

part 1

introduction





1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why do we need a Residential Design Guide?

- 1.1.1 People want to live in Southampton. As a result there is increasing demand to build new homes and extend or refurbish existing homes. Residential development in Southampton has been growing at a rate of over 1,000 dwellings per annum since 2002. The Urban Capacity Study 2005 surmised that the city has the capacity to accommodate a further 6,453 dwellings to 2011, with the possibility of a further 15,000-20,000 dwellings to 2026 (Draft South East Plan).
- 1.1.2 To achieve this considerable level of growth will require a sustainable approach to new development resulting in higher densities of housing in areas well served by public transport and making more efficient use of previously developed land. We will also need to ensure that more affordable housing and more of the right type of housing is provided that will meet the needs of all sectors of the community. In order to achieve higher density housing there will need to be much greater emphasis on creating a decent environment with high quality well designed new development that enhances local character.
- 1.1.3 The *Residential Design Guide – Making better places for living* provides detailed design guidance to transform the city and its neighbourhoods by creating environments of quality that respect and enhance local character and encourage best practice in residential design in tandem with a sustainable use of resources. We are now in a culture where the question is whether the development ‘good enough to approve’ rather than ‘poor enough to refuse’. To achieve this key design objectives for the development of new homes and the spaces that surround them need to be defined and delivered (see page 11).
- 1.1.4 The guidance will replace the current Residential Standards Development Control Brief (1989) and a number of place specific residential briefs (see page 9 for further details). It provides detailed design guidance for household applicants, developers, architects, landscape architects and other built environment designers for new housing developments, extensions and modifications to existing homes in support of less detailed policies outlined in the Local Plan Review March 2006, the Draft South East Plan and central government policies.
- 1.1.5 Public consultation on draft design guidance is required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase (Local Development) England Regulations 2004 Regulation 17 in order to adopt this document as a Supplementary Planning Document to the new Local Development Framework. Once adopted the guidance will from time to time be updated as new policies emerge through the Local Development Framework.

‘the Government’s key objective for planning for housing is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live.’

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2005) consultation draft

‘good design is indivisible from good planning’ -

Planning Policy Statement 1 - Achieving Sustainable Development

1.2 A Brief History of the Development of Southampton

1.2.1 In order to understand how the urban form of Southampton has developed it is important to understand what factors have impacted on the growth of the city in the past. The natural deep water harbour created by the confluence of the rivers Test and Itchen encouraged early settlers to establish here, and enabled the development of maritime trade that has been and still is of great benefit to the city's economic growth and its future prosperity. However, despite this advantage, the development of the city has been constrained by its topography; the two estuaries that restrict east-west movement and the ridged peninsula lying between them, along which development has spread northwards since c.1000 AD.

1.2.2 The first large settlement in the area known to have an urban form was the Roman town called Clausentum, developed around 70 AD on a bend on the eastern banks of the River Itchen. The streets were laid out in a grid pattern and fortified with earth ramparts and ditches. Around 690-700 AD the Saxon town of Hamwic was established in the area of St Marys Church and Six Dials. It was a relatively large settlement of about 5,000 population with a thriving port. The new town was also laid out with streets in a grid pattern.

1.2.3 Following a period of decline, during the 12th century trading increased and the town began to grow rapidly. Earthen defences were built to protect the town, later to be replaced by the town walls, together with houses of timber and stone. By the 13th century, the town's first suburb emerged with tenements built to the north at Above Bar and a smaller number outside East Gate. By the 14th and 15th centuries shipbuilding became the major industry attracting many associated craftsmen to live in the town as well as people to provide large quantities of supplies; materials, food and beer for the workers.

1.2.4 In 1541 a visitor is quoted as saying the High Street was 'one of the fairest in all England for timber buildings'. In the 1570's the Common was enclosed, protecting this magnificent asset for future generations to enjoy. Trade, however had been declining and fortunes did not turn again until the 18th century when the town became a popular spa resort for bathing and for retirement, attracting many rich visitors, some of whom settled in the town and surrounding countryside, establishing many large villas and associated estates. In 1762 a visitor quotes Southampton as 'one of the prettiest and healthiest towns in England, it is rather extensive and well populated and possesses several fine houses'. The enclosure of the Common and the creation of these estates have had significant impact on the future form and townscape of the city.



