

V1MP Design Code

MARCH 2026



Appendix D - V1MP Design Code Testing Report Response

V1MP Design Code Testing Report Response

Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE) have undertaken testing of the Village 1 Design Code in accordance with Gilston Park Estate outline planning permission (ref. no. 3/19/1045/OUT) planning condition 34. The results of the Design Code testing have been recorded in Gilston Area Village One Masterplan Design Code Testing (Pollard Thomas Edwards, R2, 29.1.2026) using development Parcel R10 as a test sample.

The following table summarises the Design Team's technical response to the feedback received and updates that have been made to the Village 1 Design Code in response to testing. The responses can be broken down into two categories:

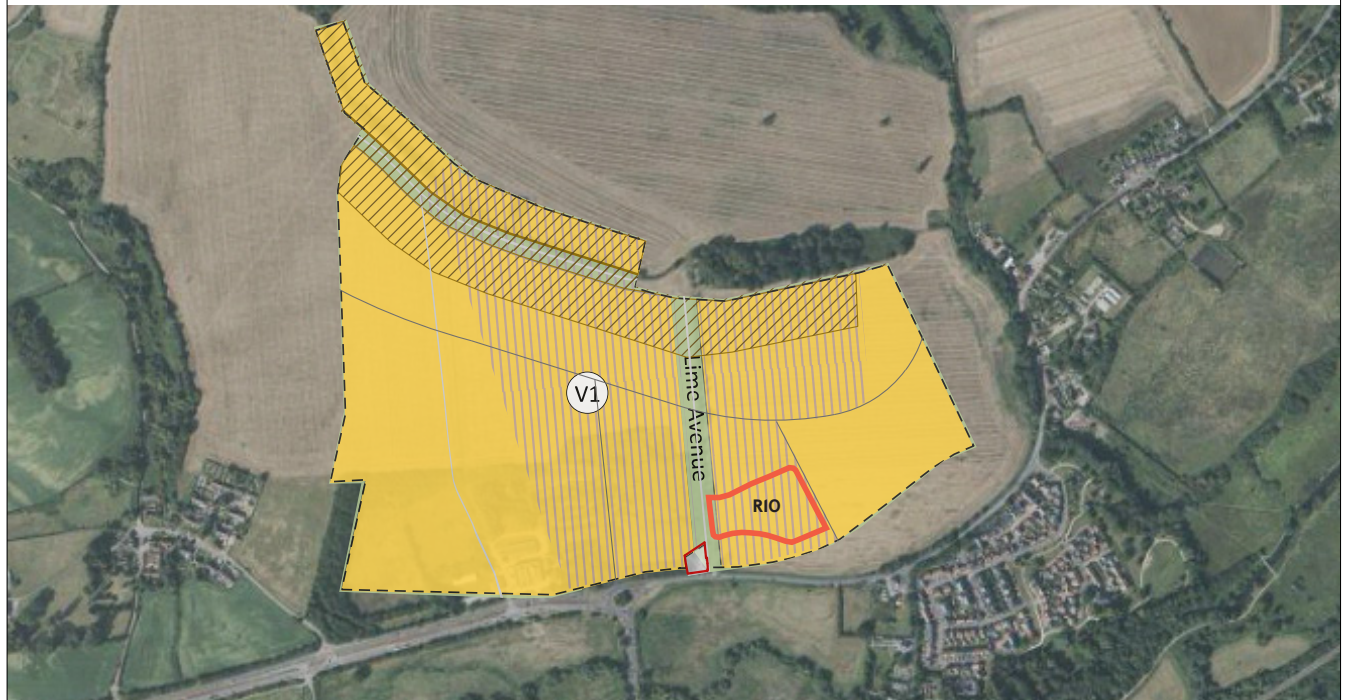
- ☒ Feedback already addressed by the Design Code - clarification provided
- ☒ Feedback included in the final Design Code
- ☒ No change - Design Team justification provided

