



Design & Character Appraisal

Land to the East of St. Nicholas

Addendum to Design & Access Statement

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1. Introduction

About This Document

This addendum document is to be read alongside the 'Residential Development at Land to the East of St. Nicholas' Design and Access Statement produced by Harmers. This document provides an overview of the context and character of St Nicholas village and other villages within the Vale of Glamorgan. The aim of this is to fully set the proposed development into the context of not only the immediate surroundings and character of St. Nicholas but those of the wider Vale. This context is also considered in parallel with planning policy guidance which considers issues relating to design and character.

The overall aim of this document is to clarify how the proposed development can reflect upon and enhance the character of St Nicholas and surrounding settlements. Details relating to the design and character of the proposed development are included in the final section.

2. Planning Policy Context

Vale of Glamorgan guidance documents which concern design and character have been used as a benchmark against which development proposals have been assessed. These documents include:

Conservation Area in the Rural Vale SPG: This sets out some key design features and character information which have been taken into consideration. Including guidance on:

- Materials
- Boundaries and enclosures
- Village boundaries

Design in the Landscape SPG: This guidance provides practical advice on how design issues affecting the landscape are best addressed in new development proposals. This includes:

- Urban edge site treatments
- Highways design
- Features in the landscape
- Guidance on planting
- How landscape can help shape character in different type of settlements

St. Nicholas Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2009: This includes analysis of features which give St Nicholas its special architectural and historic interest. It provides a basis on which new development within, and close to the St. Nicholas Conservation Area can be assessed. This document has been used as a key benchmark when considering the character and design of the proposed development

3. St Nicholas Village

Density & Massing

The majority of the properties in St. Nicholas are large detached private dwellings. These are often set within generous landscaped front and back gardens, most with on plot parking and garages. Small clusters of small terraced properties are also scattered around the village. These help add variety to the built environment whilst providing structure through isolated lengths of continuous frontage. Most properties in St. Nicholas are two storeys in height. In most cases, parking is provided on plot.

The rural and historic nature of the village means that there is no clear street hierarchy or structure to the wider village. At present, it is broadly characterised by its linear nature adjacent to the A48 which runs through the centre of St. Nicholas. The central focus to the village is situated around St. Nicholas church, the churchyard and the village green on the northern side of the A48. The church is the natural and historic centre of the village, with properties arranged informally around the perimeter loop road. The village green accommodates a war memorial, with little else occupying the space. Very few properties front onto the village green, with large hedges and stone walls providing enclosure to the sides and rear of adjacent properties.



The village green in St Nicholas is the natural centre to the village. However, properties tend to back on to this and, instead, front the A48.

Boundary Treatments

St. Nicholas' character is reflected in, and enhanced by, the boundary treatments used throughout the village. A palette of treatments which are complimentary to one another help to reinforce a strong character. These boundary treatments can broadly be categorised as the following:

- High (approximately 6ft) limestone walls
- Low limestone walls (2-4ft) combined with hedges or raised planting areas
- High (approximately 6ft) hedges where backs of gardens front onto public space/highways
- Low (up to 4ft) hedgerows or raised planting areas

Higher hedge or stone wall boundary treatments tend to be used at the side or rear of properties where the boundaries are visible to the public. Lower stone walls or hedges tend to be used as a boundary for front gardens and provide an important threshold delineating private space from public space. There are instances of low stone walls with railings but these are generally not characteristic of the village.



Examples of the use of local stone for wall construction (left) and the strong partnership of hedge and stone wall (right).

‘Conservation Areas in the Rural Vale Supplementary Planning Guidance’ recognises these common boundary treatments and states that ‘there is often an attractive partnership of hedge with stone walling within the villages’ (para 3.8.2). The proposed development will seek to continue the partnership of stone wall and hedge boundary, further enhancing the adjacent Conservation Area and strong Vale of Glamorgan precedent.

Materials & Architectural Features

The character of St Nicholas cannot be defined by one single architectural style. Instead, there are a mixture of styles which represent the growth of the village over a long period of time. There are ten listed buildings within the Village, the timeline of development of these buildings ranges from the 14th to the 20th centuries. For example, St Nicholas Church Hall is in a typical Arts & Crafts style in contrast to the 16th century thatched-roof Three Tuns.



St Nicholas Church Hall and Church Hall House are of a typical arts and crafts style



The Three Tuns on the A48.

The 'St. Nicholas Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan' identifies that local lias limestone, often faced with painted render and occasionally dressed with red brick and combined with natural slate or thatch as key material features which contribute to the special interest of St. Nicholas. Limestone and white render do make up the majority of the historic buildings within St. Nicholas and these materials are used in a variety of ways. There are instances where buildings are entirely rendered, entirely stone or a mixture of the two. Often, red brick accents break up the materials and add decorative interest. The images below illustrate this.



Two examples of instances where stone and white render is combined with red brick accent details and Tudor/ Elizabethan timber gable features. Note that both slate and brown roof tiles are used. Both of these buildings are noted as 'Locally Listed County Treasures'

Other materials and features which can be seen in St. Nicholas include:

- Red and/or brown clay roof tiles
- Black 'Tudorbethan' timber details on gables
- Decorative window surrounds in stone or red brick
- Architectural details such as corbels and quoins
- Some instances of attractive canopies on the frontage above doors.
- Incidental use of decorative hanging tile on facades and gables.
- A mixture of roof styles, pitched and hipped being the most frequently used.



White rough cast render and black detailing around windows and black timber work are seen occasionally within the village.



A row of terraced cottages in stone, with the use of render on other building elevations.



