1. Overview

Leire is a conservation village consisting of approximately 250 dwellings, varying in age, size, style and construction materials. It is in a rural setting with open countryside views, a village green and an abundance of mature trees and hedgerows.

Buildings within the village reflect its growth over the last 300 or so years, with the older traditional brick, part stone, thatched and slated dwellings concentrated around the village conservation area. Some of the 19th century brick houses along Main Street are terraced, others detached and the Village Hall is in the Arts and Crafts style.

In the mid-20th century two areas of council housing were constructed, semi-detached with brick and render facades and tiled roofs. These are on the east and west sides of the village. These were followed by a series of small developments, typical of the 1960’s, 70’s and 80’s style. Wales Orchard and Eaglesfield End are in the centre of the village but outside the conservation area and St Margaret’s, Andrews Close, St Peters Close and White House Close are all on the perimeter of the village. Recently, 4 no, 5 bedroom houses have been built on the Hall Farm Yard site in a more modern style.
In summary, Leire has managed to retain its historic charm and feel, as seen in the number of listed buildings in the conservation area. Additional developments have not been large, and are mainly on the edge of the village. It is the intention of this guide to safeguard the feel and character of Leire by encouraging any future construction to be small and of sympathetic design. It is accepted that new building styles and materials are available, but these should be appropriate to particular locations.

The following design recommendations following are therefore intended to offer guidance for the solutions we believe will enhance the character and environment of our village.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this guide is to ensure that constructors demonstrate in a Design and Access Statement how their building reinforces Leire’s character and feel, and fits within the neighbourhood.

The guide does not supersede or replace the guidance and requirements in relevant national and local documents, but is designed to make them relevant to Leire. The intention is that any construction within this Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) area is of a high standard, not the minimum of the national and regional requirements and to ensure that that any construction improves Leire for the community.

Within the conservation area of the village this guide demands a stricter coherence to the prevailing style and character of the immediate neighbours.

Design Code One — Construction proposals for residential property will require a design and access statement to be approved by the Parish Council before construction can start on site.

The Design and Access Statement must address the following:

1. Context and Character

New buildings are expected to maintain the integrity of the village character. Building scale, styles and materials must therefore be complementary to the neighbourhood in terms of visual impact. Particular care must be taken to reflect and respect the importance of the neighbouring listed properties.

2. Design appropriate to the character of the village

Any construction will enhance and reinforce the local character of the location in which it is located.
3. Environmental Impact

Any new construction must demonstrate how it will minimise the impact on local flora and fauna. Existing trees, hedgerows and topography should be preserved as far as possible.

Existing grass verges and banks should be retained where possible and provision made for the upkeep of any new green areas.

Constructions should incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques to meet high standards for energy and water efficiency, including the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology and where appropriate, grey water systems. This should be incorporated into the design in such a way that the visual impact in comparison to the character buildings within the village is negligible.

4. Vehicle Access and Parking

All construction must provide adequate provision for vehicle access and off road parking. It is desirable that new construction provides a charging port for electric vehicles.

The number of parking spaces should be a minimum of two for properties of 3 bedrooms or less, three for 4 bedroom properties and 4 for 5 bedrooms or more. Each enclosed garage space should include an external drive/forecourt large enough to accommodate vehicle standing to allow safe ingress and egress. The minimum acceptable dimensions for a car parking space will be 5.0m x 2.4m x 2.0m on plan. Parking spaces should not require drivers to reverse more than 25m for access.

The Design and Access Statement must also prove the suitability of the proposed accessories for the anticipated volume of traffic.

5. Utilities and Waste

New construction should incorporate sustainable drainage systems with an adequate maintenance regime in place. Appropriate provision for the storage of waste bins and recyclable materials must be included and having this camouflaged within the public realm is desirable.

All services, including fibre optic cables, should be on the main system with the appropriate inspection facilities.

6. Accessibility

As well as complying with current building regulations, new construction must provide adequate access for wheelchair users and pedestrians throughout the construction area by the use of suitable pavements, drop kerbs and avoidance of obstacles such as steps. All new units will be expected to achieve a minimum space and amenity standard of the current building regulations.

