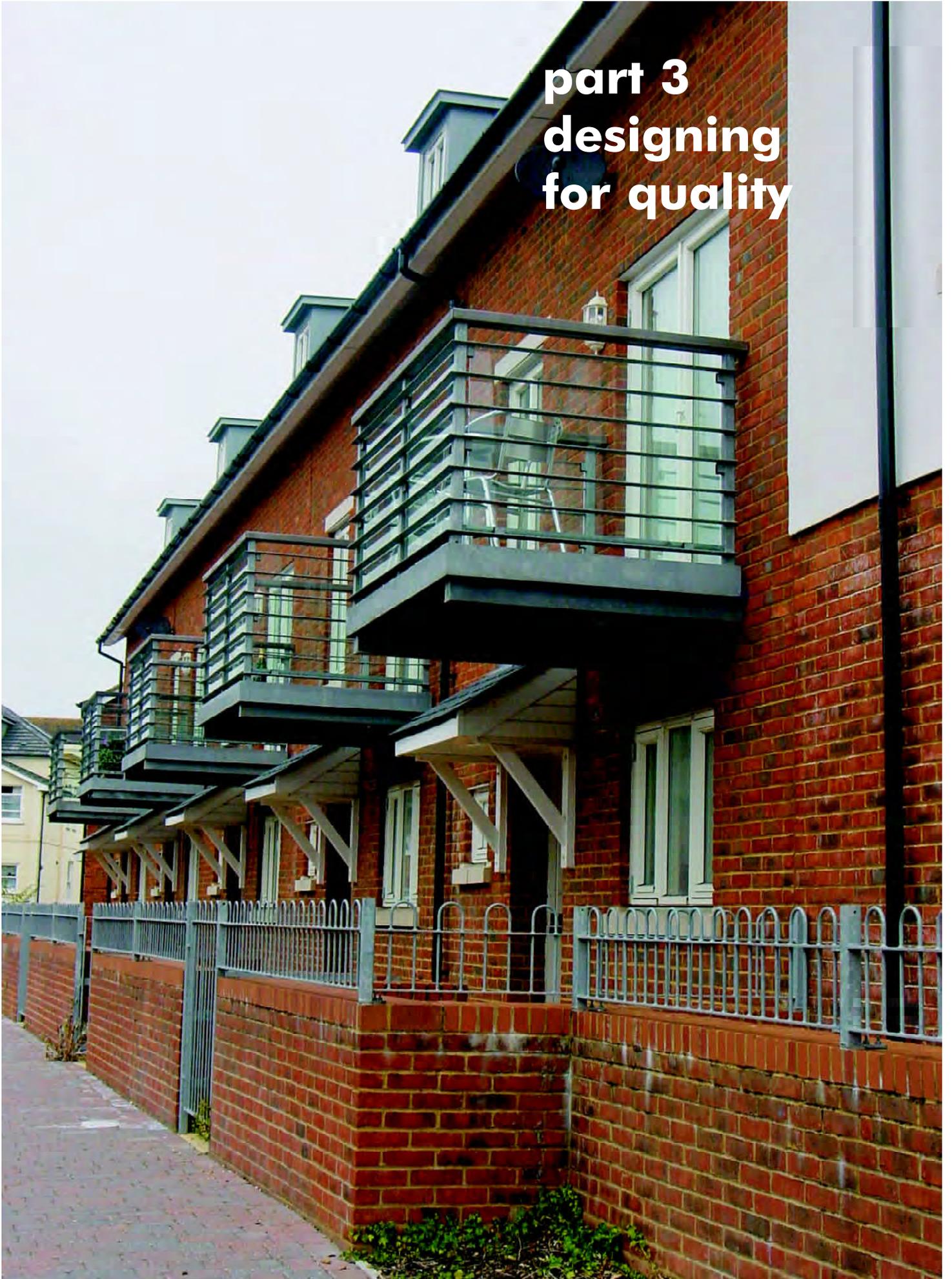


part 3
designing
for quality





3 DESIGNING FOR QUALITY

3.1 The Character of Southampton

3.1.1 Our perception of the quality of development in Southampton is derived from our understanding, appreciation and personal experience of a number of inter-relating characteristics;

the physical environment - its buildings and public realm,

the historical environment - its heritage, historical buildings, monuments and archeology,

the experiential environment - relating to particular experiences we have had in the city,

biodiversity - its open spaces and wildlife, and **visibility** - how the city can be viewed.

3.1.2 The city consists of a hierarchy of 'places' of varying scales, characteristics and qualities, such as district centres, streets and individual building plots. Each place has a distinctive character that projects its 'local identity' - how a place is perceived. The local identity of a place can be considered as being positive, negative or just 'ok'. Our understanding and appreciation of a place's character, including its social and economic background and the way such factors have shaped the urban fabric, should be the starting point for making decisions about its future development. This approach will enhance its local identity or character and improve its legibility; the degree to which a place can be easily understood and passed through. It is widely recognised that a place that has a strong positive character promotes emotional attachment to maintaining and improving the quality of the place and ultimately encourages civic pride.

3.1.3 The character of the city influences that of the larger regional area and vice versa. In places such as the Cotswolds and the Lake District, the topography, historical development patterns and abundance of local building materials have had a significant impact on the character of development. Southampton's larger regional area, is largely defined by an area of low lying land formed of sands and gravels that is contained by the Downs to the north, east and west and the sea to the south. A lack of local stone and brick clay for building the large quantities of houses built in the last two centuries has resulted in a local character that lacks a strong identity. However, in an increasingly competitive world, the local character of the city needs to be enhanced to ensure that it will continue to attract people to live in the city now and in the future.

3.1.4 This guidance sets out key principles for retaining and enhancing positive character across a hierarchy of varying scales of place from the regional context down to a new building on a plot of land.