Front Cover of PTE Design Code Testing Report

GILSTON AREA Village One Masterplan Design Code Testing: Parcel R10

May 2025
r2 29 | 2026

**Pollard
Thomas
Edwards**



V1MP Design Code Testing Report Response

Item	Design Code Testing Comment	Design Team Response	Action
1	The underlying distinctiveness of different frontage types is not always clear in the diagrams, which can feel more generic (page 4).	Noted. While the frontage types at the two ends of the spectrum are intentionally the most distinct in terms of formality and informality, the intermediate types are designed to respond to the specific constraints and conditions of key public-realm interfaces - such as the primary street and the STC. As a result, these "in-between" types will naturally sit at transitional points along the formality spectrum. Their differences are therefore more nuanced and share common characteristics by design, enabling subtle shifts in character between edges and interfaces rather than abrupt or overly contrasting changes.	
2	Behind main streets and frontages there are noticeably few controls in place in terms of frontages and placemaking – albeit a general requirement for gradual height transitions may help mitigate some risk (page 4).	This is already covered by Chapter 6. Residential Built Form under section 6.6 Street Scene Principles. The code states under the principle "Transitions in Scale & Massing": • Building heights, scale and density must transition to avoid sudden changes in character. • Sudden changes in scale and massing must be avoided.	
3	The prioritisation of flexibility has led to less clear guidance for the built form and street character – particularly beyond the main frontages. Without unduly fixing designs, We would suggest clearer guidance for tertiary streets, legibility for visitors, and incorporating delivery and waste collection may help applicants understand what the character aspiration is for these areas (page 4).	Noted. Rather than prescribing detailed urban design frameworks for internal parcel areas, it was agreed that these areas would be guided by the Urban Design and Street Scene Principles set out in Sections 6.5 and 6.6. These principles act as a "safety net" to prevent poor-quality urban design outcomes. This approach allows greater flexibility for housebuilders in configuring internal parcel layouts, while applying more rigorous and explicit design controls to site edges and frontages addressing the public realm. It is considered that this provides an appropriate balance between deliverability and the maximisation of placemaking value where it is most impactful. Regarding waste collection routes - this is considered to be a detail that is best resolved during the Reserved Matters Application stages. Design guidance on how to potentially resolve on-plot access to bins are covered in Section 6.	

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4	It is worth considering the risk of car dominance and doubling up of service roads along some frontages with this flexible approach (page 4).	Noted. The risk of car dominance and the potential for duplicated service roads has been considered. The project transport consultant has confirmed that direct vehicular access is not permitted along the Primary Street due to the outcomes of the traffic modelling. This constraint is acknowledged within the design code; however, it has been agreed that limited direct access may be permitted to allow flexibility to be tested and resolved at the detailed design stage. While rear-access solutions can be successful where carefully designed, the design team is mindful of both EHDC concerns and prevailing market reluctance toward rear parking arrangements. The flexible approach therefore seeks to balance movement efficiency, place quality, and deliverability while avoiding car-dominated frontage conditions.	
5	While the key criterion of producing a compliant layout has been met, the Design Code could be strengthened to: • Assist distinctive placemaking - key frontages are highlighted but currently feel very similar.	Refer to Response to item 1.	
6	While the key criterion of producing a compliant layout has been met, the Design Code could be strengthened to: • Promote efficient land use - emphasis on semi-detached houses on frontages may lead to potentially unused capacity, and the relationship between Frontage Area guidance and illustrative density is not clear.	Noted. The approach to frontage typologies and density has been deliberately structured to allow density to be increased at the appropriate time. As the first village to come forward, it is important to establish early momentum and a critical mass that can support subsequent increases in density, rather than introducing higher-density development from the outset. A more abrupt shift to higher densities without sufficient transition could undermine placemaking objectives and stall market absorption, which would be contrary to the long-term aspirations for Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. The Design Code therefore prioritises a graduated approach to density, with flexibility to intensify frontage areas over time as the village matures and supporting infrastructure is established.	

