

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

**HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
&
DESIGN GUIDE**



**CAMBRIDGE
CITY COUNCIL**

Department of
Environment & Planning

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL MARCH 2001

FOREWORD

Cambridge is desperately short of land for new housing. Over the last few years our booming economy and our tightly-drawn Green Belt have combined to put the price of a Cambridge home beyond the reach of many people. It is therefore important that, when urban sites do come forward for development, we maximise the contribution that they can make to meeting our housing needs. At the same time we also need to ensure that new housing developments make a positive contribution to the character of the areas in which they are to be built.

The purpose of these guidelines is to set out the principles that the City Council expects developers to follow when putting forward proposals for new housing on urban sites. They are not rigid rules but rather they set objectives that should be met, as well as requiring constructive consultation with the local community throughout the design process. The guidelines constitute Supplementary Planning Guidance that will be taken into account as a material consideration by the City Council when it is considering planning applications for housing development. I hope that these guidelines will help to secure the highest possible quality for new house-building in Cambridge in the future.

Peter Studdert
Director of Environment and Planning
March 2001

CONTENTS SUMMARY

The guide is divided into the following headings:

- Introduction.....1
- Public Participation.....2
- Site Context and Character.....3
- Mixed Areas.....5
- Access, Streets and Parking.....6
- Environmental Responsibility.....9
- Density and Residential Amenity12
- The Public Realm.....15
- Further Guidance.....17
- Index and Action Checklist19

INTRODUCTION

The Objectives of the Guidance are to:

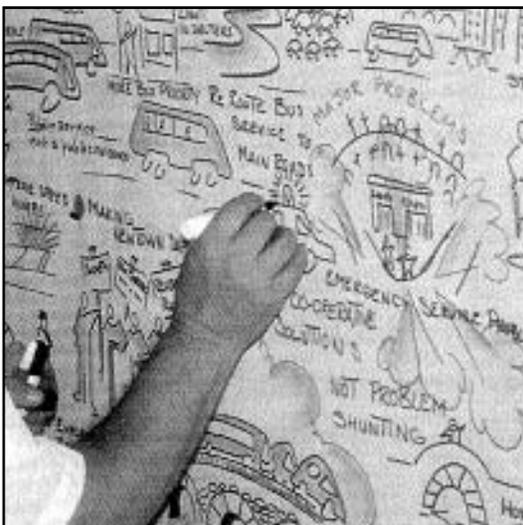
- Promote the development of imaginative, high quality housing, creating homes and environments in which people want to live.
- Maximise people's opportunities to live in decent, affordable housing close to services, employment and public transport.
- Help create mixed, inclusive communities offering a choice of housing and lifestyle.
- Raise the quality of the public realm within new developments.

1 This guidance is a response to the Urban Task Force's report *Towards an Urban Renaissance, Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing* and to the Government's Urban White Paper *Our Towns and Cities: The Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance*. It is intended to help achieve sustainable, high quality mixed housing schemes on new development sites within Cambridge. The content of this guide applies not only to large housing developments but is also appropriate for schemes of one or two dwellings.

2 *PPG3: Housing* states the Government's objective that *'there should be greater choice of housing and that housing should not reinforce social distinctions'*². In paragraph 2 it sets out a number of intentions for new housing developments. Those most pertinent to development proposals in Cambridge are to:

- *'Provide a better mix in the size, type and location of housing'*
- *'Create more sustainable patterns of development by building in ways which exploit and deliver accessibility by public transport'*
- *'Place the needs of people before ease of traffic movement in designing the layout of residential developments'*
- *'Seek to reduce car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling'*¹

3 The guidance focuses primarily on the layout, appearance and public spaces of proposed developments. It should be read in conjunction with Planning Briefs for specific sites, the Cambridge Local Plan and documents referred to in the bibliography.



A drawing may communicate more easily than the written word in a collaborative event.



Planning for Real. Local school children prepare a plan for King's Meadow.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

"The users hold the knowledge of how an existing area works, its needs and possibilities. Collaborative planning and design processes and a shared understanding of the issues ensure attention to local concerns and reduce possible antagonism from local communities to change." (Urban Design Compendium)³

Key Principles:

- **Involve the local community at an early stage.**
- **Allow adequate time and resources for effective public participation.**
- **Amend schemes to accommodate issues of importance to existing and future residents.**

4 Pre-application discussions - developers are encouraged to discuss their proposals informally with planning officers before submitting a planning application, particularly for major schemes. This enables a view to be given about whether the principal of the proposal is likely to be acceptable and the issues which will need to be addressed. Preliminary discussions on major proposals can be arranged with senior planning officers and other officers of the Council at regular meetings, so that a coordinated development team approach is taken towards giving advice. Planning officers can also give informal advice on smaller proposals, if necessary in writing without prejudice. In certain cases pre-application discussion with statutory consultees and other bodies such as the Architectural Liaison Officer may be appropriate.

5 Early consultation with interested parties - developers are encouraged to consult people and organisations who will be affected by their proposals prior to submitting a planning application. Other key stakeholders should be identified at an early stage, ensuring that the local community is involved. Community involvement can be encouraged through planning workshops, public meetings, exhibitions and explanatory leaflets. More effort will be required for larger schemes than for smaller ones. Account should be taken of the outcome of such involvement. This type of pre-application consultation has been effective in the past.

6 Planning application consultation - in addition to the statutory consultation carried out by the local planning authority, developers of larger or more complex sites will be required to undertake public consultation on the submitted planning application. This could take the form of a presentation, public meeting, exhibition or a planning workshop. Council officers will advise on venues, who should be involved, and the success of past consultation exercises.

7 Future residents of affordable housing developments - at least some future residents may be known before all the details of a development are finalised. Residents' input should be sought on the detailed design of external features such as community facilities, lighting, boundary treatments, play areas and open space as well as issues affecting individual properties. Their participation in designing these details can significantly increase their future level of satisfaction with where they live, reducing management costs and vandalism.

8 Interpretation on site - for large or complex sites developers should provide information on site regarding the proposed scheme and its progress to keep local people informed. Developers will be encouraged to join the Council's Considerate Contractor Scheme during construction and to maintain close links with local people to ensure any on site problems of noise and disturbance are minimised.