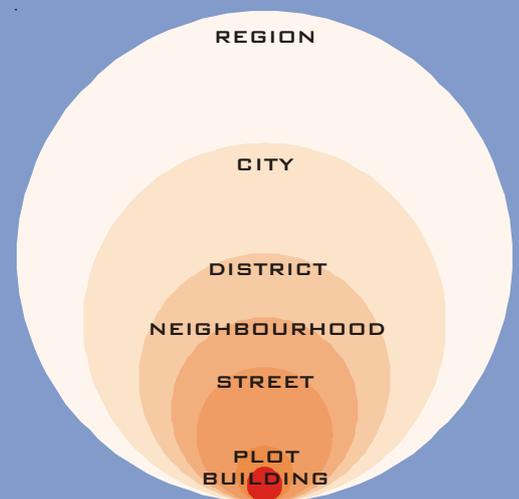


Diagram illustrating the inter relationship of the characters of differing scales of place



Typical semi-detached houses in the Polygon area of Southampton



An aerial view of the above housing shows the 'grid-iron' pattern of development



A figure-ground study shows the density of development (74dph) in proportion to the private space and public realm

3.2 Density

3.2.1 In Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing, the Government set objectives to increase housing density without compromising the quality of the environment. This objective is strengthened in the consultation draft Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing with the additional objective of affordable homes in communities where people want to live.

3.2.2 **A high quality environment should be created by all developments irrespective of density.**

3.2.3 The character of a place is defined by the quality of the environment; the development, its buildings and structures, the development site and surrounding public realm. A high density place can have just as an attractive character as a low density place.

3.2.4 **The density of a development should be appropriate to its context and level of accessibility.**

3.2.5 Local policies promote efficient use of land, setting a range of density standards depending on the accessibility of the area (see below), but also require that the development is appropriate for the area. Over-development of a site that will have a negative impact on the character of the area and local amenity is not acceptable. Policy H11 stipulates the following **minimum** net densities, subject to design and environmental considerations :

- Suburbs and areas of low accessibility 35dph - 50dph
- Medium accessibility areas 50dph - 100dph
- High accessibility areas and centres 100dph +

3.2.6 In order to understand what these proposed densities mean in built form it is necessary to examine the densities of different typologies of development in the city. Southampton has many different typologies of housing development built from the Georgian era through to the present day. Appendix B - Housing Typologies in Southampton, describes the most significant typologies of development in terms of density, house type and parking provision, and illustrates each with photos and a figure-ground study.

3.2.7 The examples shown in Appendix B of 1950s housing in Bitterne and 2000s housing in Chapel clearly demonstrate that attractive characterful living environments can be created with densities of 35 dph and above. However, in areas of high accessibility, where there is less dependence on the car, attractive environments have been possible with densities in excess of 70 dph.

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3.3 The Region and the City

3.3.1 New development should be designed to improve legibility and local identity by enhancing and complementing the positive visual characteristics of the City and its wider regional area.

3.3.2 This will include the impact of the development on views from a distance, and the impact on the skyline from key approaches by road, rail, sea and air.

3.4 The City Centre, Shirley Town Centre and the District Centres

3.4.1 The City Centre, Shirley Town Centre and District Centres should each have its own visual character and identity that relates to the City as a whole.

3.4.2 This should build on the existing positive characteristics of a place and ensure that unique features and amenities, such as parks, hospitals and universities are integrated into the overall connectivity, legibility and local identity of the place.

3.5 The Local Neighbourhood

3.5.1 Each local neighbourhood should have its own visual character and identity that relates to its local district centre but also makes it unique and distinguishable from the next local neighbourhood.

3.5.2 This improves the legibility of the City as a whole, but will also encourage civic pride at the local level. Local amenities, such as local shopping parades and local public open space, should provide a positive and vital visual focus for local neighbourhoods. The public realm around local amenities should be unique and high quality, with clear visual connections to surrounding streets.

This new development in Amsterdam builds on the historic characteristics of development in the city with narrow plots, building lines at the back of the pavement and a consistency in height



Local neighbourhood shops are often formed in the ground floor of existing houses



New development with a strong and positive visual impact can improve the local identity of a place - Coin Street, London





The line of street trees and well defined frontage to this new housing development frame a distant view of woodland - Harlow



Boundary markers, like this one at the entrance to the Northam Home Zone, Radcliffe Road, Southampton can become new local landmarks for this neighbourhood

Right: The view down this pathway is closed by the focus on the far left terraces front door. This also indicated that the route changes direction

3.6 Vistas, Views and Landmarks

- 3.6.1 A key factor that defines the character of a place and influences people's perception is the impact of views, vistas and the landmarks contained within them. This applies to the hierarchy of places, from the regional context down to the street context.
- 3.6.2 **New developments should be designed to optimise the impact on existing vistas, create and frame new views or complement existing views.**
- 3.6.3 The impact of a new development on an existing vista or view can only be assessed by creating a photo montage of the vista or views which contains an artists impression or 3D computer generated image of the development, or by use of a 3D model. The mass of the development should not obscure any landmarks when seen from key views.
- 3.6.4 **Where appropriate new landmarks should be created that improve the legibility of the place.**
- 3.6.5 Opportunities to provide new landmarks in neighbourhoods where none currently exist should be considered. Landmarks can also be created by a large tree of interesting or unusual shape or colour. A group of trees arranged in a structured manner has a strong visual impact in an otherwise treeless streetscape. A new development should not create a landmark that will compete with another or obscure an established landmark.
- 3.6.6 **Existing landmarks should be integrated into the urban structure.**
- 3.6.7 The design of the public realm and boundary treatment of a new development located next to existing landmarks should ensure good connectivity both physically and visually. Consideration should be given to whether it is best to enclose and frame the landmark, creating an element of surprise, or to open it up and create a looser sense of enclosure. Care should be taken to improve the setting of the existing landmark and not to detract from it or obscure it.



