



New Housing Developments

In Letchworth Garden City



The World's First Garden City

Letchworth is Special

It is the world's first Garden City, advocated by Ebenezer Howard as a solution to the poverty and squalor of England's cities and towns in the late 1800s. Garden cities set out to achieve the perfect balance of town and country.

The approach of Howard's company to the ownership of land was special too: First Garden City Ltd insisted on retaining freehold ownership of its Estate. It did so in order to control developments on its land and create the necessary financial resources to fund future investment for the benefit of the town.

Later, the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 (LRA), gave individual leaseholders the right to buy the freehold from the landlord. Many have taken up this option.

In Letchworth Garden City, most lessees buying their freeholds were, and still are, required to sign up to a Scheme of Management. Under this scheme, permission is normally required before making external changes to a Garden City home or for the development of new dwellings on existing plots.

The Scheme of Management has helped preserve the character of Letchworth by protecting the key features of individual houses and their group value.

There are many other examples of such schemes across the country. In the South East these include, Hampstead Garden Suburb, the Dulwich and Grosvenor Estates, all introduced under LRA legislation.

Considering A Residential Development

As freeholders of the Garden City Estate we operate a Scheme of Management.

We are committed to working with residents to preserve the appearance and character of Letchworth Garden City.

If you wish to undertake a residential development you will need to apply for our consent.

This requirement is separate from the permission required from the local authority under planning legislation and the Building Regulations.

We use these Design Principles to help you and your representatives to understand the type of schemes that are likely to be acceptable. Applicants will be required to provide a Design Statement and a Sustainability Statement in support of their application.

Please Remember

An approval Under the Scheme of Management confirms that the proposals comply with the Foundation's requirements on design and aesthetics and is not:

- A planning permission;
- Listed Building consent;
- A permission to build.

Also:

- Building Regulations approval, Party Wall Agreement and/or neighbours consent may be required;
- The Heritage Foundation cannot mediate, assist or formally determine on neighbour disputes.

We're Here To Help

Contemplating development?
Call us now on 01462 476017

You are advised to remember to always seek guidance and advice from qualified professionals.

Pre-application Advice

We have a dedicated team, on hand to support you through every step of the proposed development review process; in fact we would be happy to help from the very start. The earlier you come to talk to us, the more guidance we can provide.

Whether your plans exist in your head or are hand drawn, we can discuss your ideas and help you develop a scheme that meets your needs, is sympathetic to your home and compliant with the Design Principles. We're happy to hold a meeting with you and your architect/agent for preliminary discussions on your proposals.

The Character Areas



Heritage Character



Modern Character

As Letchworth Garden City was developed over a number of years, there is a clear difference in the style and character of parts of the town. This resulted in the introduction in 2009 of defined Character Areas, which were subsequently revised in 2013.

Heritage Character Area

Modern Character Area

There is a set of Design Principles for each Character Area, these have been developed taking into account the style and characteristics of specific homes and streets, rather than simply the age of the buildings.

Each area has been defined through a detailed examination of characteristics relevant to individual homes and streets, including the date of the property, house style, detail and materials, road layout, parking, house orientation, the building line, trees and verges, front gardens, boundaries and density.

To find out what Character Area your home (or site) is in, you can use an online search tool at www.lechworth.com/designprinciples or call us on 01462 476017.

This document provides guidance for applicants considering new housing schemes.

Although the Character Areas are mainly related to proposals for alterations to existing homes, they are also of relevance to potential new housing schemes, as we have to regard the impact on the wider context.

In all cases each proposal will be assessed on its own merits, although the impact of new development on the surrounding context, as well as an individual property, will be carefully considered.



The Design Principles outlined in this publication relate to proposals for new dwellings in all Character Areas of Letchworth Garden City.

The Heritage Character Area represents the oldest and most historically important homes in the town, particularly (but not exclusively) the homes built between 1903 and 1930, which played a pivotal role in defining the character of Letchworth Garden City. The area includes the very first homes to be built following the creation of the Garden City in 1903, plus all of the houses constructed as part of the 1905 and 1907 cottage exhibitions.