The Speed Map of Southampton - 1611



Southampton in 1791



Extract from Thomas Milne's map of Hampshire in 1791

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introduction

- 1.2.5 With the advent of steam power in the early 19th century the town took the opportunity to establish itself as 'the gateway to the world' with the development of London to Southampton railway in 1839 and the opening of the new docks at the confluence of the Rivers Itchen and Test, starting with the Open Dock at Ocean Village in 1842. As a result of this significant boost to the local economy the population of the city grew phenomenally from 12,000 in 1800 to 122,000 in 1900 creating a huge demand for new housing.
- 1.2.6 Settlements that had been established over the previous 1000 years or more, such as Portswood and Millbrook, were subsumed into the massive expansion of the town. This put increased pressure on the fields and land of private estates, the boundaries of which influenced the siting of new roads and housing developments. As a result of the population growth and the need to assume responsibility for populations outside the town's boundary, they were extended significantly in 1895 to almost its present boundaries.
- 1.2.7 In the 1920's trade boomed and the first council houses were built at Hampton Park, Freshfield Estate, Freemantle, Woolston and Bitterne. Many private houses were also built in Highfield, Swaythling, Woolston and Bitterne. By 1930 the population had increased to 178,000. The Civic Centre was completed in 1939.
- 1.2.8 Following many years of debate it was finally agreed that Southampton should have a new purpose built Civic Centre. This was completed in 1939 just before the outbreak of World War II. During the war, the Civic Centre and about 11,000 houses were seriously damaged, temporary homes were quickly erected which were gradually replaced from 1946. In 1954 the boundaries of the town were again extended to include Millbrook, Redbridge, Harefield and part of Thornhill. Slums were demolished in parts of Chapel, Northam, Shirley and Bitterne. Council house building continued into the 1960's at Thornhill, Townhill Park and Weston. Population numbers topped 200,000 in 1960 and Southampton was made a city in 1964. Since then further growth has continued around the edge of the city. However, in recent years the emphasis has been on redeveloping existing 'brown' field sites, to increase land use efficiency resulting in higher densities of development within the city.



Southampton 1896+

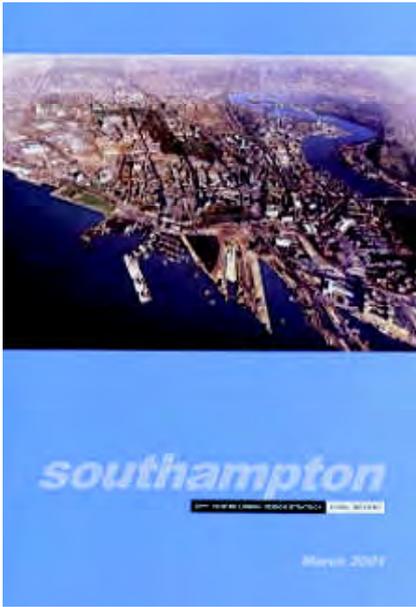


Southampton 1936



*Aerial photograph of Southampton - 2004
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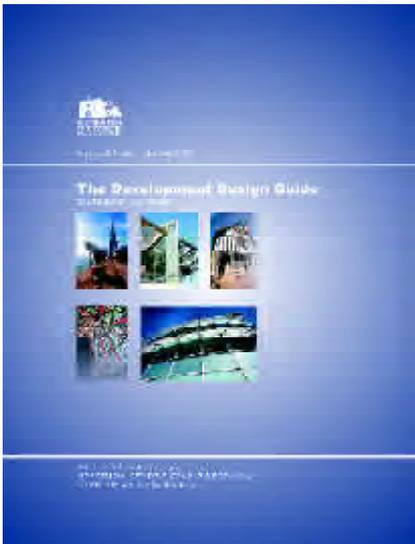
City centre Urban Design Strategy, March 2001

