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Frodsham Design Code

November 2019

Quality information

Document name	Ref	Prepared for	Prepared by	Date	Reviewed by
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Contents

01	Introduction.....	5
02	Understanding the Character of Frodsham	9
03	Defining Focus Areas	15
04	Engagement.....	27
05	Design Codes for the Town.....	31
06	Applying Design Codes to Potential Sites	47
07	Next Steps.....	51



Introduction

01

1.1 Background

Locality is a national membership network for community organisations which empowers communities to lead and influence decision-making in their area.

Local communities can use neighbourhood planning as a means of changing their neighbourhoods for the better. Through Locality's support programme, the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (FNPSG) have appointed AECOM to undertake a number of studies which will underpin their emerging Neighbourhood Plan. AECOM has been commissioned to provide a Design Codes document, which will provide urban design guidances to help deliver good quality places within Frodsham.

1.2 Purpose and Approach

The purpose of this report is to provide design principles and codes for all development in Frodsham Parish, which can be applied to potential development sites.

Frodsham sits within the North Cheshire Green Belt. The boundary for the Frodsham study area in this Design Code report is based on the outer boundary from a previous Frodsham Townscape Area study. Any future developments outside of the town in countryside areas should look to the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), Cheshire West and Chester Council local Plan Part One (2015), Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan Part Two (2019), the Local Landscape Designation: Areas of Special County Value in Cheshire West and Chester report (2016) and A Landscape Strategy for Cheshire West and Chester report (2016) for design guidance.

The process that was undertaken in order to produce this Design Code report is as follows:

- AECOM representatives attended an inception meeting and site walkover in Frodsham with the FNPSG to define the brief and direction for this Design Code report.
- AECOM studied and reviewed the existing town character areas and simplified these into a series of focus areas.
- AECOM produced a draft Design Code report based on the finding from the previous stages.
- The draft report was reviewed by the FNPSG.
- After capturing the feedback from the review, AECOM issued the final Design Code report.

1.3 Document Structure

This Design Code report has 7 sections:

1. Introduction
2. Understanding the Character of Frodsham
3. Defining Focus Areas
4. Engagement
5. Design Codes for the Town
6. Applying Design Codes to Potential Sites
7. Next Steps



Fig 1.1 Frodsham study area map



Understanding the Character of Frodsham

02

2.1 Policy Review

Frodsham lies within the unitary authority of Cheshire West and Chester Council. Any development within the area should comply with national and local planning policy. This section summarises the planning policy context as follows:

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

This is the first revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) since 2012. The revised NPPF will be a vital tool in ensuring that we get planning for the right homes, built in the right places, and of the right quality, whilst at the same time protecting our environment.

The relevant paragraphs are:

- *Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;*
- *Building a strong, competitive economy;*
- *Promoting healthy and safe communities;*
- *Promoting sustainable transport;*
- *Making effective use of land;*
- *Achieving well designed places;*
- *Protecting Green Belt land;*
- *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;*
- *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.*

Adhering to the NPPF will help to ensure high quality developments which blend into the fabric of the existing townscape and facilitate local distinctiveness and 'sense of place'. Development within the neighbourhood area should be respectful of its character and setting and at the same time adapt cohesively to future changes.

Local Planning Policy

Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies (2015)

The Local Plan (Part One), adopted in 2015, sets out the overall vision strategic objectives, spatial strategy and planning policies for the borough to 2030.

The key policies which will guide design codes in Frodsham include:

- Spatial strategy, STRAT 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11: Within this policy section, the Local Plan seeks to enable development that improves and meets the economic, social and environmental objectives of the borough, whilst protecting the high quality environment with an appropriate scale and design so as not to harm the character of the area.
- Social, SOC 3,6: Within this policy section, the Council encourages a mix of housing types, tenures and sizes. The Council will seek to protect, manage and enhance existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities to provide a network of diverse, multi-functional open spaces.
- Environmental, ENV 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6: This policy section seeks to protect and enhance our natural, historic and built environments to create a sustainable development. It also seeks to deliver the highest quality design and sustainable construction.

Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies (2019)

The Local Plan (Part Two), adopted in 2019, provides further detailed policies and land allocations which support the strategic objectives and policies set out in the Local Plan (Part One).

The key policies which will guide design codes in Frodsham include:

- Rural area, R1: The policy in this section set out the housing and employment land allocations within the rural area and provide policy criteria for development proposals.
- Green Belt and countryside, GBC 2: This policy provides the approach to be taken in protecting the landscape (see figure 2.1).
- Transport and accessibility, T1, 5: The policy set out the Council's approach to local road network improvement schemes and detailed requirements for parking and access within new developments.
- Development management, DM 1, 2,3: Within this policy section, the Council encourages any new development and redevelopment to achieve a high quality design and efficient use of land and buildings; and should respond creatively and positively to the character of the surrounding area.
- Housing, DM 19, 20, 21: This policy section provides detailed criteria for development proposals relating to housing.

- Open space, sport and recreation, DM 35, 36: This policy section provides further guidance for protecting and enhancing existing sport, recreation and the network of multifunctional open spaces. It also sets out requirements for the provision of, and contribution towards open space, sport and recreation facilities with new development.
- Green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity, DM 44, 45: The policies in this section provide further detailed guidance to support the achievement of no net biodiversity loss and delivery of net gain, by guiding consideration of biodiversity, geodiversity and planting in development proposals.
- Historic environment, DM 46, 47, 48, 49: The policies in this section seek to ensure that all elements of the historic environment are considered and that there is an informed analysis of any proposal that will impact on them.

Local Landscape Designations: Areas of Special County Value in Cheshire West and Chester

This document has identified eight areas of special character and landscape qualities within Cheshire West and Chester as Areas of Special County Value (ASCV) within the Cheshire West and Chester borough. This document will also support policy within the emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two) for the preservation and enhancement of ASCV's.

Within this document, it is explained that Frodsham is located between two ASCVs; Helsby and Frodsham Hills ASCV to the west, and Weaver Valley ASCV to the east of Frodsham.

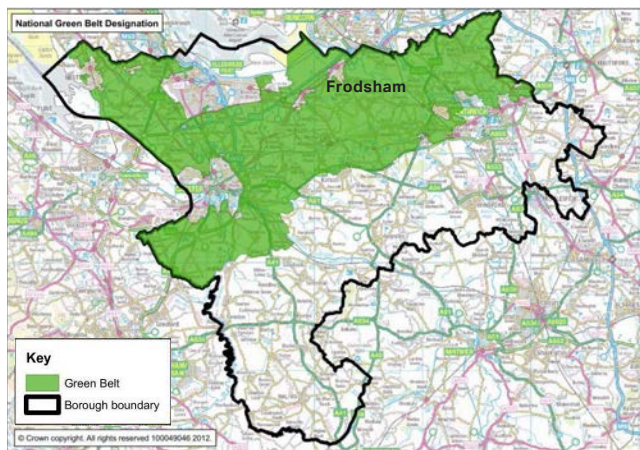


Figure 2.1 North Cheshire Green Belt, (Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan Part One: Strategic Policies, Green Belt Study Part One, 2013)

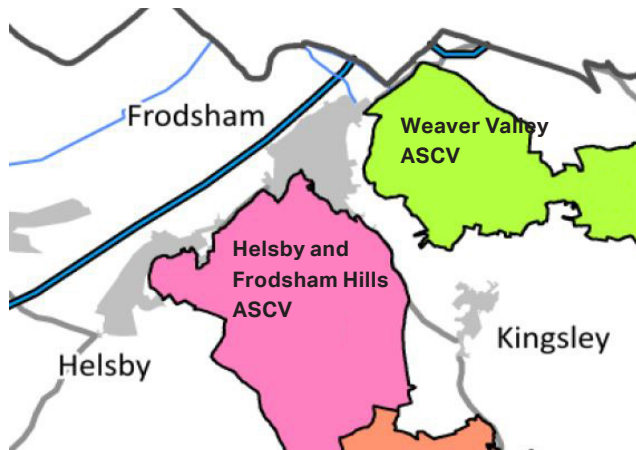


Figure 2.2 Areas of Special County Value around Frodsham, (Local Landscape Designations: Areas of Special County Value in Cheshire West and Chester, June 2017)

A Landscape Strategy for Cheshire West and Chester Borough (2016)

This document provides the first concise strategy for managing the landscapes of Cheshire West and Chester and for guiding landscape change beyond the built up areas of the borough to 2030.

This landscape strategy contributes to the achievement of these principles and the environmental dimension of sustainable development by identifying opportunities for protecting and enhancing the intrinsic character of the landscapes of Cheshire West and Chester.

It provides information to those who live, work or visit the borough, and to the general public and others with an interest in the borough's rich and diverse landscape. It also provides advice to applicants seeking to develop land within the borough about how to consider landscape character in their proposals. It offers a day-to-day working reference document to guide officers and members of the council when considering the implications of planning applications on the environment.

There are several Landscape Character Areas (LCA) located around Frodsham. Below are the list of the landscape character areas with a general description:

- **LCA 2A:** The War Memorial on Frodsham Hill is a landscape feature, from where there are panoramic views over the Mersey Estuary. It is of a low density with dispersed farms and hamlets. Many farm buildings are constructed from sandstone (quarried from the ridge) and red brick with welsh slate roofs. It is locally designated as an Area of Special County Value (ASCV), which recognises its landscape and scenic quality

and its historic, archaeological and ecological importance. More recent development includes some scattered residential houses.

