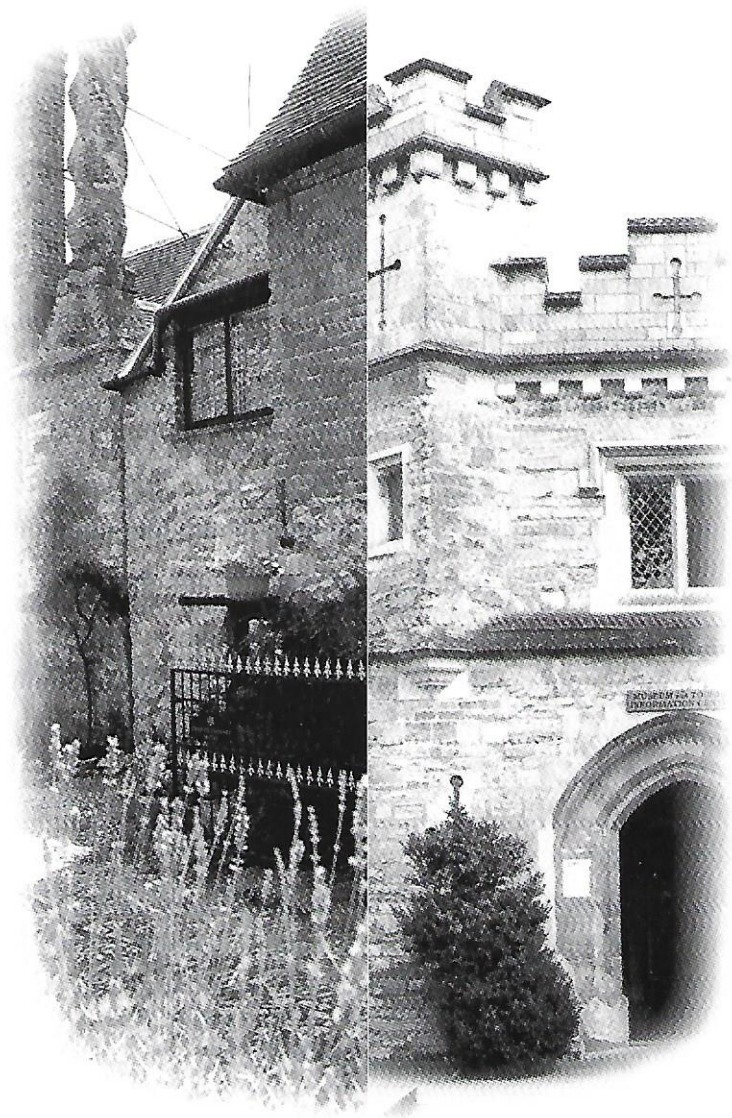


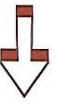
# Buckingham

## Vision and Design Statement 2001



# Buckingham then





# Contents

## REFERENCE MAP

The map, 'Buckingham now' on the fold-out page to the right, should be referred to throughout the document.

## REFERENCE TEXT

Design guidelines, wish lists from our workshop and conclusions will be introduced throughout this document, using this annotative layout for ease of reference. The design guidelines are addressed to:

- statutory bodies and planning authorities
- developers, builders, architects, planners, engineers
- local community groups
- householders and businesses in Buckingham

and are applicable in the Parish of Buckingham.



## This is Buckingham

Pages 2 & 3

Setting, history, views and architecture.



## What makes Buckingham special?

Pages 4 & 5

A selection of comments from people in Buckingham.



## Involving the community: how we did it

Pages 6 & 7

Diary of events.



## The sequential approach

Pages 8 & 9

Is there development potential in under-used town sites before we build on the green fields?



## Designing for quality

Pages 10 & 11

Spatial layout & materials.



## Designing for quality

Pages 12 & 13

Scale, landscape & elevation and roofline.



## The way ahead

Pages 14 & 15

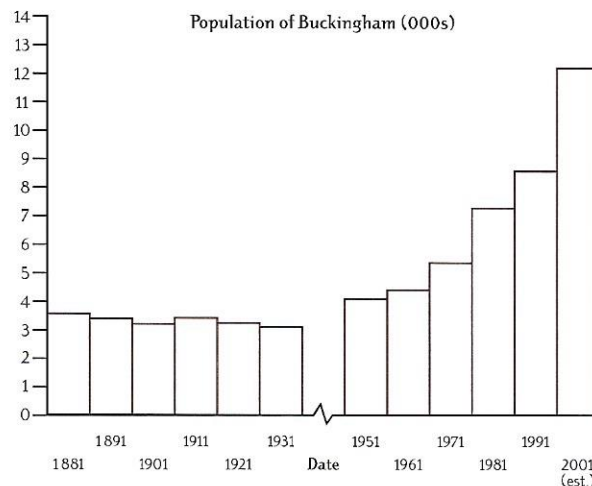
Planning for the future.



## Design guidelines

Page 16 & 17

The design guidelines on pages 16 & 17 have been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance for Buckingham in accordance with Policy GP69 of the Deposit Draft Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (October 1998).



# This is Buckingham

*"Consult the genius of the place in all."*

Alexander Pope

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Our town setting

In the centre of England, the young river Ouse has cut a long valley on its way eastwards to the Wash. At Buckingham, it sweeps round a small limestone hill about seven metres (22ft) high. To the south are open undulating hills of farming land; to the north poorer, forested country where the ice age deposits are thicker. The rich grazing lands of the Ouse Valley have endowed Buckingham with a pastoral legacy that has inspired the description 'The Green Heart of England'.

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↑ The church spire is Buckingham's most valued landmark and acts as a beacon from all approach roads.

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↑ Views out of the town, principally from Castle Hill and the old railway viaduct, reveal a townscape of clustering rooflines, green fields lapping at the edges and the tree-lined banks of the river snaking through the built up areas.

The river is an important element in the character of the town. Every opportunity should be taken to allow easy pedestrian and cycle access to it and to enhance the peaceful recreational facilities along its length.

The church spire must continue to be visible above its green domain from all directions.