Homes in the Heritage Character Area vary greatly in design; however, they are united through the high quality of materials, workmanship and architectural features with strong influence from the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Directly linked to the Garden City ethos of 'the best of town and country', many Heritage Area houses were set back from the road, with spacious front gardens. The green character continues across the street scene, hedged frontages, broad grass verges and numerous trees.

Careful consideration of any application within this area will be necessary to ensure that important characteristics are protected and the quality of the setting preserved.

The Modern Character Area includes a wide range of house styles, with some specific areas having a unique generic style.

Many homes have open frontages set along wide roads. They were generally built with contemporary materials such as pressed bricks and concrete roof tiles.

Using the Design Principles

The Design Principles have been developed to help you plan and implement an acceptable form of residential development for Letchworth Garden City.

They are intended to be a starting point, to enable initial discussion to take place.

PLEASE BE AWARE...

The purpose of the Design Principles is to provide assistance for applicants and their agents as to what may or may not be reasonably acceptable in certain circumstances. However, in view of the breadth of styles of property and street scene in the Garden City Estate, each case will be carefully considered on the specific circumstances of the property and its context. In all cases a high quality and considered design will be sought.

PLEASE NOTE:

When reading the principles you may wish to refer to the useful glossary on page 12 explaining the building terms in this document.

New Housing Developments

New housing developments, subject to Heritage Foundation approval, should normally comply with these Principles. Development proposals should be of a high quality, enhancing the character and context of the site and demonstrate how they meet Garden City design principles, to ensure that they complement the character of the surrounding area, including consideration of pioneering design solutions.

They should also meet the highest standards of energy efficiency and sustainability. New homes should be built to last and be comfortable for occupiers, with any technology easy to operate by all.

Additional measures beyond those required by the Building Regulations and planning policy are sought in this document, which reflect the objectives of the Heritage Foundation and the special nature of Letchworth Garden City. These measures will lead to an enhanced quality of homes and development. There will, however, always need to be a balanced approach to ensure that these requirements do not prejudice the viability and delivery of new homes.

New Dwellings General Requirements

- The mix of housing should be discussed with the Heritage Foundation, including consideration of local need;
- The design of homes should be tenure blind with no difference between the appearance of private and affordable accommodation;
- Room sizes, should as a minimum, meet DCLG standards, although in some cases larger sizes will be sought;
- The internal layout of developments should ensure that they provide good quality living environments, which are light and airy;
- Each proposal should carefully consider the relationship with neighbouring properties and the street scene. This will include scale and massing of buildings;
- Applications should not harm the character, quality or setting of Homes of Special Interest;
- New housing development should not lead to a significant loss of residential amenity to neighbouring occupiers, by a loss of daylight, sunlight or privacy, or lead to an overbearing impact;
- 2 storey buildings should normally be a minimum of 2 metres from any boundary;
- Single storey dwellings or any associated single storey buildings associated should normally be a minimum of 1 metre from any boundary;
- Front gardens are an important part of Garden City design and traditional housing layouts should normally incorporate these as part of a comprehensive landscaping scheme for any development, which should include structural planting and front hedges, to enhance the character and appearance of the street scene and encourage biodiversity;
- Each plot should have a frontage that maintains a minimum of 50% of the area as 'green' soft landscaping, free of car parking or hardstanding areas;
- In general, on street parking solutions will be discouraged and layouts should ensure that the visual impact of on-plot and on-street car parking on the street scene is carefully considered, along with the safety of parking provision, its inter-relationship with pedestrians and cyclists and the general amenity of the surrounding area;
- Communal gardens, or where appropriate balconies (subject to their appearance and overlooking), should normally be provided to serve apartment blocks and may exceptionally be considered where below standard front and rear gardens are proposed;