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- 3.6.8 The height of the elevations of new development should relate to the height of existing development in the street and also the width across the street.**
- 3.6.9** The degree of enclosure of a street by the elevations of development, boundary treatment and landscape features such as trees and hedges, contribute to the character of a street. In Southampton the proportions of height of elevations to width between elevations across a street vary upwards from 1 : 2.5. Existing ratios should be adhered to unless there are over-riding reasons for increasing height (see below). For new perimeter block and street development a height to width ratio of between 1 : 2.5 and 1 : 3.5 is acceptable.
- 3.6.10 Taller buildings may be considered at street corners, at the end of streets, around the edge of public open space or along a waterfront.**
- 3.6.11** Taller buildings can be used to create a visual focus at a street corner and the end of a street, and often provide an opportunity for mixed use and a focus for increased activity. Taller buildings are also appropriate where they provide an edge to public open space or an expanse of water where the scale of the space can positively support an increased scale and height of development around its edge.
- 3.6.12** The City Council has produced a background document *Southampton's Skyline: Managing Change* which will inform the preparation of Local Development Framework documents and give officers guidance on the design and location of tall buildings specifically in the city centre. The *Guidance on Tall Buildings* produced by CABI and English Heritage should also be consulted. This guidance advises that proposals for tall building fully address the following criteria:
- i) the relationship with the context, topography, scale, height, streetscape, building form and the relationship with other tall buildings;
 - ii) the effect on the whole existing landscape so that proposals do not harm or detract;
 - iii) the relationship with transport infrastructure, particularly public transport, and aviation constraints;
 - iv) the architectural quality of the building including scale, form, massing, proportion and silhouette, facing materials and relationship to other structures;
 - v) the contribution that the development makes to external and internal public spaces and the facilities in the area;
 - vi) the effect on the local climate including micro-climate, over-shadowing, night time appearance and vehicle movements;
 - vii) the contribution made to the permeability of the site;
 - viii) the provision of a high quality environment for those using the building;
 - ix) the sustainability of the proposal.



The corner of this development is emphasized by a curved form and projecting bay windows - Hythe



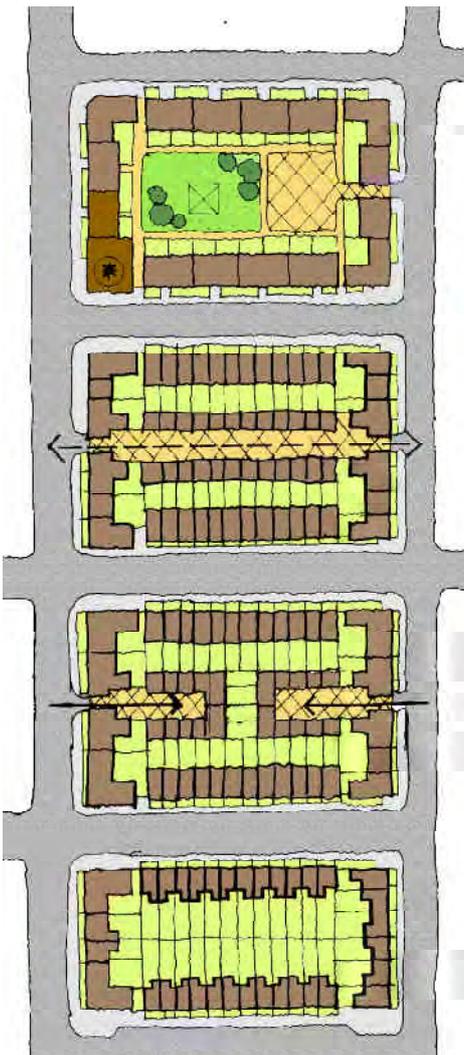
The corner of this apartment block is emphasized by creating a visual focus at the end of the street with increased height and a corner balcony feature - Basingstoke



This good example of an inner city apartment block illustrates how setting back the elevation on the corner and slightly raising the height can add interest to the development. The development also respects the scale and proportions of the Georgian buildings opposite - Portland Street, Southampton



Although designed as a perimeter block, there is not sufficient space for both private and public use along this waterfront path



3.7 The Street - Defining and retaining its character

3.7.1 New development should contribute to or create perimeter block forms.

3.7.2 The character of each street is defined by the blocks of development that frames it. The use of a perimeter block form helps deliver a legible cityscape in which public and private spaces are clearly distinguished; streets have clearly defined 'edges' and natural surveillance of the street is possible.

Block Typologies (1)

Courtyard Block - a very high density can be achieved by apartment blocks fronting onto public streets with rear communal space and private gardens. Public access to the semi-private internal courtyard is clearly defined by the form of adjacent buildings and a 'threshold' space at the entrance. Space for parking may be achieved underground.

Terraces with Mews Lane - terraces front onto public streets with mews housing fronting onto a publically accessible lane running through the interior of the block. The intimate scale of this type of development requires a high quality public realm carefully designed to emphasize the semi-private character of the lane. Plot sizes are very small so parking provision may depend on on-street availability.

Terraces with Mews Courtyards - terraces front onto public streets with mews terraces arranged around courtyards within the block. This does not allow public access and again requires high quality clearly defined public and private spaces.

Terraces - a traditional form of development in Southampton's inner city and district centres which maximises the quantity of private space within the block. There is no public access within the block ensuring a high degree of security. Some parking may be possible at the end of the block off-street or within terrace frontage.

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- 3.7.3 **All streets should connect to other streets, creating smaller blocks of development of increasing activity closer to city, town or district centres.**
- 3.7.4 Connectivity is a vital factor in increasing activity on the streets, as well as increasing choice and variety. In cases of increased activity, such as district centres, a finer grain of street pattern will improve connections to local amenities, such as shops and local parks.



'Gated' developments are not acceptable - Stratford on Avon

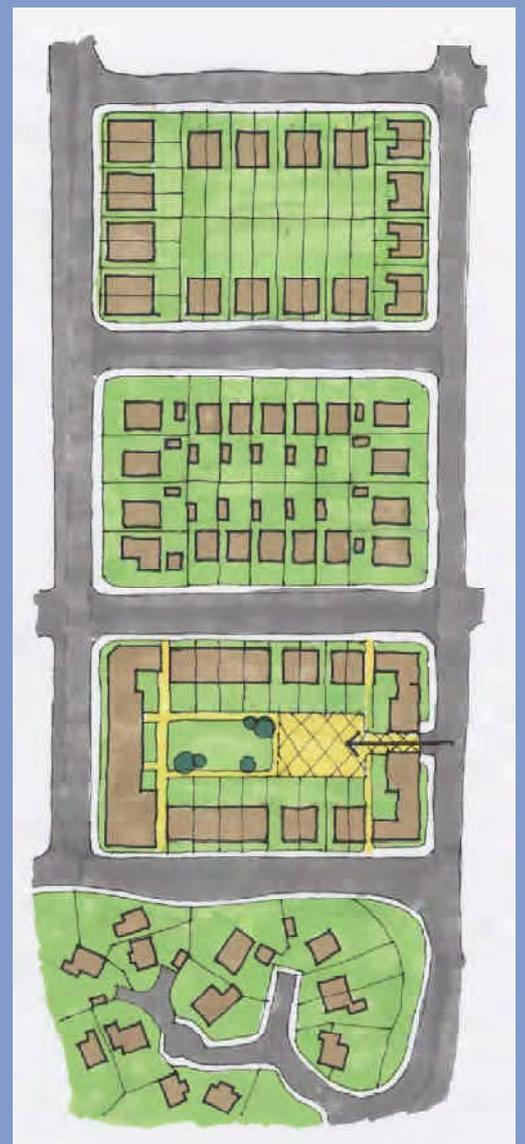
Block Typologies (2)