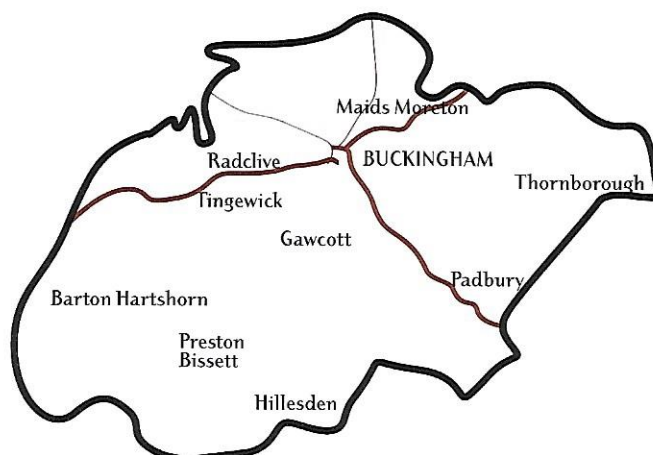
Views out of the town must be protected and continue to show the close relationship between countryside and town.

### An historic market town

Well over 1000 years ago, Bucca, the leader of a clan of Angles, settled his people here and built a fort on the hill to protect them. Buckingham grew to importance as a 'frontline' defence against the Danes, becoming the main town of the shire, Buckinghamshire.

Three ancient ways which are now major roads (from London to Worcester and Wales, from the West Country to East Anglia and from Oxford to Cambridge) meet at the river crossing in Buckingham – a natural place for a market to prosper.

In spite of the by-pass road, heavy lorries still pass through the town centre. Alternative routes should be sought in order to create streets that are safe and pleasant for people.



Buckingham's twice-weekly open air market brings life and character to the centre. Its retention and continuing growth should be encouraged.

The river provided power for the two town mills, which are recorded in the Domesday survey.

## A classic Georgian centre

New developments should retain existing focal points and introduce additional visual features, such as a pond, group of trees, unusual building or interesting detail.

Following a disastrous fire in 1725, much of the centre of Buckingham was rebuilt. This rebuilding has given our town its classic Georgian centre, now contained within a Conservation Area.



Some older timber-framed buildings survive which, together with the Victorian streets and shopfronts, give Buckingham a variety of architectural styles.



## Splendid features

Buckingham has many distinctive features: most prominent are the church, the Old Gaol, the Old Town Hall with its Swan symbol. These features provide focal points.

We need to coordinate the provision of sport and leisure facilities so that they can be shared by everyone.

Link recreational routes to schools, sporting and leisure amenities.

Extension of the business park must be accompanied by better links with the town – for example, pedestrian and cycle routes that safely 'bridge' the bypass.

Three key criteria for all development:

- be sensitive to the immediate locality
- relate to the context of Buckingham
- respect the natural environment

## A centre of learning

There are a number of well-established primary and secondary schools serving the town and surrounding villages. The University attracts students from all over the world, who bring an international element to our small town.

## A healthy employment base

At the dawn of a new millennium, Buckingham is recognized as one of the most thriving small towns in the south east. Commercial growth in recent years has been focused on the business park to the south of the bypass road.

## Local pride and community spirit

We are very proud of Buckingham's market town traditions. The town manages to convey a lively urban character while retaining a rural atmosphere. However, we are very conscious that, unless thoughtfully managed, continuing growth and prosperity could overwhelm the rural features so valued by our community.

# What makes Buckingham special?

## A selection of comments (taken from street surveys, public responses in questionnaires and meetings)

“The distinctive character of our town comes from its history.”

“Buckingham is a delightful old market town – with lovely surroundings.”

“The town has an attractive mix of old dwellings, shops and timber-framed houses. Because these were built at various times in the history of Buckingham, roofs have different pitches and heights, the window and doors come in different shapes and sizes within the same building. There is a harmony in difference.”

“It would be difficult to find houses identical to many of Buckingham’s older houses elsewhere in the southern half of England. Sadly, the designs of many modern estate houses are repeated in town after town. This represents a substantial threat to our town’s local distinctiveness.”

“In the older parts of the town, there is a general impression of houses fitting comfortably into the surroundings, be these the river bank, an old street or a wooded hillside.”



“Our legacy from the past is a rural market town feel. This risks being swamped in an encroaching tide of new development.”

“Development does not have to mean the gradual erosion of our town’s distinctiveness.”

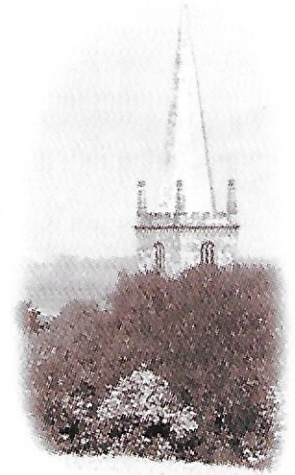
“Wharfside Place is a small development with good building materials which does not conflict with the surrounding area.”



“Fishers Field and The Moorings are compact developments and well fitted to their sites.”

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

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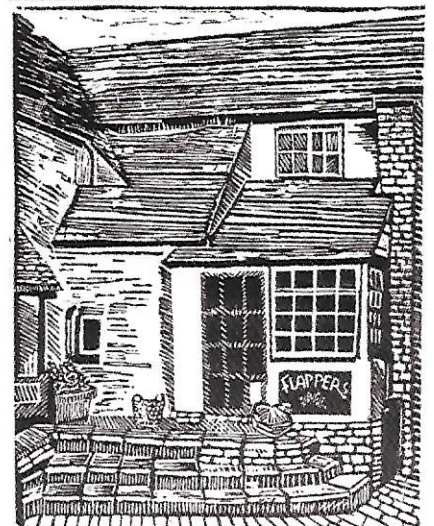


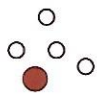
Natural roofing materials require a steeper pitch (30% and above). New rooflines for dwellings should aim for the same variety of pitch that is required for slates and tiles.

Cottages – terraced or free-standing – should be included in designs for new development.

Development plans should show how new building will merge into the existing landscape.

Avoid large-scale new housing estates with uniformity of scale.





What makes Buckingham special?  
Pages 4 & 5



“The house with a round corner in Ford Street is one of five buildings in the town with this feature.”

Vary the height of rooflines and punctuate with chimneys and/or dormers.