- Developments of 10 or more family homes should provide a local area of play (LAP) as a minimum and consideration of the provision of a Local Equipment Area of Play (LEAP) should be made and discussed whether appropriate with the Heritage Foundation;
- Houses should have a rear garden, a minimum of 15 metres in depth; unless suitable alternative provision is made on the development;
- Development should usually respect the uniformity of the front building line of the existing street;
- In developments of 5 or more dwellings, a submission will be made to the Heritage Foundation, setting out a training and/or local apprenticeship scheme linked to the proposed development. This should normally be provided in partnership with North Herts College, although alternative training providers will be considered. When a suitable scheme cannot be provided, a contribution to an existing scheme that is of benefit to local people may be considered;
- For developments on Heritage Foundation freehold land, developers will be required to sign up to the Scheme of Management, which will apply to the completed properties;
- Each application must be accompanied by a sustainability statement covering all the points raised on pages 10 and 11;
- We will apply the RIBA 'soft landing' principles in order to learn from each development; and
- The Heritage Foundation will seek a precise specification and samples of all external materials and will require access to each site whilst works take place, within health & safety requirements, to ensure compliance with the agreed materials and finishes.



Cedar Gardens Letchworth



Ashfield Drive, Letchworth

PLEASE NOTE:

See pages 10 and 11 for the Foundation's requirements for sustainability in new developments.

New Housing Developments



Lindsell Avenue, Letchworth



Derwenthorpe, York

Layout Design Principles

Any new housing development must demonstrate an understanding of the context, history and setting. This should include the original intentions for the site and how any development will impact on Garden City design principles. Consideration of linkages to the surrounding area and permeability of the proposed development should be made, along with maximising opportunities for improvements to pedestrian, cycling and public transport facilities, serving the proposed development and surrounding area.

All new housing proposals should consider the following:

- In most cases, buildings should be within groups, creating an identity for clusters of buildings or streets. Variations within these groups can be achieved by minor changes to buildings and building lines;
- The street scene can be broken down by the use of sequences of buildings, with the potential for groups of buildings to be at 90 degrees to each other;
- Focal points at the end of vistas should be created by appropriately designed buildings or substantive landscaping features;
- Consideration should be made to passive solar gain, both from the perspective of its positive use in housing design and layout and also negative implications for buildings in terms of comfortable living conditions and how this may be mitigated;
- Sufficient car and cycle parking provision must be made;
- Parking should not be within large parking courts or dominate property frontages, but designed to integrate with the street scene, with a clear definition between parking and garden areas;
- Any parking areas should be visible from either the public place or neighbouring properties;
- If garages are provided, they should be large enough to accommodate a modern car and bicycle (minimum internal dimensions of 3m x 6m);
- The spacing between groups and individual buildings is an essential component of Garden City design and must be incorporated into the layout of new housing schemes;
- Layouts should usually create vistas by way of groups of buildings and within tree-lined corridors, leading to buildings sited within a landscaped setting;
- There should be a combination of structural landscaping to assist in forming the street and lower key planting within residential curtilages; boundary treatments should match the predominant original style in the street or area. Verges should be provided to allow for tree planting and planting should be provided adjacent to boundaries and the public highway;



- All developments should include a landscape and biodiversity strategy, as part of the scheme layout, ensuring that new development will lead to attractive well designed places, which will have a positive impact on the local environment;
- Developments should include high quality, well designed public open space. Housing proposals should incorporate greens fronting groups of houses, often found in early Garden City layouts;
- Play areas must be provided in developments of 10 or more family homes, in a location that will not cause disturbance to occupiers of nearby homes;
- All open space should be visible from dwellings in the public place, in order for it to be defensible;
- Cycle routes should be provided as part of the new layout and these should preferably pass in front, rather than to the rear, of people's homes or be in safe and visible locations. They should be designed to provide a safe environment, which will include consideration of their inter-relationship with car parking and roads with speeds beyond 40 mph, where a separate track may be necessary. Covered cycle parking should be provided for each dwelling that does not have a sufficiently sized garage provision;
- Each dwelling should be accessible from a pavement or pedestrianised area;
- Internal streets should be designed so vehicle speeds do not exceed 20mph and meet the requirements of pedestrians and cyclists;
- Sufficient space is provided for refuse and recycling facilities, avoiding bins being located on the front of properties;
- Allotments should be considered in all schemes, but provided in proposals of 20 units or more (see page 11);
- The original First Garden City Ltd. Building Regulations applied a maximum density of 12 dwellings to the acre (30 dwellings per hectare) exclusive of roads, although lower densities were applied in some circumstances. Although the density of new development will be considered on the specific circumstances on each site and its setting, as a guide, the density of new housing should not normally exceed 30 dw/ha. This does not include proposals for development in town centre locations or on the edge of the town centre, or in cases where the proposal incorporates a well designed scheme of apartments.