SITE CONTEXT AND CHARACTER

"The layout of a development site must recognise its social, and physical context, and seek to integrate with existing patterns of urban form and movement. Design proposals should recognise that each location is different; that each place relates differently to the town centres, facilities and transport routes in its hinterland." (Towards an Urban Renaissance)⁴

Key Principles:

- **Maximise the unique characteristics of the site to create a sense of identity.**
- **Development proposals should make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area and be appropriate to their location.**

9 Analyse the pattern of streets and movement - identify local facilities such as schools, shops, parks and play areas and connections to public transport and areas of employment. Design the site to create good walking routes to nearby facilities. Development proposals should look to physically integrate the site into the wider neighbourhood by providing clear connections across the site for pedestrian and cycle routes, as appropriate to the scale of the development.

10 Character and distinctiveness - designs should respect local traditions and relationships, and draw on them to inspire and guide new forms of development. Cambridge has no single typical building style, having a mix of traditional building styles which typify different parts of the city. Existing buildings should be re-used where appropriate, to give continuity and maturity to a site. Consideration should be given to the use of new building technologies where they can provide an acceptable built form. New developments should reflect the grain and density of the neighbourhood and relate to nearby building lines, heights, materials and detailing. Bold innovative design solutions can be successful in historic areas if they respond well to the site's context. Attention to detail is critical as it greatly adds to the interest and distinctiveness of any new development. A high quality of materials, finishes and detailing will be expected in all developments.



New housing at Flower Street reflects the tight grain of the surrounding area.



Original Victorian houses incorporated into the development act as key to the design of the new buildings.

11 Development constraints - key constraints such as contamination, overlooking, noise pollution and mature trees should be identified at an early stage and taken into account in the design. The viability of adjoining sites with future development potential should be protected.

12 Public space - new and existing public space should be consolidated where possible to contribute to integration. Buildings should be arranged to create identifiable spaces which will contribute to the character of the area. The integration of new and existing development at their boundaries is advocated to maintain the continuity of urban form and landscape. Local distinctiveness should be promoted through the whole design of a site, including the road layout and detailing, boundary treatments and the choice of plants.

13 A sense of place - a coherent strategy should be developed for the design, layout and choice of materials for the built form and for the planting and arrangement of open spaces. In new landscaping, the choice of species and maintenance regimes should be given particular attention. A sensitive choice of materials, traditional detailing and careful reference to local characteristics will assist in enhancing the local sense of place. Large developments should be designed to create a variety of small identifiable places, and smaller ones given a particular sense of place.

14 Local features and landmarks - existing features in the landscape should be retained and enhanced wherever possible. These could include hedgerows, streams or mature trees. Skilful use of the topography of the site can add character to the development, and the use of natural features can give shape to the development and integrate it into the wider surroundings. Views should be focused onto important routes, public spaces, community buildings and landscape features.

Case Study: Portugal Street

This development of houses with flats on the corner, completed in 1997 are clearly modern, yet they are designed to respect rather than mimic the surrounding terraces of houses.

Like their nineteenth century neighbours, the houses are of two principal storeys above a semi basement with further accommodation in the roof. They are also set back slightly from the footpath edge by low walls and railings with steps leading to the front doors.



The materials, buff brick with reconstituted stone detailing and lead roofs, are from the same palette as the original gault brick houses with Welsh slate roofs.

The double-height glazing is clearly modern yet visually it adds rhythm and vertical emphasis to the properties in the same way as the bays and oriels of earlier neighbouring houses.

The L-shaped layout of the development means that car parking, gardens and bin storage etc. is out of sight from the street.

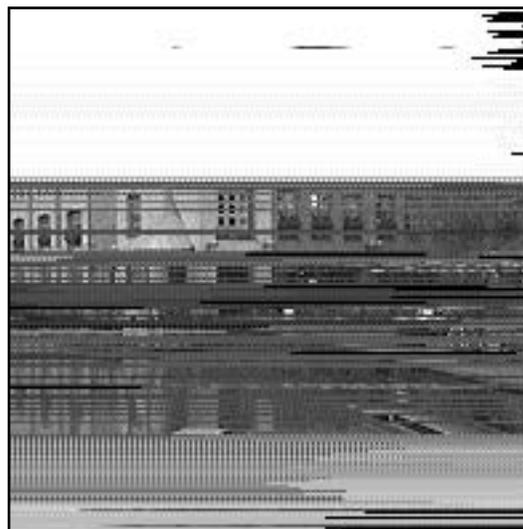
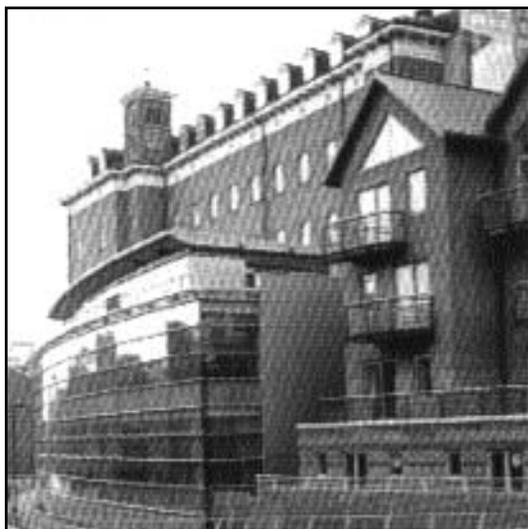
MIXED AREAS

"It is important to help create mixed and inclusive communities, which offer a choice of housing and lifestyle." (PPG3: Housing)⁵

Key Principles:

- **Reduce the need to travel by promoting mixed uses.**
- **Integrate housing types and tenures within development sites.**
- **Provide local community facilities.**

15 Mix of uses - a mix of uses within neighbourhoods, streets and individual buildings promotes vitality, community safety and reduces the need to travel. Developers should demonstrate how their proposals contribute to the mix of uses in the local area. A mix of uses and the inclusion of social, community and local services will be encouraged on sites of a suitable size where they are compatible with neighbouring activities. New developments can contribute to successful neighbourhoods by adding to the diversity of accommodation already in the area.



The Pex development in Leicester (*Urban Design Compendium*) and Quayside in Cambridge. A diverse mix of small businesses and housing.

