

Lymm Village

Design Statement

*A description of the village character and
guidelines for future development*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Lymm

The Cheshire village of Lymm is inset into the greenbelt predominantly surrounded by agricultural land and separated by green fields from neighbouring settlements.

Despite its size Lymm appears to be a village of trees with houses rather than a village of houses with trees. The views from within the settlement to open countryside highlight the extent to which the village has been built to co-exist with nature, not overwhelm it with bricks and mortar.

Lymm - a village of trees with houses



Those who live here and those who visit universally agree that Lymm has a picture-postcard centre bursting with character and charm. There are a number of unusually striking natural features in the very heart of the village, such as the Lower Dam, Slitten Gorge and a wide variety of mature trees.

Lymm is an historic village with a rich variety of house types built around a remarkable topography; they exist in an informal mix of age, style and proportion. This lack of uniformity is what identifies the built environment of Lymm.

However, this settlement supports more than 3500 households. New house building projects are steadily changing the appearance of the village. Evolutionary growth has recently given way to rapid and speculative expansion.

1.2 What is a Village Design Statement?

This Village Design Statement (VDS) describes the distinctive local character of Lymm and the qualities valued by its residents. The local community has a unique appreciation and understanding of its own surroundings and the VDS is based on this knowledge.

The VDS is an advisory document produced by the local community.

It cannot prevent development, but will help to ensure that new developments *blend with* rather than *overwhelm*, the local environment.

“Making Local Character Count”

Through a comprehensive description of Lymm’s local character, the VDS shows people how to make new developments fit into the existing character of the village.

A set of clear guidelines, appears in each chapter of the VDS. In addition, Chapter 9 contains a Design Checklist, which should be used for every new development.

1.3 Objectives of Lymm Village Design Statement

An Effective Voice For The Village.

This VDS has been drawn up in the context of existing national and local planning policies, using the guidance provided by the Countryside Commission. It is expected to be approved by Warrington Borough Council as **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)**. This is a term given to advice, which adds to or refines information in existing policies. Those policies are contained in the **Warrington Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (UDP)**, which is valid until 2016.

Therefore in practice anyone applying for planning permission for a development in the village will be expected to pay due regard to the VDS and comply with its guidelines when drawing up their plans. Deliberate disregard of this guidance may well result in refusal of planning permission.

It is not the intention of Lymm villagers or the Lymm Village Design group to prevent change. Instead, the VDS has a positive attitude to development, seeking to encourage good design, whilst paying due regard to the built heritage, outstanding landscape and geological features of the village.

The VDS sets out clearly what is appropriate for Lymm – and what is not.

1.4 When is the Village Design Statement used?

“A successful Village Design Statement should be applicable to all forms and scale of development” (Ref: “Village Design” The Countryside Commission)

It is therefore used by everyone involved in the process of change, because change in a village's appearance is brought about not only by large-scale developments, but also by adjustments to individual properties, gardens, open spaces and paths.

1.5 Who is the Village Design Statement for?

Planners:

Warrington Borough Council is responsible for local planning, with primary reference to the **UDP**. The VDS complements the UDP and should be used as detailed guidance in the dialogue with developers.

Most importantly, it represents the views of the whole village community to the local authority.

Developers and Designers:

Those wishing to develop or modify property in Lymm must demonstrate that their proposals have taken due consideration of local character and satisfy all appropriate VDS guidelines.

Local people:

The VDS gives the community a recognized voice in the planning process and demonstrates its commitment to high quality design and appropriate development. It enables local priorities to be considered in the development process, and strengthens the role of Lymm Parish Council in planning issues.

1.6 Who wrote the Village Design Statement?

The Lymm Village Design Statement has been produced by a group of local residents, spanning a cross-section of age and background. It has been carefully researched with contributions from residents groups and Lymm Local History Society. It is based on the opinions of the residents of Lymm, expressed at various public consultations – for example over 400 people completed our first Questionnaire. **For details of the Public Consultations see Appendix 1.**

1.7 Policy references in the Lymm Village Design Statement

Where relevant, the VDS references policies contained in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), National Planning Guidance and also the policies of other statutory and advisory bodies. These references are made at the end of the paragraph containing the information, in the following format: **HOU2**.

A table of policy references and sources appears in the **References** chapter.

Lymm May Queen Festival



Chapter 2: Lymm in Context

2.1 Setting

Lymm is a large village, lying on a 200-foot high sandstone ridge in the North Cheshire Plain, part of the dividing line between highland and lowland Britain, a location that affords views across to the Pennines. Lymm is situated on the boundary of the borough of Warrington, six miles from the town centre, close to Cheshire's border with Greater Manchester, while the Merseyside conurbation is ten miles to the West.

Lymm is inset into the greenbelt, surrounded by green fields and has so far avoided merging with neighbouring settlements of Oughtrington, Thelwall and Grappenhall. Approach roads to the village are generally rural in nature. Even the main arterial roads have fields to at least one side, affording views across open fields and farmland.

The village is within the administrative area of Warrington Borough Council, a Unitary Authority since 1996. Lymm borders two adjacent authorities: the boroughs of Trafford (Greater Manchester) and Macclesfield (Cheshire). Lymm is thus sensitive to developments in these neighbouring areas, as well as those in Warrington.

Warrington's designation as a New Town and its subsequent promotion as an ideal business centre for the North West, close to the M6/M62 network and two international airports, has led to an explosion of development around the borough. This has fuelled development pressure upon outlying settlements, none more so than Lymm.

2.2 Geology

Lymm's striking and unusual physical setting is the result of unique geological influences. Dramatic landscape features, which penetrate into the built environment, have made Lymm an aesthetically appealing place to live for more than one thousand years.

The bedrock of the area dates back to the *Triassic Period*. Sedimentary deposits left as the Triassic seas disappeared were compacted, shaped by geological movement and exposed as hot sandy deserts and shallow saline lakes. These sedimentary layers produced the *Keuper* or New Red sandstones that are evident throughout the village today. During the last Ice Age, glaciers flowed across the Cheshire Plain, depositing in their wake thick layers of boulder clay and sand. Together, these two geological periods have combined to form the land of modern-day Lymm. They have influenced its settlement shape and provided the basis for the early economies of farming and salt mining.

Expanses of exposed sandstone outcrops are most in evidence at Lymm Dam, the incised valley of the Dingle and the steep-sided cliffs of Slitten Gorge. These are all designated as

Regionally Important Geological Sites.

2.3 Community

Lymm is much more than a collection of buildings. It supports a strong and vibrant community, which after its striking physical landscape, is perhaps the defining characteristic of the village.