Howard Drive, Letchworth



Lytton Avenue, Letchworth

New Housing Developments



Lytton Avenue, Letchworth



Meadow Way, Letchworth

Design Detail for Heritage Character Style Developments

In addition to the guidance provided on pages 4 to 7, development in the Heritage Character Area should normally adopt a design approach using traditional materials and complementary period components encompassing the following principles:

- Window styles are an important feature of any house and help determine the character of the building. Details such as equal sight lines, flush casements and external glazing bars or lead are essential. In some cases the use of original materials will be required. Rooflights must be of conservation type;
- Where render is proposed, this should normally be rough cast and of an appropriate colour (normally cream);
- Door styles are an important feature of any house and help determine the character of the building. PVCu front doors are not acceptable, although composite doors may be acceptable when their appearance accurately replicates the proportions and style of original period timber door designs. In some cases, original materials to match the adjoining properties will be required;
- Roof pitches can have a substantial impact on the appearance of a building and the street scene; therefore, all proposed roof pitches and design of the roof and roof line should respect the surrounding context;
- Careful consideration must be given to the materials and finishes to be used; therefore, a definitive schedule should be provided with any application including samples. In some cases, original materials to match the adjoining properties will be required (e.g. clay plain tiles);
- Any design should respond to, and harmonise with, the individual qualities of neighbouring properties and the setting. Therefore, applications which are of a poor or inappropriate design, may still be refused consent, even if they meet technical requirements contained within this guidance;

Compliance with Principles incorporated in the remainder of this document will continue to apply.



Design Detail for Contemporary Style Developments

In the Heritage Character Area, the Heritage Foundation generally looks for designs using traditional materials and components that respect the age and character of the adjoining properties. However, a proposal for a contemporary design may be supported if the proposals have an exemplar bespoke design that enhances the setting.

Should contemporary design be considered acceptable in principle, pioneering and innovative designs that provide bespoke and sustainable solutions that carefully consider their context, are essential.

This should also review the opportunity to meet the highest levels of sustainability and energy efficiency (pages 10 and 11).

If it is intended to create development using a contemporary design, the following principles should usually be applied:

- Standard house types with their elevations modified to appear contemporary are generally not acceptable;
- Use of modern and new materials should be an integral part of the design and not just introduced in unrelated panels;
- Modern energy efficient materials will be encouraged as part of contemporary design;
- Compliance with Principles incorporated in the remainder of this document will continue to apply.



Derwenthorpe, York



Derwenthorpe, York

New housing developments sustainability



Derwenthorpe, York



Cedar Avenue, Letchworth

Letchworth Garden City was built on pioneering and innovative principles. When assessing proposals for new development, it is important that this pioneering spirit is recaptured. An important element of this is ensuring that new development meets the highest standards of sustainability and minimises its long term impact on the environment.

It is our view that a fabric first approach is preferable to ensure that buildings provide a long term, efficient and comfortable living environment for occupiers across all tenures. We will however also welcome opportunities to generate renewable energy as part of the design of new dwellings, where this is of an acceptable design and appearance.

