

Design Quality - Supplementary Planning Guidance

Wyre Forest District

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town planning and urban design

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF DESIGN GUIDANCE

The Design SPG serves the following functions:

- In conjunction with the Adopted Local Development Plan, it sets the agenda for securing high quality design throughout the District.
- It translates and expands upon the Adopted District Local Plan policy to provide more detailed and practical design advice to developers and their designers, in respect of key design issues.
- It establishes the ground rules for the design of new development whilst also providing the basis for innovation, creativity and originality.
- It promotes an approach to designing in context which will ensure new development is of a high quality and locally relevant.
- It provides an effective and transparent mechanism for reviewing design quality as part of the planning process, which is available to all and ensures developers understand the design criteria their schemes will be judged against.
- It provides the basis for a more efficient planning process, where requirements and expectations of both the applicant and planning authority are clearly defined.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD DESIGN

The government is committed to achieving higher quality design in new development. The District Council's policy objective to improve the quality of design in new development is based upon this national planning agenda. The District Council will use its planning powers to secure high quality design in all new development.

Developers should be in no doubt that design quality will be a material consideration when determining planning applications. This document will form the cornerstone of design review processes within the District Council's planning team and development which responds effectively to the straightforward advice within this document, is encouraged.

'Good Design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process...'
(National Government PPG1)

'The key aim is to promote high quality design in all developments...'
(Wyre Forest District Council – Local Development Plan para. 5.1)

'Urban Design is the art of making places for people...'
(Commission for Architecture and Built Environment CABE/ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister ODPM)

LAYERS OF DESIGN GUIDANCE

Different layers and types of planning and design guidance exist which should influence new development within Wyre Forest District. These can all be used to assist in achieving better urban design.

These layers reflect different scales and themes of design. The layers of guidance form a hierarchy from the national and regional perspectives to district wide and site specific issues.

This SPG (yellow on the diagram opposite) provides a valuable design tool within the District, complementing and adding more detailed practical advice to the Adopted District Local Plan. The chapters of this document are identifiable:

- **Chapter 1 – Design Themes**
- **Chapter 2 – Planning & Design Process**
- **Chapter 3 – Residential Design Guide**
- **Chapter 4 – Design Guides for Town Centres**
- **Chapter 5 – Design in the Parishes and Villages**

Further site specific planning and design guidance is available from the District Council for particularly sensitive sites, such as conservation areas and for larger regeneration sites. A number of additional good practice leaflets are also available.

This framework of design guidance is designed to make the planning system more efficient and transparent.

The Design Quality SPG supports the Wyre Forest Community Strategy and will assist in delivering its objectives.



USING THE DESIGN SPG

The Design SPG need not be read from cover to cover. It is designed to be 'dipped into' in respect of particular design issues. The five chapters are each self contained design guides.

Chapters 1 and 2 are relevant to all new development within the District.

Chapter 1 provides advice on District-Wide design issues including Cross Cutting Themes and Place Making Themes. Chapter 2 provides advice on Design and Planning Process along with a toolkit for undertaking Design Review and Monitoring.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 can be read independently and provide specific design advice for key development issues.

Chapter 3 provides advice on new residential development, focusing on the development of smaller scale schemes such as infill and gap sites, larger housing schemes and key design challenges, where problems commonly occur. Chapter 4 guides development in the District's three main town centres. Chapter 5 addresses design issues for the District's villages and rural settlements.

Collectively these chapters provide an important reference point for developers. By using this guide, there will be greater clarity on how design quality can be achieved and what will be expected from developers and designers.

Key Messages

- ✓ The District Council is committed to improving design quality.
- ✓ The Design SPG provides the basis for a more efficient planning system by identifying key design requirements.
- ✓ A range of Design Guidance exists, centred on the Design SPG and flowing from the Development Plan.
- ✓ Developers should refer to relevant design guidance.
- ✓ The Design Quality SPG is a reference for all.
- ✓ Chapters 1 and 2 apply to all development.
- ✓ Chapter 3, 4 and 5 apply to certain types of development or certain locations.
- ✓ The guidance is simple to follow and will improve schemes.

Chapter 1

District Wide Design Guide



CHAPTER 1 - DISTRICT WIDE DESIGN GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

1.0

This chapter establishes design requirements for new development across the District in respect of a number of design themes. The Guidance is structured around an ambition to improve the quality of life in the district through good design. The two important and related types of theme which support this ambition are;

Cross Cutting Themes – Based upon accessibility, sustainability and security, to help ensure new developments are environmentally and socially successful.

Place Making Themes – Based upon use, connectivity, built form and external spaces and how these combine to create quality places.

Quality of Life and Design

1.3

Our quality of life is shaped by our environment. Everyone deserves access to places which are safe, welcoming, attractive and healthy. This relates to the places people live, where they work and where they spend their leisure time.

1.4

The ambition of the Design SPG is to protect these cherished places and through good design create new and improved places that add to the enjoyment of the district for everyone; new development should contribute to the health and well being of the District as a whole. The ways in which this broad ambition can be delivered are established through the Adopted District Local Plan and within this document, where more detailed design guidance is provided.

1.5

Good design adds value to development schemes in terms of environmental performance, community and social well being and commercial viability. The value added by better design is important to appreciate when considering all development projects within the District. Wyre Forest District Council will require a demonstrable investment in good design and a commitment to best practice as set out in this SPG.

Main Messages for design in general

- ✓ Good design is integral to improving Quality of Life.
- ✓ Good design can add value to schemes, socially, environmentally and economically.
- ✓ The Council will require a demonstrable investment in design quality.

CROSS CUTTING THEMES

1.6

Cross Cutting Themes need to be addressed through whole scheme design. These issues raised here need to be considered at the outset of any development project and kept under review to ensure designs are both socially and environmentally responsible. The main themes covered in this section are:

- Inclusive Design and Accessibility,
- Sustainable Design,
- Safer by Design.

Inclusive Design and Accessibility

1.7

New development must be designed to be accessible and useable by all members of the community (Local Adopted Plan Policy D.1).

Design Requirements

1.8

Developers should design internal and external environments which are accessible to all individuals regardless of age, race, gender or physical ability. New development should remove real and perceived barriers to access and use. This section provides initial pointers on good design practice and identifies key requirements of the District Council.

1.9

A range of design information should be used in the detailed design of buildings and public realm, including:

- Section 6 & 8-10 of Approved Document M (Access and Use) of the Building Regulations 2000- basic requirements.
- Code of practice BS 8300:2001- provides advice when designing for buildings and their approaches beyond the basic building regulation criteria.
- The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) identifies statutory requirements for all new development and public realm schemes.

1.10

These key documents/requirements will apply to all development projects. In addition, Worcestershire County Council Highway standards provide another layer of guidance and advice

The External Environment – Public Realm**1.11**

The design of the public realm needs to address the access needs of individuals with impaired mobility. The design of streets and spaces within the District should help people to move around safely and freely. A number of requirements will help towards achieving this:

- i. The streetscape should be free from clutter and obstacles which may inhibit movement and create barriers for individuals with restricted mobility.
- ii. Planters and other raised beds should be carefully considered before introduction. Often these add no value to schemes and merely disrupt pedestrian movement, especially in town centres. These features also require regular maintenance if they are not to be untidy and overgrown.
- iii. Columns for lighting, highway signage, way finding etc. should be provided in a coordinated manner to reduce free standing obstacles.
- iv. Street furnishings including benches, cycle racks and bollards should be located to avoid blocking key pedestrian desire lines.

- v. Street furnishings should offer visual contrast with street materials so they are visible to individuals with restricted sight. Such furnishings should not become overly prominent and fluorescent finishes should be avoided.
- vi. Tactile/blister paving is required at all formal crossing points to streets to denote the transition to carriageway. To comply with DDA requirements, these features should be a minimum of 800mm x 1200mm and where the junction is signal controlled these should reach to the back of footway.
- vii. Pedestrian areas need to provide hard and smooth surfaces which are well drained. This includes crossing points.
- viii. High quality and slip resistant surfaces should be specified for public realm areas where heavy amounts of pedestrian traffic occur or are anticipated, particularly in town and village centres; natural stone meets these criteria whilst also providing a robust and durable surface that has a long life span if properly laid.
- ix. Poorly laid footways often create trip hazards and should be laid properly in the first place. Repairing areas where footway movements occur should be an important ongoing activity.
- x. Pedestrian footways which are wide enough to permit 2 wheelchairs to pass (2metres minimum) are encouraged where this does not undermine the townscape and public realm quality of an area.

- xi. Slopes of less than 1:15 gradient are encouraged in public areas, and slopes as alternatives to steps will be required wherever changes in levels impact on public spaces.

More detailed design advice on the external environment is available from Worcestershire County Council.

Buildings and Interior Specification**1.12**

Reasonable provision should be made within buildings and their plots for wheelchair users. Communal areas within buildings should be planned and equipped to assist people with impaired mobility for example:

- i. Communal entrance halls/reception areas should be of an adequate size to allow wheelchairs and electric buggies enough room to turn around and gain access to ground floor accommodation.
- ii. Lift access providing direct access to each floor within commercial and residential schemes is encouraged. This may lead to particular architectural challenges within historic buildings.
- iii. In addition to space at the foot of stairs adequate space is also needed on landings for stair lift installations.
- iv. Disabled equipped toilet facilities.

1.13

The aim should be to create a working environment which is fully accessible. New development will need to demonstrate every opportunity has been taken to achieve this. Conversions and changes of use within existing buildings should meet mandatory standards where fully accessible environments may not be realistic.