The village hosts a number of annual public events, such as the May Queen Carnival, Lymm Festival, Rush Bearing, the Duck Race and Dickensian Day. These attract wide support and participation, signalling a wish to honour Lymm's traditions and celebrate its strong identity. The Lymm Village Design Group Questionnaire revealed that 84% of respondents took part in at least

Sandstone cliffs behind shops & houses.



Sandstone outcrops at Lymm Dam

one community event every year, (see Appendix 1).

Schools -The four local primary schools contribute enthusiastically to the life of the village, and that sense of belonging to a community is strengthened when pupils transfer to Lymm High School.

Churches and Clubs -The churches of various denominations are well supported, taking an energetic role in village life, and there are a wide variety of thriving community groups, clubs and societies. The village has a local monthly magazine reporting on community issues and also a web-site.

Community Resources - Include a part-time branch library, two doctors' surgeries, a clinic and refurbished Village Hall, although most facilities are under pressure from the increases in the village population. Indoor sports facilities are limited and mainly shared with Lymm High School. Church halls are in constant demand. A village the size of Lymm could support a dedicated community centre.

Youth Provision - There is an acute need for more informal meeting places for young people. The Youth Club requires significant new investment; it was cited by almost 50% of respondents to the Village Design Group Questionnaire, as the facility most in need of improvement.

2.4 Affordable Housing.

Every village needs a balanced community, encompassing a broad mix of people from different socio-economic backgrounds and all walks of life. A range of housing to sustain our community is therefore vitally important.

National and local policy concurs, believing that it is important to create mixed and inclusive communities, offering a choice of housing and

lifestyle. New housing developments should not create large areas of housing of similar characteristics, but maintain the existing social mix.
HOU15, PPG3

From research, the Village Design Group has concluded that the future need is for three bedroom family houses with gardens, rather than for one or two bedroom flats.

G2 Lymm in Context Guidelines

G2.1 Community facilities should be taken into account when considering planning applications to provide for the changing needs of residents of all ages and abilities. Prospective developers should be invited to contribute to the improvement in social, recreational, educational, cultural and sports facilities.

G2.2 Developments that create in excess of 100 new homes should include an additional community resource, such as a shop, pub or meeting hall.

G2.3 A mix of housing is essential to sustain a balanced community , therefore large estates of mainly executive style homes are inappropriate for the village.

G2.5 Affordable Housing

G2.5.1 Where private developers are providing affordable housing, then family homes should be built in preference to a greater number of one or two bedroom flats.

G2.5.2 The need for affordable family homes over the next ten years is of the order of 10-15 new homes per annum. Any greater number would be over provision.

G2.5.3 Affordable homes in Lymm should offer a mix of tenure; including homes for rent and for low cost home ownership either by shared ownership or fixed equity homes. Arrangements should be made so that they remain permanently available as affordable housing for successive occupiers. Allocation of affordable homes should be placed under the control of the Parish Council.

HOU15

G2.5.4 Affordability should be determined with reference to DETR guidelines and be based on

Lymm Dickensian Day



Chapter 3: Economy

overall housing costs being no more than 40% of the household budget for the lower quartile average of manual wages in the area.

HOU15

3.1 Agriculture and Early Industries

The earliest settlement in Lymm dates back at least to the 7th century when Agriculture was at the heart of this early settlement and the parish continued to grow for several more centuries as an agricultural centre.

The core of the village began to take shape from about 1500, with the first non-agricultural industries appearing from 1700, among them iron-working, tanning and quarrying. The first slitting mill at Slitten Brook began to operate in 1750, supplying steel strips for use in tool making and ironmongery.

3.2 Canals, Trains and Highways/Growth and Change

The completion of the Bridgewater Canal in 1765 led to the expansion of other small industries such as salt extraction, gold-beating and the finishing of Fustian cloth by home-based workers in specially-adapted houses, some of which can still be seen today.

The canal became a vital commercial waterway, transporting textiles, farm produce, coal and lime.

The building of the Turnpike Road between Warrington and Stockport (what is now the A56) and the arrival of the railway brought growth, population and prosperity. Residents travelled further afield to find work; industrialists from Manchester used the railways to commute home to a rural idyll.

Despite the impact of industry and the development of communications and public transport, farm-workers remained a majority in Lymm until the early 20th century.



Bridgewater Canal, Lymm

3.3 Traditional Industries

During the late 20th century there was a shift away from land-based work and hence, a decline in local employment opportunities. A large proportion of the working population became employed outside the village. The growth in car ownership, has further transformed the village into a dormer community for people commuting to towns and cities.

Lymm has retained a number of small industries, but some of the sites where they are located are being threatened with change of use to residential. Farming is still a traditional means of employment for the village, and there are a few farm shops. There are also a number of successful garden-centres in the village, providing employment opportunities for local people.



Bridge House & Bridgewater Canal

3.4 Tourism and Leisure

Lymm's rural setting and the scope for leisure pursuits at Lymm Dam, the Trans-Pennine Trail and Bridgewater Canal have made the village one of the most popular places to visit within the borough of Warrington.

As well as attracting tourists, the canal provides small-scale employment, and commercial enterprises mainly in the

service industry; meet the needs of tourists.

The village is particularly well served with cafes and restaurants, and is increasingly seen as a place to eat out. Lymm has long been renowned for its pubs, although there are now fewer than in 1880.

3.4 Small Businesses

An increasing number of people are now working from home or from self-contained premises in small-scale business enterprises. This contributes to the diverse economy of the village, and helps to sustain other village shops and businesses.

3.6 Retail and Service Sectors

Lymm has its own post office and a good variety of shops, including a supermarket, a baker who bakes daily, a butcher, greengrocer and off-licence, which are generally well supported and valued by local people.

Specialist shops and boutiques have prospered in Lymm in recent years.

Lymm has a weekly market held in the centre of the Village, and there is an opportunity to use this site for a local "Farmers Market".

In recent years however, many businesses have changed hands and moved from retail to the service sector. There has been an increase in restaurants, take-aways and beauty salons making trading conditions for retailers difficult. As the variety of shops has dwindled residents have had less incentive to shop locally.

The geographical constraints make significant expansions of the village centre difficult; therefore it is crucial that an attractive mix of businesses is achieved.

Despite the recent, considerable expansion of the village population, trade has not increased for local retailers, whilst the service sector has prospered

G3 Economy Guidelines

G3.1 The future prosperity and community spirit of Lymm depends on its ability to support a spread of occupations and enterprises. Therefore it should be recognised that an attractive mix of retail and service outlets is essential to maintain a thriving village centre.

G3.2 New small-scale enterprises, offering a variety of employment and services would be welcomed, to strengthen Lymm as a working village and to reduce car use.