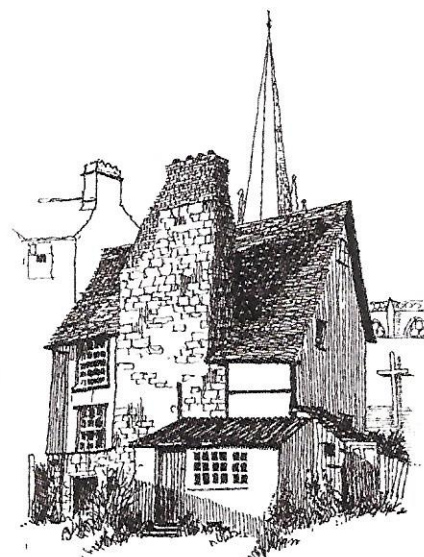
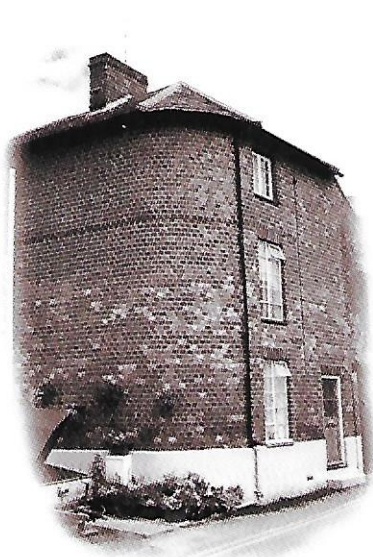


A variety of shops should be maintained in the high street.

Improve the pedestrian and cycle network to the town centre, providing safe parking for bicycles and make better use of available, off-street car parking areas.

New developments near the town centre should be compact (higher in density) with a mix of shops, flats, studios and houses.

Plan new plantings of large trees, and maintain existing trees so that they continue to contribute to the town's character.



“I like the higgledy-piggledy variety of the chimneys in Buckingham, especially the famous Twisted Chimney.”

“What I have come to value enormously is the centre of Buckingham for its charm and accessibility, both of which features I would like to preserve. It appears to cater for the immediate needs of all sectors of society. Some main high street names, independent gift shops, bookshops, a cobbler, a baker, no candle-stick maker but picture framer; jewellers, butcher, library, doctor, cottage hospital, hardware and electrical shops, not to mention its own university and attractive riverside walks.”

“The Cornwall Centre is an intimate pedestrian shopping area with about 25 small shops and one supermarket. The area has a closed-in cosy feel and there is a general mix of human scale buildings and rooflines which please the eye.”

“The market and flea market are very important features and provision should be continued for them.”

“Fishers Field has parapets and mixed styles in an overall harmonious design. It is a compact estate within easy walking distance of the town centre.”

“I like Buckingham for its compactness.”

“I did not realize at first that the School Court conversion was a recent development because it fits in so well. This is a town centre development which is sympathetic to the local distinctiveness of Buckingham; the riverside terrace is particularly effective.”

“I would like Buckingham to continue to have lots of trees. As Buckingham has some very lovely trees.”

# Involving the community: how we did it

*"Public participation is crucial to the design process."*

*"...we should devolve detailed planning to the level of the neighbourhood where local people can get more involved in the decision-making process."*

Urban Task Force Report, 1999

From the start, we tried to involve everyone in the preparation of this Vision and Design Statement. To achieve this, in 1999 we organised:

- town-wide competitions
- presentations to various groups in Buckingham
- a street audit of the entire town with over 60 volunteers
- stalls at summer shows and fairs
- an Art Competition in all local schools on the theme 'The Spirit of Buckingham'
- two town workshops that included exhibitions, slide shows, survey questionnaires, refreshments, etc.

From all this, we estimate that several hundred people had some part in this Statement.



The first town-wide competition, an informal Christmas quiz, took place over the Christmas/New Year '98-'99 and the second, a photo quiz, during the summer of 1999. Both were strongly supported by the Buckingham & Winslow Advertiser and prizes donated by many local businesses were offered to encourage participation.

We were invited to make presentations to:

- The Buckingham Society
- The Rotary Club of Buckingham
- The Buckingham Inner Wheel
- The Buckingham Women's Institute
- The Buckingham Partnership
- The Buckingham Town Council
- The Buckingham Crime Prevention Panel

In each case, lively discussion followed our presentations.

## A WISH LIST FROM OUR WORKSHOPS

"All available land in or near the town centre built on before more land is taken from green fields."

"More high-density affordable dwellings in or near the town centre."

"Be sure to encourage the street market to continue."

"Can we have more footpaths and cycleways and provide safe, undercover places to park bikes at school and in town."

"More off-street parking near the town centre."

"More shops in the town centre catering for basic needs."

"An area that commands a conspicuous position and yet is abandoned is the river between the ford and London Bridge. Could be one of the town's jewels."

"Suggest Buckingham has their own environment warden."

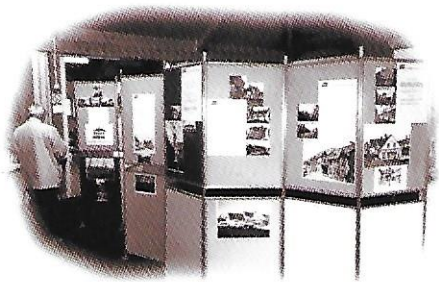
"More trees, shrubs and flowers to enjoy in and near the town centre."

"More leisure and recreation space for young people."

"Affordable, accessible amenities for young people, especially in the teenage group, should be a priority."







"No more imposed solutions from major national housebuilders, who are insensitive to Buckingham's character."

"Preferably no green field development on the outskirts of our town."

"Pay attention to the approach to the town. We are fast losing the rural, market town feel!"

"Visual approaches, especially at roundabouts. Buckingham in bloom, not in weeds!"

"We do not want to become a dormitory town for our larger neighbours."

"Can't we find a way to improve the maintenance of existing buildings and eliminate urban scruffiness."

"Take the large lorries out of the town."

"I consider the peace of mind of people who have lived in Buckingham for many years to be a necessary and important goal."

People from every street in our town participated in a town-wide, street-by-street audit with the aim of identifying the special characteristics of Buckingham.

We set out a stall at three shows and fairs held in Buckingham during the summer of 1999 and met and talked to large numbers of people. Specifically, we sought the views of fellow citizens in the photo quiz, which was put together around the theme: 'How Well Do You Know Buckingham?'

