

THE COUNCILLOR'S GUIDE TO URBAN DESIGN



FOREWORD



Councillors have a key role to play in the delivery of high quality, well-designed places, both in the buildings they procure and by influencing the quality of all new development in their areas through the planning system.

CABI is committed to supporting councillors in this important task and we hope that this document, and the training seminar it accompanies, will help to build upon recent good practice and deliver places that improve people's quality of life and which councillors can be proud to have been involved in.

Sir Stuart Lipton, Chairman, CABI

THE COUNCILLOR'S GUIDE TO URBAN DESIGN

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The issue of good urban design is not about some abstract ideal, it's about creating the right conditions to make places work.



INTRODUCTION WHAT IS URBAN DESIGN?

The purpose of this guide is not to show you how to design, but how to think about design.

Good urban design is not an abstract ideal. It is a matter of creating the right conditions to make places work, and the planning system has a central role in achieving this aim.

Crucially, the planning system provides the opportunity to ask:

- What sort of place do we want
- How can we promote the qualities we want

The planning system has always been concerned with getting the right mix of land uses, such as housing, retail or industry, in the right location. Now we recognise that making successful places also depends on getting the physical form of development right.

This has long been recognised in historic areas. But every town and city is special to the people who live or work there. Urban design is relevant from the largest to the smallest scale, and from the most historic town centre to the newest suburban development.

Urban design is the process of shaping the setting for life in cities, towns and villages. It is a process that involves politicians; a wide range of people with a stake in an area; and many different kinds of professionals. A successful outcome depends on these people working effectively together.

Every day countless decisions are made that have the potential to make a piece of a city, town or village a little more lively, welcoming and pleasant, or a little more hostile, unpleasant or unsafe. These decisions can enhance or erode a place's distinctive character.

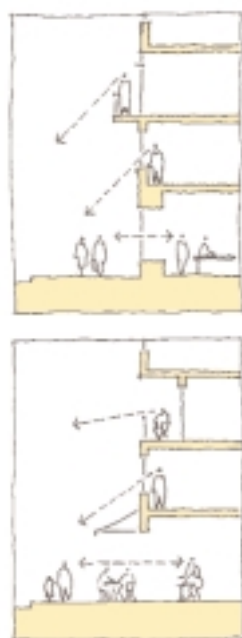
Some of these decisions concern major developments. But even the overall effect of many small developments, such as house extensions, shopfronts and infill schemes, can change a place dramatically for the better or worse over only a few years. By focusing on quality in urban design and architecture, the planning system can make a difference.

Good urban design is a powerful tool for achieving a higher quality of life, greater economic vitality and a more efficient use of resources. It is key to making places where talented people will want to live, and which will nurture economic success.

Successful streets, spaces, villages, towns and cities tend to have qualities in common. The fundamental qualities of successful places, which all development must contribute to, are outlined below.



01 WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL PLACE?



1

Character

Sense of place and history

A place that responds to and reinforces locally distinctive patterns of development and landscape

- Distinctive landscapes
- Natural features
- Locally distinctive buildings
- Streets and street patterns
- Special spaces
- Skylines and roofscapes
- Building materials
- Local culture and traditions
- Avoiding standard solutions

2

Continuity and enclosure

Clarity of form

A place where public and private space are clearly distinguished

- Streets, footpaths and open spaces overlooked by buildings
- Clear distinction between public and private space
- Avoiding gaps in the line of buildings
- Enclosing streets and other spaces by buildings and trees of a scale that feels comfortable and appropriate to the character of the space
- No leftover spaces unused and uncared for

3

Quality of the public realm

Sense of wellbeing and amenity

A place with public spaces and routes that are lively and pleasant to use

- A feeling of safety and security
- Uncluttered and easily maintained
- Carefully detailed with integrated public art
- Suited to the needs of everyone, including disabled and elderly people
- Well-designed lighting and street furniture
- Attractive and robust planting

4

Ease of movement

Connectivity and permeability

A place that is easy to get to and move through

- Density highest where access to public transport is best
- Roads, footpaths and public spaces connected into well-used routes
- Easy accessibility
- Direct routes that lead to where people want to go
- A choice of safe, high quality routes

5

Legibility

Ease of understanding

A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand

- Landmarks and focal points
- Views
- Clear and easily navigable routes
- Gateways to particular areas
- Lighting
- Works of art and craft
- Signage and waymarkers

6

Adaptability

Ease of change

A place that can change easily

- Flexible uses
- Possibilities for gradual change
- Buildings and areas adaptable to a variety of present and future uses
- Reuse of important historic buildings

7

Diversity

Ease of choice

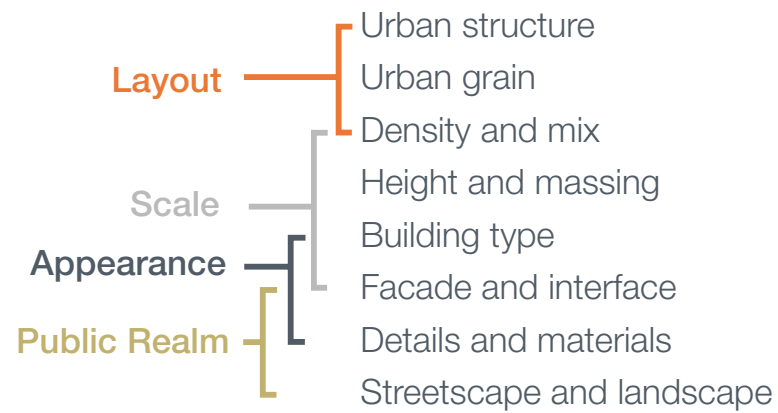
A place with variety and mixed uses

- A mix of compatible uses and tenures
- Variety of layout and building form
- Diverse communities and cultures
- Variety of architectural styles
- Biodiversity