- **LCA 4A:** The flat, open landscape provides clear views to and from the adjacent Frodsham Sandstone Ridge and Helsby Hill. Incomplete hedgerow boundaries provide partial enclosure along some field boundaries. There are important views to and from the Frodsham Sandstone Ridge and Helsby Hill. No prominent skyline, but embankments, pylons and industrial development are visually prominent. The visual impact of prominent development and traffic could be reduced by tree planting but this would change the open character of the area.
- **LCA 5B:** The Frodsham to Northwich Undulating Enclosed Farmland represents an area of large scale, gently undulating farmland located to the south of the Weaver Valley, between Frodsham and Northwich. Building materials are typically red brick but with some sandstone and white-wash/rendered finishes, with large red brick dairy barns as a particular feature. Red sandstone and brick contrast with the green pasture, providing warm colours in the landscape. The Frodsham Sandstone Ridge and the Norley Undulating Enclosed Farmland form a backdrop to views, with the Weaverham Church tower as a landmark on the skyline. Generally there is no strong skyline to this relatively low lying landscape.
- **LCA 5F:** The Helsby to Frodsham Undulating Enclosed Farmland is a small transitional character area lying between the steeply rising Frodsham Sandstone Ridge to the south and the steeply rising Helsby Hill to the west, and the flat, low lying Frodsham, Helsby and Lordship Marshes and Mersey Estuary to the north. Building materials

include a mix of red brick and sandstone, with white wash and timber framed buildings, and large red brick barns. Any new development should conserve the open setting of the church spire at Frodsham that forms a landmark on the skyline.

- **LCA 15C:** Located in Weaver Valley ASCV, The River Weaver is the key feature of the valley. It is a distinct valley with a flat open floodplain and steep, wooded, valley sides. Settlement is generally absent from floodplain. The presence of infrastructure and industry (past and present), and the proximity to built development, influences the character of the eastern and western ends of the LCA around Northwich and Frodsham. It is generally a quiet, tranquil landscape with a low settlement density. However, industrial elements have a defining visual influence on parts of the valley. The steel road bridges and arched sandstone railway viaducts are features of the valley and provide historical interest. There are recreational opportunities along the river corridor.



Figure 2.3 Landscape character areas around Frodsham, (A Landscape Strategy for Cheshire West and Chester Borough (2016), page 21)

Frodsham Town Design Statement (2010)

The purpose of the Frodsham Town Design Statement is to manage change in both the landscape and buildings, whether large or small, in a way which reflects and harmonises with the local character and setting of the settlement.

The Frodsham Town Design Statement also provides guidance to householders and local businesses, planners, builders, architects and any other organisation or individual wishing to undertake development within the Frodsham Town Policy Boundary. Any development is expected to contribute and maintain the local character and distinctiveness of the town and its setting.

The Town Design Statement was adopted in July 2010, before the adoption of the Local Plan in 2015. Therefore, a simpler version of Focus Areas study based on the Town Design Statement has been used. The Focus Areas should focus on both Townscape Areas of study and placemaking design codes which would provide design guidances for future development within Frodsham.

Frodsham Townscape Areas (TA)

- TA01: Marsh Lane
- TA02: Motorway Buffer Zone
- TA03: Commercial Core
- TA04: Ashton Drive
- TA05: Saltworks Farm
- TA06: Frodsham Bridge
- TA07: The Lakes
- TA08: Doric Avenue
- TA09: Five Crosses
- TA10: Overton
- TA11: Fluin Lane
- TA12: Community Centre
- TA13: Kingsway
- TA14: Castle Park
- TA15: Howey Lane

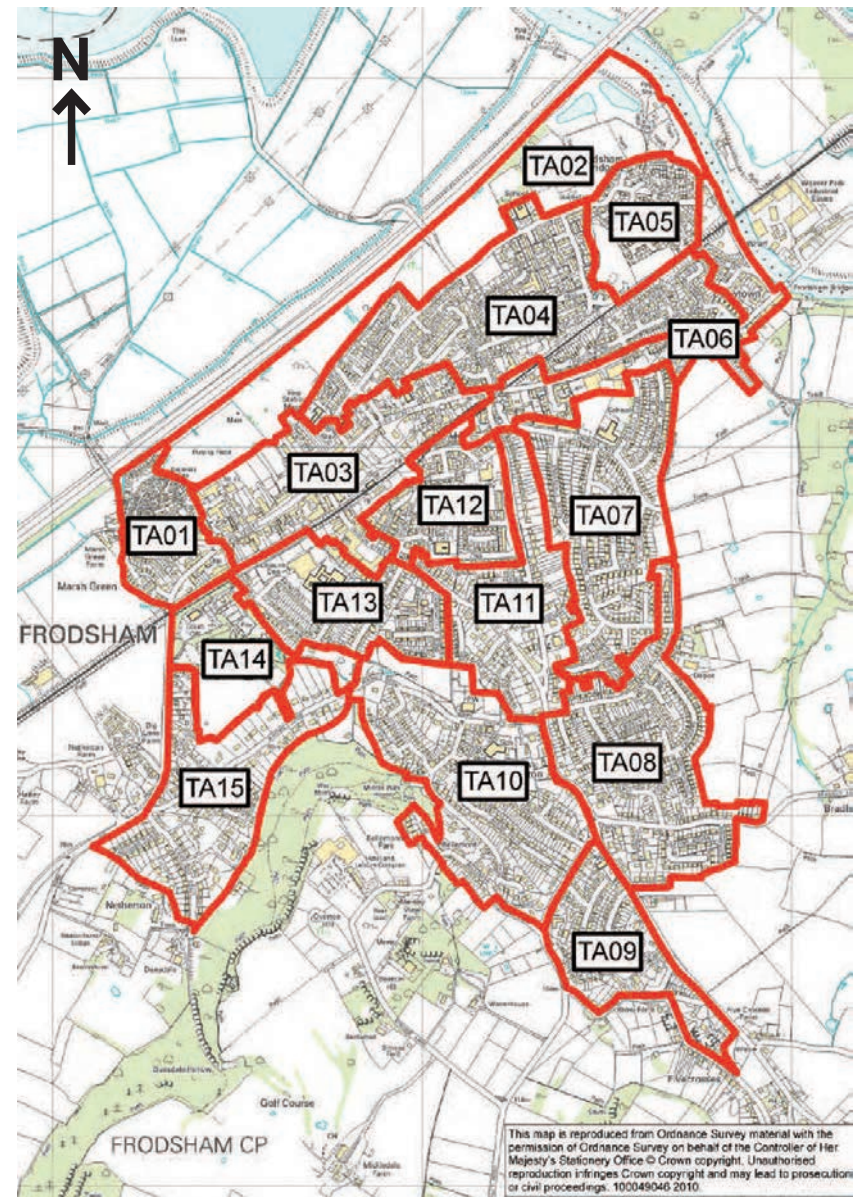


Figure 2.4 Frodsham Townscape Area (Frodsham Town Design Statement, 2010)

2.2 Approach for Defining Focus Areas

The Methodology

To define Focus Areas within Frodsham, AECOM reviewed approaches used by the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). The methodology used in LI Townscape Assessment and RTPI for character assessment cover similar items, but in different categories.

LI Townscape Assessment- Technical Information Note (2017)

This document explains how the principles and general approach of landscape character assessment can be applied to townscape character assessment. It also helps to clarify how practitioners typically interpret that guidance for townscapes by giving emphasis to particular issues that may need to be considered when assessing, mapping and describing the character of built-up areas.

A townscape character assessment may present a description of the townscape that is distinctive to that place, supported by materials such as maps, illustrations and photographs. It can provide an understanding of how a place has evolved and developed over time to respond to natural, social and economic drivers, and how this is reflected in the layout of streets, the architecture of buildings and the materials used.

Specific Consideration for Townscape Character Assessment:

- Historical development
- Movement and connectivity
- Urban structure and built form
- Heritage assets
- Green infrastructure and public realm
- Tranquility
- Stakeholder engagement

RTPI- How to Prepare a Character Assessment to Support Design Policy within a Neighbourhood Plan

This document describes how to prepare a character assessment document, which details the distinct appearance and feel of a settlement or an area, illustrating key physical features and characteristics which gives the area its specific identity. Through preparing a character assessment document, the existing character of a neighbourhood area can be documented and described. The assessment can then be used by developers and architects to help them understand local character, which will contribute in creating sensitively designed proposals to preserve the local area's feel and appearances.

The RTPI also produced a character assessment proforma which provides a structured approach to identifying and classifying the distinctive character of a settlement or neighbourhood area. The proforma breaks character down into the following ten distinct categories:

- Layout
- Topography
- Spaces
- Roads, streets, routes
- Green and natural features
- Landmarks
- Buildings and details
- Streetscape
- Land Use
- Views

Method used in the report

AECOM used principles from the LI and the RTPI documents, focusing on the 4 categories from the LI Consideration:

- Heritage assets
- Urban structure and built form
- Movement and connectivity
- Green infrastructure and public realm

The Focus Areas are based on the study of the 4 categories above in the next section. The design codes will provide further detailed design guidelines for each category in Section 6.



