

The Prestwich Village Design Code

What is a design code?

A design code is a tool used to improve the quality of places, buildings, and spaces, helping to ensure the design quality meets the expectations of the local community for the type, scale and location of the development. Design codes are clear design requirements for new developments, based on principles and priorities agreed upon with the local community. A neighbourhood plan design code is an optional tool that can be used if there are specific design issues or features in a neighbourhood plan area that are not covered by design codes produced by the local planning authority. They are supported by evidence and preferably adopted as part of a neighbourhood plan, with the full support of the local planning authority.

Why is design quality important?

Creating well-designed and beautiful places can lift our spirits and instil a sense of belonging in the people who live in, work in, and visit them. Good design creates value in our lives. It creates worth for everyone involved in shaping, creating, occupying, and enjoying the buildings and spaces that give structure to our places. Design policies, codes and guides help to ensure that design proposals take into account what is important to those living in, visiting and working in the area and that existing places benefit from new development, including works to public spaces.

Are design codes mandatory?

Many neighbourhood plans include design guidance that sets out aspirations for design that is expected to be delivered, but which can be ignored as they are not mandatory. Design codes differ from design guidance by including mandatory requirements for design issues that are important to communities, through the use of clear language. This is summarised as:

Mandatory Code	Non-mandatory Guidance	Non-mandatory Guidance
Expressed as MUST	Expressed as SHOULD	Expressed as COULD
Principles that are requirements.	Principles that are strongly encouraged.	Principles that are suggestions.
E.g. the boundary wall MUST be provided alongside the road.	E.g. the boundary wall SHOULD match the adjoining building.	E.g. the boundary wall COULD be constructed in locally sourced materials.

Well-structured design codes typically use a combination of these definitions so that the design code is not overly prescriptive and allows for interpretation, innovation and creativity by the developers and their consultants who will use it. The design priorities for an area should be requirements, and those issues that are important but less specific and fundamental to the delivery of the vision, should be guidance.

What should a design code address?

A design code should address issues and themes important to your local area and your community within your neighbourhood boundary. This guidance provides a summary of some common issues and themes that could be addressed through your design code. These include principles and parameters for buildings, streets, activities, public spaces, open spaces and landscapes.