Semi-detached Houses Block - typical of much of the 20th century development in Southampton, a medium density development can be achieved with opportunity for off-road parking and garages. There is no public access within the block and larger plot sizes provide some private space to the rear.

Detached House Block - detached houses on relatively large plots provide a low density of development, only appropriate in places of low accessibility. A high level of privacy can be achieved and more space for trees and shrubs in both front and rear gardens. Parking for several vehicles off-street is possible. Wider frontages will require good boundary treatment.

Mixed Block - usually includes semi-detached, terraced and apartments. This makes an efficient use of land, offering choice for different sized family groups and can be a useful form to use between existing blocks of different typologies, such as semi-detached housing and apartment blocks.

Detached House Irregular Block - this type of development is resisted as it creates awkward shaped plots that are difficult to develop efficiently leading to low density development. The legibility of the block is reduced due to irregular street pattern often resulting in cul-de-sacs, irregular plots and building frontages, and visually weak corners. Opportunities for natural surveillance is usually poor.





This new access to a backland development creates an unacceptable environment for both pedestrians and vehicles approaching the new dwellings to the rear and also to adjoining properties

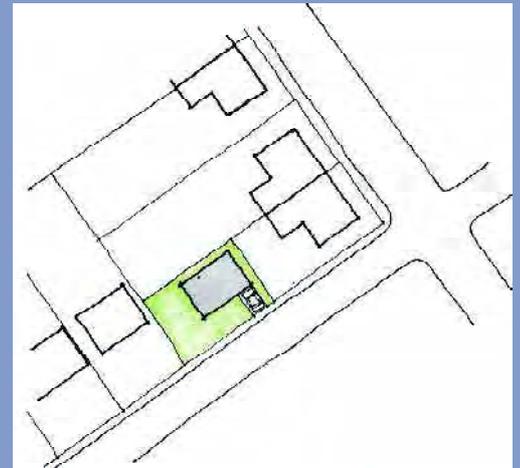


Diagram showing how a new shared access to a backland site should be created with good visibility, planting and shared surfaces. Brick boundary walls should be provided to properties adjacent to the access. The new development designed as a courtyard provides a visual focus when entering the site, in this case in the form of garages.

- 3.7.5 Each street should have its own identity that makes it easily identifiable and distinguishable from the next street.**
- 3.7.6 Many streets in Southampton have a strong character due to the repeated use of the same dwelling design or a small range of variations on one design, such as a terrace or semi-detached house. This pattern should be retained when considering the development of an infill site part way along a street. However opportunities to enrich the visual quality of the street and add visual interest should be considered at corners and ends of streets.**
- 3.7.7 New infill development, situated part way along streets, should complement the pattern of development in the rest of the street. The environment created by the new development and/or new accesses to a new 'backland' development should make a positive contribution to enhancing the character of the street.**
- 3.7.8 The proposed development should be similar in scale, massing, position on the plot, vertical and horizontal rhythm, and have a high quality of architectural detailing that is harmonious with existing adjacent development. New accesses to backland development should have attractive and robust entrance features and boundary treatment, such as brick walls that curve into the access (see part 5 for further guidance). However if the site also lies at the end of another street the following principle should apply.**
- 3.7.9 Each street, providing it is in character with the local area, should have a visual focus at the corner or end of a street that gives it a unique identity and a focus for increased vitality and activity.**
- 3.7.10 This can take many forms such as;**
- A building that has a mix of uses or different use to that of the street e.g. a local convenience shop on the ground floor of a block of flats, or a community building;
 - A building that is taller or larger in scale and proportion than the general scale and proportion of development in the street;
 - A building that has an enhanced level of architectural detailing than the general development on the street;
 - A planted amenity space, such as a pocket park containing trees or a single specimen tree;
 - A feeling of space and less enclosure than the rest of the street e.g. buildings set back and wider pavements to facilitate increased activity.

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- 3.7.11** Infill developments on corner plots need careful consideration to ensure that the local character and privacy of adjoining dwellings is not harmed and the development makes a positive contribution to enhancing the streetscene.
- 3.7.12** Depending on the width of the corner plot, the new dwelling is unlikely to have a conventional main back garden. Instead the garden is usually constrained by the adjoining plots and therefore a garden length of 10 m, as advised in part 2, is difficult to achieve. As such the garden will often have less privacy than adjacent dwellings and be overlooked. In these cases it is often beneficial to create a larger development plot by incorporating adjoining dwellings situated along the primary street and their gardens. However this can also lead to the demolition of large houses of strong architectural identity and therefore it is particularly important to ensure that the local vernacular is acknowledged in the new development.
- 3.7.13** Siting the new dwelling to respect prevailing building lines of the secondary street often also pushes the dwelling's footprint towards the rear of the sub-divided plot and therefore close to the rear boundary. As a result the neighbouring dwelling can suffer from intrusive overlooking that may be unacceptable.
- 3.7.14** The Building Research Establishment (BRE) recommends that if a quarter of a garden is placed into shadow for all of the day this should be grounds for refusing planning permission. As such, scale needs to be very carefully handled and innovative roof form solutions devised. Each case will be judged on its own merit, but in the majority of cases where a new dwelling has been found to be acceptable, a bungalow or chalet has resulted.
- 3.7.15** Where the flank wall of the original plot dwelling, that fronts onto a primary street, stands forward of the building line in the secondary street, an acceptable approach might be to step back the proposed dwelling's front wall between these two positions. The same principle could be applied to the width of the proposed dwelling fronting the secondary street, however the priority will be to ensure that the character of the street is not damaged as a result.