1.14

In terms of new residential development, the Council will expect a proportion of dwellings within larger schemes to be designed to meet the access needs of individuals with restricted mobility. In addition to accessibility needs, the provision of specialist toilets and kitchen designs is encouraged where demand for such facilities has been demonstrated. All new housing should be suitable for individuals with restricted mobility to visit. These measures will greatly reduce the cost of later adaptation.

1.15

Measures to aid adaptation of residential properties for wheelchair users will be encouraged and this might include:

- i. Adequate space at the foot of staircases to allow for the installation of a stair lift at a later date (in respect of private dwellings).
- ii. The location of appliances, fixtures and fittings.
- iii. Avoiding the use of deep steps and lips at doorways into and within properties to encourage level thresholds
- iv. The inclusion of ground floor toilets.

Car Parking and Public Transport**1.16**

The provision and design of car parking for wheelchair users is established by Worcestershire County Council standards in the context of Adopted District Local Plan policy TR17.

1.17

In designing public transport infrastructure, particularly bus stops and railway platforms, a wheelchair user must be able to board and alight with ease. Increased kerb heights can assist in achieving better integration between bus platforms and the footway, but crowning on the footway looks unsightly and creates drainage problems on the footway and against the front of buildings. A better solution may be to lower the carriageway locally.

Integration of Traffic**1.18**

New development should create a more balanced approach to accessibility. Traffic flows and pedestrian movements need to be readdressed in favour of pedestrians. More detailed guidance is provided within this theme in the residential and town centre chapters, but the key messages are.

- i. Increase pedestrian priority and accessibility within the town, district and local centres.
- ii. Create safer residential streets where traffic moves more slowly and street life is supported.

- iii. Overcome barriers to movement created by arterial traffic routes and other strategic transport infrastructure.
- iv. Better management of traffic across the District to create more pleasant and enjoyable urban places.
- v. Support for the aims of more sustainable transport patterns as established in the Adopted District Local Plan.

Accessibility Statements**1.19**

For larger schemes the District Council may request that developers submit an 'Access Statement,' which outlines their philosophy to "Inclusive Design" and the actual measures being taken on the site to achieve these objectives.

Main Messages for Inclusive Design & Accessibility

- ✓ Buildings and their approaches need to be designed to be accessible to all.
- ✓ Requirements of people with impaired mobility should be implemented in the layout and specification of new development.
- ✓ The public realm should be designed to be clutter free and help everyone to move around safely.
- ✓ A better balance is required between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, particularly in Town Centres and residential areas.

Direct Adopted District Local Plan Policy Linkages to Inclusive Design and Accessibility

D.1 Design Quality
 D.9 Design for movement
 D.14 Street furniture
 D.15 Car Park Design
 AD.6 Free Standing Signs
 TR.7 Provision for Pedestrians
 TR.17 Car parking Standards and Provision

Sustainable Design

1.20

New development is encouraged to be more environmentally sustainable in its design and construction. Safeguarding natural resources and promoting recycling and energy saving are stated aims of the Adopted District Local Plan. The guidance in this section identifies how the design of new development can help to achieve these ambitions.

Designing for more Sustainable Developments

1.21

New development should be more sustainable in its construction and operation in order to support opportunities for a more sustainable standard of living. This reaches from whole scheme design to detailed design considerations as well the kind of lifestyle the development supports. At every level designers are encouraged to provide environmentally conscious solutions. Suggestions of where design attention may be focused, is provided opposite.

i Scheme Design Issues

- Renewable energy sources.
- On site treatment of grey water.
- Sustainable drainage.
- Solar orientation of buildings.
- Shared/recovered heat sources.
- Landscape and planting schemes.
- Construction methods.

ii Detailed Design Issues

- Natural ventilation.
- Passive solar gain.
- Low energy fixtures and fittings.
- Recycling facilities on site.
- Materials selection and recycling.
- Water collection and storage.

Demonstrating Sustainable Design

1.22

Developers and their designers should demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development. This is important at every scale of development, particularly given the cumulative impact that a high number of smaller scale developments can have across the District.

1.23

Larger scale development, which will have a more pronounced impact on the local environment, will be expected to formally demonstrate environmental performance.

This involves assessment and validation by certificate to achieve a prescribed performance for each project using the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). The environmental performance provided in new development will be an important consideration in assessing design quality.

New development which scores a 'Good' rating (or better) through the BREEAM rating system will be encouraged by the District Council as a validation of good quality sustainable design. More detailed advice on sustainable residential development is provided in Chapter 3, including additional 'EcoHomes' and 'NHER' (National Home Energy Rating) tests. (Refer to www.bre.co.uk for more information)

1.24

The District Council welcomes the submission of a sustainability statement with planning applications. Such a statement will be used to establish the environmental credentials of a scheme and will be of further assistance to the Council when determining planning applications.

Main Messages for Sustainable Design

- ✓ Every opportunity should be taken to improve the environmental performance of development, at scheme and detailed level.
- ✓ Sustainability relates to design, construction and operating costs of new development.
- ✓ Development which scores 'Good' (or better) on the BREEAM rating system is encouraged.
- ✓ Larger scale developments may need to demonstrate a commitment to sustainable design.

Adopted District Local Plan Policy Linkages to Sustainable Design

D.6 Safeguarding of Resources by Design
D.7 Sustainable Drainage
D.8 Designing for Materials Recycling
NR.15 Recycling Facilities

Safer By Design

1.25

Crime and fear of crime is an important factor in influencing “quality of life”. The District Council is committed to complying with the principles of section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which states the duty of the local authority to do all it can to prevent crime and disorder. Working in partnership with Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership the District Council will seek to create environments which are safe and secure.

Natural Surveillance

1.26

The significance of urban design in relation to crime and the fear of crime is seen in the concept of natural surveillance. The notion is based upon the informal security afforded by busy places and places which are well overlooked, providing an inherently safer and more appealing environment. Any development should maximise opportunities for overlooking and contribute to a well defined and enclosed public realm. Mixing uses and providing a greater variety of activities in new development will encourage natural surveillance.

Secured By Design

1.27

Adopted District Local Plan policy D.16 supports the police ‘Secured By Design’ initiative and establishes a requirement for all new development to have regard to this concept. ‘Secured By Design’ promotes the building industry’s adoption of minimum standards in designing safe and secure developments. This scheme gives equal weighting to the importance of Environmental Design and Physical Security Measures. The Adopted District Local Plan identifies that the Council may consult with the Police Architectural liaison officer on matters of security and community safety related planning applications. Designers may wish to enter into consultations with architectural liaison officers pro-actively to ensure key issues are identified early on in the case of major schemes and resolved through detailed design. Schemes which are awarded secured by design status will be welcomed by the District Council.

(for more information see www.securedbydesign.com/ www.crimereduction.gov.uk)

Planning Policy and Design Advice

1.28

Circular 5/94 ‘Planning out Crime’ provides the justification for securing safer development through the planning system. The Adopted District Local Plan states the following points which help to make development safer:

- Maximise quality and enclosure of the public realm.
- Provide good levels of natural surveillance.
- Encourage permeable and legible layouts.
- High quality lighting – public and communal areas.

- A mix of uses and activity through the day and evening.
- Use of technology including Closed Circuit Television.

1.29

A number of additional more detailed design considerations will need to be considered in new development:

Good Practice Pointers

1.30

- i. Building frontages and public open spaces should be well related, to promote overlooking.
- ii. Public and private areas should be clearly delineated. With ownership, access and maintenance responsibilities clearly defined.
- iii. Front boundaries (where applicable) to the public realm offer more symbolic separation and should be designed sensitively in relation to the street.
- iv. Rear boundaries to private developments should be more robust and offer greater levels of physical security. Where possible rear boundaries should be designed to address other rear boundaries.
- v. Traditional well connected streets are the basis for safe development layouts.
- vi. New buildings should incorporate effective security measures, but these should not dominate the design as this can lead to an increased fear of crime.

- vii. Features such as security shutters need to be carefully designed as they can actually contribute to the fear of crime. These features should be avoided where possible, but where this is unavoidable there is a preference for internal mounted and sensitively designed systems.
- viii. A good number of windows and doors fronting directly onto the public realm are encouraged in new development to support street life and natural surveillance.
- ix. Open spaces should be carefully landscaped and managed to enable good sight lines across and through landscaped areas. It will be important to ensure vegetation is maintained to retain these important sight lines.
- x. Lighting needs to be thoughtfully considered. It should provide optimum illumination, create safe well lit routes and spaces, be tailored to a specific purpose and be designed to ensure that light spillage is minimised. The delineation between traffic scale street lighting and pedestrian lighting is important.
- xi. CCTV can assist in making a place feel safer and is encouraged in prominent locations. Facilities need to be carefully located to provide effective coverage and minimise intrusion in the street scene.