Example of Tudor/Elizabethan timber gable detail in St. Nicholas



Example of brick accents around windows in St. Nicholas



Example of off-white rough render and architectural details such as corbels and quoins on estate housing in St Nicholas



Example use of dark red/brown clay tiles in St. Nicholas and the use of decorative hanging tile on gables



Simple window details and an attractive canopy over the door on this detached house in St Nicholas

4. New Development in The Vale

It is useful to understand which design features have been successful in other areas of new or recent development within The Vale.

Where development has occurred within the context of a historic village, good examples tend to be sympathetic to the character whilst still catering for modern consumer demand and modern residential expectations. Where developments are not on a main through route, they tend to be clustered around intimate, less formal, shared access drives and small courts for parking.

On plot parking is catered for on semi-private drives, with some front gardens having little in the way of boundary treatment. However, structure to the space is ensured through the provision of the characteristic stone walls in key locations. This helps to ensure that the development is varied, and in keeping with the characteristics of the historic village. The photos, overleaf, of infill development in Colwinston, illustrate these points.



An appreciation of local materials and detailing has also helped some new development to sit comfortably within its context as illustrated (right) by this small infill development in Bonvilston.

The combination of natural stone, red brick and slate has ensured the development remains appropriate to its context.

5. Development Principles/Aims

Following a thorough understanding of the context and aspirations of The Vale of Glamorgan as set out in relevant Planning Policy, the proposed development will reflect upon the various features which give St. Nicholas its special interest. This includes:

- The use of traditional boundary treatment methods which are characteristic of the rural detailing of the Vale. Front boundaries and other visually prominent boundaries will consist of a combination of stone walls and hedges.
- An attractive settlement edge which includes appropriate landscape treatment and allows glimpses into the site.
- The use of materials which are representative of those existing in the village and the wider area. Buildings will be finished in a combination of stone and render with red brick accents.
- Open spaces which are at the heart of the new development. A village green will form a key transition point into the site, with properties fronting on to it. A further green will include amenity space and provide a break from the built form and a secondary, less formal village green.
- Appropriate landscape treatment and feature walls to enhance the sense of arrival into the development
- Landscape features such as specimen trees in key locations such as the village green.
- Enhancement of existing hedgerows which form a natural boundary or edge to the development site. Existing hedgerows will be retained and used as a feature within the development, breaking up the built form and defining character areas.

6. Proposed Character & Appearance

Density & Massing

The development comprises two storey detached, semi-detached and terrace housing. A village green will form the central focal point of the village, around which a variety of styles of housing will be arranged with all properties fronting onto the small area of open space. Similar to St. Nicholas, there will be concentrated areas of smaller semi detached and terraced housing. These will help add variety to the street scene. There will be intimate areas in the far reaches of the site where properties are clustered around an informal access or private drive arrangement.

Materials & Architectural Features

The housetypes are an adaptation of Redrow's Heritage range and are representative of many of the qualities and features of the residential properties within the historic core of St. Nicholas. The house types reflect local character ensuring that the development will integrate well with existing village, despite being fairly isolated from the historic heart of St. Nicholas.

A few example elevations of the proposed house types are included below, with a description of the materials proposed.



The Cambridge



The Shaftesbury

Materials that will be used include:

- Shearstone ironstone (see overleaf for more information)
- White roughcast render
- Red brick detailing
- Red clay cills
- Slate grey forticrete roof tiles (representative of the dark slate)
- Mixed russet roof tiles (representative of rosemary clay roof tiles)



Shearstone Ironstone: This is representative of the prevalent building material in St. Nicholas, local lias limestone. It is of a similar colour palette to the limestone; with subtle tones of blues and purples and occasional hints of red.

Boundary Treatments

The proposed boundary treatments are in keeping with those that are prevalent in St. Nicholas. This includes a combination of stone walling and hedges on all visible boundaries. Private boundaries between properties will be close-board timber fence. It is proposed that existing hedgerows are retained and enhanced where possible. Where hedgerows form rear boundaries of existing properties, these will also be enhanced where possible.

The landscape soft works plan and boundary treatments plan includes specific information about where specific type of boundaries are located and the treatment of existing hedgerows.



The combination of hedge and stone wall is characteristic of St Nicholas and other villages in the Vale



Small domestic hedges provide an appropriate boundary to front gardens



Long boundaries in visible locations typically consist of high stone walls

Landscape

The proposed development retains the existing field patterns, enhancing existing hedges where necessary and planting new hedges along long exposed site boundaries. The existing hedges marking former field boundaries are retained and have been absorbed into the proposed development. The proposed boundary hedgerows and trees provide landscape infrastructure to the site, providing screening, promoting biodiversity and linking the surrounding countryside with new back gardens.

Hedges, stone walls and a combination of the two are used to enclose front gardens and to enhance the locally distinct rural character. Garden hedges also provide wildlife corridors within the site, forming links with open spaces and groups of existing and proposed trees.

Groups of native and local trees are strategically placed at the entrance of the site to maintain privacy to surrounding properties whilst softening the edges of the new development. A feature entrance wall and appropriate planting will further enhance the transition into the proposed development.

There are two key open spaces within the development. These are to be of an appropriate rural character typical of many 'village greens' through the Vale. This includes groups of trees with prominent specimen trees and areas of native wildflower planting.

7. Conclusion

This design and character addendum clearly sets out how the proposed development responds to the context of St. Nicholas. Consideration has been given to the planning policy guidance on design and character and the proposals have been developed with these in mind.

The proposed development will provide a high quality of design, which takes into account the proximity of the St. Nicholas Conservation Area and respects the character and features which create high quality and distinctive developments.