1.3 Planning Policy Context - Designing For Quality

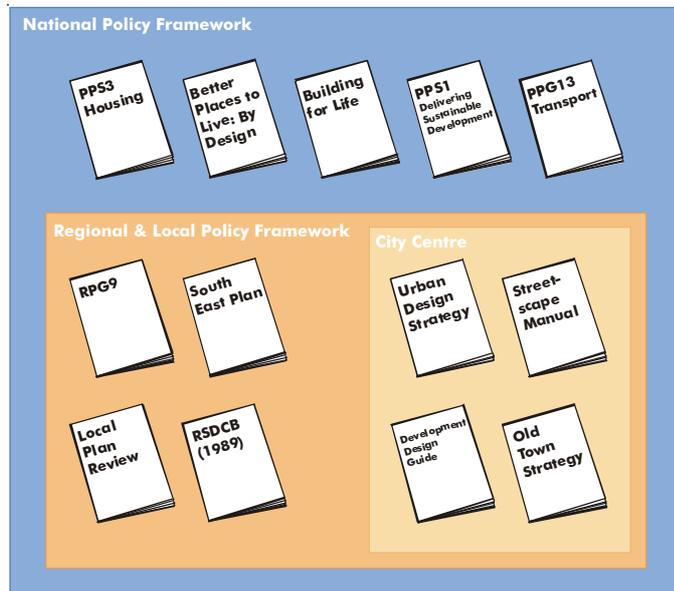
1.3.1 The Government has recently set out its objectives for designing quality in new housing in the consultation paper 'Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing' that are aimed at:

- “(a) creating places, streets and spaces which meet the needs of people, which are attractive, have their own distinctive identity, and positively improve local character; and
- (b) which promote designs and layouts that are inclusive, safe, take account of public health, crime prevention and community safety, ensure adequate natural surveillance and make space for water where there is flood risk.”

1.3.2 The benefits of well designed housing are considerable: it improves socioeconomic wellbeing, reduces crime, increases financial value of property, attracts investment to an area and improves civic pride and confidence. This document promotes high quality residential design, irrespective of whether it requires planning permission or not.



The Development Design Guide - Southampton City Centre, February 2004

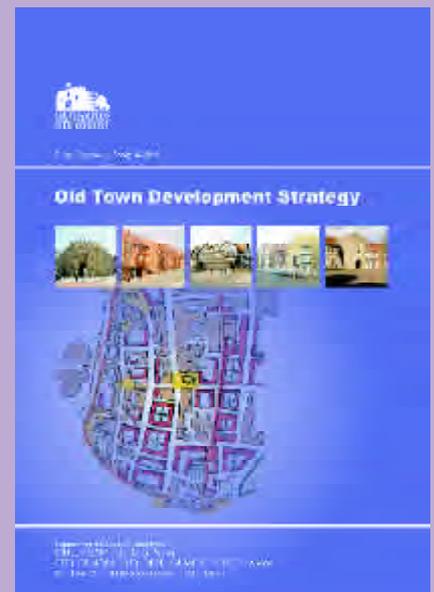


introduction

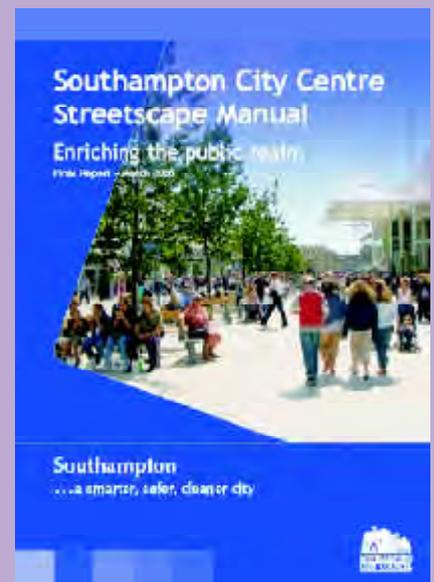
1.3.3 This document supports the policy for delivering high quality design as set out in the *Southampton Local Plan Review March 2006* and associated supplementary planning guidance such as the *City Centre Urban Design Strategy*, *City Centre Development Design Guide*, the *Old Town Development Strategy* and the *City Centre Streetscape Manual*.