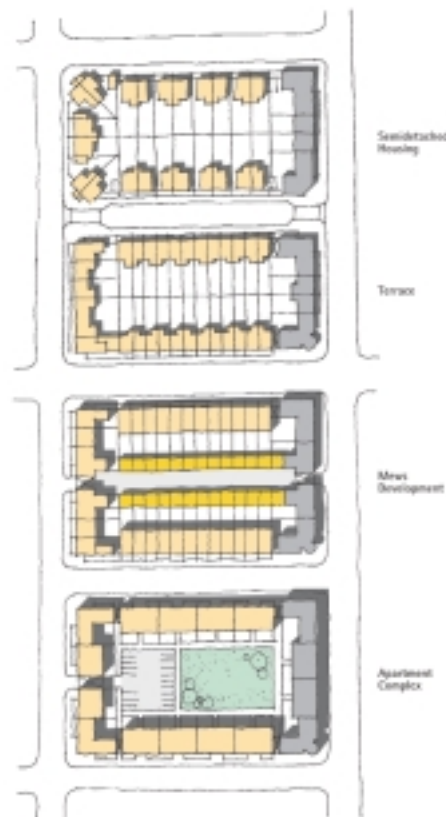
The qualities of successful place outlined above build upon the objectives of urban design set out in *By Design*, the companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 *General Policy and Principles (PPG1)*.

The form of development is the physical expression of urban design. It consists of the relationships, shape and size of buildings, structures and spaces. It will influence the users activity and movement in a place and so is fundamental to the success of a place.

The most important elements of development form are listed here. Each of these elements are informed by the seven urban design qualities described in section 01 to create the physical components of a plan.



02 ASPECTS OF FORM



1 Urban structure

The essential diagram of a place showing:

- The relationship between new development and nature, land form and existing buildings
- The framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely, and the way developments, routes, open spaces and precincts relate to one another

2 Urban grain

The nature and extent of the subdivision of the area into smaller development parcels showing:

- The pattern and scale of streets, blocks and plots
- The rhythm of building frontages along the street as a reflection of the plot subdivision

3 Density and mix

The amount of development and the range of uses this influences, to include:

- The intensity of activity relative to a place's accessibility
- The place's vitality relative to the proximity and range of uses
- The development's viability

4 Height and massing

The scale of a building in relation to:

- The arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces
- The size of parts of a building and its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person
- The impact on views, vistas and skylines

5 Building type

- The size of the building floorplate its storey heights and means and location of access
- The relationship of the building to adjacent buildings and how it relates to external space at ground floor level
- The nature and extent of the building's setback at upper floors and roof treatment

6 Facade and interface

The relationship of the building to the street:

- The rhythm, pattern and harmony of its openings relative to its enclosure
- The nature of the setback, boundary treatment and its frontage condition at street level
- The architectural expression of its entrances, corners, roofscape and projections

7 Details and materials

The appearance of the building in relation to:

- The art, craftsmanship, building techniques and detail of the various building components true to local context
- The texture, colour, pattern, durability and treatment of its materials
- Materials sourced from local and/or sustainable sources, including recycled materials where possible
- The lighting, signage and treatment of shopfronts, entrances and building security

8 Streetscape and landscape

The design of route and spaces, their microclimate, ecology and biodiversity to include:

- Paving, planting and street furniture
- The integration of public art, lighting, signing and waymarkers
- The treatment of parks, play areas, natural features and recreation areas
- Consideration of long term management and maintenance issues

The following case study illustrates urban design qualities and form of development in practice.

BACKGROUND

Once a notorious sink estate associated with crime, the Angell Town Estate in south London has undergone a ten year regeneration programme including the conversion and replacement of the housing stock. Community leadership and tenant management of the estate have been important ingredients in the area's success. In partnership with a consortium of Housing Associations, Lambeth Council commissioned six architectural practices, each dealing with different parts of the estate. Burrell Foley Fischer's new housing has already won awards including a 2002 RIBA Award and a 2002 Housing Design Award.

The layout of the new housing to an overall masterplan by John Thompson and Partners has transformed deck-access flats with a rigid separation of pedestrian and vehicular movement into a street-based layout with entrances to homes lining public spaces where once there had been only blank garage walls. The new layout has created legible blocks with a clear distinction between

what is public space and what are private spaces for residents. The monolithic concrete structures of the original estate have been replaced with a finer grain of development expressed through clean vertical proportions creating terraces in a distinctly modern idiom.

The new housing is complemented by conversion of some of the older blocks, including accommodating new community and business uses in converted car parking garages, and by new landscaping and leisure facilities. In summary, the regeneration project delivers many of the qualities that distinguish successful places:

CHARACTER

Transforming the image and perceptions of a stigmatised estate by adopting characteristics of the surrounding terraces but without stylistic pastiche.

CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE

Legible block and street-based layout enclosed by vertically proportioned modern terraces.

QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM

Positive public spaces faced by buildings, greater public safety and security, new five-a-side pitch.

EASE OF MOVEMENT

New route created across the estate linking to bus services and school, interconnecting network of streets and mews providing a choice of routes.

LEGIBILITY

Corners and mews access are given architectural emphasis, there is a clear and easily understandable grid of streets that are better connected into the surrounding street pattern.

ADAPTABILITY

Existing buildings have been adapted to introduce new uses and provide modern accommodation standards. All homes are designed to Lifetime Homes standard to facilitate future adaptation to residents' needs.

DIVERSITY

New development provides a mix of residential tenure and introduces new commercial and community uses.

Although the residential density has been slightly reduced by the redevelopment, a more varied mix of new uses has been introduced, making efficient use of a site close to excellent bus services and local amenities. Energy efficiency of building construction has been improved throughout and innovative energy and waste recycling measures are being introduced.



Everyone who makes policy, shapes opinions, sets budgets, selects designers, writes briefs or assesses proposals can play a part in raising standards.

Many local authorities know that getting the best out of development depends on going beyond the minimum requirements of the statutory planning system.

03 RAISING STANDARDS

DESIGN SKILLS

Most development, including that which requires planning permission and that built under *permitted development*, consists of small scale domestic projects such as house extensions. Very often, such development is designed by someone with little or no design training. Such people (including some plan drawers, house-builders and householders) are an important target audience for design guidance and for initiatives aimed at raising standards.

- The effectiveness of the planning toolkit in raising standards of urban design depends on how it is used
- The extent to which the planning process facilitates good design will depend on the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the participants – from planning applicants to council members
- Currently half of all local authorities have no design skills at all among their officers

Councillors have an important role to play in ensuring that their local authority has in place the right level of design skills to secure an informed and proactive planning process.

If the skills to produce urban design frameworks and development briefs are not available within a local authority, the council may well not be up to negotiating with developers about design issues or assessing the design merits of planning applications. It may be appropriate to commission external urban design consultants for specific tasks if design skills are not available among the council's staff. But there is no substitute for the council itself having officers with a high level of design skill.



WORKING TOGETHER

The quality of what comes out of the planning process often depends on how effectively people both inside and outside the local authority work together.

Everyone who:

- Guides and controls development
 - Initiates and implements it
 - Understands and interprets its context
 - Designs and manages it
- potentially has a part to play.

The creative process by which people collaborate to build on common interests has to be managed. Managing that process is itself a skill. Success depends on using suitable approaches and techniques, holding the right sort of events, and involving the right people, in the right sequence and at the appropriate time.

The process of preparing urban design guidance can provide a particularly important opportunity for this. The process needs to be carefully planned from the start, ensuring that the necessary skills and resources are made available.

The guidance document, and its various drafts, should set out what has been understood, and express conclusions in a form that people can agree to. Its clear and logical structure should help to make the process open and easy to understand.



MONITORING AND REVIEW

Raising standards depends on learning from experience. A local authority should involve the people who make planning decisions – including council members – in monitoring the quality of what gets built and reviewing the council's urban design guidance in the light of it.

Regular visits to completed projects will help everyone reflect on the decisions they took and on the impact made by officers in negotiating changes to initial schemes.

PROTECTING DESIGN QUALITY AFTER APPROVAL

Too often what looked like a well-designed scheme when it received planning permission turns out to be of poor quality when it is actually built. A local authority needs to ensure that developers' commitment to good designers, and the right materials and details, is maintained through to completion.



CHAMPIONING QUALITY

For design quality to be delivered it needs leadership and championing. A local authority design champion may be the means of delivering this leadership. The champion should be a senior councillor supported by skilled officers.

The design champion would:

- Provide a symbol of commitment to good design
- Create leadership to generate enthusiasm and commitment for design quality and provide a point of contact for external bodies
- Co-ordinate effort across the authority, joining up different departments and combating organisational ghettos
- Promote the benefits of good design and ensure every new investment in the built environment, from a building to a road-crossing, is of high quality
- Ensure all investment is seen as a piece of urban or rural design, rather than in isolation

Protecting Design Quality in Planning is a guide intended particularly for planning authorities and focuses on the tools and techniques that planners use to protect design quality.

ARCHITECTURE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT CENTRES

There is a growing network of architecture and built environment centres. Such a centre is a building or organisation that provides a focus for a range of activities and services (such as discussions, information, exhibitions, training, collaboration and professional services) relating to design and development. It can provide a neutral ground and a public face for the design debate locally and regionally. For more information visit www.architecturecentre.net

DESIGN INITIATIVES

Some local authorities run successful design initiatives that raise the profile of design locally through exhibitions, competitions, discussions, awards and publications.

DESIGN AWARDS

Local design awards can be an effective way of encouraging the best clients, design champions and designers, and of raising the public profile of good design.

DESIGN ADVISORY PANELS

A number of local authorities use design advisory panels (also known as architectural advisory panels) to help them assess the design aspects of planning applications. Some panels meet frequently to consider relevant items on the planning committee agenda. Others become involved only where there is a dispute between an architect or designer and a planning officer, which can not otherwise be resolved.

The skills and experience of a design advisory panel may be best used by involving it at an early stage in the planning process, such as in the preparation of design policies and urban design guidance.

DESIGN COMPETITIONS

A design competition can help to ensure a high standard of design for development on an important site. The process must be carefully planned, and the competition will be successful only if there is a good brief. The competition process can help to raise expectations and public interest.