Defining Focus Areas

03

3.1 Defining Focus Areas

Summary of Baseline Study

AECOM has conducted a high level spatial analysis review of Frodsham in the Frodsham Masterplan Report, April 2019.

Frodsham is a thriving Cheshire Market Town that dates from the 13th century. Frodsham is rich in history and consists of a large number of historic assets, (4 conservation areas and over 40 statutory listed buildings). All historic designations form an essential part of the local character.

Frodsham is rich in landscape features which create a number of key views towards Frodsham Hill and to the open countryside. These important view corridors should be maintained and protected.

A number of environmental designations and several environmental features like Local Wildlife Site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) can also be found in Frodsham.

From the previous study, a number of green spaces and their key function in Frodsham have also been mapped. These green spaces are also helpful to identify and analyse the character areas within Frodsham

Evolution of the Town (Heritage Assets)

Frodsham was formed throughout several eras, in which different architectural styles were established and various focus areas were formed.

The Planned Medieval Borough, now better known as the commercial core of the town, contains many properties dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as several properties in Overton. The majority of the development in Frodsham dates from the interwar period to the 1970s. Figure 3.1 illustrates how the land in Frodsham has been developed throughout history until today.

A variety of the properties from different periods form the wider Frodsham area. The oldest property groups in Frodsham are located along the Main Street, forming part of Frodsham Conservation Area. The other oldest property groups stretch along the Overton area which forms part of the Overton Conservation area. The most recent property groups within Frodsham are located on the north east of the town.

Phases (text from Frodsham Town Design Statement, 2010)

Phase 1: Pre First World War. This category identifies those areas where the town's surviving older properties are mainly located, indicating the early extent of the town. These properties include places of worship, inns, former farms and structures for new and improved transport as well as private homes – many of the buildings are nationally or locally listed, e.g. the Church of St Laurence, late 12th century; the Queen's Head Hotel, Main Street and the outbuildings to Manor Farmhouse, now refurbished as dwellings, both dating from the 17th century; Frodsham Viaduct and Frodsham Bridge, both completed in 1850; and a diverse range of private homes such as the 17th century thatched cottages and Ashley House on Main Street, and Albert Row, between High Street and Ship Street.

Phase 2: Inter-War to 1950s. This period saw several small housing developments take place, each with distinctive design features. This phase includes the area to the south of Main Street, between Church Street and Castle Park which surrounds the Leisure Centre and the recently demolished secondary school. Upper Park Lane is part of this area, and Hillsboro Avenue in Overton is also an example of this period of settlement expansion.

Phase 3: 1960s and 1970s. These decades saw a variety of residential development on all sides of the town; the most extensive occurring to the east and south of Frodsham (e.g. Wayford Close and Fairways).

Phase 4: 1980s to present. This period saw small areas of significant residential infill, from single bungalows and houses on windfall sites, to large apartment blocks on the sites of demolished property (e.g. bungalows near Lawrence House, Churchfield Road; four pairs of semi-detached houses in Ship Street near the junction with Weaver Lane; seven detached properties in Foxglove Court off Fluin Lane; Bridge Lane Mews, next to Frodsham Bridge and a mixed residential estate developed at the former Saltworks Farm on the northern edge of Frodsham).

The area along Main Street (A56) presents a distinctive historic area, which is different from the rest of the town. It also consists of the majority of commercial and social services within Frodsham. This is the 'Historic and Commercial Core' Focus Area.

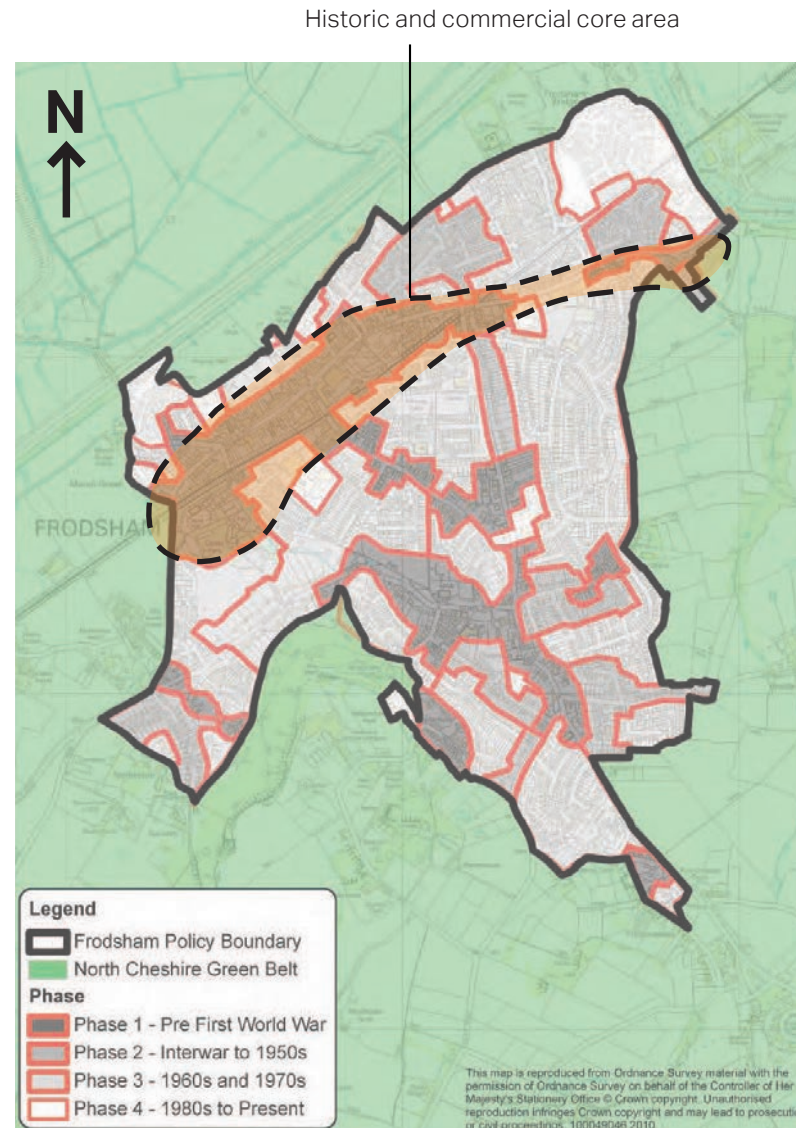


Figure 3.1 Evolution of the Town (Frodsham Town Design Statement, Page 23)

Urban Structures and Built Form

The historic core of Frodsham lies within the town conservation areas: Frodsham Town Conservation Area and Overton Conservation Area. As is evident throughout this designation, the more historic parts of the town tend to exhibit a strong character and locally distinctive architecture. The majority of historic buildings sit on the A56 road. This area also contains community services and mixed use facilities.

The most prominent building type that can be found in the historic area are buildings with linked frontages. In the other areas, Frodsham exhibits a greater variety of building typologies including bungalows, terrace houses, semi-detached, detached, mixed-uses buildings and apartments.

Building arrangements within wider Frodsham exhibit more variety. In the majority of Frodsham, the building arrangements are formal arrangements, while informal arrangements can be found on the development on Netherton Drive.

Across most of the settlement, building heights vary mainly between two and three storey, especially within the historic core. There are some areas of one storey bungalows within 20th-21st century housing estates to the north of the town, and some three-four storey apartment located on the north of the town.

Building materials in Frodsham are predominantly brick with slate and tiled roofs, but some white render buildings can be found throughout Frodsham. The historic core has contrasting building materials and styles, with Victorian brick buildings and timber-framed building located along the Main Street.

In terms of land use, Frodsham is predominantly residential, with the commercial and community activities located along the Main Street and Church Street, making these some of the busiest areas within Frodsham.

Residential area with the most recent development in Frodsham with building height up to 3.5 storeys. This could be a distinctive Focus Area (Northern Residential Area).



The residential area is heavily influenced by Frodsham Hill towards which it orientates. The area also has several historic Pre-War buildings that should be respected. This could be a distinctive Focus Area (Hillside Residential).

Residential area adjacent to the open countryside, with dominant post-World War development and formal building arrangements. This could be a distinctive Focus Area (Eastern Frontage).

Fig 3.2 Frodsham urban structures and built form characteristics

Movement- Vehicular and Non Vehicular

Frodsham sits on the main A56 regional distributor from Helsby to Runcorn, which connects the Parish with the wider region, local towns and main national motorways. There is a hierarchy of streets in Frodsham which shows the access and the growth of the town.

The Primary Distributors are the highest order routes within Frodsham, which provide access into and out of the town. They form a spine to a wider street network, interconnecting routes of lower tiers allowing better navigation and legibility throughout the town. Red Lane, Fluin Lane, and Vicarage Lane act as a primary connectors to wider Frodsham and other towns. Most of the commercial and community facilities are located along the primary route, creating the core structure within the road network in Frodsham.

As the Primary Distributor runs through the Town Centre it becomes a Main Street with a narrower carriageway, increased footway and increased enclosure through 2-3 storey buildings. Main Street and Church Street has a more intimate and pedestrian focused character than the Primary Distributor and will naturally calm and slow traffic. Within Frodsham, the A56 and Main Street is where the town historically developed from, and is where the majority of the local amenities are. It runs from The Bears Paw Pub to the Community Church. Every Thursday, the north side of Main Street serves as a local market for the town.