Frontage of proposed new house is set back part way between flank wall of the house on the primary street and the building line of adjoining house on the secondary street



A deeper plot is created by redeveloping two rear gardens creating better amenity for the proposed new houses' occupants



The building lines of this courtyard development line up with adjacent development



This archway is in proportion with the main elevation



Archway into the courtyard of a perimeter block of apartments - London



This archway is too wide for its height

The corner of this building is emphasized by a change in elevational treatment, balconies and a taller roof feature - Portsmouth



This archway is too high for its width and leaves a blank wall above the opening that is visually 'heavy'

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- 3.7.16 The space created within a perimeter block development should be completely private or designed as a publically accessible courtyard.**
- 3.7.17** Perimeter blocks can be designed with back to back plots so there is no public access to the rear of properties in order to improve security. Where access is necessary to the space within the block, e.g. for parking, there should be at least two access/egress points, private and public space should be clearly demarqed and designed to encourage natural surveillance. 'Gated' developments are not acceptable as they create enclaves that promote social segregation and prevent natural surveillance as an efficient means of improving the security of a neighbourhood.
- 3.7.18 Dead ends should be designed as courtyards and not cul-de-sacs.**
- 3.7.19** Where a dead end situation cannot be avoided development should create a high degree of visual enclosure, without being oppressive, and close views to create a visual end-stop to the street. The traditional cul-de-sac arrangement where the development is dominated by a hammerhead street layout is not encouraged, instead shared surfaces should be considered and the use of features such as trees and public art to calm traffic and create a focus.
- 3.7.20 The design of archways leading to rear courtyard development should be in proportion to the front elevation.**
- 3.7.21** Where access is not required for waste collection or emergency vehicles the size of archways can be a minimum of 2.5m wide and 2.25m high. The sides of the opening should relate to the width of dwelling units above and should not have blank walls above.



The use of shared surfaces and soft landscape can create an attractive courtyard setting - Harlow



The pedestrian route into this courtyard is defined by a two storey archway in proportion to the height of the adjacent development - St Helier, Jersey

3.8 Plot Series and Plots



A plot series of terraced dwellings

3.8.1 In Southampton, most of the existing residential development has been built in groups, whole streets or estates by the same builder or developer. A wide variety of architectural styles has been established over several centuries. However, the design principles used to establish the relationship of the dwelling with the street and its plot and neighbouring development have been the same. The same design is often repeated, sometimes with small variations, plot after plot either as a terrace, semi-detached or detached house creating a repetitive series of plots (so called a plot series) with frontages orientated to face the street. Where this occurs a strong visual character is established in the street.

3.8.2 **Where there is an established use of plot series on a street this plot series should be used in all new development.**

3.8.3 This will ensure that the existing character of the street, created by the vertical rhythm of existing plot series, is perpetuated. Therefore new development will continue to enhance the existing character of the street.

3.8.4 **Plot series and plots should be orientated to reinforce the line of the street.**

3.8.5 Where plot series and plots are orientated with front boundaries facing onto the street new development should be orientated similarly.

3.8.6 Changes in orientation of plot series and plots will only be allowed at corners and dead ends. This gives opportunities to provide a visual end-stop or focal point to the view down a street.

3.8.7 **The frontages of new development on plot series and plots should be parallel to the primary street.**

3.8.8 Frontages should contain front doors and windows overlooking the street. This will improve the vitality and security of the street and development along it through natural surveillance. It will also ensure that inactive elevations, such as side or rear elevations, do not face primary streets and improve the visual amenity of the street.



A contemporary plot series of terraced dwellings - Harlow

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3.9 Design of a dwelling or a group of dwellings

3.9.1 The footprint to plot ratio of a new dwellings should be similar to that of existing nearby dwellings.

3.9.2 The character of a street relates to the footprint of a dwelling to its plot area. For example; if the plot is much bigger than adjacent plots there is a strong case for subdivision of the plot to create new houses of a similar footprint to plot ratio as existing adjacent houses. However, if the plot is much smaller than adjacent plots there is a strong case for a development that is proportionally smaller in footprint area than existing adjacent houses. In all cases outside the city centre the footprint of buildings and hard surfaced areas should not exceed 50% of the site. If the quality of the hard landscaping contributes significantly to the creation of a high quality place around the building, these areas may be excluded from the calculations.

3.9.3 Set backs will be the same as nearby housing development and identical for plots in the same plot series.

3.9.4 The set back of a dwelling from the street has a significant impact on the character of the street as it helps define the width to height ratio of the street and therefore its degree of enclosure. A set back allows dwellings to establish individuality and may be required to serve a particular function. Set backs should be sufficiently deep to be fit for the purpose required of them. This could be as a 'threshold' space; a semi-private amenity space where on small and shallow plots children can play, people can sit, bicycles temporarily left and bins can be stored, and on larger deeper plots gardens planted and cars parked.

3.9.5 The scale, massing and appearance of a dwelling or a group of dwellings (e.g. terraces, semi-detached, detached or a block of apartments and sheltered housing) should create a balanced composition in relation to each other and be in harmony with existing nearby development.

3.9.6 Consistency in the height of eaves, parapets, ridges and window lintels and cills will assist in creating a harmonious composition with adjacent development. However features that break this mould, such as a bay window or lower height roof of similar design can add variety to what could be a monotonous elevational composition.



New terraced housing is built with similar setbacks to existing housing - Bath



A contemporary take on traditional housing creates an attractive new focus for this courtyard - Bremen

3.10 Elevations



New housing should not be a pastiche of earlier styles of development



New contemporary styled housing - Birmingham



This new housing development respects the existing rhythm of gabled bays and provides an attractive focus on the bend of the road

3.10.1 Much of Southampton's tradition of local vernacular architecture has disappeared. There are still a few examples of use timber framed houses, of locally produced bricks (from Highfield) and slate roofs and slate tiling hangings to exposed walls, however, much of the housing is of a generic vernacular architecture. Materials used are mass produced and use details that are not unique to the city, that result in developments that could be of anywhere else in the country. This situation must change in order for the city to strengthen its image, existing character and local distinctiveness.