G3.3 Small-scale retail, commercial and office premises should be encouraged and developed where possible, providing they do not adversely affect the landscape or amenity of the village.

G3.4 The founding of a Farmers Market to support local based farming and food economy would be welcomed.

G3.5 Tourist and visitor-based activities within the village landscape features e.g. the Bridgewater Canal should be encouraged, provided that the use does not impact adversely on the landscape.

Lymm Market



Lymm Shops

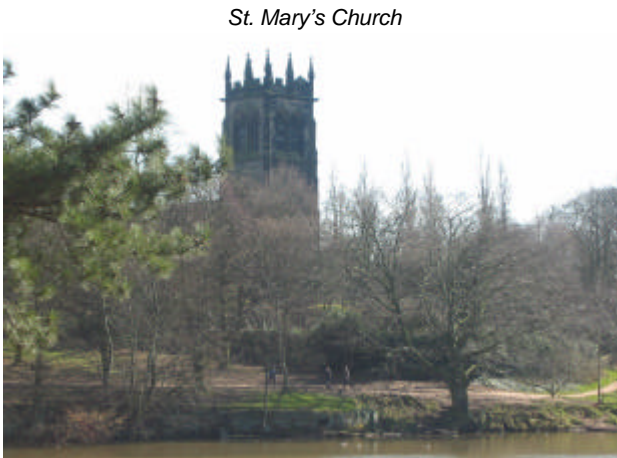
Chapter 4: Settlement

G3.6 The success of tourism in Lymm depends on the integrity of the Conservation areas, the accessibility of the Village Centre and the preservation of the amenity value of our

notable landscape features such as Lymm Dam, the Bridgewater Canal and the Trans-Pennine Trail; therefore these must be preserved and enhanced.



Lymm Cross



St. Mary's Church

Aqueduct, Whitbarrow Road, Lymm



4.1 Historic Settlement Patterns

Lymm is an historic village, which has evolved over many centuries; this long history has ensured a rich variety of house types in Lymm.

Houses, shops and businesses are built around the remarkable topography, landscape and water; they exist in an informal mix of age, style and proportion.

This lack of uniformity gives Lymm its' identity, character and unique charm.

Lymm's oldest surviving site is that of the present St Mary's Church perched on a sandstone ridge overlooking the Dam. This site, with its church, inn and village green setting formed Lymm's original centre.



View from Sutch Lane, Lymm

The current centre of the village defined by Lymm Cross evolved when the Bridgewater Canal was constructed; as it cut through the

18th century village centre, known today as The Square.

As local industry developed in the 18th century, a triangular settlement pattern began to emerge.

Today this evolved settlement pattern is contained within **Lymm's Conservation Areas.**

Roads wind through the village Conservation Areas, over and under the canal, over historic bridges and through the gorge giving unexpected views and interest.

The Conservation Areas are: -

New Road, a distinctive approach road to the village centre over the historic hump-backed canal bridge; properties include some listed cottages, substantial Victorian houses and an excellent example of Georgian architecture.

Village Centre, stretching from Danebank Road, to the furthest point of Lymm Dam, and encompassing the Village Centre and Cross, Lymm Hall and grounds and Lymm Lawn Tennis Club.

Eagle Brow, another approach road to the village centre, distinctive because of the large mature trees, which form a canopy over the road. Houses are generally set well back from the road and include some fine examples of local architecture. This conservation area encompasses Brookfield Road, and extends to Whitbarrow Road, which leads back into the central village conservation area under the canal aqueduct.

4.2 Present Day

Lymm has developed in an informal settlement pattern, over many centuries, with a high proportion of woodland and open spaces, reflecting the rural origins of the village.

20th century developments have been in ribbon form along arterial routes and in infill farmland sites with the boundaries between Oughtrington and Lymm remaining clearly defined.

However 21st century developments have encroached onto greenfield sites, sometimes diminishing the green areas of separation between Lymm and Oughtrington.

4.3 Planning Guidance & Future Settlement

National Planning Guidance advises that most additional housing should be concentrated in urban areas, and that previously developed land should be used for housing.

This is both to promote regeneration and to minimise the amount of greenfield land being taken for development.

Warrington Borough Council has determined that the borough has an adequate supply of previously developed land to satisfy building requirements until 2016.

Chapter 5: The Built Environment

Therefore there is no present need to allocate green sites to meet housing requirements, or to approve proposals for the development of greenfield land. This policy is vital to Lymm, which has been subjected to an unprecedented level of development on green sites, and whose character is defined by its woodland and landscape.

Future development in Lymm will be mainly infill and limited development on the periphery of the village, and any new development must be of a scale and size appropriate to the village.

HOU1, GRN6, PPG2, PPG3

4.4 Safeguarded Land

Warrington Borough Council UDP identifies five areas of “safeguarded land” in Lymm and Statham. These are important areas of Open Space contributing to the green framework of the village and should not be allocated for development for the following reasons:

- Development should be on previously developed sites in preference to green sites. Once these sites are given to development, their value, as farmland, potential woodland or grassland is lost to future generations and can never be restored.
HOU15, GRN2, RPG, PPG3
- The areas of green separation between Lymm and its neighbouring villages are necessary for the villages to maintain their separate identities. They reflect the rural origins of the settlements, and provide open views from Lymm to St. Peters Church in Oughtrington and vistas across to the Pennines.
- Reddish Lane in Lymm is a buffer zone to the Trans-Pennine Trail, protecting the habitats of local wildlife and providing another open vista to countryside from the village.
- The Longbutt Lane field is a soft edge to the settlement of Lymm, providing a gradual transition from the built environment to the greenbelt.
- Pool Lane is a very narrow rural road; the green open space identifies the rural origins of the settlement and provides important views across to the greenbelt.

Victorian Building in Lymm



G4 Settlement Guidelines

G4.1 Lymm’s Conservation Areas should be reviewed with a view to extending them.

G4.2 The high proportion of woodland and open spaces in Lymm should be reflected in new development, so as to retain the identity and character of the village.

G4.3 Large-scale modern estates should be avoided, as they do not reflect the essentially informal settlement pattern and development of the village.



Village Centre Conservation Area

G4.4 The fields providing the separation of Lymm from its neighbouring villages of Oughtrington, Thelwall and Little Bollington should be designated greenbelt to allow each village to maintain its sense of community and distinct character.

G4.5 All Green sites should be retained, and the areas of “safeguarded land” in Lymm contribute to the green framework of the village and should not be allocated for development.