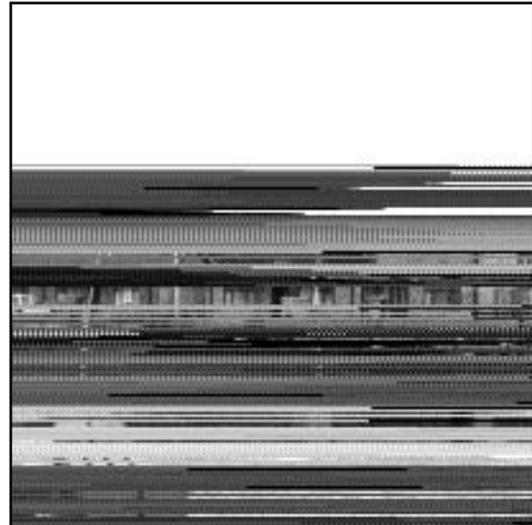
16 Mix of house types - individual developments should offer a range of accommodation. By providing a mix of dwelling types it is more likely that a greater range of people will be attracted to live in a development thereby promoting natural surveillance and security. Terraced housing can be integrated with groups of flats to provide a versatile mix for private/affordable schemes. All developments must aim to be visually co-ordinated through use of a consistent palette of materials and architecture.

17 Mix of tenures - new developments of 1 hectare or more in area or on smaller sites where 25 or more homes are proposed should foster socially diverse communities through the incorporation of a range of tenures. Normally either 30% of the developable area or 30% of the dwellings on a site should be developed as affordable housing. Development proposals should adopt an integrated approach to tenure with groups of affordable housing integrated within larger private developments. The number of groups will be dependent on the size of the site. Affordable housing should not be relegated to the least desirable parts of the site.

18 Affordable housing - developers are advised to identify the City Council's Housing Service's requirements early on and accommodate these within the scheme. (see contacts list on page 17). They will vary according to location and priority needs at the time of development, but will normally include a high proportion of family houses. Registered Social Landlords may need to be flexible in their approach to accepting housing types designed primarily for the private sector in order to promote integration. Occupancy levels within affordable homes tend to be high, as do child densities, and there is often relatively intensive daytime use of homes. These factors need careful consideration in the detailed design of dwellings to ensure adequate privacy and prevention of noise nuisance.

19 Working at home - consideration should be given to the inclusion of homes with workshop/home office space, although live/work units should be located and designed to cause minimal disturbance to other residents and prevent noise nuisance.

20 Community facilities - these should be incorporated within the site, or contributions made to off-site provision, according to the level and nature of demand the development is expected to generate. They should be complementary to existing facilities in the local area. Within larger sites suitable facilities may include a multi-purpose community centre or meeting room, health care premises or childcare facilities. Smaller sites will be expected to contribute to the improvement or extension of existing nearby facilities or services which will help meet the needs of their residents.



High quality social housing - Ditchburn Place and King's Meadow.

ACCESS, STREETS AND PARKING

"A user friendly public realm should make walking and cycling easy by keeping the size of urban blocks small, with frequent cut throughs to make a new development permeable and accessible to the existing neighbourhood. Car dependency should be minimised and integration with public transport maximised." (Towards an Urban Renaissance)⁶

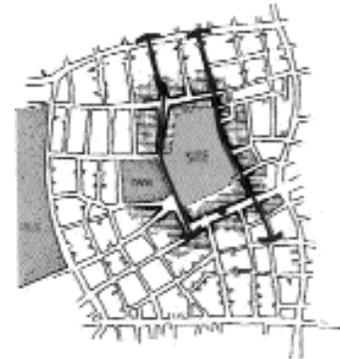
Key Principles:

- **Maximise 'permeability' through the site.**
- **Integrate the development into the local area paying particular attention to the location of bus stops.**
- **Create visually interesting, people-friendly streets to encourage walking and cycling.**

21 Highways standards - local context and overall quality of the environment are crucial factors in the design of roads and footpaths. Rigid adherence to standards and guidelines does not always produce the best solution. The County Council, as the Highway Authority, will be flexible if alterations are reasonably justified, if the support of the City Council's highway officers has been achieved. Designers are advised to refer to *DB32* and *Places, Streets and Movements - A Companion Guide to Design Bulletin 32 Residential Roads and Footpaths*.

22 Access to public transport - developments should facilitate the use of public transport through good linkages to existing bus stops and stations. On larger sites bus stops and laybys should be designed as an integral part of the street layout. Developers should identify the adequacy of current provision through discussions with the County Council and may be required to contribute to improving facilities, particularly where an Area Transport Plan exists.

23 Road Layouts - these should ensure that developments are easy to get to and move through. A modified grid on larger sites allows for more direct pedestrian and cycle access. Culs-de-sac generally make journeys longer and discourage walking and cycling. A more pedestrian-friendly approach integrates the development with the surrounding community and links existing and proposed streets, and provides direct links to bus stops. The street pattern can then form the basis for perimeter blocks, which ensure that buildings contribute positively to the public realm.



Consider how best to connect the site with main routes and public transport facilities.



The typical cul-de-sac fails to integrate with the surroundings.

24 Access - pedestrian/vehicle conflicts need to be minimised through design not by regulation. Developers should consider incorporating the principles of "Home Zones" within layouts; designing for low traffic speeds to promote interaction and create a safer environment for children and other vulnerable road users. For example, distinctive surface materials should be used with low and dropped kerbs for easy accessibility. Pavement widths must be adequate to cope with the expected volume of pedestrians, pushchairs and wheelchairs and should also include space for people to sit and children to play. Where necessary, physical traffic calming measures should be an integral part of the design. Routes to, and within, development sites need to link logically with the wider network to give safe access to shops, schools and public transport.



Link existing and proposed streets, and provide direct links to bus stops.

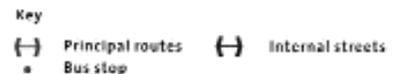
25 Car parking - parking solutions must be appropriate to the character of the surrounding area. Whatever parking schemes are put forward, most spaces should be clearly allocated to individual properties to reduce potential conflict amongst users. Provision of 1 space per house, plus visitors parking is normally adequate where the site has, or is capable of being provided with good accessibility by other means of travel than the car. High quality cycle parking provision will be required in new developments. Designers should consult the City Council's parking standards which are detailed in appendix 6 of the *Cambridge Local Plan*. (Note these standards are a maximum).



The new street pattern then forms the basis for perimeter blocks.

(Diagrams opposite: Urban Design Compendium).

26 On-street parking will be acceptable in many parts of the city. Parking within front gardens is visually intrusive and will be inappropriate to the character of many areas. Where used, its visual impact must be softened through high quality hard and soft landscaping.