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7	While the key criterion of producing a compliant layout has been met, the Design Code could be strengthened to: • Develop clearer coding requirements for internal parcel areas (page 4).	Refer to response to Item 3	
8	While the key criterion of producing a compliant layout has been met, the Design Code could be strengthened to: • Provide clearer criteria for access driveways off primary streets (page 4).	Refer to response to Item 4	
9	A gateway flat block is suggested in the SE corner of the Illustrative Masterplan. However, the Design Code does not include apartment typologies in the frontage allocation for Area D (page 8).	Noted. Flexibility for this approach has been added to the code. On Frontage Character D, a note has been added to permit flats but only on defined corners (e.g defined Marker Buildings). The key grouping for this gateway has also been amended to ensure a Marker building of at least 3 storeys is used on this key corner to allow flexibility for either a apartment building or taller residential dwelling to be used. The height parameters allow up to 14m to ridge height.	
10	The testing design provides 59 homes on a site area of 1.37 hectares. This represents a density of about 43 dph. While above most housebuilder development densities, this is below the peripheral maximum densities specified of 55dph, and significantly below the 75dph ceiling (page 8).	Density - This was agreed with PfP to allow maximum flexibility to achieve the target number of homes noting uncertainties in mix, typology or parking requirements as this is to be determined by the market.	
11	Behind the strictly defined 'Frontage Areas' the Type E streets coding does not give height or design guidance. Theoretically a developer could place flat blocks of up to five storeys - 18m ridge height and large areas of parking in this location (page 8).	This is prevented by the Street Scene Principles - Transitions in scale and massing: • Building heights, scale and density must transition to avoid sudden changes in character. • Sudden changes in scale and massing must be avoided.	

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12	We suggest that applicants are asked to include a section at the beginning of Design and Access Statements explaining how they have understood and complied with the Design Code's quality aspirations, and highlighting any principles they wish to modify, in addition to the checklist. This is to encourage a comprehensive design approach (page 10).	Noted - We have updated the requirements in the "Notes" section of the Compliance Checklist Template to state the following: <i>"Wherever 'No' or 'Partial' is answered to any compliance question, an explanatory statement justifying non-compliance is required. Explanatory statements will be submitted in support of the completed Compliance Checklist."</i> <i>The Design Code Compliance Checklist and any associated design justification should be provided as part of the Design and Access Statement (DAS) submitted with the Reserved Matters Application. Applicants should provide a statement at the beginning of the DAS explaining how they have complied with the Design Code's aspirations.</i> <i>Submitted proposals will only pass where "Yes" is achieved throughout or if acceptable justifications or alternative design rationales have been provided where "Partial/No" has been filled."</i>	
13	The 'Statement of Compliance' could be the section of the Design and Access suggested under 'Compliance with Code' (page 10).	See response to Item 12	
14	List required, not checkboxes for overlapping features (page 10).	Noted. The checklist has been updated to identify the relevant items that must be completed for this question in the Compliance Checklist.	
15	Checkboxes required for items relating to Green Infrastructure Components (page 11)	Noted. The checklist has been updated to identify the relevant items that must be completed for this question in the Compliance Checklist.	

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16	Only Street Type E occurs within Parcel R10. Very few of the parameters apply to R10 testing. However, there is a potential conflict between “Typically, tertiary streets will only be used by people living in or visiting that area...” (DC p18) and the Active Travel Plan on DC p116, which shows “Footpath Routes within Parcels (based on Tertiary Streets and Cross Parcel Permeability routes)” connecting the Eastwick Road leisure route to the south of R10 to the primary street to the north. This lack of clarity about the function of tertiary streets may be mitigated by swapping “typically” to “predominantly”. This could be assisted with a confirmation of the important role of tertiary streets in contributing to a permeable and convenient network of routes for walking and cycling at this point (page 11).	Noted - the code has been updated to say: <i>"Tertiary streets will predominantly be used by people living or visiting that area, and will therefore be narrower and less formal in character than a secondary street."</i>	
17	Separate checkboxes required for relevance & compliance for Frontage Characters (page 11).	Noted. The checklist has been updated to identify the relevant items that must be completed for this question in the Compliance Checklist.	
18	Additional checkboxes for the key groupings should be added to allow compliance to be recorded (page 11).	Noted. The checklist has been updated to identify the relevant items that must be completed for this question in the Compliance Checklist.	
19	It is not clear what the distinction is between “Parking areas must be defined by landscaping such as trees, hedges and planted verges” and “Parking areas should be demarcated in a low-key manner, for example, with pressed concrete pavements or similar hard landscape treatment”. There is a general opportunity to review the content and number of must and should statements to ensure clarity of specification (page 13).	Noted - the text has been updated to avoid ambiguity. This has been clarified as follows: <i>"Parking areas must be defined by landscaping such as trees, hedges and planted verges."</i> <i>"The hard landscaping treatment for parking areas should be demarcated in a low key manner, for example, with pressed concrete pavements or similar hard landscape treatment."</i>	