HOU1, GRN2, PPG3

5.1 Introduction

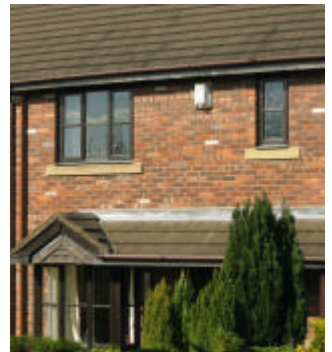
This chapter provides a considered assessment of the village's built environment, and suggests appropriate design principles, building forms, materials and boundary treatments for future development in Lymm. The guidelines used in conjunction with "The Design Checklist" (Chapter 9) will ensure that future development contributes positively to the distinctive character of the village.

The chapter is split into the following sections each with guidelines: -

- **Existing Built Environment** - An analysis of local house styles.
- **Future Development** - How a development should sit within the landscape of the village.
- **Building Form** - Appropriate styles for new development in Lymm.
- **Materials, Features and Building Details**
- **Boundary Treatments**



Commercial Premises



Ridgeway Gardens

5.2 Existing House Styles

The built heritage of Lymm informs every resident and visitor that the village has evolved over many centuries. In addition to nationally Listed Buildings, Lymm boasts many buildings and structures of local historical and architectural value, e.g. Lymm Hall and Crossfield Bridge.

UDP - APPENDIX 6

A careful study of the existing housing stock within Lymm has been made by the Village Design Group in a series of discussions chaired by a local architect, attended by residents and Lymm Local History Society.

Large Victorian and

Edwardian Houses - These are mainly set in good-sized plots with mature gardens.

They are a dominant style within the village, especially the Conservation Area.

They are generally of brick construction with slate roof tiles. Frontages, corners and bold features are usually picked out in smooth red clay bricks, with Cheshire common bricks to gables and rear elevations. Many buildings have contrasting white rendered panels. These houses are often in prominent locations along main access routes. The central areas of the village and Higher Lane have large Victorian villas, built in the centre of large, irregular plots with mature trees.

Lymm is a village inset into the greenbelt.



Victorian Terraced Housing - Found in isolated positions in most areas. Often built on the back edge of pavements, with back gardens only. Mostly red brick with slate roofs, with occasional rendered elevations.

Village Centre Conservation Area - In the heart of the village properties are tight knit, built at the back edge of pavements. Building styles are a rich pattern, including 19th century mock Tudor, Victorian terraced and older stone cottages.

Council Housing - Built throughout Lymm, mainly from 1930 onwards; but more recently, mainly in Statham. They are set in regular sized plots, accessed from highly engineered carriageways, with footpaths on both sides of roads. Mature landscaping and hedges have helped soften the “hard edges” of these developments.

Private Housing 1930 – 1980 - Found in many parts of the village these properties usually have high standards of privacy and spaciousness. The houses are built in a number of styles using a variety of different materials, and not always in keeping with the older properties. However developments were usually small in scale, and have mellowed into the street scene, helped by generous planting with mature trees and hedges. There are some bungalow developments either built to individual designs or in small estates, with low-pitched roofs they sometimes attempt to reflect farm buildings. **Modern Housing from 1980**

- These appear in a variety of styles often attempting to evoke Victorian and Edwardian architecture.

They are usually not in keeping with traditional older houses in the village because the designs do not respect the proportions of Victorian buildings. Materials are inappropriate and detailing is sparse and economic.

Larger developments present additional problems, the houses are often built over green fields with little attempt to reflect the landscaping typical of Lymm. However, more successful developments have been smaller with appropriate landscape screening, with slate roofs, and Cheshire brick.

Commercial Premises - Within the Village Centre these are of a mixed quality.

The older premises reflect the history of the village but the more modern

premises bear no relation to their site within

a Conservation Area.

Signage should be appropriate for a Conservation Area, with bespoke solutions rather than the standard “High Street” signs in evidence on many premises.

Outside the Conservation Area commercial premises have mainly been located in previously domestic housing stock, and still merge well within the street scene.

Commercial Premises should normally be two storey. The height of some newer developments has adversely impacted the views of the village centre.

5.3 Future Development

Future building in Lymm will be mainly infill and limited development on the periphery of the village.

Warrington Borough Council, in accordance with the North West Regional Development Plan, has determined that the borough has an adequate supply of previously developed land to satisfy building requirements until 2016.

GRN6, PPG2, PPG3

Infill Development

This could include schemes to demolish existing houses in large plots to build an increased number of new houses within that plot, or schemes to build more houses alongside existing houses

Historic Building in Lymm



Housing screened by trees

Housing drifting into farmland



in large plots.

Such schemes will affect the rich variety of house styles that exist in Lymm, and which are a strong visual characteristic of the village, illustrating its' long history.

Such schemes could also be a threat to established landscaping and mature trees, which are also characteristic of Lymm.

The ratio of building to garden should still reflect the original development, and no mature hedgerows, trees should be removed. Existing boundary treatments such as sandstone walls should also be retained, and incorporated into the new design.



Pepper Street, Lymm

Change of Use of Properties

The change of use of historic Victorian and Edwardian houses (both within and outside the Conservation Areas) is preferable to them being demolished. This both preserves valuable examples of historic architecture, and maintains the rich diversity of house styles within Lymm. **Existing boundary treatments such as sandstone walls should be retained, and incorporated into the new design**

5.4 Building Form

This section offers guidance regarding design points considered appropriate to achieve sympathetic and satisfactory house types, appearance and settings to match and blend in with the existing Lymm village scene.

There must be room for innovation and scope for the use of new materials, but in a sympathetic fashion and with reference to the history of the village.



any development should respect the historic context and environment of Lymm, and use appropriate, high quality materials.
BH6 – BH12, PPG15

Future developments, whether major or minor, should enhance the character of the village and maintain its high standards of landscaping and community identity.

Within the Conservation Areas,

Lymm has an interesting and varied roof-scape. Roofs are mainly slate, And have generous eaves.



Pig Slabs in Pepper Street

Future House Styles

Good design should be the aim of all involved in the development process.

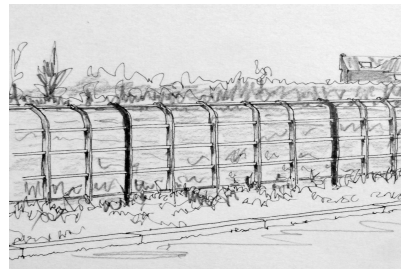
The appearance of a development is a material consideration, it should blend with its setting, have its own distinctive layout, respect and enhance local character. National Planning Policy stresses the need for local authorities to develop a shared vision with local communities.

PPG1, PPG3, HOU2

Lymm is characterised by the housing being laid out according to landscape-dominated principles.

The more successful developments are smaller in scale avoiding a particular style becoming dominant and overwhelming not only the natural but also the pre-existing built environment.