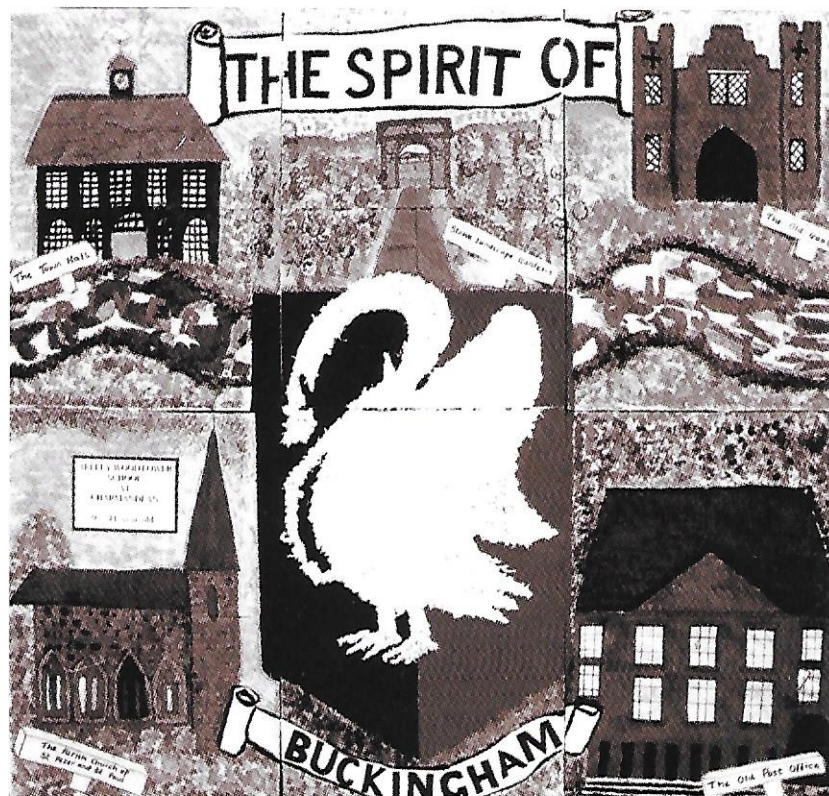
The competitions, the discussion groups and the audit all provided a wealth of detailed information and opinions from the people in Buckingham on the growth of our town.

The art competition for both adults and schools from Buckingham and the surrounding parishes on the theme 'The Spirit of Buckingham' was a great success, involving all age groups. Once again, local businesses donated generous prizes.

Several hundred people participated in the two Town Workshops, held on Wednesday, 22nd September, to coincide with the annual Town Forum and on Saturday, November 6th. We received over 150 written submissions in which people gave their ideas on vision and design for the future of our town.



Involving the community:  
how we did it  
Pages 6 & 7



# The sequential approach

*“Quality of design is not just about creating new developments. It is also about how we make the best use of our existing urban environments.”*

Urban Task Force Report, 1999

## CONCLUSIONS

Our study has established that Buckingham's character is very firmly based around its image of a country, market town. This means a busy, active, densely-built centre with more scattered developments on the edge where town meets country.

In Buckingham town centre, there are several examples of recently developed 'pockets' of land, which demonstrate how successful new development can be in respecting the character and patterns of the built environment, while breathing new life into the vitality of the traditional market centre.



Central locations used to and can still accommodate high density housing, as well as shops, offices and leisure facilities.

On the other hand, the rural approaches to Buckingham are being eroded. For example, the bypass road has imposed new boundaries and has encouraged large scale development to ignore the important distinction between dense 'in town' and scattered 'edge of town' building patterns. This type of development lacks the sensitivity that is needed to merge countryside into town.

Maximum use of derelict and previously developed sites within the town would reduce the need for greenfield development.

## Towards an urban renaissance

The Urban Task Force report prompted new thinking on the need to re-evaluate land for development.

As part of this Vision and Design project, we carried out a survey and analysis of empty or under-used sites in Buckingham, using local expertise and knowledge to evaluate their capacity for residential (or mixed) development. While not under-estimating the difficulties in developing these sites, a detailed assessment by local people clearly demonstrates that under-used sites and buildings in town centres do provide more opportunities for houses and flats than has hitherto been acknowledged.

One of the key obstacles is access, as defined by current highway regulations:

- existing narrow lanes and streets are considered 'inadequate'
- car parking standards
- open splays and sightlines at junctions in new developments
- too many roads required for new estates.



New development on the approaches to the town should reflect the concentrated form of farm buildings with the generous green spaces associated with them.

We need a new strategy for traffic management in historic town centres.



↑ A recent example indicating a 'renaissance' in assessing the suitability of some sites.



Investigate these sites in much more detail and promote every opportunity to re-introduce housing to the town centre.



Clearer national policies are required to provide new incentives for the development of difficult inner town sites.



There is a growing demand for town centre living. Special enthusiasm was shown for the design, layout and location of Fishers Field, The Moorings, Paynes Court and Wharfside Place. Using these as examples of best practice, we estimate that it would be possible to build up to half of Buckingham's new houses on sites already allocated for development within the existing centre. Other opportunities include:

- re-use of empty premises above shops
- smaller spaces left over in planning
- conversions of larger properties
- re-use of redundant property.

Taken as a whole, this would suggest that a significant proportion of Buckingham's housing allocation could be built within the town centre before allowing 'blanket' development on our green field boundaries.

There was broad agreement for this sequential approach from all sections of the community. In the quiz and at the workshops, most people felt that more urban mixed developments in the town centre would:

- better reflect the town's character
- turn under-used assets into positive features.

These are some of the comments from townspeople:

*"Small scale development suits Buckingham."*

*"Small and sympathetic to a rural town environment."*

*"The essence of a lively town is lots of people, high density housing, rooms, studios, flats, etc."*

*"The town needs to regenerate the centre and use the above store areas for apartments for singles/couples."*

*"Small scale, close to town centre."*

*"Town centre needs solid core of residential property."*

Good quality design is a pre-requisite for success. If development can be built to a high standard and planning briefs agreed between local people, district council and developer, then we can provide new housing, improve the town's vitality and protect the countryside all at the same time.