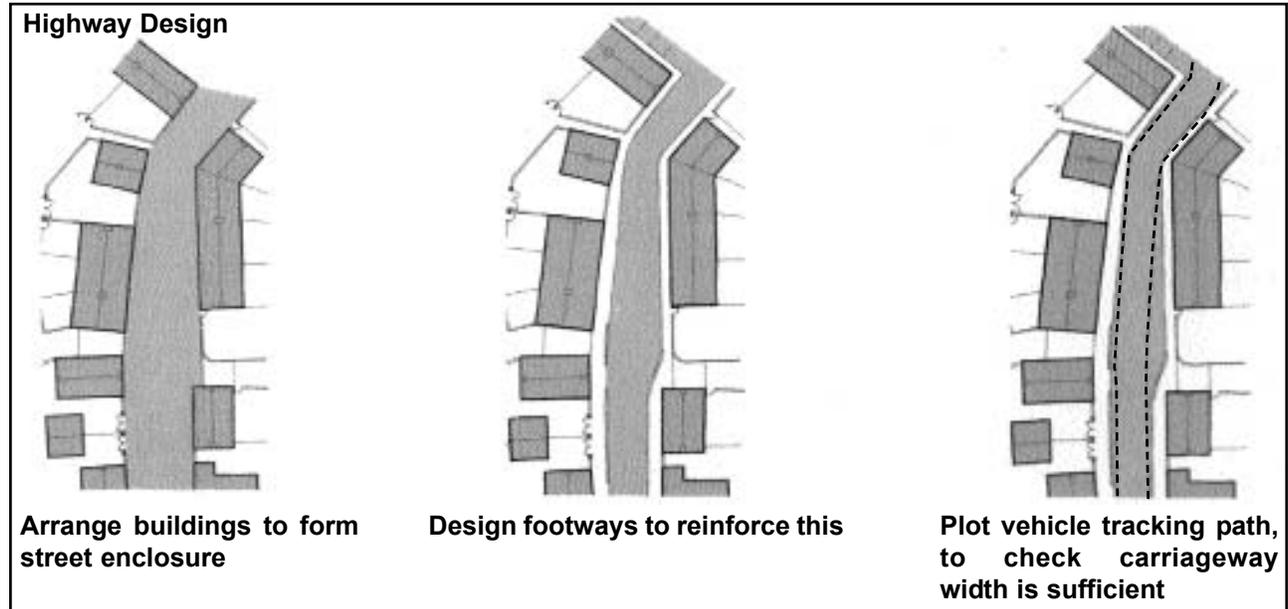


27 Where on-street parking is inappropriate, the use of townhouse designs with integral garages may be acceptable, subject to site circumstances and the quality of the design. Where this solution is adopted garages should be provided in properties covering a range of tenures to reduce the potential for social exclusion. Garages should be of a minimum 3mx6m internal floor area to allow for cycles, workbenches etc. Car ports may be acceptable as parking provision subject to site circumstances and the quality of the design.

28 Underground or basement parking will only be acceptable provided that an ongoing management system is instigated to ensure users' safety. Garage courts and large open parking areas are unacceptable.

29 Cycle parking - cycle parking must be provided for all new dwellings to ensure at least 1 space for a one bedroom dwelling and 2 spaces for larger dwellings. The parking must be secure and easily accessible. In new blocks of flats and townhouses the parking should be inside the building and at ground floor level. The joint use of garages and rear garden sheds for cycle storage is acceptable.

30 Walking, cycling and public safety - layouts should be designed to ensure streets enjoy a high degree of casual surveillance to increase personal safety and reduce crime. Segregated footpaths round the back of properties should be avoided. Footpaths and cycle routes need to reflect desire lines and be as direct as possible with good lighting and well placed crossings. Public footpaths and cycle ways should be open to the sky for the duration of their length. No dwelling or garage doors should open directly onto the route, where this does occur then a small amount of defensible space will be necessary. See paragraph 41. Developers may be asked to make contributions to improving local walking and cycling networks, particularly where an Area Transport Plan exists.



ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

"Development projects should be as compact as possible and should enhance the environment, not just limit damage, by respecting biodiversity, harnessing natural resources and reducing the call on non-renewable resources." (Towards an Urban Renaissance)⁷

Key Principles:

- Provide high quality, durable, adaptable buildings.
- Give high priority in designs to energy efficiency during both construction and in future running costs.
- Integrate facilities for waste storage and recycling into the design of buildings.
- In new layouts, maximise the potential for benefiting from renewable energy, natural light, ventilation and shelter.

31 Sustainable buildings - layout and built form should aim to minimise demands on energy, water and materials. Good quality materials should be used to reduce maintenance requirements both for individual buildings and within the public realm. Materials and labour should be sourced locally where possible to promote sustainable development practices. Developers should aim to minimise the embodied energy costs of building construction and consider energy efficient alternatives.

32 Adaptability - building design should be adaptable and capable of responding to changing social and economic needs. Scope for alternative use, extension, amalgamation and sub-division of properties should be designed in. Terraced forms offer good potential for vertical or horizontal adaptations. Within individual properties the use of traditional rafter and purlin construction for roofs is encouraged rather than trussed rafters allowing more flexible accommodation to meet residents' changing needs over time. Developers are urged to build a significant proportion of new properties to the "lifetime homes" standards, which have 16 design features that ensure a new home will be flexible enough to meet changes in circumstances. If these standards are used then the Part M Regulations and the relevant Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards are met. These homes would contribute to the mix of housing available in Cambridge and reduce the need to move, thereby promoting stable communities.