BEST VALUE

Local government has a duty to deliver Best Value by providing good quality and affordable services in line with local demands and to seek continuous service improvement over time.

A key element in the monitoring of Best Value is the setting of targets measured by Performance Indicators, both statutory and local.

Understanding and delivering good urban design can help authorities to meet their statutory Best Value targets in Planning by achieving excellence in its urban design and conservation service. This will help deliver a high quality, locally distinct and valued built environment.

Good urban design can also help authorities meet their statutory targets for education, housing, social services, community safety and culture by the provision of well designed and appropriate buildings and environment.

Research by CABE demonstrates that good design:

- Generates economic and social and environmental value
- Delivers high investment returns
- Helps to attract investors
- Enhances workforce performance and satisfaction
- Increases occupier's prestige
- Opens up new investment opportunities
- Delivers accessible places to all
- Benefits all stakeholders

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT: THE COUNCIL AS CLIENT

When the local authority is itself the landowner or client for development it has a real opportunity to show its commitment to quality. The route to procuring good design in these circumstances must be carefully considered.



The local authorities that are achieving significant improvements in design quality in their area tend to be those giving a consistent message that design matters at all stages.

This section outlines the tools currently available to planning authorities. Used effectively, these tools can deliver the high quality of design and environment that people are increasingly demanding.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The countless decisions that councillors make which shape a place are, in a real sense, design decisions. The planning toolkit offers us the chance to influence them.

- Councils approve or reject planning applications
- Members take decisions drawing on the recommendations of officers
- Decisions must be fair and transparent
- A local authority can be reactive and wait for applications, or proactive, setting the agenda and influencing events
- There is no replacement for skilled design professionals within planning departments

For a particular site or area, finding the appropriate balance between what may be conflicting objectives depends on five factors that influence the development process.

These are:

- **Policy** set out mainly by central and local government
- **Feasibility** based on an understanding of economic and market conditions
- **Context** of the site, its setting, adjacent land uses and local heritage issues
- **Community** involvement, including those directly affected by the scheme by virtue of proximity, local amenity groups and the wider community
- **Approach** of the design team and the people who manage and plan the design process



They are important because:

- If policy is not in place or is given too little weight there is a lack of clarity for developers, a proposed development may conflict with objectives of good urban design and fail to get planning permission
- If too little weight is given to feasibility, the proposal (or the development) may fail commercially or economically
- If too little weight is given to local context, the development may fail to achieve its potential or suffer from unexpected problems
- If too little weight is given to community involvement, the proposal may be derailed by local opposition and/or trust in the authority may be damaged
- If the design approach is inappropriate, the site's opportunities will be missed and standards of design will be low

For a significant amount of small-scale development, a planning application is not required. Such development can often, though, be influenced by local authorities' design guidance.



PROACTIVE PLANNING

By taking the initiative in planning, a local authority can save time that might be wasted at a later stage in negotiations on ill-conceived planning applications, and in appeals that might have been avoided. Proactive planning – through pre-application discussions and design guidance, for example – can help the council meet its planning deadlines. (Pre-application discussions should involve council officers, not members.)

Understanding what is likely to be commercially feasible is key to harnessing the development process to achieve the goals of public policy.

The timing of the planning process should be influenced by the pace of the development process. Taking the initiative depends on the local authority understanding which sites are likely to be subject to development pressure.



MULTI-DISCIPLINARY WORKING

Getting the best out of the council's officers will depend on all departments (including planning, highways and transportation, housing, economic development) working together. In particular policy planners, development controllers, conservation officers, urban designers and architects, need to collaborate closely to encourage good design.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) set out the Government's policies on different aspects of planning and urban design.

Local authorities must take them into account in preparing their development plans.

Relevant PPGs will also be material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

The issue of design is covered primarily in PPG1, though most PPGs provide some guidance on design.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The local authority's development plan sets out the policies against which development proposals will be assessed.

Every plan starts with a vision. Do we want this to be the competitive town, the legible city, the city of innovation, environment town, city of architecture, city of culture? What civic aspirations do we hope development will reflect and support?

Every place needs a vision of what it wants to be: how it should respond to change, compete with other places, or preserve its unique qualities.

The development plan should include:

- Its main aims, objectives and targets
- General design policies – at least covering the seven urban design qualities
- Specific design policies
- Area-specific
- Site-specific
- Topic-based
- Process-based (describing how certain aspects of the planning process should work)

The key to producing good policy and guidance is to think about which qualities are most important and which aspects of form are relevant.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Further explanation of the plan's policies will be provided in supplementary planning guidance (SPG) and provides helpful guidance for those preparing planning applications.

SPG is prepared in consultation with the public, and is formally adopted by the council.

Planning inspectors and the Deputy Prime Minister will give substantial weight to supplementary planning guidance as a 'material consideration' in making planning decisions at appeal (or after an application has been 'called in' by the Secretary of State).



URBAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

Urban design guidance is an overall term for SPG documents that guide developers and their designers (and other agents) in planning and designing development. It can be prepared by local authorities, landowners, developers, partnerships, and business and community organisations (all of whom should be involved in the process), or by several of these jointly.