Design Aspects to Avoid

1.31

- i. Left over space which lacks a function or clear sense of ownership should be avoided in new development.
- ii. Developments should not turn their back on the street/public realm or present blank lifeless walls to the street as this creates unobserved and unsafe spaces as well as being unsightly.
- iii. Private amenity space such as back gardens should be enclosed by buildings and should not face onto the public realm.
- iv. Public routes close to the backs of properties should be avoided. These make rear areas more vulnerable and such routes will generally lack effective overlooking.
- v. Dark and shady areas where street lighting deficiencies or overgrown landscape limit visibility should be avoided.
- vi. Whilst the provision of good quality trees and landscape are encouraged, care needs to be taken to avoid positioning landscape and and/or trees which inadvertently create hiding places or climbing aids over perimeter walls.
- vii. Avoid layouts which limit movement options and which create dead ends. Street networks should be well connected and permeable. Subways are a classic example of where movement is limited.
- viii. Subways offer relatively poor potential for natural surveillance are visual segregated from their context at lower levels and offer no real prospect for overlooking. As a result subways should be avoided and removed at every opportunity.
- ix. Avoid the separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic seeking wherever possible a balance between the two based upon the functions of the street. The needs of the pedestrian should be considered at the first opportunity.
- x. Access to rear service areas and exiting alleyways, which do not form part of the public realm, should be controlled. Alley-gating is an effective approach and these features offer opportunities for bespoke treatment. These features should be secure and robust and offer visual permeability into the alleyway they protect.

Main Messages for Safer By Design

- ✓ Busier places are safer places. Design to create activity, street life and natural surveillance.
- ✓ Ensure layouts create well defined public places and secure private areas – with clarity between the two.
- ✓ Design to support overlooking of public places from nearby uses and buildings.
- ✓ Avoid creating isolated and poorly defined spaces.

Direct Adopted District Local Plan Policy Linkages to Safer by Design:

Designing for Community Safety (P. 76 Para. 5.68 – 5.73)
Policy D.16 Designing for Community Safety.
Policy NR.12 Light Pollution

iii. Townscape and Building Design

“How can buildings define and enclose new and existing routes, making sure they create an overall identity which has a strong relationship from one to another and new to old?”

iv. Public Realm, Open Space & Landscape

“How can the public routes and spaces between buildings be designed to aid enjoyment of a development, to create a vibrant and safe public realm?”

The guidance which follows in this section is structured around these four themes and introduces 20 design principles which underpin best practice in place making.

Uses, Functions and Activities – Designing for Vitality

1.33

The physical design of buildings can only go so far towards creating the kind of environment where people want to live, work and relax. The vitality inherent in well loved streets and spaces is generated by the uses and activities which surround them. Busier places tend to be safer and more successful places, where people feel more comfortable.

New development should contribute to this vitality and make a contribution towards street life.

1.34

New development should avoid creating areas which are lifeless, where few people will go and where as a result people feel less safe. New development must help to achieve these ambitions by responding to the following design advice.

Principle 1 - Density and Intensity of Use

1.35

The capacity of individual sites should be fully considered in terms of supporting a higher density and intensity uses. Higher density development allows for greater levels of activity and for greater opportunities for work, leisure and most importantly for living. Residential densities are addressed within chapter 3. Developing at higher densities and making more intensive use of sites will help to make more economical use of development land. Concentrating activities and people together improves the viability of services and facilities. There are numerous considerations to be taken into account when looking at densities and these are highlighted in the Local Plan.

Related Design Guidance

- i. **Developing greater levels of activity** is more important in town, district and local centres and on sites which are well served by public transport. This concept underpins District and County Council planning policy and this will require highly accessible sites to be developed at higher densities and capacities than has often been the case in the District historically.

PLACE MAKING THEMES

1.32

Place making themes relate to the design of development in broad urban design terms. This is focused upon the particular characteristics which are encouraged in new development in terms of uses, linkages, building design and public realm treatment. Designers will be expected to think about urban design as well as architecture. The task is not just to design buildings, but to design for place making. This requires designers to consider the following urban design themes.

A staged approach to the design of new development is encouraged, based upon four key place making themes:

i. Functions, Activities and Vitality

“What uses and activities can the site accommodate?” Developer’s aspirations/ planning policy/site capacity.

ii. Movement, Linkages and Connections

“How can new development assist ease of movement within the site?” “How can a layout fit into the existing networks and provide good levels of access?”

- ii. The most obvious way to intensify development on sites is to increase the amount of development proposed, with greater floor space and higher volumes of people using a development. **Innovative design** will be integral to achieving more intensive development, where parking, access and amenity space requirements are accommodated in a creative manner to facilitate a site's full development capacity.
- iii. **Single storey** development will not deliver good land economies and should be avoided within commercial, retail and leisure schemes. With better design, sites should be laid out to include a mix of different uses and activities above each other. This form of development will create an inherently more urban scale as well as providing greater vitality and viability. This is particularly important in the town centres, at areas accessible by public transport.
- iv. The Potential to **include day and night time uses** should be considered and schemes should remain in use for longer than merely the working day. This is particularly important in town, district and local centres, where the night time economy will need to be strengthened. New development should avoid creating places which close down out of hours and which are exclusive in terms of their access and use.
- v. Adopted District Local Plan policy sets the context for **increasing residential densities** across the District. Good design will be instrumental in achieving this requirement whilst also creating places where people will want to live. Chapter 3 provides more detailed design guidance on this issue.
- vi. New development should seek to make the best use of space within the District by **accommodating car parking in a less land intensive manner**. Under-croft, underground, roof-top or decked car parking are all options which should be considered in new development.
- vii. Opportunities to screen car parking by wrapping development around frontages will be encouraged where new decked car parks may be proposed. Car parking areas must provide good levels of surveillance and be well lit in themselves, especially where views from adjacent streets are not possible.
- viii. Development should seek to **make good use of internal space within buildings** incorporating rooms within sub-basements and/or roof space to increase internal floor space and create greater flexibility. This may not necessarily increase the density of development on a site but can help to ensure that internal space is used more effectively.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Density and Intensity of Use

- D.1 Design Quality
- D.15 Car Park Design

Principle 2 – Mixed Uses

1.36

New development should contribute to the mix and vitality of uses within the District, creating opportunities to live, work and spend leisure time within close proximity to one another. These opportunities are more readily available in larger towns and cities, but new development should support the aspiration for such contemporary lifestyles.

Related Design Guidance

- i. The Adopted District Local Plan provides an indication of suitable uses in terms of land uses, but as a matter of principle **schemes which combine more than one primary function** will be encouraged in Town, District and Local Centres. High quality design will be essential to achieve an effective accommodation and operation for different uses within individual developments.
- ii. **Uses should be mixed** laterally within development sites but also vertically within developments, to achieve the overall ambition for a varied and vibrant urban form.

- Large single use schemes should be avoided in town centres and designers should investigate fully the potential for mixed approaches on their sites. This can create economic value as well as better urban design.
- iii. **Upper floors** are particularly important and new development should make full use of upper floors to add new commercial and residential opportunities. Storage space is usually required for shops but this use for upper floors may be considered as ineffective if it reduces the advantage of natural surveillance. Commercial, residential or other activity generating functions space should be provided where possible above street level.
 - iv. **Ground floor units** should be prioritised for activity generating uses such as shop fronts, cafes and commercial office space. This will help to animate the public realm with varied and interesting uses taking space at the back of the street edge. Opportunities for uses at the edge of public spaces to spill out onto the footway will be supported where this will not conflict with principles for accessibility.
 - v. **Narrow plot widths** are preferable to larger plot width. They increase the frequency of entrances and the variety of uses within the street, thus increasing the level of activity and interaction with the street.
 - vi. **Frequent doors and window** openings spaced at regular intervals help to generate increased interaction between buildings and the street.
 - vii. **Main entrances**- should always be accessible from the street where entry and exit can be clearly monitored to foster pedestrian movement and thus feel safer. Deep windows and doors are encouraged at ground floor level to maximise natural surveillance.
 - viii. New concepts such as **live and work** space, which create a less rigid land use character, will be encouraged where these contribute to the variety of larger single use residential and commercial schemes. Such schemes will need to demonstrate a good quality of design with good space standards for residential and work activities which is flexible and capable of adapting to individual needs. Two general layouts are suggested:
 - a. Apartments above ground floor workspace – Ideal if access from the street is needed and heavy products are to be produced (i.e. craftsmen).
 - b. Studio space above residential accommodation – Providing good natural light levels (i.e. artists & designers)
 - c. In larger schemes a combination of the two may be possible.
 - ix. In large scale predominantly **single use** developments, such as employment/business parks and retail developments, the design of buildings themselves becomes even more important in facilitating natural surveillance and the use of large windows and doors overlooking the public realm will be required.
 - x. **Open spaces and landscaping** are encouraged in residential and office developments and can add to the quality and enjoyment of schemes. Such spaces should be well laid out and provide defined and concentrated amenity value. Open spaces above car parking or on roofs of buildings can provide green spaces within higher density schemes to good effect.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Mixed Uses

- H.2 Residential Locations
- H.8 Non-Residential Development in Residential Areas
- E.6 Areas Allocated for Mixed Uses
- CY.1 Mixed Uses
- TC.2 Town Centre Uses
- KTC.1 Kidderminster Town Centre Redevelopment Area
- KTC.3 Worcester Street Enhancement Area
- KTC.4 Green Street Mixed Use Area
- STC.1 Lichfield Basin (Severn Road Phase One)
- STC.2 Carpets of Worth (Severn Road Phase Two)
- STC.3 Cheapside (Severn Road Phase Three)
- STC.4 Bridge Street - Basins Link

Principle 3 – Compatibility

1.37

Building uses need to be compatible with each other; new development should ensure the protection of privacy and amenity for new and existing occupiers.

Uses which are good neighbours can be accommodated in close proximity to one another side by side or vertically within the same building.