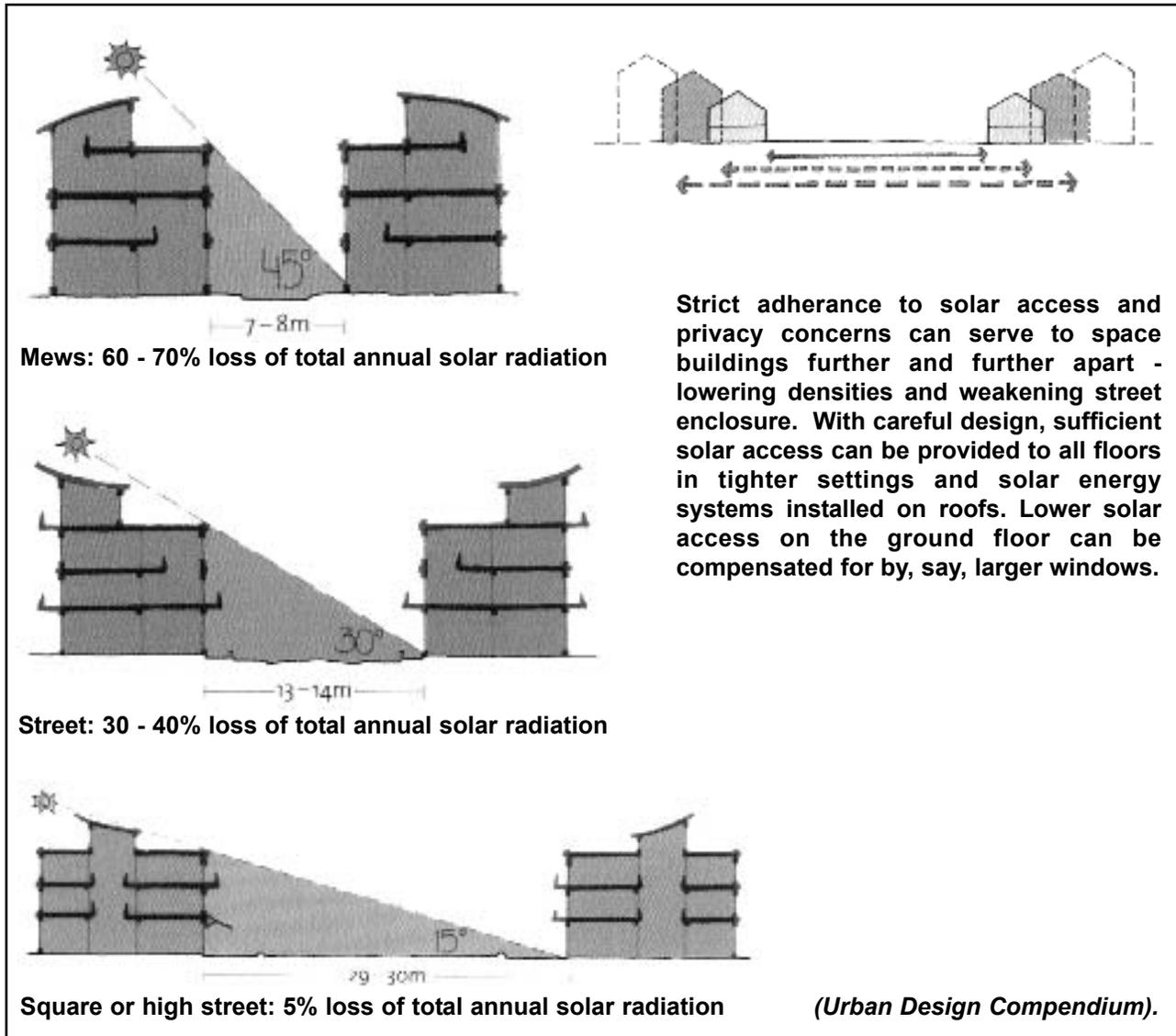
EcoHomes - is a BREEAM assessment method for residential buildings. It considers the broad environmental concerns of climate change, resource use and impact on wildlife balancing these against the need for a high quality of life and a safe, healthy internal environment. Issues assessed are grouped into 7 categories: energy, water, pollution, materials, transport, ecology and land use, and health and well being.

It does not involve high capital costs to score well. Benefits include:

- Demonstrating sustainability credentials to planning authorities
- Demonstrating 'green' credentials to investors
- Demonstrating the superior environmental design of new homes over old to customers, namely:
 - Reduced running costs through greater energy and water efficiency
 - Healthy and comfortable internal environment
 - Access to local amenities
 - Less dependence on the car

For further information contact: Building Research Establishment, Garston, Watford, WD2 7JR
Tel 01923 664462, e-mail ecohomes@bre.co.uk

33 Solar gain - subject to wider design considerations, the potential for daylight and passive solar gain can be optimised by orientating buildings broadly on an east-west alignment maximising glazing on the south elevations, possibly also including a south facing atrium or conservatory and minimising that to the north. Minimise shading by locating taller buildings to the north of a site. Ensure overheating is prevented through careful design of windows. Consider use of photovoltaic modules and active solar panels where they will not detract from an area's character.



34 Water - designs should maximise groundwater soakage on site from roof runoff and permeable parking surfaces. This will minimise both groundwater depletion and storm surges which can lead to flooding. Streams and ponds can be used to reduce the need for drainage infrastructure with the added benefits of providing landscape features and wildlife habitats. Properties with gardens should provide space for water butts. Internally, the scope for the re-use of "grey water" should be investigated and fittings installed which minimise water consumption.

35 Wind - building design should seek to balance the benefit of natural ventilation with problems of heat loss. The pattern of development should aim to minimise wind funnelling and potential for creation of uncomfortable microclimates. Wind is an important source of renewable energy. Consideration should be given to the use of small wind turbines or other methods provided they do not detract from an area's character or be visually intrusive.

36 Waste - all new homes must have provision for waste separation and storage designed in. As a minimum this will require enough covered storage space for storage for two wheelie bins and a recycling box, situated to ensure easy access both from the home and from likely collection points. Internal layouts should incorporate adequate space or facilities for short term waste storage. Flatted developments can provide larger communal bins provided these allow for waste separation and recycling. Larger development schemes may be required to provide on-site facilities for collecting materials for recycling. The use of uncovered free standing wheelie bins will not be acceptable.

37 Biodiversity - where sites include, or are in close proximity to, areas of nature conservation interest, developers should work with suitably qualified professionals to develop plans that maximise biodiversity on site and create habitats of a sustainable size. Designers should have a creative approach to the design and management of public open space and the use of indigenous plants to foster wildlife interest and promote local distinctiveness.

Case Study: Aldwyck Housing Association, Dallow Road, Luton

Location: Brownfield site of former hospital, front section was listed and has been converted into a residential care home.

Scheme: Development of 43 housing units comprising - 21 three bedroom houses, 12 four bedroom houses, 4 two bedroom houses and 6 two bedroom flats. Units are grouped in terraces of 4 to 8 properties in a mixture of 2 and 3 storey levels.

Details: The Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Methodology was used to provide a tangible measure of the scheme's environmental impacts. As the development was for housing the Environmental Standard "Homes for a Greener World" was used. It was achieved by obtaining 12 out of a possible 22 credits which are divided into global, local and indoor issues. Examples of credits achieved include:

Global issues

- All insulation material with an ozone depletion potential of 0.10 or less
- All solid timber from well-managed regulated sources or suitable reused timber
- Storage containers for recyclable household waste
- Demolition material for fill and hardcore

Local issues

- Ecological damage to site minimised

Indoor issues

- Formaldehyde emissions minimised
- Thermal insulation protected in lofts

Cost Implications:

Rather than increasing construction costs to achieve the BREEAM Environmental Standard, the Dallow Road scheme cost 15% lower than the Housing Corporation cost limit. Residents also benefit from ongoing savings: a 4 bedroom end of terrace house on the development can be heated for around £80 per year.