There are four main types of guidance:

- 1** Guidance relating to specific places.
 - Urban design frameworks (for areas)
 - Village and town design statements
 - Development briefs (for sites)
 - Masterplans (also for sites)
- 2** Guidance relating to specific topics (design guides). These cover topics such as shopfronts, house extensions, lighting and cycling.
- 3** Guidance relating to specific policies. Examples are policies on conservation areas, transport corridors, waterfronts, promenades and green belts.
- 4** Guidance relating to a whole local authority area. These may give general urban design guidance for the whole district or county.

USING URBAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

The effectiveness of the guidance will depend on council officers (development control planners as well as urban designers) and council members being committed to it.

The guidance should be used as a basis for discussions and negotiations with developers, and for decisions on planning applications.

This commitment can be built by involving these people in preparing the guidance, and by the council organising seminars for councillors and officers on particular guidance and on the use of guidance in general.



URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORKS

An urban design framework is a document describing and illustrating how planning and design policies and principles should be implemented in an area where there is a need to control, guide and promote change.

Such areas include urban quarters, transport interchanges and corridors, regeneration areas, town centres, urban edges, housing estates, conservation areas, villages, new settlements, urban areas of special landscape value, and suburban areas identified as being suitable for more intense development.

The area may be one that is likely to be developed in several phases and by several developers. It is likely to be in multiple ownerships.

An urban design framework often covers an area only part of which is likely to be developed in the near future.

Urban design frameworks are used to co-ordinate more detailed development briefs and masterplan.

The framework includes a vision of future infrastructure requirements.



CREATING SUCCESSFUL PLACES THROUGH MASTERPLANNING

To be published early 2004

This forthcoming guide adopts the definition of a masterplan provided in *Towards an Urban Renaissance* which states 'the spatial masterplan establishes a three-dimensional

framework of buildings and public spaces'. It is a sophisticated 'model' that:

- allows us to understand the public spaces between buildings
- shows how the streets, squares and open spaces of a neighbourhood are to be connected
- defines the heights, massing and bulk of buildings
- controls the relationship between buildings and public spaces
- determines the distribution of uses
- controls the network of movement patterns for people moving by foot, cycle, car or public transport
- allows us to understand how well a new urban neighbourhood is integrated with the surrounding urban context and natural environment

DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS

A development brief is a document providing guidance on how a specific site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed in line with the relevant planning and design policies.

A development brief usually covers a site most of which is likely to be developed in the near future. The site is likely to be in a single ownership.

The brief will usually contain some indicative, but flexible, vision of future development form.

MASTERPLAN

The term 'masterplan' is often used to describe all types of urban design guidance, but it is more useful to reserve it for the particular type of guidance described here.

A masterplan (in the more specific sense) is a document that charts the masterplanning process and explains how a site or a series of sites will be developed.

It will describe how the proposal will be implemented, and set out the costs, phasing and timing of development.

A masterplan will usually be prepared by or on behalf of an organisation that owns the site or controls the development process.

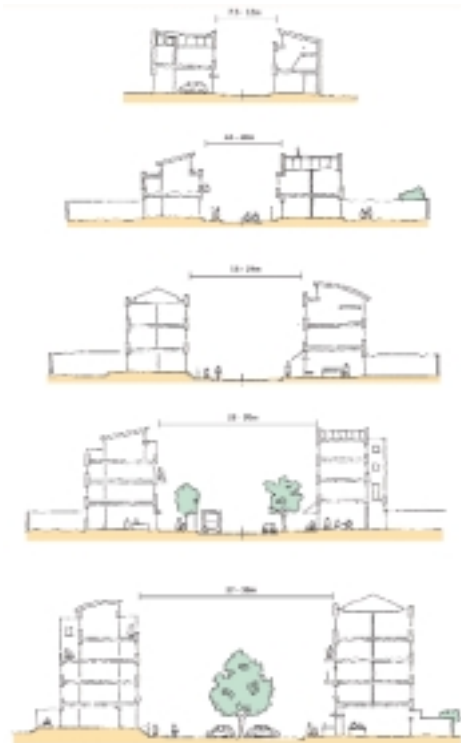
As with all design guidance, the purpose of a masterplan is to set out principles on matters of importance, not to prescribe in detail how development should be designed. But a masterplan should show in some detail how the principles are to be implemented.

Urban design guidance can have the status of SPG if it is consistent with the development plan, if it has been prepared in consultation with the public, and if the local planning authority has formally adopted it.

DESIGN CODES

An urban design guidance document may include a design code when a degree of prescription is appropriate.

A design code sets out with some precision (with detailed drawings or diagrams) how the guidance's design and planning principles should be applied. It provides developers with a template within which to design individual buildings. The code may cover a group of buildings, a street or a whole area.



DESIGN STATEMENTS

A planning application and its related design statements should take the council through the thought processes that have gone into the design.

Design statements are a means of helping developers explain their proposals to the local authority.

A developer makes a pre-application design statement to explain the design principles on which a development proposal in progress is based. This enables the local authority to give an initial response to the main issues raised by the proposal.

An applicant for planning permission submits a design statement with the planning application, setting out the design principles adopted in relation to the site and its wider context.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Development control is the process through which a local authority determines whether (or with what conditions) a proposal for development should be granted planning permission.

How the development control process is used will determine how far the design policies in development plans and supplementary planning guidance are respected and applied.

Development control should be seen as a positive means of guiding planning applicants towards fulfilling both their own objectives and those of public policy.