Related Design Guidance

- i. **Certain uses will be very well suited to the mixed use approach.** Office space, retail space and residential space can all be housed together to good effect. Leisure uses, particularly eating and drinking uses by virtue of their hours of operation will need to be thoughtfully designed into mixed use schemes to reduce incompatibility. Commercial space is often more successful above leisure uses. Where residential uses are proposed over leisure uses, mitigation measures will be required to overcome issues of nuisance.
- ii. **Designs should mitigate nuisance.** This is an important factor to how successful a mixed use neighbourhood will be. Relevant issues for consideration include noise, privacy, street lighting, traffic noise and air quality, overlooking and servicing. A number of detailed design issues should be addressed:
 - a. Bathrooms/toilets placed within or at the back of the development with obscure glass when windows are provided.
 - b. Allow for adequate room to room separation distances or juxtapose windows to prevent overlooking of different uses and activities.
 - c. Reduce glare from street lighting into habitable rooms, particularly bedrooms.
 - d. Avoid the need for service vehicles to reverse within developments.

- e. Screen service areas where these would impact upon views of and from the development.
- f. Place extractor fans and air conditioning units away from noise sensitive areas.
- g. Double/triple glazing to limit noise may need to be used.
- h. Ensure residential parking courtyards are clearly delineated and separate from retail/commercial service areas.
- i. Include drop off bays for deliveries at the front of properties to service commercial and retail developments.
- iii. **Zone nuisance uses:** Particularly noisy, polluting or traffic generating uses are less likely to be compatible with other uses and should be separate.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Compatibility

- H.8 Non-Residential Development in Residential Areas
- E.6 Areas Allocated for Mixed Uses
- D.1 Design Quality

Principle 4- Re-Use of Existing Buildings

1.38

Older buildings define the character of areas and also contain an amount of embodied energy in their construction; demolition and new building uses more energy. New uses can breathe new life into older buildings and/or frontages which are valued within the District.

Related Design Guidance

- i) Adopted District Local Plan policy encourages the re-use of older buildings which have become vacant and no longer serve their original functions. New uses and requirements of contemporary development will need to be incorporated sensitively to ensure the integrity and character of the original building is retained.
- ii) Demolition of historic buildings should only be considered where:
 - a. Buildings are in such a condition that their salvage and re-use is unviable.
 - b. Their appearance is detrimental to the street scene
 - c. Internal configuration of the building significantly limits re-use to an extent that the original integrity of the building is compromised.
 - d. The building is not statutorily or locally listed or within a conservation area, in which instances more rigorous heritage cases will need to be made to justify development.
 - e. The loss of that building will not have a detrimental impact on the quality of the townscape of the locality. In determining this, regard should be had to the contribution any new (replacement) built development may make to townscape quality.
 - f. The existing layout of the building/s on site will limit the scope for and viability of regeneration and refurbishment, based on urban design principles established in this guide.

In which case, a critical review of the intrinsic value of buildings or parts thereof will be required to properly understand ways forward which balance heritage issues with wider planning and regeneration priorities.

- g. There will be a preference for retention of buildings rather than merely their facades, but where specific circumstances dictate, and cases in respect of the above tests are properly justified, designs which reuse facades only may be acceptable, after all other opportunities are discounted.
- iii) Where demolition meets the above tests the original materials and features should be salvaged where appropriate, such as the reuse of local bricks as an integral part of the design. Where traditional local materials are not used on site, their use on other schemes within the district will be encouraged.
- iv) Where demolition is proposed measures to ensure the salvage and reuse of materials on site or within the district will be encouraged
- v) The retention of selected features within historic buildings, such as higher quality frontages, and the demolition of less precious parts of older buildings would not normally be considered as this may undermine the integrity of the original design. However, in some larger scale former industrial buildings, this may be required as a last resort where existing layout would preclude regeneration and re-use of land and buildings.

- vi) Where appropriate consultation between the District Council and English Heritage may help to determine the scope for change on sites containing historic buildings.
- vii) Some buildings constructed in the 1960's were always intended to have a **limited lifespan**. Often these buildings are poorly equipped to deal with contemporary demands in terms of commercial and information technology provision. In such cases the demolition of such buildings may actually facilitate more appropriate new development.
- viii) Older steel frame and/or reinforced concrete buildings which can look tired and undermine the image of the District present opportunities for **re-cladding** to give a fresh identity. Contemporary materials and architectural techniques can enliven frontages and bring a new sense of quality to a building.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Re-Use of Existing Buildings

- CA.2 Demolition in Conservation Areas
- H.7 Sub-division of Existing Dwellings
- D.8 Designing for Materials Recycling
- GB.5 Re-use of Existing Industrial Premises in the Green Belt
- AG.8 Farm Diversification
- RB.1 Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings- Conversion Criteria
- RB.2 Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings- Appropriate Uses
- RB.3 Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings- Impact of Existing Uses

Principle 5 – Adaptability

1.39

New buildings need to adapt to future change. Buildings that can be modified without major structural alteration will suit changing circumstances and the energy and upheaval of demolition can be avoided.

Related Design Guidance

- i. New development should **avoid monolithic structures** where other design formats and layouts can achieve the desired level of accommodation. Some developments will by definition require large format buildings. In prominent locations and town centres, opportunities to wrap single aspect development around large floor plate buildings should be investigated.
- ii. The design and construction of buildings should provide some flexibility to change the internal layout and operation of a building within the same primary use. This is particularly applicable to residential design in the achievement of 'Lifetime Homes' standards. Greater flexibility to change the actual primary use of buildings, however, is more difficult to achieve successfully.
- iii. **Tried and tested forms** of development such as the terrace and perimeter block are encouraged as they can accommodate a range of uses that can develop over time. Slim building layouts, which allow for natural ventilation and light penetration and which are served by larger numbers of individual buildings can all help to create a more flexible development.

- iv. Designs should allow adequate space for ducting, wiring and incorporation of information technologies, so they can be updated in the future without major structural changes to the building. The **future proofing** of commercial accommodation is an important consideration.
- v. Materials should be selected which are of a high quality and which will weather well with time and require limited maintenance.
- vi. Whilst recognising the benefits of designing for adaptability, it should be noted that changes to the function and operation of buildings should not reduce the accessibility of developments for people with impaired mobility.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Adaptability

- D.8 Designing for Materials Recycling
- D.19 Designing for Adaptability

Main Messages for Functions, Activity and Vitality

- ✓ Design new development to contribute to vitality by mixing uses and increasing densities and the intensity of uses within buildings.
- ✓ Ensure ground floor uses have a positive relationship to the public realm. Activity generating uses encouraged in Town, District and Local Centres.
- ✓ Ensure uses are compatible. Consider hours of operation and the nature of uses involved and the relationships to be established.
- ✓ Re-use older buildings to accommodate new use/space demands within existing/redundant townscape.
- ✓ Design for adaptability, building in options for changing the way internal space is used.

Movement, Linkages and Connections – Creating the Urban Structure

1.40

The movement structure is fundamental to the layout and design of all new development, particularly large scale development sites.

The aim should be to create a structure which is well integrated with surrounding streets and spaces and which is well connected in itself.

1.41

This should involve creating direct links through a network of connected streets and spaces. This is equally important no matter what the nature of the uses proposed on a site. A connected network of streets will provide a structure based on a choice of direct walking and cycle routes from within the site and to its periphery. Disconnected routes indirectly promote car use by prompting pedestrians into cars in order to avoid unnecessarily and convoluted linkages. The condition of routes through a site will also shape people's travel decisions.

Principle 6 – Developing the Urban Structure

1.42

Scheme layout may vary considerably within the district. This guide seeks to prompt a greater awareness of location and context when laying out a scheme.

Related Design Guidance

- i. **Make the most of the setting** by orientating building frontages to face onto and provide views over landscape features.
- ii. **Create a structure** which is well connected both to its wider environment and in itself. These linkages should be based upon streets and not pedestrian alleyways. Even if through traffic is not desirable the street (in whatever form) should be the basis for any layout.
- iii. **Layouts should avoid being inward looking and cellular.** Such cellular layouts have led to culs-de-sac forms. These have no relevance to the vernacular of the District and work against the principle of connectivity and integration.

- iv. **Traditional street networks**, which provide different choices and options to move around a site, should be created. The aim is not to create a housing layout, but to establish new townscapes and village settings.
- v. **Layouts should clearly relate to their location** in terms of street and block design considering the following:
 - a. Street lengths and alignments - Including any characteristic changes in direction.
 - b. Development blocks sizes and proportions - including any characteristic shapes.
 - c. The relationship between street and the block will be important in developing character. Formally laid out schemes and organic schemes being typical examples.
- vi. **Development blocks** should form the basis of any design. Development blocks are not a recent concept. The practice of establishing a block structure was widespread until the mid twentieth century. Indeed, the District exhibits many examples of blocks (Development Blocks are further explained in Chapter 3- Residential Design Guide Part 2).
- vii. The area created by an alignment of streets establishes a **structure of blocks or plots** where houses can then be positioned. Blocks can be developed in many ways, in many sizes and can take many shapes, but the principle behind the block is that building frontages will address and overlook public streets whilst private spaces to the rear are located together and enclosed by buildings to establish a robust

and secure island of development. A multitude of development possibilities can be created based upon the urban block principle...

- a. From tightly enclosed perimeter blocks – with a strong urban character and communal parking and amenity spaces...
 - b. To less intensively developed village forms, of short terraces and detached properties with back gardens...
 - c. Even executive style larger properties set within landscape can be developed in this manner.
- viii. In terms of ease of pedestrian movement smaller development **blocks** are seen to promote walking and permeability.