So, although there is no dominant house style in Lymm, the houses, which vary enormously in terms of size and style, generally settle comfortably within the natural landscape not allowing the built landscape to overwhelm the natural one.



Cheshire Railings

Layout of buildings is informal with intimate spaces formed between buildings or between buildings and landscape. Building plots often have soft edges drifting into areas of farmland and unkempt landscape.

New development should seek to maintain this characteristic, and not allow buildings to dominate the natural landscape.

Height of Buildings

This issue has become contentious in recent years, where because of the high cost of building land developers have sought to achieve large houses in smaller areas, this has resulted in the building of 2½ and 3 storey houses.

However, the majority of domestic buildings in Lymm are two storeys. Existing three storey houses often have the top level in the roof space, and indeed many of these properties blend into the rising landscape (for example in the Village Centre within the steep sides of the gorge or in the slopes of the Conservation areas), disguising their height and preventing an overpowering presence.

Exceptions are the historic 3 storey fustian cutters properties that still exist in the village, and the modern canal-side houses designed to reflect the wharf-side heritage of the Bridgewater Canal. These should not be used as a precedent for future development.

5.5 Materials, Features and Building Details

As can be seen from the photographs in this document, the predominant character of the brickwork in the village is based upon Cheshire common bricks with details picked out in smooth red bricks. Often, brick is combined with white render. A few older buildings are constructed in stone, sometimes rendered. Roofs are generally slate.

Brick Decoration

Many Victorian buildings, such as the old Council Offices and Fire Station, use brick decoration and decorated ridge tiles to break up the outline.

Walls

Brick walls are often adorned with projecting, weathered stringcourses; patterned brickwork, dog toothed detailing to rendered panels. Some buildings in Lymm use applied half timbering in an Tudor Arts and Crafts style. The timbers are painted black with white infill. The proportions of brick walls, roof and half timbering are critical, over elaborate frameworks with, for example, curved braces and quatrefoil patterns are not typical of Lymm.

On new properties, brickwork is treated like a sheet of solid material with architectural emphasis on windows. Building outlines are often harsh and straight with few opportunities for shadow and contrast, and artificial stone quoins are sometimes added to new properties to provide visual interest. These features are not characteristic of Lymm.

Roofs

Roofs on older Victorian and Edwardian houses use cross wall purlin and rafter construction. This allows generous eaves and verge overhangs, with plain and sometimes decorated well-proportioned bargeboards, and also allows the roof space to be used for habitable rooms.

5.6 Boundary Treatments

Lymm derives a great deal of character from interesting and unusual boundary treatments

The following are the distinctive characteristic boundary treatments of the village and are therefore appropriate for future development.

- **Mature Hedging and Trees** which help to preserve and enhance the rural character of Lymm. Existing hedges and mature trees should be retained and Tree Preservation Orders should be served or covenants for their preservation agreed.
- **Pig Slabs**, these are large stone slabs used as retaining structures at changes in level in landscaping.

- **Cheshire railings** which are traditionally used to fence corners on highways, they are provided by Cheshire County Council and painted white with each 5th or 3rd post painted black.
- **Red sandstone walls** with shaped copings are a common feature around Victorian and Edwardian dwellings, and also retained around the 1970s dwellings along Brookfield Road. These are attractive characteristic boundary treatments within the village often topped with hedging and combined with dressed stone gateposts.
- **The combination of walling (sometimes of varying heights) and hedges** exists on many streets that have developed over a long period of time.

G5 Built Environment Guidelines

G5.1 Future Development

- G5.1.1** *A completed Design Checklist (Chapter 9) should accompany each development proposal, together with a Statement identifying how it has satisfied all appropriate Lymm Village Design Statement Guidelines, and enhanced the Landscape Setting.*
- G5.1.3** *Infill development in Lymm should be of a scale and size appropriate to the village, not overwhelming adjacent styles of housing.*
GRN6
- G5.1.4** *Larger estates of houses should ideally be avoided. However if permitted, they should be divided into sub-developments (no bigger than 0.4 hectares), each with a distinct style, chosen to reflect the heritage of the village. Landscaping and public open spaces should be used to separate and individualise these smaller sub-developments.*
- G5.1.5** *The site plans for any new development must show ratios of buildings, open spaces, verges and planted areas . Any revised plans following the granting of planning permission should retain or improve upon these ratios, so that if the number of houses were increased the sizes of the dwellings would have to be correspondingly smaller.*
- G5.1.6** *New development should incorporate a landscaping strip along any boundary (front or back) that it shares with existing properties, farmland or roads.*
- G5.1.7** *Schemes to demolish existing houses in large plots to build many more new houses within that plot should be carefully considered and limited in number. Established landscaping and mature trees should be retained.*
- G5.1.8** *Schemes to build more houses alongside existing houses in large plots should be carefully considered and limited in number. Established landscaping and mature trees should be retained.*
- G5.1.9** *The change of use of historic Victorian and Edwardian houses (both in and out of the Conservation Areas) is preferable to demolishing these valuable examples of historic architecture.*
- G5.1.10** *Approach roads (particularly Eagle Brow, New Road, Church Road, Rectory Lane and Brookfield Road) leading to the Village Centre should keep their distinctive boundary treatments. Any new development should be within these existing boundaries.*
- G5.1.11** *Public Open Spaces should not just be grassed areas, but should have a function, e.g.; a woodland framework could be used and incorporate existing trees and hedges.*
HOU3

G5.2 Building Form

- G5.2.1** *The rich variety of age and style of houses in Lymm determine its distinctive historic character. No modern style should be allowed to dominate by removing or overwhelming the existing built heritage.*
- G5.2.2** *Modern architecture is to be encouraged but should adhere to good design principles, have relevance to Lymm and embrace ecological / energy conservation principles.*
- G5.2.3** *New developments should respect the height of adjoining properties and be restricted to a maximum of two storeys. Three storeys should only be used in exceptional circumstances where adjoining properties are three storeys or more.*

Chapter 6: Landscape, Open Spaces & Wildlife

G5.2.4 *Where new house styles are derived from existing Victorian and Edwardian house styles, careful attention should be paid to scale, proportion and materials. Local characteristic details are to be encouraged. Pitched roofs should allow generous roof overhangs at verges and eaves, these features provide shadow and visual interest.*

G5.2.5 *House Styles should not be mixed, e.g. neo-Georgian features being applied to Victorian style properties.*

G5.2.6 *Houses should not be overlarge for their plots, high densities should be achieved by using smaller dwellings.*

G5.2.7 *New houses within the Conservation Areas should be screened by the planting of mature trees and hedges of indigenous species, protected where appropriate .*

G5.2.8 *Business premises (particularly within the Conservation Areas) should use high quality building materials and windows. They should be in keeping with the predominantly traditional building style, and not be visually intrusive upon the street scene nor detract from the high quality of the built heritage that characterises the centre of Lymm.*

G5.2.9 *Although there are modern buildings within the village centre Conservation Area it must be ensured that these buildings are subject to the constraints upon development within a Conservation Area and if they are commercial premises then signage should be of high quality, individually bespoke and worthy of its setting.*
PPG15, BH8, BH9, BH10

G5.2.10 *The Conservation Areas, historic approach roads (particularly Eagle Brow, New Road, Church Road, Rectory Lane and Brookfield Road) and the built heritage of the village that give Lymm its distinctive character should be preserved.*
PPG15, BH8, BH9, BH10

G5.3 Materials, Features and Building Details.