We believe that this approach could be adopted in most towns. If we are to use our limited land resources effectively, we all have a role to play in promoting realistic and imaginative solutions for the 'difficult' sites within our towns. We cannot take the easy option first. 'Take care of the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves' could be updated:

*"Treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children."*

# Designing for quality

Quality and character in the design of our town was largely brought about by local expertise and enterprise. Today, new buildings are rarely designed 'on the spot'. Designing for quality means putting local context back into new development. These guidelines highlight locally valued qualities. They seek to inspire new designs, interpreting local traditions with innovation, but with a character that is unique to Buckingham.

## Spatial layout

Street design should be seen as a sequence of spaces, defined by buildings. Buckingham's historic townscape is a testimony to patterns of movement that generations have created. This sequence of spaces has also been influenced by the river valley and the central hill.



← *The variation of levels within the town forms an important relationship between Buckingham and its environment.*

The streets march uphill and downhill, radiating outwards from the market place, opening and flowering on to wider open spaces. Together with a network of connecting lanes, off-street yards and islands of buildings, they present a constantly varied but rhythmically satisfying layout. Standard road layout in new development has ignored historic street patterns.



← *Partial closure of street with curving facade creates a natural break. The open space beyond is static, surrounded by three-storey buildings.*



← *The orientation of streets, lanes and paths is focused on the church, the river or the market place.*

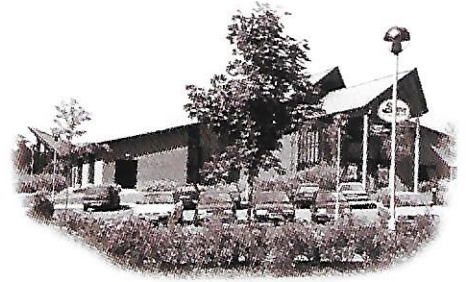


↑ *Courtyard spaces feature prominently in Buckingham. Narrow and linear, or small and square, their arched entrances offer a highly varied but rhythmic sequence of spaces.*



← *Street flow echoes the river's meandering course. Several 'islands' of densely packed buildings punctuate and divide the movement of traffic.*

## DESIGN GUIDELINES



Exploit levels to contrast the intimacy of enclosed space with the drama of wider spaces.

New road layouts in Buckingham should create a mixture of different spatial effects and not be determined by standard road layouts.

New roads or pathways need to be orientated towards the church, river and/or market.

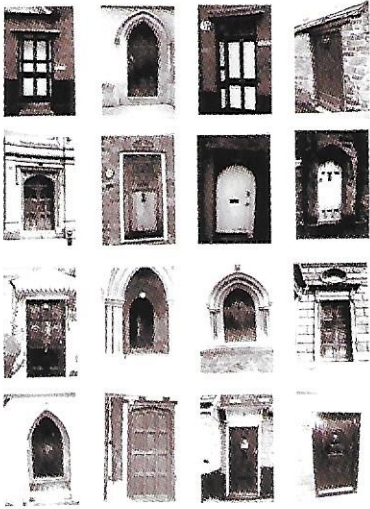
Plan more safe, informal routes for pedestrians and cyclists to link schools, shops, car parks and business with residential areas.

A variety of courtyard spaces should be created to reflect the existing character and pattern found in Buckingham's many walks and yards.

Use closely knit groups of buildings to echo the shapes associated with Buckingham's 'island' developments.

## Materials

Local geology underlies the character of every country town or village. Buckingham is no exception. Lying on the edge of a limestone belt interspersed with clay and cornbrash deposits, traditional building materials have reflected this diversity. Local stone quarries and brickworks provided the principal building materials but all elements from doorframes and roofs to paving and fencing help create a sense of place. Mass-produced, modern materials and standard details lack local distinctiveness when used indiscriminately.



Natural slate and plain clay tiles give Buckingham its familiar outline. If alternatives are appropriate, good quality materials must be chosen which match natural colours, do not glare and are proven to 'weather' with age.

Local bricks come in a variety of warm orange tones – pinky-orange, brown-orange and 'burnts' – adding to the distinctive mottled colour effect. These colours should be matched and used in new building.

Facades should show some contrasts of texture. Intersperse lime-rendered buildings with brick elevations. Combinations of brick and natural stone should also be used to add variety.

Painted facades should use muted earth colours. Paints for commercial signs must complement surroundings. Luminous primary colours are inappropriate.

The local stone is a pale, creamy ochre colour. Occasional buildings or free-standing walls in a matching natural stone should be introduced, particularly at the rural edges of town.

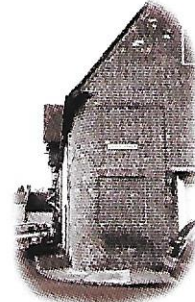
Joints should be careful to use a mortar mix that does not overwhelm the principal building material. Mortar joints in stonework should be recessed and a lime mortar used in restoration work on older buildings.

Windows and doors should use natural materials.

The surface treatment of pavements, footpaths, back lanes and alleys should complement the variety of textures and tone shown in surrounding buildings or landscape.



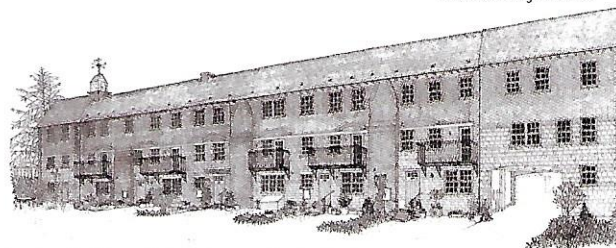
↑ Stone and brick elevation, clay roof tiles, river-washed cobbles and stone sets on the ground. A careful analysis of local colours and textures, used with a proportionate mix of the natural materials found in Buckingham, will help to make new buildings fit the local context.



↑ Often using burnt headers in a Flemish Bond, local brickwork has a distinctive mottled appearance. Header courses are used to create the distinctive round corners.



↑ Contrasting textures with brick and render, slate and tile, help define the personality of individual facades.



↑ A mix of brick and stone is a particular feature of many properties in Buckingham, successfully blending the rural with the urban. Early surviving buildings are built with local stone; later brick additions are often built over stone bases. Free-standing stone walls are normally random coursed, house elevations built to course.



↑ Use a limited palette but variety of texture to harmonise with surroundings. Diamond paviours, stone sets and cobbles are appropriate paving materials for Buckingham (see above). Timber deck and edging, gravel or hoggin paths, complement riverside walks.