Principle 7 – Design for Ease of Walking

1.43

Walking is not only the most sustainable form of transport but is also an essential part of our health and social wellbeing. Developments should respect a preference for walking over all other forms of transport:

Related Design Guidance

- i. Public routes within new development should be:
 - a. **Connected-** with existing routes and local facilities to support their viability and take people directly where they want to go.

- b. **Convenient-** not restricted by impermeable structures or routes. Public Rights of Way should not be adversely affected. The pattern of built fabric should follow a fine grain characterised by short 'blocks' and a choice of routes.
- c. **Convivial-** respect the social element of walking and create lively and interesting places. Development defines the movement structure and can enhance its quality through the creation of distinctive intersections, corner features, landmarks, landscape, public art and quality building frontages.
- d. **Comfortable-** many people passing through a place aids 'self policing' and makes it feel safer, as does the overlooking of routes from adjacent buildings. Separating pedestrian routes from trafficked streets can reduce this especially at night and should be avoided apart from the busiest pedestrian locations.
- e. **Clear and legible-** routes which are not clearly visible or welcoming create a feeling of uncertainty, unease and disorientation. Townscape should follow a coherent pattern defined by a network of landmarks and vistas so that routes are easy to understand. This is a combination of layout, the buildings which define the routes and the condition of landscape and public realm.

- ii. The aim should be for a good **balance of pedestrian and vehicular traffic** within traditional streets fronted onto by development. Forms of development where pedestrian and vehicular traffic are segregated should be avoided.
- iii. Traffic requirements should be **pragmatic but should not dominate** the environment and in larger schemes, road designs may need to accommodate bus routes through the site.
- iv. Requirements for the design of streets and spaces in respect of accessibility and people with impaired mobility are outlined in 1.11 earlier in this section. (see page 15/16)

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Design or Ease of Walking

- D.1 Design Quality
- D.2 Tall Residential and Commercial buildings
- D.9 Design for Movement
- D.11 Design of Landscaping Schemes
- D.14 Street furniture
- TR.7 Provision for Pedestrians
- LR.8 Public Rights of Way
- TC.4 Key Movement Corridors

Principle 8 - Integration with Public Transport

1.44

Despite high car ownership in the District a notable cross section of the population does not have access to a car. In the interests of social inclusion and the promotion of more sustainable travel choices, public transport provision will need to be considered as part of the design and planning process for new development.

Related Design Guidance

- i) The principal form of local public transport in Wyre Forest is the bus. New development can support the **viability** of existing or proposed public transport services and strong linkages need to be made between existing or new bus stops
- ii. The scope for re-routing **bus services** (or even new services) to include larger scale new developments will need to be considered at an early stage within the design process in partnership with relevant stakeholders. The design of new streets will need to reflect this ambition.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Other Forms of Transport

- TR.1 Bus Infrastructure
- TR.20 Implementation of Transport Plans
- D.1 Design Quality
- D.9 Design for Movement
- LR.16 Arts, Entertainment and Museum Facilities
- LR.17 Commercial Leisure Developments
- RT.1 Sequential Approach
- RT.13 Food and Drink
- TC.4 Key Movement Corridors

Principle 9 – Other Forms of Transport

1.45

As well as walking and public transport other sustainable forms of travel exist, often connected to leisure pursuits and considered as less formal, but are none the less significant in widening travel choice.

Related Design Guidance

Designers should consider the following in the layout of new development in order to provide viable alternatives to the car:

- i. **Cycling-** provisions should be made for cyclists in all developments. Development should complement the growing network of cycle routes and should in no way undermine these.
- ii. **Cycle routes-**should be concentrated in existing and new streets to the fronts of buildings where there are good levels of natural surveillance. Segregation should be avoided. (Refer to 'Sustrans' Information sheet FF21 'Designing for Security on the National Cycle Network' for further advice see www.sustrans.org.uk).
- iii. **Tame traffic-** traffic calming will need to be applied across the district to improve pedestrian accessibility. This is particularly important in new residential areas, in town centres and at junctions to strategic roads.
- iv. **Waterways-** the water courses of the District are a distinctive part of the landscape. New development can help by improving access to waterways.

(Refer to www.crimereduction.gov.uk 'Under lock and Quay' for more detailed advice)

- v. **Horses-** Public Rights of Way which incorporate bridleways should not be compromised. Development should respect safe and convivial routes for horse riding in rural areas.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Other Forms of Transport

TR.6 Cycling Infrastructure
 TR.8 Highway Network
 LR.8 Public Rights of Way
 LR.13 Water Sports
 TM.8 The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal
 KTC.1 Kidderminster Town Centre Redevelopment Area
 KTC.4 Green Street Mixed Use Area
 STC.1 Lichfield Basin (Severn Road Phase One)
 STC.2 Carpets of Worth (Severn Road Phase Two)
 STC.3 Cheapside (Severn Road Phase Three)
 STC.4 Bridge Street Basins Link
 STC.5 Canal Basins Area
 STC.6 Vale Road (West)

Main Messages for Movement, Linkages and Connections

- Consider views, orientation, setting and landscape in laying out a site.
- Make connections both internally and to adjacent streets and townscape.
- Create a network of linked streets and spaces
- These should form a hierarchy, where scale of street and landscape treatment, are related to the importance and purpose of the street.
- Uses the 'development block' principle to layout building elements – This offers flexibility.
- Ensure street widths, lengths and block sizes are related to context or traditional vernacular character.
- Design for walking and forms of movement other than the car – which should not dominate.
- Streets and spaces should be connected, convenient, convivial, comfortable, conspicuous as well as clear and legible.

Building Design – Creating and Contributing to Townscape Value

1.46

The Towns and Parishes of the District reflect many years of development activity which provide the present day context for new development. The traditional vernacular character of much of the townscape heritage of the District respects long standing urban design principles of scale, proportion, harmony and quality. The architecture of each of the three towns provides a different historical perspective on the Georgian and Victorian townscape tradition. These are united by consistent use of local materials and construction methods. These intrinsic qualities define the District's sense of identity and give it a recognisable character.

1.47

A national trend has been for standard design practices, less locally relevant materials and buildings which could be anywhere and which actually undermine the special characteristics of their settings. This has resulted in development which has only limited relationship with its surroundings. The design of new development within the District must avoid creating such 'anywhere' developments by better relating to the inherent characteristics within the district.

The principles of good townscape outlined within this section provide the basis for new development which better complements its setting.

This is not about designing merely to 'fit in'. Innovative and contemporary design is welcomed, but this must be underpinned by a considered response to context.

Principle 10 - Respond to Context**1.48**

New development should harness character at a regional, district and local level to underpin a sense of distinctiveness however this needs to be exploited in a convincing way, honest to its setting in the 21st century.

Related Design Guidance

- i. Existing features of the site and the wider context should directly influence the layout and townscape of new development. Analysis of the site should provide the basis for a detailed understanding of the **site in context**, including:
 - a. Ecology
 - b. Topography
 - c. Routes
 - d. Site form
 - e. Landmarks
 - f. Views and potential vistas
 - g. Local townscape vernacular
 - h. Historic features and landscapes
- ii. **Local buildings**- understand the elements of the existing street scene that can act as the building blocks for design and relate to them. Contextual cues can be taken from the adjacent context (see principal 11) and include:
 - a. Massing
 - b. Scale
 - c. Proportions
 - d. Plot width and building lines

- iii. **Draw from the traditions of the District**- architects should consider the use local materials and craftsmanship to help develop a locally relevant design solution. Sensitive use of traditional and contemporary materials together works most effectively.
- iv. **Avoid standardisation**- standard building designs and layouts damage local distinctiveness, since these designs bear little relation to the proportions, materials and detailing of surrounding properties. A bespoke architectural led approach will always produce a more fitting solution.
- v. The guide promotes design solutions which are more locally relevant both in the design of buildings and layouts. Experience shows that 'characterful' and place specific schemes, with identity distinctiveness are more marketable than generic 'anywhere' developments.

Note - More detailed guidance on designing in context for residential development is provided in Chapter 3 and for villages in Chapter 5.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Responding to Context

- D.1 Design Quality
- D.3 Local Distinctiveness
- D.5 Design of Development in the Countryside
- D.17 Design of Residential Extensions
- D.18 Design of Non-Residential Extensions
- RB.7 Listed Buildings
- LB.2 Repairs, Alterations, Extensions and Conversions

- L.B.3 Fixtures and Fittings
- L.B.5 New Development Affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings
- CA.1 Development in Conservation Areas
- CA.3 Shopfronts in Conservation Areas and in relation to Listed Buildings
- CA.6 Other Areas of Special Character or Appearance
- NC.6 Landscaping Schemes
- KTC.1 Kidderminster Town Centre Redevelopment Area
- KTC.3 Worcester Street Enhancement Area
- STC.1 Lichfield Basin (Severn Road Phase 1)
- STC.2 Carpets of Worth (Severn Road Phase 2)
- STC.3 Cheapside (Severn Road Phase Three)
- STC.4 Bridge Street Basins Link
- STC.5 Canal Basins Area
- STC.6 Vale Road (West)

Principle 11 – Creating Townscape**1.49**

Developments should not be viewed as a series of inanimate objects separated by landscaping or amenity space. Such formless development produces anonymous and disorientating spaces. Townscape occurs when there is a positive relationship between individual buildings, through their layout, design and construction. New development should help to develop this townscape value.

Related Design Guidance

- i. An important function of buildings is to give shape to the movement structure/network described previously.

The basic requirement for new development should be to **define and enclose streets and spaces** to help people move around the site.