Contact:

Director of Development, Aldwyck Housing Association,
Aldwyck House, upper George St, Luton, Beds LU1 2RB.
Tel: 01582 733722

DENSITY AND RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

"The design potential of vacant urban sites and buildings should be optimised by intensifying development and uses in relation to local shops, services and public transport. Any development designed around higher densities, should take account of privacy, sound insulation and safety." (Towards an Urban Renaissance)⁸

Key Principles

- Adopt a design-led approach to density and site capacity.
- Respect the site context.
- Ensure high levels of amenity for individual homes.
- Provide high quality public open space for leisure, play and social activities.

38 Efficient use of land - external space should be clearly allocated to streets, squares, gardens and other active uses. Individual designs will be necessary to maximise the opportunities any site can offer. Terraced forms with vertical or horizontal sub-division and townhouses with integral garages provide flexible, efficient accommodation. Road widths may be reduced where safety levels can be maintained. On street or underground parking can be acceptable to reduce land take.



Higher density housing in Cambridge appropriate to its context - Saxon St / Brookside, Petersfield Mansions.

39 Build at appropriate densities - well designed high density homes, where careful attention is paid to detailed layout and landscaping, can appear more spacious than poorly designed low density ones. As a guide, densities should not be less than 30 dwellings per hectare and should only be higher than 50 dwellings per hectare at places where a greater intensity of development can be justified. The latter will be places well served by public transport such as the City Centre and the area around the Railway Station. The scale and volume of buildings are as important as dwelling numbers in determining density. Higher density developments do not automatically involve a high proportion of the site being built on. A diverse range of smaller accommodation may be provided to accommodate single people and small households. Development proposals should maximise people's opportunities to live in close proximity to local shops, leisure and cultural facilities and public transport services.

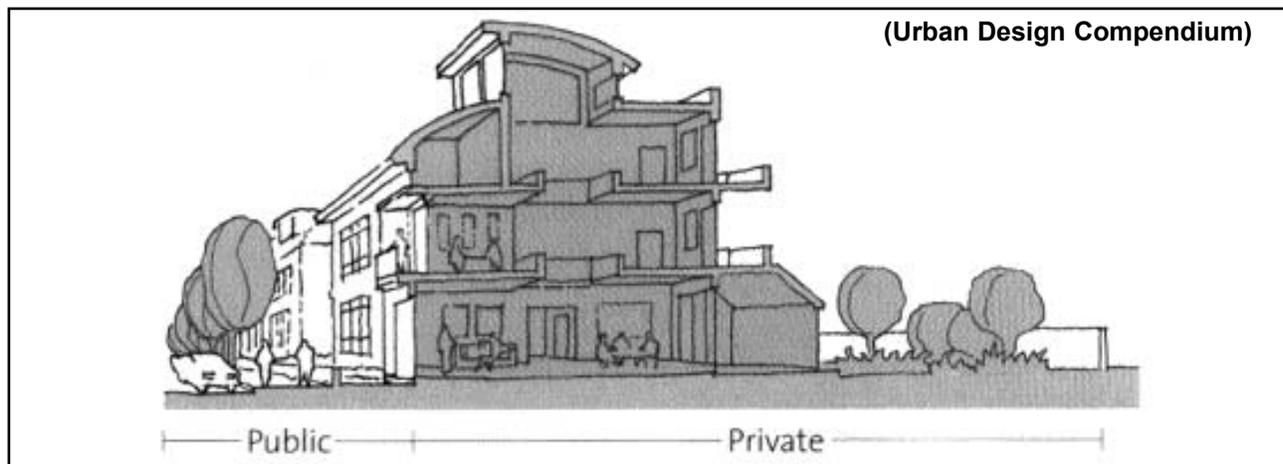


Play equipment should stimulate children's imagination as well as provide physical activity. (Jesus Green).



Finches Walk - open space associated with new development at the Government Offices site will enhance the wildlife corridor.

40 Provide open space - open space provision should be in accordance with the standards contained in the *Cambridge Local Plan* and the *Open Space: Guidance Note for Interpretation and Implementation*. Developers should identify in early discussions with the Environment and Planning Department, how much, and what type of open space and facilities are to be provided on site and how much of the requirement will be covered by the payment of a commuted sum towards off-site provision. Play facilities for under 6s will normally be required on site. These should have an adequate buffer zone to avoid disturbance to adjacent residents. Designs should be worked up in consultation with council officers and future residents, where known. On larger sites more comprehensive play areas may be required together with informal open space.



41 Ensure adequate privacy - new developments should minimise the potential for direct overlooking of habitable rooms and private garden areas through the use of screening and orientation as well as distance. As a guide, a 20 metre separation between habitable room windows is normally sufficient to ensure adequate privacy. Terraced housing forms can perform very well in terms of providing privacy at higher densities. Homes should have a public face onto the street to contribute to vitality and public safety, and private space behind. Thus buildings should have fronts to fronts and backs to backs. Ground floor rooms at the front of houses and flats facing onto public areas require measures to ensure reasonable privacy and security. For houses, narrow front gardens, even as small as 1.5m in depth give privacy and greater security. Hedging and low walls or railings are encouraged; higher boundaries are discouraged as they tend to appear hostile and preclude planting. A similar small buffer zone of planting should be provided below ground floor windows of flats.

42 Outdoor Amenity Spaces - these include gardens, courtyards, balconies, patios etc and they are important for residents' well being. Shared amenity space may be more appropriate in some instances than individual amenity space such as gardens, patios or balconies. If provided, back gardens should be private, well connected to the property, have the best possible orientation, and provide adequate space for both leisure and practical purposes such as drying clothes. Sturdy fencing is necessary which should be high enough to provide a good degree of privacy between neighbours, wire fencing is insufficient as it gives no privacy and is not child or dog proof. Where landscape planting is carried out prior to occupation, gardens must be treated as individual plots, especially where a choice of plants is available. Liaise with future occupiers, where these are known, to establish their planting preferences.

43 Storage facilities - external and internal storage space is crucial in enabling residents to maintain homes decently. All properties must have adequate storage for bikes, bins and garden equipment where appropriate incorporated within the initial designs. Secure storage for electric wheelchairs and motorised scooters should be fitted with an adequate power supply. This must be clearly assigned to individual properties. Properties with lofts should be designed to ensure that the roofspace can be easily accessed for storage use. Consideration should also be given to the construction of basements both within individual houses and as a shared resource for groups of flats. This is likely to be particularly suitable on contaminated sites where dig-out remediation is appropriate.