↑ Buckingham has a rich inheritance of carpentry. Aluminium, UPVC, plastic and metal doors and window frames are eroding that tradition. Evidence suggests that natural materials are a sustainable alternative: they are more durable, create and retain local skills, reduce transport costs and look better. They can also be cheaper!



# Designing for quality

## Scale

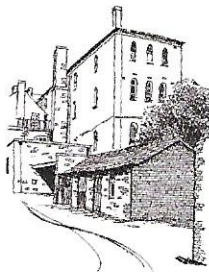
Scale is site specific and relies on real sensitivity to the location.



← In Buckingham, a wide range of building types and sizes have given an eclectic variety of scale – grander houses rubbing shoulders with back yard cottages and terraced facades. This creates an interesting contrast between the communal and the private.

The density and scale of development in Buckingham need to retain the feeling of a small and rural market town. Large housing estates detract from the town's character.

Scale can be fun. Odd juxtapositions of scale are welcome for the touch of individuality they give.



← Small scale does not always refer to size of building. Larger scale, individual buildings are very much part of the central townscape. There are good examples in Buckingham of old mills and warehouses being sub-divided internally to provide much needed contemporary flats with flexible living space.

## Importance of landscape

The importance of landscape has often been sidelined in new development. Land form and natural features exist before buildings. They must be considered at an early stage in development proposals.

12



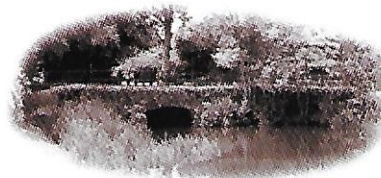
↑ Views over and into the town connect people to place. The hills, the river banks, the avenues, pockets of woodland and thick hedges lining roads and fields are as much part of Buckingham's character as its buildings. Plant species are as suggestive of place as building materials.



↑ Landscape is not just the 'green' element – contours, gates, stiles, bridges, follies, fences, footpaths and lighting all play a significant part in the overall picture. Close observation of their detail is needed in order to respect local distinctiveness.



↑ The treatment of enclosure in both private and public boundaries has a significant impact on character. Panel fencing (larch-lap or close-boarded) is inappropriate in Buckingham. Picket or post and rail fencing, hurdles, walls or railings are acceptable alternatives.



↑ Bridges must be in proportion to the width of crossing and the choice of materials appropriate to setting. Views from the bridge must not be obscured by overlarge side walls or railings.



← Existing trees and hedgerows in and around the town should be used to create a setting for new buildings.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

The scale of each scheme should be dictated by its location in relation to existing buildings, landscape features and physical setting.

The character of Buckingham is brought about by a mix of dwelling sizes and amenities within a compact area.

Developments within the central shopping areas should contain an appropriate mixture of shops, houses, flats and/or studios, respecting the existing diversity of scale and use.

Provide larger scale individual buildings to give identity and focus within groups of smaller units.

An occasional touch of eccentricity in scale relieves monotony and, picking up on a local point of reference, emphasises the individuality of place.

Site analysis and proposals for landscape design must be considered at the outset of any development proposal.

As well as protecting existing views, opportunities should be taken to create others.

New development outside the town centre must allow room for large-growing, native tree species:

- Choose plant species that re-inforce the character of the setting.
- Native trees and shrubs must be predominant in all new planting and soft landscape must dominate built form near to the edges of the town.

Boundary enclosures should avoid panel fencing and choose a sympathetic alternative.

Bridges are a crucial part of the townscape and must be designed to enhance their setting.

Use existing natural features and vistas to enhance the setting of new buildings.

Development should take account of existing hedgerows and trees, turning to advantage valued natural features.

## Interest of elevation and roofline

Detailing should be clearly specified on elevation drawings. It should avoid mixing historical styles in the same building.

Elevations should achieve individuality with simplicity.

Vary the brick bonds to give greater individuality to one or two buildings within a street.

Shop fascia boards and lettering should follow the older shop pattern of paint on board in colours which complement and match adjacent material.

The proportions of the shop front window should respect the Georgian and Victorian styles of the town. Retain the original shopfronts wherever possible.

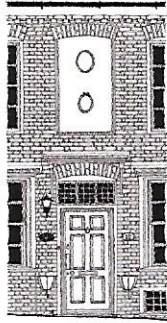
In general, roofs for dwellings should be pitched at the angles required for natural materials.

A variety of dwelling sizes within the continuity of a single street is important to add both a visual interest and a mix of people within the community.

The style of replacement windows, and in particular the use of glazing patterns, must be in keeping with the original building.

Avoid uniformity in the balance of window to wall (solid to void). Overall, greater proportion of solid to void is required to echo the rural character of buildings, particularly in residential areas away from the town centre.

In our historic town, several centuries of differing architectural styles and social needs have contributed to a diversity of elevation and roofline. Georgian elegance vies with Victorian exuberance; cottage simplicity with imposing grandeur – all achieved without discord. Thoughtful design has ensured that windows, doors, arches, dormers, roofs, chimneys and other details are carefully composed to give individuality to each building and yet achieve an harmonious street scene.



↑ Diversity of elevational detail but simplification of shape are the hallmark of Buckingham's prosperous but rural face.



↑ The pitch and proportion of roofs add as much interest to the property as the elevation. A steep pitch over a narrow span, gabled and hip ends are some of the typical features found in Buckingham.

The restrained use of windows and doors on the street elevation gives the building solidity and rural character.



↑ Shopfronts form an integral part of the town's architectural variety. An eclectic assortment of styles – canopies, bays, bows, plate glass displays – enliven the street facade. Traditional glazing proportions are in keeping with Buckingham's domestic scale and character.



The very different ratios of window to wall within the town are notable. Sometimes restrained, sometimes exuberant, they proclaim commercial centre or country 'honesty'. Replacing stone with brick as the principal building material brought with it more decorative facade details. Sash windows are set with contrasting cills and over-arch detail. String courses are in contrasting form or material.



Designing  
for quality  
Pages 12 & 13

# The way ahead

*“The key to sustainable development is community involvement.”*

Shell Better Britain

Buckingham's image of a small, market town is one that is very important to our community. Our Vision is to retain and promote that identity. We would like to see development that strengthens the visual cohesion between the old and the new.