3.10.2 **New development should respond to the character and context of its site and establish a new high quality 21st century contemporary architecture for the city that makes appropriate reference to the local vernacular architecture.**

3.10.3 This does not mean building new dwellings in a pastiche of historical architectural styles, e.g. with UPVC Georgian style porches and fake sash windows that no longer have the proportions of a traditional Georgian sash. It means developing high quality contemporary designs that modernise vernacular features such as the bay window and the balcony, bringing detailed designs into the 21st century using high quality modern materials and construction techniques that respond to the sustainability agenda. A pastiche of historical styles is not acceptable.

3.10.4 **The design of frontages facing streets should respect and enhance the vertical and horizontal rhythm of existing development.**

3.10.5 Many streets in Southampton have a strong vertical rhythm created by repetitive plot widths, as well as vertical features of the elevations. These are predominantly porches, bay windows and chimneys. However, the vertical alignment of doors, windows and rainwater down pipes also contribute to the overall vertical rhythm of the street. Horizontal features such as the eaves and ridges of roofs and porches, and brick string coursing are usually set at an identical height on each adjacent dwelling offering a strong horizontal rhythm to the street which contributes to strengthening the character of the street.

3.10.6 **The design of frontages facing streets should provide a balanced composition in relation to existing nearby development.**

3.10.7 Ensuring that there is a similar relationship between the height and proportion of the facades of new developments and those existing development helps create a balanced composition. In addition the use of contemporary versions of vernacular features of similar height and proportions ensures continuity.

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3.10.8 Each elevation, including the roof, should have a balanced composition of doors, windows, openings and other features.

3.10.9 Although the front elevation is normally the most prominent, all elevations have some degree of visual impact on the occupants of the dwelling or occupants of neighbouring dwellings. The roof and roof terraces should be considered also as an elevation as it may be overlooked by taller development in the vicinity. Consideration should be given to a balanced composition of features that project at roof level such as, chimneys, services, service outlets and access features.

3.10.10 The front elevation should be the most visually prominent elevation.

3.10.11 Side elevations that are exposed to secondary streets should not have blank walls but include doors and windows to provide some natural surveillance of the street.

3.10.12 Elevations should have depth to create interest and enhance existing character.

3.10.13 Historically, the elevations of housing in the city that have strong positive characteristics consist of a combination of architectural details that add interest and are repeated in dwellings forming part of the same development. For example, roofs traditionally have steep pitches, slate or clay tiles and deep eaves, front facades have projecting bays and porches, string courses, reveals to doors and windows, and further detail is provided by carving of bargeboards and stone relief.

3.10.14 New developments should continue these characteristics using modern interpretations, details and materials to provide a balanced composition to each elevation. Dwellings in the same development should draw from a limited palette of architectural details, materials, colours and textures. Prominent corners or facades might have special features to make them more visually prominent. However, larger developments it may be appropriate to use a wider variety of materials and details for different blocks in order to avoid monotony and create greater identity of different areas of the development.

3.10.15 Architectural details often have a practical function, for example, to throw rainwater off the surface of the building, such as deep eaves and projecting sills. These features also add interest by creating depth and interest to the elevation when viewed obliquely and when shadows are cast.



Each house in this development has been designed by different architects but a balanced composition is still achieved - Amsterdam



The front elevation is the most dominant but side windows add visual interest and allow natural surveillance



The use of projecting bay features adds visual interest and depth to this elevation



These Georgian elevations illustrate how larger windows were used on lower storeys than upper ones. This classical design technique also reduces the emphasis on upper storeys making the development appear less tall - Portland Street, Southampton



The bay window feature in this terraced housing creates a focus about which other windows are organised in symmetry - Harlow



The use of balconies, brick and timber facing materials and a top storey setback all help to reduce the visual mass of this apartment block

- 3.10.16 Features such as bay windows and balconies should be used to help structure the design of front elevations.**
- 3.10.17** These features are prominent characteristics of housing in the city and give structure and presence to front elevations, as well as providing opportunities for increased natural surveillance of the street.
- 3.10.18 The height of window openings can be reduced as they get higher up the building.**
- 3.10.19** This is a useful design tool that was used in Georgian and Victorian houses. The ground floor gets the least amount of light and so should have the largest windows. The use of smaller height window openings for upper floors, where more light is available also creates a visually balanced composition helping the upper floors to appear less visually obtrusive. However consideration also needs to be given to other factors, such as solar gain.
- 3.10.20 The upper floor or floors can be set back to reduce the visual impact of tall buildings.**
- 3.10.21** A set back reduces the visual impact of the upper storeys of a tall building. The impact of the set back should be considered from the street level and where it will be seen from a distance. Normally the set back would apply to one or two storeys, however it can also be used to differentiate between different uses on a mixed use building. The set back should be of sufficient depth to allow its functional use as a terrace.
- 3.10.22 Frontages on to streets should have good natural surveillance of the street, provided by doors and windows.**
- 3.10.23** Living rooms, such as lounges, dining rooms and kitchens should front on to streets giving opportunity for natural surveillance of the street. High window cills (over 1300mm high) on ground floors reduce natural surveillance and present an unwelcoming visual impact. Defensible space can be provided by other means, such as by set backs and threshold planting.
- 3.10.24 The primary access point to a dwelling or group of dwellings should be located on the frontage facing the street.**
- 3.10.25** The primary access point or front door to a dwelling is the point at which the dwelling directly interfaces with the street. A street with a regular occurrence of front doors will improve the the sense of security by offering potentially good levels of natural surveillance and increased pedestrian activity.

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3.10.26 External services should be kept to a minimum and placed in accessible and visually unobtrusive locations on the elevations.

3.10.27 Soil stacks should be located internally and will not be acceptable externally. Service inlets and outlets on elevations and protrusions at roof level for ventilation, service supply and water storage overflows should be kept to a minimum; detailed and located to minimise visual impact or designed as an integral design feature of the elevations.

3.10.28 Electricity, gas and water meter cupboards should be visually unobtrusive but fitted into the external walls of the dwelling, in places offering easy access for reading meters. Service cupboards should be provided in a colour that blends with the colour of other materials used in the elevations to minimise visual impact.

