape & Character).

D5 - Reflecting local identity: Respect and reinforce local identity by using traditional building materials that make a valuable contribution to the historic character of each settlement, primarily Astbury, as well as the whole Neighbourhood area.

D6 - Using muted and contextual material colours: Contextual tones of material should be used to enable new development to blend with the materials and colour palettes of existing high-quality development. Dark or muted tones should also be employed to minimise visibility of development from the surrounding landscape. The choice of colour and finish is an important design consideration in mitigating adverse impacts on the sensitive historic and rural characters of the Neighbourhood area.

D7 - Innovative materials and design: Deviating from traditional materials and aesthetics should be considered where innovative design and sustainability is demonstrated. For example, innovative designs can both be sustainable and enhance local character by effectively using or referencing traditional materials and architectural detailing.



Figure 66: A high-quality 20th century infill dwelling in Astbury - referencing local fenestration, high pitched roofs, and materials used on nearby homes.



Figure 67: Both buildings and their boundary treatments should reflect local identity, such as this frontage using red brick, cobblestone, and timber.



Figure 65: Example of preserving local identity by directly referencing the original school's architectural style



Sustainable design and climate resilience

4.6 Sustainable design and climate resilience

Climate change has created the need to decrease our carbon footprint towards net-zero by providing innovative solutions to transportation (electrification) and the energy use of buildings. These codes are, therefore, in response to the Climate Emergency facing the world. Every locality has a part to play in decarbonising and moving towards achieving net-zero. This can be achieved by incorporating innovative design features and techniques into both new and existing developments.

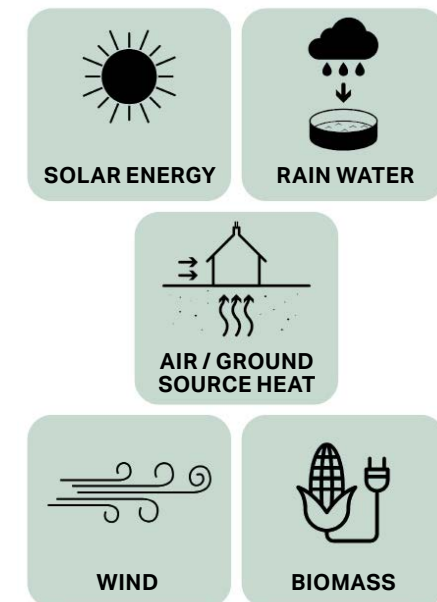
Sustainable design incorporates innovative practices at all scales of design to achieve less impactful development footprints, whilst future proofing homes, settlements and natural environments. Reducing use of imported natural resources whilst increasing utilisation of local resources and sustainable natural resources can help to achieve this.

E1 - Resilience to Climate Change

All new development should work to moderate extremes of temperature, wind, humidity, local flooding and pollution within the parish:

- Avoid siting homes in high risk flood areas and mitigate increased risk of storms/flooding with sustainable drainage systems. These reduce the amount and rate at which surface water reaches sewers/watercourses. Often, the most sustainable option is collecting this water for reuse, for example in a water butt or rainwater harvesting system.
- Plant trees as part of major development for habitat, fuel and sustainable building materials.
- Ecosystems cannot adapt as fast as the climate is changing leading to loss of biodiversity. Protecting and enhancing the Neighbourhood

area's watercourses and green infrastructure can combat this. Aim to increase ecology through biodiversity net-gain (BNG) on major development sites.



F.68

Figure 68: E2 - Key alternative natural energy sources

E2 – Assessing Alternative Energy Sources

Key considerations in the assessment of alternative energy sources may include:

- Optimise solar orientation of streets and buildings. Aim to orient buildings within 30' of south (both main fenestration and roof plane) for solar gain, solar energy (solar panels) and natural daylighting;
- Ground conditions to accommodate loops for ground source heat and space for air source heat pump units; and
- Links to local estates for sustainable coppicing, harvesting or recycling of biomass fuels.