## What is needed:

### Caring for what we have

Conservation Area status, granted in 1971, has focused attention on the care and management of the historic core. We now need an urgent policy review to ensure that basic conservation principles extend to other important areas of the town.

### Town management

Many of the comments made by townspeople referred to the maintenance of our parks and open spaces, also litter and refuse collection, and the upkeep of paths. All these require coordinated management.

### Investment in Buckingham

Our small and pleasant country town is in the centre of England, not too far from the motorways, and is attractive to modern business with its high technology and low labour demand. Premises are available both in the Business Park and the town centre. We welcome new ideas and investment which use these assets to strengthen the bonds between living and working at the heart of the town

Buckingham's market, its shops, inns and pubs are vital elements in town centre business. They must retain accessibility, diversity and individuality. There is a need for safe, off-street parking – for bicycles, as well as cars.



Mixed residential and commercial building means that the residents can keep an eye on the businesses at weekends and evenings; the businesses doing the same for those houses that may be empty during the day.

## WHAT WE CAN DO

Review the Conservation Area.

Develop a strategy for environmental improvements.

Improve facilities for visitors.

Set targets and priorities for open space maintenance. Identify areas for 'adoption' by various groups and organisations.

Encourage public architectural competitions to stimulate creative solutions for town centre development.



Introduce an integrated traffic scheme, reconciling the needs of commerce and people, to bring easy, safe access to the centre.

Maintain and extend opportunities for mixed commercial and residential units in the town centre to broaden the times when the streets are occupied.



Ensure optimum use for commercial or residential purposes of all property within a 1000 metre radius of the town centre.

## Regeneration

The University has undertaken an exemplary programme of urban regeneration in restoring the old Prebend End. The collegiate layout suits Buckingham and has married the new with the old sympathetically.

As well as looking at empty sites and under-used buildings, it would be a good idea to re-examine past mistakes. For example, those parts of sixties street development that 'stick out like a sore thumb'. Can we not transform the ugly ducklings into Buckingham's new swans?



Encourage redevelopment of past mistakes.

Arrange debates and discussion on future decisions for Buckingham to involve all sections of the community. For example, Planning for Real events can be invaluable.

Give local people an early opportunity to voice concerns and work towards solutions.

Organise an 'Ideas Day'.

Follow up new ideas and past achievements to strengthen confidence between all interested parties.

## Effective local partnership

The Town Design Group was set up as a Partnership, representing many different interests, to prepare this Vision & Design Statement.

Fostering community spirit needs commitment to good communication. This project has been undertaken with the cooperation of local government, local people and local business. The professional advice from officers in the Planning Department at Aylesbury has been most useful.

This process of group research and public discussions could be adapted to address other issues. For example, traffic and access, appropriate signage, activities for young people. There is a largely untapped 'think tank' within the community and we need to constantly explore ways to involve more local people in solving problems.

The Buckingham Partnership provides a forum for discussion between the many different interests in Buckingham. It could encourage an 'Ideas Day'. Effective partnership needs to consult the wide range of skills and expertise within the community and to have confidence in helping each other work towards a common objective.



# Design guidelines

## SPATIAL LAYOUT

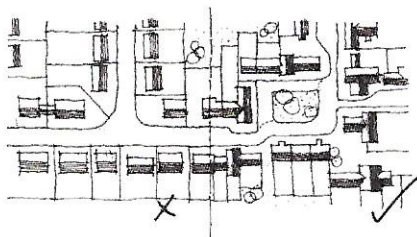
- 1 New development should use existing focal points, as well as create new landmarks, so it has an established point of reference with the town. (Pages 2 & 3)
- 2 Views out of the town must be protected and continue to show the close relationship between countryside and town. (Page 2 & Map)
- 3 Aim for a mix of different spatial effects, reflecting the contrasts found within the town centre between intimacy of enclosed space with wider, open public space. (Page 10)
- 4 New roads and paths need to be orientated towards river, church or market place. These should link to a network of safe walking and cycling routes between schools, business and residential areas. (Pages 2, 5 & 10)
- 5 Incorporate closely knit groups of buildings to echo the compactness of Buckingham's 'island' shapes. (Page 10)
- 6 A variety of courtyard spaces should be created to reflect the existing character and pattern found in Buckingham's many walks and yards. (Page 10)
- 7 New development on the approaches to the town must retain larger areas of 'green' space between clusters of buildings. (Page 8)
- 8 The function of all public open space should be clearly defined so that it can provide opportunities to bring people together.

## MATERIALS

- 1 Local traditional brick colours and textures should be matched and used in new build. (Page 11)
- 2 Natural slate and plain clay tiles are traditional roofing materials in Buckingham. Where alternatives are appropriate, materials must be chosen which match natural colours and textures. (Page 11)
- 3 Combinations of brick and stone should be used to give variety where there are predominantly brick elevations. (Page 11)
- 4 Contrasts of texture can be achieved with lime rendered facades and the use of earth coloured paints, particularly on smaller domestic dwellings. (Page 11)
- 5 Some new buildings and free-standing walls on the rural edges of the town should be built, or faced with natural stone of a matching colour to that quarried locally. (Page 11)
- 6 Materials, colour and textures of ground surfaces must blend with those of adjacent surroundings and a sensitive combination of textures chosen where it can aid mobility. (Page 11)
- 7 Contrasting brick or stone sills and lintels around windows and doorways are a traditional mix of materials in Buckingham. (Page 11)

## SCALE

- 1 The scale of each scheme should be dictated by its location in relation to existing buildings, landscape features and physical setting. (Page 12)
- 2 Avoid uniformity of scale throughout new estates. (Page 4)
- 3 The cosy and intimate personality of Buckingham is brought out by smaller scale development, incorporating a mix of dwelling sizes and amenities within a compact area. (Pages 5 & 12)
- 4 It is also appropriate to use larger-scale, individual buildings within smaller groups to give focus and identity. (Page 12)
- 5 An occasional touch of eccentricity in scale prevents monotony and, picking up on a local point of reference, emphasises the individuality of character and place. (Page 12)
- 6 The density of development should be higher nearer to the town centre, and should adopt progressively lower densities, combined with larger areas of open space, as it approaches the rural edges. (Page 8)
- 7 The overall scale of all new housing schemes must be balanced to reflect Buckingham's traditional need for a greater proportion of smaller dwellings than in the recent past. (Page 4)



These design guidelines were adopted in April 2001 as Supplementary Planning Guidance for Buckingham in accordance with Policy GP69 of the Deposit Draft Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (October 1998).