3.10.29 Satellite dishes, TV aerials, antennae and amateur radio masts should be positioned discretely to minimise visual impact. These do not normally need planning permission. However, in the case of larger satellite dishes, aerials, antennae and radio masts, particularly those mounted on a pole or as a group, or on a listed building, advice should be sought as to whether a planning application is required.



This development has a good level of natural surveillance onto a waterfront walkway



Ventilation cowls are designed as an integral feature of this sustainable development - BedZed



Meter cupboards should not be located in visually obtrusive places and where they are vulnerable to damage



Exposed soil pipes to the rear elevations of these houses look unsightly

3.11 Plot Boundaries

3.11.1 The treatment of boundaries fronting the street will be in keeping with the treatment of other boundaries along the street.



New boundary treatment should be in keeping with existing boundaries

3.11.2 Front boundary treatments should be robust and fit for purpose. Proposals might include hard landscape features such as walls or soft landscape feature such as hedges. The detailed design, materials and colours should be consistent with the predominant positive characteristics of existing boundaries in the street. The use of dwarf walls with pillars, with or without railings or vertical bar galvanised steel railings, and pedestrian entrance gates are encouraged where there is no strong precedent.

3.11.3 Close boarded, woven panelled, or post and rail timber fencing should not be used on or close to boundaries (either front or side) fronting the street.



Timber fencing is an inappropriate treatment for boundaries fronting onto the street

3.11.4 This type of boundary treatment is not visually attractive nor robust enough for this location and does not allow natural surveillance. The use of dwarf walls and railings as described above is encouraged.

3.11.5 Boundary treatment should not obscure sight lines for the egress of vehicles from a site and should allow good levels of surveillance of the street.

3.12 Garages, Sub Stations and Other Structures

3.12.1 Garages, sub stations and other structures built within the plot boundary or on the development site should be subservient in size to housing development and in keeping with it in terms of the design, colour and materials used.

Below - garden sheds have been designed as integral features of the courtyard in the photo on the left, unlike the example on the right where each resident has put up their own shed

3.12.2 Statutory authorities should be encouraged to provide buildings for sub stations that use the same architectural style, details, colours and materials as the housing development. Guidance on waste storage is given in Part 9.



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3.13 Materials and Construction Methods

3.13.1 Materials used will respect and complement the character, scale, texture and colour of existing materials used in the street.

3.13.2 The use of modern materials and construction techniques is encouraged, however these should respect and complement those already used in the street. The recent exploration of the innovative design and mass production of cheap and quick to build homes, such as the '£60 K house', should be considered. In particular, homes that reduce the use of non renewable resources and increase the use of renewables are encouraged.

3.13.3 A range of complementary materials should be used where necessary to reduce the visual impact of new developments, providing these enhance the existing character of the street.

3.13.4 Materials that are visually more 'heavy' are more appropriate for use on the facades of lower storeys of a building. These are materials such as types of brick and stone, that generally absorb light, have a rough texture and therefore appear darker than other materials. There are practical reasons for this too, as darker materials will not show up rainwater splashback and scuff marks from people passing by. A dark coloured plinth detail at the ground storey can visually enhance the building by providing a 'base' for the building to sit on and a contrast with surrounding hard surfaces. Materials such as glass, metal panels, timber slats and render are generally lighter in colour, smoother in texture and more reflective and therefore appear visually 'lighter'. These materials are more appropriate for use on the facades of higher storeys of the building to reduce the overall visual impact of the building.

3.13.5 Materials used should be sustainable, easy to maintain, robust and resistant to vandalism.

3.13.6 Innovative constructions techniques are encouraged providing they enhance existing character of the street.

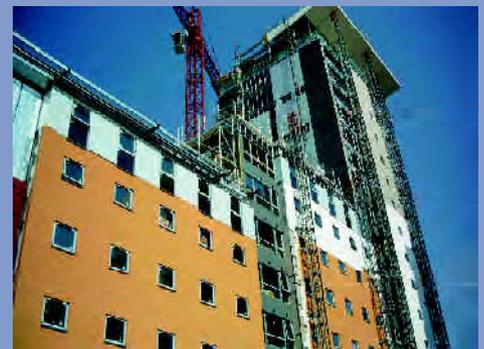
3.13.7 The use of prefabrication as a way of increasing efficiency and reducing the construction cost may be appropriate for dwellings that are repetitive in plan layout, such as apartments and terraced housing. However, the facades of these developments by nature can look lightweight and 'stuck on' to the main structure. Care must be taken in their detailed design and selection of materials to ensure that the development looks visually robust and of good quality.



An attractive composition of materials is used in this development - Harlow



The use of brick at third floor level makes this development look top heavy, however the use of galvanised steel is a sensible choice in this waterside location - Hythe



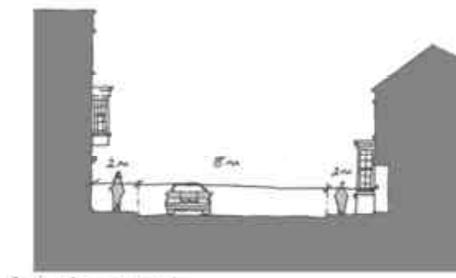
Off site pre-fabrication of units can reduce costs and construction time on site, however care must be taken that cladding materials are appropriate for the context and well detailed - Mercury Point, Southampton

3.14 Case Study: the French Quarter, the Old Town

Developer: Linden Homes

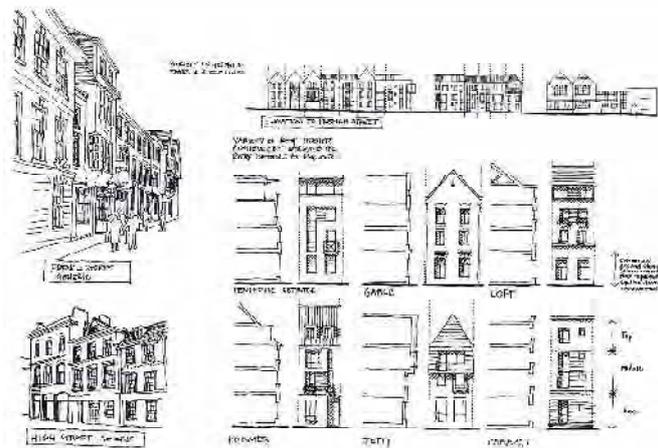
Architect: John Thompson & Partners

The planning application for this scheme in a conservation area was submitted with a comprehensive design statement that is a model for best practice. The following illustrations are a selection from those submitted, which included a detailed urban analysis, a study of plot widths, a study of architectural styles and details in photographic and sketch form.