44 Preventing noise nuisance - development layouts should seek to minimise likely disturbance between new homes and adjacent land uses through: appropriate separation by distance, careful use of landform and screening, use of innovative building form and careful integration of less noise sensitive uses within the scheme. Noise transmission between properties is a major cause of neighbour dispute. Housing developments should reduce the potential for disturbance through careful internal layouts; for instance, living rooms in one property should not be immediately above or beside bedrooms in adjoining properties. Good quality sound insulation further contributes towards ensuring domestic privacy and its provision is particularly important for flats and terraced housing.

45 Creating green streets - deciduous street trees are encouraged as they contribute to perceptions of lower density, add to the character of an area, filter heat and pollution and provide shade in the summer. Occasionally a hard urban environment is appropriate in a mews development or small square. Trees and greenery in private gardens, small squares and courts can contribute to streets visually and make a significant difference to perceptions of density.



Small front gardens enhance privacy, security and help to green the streets.



Basements provide extra accommodation without using more land.

THE PUBLIC REALM

"Priority must be given to the design of the public realm. From the front door to the street, to the square, the park and out to the countryside, designs should create a hierarchy of public spaces that relate to buildings and their entrances, to encourage a sense of safety and community." (Towards an Urban Renaissance)⁹

Key Principles

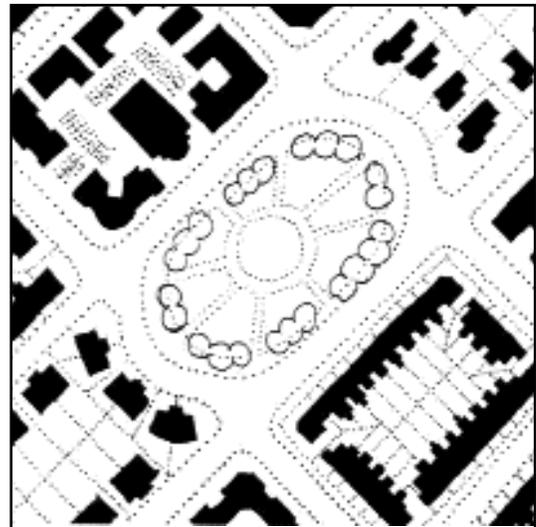
- **New developments should create interesting, secure and permeable streets and spaces to encourage pedestrian activity and social interaction.**
- **The public realm should encourage residents to extend their level of concern beyond their own properties.**
- **The design of the public realm should ensure a safe and interesting environment for children to live and play in, as well as incorporating formal play space.**

46 Use built form to define the public realm - create distinct streets with a clear definition between public and private space through use of perimeter blocks and well designed corner buildings. Sites should maximise opportunities to provide landmarks, views and vistas to help people find their way around and create a sense of place. These can be complemented by interesting rooflines, projections and setbacks from the building line. Architectural detail and design should place particular emphasis on richness of detail at ground level where it is best appreciated.

47 Individuality - well designed street furniture and works of art, should be integrated into the public realm to help create a sense of identity and provide landmarks.

48 Designing out crime - avoid creating potentially unsafe places which attract crime and problems. Active street frontages are encouraged boosting casual surveillance levels to deter crime. Communal rear accesses to properties are undesirable but where they are unavoidable they should be well overlooked and a lockable gate provided at the front at the least.

49 Lighting - good quality, even lighting is essential to public safety and reducing the fear of crime. White lighting is preferred as it allows for colour recognition. Appropriate downlighters should be used to reduce light spillage. Proposed lighting schemes should be included on drawings submitted with planning applications and should take into account environmental concerns such as light spillage, energy use and architectural lighting.



Perimeter blocks can accommodate a range of building types and densities. (Urban Design Compendium).

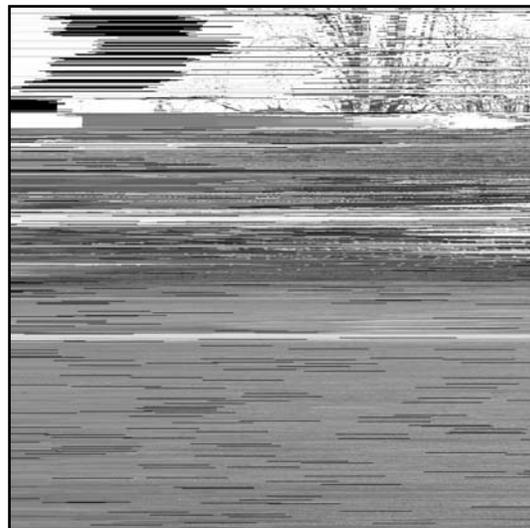
50 Design of open space - the siting of open space is critical to its success both in terms of being functionally attractive and in providing visual relief in built up areas. Incorporation of interesting, varied planting schemes helps to reduce pollution and create a healthier, more attractive living environment. Imaginative designs are encouraged to provide a range of parks, greens, squares and play areas to complement the variety that already exists in Cambridge. Public open space must be highly accessible and benefit from good casual surveillance from surrounding streets and houses. Planting schemes for open spaces should respect their context and give consideration to the use of indigenous species. The use of reasonably mature stock and good staking methods are advised in areas which may be prone to vandalism. All schemes should explore the potential for planting forest scale trees within the development in locations where they can mature and thrive in the long term.

51 Play Areas - child safety and the amenity of residents are the primary considerations in determining the location of play areas. High bunding, fencing or buildings which obscure surveillance from surrounding streets and homes are unacceptable. Play areas, including their surfacing and equipment, must be manufactured and installed to appropriate current safety standards and be of an appropriate nature for the scale and location of the site. Long term maintenance should be ensured, preferably by the adoption of the play area by the Council. This will involve the payment of a commuted sum for the inspection, maintenance and future refurbishment of the play area. In addition to formal play areas much play takes place in the streets in close proximity to children's homes. A variety of surfaces, places for sitting out and quiet play should be incorporated into the public realm to provide informal play opportunities.

52 Servicing and maintenance - service providers should be consulted regarding routes, requirements and programming early in the design process. Servicing requirements should not dictate layout, but layouts should ensure the co-ordination of routing for external services ducts, cabling and allow sufficient capacity for upgrading or provision of future services. The visual impact of equipment boxes should be minimised by careful integration with the landscaping scheme and boxes should not obstruct the footway. The design of front gardens and communal areas should take into account the ease of maintenance of the proposals and provide realistic solutions to ensure that it is possible to keep schemes looking good. Meter covers and cable entry points should be carefully designed to integrate with the design of the house and to minimise visual impact on the street scene. Accessibility for ease of maintenance should be provided.