G5.3.1 *Traditional buildings should be constructed in Cheshire brick, Red Sandstone Ashler or brick with smooth cement render. Use of other colours should be avoided unless chosen to match the existing dwelling or used on immediately adjoining buildings.*

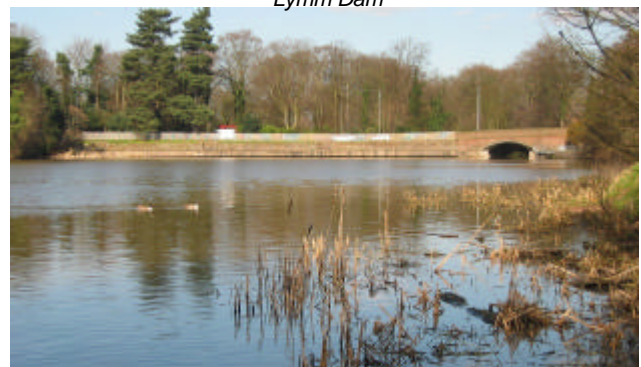
G5.3.2 *Pitched roofs should preferably be of natural slate, however artificial slates are acceptable but should be of good quality to avoid fading. Red clay tiles are only acceptable where necessary to match immediately adjacent existing buildings. Concrete tiles (e.g. Marley moderns') should only be used to match or extend existing roofs, or when a proposed building is*



Lymm Dam—water, woodland, open spaces and houses



Beech Hedgerows



Lymm Dam

entirely surrounded by concrete tiled buildings.

G5.3.3 *Buildings should be proportionate to their neighbours, and normally not higher than two storeys. Ridge height and roof pitch should relate to those of adjoining buildings. Pitched roofs should have a pitch between 40 and 50 degrees.*

G5.3.4 *Windows should be proportionate to the building, and where traditional windows are desired the frames should be of traditional sections and of substantial thickness.*

G5.3.5 *When conservatories are constructed they should not obtrude upon the street scene.*

G5.3.6 *External doors should be well proportioned and preferably of solid painted timber. A small amount of glazing is acceptable.*

G5.3.7 *The following are not typical of Lymm and should be avoided: -*

- The application of artificial stone quoins to new brick built houses.*
- Banded brickwork in different colours.*
- Mock Georgian windows.*
- The use of brushed aluminium window frames with bronze tinted glazing.*
- Brickwork covered in swirled render .*

Bridgewater Canal



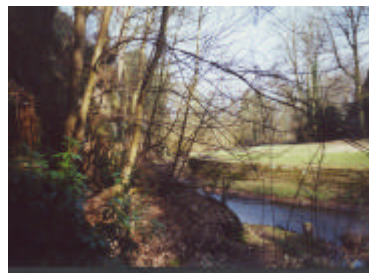
G5.4 Boundary Treatments.

G5.4.1 *The following boundary treatments are typical of Lymm and are therefore appropriate: -*

- Hedging and trees, preferably of indigenous species.*
- Red sandstone walls with shaped copings.*
- Combination of Walling and Hedges.*

G5.4.2 *The following boundary treatments are not typical of Lymm and should be avoided: -*

- Brick Walls capped with Victorian style railings.*
- Modern Victorian Style railings rely on slender members with elaborate finials. These railings have little in common with traditional wrought iron railings.*
- Modern Victorian Style wrought iron gates with elaborate finials.*
- Rough Sawn Timber fences.*
- Low brick walls with precast concrete toppings.*



6.1 Key Landscape Characteristics

The natural landscape in and around Lymm is the **UNIQUE** characteristic of the village.

Despite its size Lymm appears to be a village of trees with houses rather than a village of houses with trees. The views from within the settlement to open countryside highlight the extent to which the village has been built to co-exist with nature, not overwhelm it with bricks and mortar.

Residents and tourists have long been aware of the wealth of woodland, open spaces and water which play an important part in the village landscape making Lymm an extremely attractive village.

Ridgeway Grundy Park



The Village Design Group Questionnaire illustrated the depth community feeling, with Lymm Dam, The Dingle, Slitten Gorge, Ridgeway Grundy Park and the May Queen Field all scoring more than 8 out of 10 in response to the question "How Important are Lymm's Open Spaces".

Lymm is an Inset Village surrounded by agricultural land and greenbelt; most of the approach roads leading to the Village Centre reflect it's rural origins, as they are bordered with fields, open spaces or hedgerows of native species (e.g.: hawthorn, elder, blackthorn, hazel, bramble, briars and ivy).

Hedges (typically of beech, holly and hawthorn) are also popular boundary treatments for many private homes. The larger plot sizes of some properties and informal grassed areas in the village have been used to plant native broadleaf trees such as beech, chestnut, oak and lime.



6.2 Landscape Features

Lymm is fortunate to have a number of significant landscape features within the village notably Lymm Dam (Upper and Lower), The Dingle and Slitten Gorge, areas of public open space, within the Conservation Area, owned by Warrington Borough Council.

They form part of the **Mersey Valley Wildlife Corridor**, providing a wide range of habitats including open water, marginal vegetation, boggy areas, sandstone cliffs, rock exposures, deciduous woodlands and grasslands.

Lymm Dam - An Area of Local Landscape Value and a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation within the **Mersey Forest**.

Lymm Dam comprises 2-dammed reservoirs known as the Upper and Middle Dams. The water from the Middle Dam flows beneath Church Road, (the A56 Warrington to Altrincham road) to form The Dingle Brook and the Lower Dam, this dam then feeds Slitten Brook.

Mature woodland predominately oak and beech characterises Lymm Dam; and the **Lombardy Poplar avenues** on either side of the Dam are a dominant feature of the landscape.