Town Streets are the primary movement corridors within the residential areas. Enclosure is achieved with higher densities and building heights. The alignment of the street naturally calms down traffic, creating a more pedestrian/cycle focused environment. Some T junctions outside the core area may need enhancement to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

There are also numerous non-vehicular routes including Public Rights of Way (PROW) and long distance trails running within and outside the town. The internal footpaths link a series of green amenities and provide connectivity with the wider movement network, creating a pleasant walking environment. There are two long distance routes in Frodsham: the Sandstone Trail and Weaver Way long-distance route.

A 'Central Area' can be identified at the core of the town. It is rich in access, and contains a number of primary distributor streets, Public Rights of Way and a long distance trail.

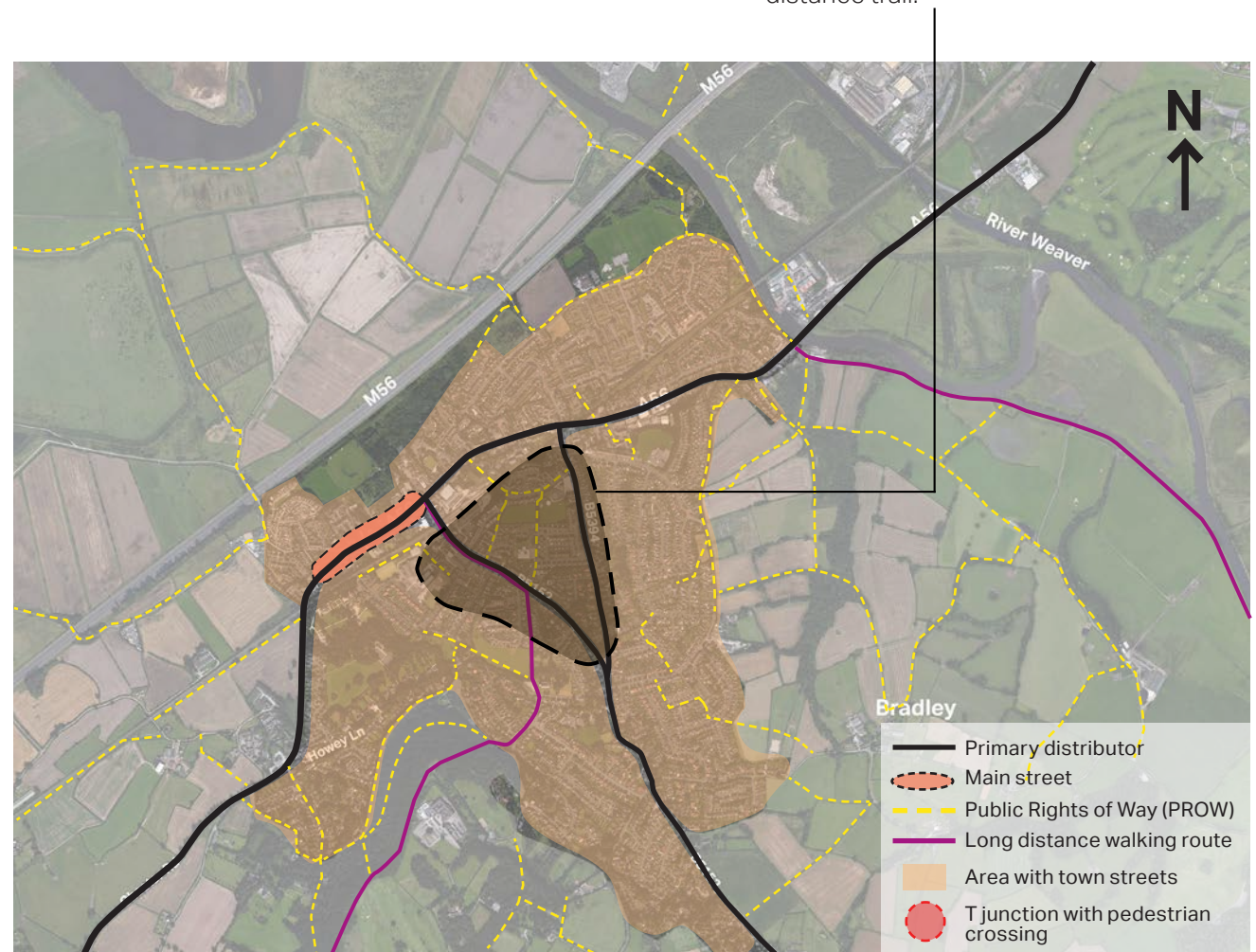


Fig 3.3 Frodsham vehicular and non-vehicular movement network

Green Infrastructure

Frodsham has a number of important green infrastructure assets. Several green infrastructure elements including Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), open spaces, Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), hedgerows, and woodlands are scattered throughout Frodsham, and play an important role in creating Frodsham's character.

Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings of Special Scientific Interest are located in the Frodsham Town Centre and Overton area. In the town centre, the sandstone exposures northeast of the railway station and on the High Street and The Rock, form part of this area's SSSI. Meanwhile, the rock exposures on Howey Lane are part of the Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings SSSI in the Pinmill Brow area.

LWS's in Frodsham are mostly located on the open space area around Frodsham, including Frodsham Hill, the Riverside site, and around open space areas on the east of Frodsham. The majority of Frodsham's open spaces are located around Frodsham's historic core, such as Castle Park. Another example of open space with significant contribution is the Churchfields green space located near St Laurence church, and the salt works play area and skateboard park, which is one of the outdoor sports open spaces in the north of Frodsham.

Other important green infrastructure includes trees, hedgerows, and woodland. There are a number of TPOs located throughout Frodsham which need to be considered as well as hedgerows, which have an important role as natural boundaries on the east and west sides of Frodsham.

The 'Northern Frontage' Focus Area acts as an interface between the town and countryside. It is also an important buffer between the Frodsham and Helsby and Inche Marshes Local Wildlife Site, and Frodsham

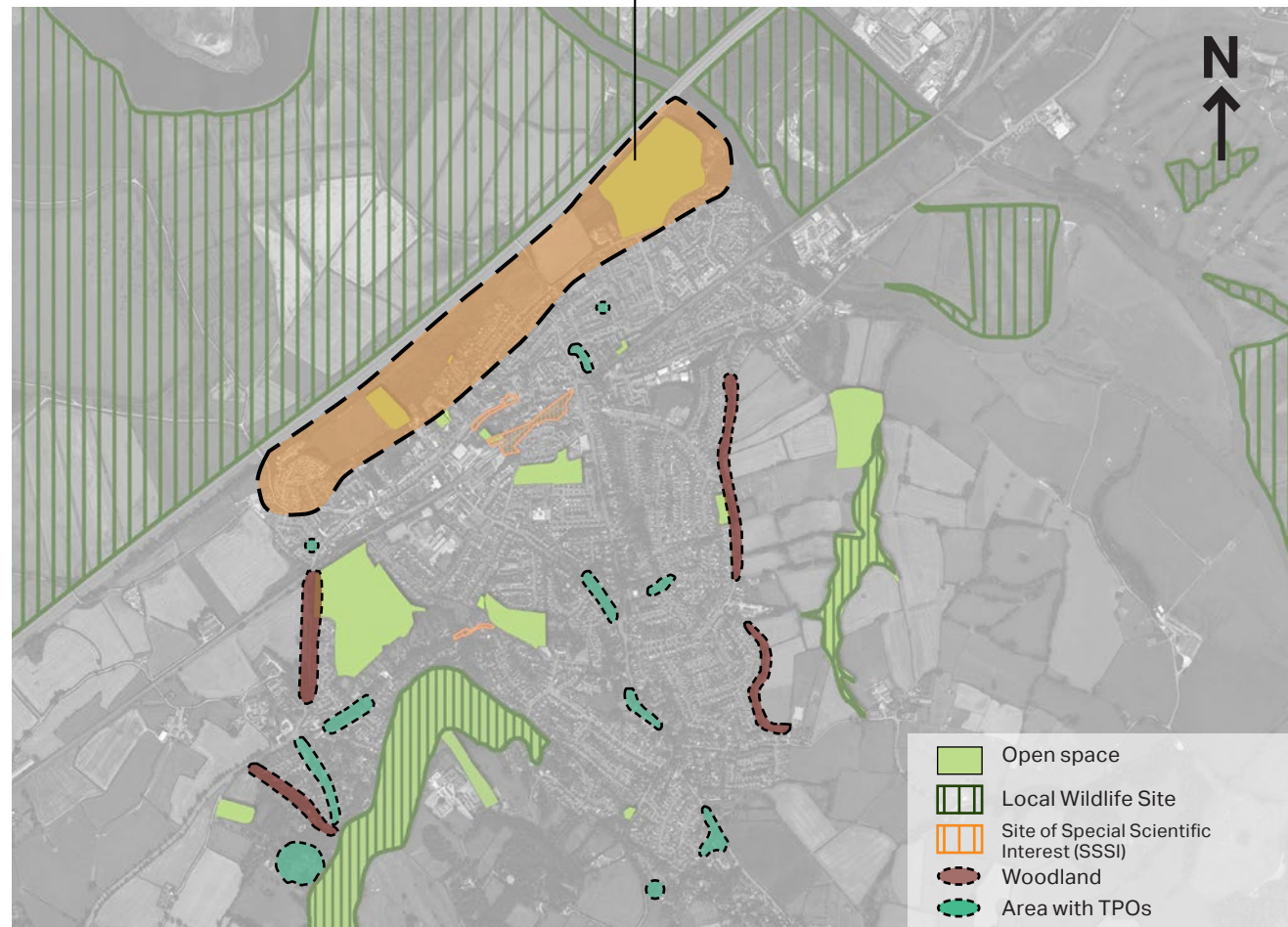


Fig 3.4 Frodsham green infrastructure

Key Views of Focus Areas

Frodsham Hill War Memorial is one of the most important local features in terms of views. This point overlooks Frodsham Town Centre and the Mersey Estuary. There are also a number of key views of the hill which should be maintained and protected. Of these, there are some long distance views which will be particularly sensitive to development (view A). The areas in the north and west of Frodsham are heavily influenced by the Frodsham Hill features. Meanwhile, the developments on the north and east part of Frodsham are influenced by views to the open countryside (view F).