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement procedures exist in order to ensure that schemes which have received planning permission are built according to the plans approved by the local authority and any conditions which may be placed upon the approval; for example, controlling the type of external materials used. Much enforcement work also relates to ensuring that the relevant permissions are sought for certain types of development.

Local planning authorities need to become more confident to pursue enforcement action in cases where quality of design has been regarded as an important issue in the determination of the original application.

PLANNING APPEALS

There is widespread evidence of proposals of low design quality being granted planning permission because a local authority is not confident that its decision can be defended should the applicant appeal against a refusal.

However, where local authorities are able to back up their decisions with clear local design policies, supplementary planning guidance (SPG) and/or expert advice; there is strong evidence of support from the Planning Inspectorate.



**THE PLANNING TOOLKIT
IN PRACTICE**

This South Yorkshire town was hit by the industrial decline of its two traditional industries – coal mining and rail wagon manufacture during the 1980s. This led to the town struggling to find a new identity and economy. These difficulties, that are widespread through the region, were recognised with Objective One status.

The town is fortunate in that its excellent location has allowed it to develop new industries based on logistics and manufacturing. It suffers, however, from low education and skills.

In 2002 the Regional Development Agency began a pilot initiative for the renaissance of six Yorkshire towns as its response to the Urban Task Force report. This initiative looked for the development of a 25-year vision for the renaissance of each town by a team of urban design consultants that was firmly based on the partnership and involvement of the local community and included capacity building for both the community at large and the local council.

This involved the creation of a 'Town Team' made up from local business, community representatives, faith and education organisations and the local council. The Town Team participated in several months of seminars and workshops on the principles of urban design and why a quality environment was important economically, socially and visually. The culmination of this was a weekend of workshops and events with the general public exploring and agreeing a 25-year vision. The weekend activities included context appraisals of the town to enable a better understanding of the built environment. This information was then examined in workshops and a series of guiding principles developed to address a range of contentious and complex issues. A specific workshop for young people was also held. A film that recorded this process has since been used to further communicate the Renaissance process to the wider public.

The agreed vision was set out in a Town Charter and distributed through libraries, schools and council offices for widespread public consultation. The vision has now been refined into a masterplan which was again developed in partnership with the Town Team and

is now out for public consultation. To communicate the proposals to the wider public a model was constructed of the proposed masterplan and this was the centrepiece of a public exhibition held in the town centre. This model was very popular and allowed in-depth discussion over the range of issues and choices to be made. After the public consultation, the Council propose that the masterplan will become Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Arising from this masterplan document, a development brief and design guide have been commissioned. These will examine and provide in-depth guidance to developers on a specific development site with complex issues, which has been identified for an urban village. The design guide has provided more detail on the development of the public realm along the waterfront.

The Town Team has remained involved throughout the renaissance process and will now act as a 'Critical Friend' to the elected Mayor. Their role being to disseminate to the wider public information on the town's renaissance process, the organisation of design events and training and to help raise the profile of the importance of design in the

built environment. They will also have a particular focus on maintaining the vision behind the masterplan and seeing it is delivered. A core group from the Town Team, supplemented by local planning and design experts would form a Design Panel which would meet on a regular basis to provide planning and design advice to the Council on specific planning proposals.

A further initiative of the Town Team and Council is the creation of a Doncaster Architecture and Design Centre with the masterplan model as a central exhibit. This will provide resources and information on architecture and design as well as providing a one-stop shop for information on the renaissance process.





Shortened extracts from *By Design* (ODPM/CABE, 2000) and *The Dictionary of Urbanism* (Streetwise Press, 2003)

accessibility The ease with which a building, place or facility can be reached by people and/or goods and services. Accessibility can be shown on a plan or described in terms of pedestrian and vehicle movements, walking distance from public transport, travel time or population distribution.

adaptability The capacity of a building or space to respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions.

amenity Something that contributes to an area's environmental, social, economic or cultural needs. The term's meaning is a matter for the exercise of planners' discretion, rather than being defined in law.

appearance combination of the aspects of a place or building that determine the visual impression it makes.

architecture and built environment centre A building or organisation that provides a focus for a range of activities and services (such as discussions, information, exhibitions, training, collaboration and professional services) relating to design and planning. See www.architecturecentre.net.

area appraisal An assessment of an area's land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics.

authenticity The quality of a place where things are what they seem: where buildings that look old are old, and where the social and cultural values that the place seems to reflect did actually shape it.

background building A building that is not a distinctive landmark.

backland development The development of sites at the back of existing development, such as back gardens.

barrier An obstacle to movement.

best value The process through which local authorities work for continuous improvement in the services they provide. Local authorities are required to challenge why a particular service is needed; compare performance across a range of indicators; consult on the setting of new performance targets; and show that services have been procured through a competitive process. Councils are subject to independent best value audits by the Best Value Inspectorate, an offshoot of the Audit Commission.

block The area bounded by a set of streets and undivided by any other significant streets.

brief This guide refers to site-specific briefs as development briefs. Site-specific briefs are also called a variety of other names, including design briefs, planning briefs and development frameworks.

building element A feature (such as a door, window or cornice) that contributes to the overall design of a building.

building envelope guidelines Diagram(s) with dimensions showing the possible site and massing of a building.

building line The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street. The building line can be shown on a plan or section.

building shoulder height The top of a building's main facade.

built environment The entire ensemble of buildings, neighbourhoods and cities with their infrastructure.

built form Buildings and structures.