7. Connection with the Countryside

The countryside is regarded as a non-renewable and natural resource which must be afforded protection. Construction is expected to demonstrate their compliance to Planning Guide Guidance as relates to the countryside. In addition, the Design and Access Statement must show how new buildings will be set into the landscape in such a way that they appear to be a fitting part of Leire.
8. Implications for Local Historical Narrative

The Design and Access Statement must demonstrate how any construction meets the demands of the Neighbourhood Plan with regards to the protection and preservation of local historical assets.

9. Implications for Local Amenity

Any new construction must demonstrate how it contributes positively to local services and amenities and not reduce access to services or amenities for Leire residents.

10. Implications for Local Ecology

The Design and Access Statement must demonstrate an understanding of the ecology local to the proposed construction. The following measures should be considered:

- Hedges or fences with ground level gaps should be used for property boundaries for the passage of animals such as hedgehogs.
- Security lighting should be operated by intruder switching, not on constantly.
- Existing trees and hedges of ecological or arboricultural value on and immediately adjacent to new construction should be retained and protected whenever possible. Where this is not possible, new planting to match or improve should be incorporated, with regards to future height and density.

3. DESIGN SUGGESTIONS

A variety of design solutions should be incorporated to reflect the diverse nature of Leire and all new construction should generally conform to the suggestions listed below:

Design Code Two — Construction proposals will be required to achieve the following density and layout requirements.

- Density and Layout

Density should be sympathetic to the current built form and easily integrated into the village rather than of an urban standard, bearing in mind the character of surrounding properties and having reasonable consideration to neighbours’ amenity.

Design Code Three — Construction proposals will be required to achieve the following architectural design features.

- Height and Scale

Dwelling heights should be one or two stories, with the exception of a third floor being extended into a roofline with the use of dormer windows.

- Materials

The diversity of materials used in any construction should match those found elsewhere in Leire, with particular emphasis on neighbouring premises and consideration for listed buildings nearby.

- Elevations

Should generally match those in close proximity. Whilst brick and render are preferable treatments,
other cladding materials will be considered where the design and setting are appropriate. Gutters and Downpipes should not create a major impact.

- **Roof Treatments**

Should generally have a mixture of materials, chiefly slate, and clay and concrete tiles. Solar panels should not detract from the architectural integrity of the area. They should generally be pitched and flat roofs avoided. Chimneys should reflect the many current styles in Leire, with chimney pots encouraged.

- **Window treatments**

Should generally be consistent with neighbouring properties and style. Detailing such as cant brick sills, stone and keystones are encouraged. UPVC is not to be used within the conservation area without the prior written consent of the Local Authority conservation officer.

- **Garages**

Should generally be constructed to match the village dwelling materials with conventional pitched roofs.

- **Roads and Driveways**

Should generally be of varied materials to fit the landscape of the village and incorporate a mixture of paviors, setts, gravel and tarmac. Planted areas should be included to soften the impact and reduce surface water run-off.

- **Green building materials**

These are actively supported as are grey water systems, low carbon technologies such as heat pumps and photo voltaic panels.

**Design Code Five — Construction proposals will be required to achieve the following external design features.**

- **Boundary Walls**

Wherever possible plots should be enclosed by native hedging, brick walls, wooden fencing or metal railings, to reflect the rural character. All plots should support biodiversity and landscaping plans must respect local hedges, trees and wildlife considerations. Boundary walls should not usually exceed 1.8m in height when facing on to roads. Boundary and internal fences should not usually exceed 1.2m in height.

- **Colours**

Of doors, windows and garage doors should be generally sympathetic to the village vernacular and surrounding properties.

- **Landscaping**

Existing trees and hedgerows should be preserved and incorporated into the design if possible.
Provision for new trees and other plants must be made wherever possible to encourage the construction to blend into the rural setting, act as a water run-off soak and soften the lines between old and new buildings.