Views should be protected by controlling development densities and building heights particularly when in the sight lines of local landmarks and open countryside. Key views into and out of the town were studied to check/confirm the defined focus areas.

View A: A view shows close relationship between residential properties and Frodsham Hill.

View B: The photo demonstrates the long distance views which can be obtained from the 'Eastern Frontage' residential area.

View C: A typical view within the 'Central Area' where various types of streets and footpaths run through this area.

View D: A photo of Main Street; historic buildings, commercial land uses and social facilities dominate the view.

View E: Residential development from various periods are present in this view of the 'Northern Residential Area'.

View F: The photo looking towards the north demonstrates the appearance of northern edges of the town



Fig 3.5 Frodsham key view locations



View A. View towards the Frodsham Hill War Memorial from Netherton Drive



View B. Long distance view towards the open countryside from Bradley Lane



View C. Streets and footpaths in 'Central Area'



View D. View of the Frodsham Historic Core Area



View E. Residential development in Overton Green



View F. M56 frontage view

3.2 Focus Areas

Focus Areas

Based on townscape and local character study, 6 Focus Areas have been identified by AECOM. A brief description of each area is summarised below:

– A: Hillside Residential

This area developed from medieval settlements that grew around the Parish Church. A large part of this focus area sits within the Overton Conservation Area. Residential buildings in this area are most heavily influenced by views towards Frodsham Hill, with building layouts orientating towards the hill. There are also a number of important walking routes connecting this area to Frodsham Town Centre.

– B: Eastern Frontage

This area is located on the east of Frodsham, with developments dating from Pre-War to the 1970s. Some of the residential buildings within this focus area also act as a frontage to the open countryside on the east of Frodsham which has a woodland boundary. This area also has a number of long and panoramic views towards the River Mersey and the open countryside to the north of Frodsham.

– C: Central Area

This central area comprises two primary distributor routes, the B5152 and B5394, which are two main roads with very busy traffic. This area consists of diverse mixed-age residential buildings, with prominent Pre-War buildings along the B5152 road.

– D: Historic Core and Commercial Area

This focus area predominantly lies within Frodsham (Town) Conservation area, with residential, commercial and community uses. The area has significant contributions in Frodsham's social and economic aspects, especially the High Street area which consists of a number of buildings from the 13th century. This area also includes the recently developed Princeway Health Centre.

– E: Northern Residential Area

This area is mostly developed from Post-War to 21st century developments, with building height up to 4 storeys. The area is predominantly residential and bounded by the railway. The view towards the River Weaver contributes significantly to this focus area.

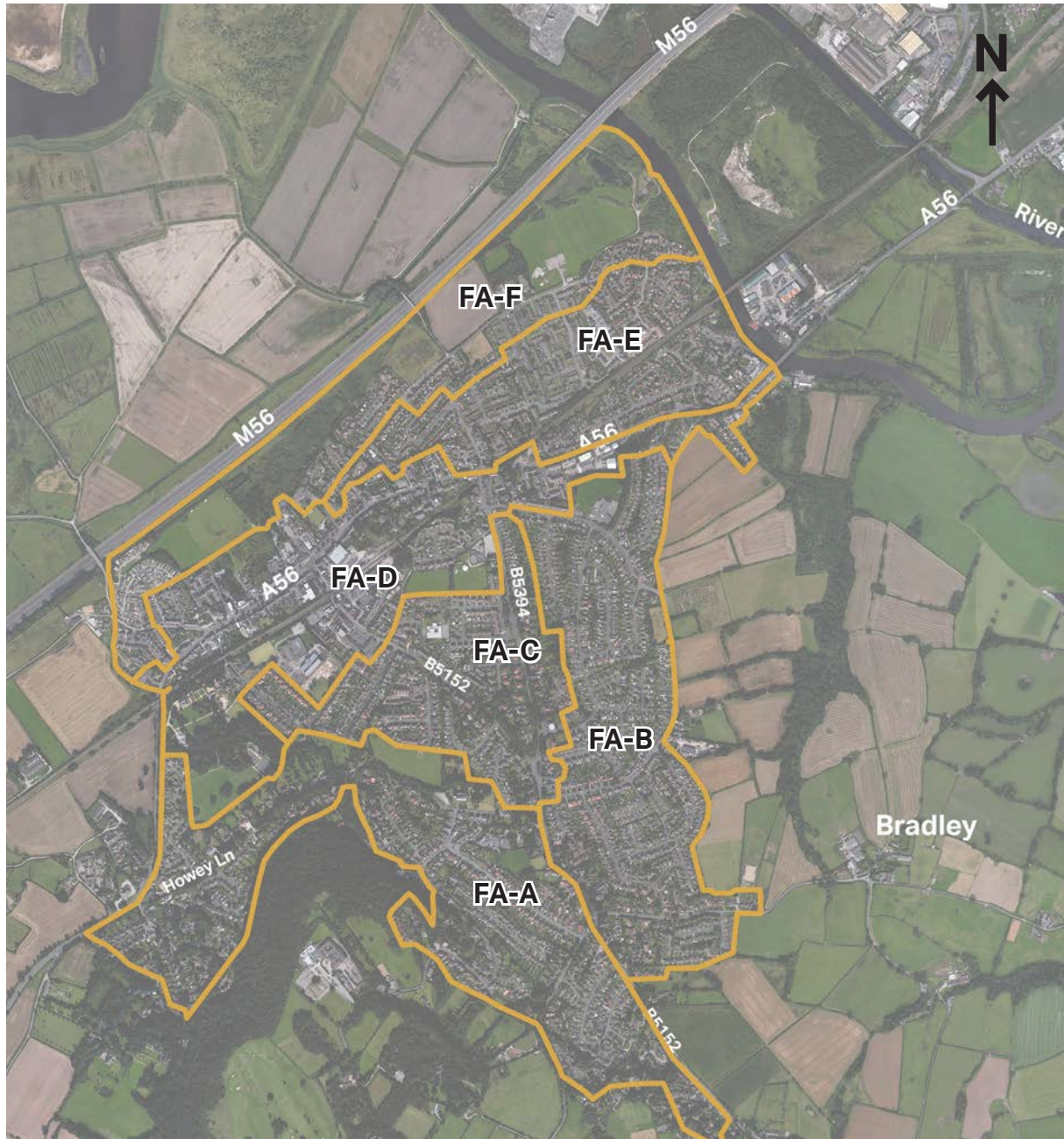
– F: Northern Frontage

This area's predominantly green infrastructure comprises a mixture of recreational open spaces and wildlife habitats, with residential developments that are strongly influenced by the view towards the open countryside on the north of Frodsham.

The focus areas are depicted based on the previously determined Frodsham Townscape Area boundary. Some changes that occurred are as follows:

- Focus Area A (Hillside Residential) covers TA09, 10, 15.
- Focus Area B (Eastern Frontage) covers TA07, 08.
- Focus Area C (Central Area) covers TA11, 12, 13.
- Focus Area D (Historic Core and Commercial Area) covers TA01, 03, 06.
- Focus Area E (Northern Residential Area) covers TA04, 05.
- Focus Area F (Northern Frontage) covers some part of TA01 and TA02.

3.2 Focus Areas



Focus Areas (FA):

- A:** Hillside residential area
- B:** Eastern frontage
- C:** Central area
- D:** Historic core and commercial area
- E:** Northern residential area
- F:** Northern frontage

Fig 3.6 Frodsham Focus Areas



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Engagement

04

4.1 Engagement

General Description

During the preparation of the Design Codes document, two neighbourhood plan steering group engagement events were held. These workshops gave the members the opportunity to ascertain, share and debate the key opportunities and constraints. These events helped to confirm an understanding of the key issues, and also helped to shape the content of the design principles & guidance.

Workshop

- Workshop 1, Inception Meeting: The first workshop was held on 29 January 2019. In this workshop, AECOM explained about the approach that was going to be adopted in the design code exercise. AECOM also gathered aspirations from the members of the FNPSG.
- Workshop 2: The second workshop was held on 14 May 2019. AECOM explained the progress of the design code. In this workshop, AECOM explained the approach used during the analysis, including redefining the character area within Frodsham. FNPSG provided feedback regarding the preferred approach.