- ii. **Individual buildings should be well related to one another** and establish a collective character and sense of place. Schemes should be more than a collection of individual developments and help to generate group value.
- iii. **Massing** – The massing of a building should be relevant to its context and not merely to the uses which it needs to accommodate. The articulation of massing in terms of projections and set backs should be informed in the first instance by adjacent buildings. In general buildings should be read as additive forms – where new elements are solidly attached to or project from a building in preference to subtractive forms where buildings read as though sections are missing or have been removed.
- iv. **Scale** – The scale of a building should be related to its location. Scale is not size. It is about the relative scale of materials and frontage elements which articulate the buildings mass. Scale can be either monumental or domestic.
- v. Understanding the scale of elements within the locality will help a building to harmonise with the location. In some cases juxtaposition of scale and forms may create new and exciting architecture. Through the clever use of scale larger buildings can often be broken down into more manageable and aesthetically more comfortable elements.
- vi. **Proportion** - Building frontages should be well proportioned, emphasising verticality and creating a sense of order. This can be achieved by use of materials and details and the location of doors and windows, and the use of projections and set backs. In established settings the proportions of a building should relate positively to adjacent buildings.
- vii. **Plot Width and Building Line Set Back** – The composition of existing street frontages should inform the siting of new buildings to ensure a coherent and unifying street edge is created. Often new development will need to repair or put back a street frontage which has been removed. Create buildings which are of similar scale in terms of their height, frontage composition and massing.
- viii. **Develop a coordinated design language**, where a suite of materials and treatments are applied to an area to create a bond and visual relationship.
- ix. **Design within the theme**, but add variety through different arrangements of similar materials and treatments across a site. Larger sites offer more scope to develop this.
- x. **Identify high profile sites** where new landmarks could be created. These will provide greater opportunities for creative and innovative design. Such buildings can be used to mark gateways.
- xi. Buildings should help to **turn corners** adding visual interest and creating local landmarks to aid orientation.

- xii. **Pinch-points or set backs** in building frontages at junctions/intersections can help to reinforce the importance of nodal points.
- xiii. **Views and vistas** should be framed and/or terminated by new buildings, to create a sense of destination and arrival.
- xiv. **Buildings should step up in height and scale** to address important frontages to help define main routes or frontages which overlook open spaces.
- xv. **Vertical emphasis** in frontage design to reflect the vernacular style of the district, with simple and well proportioned and scales frontages offering variety and continuity.
- xvi. **Varied skylines** with landmark features located at corner plots are characteristic within the District and help to add visual prominence and interest.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Creating Townscape

- D.1 Design Quality
- D.9 Design for Movement
- D.11 Design of Landscaping Schemes
- D.13 Design of Private and Communal Amenity Spaces
- D.16 Designing for Community Safety

Principle 12 – Excite, Innovate and Enhance Character

1.50

Design should build upon the traditions of an area but there is also room for architectural creativity. The character of the District has followed a process of evolution and new development presents the opportunity to add a contemporary layer of growth through the use of modern building materials and techniques.

Related Design Guidance

- i. **High quality building design** is an important consideration and new development should be distinctive and add to the character of the District.
- ii. **As a general rule, design should be based upon either a traditional or contemporary design language.** Combining traditional and contemporary elements can achieve a good effect, but care should be taken not to compromise the overall integrity of development by including too many styles, materials and features. Character and quality will be the overall aim and designers should avoid creating placeless anonymous and anywhere schemes.
- iii. A limited range of materials often creates a more sensitive and well mannered design. In judging scheme quality it is the **overall value** of the design rather than individual elements which will be important.
- iv. **Materials** should be combined to reinforce a sense of place and quality in new development. A limited palette of well related materials is often more successful than many competing materials.
- v. Quality materials will be required that are **hard wearing and require minimal maintenance.** The extent to which materials will age and develop in terms of colour and texture should be considered.
- vi. **Traditional materials and design** - Where traditional materials are to be used, these should offer a good match with existing materials of a particular location. One or more materials or finish may be characteristic within an area. A list of traditional materials is located at the end of this section.
- vii. **Contrast is often an option even when designing in a traditional vernacular.** For example, where 'one off' rendered facades may be characteristic to an area which is more generally typified by brick faced buildings. When designing in a traditional vernacular style there will be a requirement for a thorough reinterpretation of scale, proportion and details to ensure new developments are not merely bad pastiche.
- viii. **Contemporary materials** are welcomed within new developments to complement natural materials. These can provide fresh and innovative design solutions and create more striking architectural forms. Contemporary design and materials should be sensitive to existing contexts, particularly where new development is within heritage settings.
- ix. Considering the suitability of materials the Council will consider the following test:
 - a. **Indigenous** - Are the materials locally relevant? Is this required or necessary in a given location.
 - b. **Colour** – The colours, tones and shades of materials. The quality and depth of colouration is important. Naturalistic colours are likely to be more successful on larger surfaces, with bolder colours used more strategically.
 - c. **Texture and Finish** – The relief of materials creating harmony, richness and/or simplicity. The quality of finish and texture of surfaces can provide visual interest.
 - d. **Scale** - Unit sizes for materials should be well related to the building and location. The use of contemporary materials in scale with traditional materials can create striking effects.
 - e. **Contrast:** can achieve harmony through juxtaposition.
 - f. **Quality:** New materials should be as high in quality as traditional materials.
- ix. Where new development is infilling an existing setting and in particular a historic setting, the choice of materials will be of particular importance and must relate positively to the established character of the area.

More detailed advice is provided in Chapter 3.

- x. **Contemporary architecture** can create both a harmonious and contrasting relationship with existing development. Where new and contrasting elements are proposed it will be even more important for designers to effectively demonstrate the relationship between new and existing. The importance of well scale and proportioned buildings is underlined when modern design and construction techniques make possible more innovative and challenging designs.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Excite, Innovate and Create Character

- D.1 Design Quality
- D.12 Public Art
- KTC.3 Worcester Street Enhancement Area

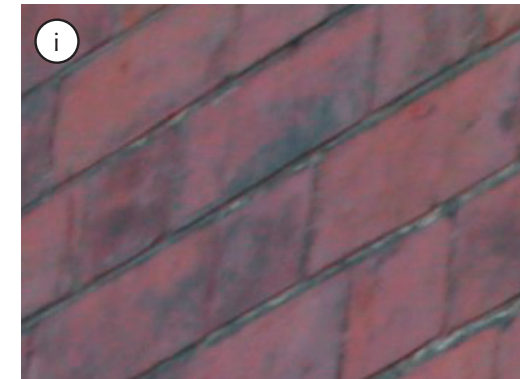
Inventory of traditional materials found in Wyre Forest District

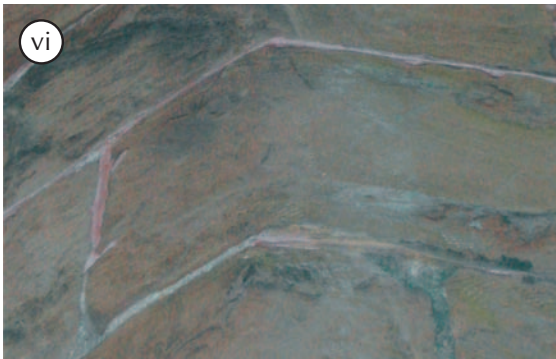
1.51

An analysis of featured materials in Wyre Forest includes:

- i. Red brick as the dominant wall material
- ii. Buff brick for some buildings or used for horizontal detail courses
- iii. Soft rich and warm reddish-orange to reddish-brown bricks in Stourport

- iv. Blue engineering brick for detailing—particularly Victorian industrial buildings (to accentuate window heads and sills) and for surrounding wall details
- v. A smoother finish to bricks from Victorian buildings over Georgian
- vi. Local sandstone as the main facing material to important town centre buildings
- vii. Warm tones of white/magnolia Stucco or render to larger houses, especially in rural areas
- viii. Local stone for such details including: pilasters, capitals, entablature, quoins, architraves around window openings, pediments, projecting window sills, moulded projecting cornices and voussoirs
- ix. Timber gable details and exposed eaves
- x. Local red sandstone
- xi. Oak timber frame with natural light red-brown or cream washed infill in parts of Bewdley and rural settlements
- xii. Welsh Blue Slates as the main roofing material
- xiii. Small rectangular red brown plain clay tiles to other buildings
- xiv. Terracotta ridge detailing to some slate roofs





Principle 13 – Large Scale Buildings**1.52**

Modern large buildings, particularly commercial, leisure and employment buildings pose a particular challenge to designers in terms of interpreting the key features of the district. All too often large floorplate buildings, be they for retail, leisure, storage, distribution, employment and other activities undermine local character.

Whilst there is a limit to the potential of such utilitarian buildings contributing to the richness and quality of the districts built fabric, a number of design techniques can be adopted which improve the urban design of these buildings and provide for a more coherent and higher quality development.

Related design guidance:

- i. Achieving a positive relationship between different buildings is encouraged in areas where large buildings are proposed. The aim should be to create a built structure, not just lots of individual large boxes on separate sites.
- ii. Innovative architecture is encouraged in larger buildings. This is not about decoration or making large buildings look small. Good honest utilitarian design should create a form of development based on function but which is also visually pleasing and well related to both the district and its setting.
- iii. Large buildings should be given relief and broken down in terms of their scale. Massing, projections, set backs and variety in the skyline can all add more interest and help to sub divide large buildings.