1.3.4 The guidance sets out further detailed design guidance in support of many of the policies in the current Local Plan Review March 2006 as listed below:

- SDP1 Quality of Development
- SDP5 Parking
- SDP6 Urban Design Principles
- SDP7 Context
- SDP8 Urban Form and Public Space
- SDP9 Scale Massing & Appearance
- SDP10 Safety and Security
- SDP11 Accessibility and Movement
- SDP12 Landscape and Biodiversity
- NE6 Improvement of Character
- CLT5 Open Space in New Residential Developments
- H1 Housing Supply
- H2 Previously Developed Land
- H6 Housing Retention
- H7 Residential Environment
- H8 Housing Density
- H9-H11 Affordable Housing
- H12 Housing Type and Design
- TI2 Vehicular Access.



Old Town Development Strategy, May 2004



City Centre Streetscape Manual, March 2005

1.4 How has the Guide been developed?



1.4.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (Local Development) England Regulations 2004 the preparation of supplementary planning documents are required to be consulted on widely from the outset. Initial consultation was started in April 2005 with a presentation of the proposed scope of the document to council officers. Representatives from local developers, architects, public agencies, amenity groups and Council Members were invited to attend two workshops where recent planning applications were reviewed, looking at strengths and weakness of each scheme in order to draw out issues that need further consideration in this document. Presentations were also given to each of the five Neighbourhood Partnerships.



1.4.2 Informal consultation on the emerging draft document was carried out in December 2005 and January 2006 with Southampton's Development Forum, English Heritage, English Nature, the Environment Agency, the Countryside Agency and internal officers. Following approval by the City Council's Cabinet in April 2006, formal public consultation was carried out between April and June 2006, with formal notification in the press and presentations to interest groups. Comments were reviewed and the document amended as appropriate at each stage. The document was approved in September 2006 for use as a supplementary planning document.



Study visits to new housing developments included Amsterdam (Eastern Harbour District), BedZed (Sutton) and Harlow

1.4.3 Under the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase (Local Development) England Regulations 2004 Regulation 17 a Sustainability Appraisal must be prepared alongside the guidance, which takes into consideration its social, environmental and economic impact. A decision has also been made that a Strategic Environmental Assessment should be prepared as required by the European Directive 2001/42/EC. These two documents have been combined into an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal; a scoping report for this has been prepared and consulted on at informal public consultation stage. From this a Sustainability Appraisal Report has been developed which was consulted on at formal public consultation stage, followed by a full appraisal of the final document taking into consideration comments arising at consultation stage. This has been validated by an independent panel formed by officers from neighbouring local authorities and the final report has been produced along side this final document.

1.5 Other Evidence Gathering

- 1.5.1 During the initial stages of preparation of the guidance a number of evidence gathering activities have been undertaken. These include a review of the existing guidance the Residential Standards Development Control Brief (1989) and its effectiveness in Appeals.
- 1.5.2 A study of different types of development in the city was carried out, examining figure and ground, the quality of the environment and density achieved (see Appendix B). Best practice in housing design has been researched with visits to new waterside developments in Amsterdam, sustainable housing at BedZed, South London, and new housing built to design codes in Harlow New Town, as well as local developments. Research was also undertaken into best practice in residential design guides produced by other local authorities.
- 1.5.3 Account has also been taken of other initiatives that are emerging that promote great places for people to live that can only be achieved by good design in tandem with sustainable development. These include the CABA-Home Builders Federation *Building for Life Standard*, which is described in more detail in section 1.7, and the *Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's forthcoming *Code for Sustainable Homes*, currently at consultation stage, which will be a voluntary code encouraging developers to meet minimum targets for reducing non renewable energy use in new housing by using sustainable materials and design, and products that use renewable forms of energy and conserve energy. This is referred to in more detail in Part 7 - Resource Management.

1.6 Review of Existing Guidance

- 1.6.1 The extent of public consultation was not made clear in the previous Residential Standards Development Control Brief (1989). Extensive public consultation has been carried out from the outset as demanded by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase (Local Development) England Regulations 2004.
- 1.6.2 A review of recent appeal decisions was carried out which revealed that the previous Residential Standards has performed best at Appeal where the City Council has applied the standards in relation to character and appearance of the Appeal site and its context. However the use of 'minimum' standards alone has not guarded against poor quality developments, an issue that has been addressed in this new guidance.