A Sustainability Statement should accompany all proposals for new housing; setting out how the proposal addresses the following items;

- How non-car transport modes are encouraged;
- Pedestrian and cycle links to local facilities, public transport links and employment areas;
- All new dwellings should comply with Lifetime Homes criteria;
- The performance of the building fabric shall meet Zero Carbon Standards of apartment/mid terrace – 39 kwh/m²/year and end terrace/semi-detached/detached – 46 kwh/m²/year;
- In terms of conservation of fuel and power, a 19% improvement against the Target Emission Rate (TER) included in Part L of the Building Regulations 2013 (with 2016 amendments) is sought;
- Air Tightness compliance with the Building Regulations should be demonstrated by on site testing;
- We will welcome external wall treatments that consider changes in climate – for example extreme heat events;
- Provision should be made for electric car charging points, particularly in larger development sites. These should be sited in the most inconspicuous locations possible. Where this is not possible, the appropriate cabling for future installations should be provided to serve garages and other parking areas;
- Where appropriate, combined Heat and Power or Biomass boilers will be encouraged, particularly on larger development sites. Communal heating for apartment blocks should be considered;
- All dwellings should seek to attain an Energy Performance Certificate rating of A, but B is considered as a minimum requirement;
- Developments should include details of ventilation and night cooling to serve new dwellings, with a preference for low energy, natural strategies;
- Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) should be included as part of any development proposals and non-permeable hard surfacing is to be avoided where possible;



- A strategy to reduce water demand to serve the development. This should include consideration of water recycling, re-use, storage and water use minimisation measures in order to meet a maximum water usage of 105 litres per person per day;
- Landscaping schemes will be integral to the design of any scheme and proposals should demonstrate that they encourage bio-diversity, this should also be linked to SUDs, to create interesting environments;
- All new residential developments should incorporate bird boxes;
- All new dwellings should have cable television and high speed internet broadband connection, where practical;
- All materials should be from certified sustainable sources and recycled materials are encouraged;
- If domestic appliances are included with new homes, they should have a minimum energy rating of A, although a higher rating is encouraged;
- All new dwellings shall have covered secure cycle parking, which should preferably be provided on each plot and may be part of an appropriately sized garage (3m x 6m);
- Opportunities to incorporate allotments or community gardens within housing layouts will be sought on developments with more than 20 dwellings;
- Where technologies are used, these should be understandable for all occupiers and not so complex that they are rendered unusable;
- Clear user instructions of all technologies incorporated, should be provided to all new homeowners, with information retained for future occupiers; and
- As new technology, government legislation and scientific views and recommendations evolve, these requirements will be subject to periodic reviews.

Plot Splits

Plot splits to form two or more dwellings on what was originally a single dwelling plot normally require approval under the terms of your lease or the Scheme of Management. There is a presumption against plot splits and re-development of existing properties, except in special circumstances. If you are considering this type of proposal, you should apply for a lease amendment or amendment under the Scheme of Management. The relevant drawings and details will form part of the legal process when forming the amended lease and therefore will be deemed to have the Foundation's approval.

Once your application for a lease or deed amendment is received, it will be assigned to a member of the team who will follow it through to conclusion.

DON'T FORGET:

Most residential plots in Letchworth Garden City are covenanted to be used for 'one dwelling house' only; generally the Heritage Foundation will not support proposals to revise this and reserves the right to maintain the status of the original covenant.

Glossary

A

Artificial Cladding

External wall cladding manufactured to represent original wall finish materials such as rendering or brickwork; usually to provide additional insulation

B

Boundary

The line that determines the limit of a property and usually delineates the separation of a property from the neighbouring property

Building Footprint

The area of ground covered by a building

Building Line

The line defined by the main front wall of buildings

C

Casement

(See Window Casement, Sash or Light)

Composite Door

A door that is constructed of a variety of materials; the outer skin is usually moulded glass reinforced plastic (GRP) which covers timber reinforcing sections and foam insulation. They are very strong and secure. They are designed to replicate the style and proportions of timber doors, but due to the materials used they do not readily fade or discolour and require minimal maintenance

Conservation Type Rooflight

A rooflight recessed into the plane of the roof tiles and therefore not significantly proud of the roof finish. Usually with a black or dark grey finish

D

DCLG

Department for Communities & Local Government

District Heating (or Heat Networks)

Supply heat from a central source directly to homes and businesses through a network of pipes carrying hot water, meaning individual homes do not need to generate their own heat

