

# Sherfield English VDS - Appendix I: Guidance Summary

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*This appendix provides a summary of the guidance notes for any new or extended property in the parish. It is just a summary of the main points – the full text of the VDS is integral to the guidance, including the information in Appendix II.*

*Reference should also be made to Borough Policy and, if available, the Neighbourhood Development Plan.*

## **The habitation pattern**

**Guidance Note 1:** The visual character of Sherfield English is primarily defined by a settlement pattern of dispersed hamlets and scattered dwellings. Any developments or individual buildings in the parish should maintain this pattern, and should not create a concentration of dwellings, or significantly degrade the spacing between hamlets.

## **Piece-wise linear development**

**Guidance Note 2:** Any development should maintain the pattern of piece-wise linear development, with no roads closely parallel to others, or folding back on themselves. Any plots created should avoid one dwelling backing onto another (backland or tandem development).

## **Connection with fields and woods**

**Guidance Note 3:** The many existing gaps between individual dwellings are just as important in defining the character of the area as the surrounding fields and woods, and should be preserved. 'Infill' between dwellings, whether in gardens or fields, should not be seen as acceptable in the way it might be in a larger village with a settlement boundary.

**Guidance Note 4:** A field, wood or garden immediately 'behind' existing dwellings should remain undeveloped, particularly where it is behind dwellings which have no other boundary with undeveloped land.

**Guidance Note 5:** Where a row of dwellings forming a group is entirely on one side of highway, a specific character for that group is created, and this should be preserved. This is especially true where there is an open prospect across fields.

**Guidance Note 6:** At the level of the individual plot, new dwellings should ideally have at least one boundary (notionally a quarter of the total boundary) with a field, pasture or woodland, and should preserve the same for any existing dwellings, in line with the established settlement pattern.

## Dwelling plot details

**Guidance Note 7:** The plot size for new dwellings should take account of the local norm, rather than the Borough or national one. Specifically, if permission is given for an existing plot to be divided, it should not result in any plot being markedly smaller than the average for other dwellings within the same group. In this context a 'group' is typically dwellings on the same road, but reference should be made to the groups identified in the last section of Appendix II.

**Guidance Note 8:** Both frontage width and the spacing between buildings are important factors in creating the character of each group of dwellings. It should be shown in any proposal that the new dwelling or extended dwelling maintains the established pattern, and that neither of these measurements is markedly less than the average for the group.

**Guidance Note 9:** Where neighbouring dwellings establish a characteristic pattern of set-back from the highway, any new building or extension should preserve this, even if there are already isolated exceptions.

**Guidance Note 10:** In groups where hedging is the characteristic frontage of its neighbours, a new or developed dwelling should maintain this character, giving precedence to this over other style considerations. Where the pattern is varied there will be more freedom, but the development should follow one of the established styles.

## Architectural character

**Guidance Note 11:** Where there is no other dwelling within the same sweep of view the only architectural design constraint will be compatibility with rural surroundings. If a proposed new dwelling or extension will be clearly visible from outside its curtilage it should harmonise with a view which will be dominated inevitably by trees and fields. Provided the bulk is not excessive, even the most innovative designs should be able to achieve this by sympathetic choice of external materials.

**Guidance Note 12:** A new or developed dwelling should be consistent with the general architectural ethos of any immediately adjacent neighbours, observing both apparent bulk, and external materials, but not necessarily any specific details of form. The degree of compatibility should be proportional to the closeness of the neighbouring building, with a relaxation starting once there is a gap as wide as either dwelling.

## Open spaces

**Guidance Note 13:** Any developments, whether domestic or commercial, should not significantly degrade the visual amenity of the open spaces and visible woodland across the parish, particularly those identified in Section 8.