Southampton City Council, Swaythling Housing Society and Persimmon Homes jointly received the CABA/HBF Building for Life Gold Standard Award in December 2005 for the Chapel Regeneration Area housing development in Southampton

*Since changed - May 2006, to Communities and Local Government.
www.communities.gov.uk

The Residential Design Guide will replace the Residential Standards Development Control Brief (1989) and other residential briefs listed below, produced between 1974 and 1993, that give guidance for new housing development in specific areas of the city. However, these documents will continue to be used as a reference until such time as they are each replaced with up-to-date area specific guidance. The documents referred to above are:

- Residential Standards Development Control Brief (1989)
- Banister’s Park (1991)
- Bassett Avenue (1982)
- Howard Road (1991)
- Lower Freemantle (1981)
- Mid Freemantle (1982)
- Westridge Road (1989)
- Westwood Park (1981)
- Northam Road Area Improvement Strategy (1987)
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (1990)
- Vyse Lane/58 French Street (1990)
- Tauntons College Highfield Road Development Guidelines (1993)
- Old Woolston Development Control Brief (1974)
- Cranbury Place (1988)
- Carlton Crescent (1988)
- Old Town (1974)
- Oxford Street (1982)

1.7 Building for Life

- 1.7.1 Southampton City Council endorses the Building for Life Standard, launched by the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott in 2003. The Building for Life initiative is led by CABE and the House Builders Federation, in partnership with the Civic Trust, English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation and design for Homes.
- 1.7.2 The Building for Life Standard comprises 20 questions to assess design quality in new housing, providing an invaluable tool for developers, planners, local authorities, architects and the public - anyone keen to identify best practice in housing and neighbourhood design. The City Council has included an additional question that deals with biodiversity and habitat creation.
- 1.7.2 The City Council will expect developers and their architects to submit a response to these questions as part of the Design Statement when making a planning application for five or more dwellings. They will also be encouraged to respond to these questions on smaller schemes. This will enable council officers to demand high standards of design and assess design quality more easily, thereby enabling greater support from local communities and speeding up the planning approval process. A schedule of the Building for Life questions is included in Appendix C. This schedule also lists documentation which might be included in the Design and Access Statement to demonstrate how the proposed design responds to each of the questions. The Building for Life website provides more information about the Standard and features an on-line reference library of the Standard winning exemplars: www.buildingforlife.org



Diagram depicting how the key objectives of housing policy all interrelate to create housing quality

1.8 Key Objectives of the Residential Design Guide

1.8.1 Southampton City Council identified 'Improving the Streetscene and Environment' as one of its five key themes. The environment in the city is formed mainly by residential development set in a network of streets and areas of private and public open space. Therefore an improved quality of residential development will have a direct impact on raising standards in the streetscene and the environment.

1.8.2 Key objectives for residential design are listed below. The key design principles outlined in this document should deliver residential design that satisfies these objectives:

- **Making places for living**, that are of high quality design and enhance the local character and distinctiveness, improve the public realm and protect amenity;
- **Accommodating further growth** of residential development to **sustain** economic growth and competitiveness;
- **Utilising land efficiently and effectively**, including 'backland' and brownfield sites ;
- **Encouraging development in areas of higher accessibility** such as the network of district centres and public transport corridors;
- **Ensuring an affordable and diverse mix of dwelling types** appropriate to the local **context**;
- **Greening the city** by ensuring that existing qualities of landscape character, features and resources are conserved and that new landscape design is rich, diverse and implemented to enhance character;
- **Protecting and enhancing biodiversity** by providing habitats for flora and fauna to establish and thrive;
- **Designs** that integrate effective **resource management** measures (such as solar energy and water management);
- **Incorporate measures to improve accessibility** and connectivity, that encourages walking, cycling and use of public transport and reduces the impact of the private motor vehicle;
- **Design of homes for improved adaptability** (such as adaptable family housing or housing that incorporates home working);
- **Safeguarding residential amenity** through the improved design of household extensions
- **To reduce and manage risk of flooding.**