The combination of open water, varied topography including sandstone outcrops, and history expressed in the form of structures such as Crossfield Bridge give the Dam a unique character. Whilst proximity of St Mary's Church and the church hall offer a sense of the Dam belonging within the community. The open land around the southern part of Lymm Dam is designated **Greenbelt**. **GRN1, GRN12, GRN19, GRN20, GRN21, GRN28, PPG2**

The Lower Dam - Opens into the village, and the pool above this Dam provides a distinctive village focal point, enhanced by the ducks on the pool and the adjacent row of cottages.

The Dingle - An incised wooded (predominantly oak and beech) valley between houses to the east and further developments including Lymm Lawn Tennis Club to the west. It opens into the centre of Lymm village at the Lower Dam; the brook is then channelled between developments, passing beneath the Bridgewater Canal before emerging into Slitten Gorge

Slitten Gorge - An attractive valley with dramatic cliffs, there is interest in the remaining structures of the Slitting Mill, the juxtaposition of roads, footpaths and the Bridgewater Canal.

6.3 Open Spaces

Lymm benefits from a large number of open spaces.

The protection and enhancement of these open spaces and also the amenities such as the views and footpaths which are part of the daily life of the community are vital to the future and well being of Lymm Village.

Notable Open Spaces include: -

The Bridgewater Canal - This is an **attractive visual feature of the village** and a **piece of extremely valuable industrial archaeology**, which is important to the community in many ways. It is an attractive footpath route through open countryside to Oughtrington, Heatley, Grappenhall and Dunham Massey, affording

Chapter 7: Highways

remarkable views across the Cheshire Plain. The Canal provides a good source of local employment with leisure facilities for boating and fishing. It is part of the **Mersey Valley Wildlife Corridor**, and a valuable habitat for a variety of wildlife.

GRN22, GRN24

The Trans-Pennine Trail - A cycle path and footpath through the village along a disused railway line. This is an attractive amenity within the village, providing a leisure facility for cycling and walking for the community and tourists. It forms part of the **Mersey Valley Wildlife Corridor**.

GRN24

The May Field (Village Green) - A central Open Space owned by Warrington Borough Council, regularly used for sports and for community events such as the May Queen Village Carnival and the Lymm Festival.

Ridgeway Grundy Memorial Park – A Village Park, adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal, providing recreational facilities for children.

GRN13

Sutch Lane - A **bridleway** running from the western point of Lymm to Oughtrington. It is close to the canal, flanked by fields, making it a **wildlife corridor** providing habitats for birds and wildlife.

Playing Fields - These are Sow Brook Playing fields, Lymm Rugby Club Playing fields and the open spaces associated with Lymm High School and the Lymm Primary Schools of Statham, Cherry Tree and Ravenbank. They are popular facilities used by many village organisations and groups.

GRN14

WBC Allotments - Situated adjacent to the Sow Brook Playing Fields, and on Star Lane. These provide an important resource for the community giving people access to gardening and also the opportunity to market garden.

The Fishing Pools along Whitbarrow Road

GRN22

6.4 Warrington Tree & Woodland Strategy

“To promote the importance of trees and woodlands in the Borough and ensure their sustainable management for the benefit of the whole community.”

Mature trees and woodland are a distinctive feature of Lymm; so it is essential that there is sustainable management of Lymm's' tree resource, and that existing woodland is protected. Warrington Borough Council has pledged to increase overall woodland cover to 30% of available land.

6.5 Bird Population & Wildlife

Recent bird surveys undertaken on behalf of Warrington Borough Council recorded over 70 species visiting Lymm Dam and Slitten Gorge, which included Kingfisher, Tree Creeper, Sparrow Hawk, Buzzard and many water species.

The Mersey Valley Wildlife Corridor, Lymm Dam, the Bridgewater Canal, Trans-Pennine Trail, the May Queen field and areas such as hedgerows, ponds, or streams provide a habitat for a variety of species. Habitats can be affected by development of adjacent land, and must be considered at the earliest stages of planning developments.

G6 Landscape, Open Spaces & Wildlife Guidelines



Cherry Lane Development



Hump-backed Bridge, New Road,



Trans -Pennine Trail



Longbutt Lane

- G6.1** *New developments should give high priority to landscape design, in particular the protection and conservation of important landscape features such as woodland, trees, hedgerows, ponds, streams and walls. No development should be permitted to remove any of these features. Developers should contribute to the management costs and any improvement of these features. They should also be encouraged to contribute to the Lymm tree population.*
GRN26, GRN30
- G6.2** *Development should not be permitted on land adjacent to wildlife habitats.*
GRN22
- G6.3** *The amenity, landscape and views of the Bridgewater Canal (and its value as part of the Mersey Valley Wildlife Corridor) would be severely harmed if these areas were further developed: -*
- *Land from Lymm to Oughtrington, north and south of the canal, within a 200m zone.*
 - *Remaining land between Statham and Camsey Bridge within a 200m zone.*
- G6.4** *The amenity, landscape and views of the Trans-Pennine Trail (and its value as part of the Mersey Valley Wildlife Corridor) would be severely harmed if development were permitted within a 200m zone along the north side of the trail. Development to the south of the Trans-Pennine Trail should not be permitted.*
- G6.5** *The fields north of Rushgreen Road should not be developed as they provide open views to countryside, illustrating the rural origins of Lymm and providing welcome breaks in the built environment.*
- G6.6** *Developments along the rural approaches to Lymm should be screened by areas of appropriate landscaping, to maintain the “soft edges” of the settlement.*
GRN5
- G6.7** *Development should not be permitted on land containing areas of woodland. New development should include informally landscaped areas large enough to include native broadleaf species.*
GRN29, GRN30
- G6.8** *Any new development plans which propose to discharge surface water into Lymm’s waterways should be considered by the Environment Agency to ensure that proper filtration and oil interceptors are introduced to maintain water quality. In addition, the provision of balancing ponds to reduce peak flow rates and reduce saline wash in winter should be considered by the Environment Agency and provided by developers.*
REP6, PPG23, ENVIRONMENT AGENCY GUIDELINES.
- G6.9** *Allotments should be preserved both for their value in providing a worthwhile leisure amenity for local people and for their reference to Lymm’s agricultural history.*

7.1 Roads

Lymm is a commuter base for car to link with the motorway network or to travel to airports routes to Warrington and transport for the village. It is a some narrow approach roads narrow pavements), these character of the village and run development patterns of the The recent incremental increases following problems: -

Cherry Lane, the B5158 linking has seen a marked increase in expansion of the village, which can only increase proposed for Lymm, Oughtrington Cherry Lane is a popular school pavements and the many HGV pedestrians.