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Study of street width to height ratio of Bugle Street



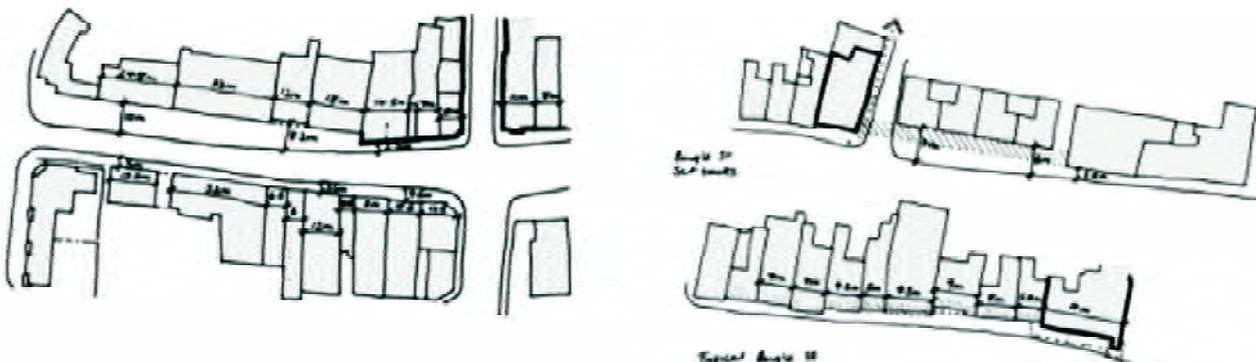
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Sketch studies of existing elevations and storey heights



Photographic study of Bugle Street

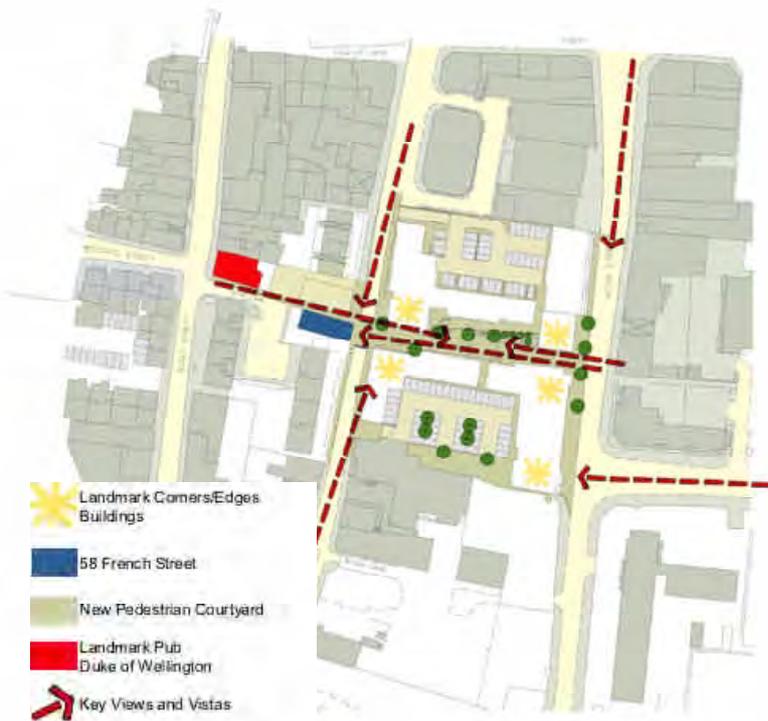
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Study of plot width on Bugle Street and French Street

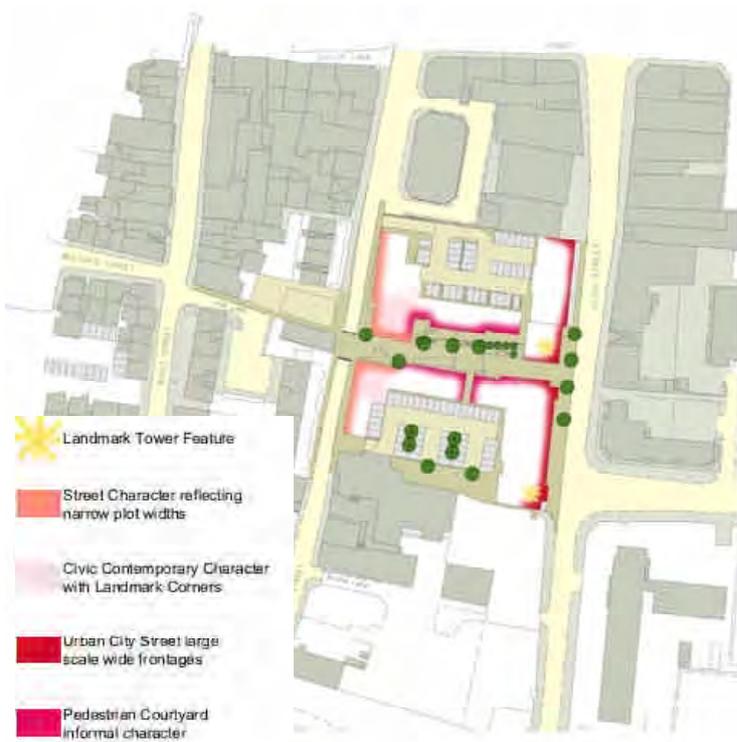
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Landmarks and key views



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Character analysis



Computer generated image of the High Street elevation looking down a new street, Vyse Lane, towards the medieval merchants house - 58 French Street

© John Thompson & Partners



Computer generated image of the French Street elevation with a contemporary approach that respects the positive characteristics of rhythm and variety of form that exist in French Street and Bugle Street

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