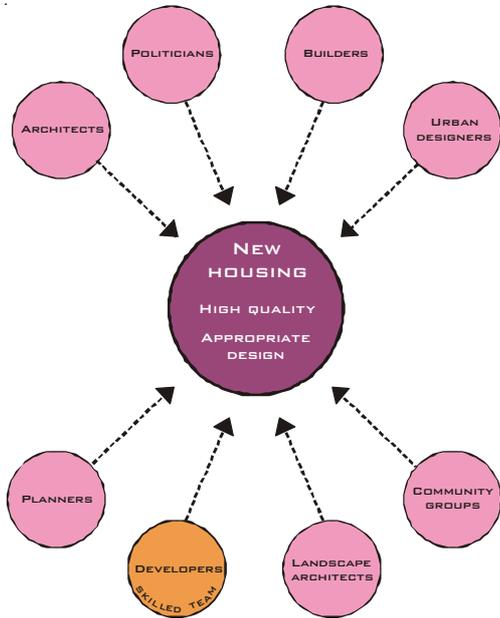


Diagram illustrating the key players in the design development process

1.9 Who should use the Guide?

1.9.1 This guidance should be used by all designers and developers involved in the creation of new residential development and extensions or alterations to existing homes. This will include architects, landscape architects, planners and urban designers and builders. However the key is for developers to employ skilled designers who consider design from the outset. All city council officers involved in the planning of the urban environment will also use the document as a planning tool to achieving high quality and appropriate design.

1.9.2 The guidance will also be of use to local communities and other stakeholders empowering them with a useful planning tool to use when being consulted on new development in their neighbourhood.

1.10 How to use the Guide

1.10.1 For ease of use the guidance is divided into a number of themed parts containing key design principles (highlighted in bold) and supporting text. These should be used to guide the development of the design, in a manner that is not overly prescriptive, but that encourages high quality design that enhances local character.

1.10.2 The guidance will apply citywide and gives generic design guidance for two key areas of residential design:

- **Maintaining Residential Standards – guidance on household extensions (part 2);**
- **Designing the Urban Environment – guidance on best practice for designing new residential developments of one or more dwellings (Parts 3-10).**

1.10.3 The design should be developed and tested using the following design tools:
 Building for Life Checklist (Appendix C)
 Guidance on Preparing a Design and AccessStatement (Appendix D) (for all developments other than household extensions and alterations)
 Guidance on Preparing a Character Appraisal (Appendix E)
 Sustainability Checklist (Appendix F)
 Landscape Checklist for New Development (Appendix G)

1.10.4 In the future, specific design guidance may be prepared for selected areas of the city in the form of neighbourhood design statements. In the meantime, local communities are encouraged to develop their own guidance for their neighbourhood in consultation with relevant officers of the planning department.

1.11 How to Make a Planning Application

1.11.1 Applicants for simple household extensions and modifications and minor proposals should initially contact Gateway, the City Council's one stop shop in the Civic Centre where the Duty Planning Officer will give initial advice on how to proceed. Applicants will need to appoint appropriately qualified and experienced consultants to develop their development proposal.

1.11.2 Applicants for large, complex or potentially contentious developments should contact the Development Control department by telephone or email (contact details are given in Appendix L) to arrange an initial meeting to discuss the proposals. This will allow the appropriate officers to attend the meeting and to provide a more considered approach, discuss the pre-application design process and submission requirements. Applicants should appoint a chartered or registered architect to develop their proposals, but should also consider appointing other consultants to form a multi-disciplinary team, such as chartered landscape architects, planners and urban designers, transport planners, highway engineers, ecologists and other specialists to give more specialist advice. Applicants should develop their proposals themselves and cannot expect council officers to design schemes for them.

1.11.3 A charge will be made by the planning department for providing pre-application advice on large or complex proposals.

1.12 Advice for Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Article 4 Directions

1.12.1 Applicants should contact the Conservation Officer for advice on all developments that will impact on conservation areas, listed buildings and locally listed buildings. Here there are specific constraints on permitted development in order to protect buildings and structures of special interest and significance, and the character of the existing environment. The protection of which will in most cases be considered as an exception to the general design principles described in this document, and proposals for new development will be considered on its merits on a case by case basis.

1.12.2 A designated Conservation Area may remove some permitted development rights, such as erection of satellite dishes. These rights may also be withdrawn by the local authority under an Article 4 direction for a specific type of development. This enables the local authority to control certain types of alteration which do so much damage to the character of Conservation Areas, such as the alteration or removal of doors and windows in particular.