- iv. Colour is particularly important on large buildings. Large areas of colour should be sympathetic to the landscape and respond to colours found in the districts built and natural heritage. Cladding manufacturers now provide a wide range of more tonal and naturalistic cladding options.
- v. Panels of colour can break down the scale of buildings. A limited palette of colours is generally preferred for buildings and groups of buildings. Corporate colours should be avoided.
- vi. Greatest attention to design quality and investment in good design should be focused on the public faces or main frontages to the development.
- vii. Entrances and reception areas should be located on the primary public face of the building to help develop a relationship with the street and public realm.
- viii. In layout terms larger scale buildings need to respond to principles of enclosure. For this reason buildings set to the back of large plots of car parking should be avoided. Development should create a relationship with the street or road it fits within.
- ix. A limited number of parking spaces to the front of buildings are preferred with the majority of parking at the back of the plot in less visible locations.
- x. Open spaces and places to sit outside are important in employment areas.

These provide opportunities for fresh air, eating lunch outdoors and so on. Such spaces are usually better related close to the front entrance of a development

- xi. Where after all design and layout opportunities have been considered, development is still considered visually detrimental to the landscape, high quality landscape screening using indigenous species will be encouraged.

Main Messages for Building Design

- Respond sensitively, thoughtfully and creatively to context.
- Create townscape and group value – not just lots of different buildings together.
- Building frontages should define and enclose streets and spaces – on plan and in three dimensions.
- Avoid standardisation and ‘anywhere design’.
- Contemporary design and materials are encouraged where they add value to established settings.
- Where appreciation of context is properly demonstrated, more innovative design will be supported.
- Quality rather than style is the key.

Public Realm, Open Space & Landscape

1.53

The public realm includes the streets and open spaces within the District, which bind it together. It relates to all parts of the District to which people have physical and visual access. It is the backdrop to everyday life and if well designed and laid out can provide the basis for social interaction. The highest concentrations and most intensively used areas of public realm are within the three Town Centres.

1.54

The provision, condition and quality of the public realm is integral to the health and well being of urban areas. The public realm is a places public face and often this can be neglected when new development focuses on the private realm of the building and its grounds.

The design of the spaces between buildings is as important in creating safe and welcoming places as buildings themselves.

1.55

Everyone benefits from a healthy public realm and new development should contribute to the well being and quality of the streets and spaces around them. This section therefore establishes important design considerations for the improvement and refurbishment of the public realm.

Principle 14 – A Network of Streets and Spaces

1.56

New and refurbished streets and open spaces are encouraged within the District to act as a setting for civic and social life. This is particularly important within the existing town centres and residential areas.

Related Design Guidance

- i. New development should give thoughtful consideration to the design of the movement structure established for a site/development. This should create **high quality streets and routes complemented by attractive open spaces**, squares and pocket parks. These can act as focal points and create a positive sense of place.
- ii. The design of open spaces should encourage people to linger, sit and enjoy external spaces rather than hurry on to the next designation.
- iii. The basic criteria for people to use open space is that it is safe. After that **enjoyment** can be introduced by high quality design.
- iv. **New development** should contribute to an active and vibrant public realm by ensuring frontages at ground floor level which address the street provide good levels of overlooking and maximise the opportunity for activity generating uses.
- v. **Outdoor** seating areas and pavement cafes are encouraged to add life and activity to the street scene. These will need to be properly managed and licenses are required from the Council to operate alfresco activities. The layout, of seating and other kit as well as cleansing arrangement will need to be considered to avoid creating obstacles or hazards
- vi. **‘Designing in’ opportunities for outdoor activities** into new streets or as part of the refurbishment of existing streets will need to be encouraged.

- vii. **The inclusion of new streets and spaces** within larger schemes is encouraged. Although ongoing maintenance issues will need to be identified at the planning stage. Such areas will need to be clearly defined from pedestrian routes.

Principle 15 - Character and Continuity

1.57

Public realm design should uplift the quality and provision of external public space within the district. Designs should complement and not compete with the existing character of established settings and help to reinforce the quality of new places. Individual developments should demonstrate an appreciation of how they fit within and contribute to the wider public realm.

Related Design Guidance

- i. **Continuity** between streets and spaces is required where materials, furnishings, lighting and landscape become consistent and identifiable features of a place.
- ii. Consideration should be given to how all **streetscape elements** fit together in a coordinated way. The aim is to avoid clutter create and ensure public places are safe, attractive and well used.
- iii. **The design of streets** should be simple and well coordinated, emphasising the linear qualities of the street based upon high quality and robust street/kerb alignments. In historic areas street design will need to be especially sensitive.

- iv. It is important to avoid creating a variety of unrelated themes within the public realm of the District. A **coordinated** approach to public realm design is particularly important in each of the districts town centres, where there may be scope to interpret this guidance in a variety of ways.
- v. **Clarity between public areas and private spaces** will be required. This will assist in defining access and maintenance responsibilities.
- vi. Boundaries to the public realm should be of a high quality and be relevant to the particular location.

Principle 16 – High Quality Surfaces

1.58

Surfaces include the pavements, kerbs and roads which make up the public streets and spaces across the District. All surfaces should be of a high quality and robust design and construction. In town centres in particular, natural materials are preferred to synthetic materials for surfaces. Natural stone represents a good investment over the long term, due to its superior performance and visual quality.

Related Design Guidance

- i. There will be more scope for innovative designs within specific **public spaces**, although designs will need to relate well to adjacent streets in terms of materials.
- ii. The overall ambition should be to create a **seamless floor** from building edge/boundary to building edge.

Changes in materials and patterns should be based upon functional requirements and designers should avoid pattern making with different materials colours which can often detract from townscape quality.

- iii. **Kerbs** in particular need to be robust and designed to be strong enough to accept inevitable vehicle overrunning. The design of kerbs and pavements adjacent to vehicular streets should be designed so as to minimise opportunities for overrunning.
- iv. The use of **reclaimed materials** will be encouraged where these provide a good match to existing surfaces or where they complement historic settings.
- v. The design and specification of surfaces should **assist traffic calming** and pedestrian priority within town centres and residential areas. Changes in level and relief within panels of paving materials can help to achieve this.
- vi. The ambition for high **quality public realm** treatment within the District's town centres should not be undermined by the maintenance responsibility of the County Council. Materials should be sourced from suppliers where replacement materials are easily available. The County Council should adopt a flexible approach to new materials where they are proven to be robust and fit for purpose.
- vii. **As identified earlier in this chapter (1.11vi), tactile surfaces are** required at formal crossing points to streets. The design of tactile surfaces has an important impact on the quality of the streetscape.

In conservation areas and town centres, tactile surfaces should be designed to a high specification and reflect the design of the streetscape and floor materials in terms of colour and finish. Good quality examples adopted elsewhere include metallic rivets fixed into stone pavers or honed stone pavers where blisters are left in relief. Standard red blister synthetic units should be avoided, in town centres and conservation areas.

- viii. Where **double yellow lines** are required within town centres and conservation areas, these should be painted in narrow primrose yellow strips.

Principle 17 - High Quality Street Furnishings

1.59

The purpose of including furnishings in street design is to make them more user-friendly and responsive to peoples needs. The provision of furnishings needs then to be related to how people would like to use the urban setting. All furnishings should be well located and well coordinated. Keeping furniture to a minimum will help to create a simple and clutter free street scene.

Related Design Guidance

- i. Street furnishings should be:
 - a. **Fit for purpose and robust**, to ensure that maintenance will be minimal.
 - b. **Coordinated aesthetically** – Based upon a contemporary or historical theme, not a combination of the two.
 - c. Well positioned to **avoid creating barriers** to desire lines and blockages to views.

- d. **Visually contrasting** with flooring materials and comply with DDA requirements.
 - e. **Contributory to way finding and sense of place.** Specific finger pointers and information points/can assist in creating more legible town centres.
- ii. Opportunities to **incorporate seating and litter bins** as an integral part of street and open space design should be investigated to minimise potential barriers, whilst providing facilities for pedestrians. Well located and frequent seating will help people to enjoy their surroundings, but this must not work against the ambition for less clutter.
 - iii. Street furnishing must be **capable of adoption** by the County Council which would be responsible for ongoing maintenance. This should not be used as an excuse for using poor quality standard furnishings.
 - iv. **Safety barriers** which undermine pedestrian movements should be used sparingly. Street design and redesign should seek to create a more pedestrian friendly environment where traffic is calmed and the need to provide physical infrastructure is reduced.
 - v. **Signs** and other mandatory markings/infrastructure should be sensitively incorporated within the street scene, to minimise clutter and visual intrusion. This is particularly important in town centres and residential areas where a plethora of poorly located signage can undermine local distinctiveness.

- vi. Areas of public seating should be well overlooked and themselves contribute to natural surveillance where well designed and located.

Principle 18 Functional and Striking Lighting

1.60

Lighting is an important factor in creating places which are safe and well used at night. The basis for any lighting scheme should be to create sufficient levels of illumination to create safe places. Building upon this there may be scope in town centres or other prominent setting to add visual interest and incidence through the use of feature lighting.

Related Design Guidance

- i. **Street lighting** should ensure that levels of illumination are sufficient to create a safe environment. In town centres, an increase in the lighting levels is proposed using a white light approach, is encouraged.
- ii. **Wall mounted** lighting is encouraged with a view to reducing the volume of posts and columns within town centre.
- iii. Where **lighting columns** are required opportunities to concentrate signage on fewer columns will be desirable. The position of lighting columns should not obstruct views and the linear qualities of streets.
- iv. **Pedestrian scale lighting** will be encouraged in town centre locations and along the canal side. Lighting of this nature is mounted at lower levels and is often utilising on up-light designs.