bulk The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Also called massing.

character appraisal Techniques (particularly as developed by English Heritage) for assessing the qualities of conservation areas.

character area An area with a distinct character, identified as such so that it can be protected or enhanced by planning policy. The degree of protection is less strong than in a conservation area.

character assessment An area appraisal emphasising historical and cultural associations.

charrette See design workshop

collaboration Any arrangement of people working together, such as between departments, between councillors and officials, within partnerships, between local authorities, between local authorities and developers, and with the public.

conservation area advisory group A group of people with specialist knowledge, which meets regularly or occasionally to advise a local authority on the merits of planning applications, or other planning and design issues in a conservation area.

conservation area character appraisal A published document defining the special architectural or historic interest that warranted the area being designated.

conservation area One designated by a local authority under the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as possessing special architectural or historical interest. The council will seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of such areas.

context (or site and area) appraisal A detailed analysis of the features of a site or area (including land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics) which serves as the basis for an urban design framework, development brief, design guide, or other policy or guidance.

context The setting of a site or area.

countryside design summary A descriptive analysis explaining the essential design relationship between the landscape, settlement patterns and buildings. From this analysis the document draws principles that can be applied to development in the area and sets out the implications of the choices open to designers. As supplementary planning guidance prepared by a local authority, the summary can encourage a more regionally and locally based approach to design and planning. It can also provide

the context for individual communities to prepare village design statements.

defensible space Public and semi-public space that is 'defensible' in the sense that it is surveyed, demarcated or maintained by somebody. Derived from Oscar Newman's 1973 study of the same name, and an important concept in securing public safety in urban areas, defensible space is also dependent upon the existence of escape routes and the level of anonymity which can be anticipated by the users of space.

density The mass or floorspace of a building or buildings in relation to an area of land. Density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial development); homes or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); site coverage plus the number of floors or a maximum building height; space standards; or a combination of these.

design advisory panel A group of people (often architects) with specialist knowledge, which meets regularly or occasionally to advise a local authority on the design merits of planning applications or other design issues.

design and build An arrangement whereby a single contractor designs and builds a development, rather than a contractor building it to the design of an independent architect. Design and build generally produces buildings that are relatively cheap and easy to build, using the methods with which the builder is most familiar. Standards of design are often low.

design audit An independent assessment of a design, carried out for a local authority by consultants, another local authority or some other agency.

design champion A person responsible for ensuring that a particular organisation – a local authority, regional development agency, health authority or government department, for example – promotes high standards of design throughout its work.

design code A document (usually with detailed drawings or diagrams) setting out with some precision the design and planning principles that will apply to development in a particular place.

design coordinator One who manages the design process in a development project, particularly liaising between the developer and the local authority.

design guidance A generic term for documents providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the planning and design policies of a local authority or other organisation.

design guide Design guidance on a specific topic such as shopfronts or house extensions, or relating to all kinds of development in a specific area.

design policy Relates to the form and appearance of development, rather than the land use.

design principle An expression of one of the basic design ideas at the heart of an urban design framework, design guide, development brief or design code. Each

such planning tool should have its own set of design principles.

design quality indicator A method of assessing the quality of buildings in terms of 'build quality', 'functionality' and 'impact'. It was developed by the Construction Industry Council and launched in 2003. See www.dqi.org.uk.

design standards Produced by districts and unitary authorities, usually to quantify measures of health and safety in residential areas.

design statement A developer can make a pre-application design statement to explain the design principles on which a development proposal in progress is based. It enables the local authority to give an initial response to the main issues raised by the proposal. An applicant for planning permission can submit a planning application design statement with the application, setting out the design principles adopted in relation to the site and its wider context. Government advice (Planning Policy Guidance Note 1) encourages an applicant for planning permission to submit such a written statement to the local authority.

design workshop A participative event, ranging in length from a couple of hours to several days, which brings together a range of people (often local people and professional advisors) to discuss design issues. A workshop may or may not use techniques of collaborative design. Also known as a charrette.

design-led development (or regeneration) Development whose form is largely shaped by strong design ideas.

desire line An imaginary line linking facilities or places which people would find it convenient to travel between easily.

development appraisal A structured assessment of the characteristics of a site and an explanation of how they have been taken into account in drawing up development principles.

development brief A document providing guidance on how a specific site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed in line with the relevant planning and design policies. It will usually contain some indicative, but flexible, vision of future development form. A development brief usually covers a site most of which is likely to be developed in the near future. The terms 'planning brief' and 'design brief' are also sometimes used. These came into use at a time when government policy was that planning and design should be kept separate in design guidance. The term 'development brief' avoids that unworkable distinction.

development control The process through which a local authority determines whether (and with what conditions) a proposal for development should be granted planning permission.

development form See form.

development plan Prepared by a local authority to describe the intended use of land in an area and provide a basis for considering planning applications. Every

area is covered either by a unitary development plan or by a development plan comprising more than one document (a structure plan and a local plan, and sometimes also other plans relating to minerals and waste). The development plan sets out the policies and proposals against which planning applications will be assessed. Its context is set by national and regional planning policy guidance.

development Statutorily defined under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land'. Most forms of development require planning permission.

development team (i) The people working together to bring about a particular development. (ii) Local authority officers working collaboratively in dealing with development proposals rather than each carrying out their own section's responsibilities individually.

elevation (i) An external face of a building. (ii) A diagrammatic drawing of this. (iii) The height of a site above sea level.