E3 – Electric Vehicle charging

Current transition to electric vehicle technology and ownership comes with related issues that must be addressed by new development. Design issues to address for EV charging at the home include:

- Convenient on plot parking and charging points close to homes;
- Potential to incorporate charging points under cover within car ports and garages;
- Still need to integrate car parking sensitively within the streetscene. For example, parking set behind the building line or front of plot spaces lined with native hedgerow planting;
- Need to consider visitor parking / charging needs;
- Potential for providing secure, serviced communal parking areas

for higher density homes.

- Existing unallocated / on-street parking areas and feasibility to provide electric charging infrastructure not linked to the home



F.69

Figure 69: E3 - Home electric vehicles charging point

E4 - Energy efficiency measures towards Net-Zero carbon

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

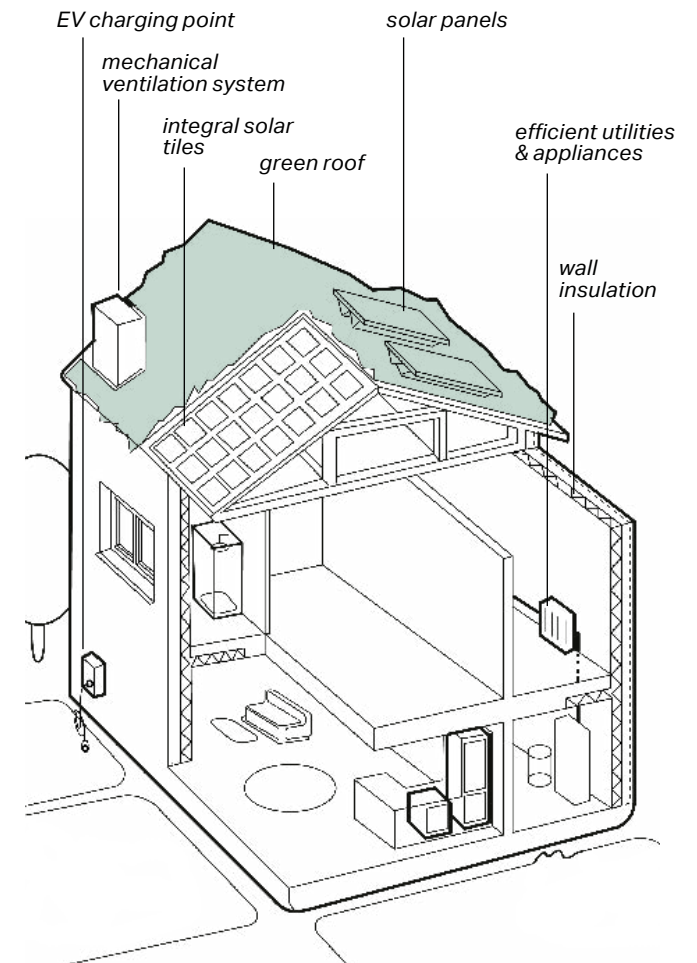
- Reducing energy demand further by employing passive design principles for homes is desirable and can make some forms of development more acceptable to the community (window orientation, solar gain, solar shading, increased insulation, ventilation with heat-recovery);
- Maximise on-site renewable energy generation (solar, ground source, air source and wind driven);

- Consider building form and thermal efficiency: point-block/ terraced / semi-detached / detached all have different energy efficiency profiles. This must be balanced with local design preference and character considerations to ease acceptance for development.



F.70

Figure 70: Air source heat pump unit hidden out of view at the rear / side elevation of a building



F.71

Figure 71: E4 - Cut-through diagram of an energy efficient home and its features



Checklist

05

1

General design guidelines for new development:

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

2

Street grid and layout:

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

3

Local green spaces, views & character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? I.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?

3 (continues)

Local green spaces, views & character:

- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention e.g. permeable landscaping, swales etc.?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

4

Gateway and access features:

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

5

Buildings layout and grouping:

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the villagescape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?

5 (continues)

Buildings layout and grouping:

- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles, with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night? This is to reduce peak loads. And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?

6

Building line and boundary treatment:

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

7

Building heights and roof-line:

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

8

Household extensions:

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

9

Building materials & surface treatment:

- What is the distinctive material in the area?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?
- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?

9 (continues)

Building materials & surface treatment:

- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.
- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced? E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

10

Car parking:

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

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