Pre-application public consultations are a useful way of involving and getting the support of the local community and key stakeholders on large or potentially contentious development proposals

1.13 The Design Process

1.13.1 The design process should be analysis-based, context-driven and innovative, involving consideration and understanding of the following:

- national and local policies;
- design guidance, including any site specific design principles; Conservation Area appraisals, Neighbourhood Design Statements;
- best practice; examples of high quality design set in similar contexts.

1.13.2 The applicant and his/her consultants should work together with the City Council's officers in an integrated and proactive way, meeting at key stages of the design process, which are:

- **site analysis, development of a character appraisal and establishment of design principles**
 - analysis of the existing situation, including the areas adjacent to the site, from which a character appraisal of the area and broad urban design principles should be established;
- **scheme design** - proposed layout and form based on the urban design principles; several options may be explored to test different solutions;
- **detailed design** - selection of the option which most closely meets local plan policies and design guidance.

1.13.3 The design process is iterative, each stage giving an opportunity to explore and test different solutions, with an emphasis on enhancing the quality of an environment, even where it is poor. Each stage should be supported by plans, elevations, illustrations, photos and/or photo montages that show how the scheme relates to its context. A working three dimensional model can be a useful tool to test options.

1.13.4 It is only when this process has been gone through that a realistic density can be formulated which will in turn drive the potential land value that could be offered for the site. Notwithstanding PPG3/PPS3 and Policy H2 of the Local Plan Review, the City Council may still refuse planning approval on the grounds of over development.

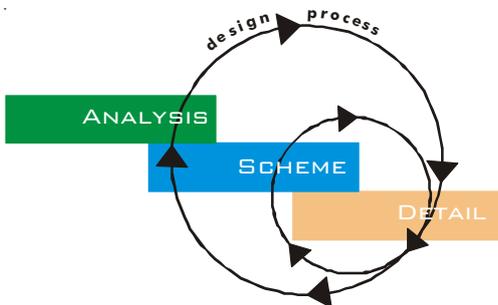
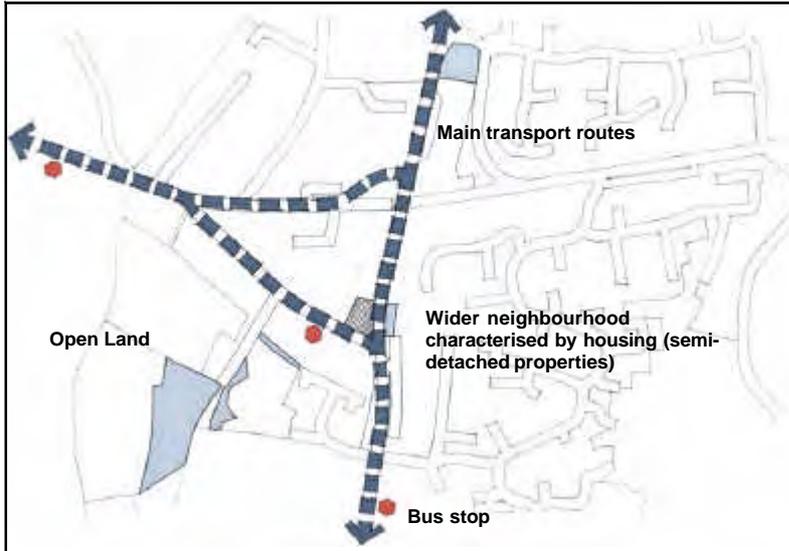


Diagram illustrating the iterative design process, between the key stages; analysis, scheme and detailed design