Final Discussion

The final discussion with the FNPSG was held on 8 August 2019. In this discussion, the FNPSG representative provided comprehensive feedback from the first draft report that had been delivered by AECOM. After this meeting, AECOM made updates to the report based on the provided comments and issued the final report to the FNPSG.



Design Codes for the Town

05

5.1 Applying Design Codes for the Town

How Design Codes Links to the Focus Areas

A series of design codes have been produced to provide guidance for any developments in Frodsham, to ensure developments consider local character and can enhance the local distinctiveness of the area.

Design codes set out within this document have been significantly influenced by the combination of good design examples in Frodsham and also the guidance and content of best practice materials such as: Urban Design Compendium, Manual for Streets, Building for Life 12, and Car Parking: What Works Where.

Based on the understanding gained in the previous sections, feedback captured in the engagement workshop and the policies within Frodsham, the design code matrix has been broken up into 4 focus categories:

- Heritage Assets (Protecting Local Distinctiveness)
- Urban Structure and Built Form
- Movement
- Green Infrastructure

All proposed developments need to consider the character areas to ensure negative impacts are avoided where possible. The design codes will help to understand what types of development are appropriate in Frodsham.

How to use the Matrix

The matrix in table 5.1 shows which part of the code appears within each focus area.

The code will guide any development within each focus area to understand what the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan expects in terms of design, layout, materials and landscape. It will help with the preparation of planning applications for development proposals.

This design code highlights the assets of the wider focus areas. Any potential developments should observe this code and analyse which assets are relevant for the specific development.

Focus Areas	Heritage Assets			Urban Structure and Built Form							
	Conservation Area	Listed Building	Other historic features	Building Blocks and Building Line			Building Heights and Skylines		Architectural Style		
				Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 1	Type 2	Before WW	Post WW	Recent
A	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
B	●			●	●		●		●	●	
C			●		●		●	●	●	●	●
D	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
E				●	●		●	●		●	●
F				●	●		●	●		●	●

Table 5.1 Frodsham design code matrix

Focus Areas	Movement								Green Infrastructure		
	Vehicular			Non-Vehicular Route	Key Views	Parking Typology			Statutory and Non-Statutory	Open Space	Trees, Hedgerows, Woodland
	Primary Distributor	Main Street	Town Street			Garage and On- Plot Parking	On-Street Parking	Courtyard Parking			
A	●		●	●	●	●				●	●
B			●	●	●	●					●
C	●		●	●		●		●			●
D	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
E			●	●		●	●	●			●
F			●	●	●	●				●	●

Heritage Assets (Protecting Local Distinctiveness)

Historic features play an important role within Frodsham, which has various heritage assets that contribute to its historic character. Cheshire West and Chester Council defines heritage assets as a building, monument, site, place, structure, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance, which merits consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Careful consideration of any potential impacts brought by developments on these historic assets is needed, and relevant historic organisations should be consulted.

In this section, heritage assets will be classified as 3 components as follows:

Conservation Area

Frodsham has a number of Conservation Areas, such as the Frodsham (Town) Conservation Area (see figure 5.1) and Overton, St. Laurence's Conservation Areas (figure 5.2). Enhancement of Frodsham's historic value and character needs to be provided by developments. It has been recognised that if the special interest, character and appearance of a conservation area is to be retained.



Fig 5.1 Frodsham (Town) Conservation Area

Listed Buildings

A large number of historic assets are present in Frodsham, including over 40 nationally Listed buildings. The majority of these listed buildings are found in the historic core and the Overton area. This setting needs to be respected, and any development that may impact these historic designations needs to be sensitive to it.

Other Historic Features

Frodsham also has other non-statutory historic features such as Castle Park Registered Park and Gardens (see figure 5.7). Other features include Pre-War settlements located around Belemonte Road, Howey Lane, and Bridge Lane, and locally listed buildings scattered throughout Frodsham, all of which need to be considered by any future developments.



Fig 5.2 Grade I Listed Building Church of St Laurence located in Overton, St Laurence's Conservation Area

Design Codes: Heritage Assets (HA)

- To avoid loss or harm to the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings, developments will be required to respect and respond positively to these assets.
- Developments must protect or enhance both designated and non-designated heritage assets, and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged significance.
- Any development must create areas of positive character by responding to prevailing characteristics in terms of street patterns, density and layout, built form, materials and details.
- Materials and architectural styles applied by any developments must respect the existing character area and conservation area setting, including minimising any work that may affect the heritage assets located near to any development.



Fig 5.3 Castle Park Registered Park and Garden



Urban Structure and Built Form

Building Blocks and Building Line

Building lines play a key role in defining the layout and the character of an area. There is a good mix of housing typologies in Frodsham. Housing typologies are one of the important features that contribute to the variety of building lines in Frodsham.

Any development should ensure buildings are aligned along the street with their main facade and entrance facing it, where this is in keeping with local character.

In Frodsham there are three types of building lines that can be found throughout the area:

Type 1 Informal building lines

Within Frodsham, informal building lines usually have a larger variety of housing typologies and consist of lower density developments. Developments with informal building lines are usually characterised by larger plots, generously-sized gardens, or greater provision of open space. Most of the buildings face the street with various recesses, which usually include a front yard and a garden. The alignment of these informal building lines usually responds to the context of the surrounding landscape. Examples of informal building lines can be found in Figure 5.5.



Fig 5.5 Building line type 1 (informal building lines)

Type 2 Formal building lines

Formal building lines can be found in the majority of Frodsham's residential areas. The typologies observed tend to be a variety of terraced properties with small or medium sized gardens, and the housing type is generally uniform. The lines usually consist of 4-5 houses with breaks in between (figure 5.6).

Type 3 Linked buildings

Linked buildings can be found in the Historic Core area of Frodsham along Main Street, with a variety of uses within them. Lines of linked building generally have a higher density, and the length can reach up to 60m (figure 5.7).



Fig 5.6 Building line type 2 (formal building lines)

Design Codes: Urban Structure Building Line (US-BL)

- Development should respond to each focus areas' existing development pattern, in respect of existing block sizes, layout and structures.
- The layout of developments shall be permeable in order to provide legible connections through the area and beyond.
- A buildings' main facade and its entrances should face the public spaces, allowing natural surveillance and enhancing interface activity.
- Properties should provide gardens in the front and rear, or a small buffer as a minimum.



Fig 5.7 Building line type 3 (linked buildings)

Urban Structure and Built Form

Building Heights & Roofline

A comfortable variation in the size and scale of buildings - from single storey bungalows to three storey townhouses - can enhance local character. It provides variety and difference, as opposed to homogeneity. Houses within Frodsham are mainly 1-2.5 storeys high, with a minority of 3.5 storey townhouses which can be found in recent developments. The variety of the building heights in Frodsham also help create a distinct character within Frodsham especially regarding the roofline. Development should be sympathetic in scale to the context and should respect the building heights of its setting. There are two types of building roofline throughout Frodsham that can be identified:

Type 1 (Uniform roofline)

Buildings with uniform skyline can be found throughout Frodsham. This type of building roofline can be found along the development, for example on the Penrith Close (figure 5.8).

Type 2 (Varied roofline)

Buildings with various heights can be found predominantly in the areas with Pre-War developments. This type of building roofline can be easily identified along the historic core of Frodsham (Town) Conservation Area (figure 5.9).

Design Codes: Urban Structure Building Height (US-BH)

- Development should be sympathetic in height and scale to its context.
- The roofline should reflect the nature of buildings in Frodsham, and should have adequate variety to provide points of interest.
- Roofing materials, eaves, pitch, verge details, chimney stacks, or other features visible above the ridge line should be carefully considered.



Fig 5.8 Uniform roofline in Penrith Close



Fig 5.9 Varied roofline along Main Street

Urban Structure and Built Form

Architectural Style and Materials

This section identifies the variety of architectural styles, and materials that contribute to the local distinctive character of Frodsham.

Frodsham has various architectural styles and materials which differ by location, age and type of buildings. This is reflected in the local vernacular and contributes to the area's local distinctiveness. The materials and architectural detailing used throughout Frodsham contribute to the distinct character of the area.

Building Materials

Pre-War



Natural stone wall



White rendered building

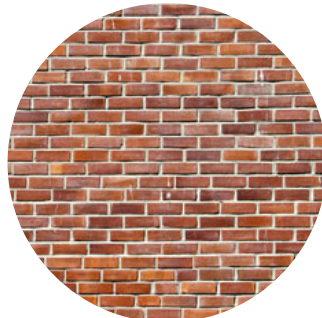


Grey slate roof



Thatched roof

Post-War



Red brick



Red multi brick



Hanging tiles



Slate roof

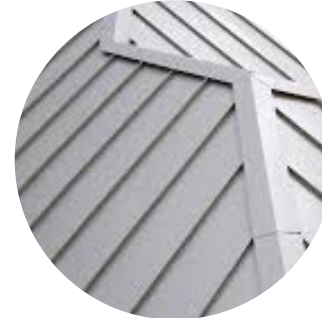
1980's- recent development



Timber cladding



Buff brick



Metal roofing



Roof with solar panel

Building Style Appearances

Pre-War



Post-War



1980's- recent development



Design Codes: Architectural Style Materials (ASM)

- It is recommended that contemporary architectural solutions are considered, but they must be well considered, high-quality designs which use local materials, forms, massing and detailing to reflect the existing built fabric of Frodsham. It should also respect the surrounding character area.
- It is very important that the proposed developments are of a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness of the area. Material selections should be made based on an understanding of the Frodsham built environment.
- The materials list in this document should not be considered prescriptive. Complementary innovation and creativity in material use are allowed, with consideration of materials used in local heritage buildings.
- Developments in High Street must ensure that that shopfront design and materials are of a high standard and respect the character of the building concerned, the character and visual amenity of the surrounding area.