For more detailed background information, please refer to illustrations and text on the page numbers indicated in the guideline.

## LANDSCAPE DETAILING

- 1 Use existing natural features and/or vistas to enhance the setting of new buildings. (Pages 2 & 12)
- 2 Take opportunities to frame existing views and create others. (Pages 2 & 12)
- 3 The river corridor provides the most popular and significant amenity space in the town; every opportunity should be taken to link all areas to it with walks and cycleways. (Page 2)
- 4 Bridges are part of Buckingham and extensions to walks and cyclepaths should create more river crossings. Bridges must be built in materials appropriate to the setting. (Page 12)
- 5 The existing network of footpaths, lanes and bridleways around Buckingham must not be spoiled by over zealous urban specifications. Connect the gaps between them, using materials appropriate to their setting. (Pages 6 & 12)
- 6 Development should take account of existing hedgerows and trees, turning to advantage valued natural features. (Page 12)
- 7 Native trees and shrubs must be predominant in all new planting and soft landscape must dominate built form near to town edges. A greater variety of tree specimens is appropriate within the town centre. (Pages 5 & 12)
- 8 Close-board fencing over 1.5 metres in height is out of place in a country town. Post and rail (reinforced with indigenous plants), hurdles, picket fencing, walls or native hedging are better alternatives and should be used where boundaries abut public areas. (Page 12)
- 9 Planting schemes in town should have some rural associations; allotments and orchards give Buckingham's green spaces a country image. (Pages 1, 8 & 12)

## ELEVATION AND ROOFLINE

- 1 Detailing should be clearly specified on elevation drawings. It should avoid mixing historical styles in the same building. (Page 13)
- 2 Elevations should achieve individuality with simplicity. (Page 13)
- 3 Vary the height of rooflines and punctuate with chimneys and dormers. (Page 5)
- 4 New rooflines for dwellings should aim for the same variety of pitch that is required for slates and tiles. (Page 4 & 13)
- 5 Avoid uniformity in the balance of window to wall (solid to void). Overall, greater proportion of solid to void is required to echo the rural character of buildings, particularly in residential areas away from the town centre. (Page 13)
- 6 Elements within a facade, such as doors, windows, decorative finishes, etc. must relate to one another. Diversity of interest must not be confused with uncomprehending variety. (Page 13)
- 7 Where possible, the style of replacement windows and doors should be in keeping with the original building. (Page 13)
- 8 A variety of dwelling sizes within the continuity of a single street is important to add both visual interest and to bring a mix of community. (Page 13)
- 9 The proportions of the shop front window should harmonize with the Georgian and Victorian styles of the town. Glazing patterns should reflect the 'human' scale. Avoid large or single expanses of glass in windows.



## GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

- 1 All aspects of design should consider the importance of access for all members of the community, safety and security for people and property. Buckingham welcomes appropriate designs that achieve consideration of access for people with mobility problems and the Police 'Secured by Design' award.
- 2 Buckingham's twice weekly open air market brings life and character to the centre. Its retention and continuing growth should be encouraged. (Page 2)
- 3 Heavy lorries should be discouraged from the town centre. Alternative routes should be sought in order to bring a pleasant and safer environment to our streets.
- 4 Planning applications should show how new building will relate to the surroundings.
- 5 Where appropriate, an archaeological assessment will be required before the site is developed.
- 6 It is important that names given to new roads, streets and pathways are chosen to reflect the traditions of the locality (for example, the use of field names in Linden Village).
- 7 While a good local standard of design will always be sought, a greater degree of control can be exercised on sites within conservation areas or on listed buildings, than can generally be exercised elsewhere.
- 8 Lighting fixtures on the bypass at roundabouts and junctions should ensure:
  - light is directed downwards
  - light spillage is minimized
  - low energy consumption
  - low column height and maximum spacing between columns

All lighting features in the town should adopt a system that co-ordinates with the lantern columns and wall mounted lanterns in the High Street. (Page 12)

# Buckingham now



**KEY**



1 Important views of the town (not illustrated)



2 Important views of the town (illustrated)

Recent developments between 1999 and 2001

Densely packed clusters of buildings

Linear plots behind terraced buildings

# Why a Vision and Design Statement?

*"Time present and time past  
Are both present in time future  
And the future contained in time past."*

T.S. Eliot

Vision and Design is about involving local people from Buckingham in the future development of our town. At a time of rapid change, often dictated by national forces, rather than local needs, it is crucial for Buckingham to have its own vision and to encourage high quality new design that reflects the local context.

This Statement aims to promote a deeper understanding of Buckingham's sense of place and distinctive character. Where the design of new development respects this character, it will:

- strengthen the town's identity and sense of place
- attract investment and encourage a thriving business community
- reinforce civic pride
- promote sustainable development.

A revival of local distinctiveness in the design of new development does not mean loss of originality or innovation, but rather an opportunity to create a sensitive environment which enriches Buckingham's heritage.



↑ The Bullring, 1847.



↑ The Bullring, 1999.



# Who we are and who helped us

## The Steering Committee of The Town Design Group

Representatives on the Steering Committee from:

The Buckingham Society  
The Buckingham Town Council  
Buckingham Heritage Trust  
The Buckingham Traders Association  
Buckingham Business Club  
Buckingham Camera Club  
The Parish Church of St. Peter & St Paul  
Luffield Group of Schools

### Prime sponsors

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County Council; Buckingham & Gawcott Charitable Trust;  
Bulldog Trust; The Civic Trust; John Credland Photography;  
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### Community sponsors

Amity Business to Business; Buckingham Bookshop;  
Buckingham Garden Centre & Nurseries; Budgens;  
Boots the Chemists; The Buckingham Society;  
Buckingham Rotary; Da Martino; Dragon Gallery;  
Fletchers of Buckingham; Four Pillars Hotel;  
Malcolm Hudson Shoes; Pedlars Basket; Steamers; Winerack;  
Woolworths; Stowe Castle Business Park; Tearle & Carver;  
Sigma Coatings; Silverstone Circuits; University of Buckingham;  
Vitalograph; West Farthing Gallery and many other individuals.

£5.00

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