enabling development (i) Commercial development whose profitability makes possible a related development or restoration of social, historic or environmental value. (ii) Development (such as building an access road) that is necessary for carrying out another development.

enclosure The use of buildings to create a sense of defined space.

energy efficiency The result of minimising the use of energy through the way in which buildings are constructed and arranged on site.

enquiry by design A form of urban design and planning charrette or workshop in which stakeholders in a proposed development, including local authorities, residents, developers, landowners, voluntary groups, employers and retailers, collaborate in producing a masterplan through a workshop that can last up to a week.

eyes on the street People whose presence in adjacent buildings or on the street make it feel safer.

facade The principal face of a building.

feasibility The appropriateness of development in relation to economic and market conditions.

fenestration The arrangement of windows on a facade.

figure/ground (or figure and ground diagram) A plan showing the relationship between built form and publicly accessible space (including streets and the interiors of public buildings such as churches) by presenting the former in black and the latter as a white background, or the other way round.

fine grain The quality of an area's layout of building blocks and plots having small and frequent subdivisions.

flagship project One intended to have the highest profile of all the elements of a regeneration scheme.

floorplate The area of a single floor of a building.

form The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

grain See urban grain.

in-curtilage parking Parking within a building's site boundary, rather than on a public street or space.

indicative sketch A drawing of building forms and spaces which is intended to guide whomever will later prepare the actual design.

landmark A building or structure that stands out from the background buildings.

landscape The appearance of land, including its shape, form, colours and elements, the way these (including those of streets) components combine in a way that is distinctive to particular localities, the way they are perceived, and an area's cultural and historical associations.

layout The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

legibility The degree to which a place can be easily understood by its users and the clarity of the image it presents to the wider world.

lifetime homes With an emphasis on accessibility, Lifetime Homes have a number of design features which make the home flexible enough to cope with whatever comes along in life. Part M of the Building Regulations require all new homes to include Lifetime Home features.

live edge Provided by a building or other feature whose use is directly accessible from the street or space which it faces; the opposite effect to a blank wall.

local distinctiveness The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

massing The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. This is also called bulk.

mixed uses A mix of complementary uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. 'Horizontal' mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. 'Vertical' mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

mobility The ability of people to move round an area, including carers of young children, older people, people with mobility or sensory impairments, or those encumbered with luggage or shopping.

movement People and vehicles going to and passing through buildings, places and spaces.

natural surveillance (or supervision) The discouragement to wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability

of people to see out of windows. Also known as passive surveillance (or supervision).

node A place where activity and routes are concentrated.

performance criterion/criteria A means of assessing the extent to which a development achieves a particular functional requirement (such as maintaining privacy). This compares with a standard, which specifies more precisely how a development is to be designed (by setting out minimum distances between buildings, for example).

permeability The degree to which a place has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

permitted development Small scale, often domestic, development which does not require formal planning permission provided it complies with criteria set out in Government legislation.

perspective A drawing showing the view from a particular point as it would be seen by the human eye.

placecheck A type of urban design audit advocated by the Urban Design Alliance. A local collaborative alliance or partnership uses checklists to investigate how a place can be improved.

planning for real A participation technique (pioneered by the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation) that involves residents and other stakeholders making a model of their area and using it to help them determine priorities for the future.

planning inspectorate Government agency which administers the Planning Appeals system.

plot ratio A measurement of density expressed as gross floor area divided by the net site area.

proactive development control Any process by which a local authority works with planning applicants to improve the quality of development proposals as early as possible in period before a planning application is submitted.

public realm The parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks. Also called public domain.

scale The size of a building in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person.

section A drawing showing a slice through a building or site.

settlement pattern The distinctive way that the roads, paths and buildings are laid out in a particular place.

sight line The direct line from a viewer to an object.

strategic view The line of sight from a particular point to an important landmark or skyline.

street furniture Structures in and adjacent to the highway which contribute to the street

scene, such as bus shelters, litter bins, seating, lighting and signs.

topography A description or representation of artificial or natural features on or of the ground.

urban design The art of making places. Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, and the establishment of frameworks and processes that facilitate successful development.

urban design framework A document setting out how development plan policies should be implemented in a particular area where there is a need to control, guide and promote change. Such areas include transport interchanges and corridors, regeneration areas, town centres, urban edges, housing estates, conservation areas, villages, new settlements, urban areas of special landscape value, and suburban areas identified as being suitable for more intense development.

urban grain The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

urban structure The framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely, and the way developments, routes and open spaces relate to one another.

vernacular The way in which ordinary buildings were built in a particular place before local styles, techniques and materials were superseded by imports.

village appraisal A study identifying a local community's needs and priorities.

village design statement An advisory document, usually produced by a village community, showing how development can be carried out in harmony with the village and its setting.

visual clutter The uncoordinated arrangement of street furniture, signs and other features.

walk band A line on a map or plan showing the furthest distance that can be walked from a particular point at an average pace in a certain time (usually five or ten minutes).



ESSENTIAL READING

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WEBSITES

CABE
www.cabe.org.uk
(For copies of all of CABE's publications)

ODPM
www.odpm.gov.uk

The Urban Design Alliance www.udal.org.uk

The Urban Design Group
www.udg.org.uk

English Heritage
www.english-heritage.org.uk

Design Quality Indicators
www.dqi.org.uk

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