Movement

Vehicular Route

A well-designed street hierarchy and streetscape is a key element of successful places. The relationship between streets and the adjacent buildings strongly influences the safety, appearance and movement function of development. Development should accommodate traffic flow and allow for access by service vehicles, but it should also contribute positively to the character of the development.

There are three types of vehicular routes present in Frodsham that should be put into consideration for new development:

Primary Distributor

The Primary Distributors are the highest order routes within Frodsham, which provide access into and out of the town. Primary distributor are main roads through residential and commercial areas. A56, B5152, and B5394 are three primary distributors within Frodsham, and form the core movement structure within Frodsham (see figure 5.10).

Main Street

As the Primary Distributor runs through the Centre it becomes a Main Street with a narrower carriageway, increased footway and increased enclosure through 2-3 storey buildings (figure 5.11). The Main Street has a more intimate and pedestrian focused character than the Primary Distributor, and naturally calms and slows traffic.

Town Street

Typically, these are distributor streets, and each may have a different character based on the street scene. They are usually fronted by either detached, or semi-detached properties with garages or front gardens, or terraced properties with setback. They

should blend in with the existing character of the streetscape. Town Streets will be the key movement corridors within the residential areas.

When designing a development, this hierarchy of routes should be respected and carefully considered and incorporate the following design codes within the development:

Design Code: Vehicular Route (VR)

- Streets should be identified by a hierarchy of movements and have a specific character linked to the scale of development.
- Streets should provide interest and evolving views.
- The distribution of land uses should respect the general character of the area and street network.
- Any proposed routes should provide a permeable and connected pattern, creating different travel options, particularly for pedestrians.
- Provide improved access to new developments which will funnel new traffic away from existing primary routes.
- Provide 'Refuges' for pedestrians in specified unsafe locations whenever possible, such as Howey Lane/Manley Road.
- Speed limits should be considered for roads and lanes leading to countryside area, which will ensure the tranquillity of these corridors as a 'gateway' to the countryside.



Fig 5.10 A56 road as a primary distributor route



Fig 5.11 Frodsham Main Street



Fig 5.12 Town street in Frodsham's residential area

Movement

Non-Vehicular Route

Particular attention in terms of sustainable movement should be given to the non-vehicular movement networks. Frodsham is highly walkable, with a number of PROW routes, long distance walking routes and trails which create a pleasant walking environment within the village and link it with the open countryside surroundings and the wider region. These non-vehicular movement networks should be carefully considered in any development.

Design Codes: Non-Vehicular Route (NVR)

- Developments must provide attractive and direct walking and cycling connections and promote sustainable movement network.
- Pedestrian paths in new developments must be integrated with any existing pedestrian routes and provide access to wider walking routes, wherever possible.
- When designing non-vehicular routes high quality materials and high landscaping should be encouraged, as such environments will encourage walking and cycling.



Fig 5.13 Existing PROW on east Frodsham

Key Views and Vistas

Development in Frodsham is strongly influenced by a number of key views. There are several important key views from Frodsham, including views towards Frodsham Hill and the open countryside, which have strong influence on developments. Future developments need to especially consider this influence.

Design Codes: Key Views and Vistas (KVV)

- Development should be planned to respond to existing view corridors or reinforce views of existing landmark.
- Orientating buildings to face open views should be enforced.
- The spacing of development should allow for long distance views of the Frodsham Hill or open countryside.
- Key vistas should be protected by controlling development densities and building heights, particularly when in the sight lines of local landmarks.



Fig 5.14 Sandstone Trail Beacon in Frodsham



Fig 5.15 Open countryside view



Fig 5.16 View towards Frodsham Hill from Manley Rd



Fig 5.17 View towards Frodsham Hill from Netherton Drive

Movement

Parking Typologies

The arrangement of car parking shapes the character of different development areas. Parking provision should provide a balanced mix of parking solutions that are integrated into the design and layout of proposals to support its appearance without cars becoming visually dominant. The provision of parking space and safe access must be in line with the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan (2019) and the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2017).

Design Codes: On-Plot and Garage Parking (Mo-OPGP)

- Ensure houses with on-plot parking maximise the extent of a well-defined vertical front boundary.
- Front garden depth from the back of the pavement should be sufficient for a large family car.
- Avoid uninterrupted banks of frontage parking and mitigate the impact of any parking in front of houses with a well-designed landscape.
- On plot parking should consider amenity space and access to the front and back of properties.

Design Codes: On-Street Parking (Mo-OSP)

- Avoid large banks of uninterrupted or visually intrusive parking.
- Moderate visual impacts with small groups of spaces separated by trees or features that provide opportunities to cross safely.
- Delineate on-street parking spaces through the use of surface treatments.



Fig 5.18 Example of on-plot parking in Springbourne



Fig 5.19 Example of on-street parking in Main Street

Design Codes: Courtyard Parking (Mo-CP)

- Courtyard parking should be highly accessible.
- Courtyard parking should be safe, secure and convenient to use and appropriately located to facilitate natural surveillance and ownership.
- Courtyard parking should not dominate the views from the streets, and landscape elements should be incorporated as a natural buffer between the parking area and the streets.



Fig 5.21 Aerial view of on-plot parking type in Springbourne

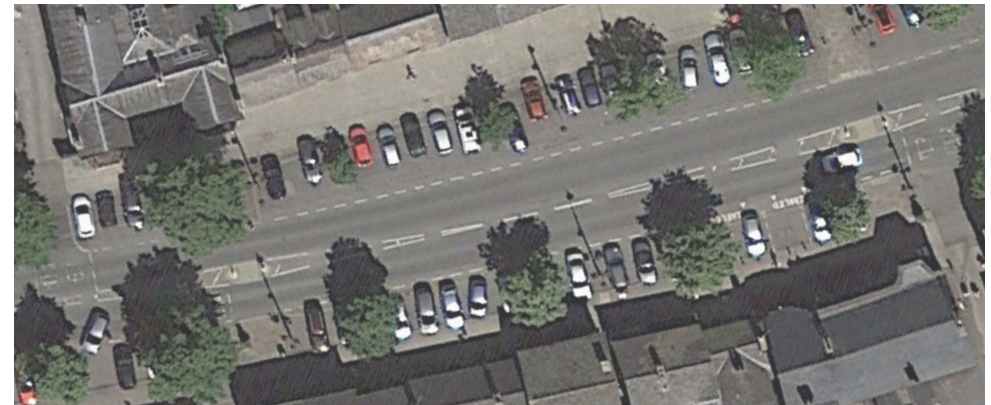


Fig 5.22 Aerial view of on-street parking type in Main Street



Fig 5.20 Example of courtyard parking in Overton Green

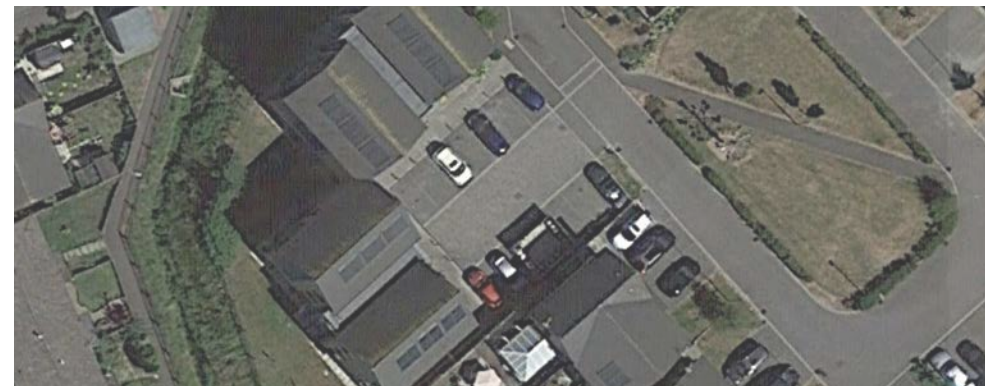


Fig 5.23 Aerial view of courtyard parking type in Overton Green

Green Infrastructure

From the CWaC Local Plan it is stated that Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces, water bodies, biodiversity habitats, and other natural elements that surround, pass through, and link the settlements and landscapes, connecting the cities, towns and villages in the borough. Frodsham consists of a variety of green infrastructure types that make a significant contribution to Frodsham.

Statutory and Non-Statutory Environmental Designations

Frodsham has various statutory and non-statutory environmental designations, such as LWS and SSSI. Some Focus Areas lie within or are adjacent to these green infrastructures, thus consideration of these assets is needed in any development. (See figure 5.24 and figure 5.25)

Design Codes: Environmental Designations (GI-ED)

- Development likely to have an impact on statutory and non-statutory designations must be accompanied by an Ecological Assessment with industry best practice and guidance.
- Development should not result in any net loss of natural assets, and should seek to provide net gains. Where there is unavoidable loss or damage to habitats, sites or features because of exceptional overriding circumstances, mitigation and compensation will be required.
- Development shall contribute towards the provision of green infrastructure and support biodiversity through integration of new wildlife habitats.
- Any development should enhance biodiversity and geodiversity wherever possible. This will involve restoring and increasing the total area of natural habitats and landscape features.