Well designed corner buildings such as these in Norwich add visual interest, avoid wasted space and can help integrate new development into the surrounding area.



Butt Green. A good relationship between housing and public open space.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Additional City Council guidance for those wishing to progress development proposals in Cambridge is available in the following documents:

Cambridge Local Plan - Cambridge City Council; November 1996

Open Space Standards - *Guidance for Interpretation and Implementation* - Cambridge City Council; January 2000

Parking Standards - Cambridge City Council; November 1995

Southern Corridor Area Transport Plan - Cambridge City Council; March 2000

Eastern Corridor Area Transport Plan - Cambridge City Council; November 2000

The Kite Conservation Area Appraisal - Cambridge City Council ; June 1996

Trumpington Conservation Area Appraisal - Cambridge City Council; August 1998

Newnham Croft Conservation Area Appraisal - Cambridge City Council; April 1999

Mill Road and St Matthews Conservation Area Appraisal - Cambridge City Council; October 1999

Southacre Conservation Area Appraisal - Cambridge City Council; February 2000

Various individual development site briefs.

Contacts - you can also contact the following officers for further advice:

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For general information on planning matters, please refer to the Planning Service's Website:
www.cambridge.gov.uk/planning/planhome.htm

Notes

1. *Planning Policy Guidance Note No.3: Housing*, paragraph 2.
2. *Planning Policy Guidance Note No.3: Housing*, paragraph 10.
3. *Urban Design Compendium*, page 13.
4. *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, page 71, section 1.
5. *Planning Policy Guidance Note No.3: Housing*, paragraph 10.
6. *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, page 71, section 4.
7. *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, page 71, section 10.
8. *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, page 71, section 5.
9. *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, page 71, section 3.

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- By Design* DETR, May 2000
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- Good Practice - Planning and Affordable Housing in the Eastern Counties* The Housing Corporation and National Housing Federation Midlands/ East
- Housing Layouts - Lifting the Quality* Planning Officers Society, HBF and DETR, August 1998
- Lifetime Homes* Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000
- Modern Local Government - Guidance on Enhancing Public Participation* DETR, October 1998
- Our Towns and Cities: The Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance* DETR, November 2000
- Places, Streets and Movements - A Companion Guide to Design Bulletin 32 Residential Roads and Footpaths* DETR September 1998
- Planning for Passive Solar Design* Terence O'Rourke for BRECSU/ DETR, 1999
- Planning for Sustainable Development - Towards Better Practice* DETR, October 1998
- Planning in Best Value - Consultation and Public Involvement* Planning Officers Society (Draft) August 1999
- Planning Policy Guidance Note No.3: Housing* DETR, March 2000
- The Cambridge Roof Extension Design Guide* Cambridge City Council, April 2001
- Towards an Urban Renaissance* Final Report of the Urban Task Force, June 1999
- Urban Design Compendium* Llewellyn Davis, English Partnerships and The Housing Corporation, August 2000

INDEX AND ACTION CHECKLIST

Use the index list and paragraph / page references to find out what you want to know and use the action checklist to ensure that your development has taken account of the guidance. Planning Sub Committee approved this document as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 7 March 2001. As SPG, the Guide will be a material consideration when determining planning applications for housing. You should submit a short statement with your application saying how your proposal adheres to the Guide.

The content of this guide applies not only to large housing developments but is also appropriate for schemes of one or two dwellings. The sections that are particularly pertinent for schemes of one or two dwellings are denoted with * but others may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

Contents	Paragraphs	Action Checklist
Access *	2, 9, 23, 24, 39	
Access to Public Transport	2, 9, 22, 39	
Adaptability *	32	
Affordable Housing	2, 7, 16, 17, 18, 27, 42	
Amenity Space *	40, 42, 50, 51	
Bibliography	At end	
Biodiversity	34, 37, 50	
Boundaries *	7, 12, 41, 42, 51	
Bins *	24, 36, 43	
Cable Entry Points *	52	
Car Parking *	25, 26, 27, 28, 34, 38	
Car Ports	27	
Character *	11	
Community Facilities	7, 20	
Constraints *	10	
Contacts	At end	
Crime *	7, 15, 30, 48, 49, 50, 51	
Cycles *	2, 9, 23, 25, 29, 30, 43	
Density	38, 39, 41, 45, 46	
Design *	10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 33, 34, 35, 38, 45, 46, 48	
Disabilities *	24, 32	
Distinctiveness	11	
Flats	16, 29, 36, 41, 43, 44	
Gardens *	26, 34, 38, 41, 42, 43, 45, 52	
Highways Standards *	2, 21, 24	
Home Working *	19	
Home Zones	24	
Information Boards	8	
Landmarks	14, 46	
Landscaping	7, 12, 26, 34, 37, 39, 41, 50	
Lighting	7, 49	
Local Features	14	
Maintenance *	31, 51, 52	
Meter Covers *	52	
Mix of House Types	2, 16	
Mix of Tenures	2, 17	
Mix Of Uses	15, 44	

Noise *	10, 18, 19, 40, 44	
Obligations	3, 17, 18, 20, 22, 30, 40, 51	
Open Space	7, 9, 12, 37, 40, 50	
Overlooking *	41	
Pattern Of Streets And Movement	2, 9	
Pedestrians	2, 9, 23, 24, 30, 52	
Planning Application Consultation *	6	
Play Space	7, 9, 40, 51	
Pre-Application Discussions *	4, 5	
Privacy *	18, 41, 46	
Public Art	47	
Public Safety	15, 24, 30, 41, 50	
Public Space	12, 41, 46, 48	
Private Space *	41, 46	
Renewable Energy *	33, 35	
Road Layouts	2, 12, 23	
Roofs *	32, 46	
Sense of Place	13, 46	
Servicing	52	
Site Layout	2, 17, 19, 23, 30, 33, 39, 41, 44	
Small Amenity Space	42	
Solar Gain	33	
Storage *	43	
Street Furniture	47	
Sustainable Buildings *	31	
Terraces	16, 27, 29, 32, 38, 41, 44	
Traffic Calming	2, 24	
Trees	10, 14, 45, 50	
Use of Loft Space	32	
Views	14, 46	
Waste *	36	
Water	34	
Wind	35	