Dormer (Window)

A construction with a window that projects from a sloping roof

E

Eaves

The construction at the foot of a sloping roof

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

This rates the energy efficiency of the building between A (most efficient) to G (least efficient)

Energy Rating (for appliances)

A tool to help customers compare appliances energy performance between A to D

Equal Sight Lines

Non-opening casements or sashes installed into the fixed panes of a window to give equal or balanced glass lines

External Glazing Bars

Mock glazing bars fitted to the external face of the glass in a window or door that simulate true glazing bars

External Leading

Lead strips fixed to the external face of the glass in a window or door, to simulate a leaded light

F

Flush Casement (window)

Opening casement (sash) that closes into the window frame and finishes flush with the face of the window frame

Frontage

The area of land between the front building line and the boundary to the public highway

G

Gable

A triangular shaped vertical wall of a building directly under the roof

Glazing Bars

Small bars forming the framework that support smaller multiple glass panes within a window casement or glazed section of a door

Grey Water

Waste water that is generated from domestic activities such as laundry, dishwashing and bathing, which can be collected and recycled on-site for use such as garden watering

H

Habitable Room

Bedrooms, lounges, dining rooms, studies and other reception rooms in a house

Half Round Ridge Tiles

A semi-circular roof tile used to finish the ridge

Hardstanding

An area finished in concrete, stone, bricks, blocks, tarmac or gravel

Hard Landscaping (or Hardscape)

Ground areas finished in concrete, stone, bricks, blocks, tarmac or gravel

Hipped Roof

A roof where all of its sides are sloping i.e. with no gable end

Hip

The external angle formed by the meeting of two sloping sides of a roof

Hopper Head

An open topped receptacle connected to the top of a rainwater down pipe, which receives rainwater from a roof situated behind a parapet wall

I

Internal/Mock Glazing Bars

Decorative strips fixed between the double glazing panes, to represent glazing bars

Glossary

L

Lifetime Homes

A series of design criteria to make homes adaptable for lifetime use

Light

A glazed section of a window

P

Pavior

A small brick sized block or slab for surfacing hardstandings etc.

Photovoltaic (PV) Panel

A panel (made up of many PV/Solar cells), usually fixed to a roof slope, that creates electricity from sunlight. (Should not be confused with Solar Thermal Panel)

PVC

Polyvinyl chloride – is the material used for plastic windows, doors, fascias, soffits and barge boards, as an alternative to timber.

R

RIBA

Royal Institute of British Architects

S

Sash

(See Window Casement or Sash)

Sett

A rectangular or square small module paving stone

Soft Landing Principles

These principles are applied by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and seek to compare the required performance outcomes of buildings with actual performance outcomes.

Soft Landscaping (or Softscape)

Areas of planting e.g. flower beds, borders and lawns

Solar Thermal Panel

A panel usually fixed to a roof slope that warms water using the heat of the sun (Should not be confused with PV Panel)

Storm, Stormproof or Lipped Casements (Window)

An opening casement (sash) that overlaps the face of the window frame when closed

W

Window Casement or Sash

Usually the opening part of the window, but can be fixed as a 'dummy' casement or sash, to create equal sight lines

More information:

Historic England – Conservation Bulletin Summer 2014 – Housing

www.content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-bulletin-72/cb-72.pdf

Design Council – CABE – Building for Life 12

www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition

Zero Carbon Hub (now closed, website contains relevant information)

www.zerocarbonhub.org

Building Research Establishment

www.bre.co.uk/sustainable-construction-of-buildings

Department for Communities & Local Government – Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard___Find-web-version.pdf

North Herts Local Plan (including current Design SPD)

www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/planning/planning-policy/proposed-submission-local-plan-2011-2031

To find out more about Letchworth Garden City:

www.leitchworth.com

www.garden-cities-exhibition.com

Research on a specific property can be undertaken via the Garden City Collection, which includes an archive of early plans and photographs

www.gardencitycollection.com

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foundation**
Letchworth Garden City