Cobbles & Setts

many residents who use the and railway stations. Bus Altrincham provide public very old village serviced by (with non-existent or very roads are central to the along the ribbon earlier settlement. in dwellings have lead to the

Lymm to the motorway network traffic during the recent further with new developments and Heatley. route therefore the lack of make it dangerous for

Chapter 8: Street Furniture

Rushgreen Road approaches the village from Oughtrington; this becomes **New Road** closer to the Village Centre.

The road goes over the narrow, hump-backed canal bridge, and is a hazard for cyclists and pedestrians due to poor visibility and the high volume of traffic.

Eagle Brow from the village centre to the A56 is a narrow road, along a direct access route to a local primary school, subjected to delivery lorries and double-decker buses coinciding with a high volume of cars at peak times.

The A56 between Warrington and Altrincham passes through Lymm. This is now being used increasingly as a short cut instead of the motorway, adding to the traffic problems in the village.

7.2 Traffic

Lymm, Heatley and Oughtrington gained 300 new dwellings between 2000 and 2002, and over 100 more are proposed for Oughtrington and Heatley in the near future.

However because each new development has been relatively small-scale it hasn't warranted a Warrington Borough Council Transport Impact Assessment.

The Village Design Group

Traditional Wooden Bus Shelter



Modern Plastic Bus shelter

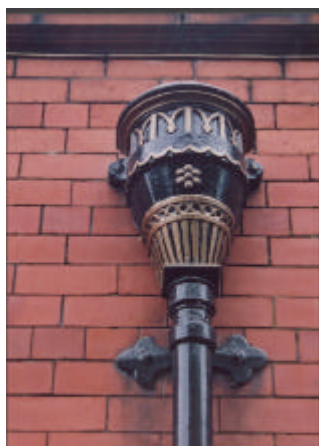


recommend that a full Transport Impact Assessment is carried out for any new development exceeding 25 dwellings, based on the cumulative effect of the total of new dwellings created in Lymm, Oughtrington and Heatley over the last few years.

LUT12, POINT 4 & POINT 5

7.3 Footpaths

Lymm has about 30 footpaths and bridleways including 20 km of public footpaths and about a further 4 km of permissive paths, spread out across the whole of the parish. In addition there are many pedestrian walkways (ginnels) connecting small groups of houses. As well as providing valuable access routes to schools and leisure facilities, such as the canal mooring and the conservation area they are well



Traditional Cast-Iron Drainage Goods Painted Black.



Village Signs



Railings to the Lower Dam should be painted black

Chapter 9: Design Checklist

used by villagers and visitors for pleasure walking and provide a variety of views across and out of the village.

Important Footpaths include :

Trans Pennine Trail - This is an attractive amenity within the village promoting the use of alternative means of transport than car. **This path forms part of the E8, Trans-European footpath running from Ireland to Istanbul!**
LUT15, LUT17

Bridgewater Canal - A cycle path and footpath through the village along the canal towpath.
LUT15

G7 Highway Guidelines

G7.1 Every development proposal, exceeding 25 dwellings should be accompanied by a "Transport Impact Assessment" (based on the cumulative total increase in dwellings for Lymm, Heatley and Oughtrington over the last 5 years), and should measure the impact on the whole area of Lymm, Oughtrington and Heatley.

G7.2 Current informal access routes should be recorded as public rights of way in order to secure their use for future generations.
LUT4

G7.3 "Safe Routes to School" are important to the community. School Travel Plans should be encouraged and updated when new development is proposed.
LUT11

G7.4 Safe and pleasant pedestrian routes for everyday travel around the village and for access to local amenities are required to lessen the dependence on the car as a means of transport. Pedestrians should be given the highest priority when any new development is being proposed whether for a single new dwelling or for many new dwellings.
LUT2, LUT3, LUT4

G7.5 Cyclists should be a major concern of planners and developers when designing any new development. New development should provide safe, direct and attractive routes for cyclists and incorporate measures to give cyclists priority over private cars.
LUT5

G7.6 Road improvements should not lead to the increase of urban elements to promote safety. The highways authority should recognise the character of the village when examining plans and promote the informal landscaping which has always been an integral feature of the village landscape. This is particularly true in the village centre where some areas of paving and cobbles have been retained to acknowledge the historical background of the village. Similarly canal bridges in local materials should be maintained as they are.

G7.7 The following improvements are recommended: -

G7.7.1 Cobbled areas particularly around the Village Cross and Pepper Street demonstrate the history of the village and should be preserved as a distinctive characteristic of Lymm.

G7.7.2 The York stone flags (by the Post Office) should be repaired and extended.

G7.7.3 Gritstone or York stone kerbs should systematically replace concrete kerbs.

References: Cross-References to Planning Guidance

There is a diversity of age, style and quality of street furniture in Lymm.

Chapter	Section	Page	Reference
1: Introduction	1.3	3	SPG - Supplementary Planning Guidance UDP - Unitary Development Plan
2: Lymm in Context	2.2	4	Regionally Important Geological Sites
2: Lymm in Context	2.4 G2.5.3 G2.5.4	5	HOU15, PPG3 HOU15 HOU15
4: Settlement	4.3 4.4 G4.5	9	HOU1, GRN2, PPG2, PPG3 GRN2, HOU15, RPG, PPG3 HOU1, GRN2, PPG3
5: The Built Environment	5.2	10	UDP: APPENDIX 6
5: The Built Environment	5.3	11	GRN6, PPG2, PPG3
5: The Built Environment	5.4	12	BH6-BH12, PPG15 HOU2, PPG1, PPG3
5: The Built Environment	G5.1.3 G5.1.11	14	GRN6 HOU3
5: The Built Environment	G5.2.9 G5.2.10	15	BH8, BH9, BH10, PPG15 BH8, BH9, BH10, PPG15
6: Landscape, Open Spaces & Wildlife	6.2	16	GRN1, GRN12, GRN19, GRN20, GRN21, GRN28, PPG2
6: Landscape, Open Spaces & Wildlife	6.3	17	GRN22, GRN24 GRN24 GRN13 GRN14 GRN22
6: Landscape, Open Spaces & Wildlife	G6.1 G6.2 G6.6 G6.7 G6.8	18	GRN26, GRN30 GRN22 GRN5 GRN29, GRN30 REP6, PPG23, ENVIRONMENT AGENCY GUIDELINES
7: Highways	7.2 7.3	19	LUT12, PONT4 & POINT5 LUT15, LUT17 LUT15
7: Highways	G7.2 G7.3 G7.4 G7.5	20	LUT4 LUT11 LUT2, LUT3, LUT4 LUT5

There are some good quality examples of lampposts and benches within the village centre, which combine with the traditional Cheshire railings around the Lower Dam, but otherwise the provision has generally been standardised solutions more appropriate to urban areas.