

Marcham Parish Council

Planning and design principles for new housing in Marcham

This policy should be seen as an addition to the Vale of White Horse District Council (VoWHDC) planning and design guidelines. It reflects the particular needs of the village of Marcham.

1	Preserve the rural character	In spite of its continued growth, most people move to Marcham because they want to live in a rural environment rather than in a town. An overriding imperative is that all new developments should seek to preserve and enhance the rural nature of the village. One important way to help achieve this is to have the lowest possible housing density.
2	Provide an appropriate mix of house sizes	In Marcham's Community-led Plan, the strongest demand is for low cost starter homes and for mid-range properties. Developers are asked to reflect that demand by including sufficient 2 bedroom starter homes and 3 bedroom mid-range homes which can be bought outright.
3	Provide sufficient 3 and 4 bedroom affordable housing	Developers should include sufficient three and four bedroom houses in the 40% provision of affordable housing.
4	Consider the possibility of including bungalows	There is a demand from Marcham families where children have left home to downsize to a smaller 2 or 3 bedroom bungalow. Although that may use more land than a two storey house, this can be offset to an extent by having a smaller garden plot. This helps to maintain the age balance within the village and makes the community stronger by enabling multi-generational families to live here.
5	Limit all buildings to a height of no more than 2 storeys	This is an essential contribution to preserving the character and feel of the village. This limit also excludes two and a half storey buildings.
6	Use a traditional stone or brick finish	This is in keeping with other developments in the village over the last thirty years.
7	Avoid the use of weather boarding, particularly black or white board, including on garages.	Weather boarding would be completely out of character with the village. It is also much more likely to make an area look dilapidated if it is not well maintained.
8	Use a single style of finish within each section of a development	Marcham has a limited range of styles, and most of the previous developments have a sense of coherence. A mix of styles for adjacent houses may be more visually exciting but would be out of character for our village.

9	Create sustainable housing	Developers are asked to build low-energy use, energy efficiency and other sustainable features into all new housing. This especially applies to the affordable houses within the development. Fittings should include solar heating (or possibly ground source or air source heating), photovoltaic panels, grey water collection, water butts, etc.
10	Provide sufficient off-street parking	It is important that any new development provides sufficient off-road parking, in addition to garages. The minimum standards required by VoWHDC should be exceeded if possible. 4 bedroom houses should have a minimum of 3 parking spaces. There should also be additional shared off-road parking for visitors.
11	Do not create gated areas	Gated areas are likely to create a sense of isolation from the community. In time they add to, rather than reduce, a sense of insecurity. Finally they become an annoying obstacle for delivery vehicles and residents.
12	Provide a pavement with a raised kerb on every road	A dedicated pavement encourages people to walk around the village rather than make car journeys. Shared roads are not satisfactory for people with pushchairs and the elderly, particularly when cars park on them.
13	Include front garden space	There should be no property which fronts directly onto a pavement – all properties should have some green space between them and the pavement. This helps preserve the identity and character of the village.
14	Provide storage for at least 3 wheelie bins for every residence	This avoids cluttering the pavement, is more secure and makes the street scene more attractive.
15	Use energy efficient street lighting	Street lighting should be energy efficient, and conform to the existing village pattern of switching off a carefully selected 50% of the lights between 12.30am and 5.30am.
16	Include as many footpaths as possible from the development into the rest of the village	An essential part of community life is encouraging residents to walk to other parts of the village rather than travelling by car. Including footpaths wherever possible makes it more likely that any new development is integrated into the existing community.
17	Make green space central to any development	The VoWHDC requires new developments to include 15% green space. Where possible, this space should be in a single block in a central position within the new housing. This encourages residents to care for the space, and helps to keep a rural feel to the village.
18	Fit electric car-charging points to all new houses	Parts of Marcham suffer from dangerously high levels of air pollution. It is important that we take every possible step towards reducing this problem.