Fig 5.26 Churchfields recreation area



Fig 5.24 Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings SSSI



Fig 5.25 East Clifton Tip Local Wildlife Site



Fig 5.27 Development adjacent to Castle Park open space

Green Infrastructure

Open Space

Within Frodsham, 18 allocated green spaces are identified (with various key functions). Any development should consider these open spaces as an integral aspect of the development's layout planning and structuring. Any existing open spaces should be retained and enhanced, and developments need to contribute to the provision of enhancement of Frodsham's open spaces. (See figure 5.26 and 5.27)

Any development needs to provide and complement an appropriate level and quality of open space;

Design Codes: Open Space(GI-OS)

- Residential development must include an appropriate quantity and quality of outdoor private amenity space, having regard to the type and size of proposed development.
- Developments adjoining public open spaces should arrange main building façades and entrances to face the open space to enhance the character of the space, which will help create a sense of place, improve natural surveillance, and foster social interaction.
- Open spaces should offer a variety of uses related to the surrounding activities and buildings. Where play areas are required, ensure that they are not isolated, locate them within short walking distances of housing and promote natural surveillance with buildings overlooking them.
- Open spaces need to be well connected with the non-vehicular networks, and connected to the wider town area.

Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows

Woodland, trees and hedgerows have a significant contribution to both the built and rural environment of Frodsham. Some groups of trees and hedgerows in Frodsham can be seen as a natural village boundary on the east and west of the town. Their visual amenity helps define the character of the borough. Development should seek to enhance and protect networks of high quality trees, hedgerow and woodland.

Design Codes: Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows (GI-WTH)

- Development which causes loss of trees, hedgerows and woodland must include replacement of above assets within the site, or where this can be demonstrated to not be practical, contribute to off-site provision.
- According to the Hedgerow Regulation 1997, any good quality hedgerows classified as important should be protected and enhanced where necessary. This is known as 'Important Hedgerow'.
- The spacing of development should reflect the rural character and allow for long distance views of the countryside from the public realm. Trees and landscaping should be incorporated in the design.
- Within the countryside frontage areas, should be preserved the rural character of the roads by retaining grass verges, hedgerows and trees.



Fig 5.28 Hedgerow along Chester Rd as Frodsham natural boundary



Fig 5.29 Hedgerow along Townfield lane as Frodsham natural boundary



Fig 5.30 TPOs along Howey Lane



Applying Design Codes to Potential Sites

06

Applying Design Codes to Potential Sites

AECOM and FNPSG previously had a masterplanning exercise regarding the 11 potential allocated sites throughout Frodsham (Frodsham Masterplan Report, May 2019). This Design Code report is complementary to this and can be incorporated into the previous report. With the appointment of potential allocated sites in the predetermined focus areas, the sites' development is expected to comply with the codes described in this document.

This design code table looks at relevant assets for each potential allocated sites (see table 6.1). The grey bullet points within the table are assets in the Focus Areas which secondary priority considerations in each of the specific allocated sites.

Focus Areas	Site	Heritage Assets			Urban Structure and Built Form							
		Conservation Area	Listed Building	Other historic features	Building Blocks and Building Line			Building Heights and Skylines		Architectural Style		
					Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 1	Type 2	Before WW	Post WW	Recent
A	Site 10	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
B	FRO/0005	●			●	●		●	●	●	●	
D	FRO/0010	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	FRO/0038	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	FRO/0040	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Site 1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Site 6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Site 7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
E	FRO/0039				●	●		●	●		●	●
F	FRO/0060				●	●		●	●		●	●

Focus Areas	Site	Movement								Green Infrastructure		
		Vehicular			Non-Vehicular Route	Key Views	Parking Typology			Statutory and Non-Statutory	Open Space	Trees, Hedgerows, Woodland
		Primary Distributor	Main Street	Town Street			Garage and On- Plot Parking	On-Street Parking	Courtyard Parking			
A	Site 10	<div></div>		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>				<div></div>	<div></div>
B	FRO/0005			<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>					<div></div>
D	FRO/0010	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
	FRO/0038	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
	FRO/0040	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
	Site 1	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
	Site 6	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
	Site 7	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
E	FRO/0039			<div></div>	<div></div>		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>			<div></div>
F	FRO/0060			<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>				<div></div>	<div></div>

Table 6.1 Design Code Matrix for 11 potential allocated sites

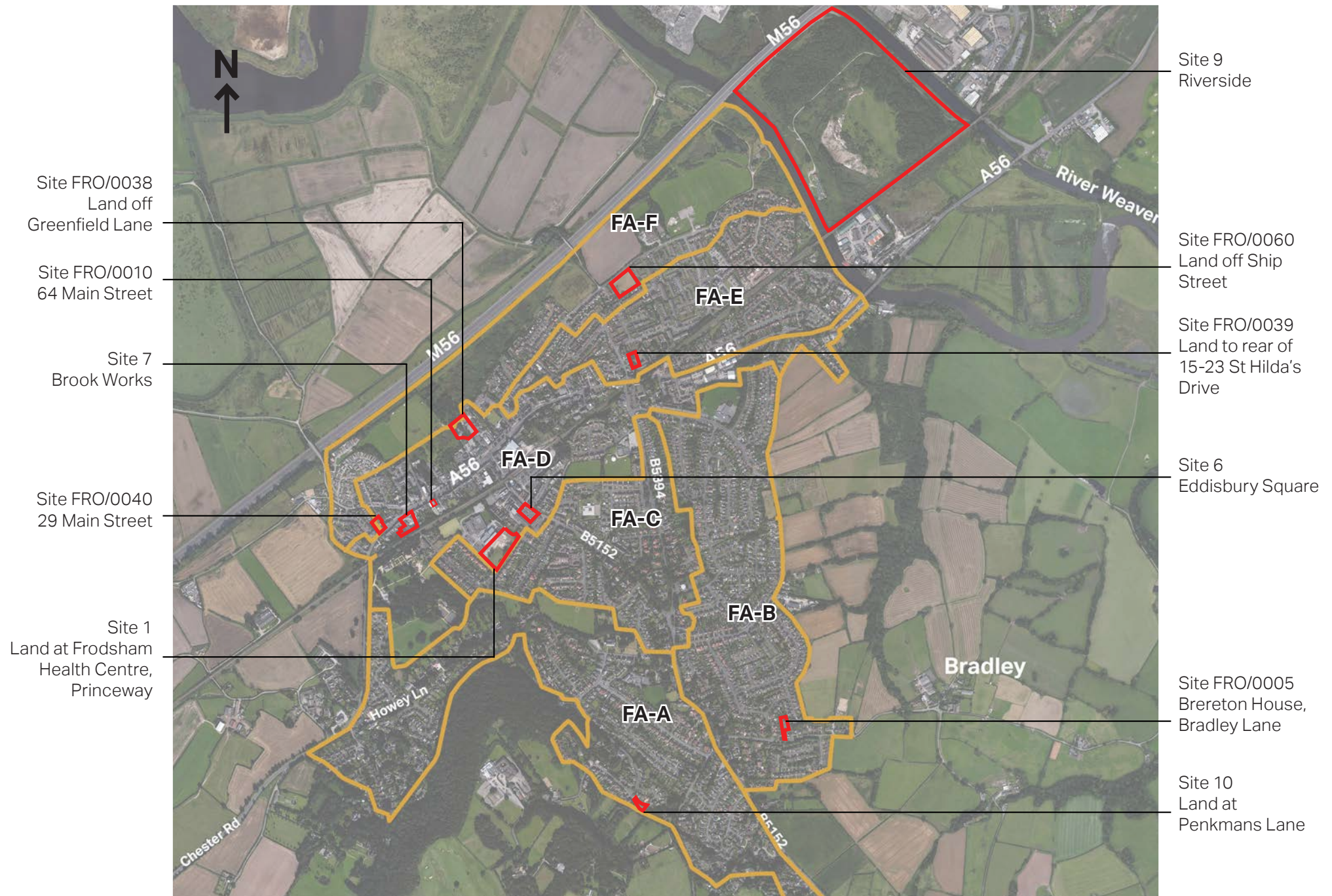


Fig 6.1 11 potential allocated sites within the focus areas



Next Steps

07

Next Steps

This report aims to identify the key design features present in Frodsham with the intention of influencing the design of any forthcoming development. It is recommended:

- The FNPSG should use this document to embed design policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The document should also be used by developers in order to understand the design character of the housing which will be appropriate within Frodsham's character areas.
- This design code should be considered together with the potential allocated sites within the existing masterplan report.
- The design codes apply to any potential development within Frodsham's focus areas.

It is important to note that the design details which have been noted in this report should be carefully interpreted in order to avoid developments which are a pastiche of the existing buildings within Frodsham as this would undermine Frodsham's character.

In order for the neighbourhood plan to be effective, any design and character-focused policies will require close liaison and co-operation with the Local Authority, landowners, and developers. Co-operation between and among these bodies can be used initially to ensure the proposed policies and strategy are robust and future proofed. At a later date, these discussions will help to refine proposals leading to future planning applications.



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