5.3 TOW4 Design

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should sustain and where practicable enhance the character of the Parish and, where appropriate, the character and appearance of the Towersey Conservation Area and its setting as shown on the Policies Map.

Development proposals should also have full regard to the Towersey Character Appraisal and the following design principles:

- *Maintain the prevailing character of one to two storey, detached and semidetached dwellings with consistent building lines in rectangular plots fronting onto main roads;*
- *Respond to and compliments the prevailing material character which primarily consists of: red-facing brick, colour through render, some buff brick and stone, plain clay tile roofs with some Welsh slate, and a small number of thatched roofs;*
- *The appearance in the streetscene of several Local Heritage Assets, notably The Old Bakery, Manor Cottage/Cobblers Cottage, 1 Church Lane, 11 Church Lane, Greenway, which either terminate or punctuate key views along the main roads;*
- *Maintain the setting of informal and formal open space as intimate and tranquil areas in the village providing glimpse views to several listed buildings and local heritage assets whilst their openness contributes to the setting of these heritage assets, especially:*
    - *~ the Three Horseshoes PH garden;*
    - *~ land at The Duck Pond;*
    - *~ the Village Green;*
    - *~ White's Field;*
- *The openness of land adjacent to Towersey Manor in its contribution to the setting of Towersey Manor and to the buildings at Upper Green Farm and at Home Farm;*
- *The prominence of mature trees and tall hedges along frontage boundaries and the common use of grass verges, occasionally with ditches, in the space in front of buildings, in defining the rural character of the area and helping to punctuate views in the street scene;*
- *The pattern of strongly defined edges to the countryside with clear rear plot definition by way of boundary walls, hedges, fences and/or trees;*

> • *Views into the village, including the Conservation Area, at public vantage points to the west, north-west and east and from the former railway embankment in the south;*
> • *The importance of plot arrangements in the setting of the Conservation Area, as shown on the Policies Map, and local heritage assets, as set out in Policy TOW5, in defining the essential character of the Conservation Area.*

5.3.1 The policy establishes the importance of design of new development in the village to maintaining its strong rural character. In doing so, it refines the design quality principles of Local Plan policies DES1 and DES2. It also defines the key characteristics of its heritage assets for the application of Local Plan Policies ENV6 – ENV8. Of particular note is the importance of local heritage assets, as set out in Policy TOW5, in defining the character of the Conservation Area, due to their prominence in the street scene.

5.3.2 The policy highlights a series of development principles that are drawn from the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal of Towersey included in the evidence base. Those principles set out those features of the village that make it distinctive from its neighbouring villages and help define the significance of the Conservation Area. It therefore informs the Design & Access Statements prepared for planning applications in demonstrating that, where relevant to the nature and location of the proposal, regard has been paid to those principles. It does not require that each proposal slavishly adheres to each principle, but applications will be required to demonstrate they have acknowledged, understood and responded to the relevant characteristics in drawing up their schemes, and to justify where proposals depart from the policy.

5.3.3 Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being (NPPF para 118). Consideration should be given to the fact that any new homes or commercial premises planned to be built have 21st digital infrastructure installed at the build phase. Developers should be required to engage with a telecommunications network provider to provide a full fibre connection to each residential/business premise. This will significantly mitigate environmental impacts of any proposed development. People will be able to work from home, reducing unnecessary journeys. Moreover, digital infrastructure provides the backbone for digital technologies' role in building a low carbon economy.