

# CHARACTER STATEMENT ON OUR BUILDINGS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

This is a short guide to the characteristics of buildings in our Hurst Park Estate neighbourhood, to help anyone planning a house extension or addition in the area. Everyone should consult the published planning guidance and seek advice available from individuals at the planning authority.

## The garden suburb

The Hurst Park Estate (part of the 'New Chesterton' development of Cambridge from c. 1910 to the 1930s) belongs to the garden city/garden suburb ideals championed by Ebenezer Howard from the 1890s, which defined much suburban development in the early twentieth century and interwar period.

The garden suburb ideals were rooted in new thinking about health and hygiene, and improved living conditions. They were a reaction to the narrow brick terraces of 19th century urban building which had little in the way of gardens. In aesthetic terms, the architecture of garden suburbs drew on recognisable picturesque precedents, such as early 17th century cottages and farmhouses. These were re-imagined for the 20th century around compact modern plans and with an emphasis on natural light.

## Dates

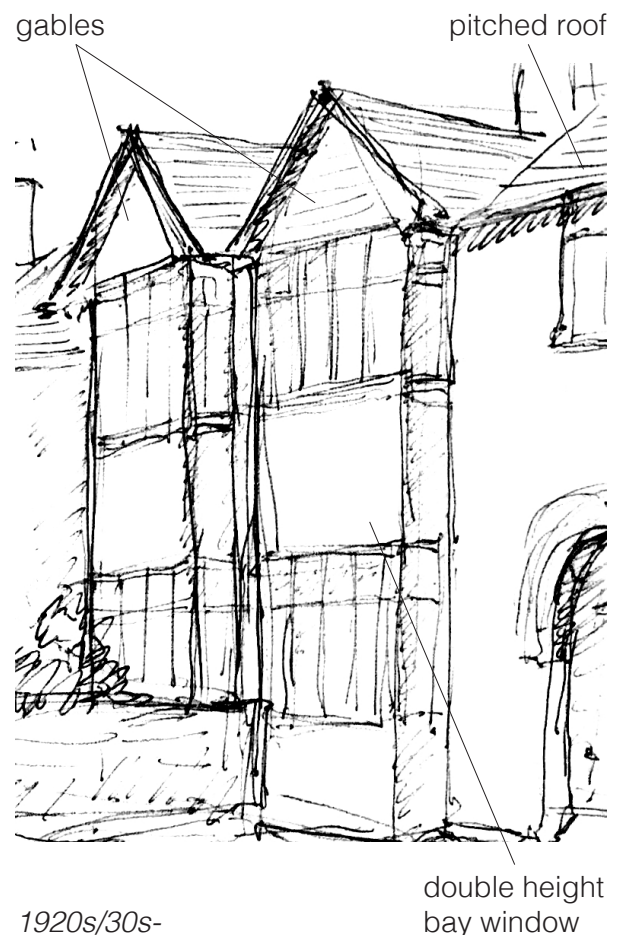
Some houses on **Highworth Avenue** date back to before 1914, and several to the 1920s, while most of the houses on **Hurst Park Avenue, Highfield and Orchard Avenues, Leys Road and Leys Avenue** belong to the 1930s. There are a small number of modern infills and replacements. **Mulberry Close** was built in the 1960s, to a prototype design by architect Peter Boston. This was designed around an open space, 'a village green', so in some ways a modern version of the garden suburb theory, but with terraces on a denser grouping.

## Characteristics of houses

The houses of the Hurst Park Estate have a largely consistent character both architecturally and in terms of their setting; the wide roads and pavements, avenues of fruit and other trees, grass verges.

That character also depends on a consistent range of architectural forms and details. Common features of 1910s to 1930s detached and semi-detached homes include:

- Gables and pitched roofs covered in clay, peg-and pan- tiles
- Brick elevations, either using red or yellow bricks, sometimes in combination with pebbledash or smooth render – in a variety of combinations
- Sometimes 'half-timbered effect' in gables
- Casement bay windows — often at both ground and first floor levels
- Generous plot sizes
- Deep rear gardens, with mature and orchard trees
- Front gardens, fences and hedges, sometimes with parking





## Your neighbourhood

Extensions and improvements are a normal way of achieving more living space and improving how the house functions but care should be taken that all additions respect the character of the building and the locality.

This is especially true for those additions and alterations which have an impact on the shared character of the street: these streets were laid out as planned communities, and it is the shared characteristics and quality of the public space derived from the garden city/suburb thinking of the early twentieth century that represent the best qualities of suburban planning.

It is widely accepted planning policy that proposed additions and extensions should respect their local surroundings in terms of form, scale, aspect, design and materials.

Good neighbourhood design should aim to avoid detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and on the character of the street and the 'shared' environment.



front  
garden  
hedging

## Guidance

- It's best to engage a suitably qualified professional to prepare any proposals
- Sympathetic and good quality development will enhance the whole neighbourhood
- Over-enlargement or drastic changes in character detract from the whole
- Use appropriate materials
- Sometimes contrasting materials can work well, especially if they help define the new work as something different and subsidiary to the main house
- Respect the building's site and surroundings
- Extended building should not become over-assertive or obtrusive and should respect the overall floor area, size, height and proportion of the original dwelling
- Sustainability issues should be addressed, by trying to use local materials (brick, stone or timber, as appropriate) and by considering energy efficient materials and features.

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