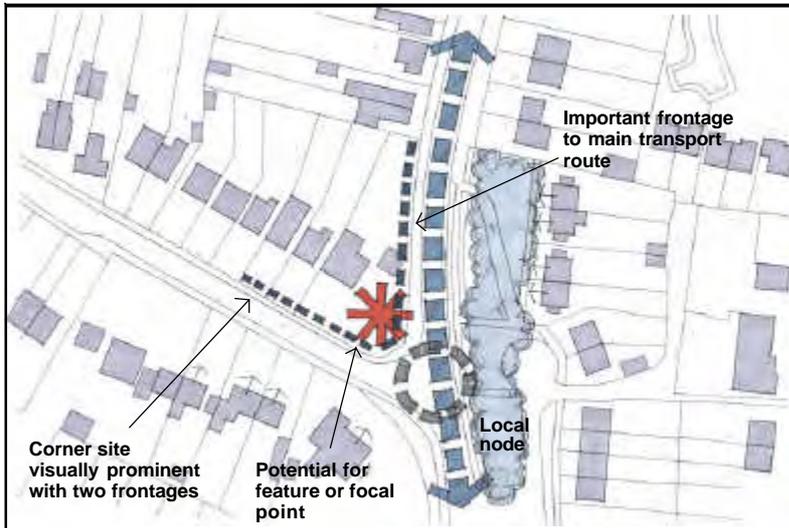
Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted' -

Planning Policy Statement 1 -
Achieving Sustainable Development

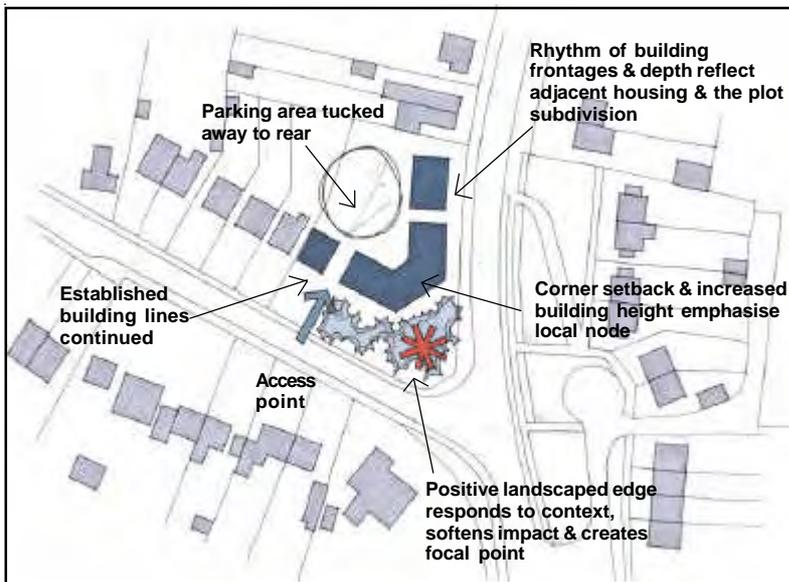
introduction



Analysis: *Adjacent areas and context*



Analysis: *Design principles*



Scheme design: *Layout and form*

1.13.4 All character appraisal should be prepared and submitted for all planning applications. A character appraisal of the site and the local area is a key tool in establishing design principles for the proposed development and creating a robust case for an appropriate development on the site or extension(s) or alteration(s) of existing buildings. Further advice on preparing a character appraisal is included in Appendix E.

1.13.5 All developments except for householder applications will require a design and access statement. This should include all of the information gathered during the stages of the design process, including a character appraisal of the site and local area. Further advice on preparing these is given in Appendix D.

1.14 Status and Review

1.14.1 This guide replaces the existing Residential Standards Development Control Brief (adopted on 5 April 1989) and has been approved as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the City Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). The impact of the will be monitored annually by the City Council as part of the ongoing monitoring of the LDF as required by the Government Office for the South East.

1.15 Conflicts, compromise and exceptions

1.15.1 During the design development process conflicts are likely to arise when applying some of the principles in this guide. In each case it will be necessary to evaluate these in consultation with council officers and consider which principles will bring the greatest benefits in design quality to the development and its environs. The principles aim to provide an appropriate level of guidance to achieve high quality well designed development, however they do not intend to stifle innovation and exceptions to the guidance will be considered if a robust case for any deviation can be made.

1.15.2 The design of a development in a Conservation Area or that has an impact on a Listed Building or locally listed building may be considered as an exception to some of the guidance in this document. See section 1.12 for further details.

1.15.3 This document provides guidance generally on design issue which planning legislation controls. However, where appropriate, guidance is also provided concerning design issues controlled under the Building Regulations and also best practice guidance with the ultimate aim that this guide sets new standards for making better places for living.