- v. Accent/feature lighting will be encouraged at prominent locations, including gateways and public squares. The use of feature lighting within the public realm to help legibility and mark out important routes will be encouraged. Lighting scheme should avoid creating **light pollution** and should not undermine the amenity of residential areas. The illumination of the public realm should be coordinated with architectural lighting projects.
- vi. Street lighting should be robust, fit for purpose and easy to maintain. Where required lighting columns should be design to accommodate other street signs to minimise clutter.

Principle 19 – Incorporating Art into Public Space Design

1.61

Investment in public art will be encouraged as an integral part of new development and public realm projects. In line with Adopted District Local Plan policy the District Council will negotiate for the inclusion of artworks, in their broadest sense to be included within new development. This will be particularly important in large scale development, in town centres and at prominent locations, where art works will have a significant impact on image and identity.

Related Design Guidance

- i. **Applying public art to public realm design** involves much more than commissioning one piece of art to sit within a new or improved space. Artworks can include formal or applied design on a grand or modest scale.

Elements such as water, media, sound and other techniques may compliment more traditional public realm treatments. The way artworks change through the day and into the evening is one exciting aspect designers should exploit.

- ii. Artworks and **locally relevant design elements** should be embedded within a scheme from first principles to implementation. Opportunities for art works to permeate aspects such as footway design, street furnishings and lighting should be investigated.
- iii. The aim of artworks within the public realm should be to improve the **image and profile** of the district and to add a layer of **integrity** to space design, to reinforce a sense of place. This should be much more than a gloss applied after other design decisions have been made.
- iv. Larger scale artworks may be more **striking and controversial**. Consultation will be important but inevitably art is a challenging and subjective issue. Design by consensus rarely provides the basis for cutting edge solutions. A balance between creativity and consultation is therefore encouraged.
- v. **Larger scale artworks** should be located at highly prominent locations, such as major public squares or gateways to new development or the district or its towns. The **gateways** to the District could be improved more generally through modest improvements to signage and features.
- vi. Local craftspeople and artists should contribute to public art within the district.

This can support local skills and artistic networks and provide direct investment in the cultural capital of the district.

- vii. A **coordinated approach** is required. The existing public art strategy provides the basis for achieving this. This document is available separately from the District Council. Consultation with the Arts Development Officer and Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services at Wyre Forest District Council should be undertaken as part of any public realm works, to identify where value can be added.

Adopted District Local Plan policies relevant to Incorporating Art into Public Space Design

Policy D.12 Public Art

Principle 20 – Incorporating Landscape

1.62

The District has a strong connection with its rural setting. Developing the green character through new development is encouraged. At a strategic level, the opportunities to include green spaces within new development should be considered. This should recognise green networks and waterway corridors. New development should include green areas and trees to improve both the amenity and ecological value of new developments. This is equally important in the Town Centres.

Related Design Guidance

- i. Opportunities to develop **green corridors** through towns by linking together landscape elements, parks, canals riverside boulevards and are encouraged.
- ii. **Green networks** as part of new development should be considered. The ecological value of sites can be improved by street trees connecting to pocket parks providing shelter and habitats.
- iii. **Landscape planters** should be avoided as these often limit movement, creating barriers and adding to the clutter of the street. These also create maintenance liabilities and are prone to abuse.
- iv. Including **water features** within new landmark public spaces is encouraged as this can add a sense of fun and enjoyment to the urban fabric. Water features should avoid creating areas of standing water. Moving water is often popular and designs which accommodate a level of human interaction are often popular in town and city centres. Any design should be capable of shutting down without the space which remains appearing out of place or separate from the public realm.

- v. **Street trees** can add to the quality of streets, providing ecological value, vertical emphasis and creating shelter. Where new trees are proposed they should be semi mature in order to stand a better chance of survival. Tree grills and irrigation systems should provide the tree with plentiful water within urban settings. The use of mature trees will negate the requirement for guard rails which can often obscure the tree.
- vi. Where **street trees** are proposed, care should be taken to avoid blocking important views and/or obscuring important buildings.
- vii. New developments should whenever possible and feasible retain, enhance, manage and if appropriate recreate the District's indigenous biodiversity to improve both the amenity and ecological value of new developments.

Principle 21 - Maintenance Requirements

1.63

Any capital investment in an improved public realm will need to be matched by a commitment to the long term maintenance of the public realm to ensure a clean and well cared for environment is created.

Related Design Guidance

- i. The **specification** of materials, fixtures and fittings should create a robust public realm which lowers the maintenance burden. Investment in high quality materials is encouraged.
- ii. **Cleansing regimes** should be fit for purpose. A particular emphasis should be placed on the regular removal of chewing gum from surfaces. Bins and discrete signage prompting more hygienic disposal of gum will help. Treatment to surfaces and/or materials selection can assist in the cleaning process and should be investigated. Street cleaning more generally will be important to maintain a pleasant environment. Cleansing regimes will need to reflect times of the week/day when litter etc. is at peak.
- iii. **Reinstatement** of public streets and spaces where surfaces require to be disturbed to permit access to services etc. will need to be of the highest order and match the existing. Landscape schemes should consider potential future access requirements to services as part of the design process. Communal access points are encouraged and covers should be designed to match the footway.

Main Messages for Public Realm, Open Space and Landscaping

- ✓ New development should contribute to the improvement of the public realm.
- ✓ Larger scale development can contribute by creating and/or refurbishing public streets and spaces.
- ✓ Linked sequences of streets and spaces are required.
- ✓ Vibrant, attractive and safe spaces are required. This is important by day and also in the evening.
- ✓ The public realm should unite buildings, providing continuity to the floor of urban areas.
- ✓ Space design should allow buildings to shine and not compete with townscape.
- ✓ Simplicity and coordination is required as well as high quality, robust materials and furnishings._
- ✓ Avoid pattern making.
- ✓ Ensure lighting is functional and creates safe places. Consider opportunities to add interest.
- ✓ Integrate public art and landscape in a meaningful way.
- ✓ Ensure maintenance is fully considered and responsibilities are clear.

Chapter 2

Planning & Design Process



CHAPTER 2 - PLANNING & DESIGN PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

2.0

Through national policy guidance the government is promoting a higher regard to design than has previously existed. Indeed, Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General policy and principles states:

‘Local planning authorities should reject poor designs, particularly where their decisions are supported by clear plan policies or supplementary planning guidance’ (para. 17).

2.1

The Adopted Draft Local Development Plan for Wyre Forest District provides the overall policy framework for the District, against which applications for planning approval will be determined. This site specific and themed document is aimed at supporting and developing plan policy to provide further advice to developers and designers on achieving better urban design. Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have responded to the design issues in this guide and should recognise that design quality will be an important material consideration when determining planning applications.

2.2

This section of the SPG addresses the dimension of design in relation to the planning process. It provides guidance on the following:

- Establishing the key stages in design process.
- Identifying roles and responsibilities at key stages through the development process for developers and their designers and for the local planning authority.

- Establishing a framework for determining planning applications in respect of design concerns.
- Clarifying the range and quality of information which will be required to accompany a planning application to help communicate the urban design response.
- Explaining the key design stages which developers and their designers should be undertaking when evolving development proposals.

2.3

This chapter of the guide will help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning process, by making clear the expectations placed on both developers and the Planning Authority.

DESIGN PROCESS

2.4

Good design and development outcomes will be reliant on an effective and thorough design process. This moves from understanding a site, to reviewing opportunities and developing initial ideas through to detailed design and implementation. The table below summarises a basic design process. The planning process will impact on this design process at critical stages. These stages are described in the remainder of this chapter.

At each stage the following checklist should be followed:

- How can developer’s ambitions best be related to planning aspirations?
- What can we learn from the context – built fabric, landscape, historical change, social issues?
- What is the potential of the site – What makes it special and how best can new development address this?
- Is new development adding value to the existing setting? - New development can and should improve places.

Design Process

Decision Stage	Issues to be considered
Decision to develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish design team (for larger schemes)
Baseline analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop review of planning policy/guidance • Site analysis focusing on understanding key characteristics of the site. • Understand opportunities and constraints to development.
Concept Design Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify design principles for a site, based upon; Activities and uses, movement & linkages, townscape and public realm. • Apply these principles to site in schematic sketches. • Discussions with Planning Authority. • Planning application may be submitted to test the principle of development on a site.
Detailed Design Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop concepts and principles into detailed scheme designs. Specific uses and development outputs; transportation arrangements; (detailed) landscape design and building design. • Detailed consideration of issues of design quality, accessibility, sustainability and security. • Ongoing consultation with planning authority. • Planning application and supporting information (which will vary depending on the complexity/scale of the scheme) may be submitted in respect of detailed development proposals.
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval for any reserved matters and discharge of any conditions. • Ensure design quality is maintained.

Design Skills

2.5

Design skills are integral to the success of any scheme. Planners, urban designers, landscape architects, architects and engineers will all play a role in facilitating good design as will the client. Client thinking and approach from the outset should be aware of the 'external' implications of development. Instructions to designers should not just focus on user requirements but also on context and impacts.

2.6

This guide promotes a culture of 'design review' where proposals can be defined, worked up, presented, reviewed and improved to the benefit of all, from first principles and development concept through to the submission of a planning application and on to implementation.

2.7

This document will also assist in developing the design agenda District, creating the means for debate on design issues. This approach will require time and resources from both the developer and the Council. The value added from good design and the time saved on abortive work will be the reward for investing time in design up front.

2.8

The local authority produces a wealth of information which will be useful to applicants in identifying local authority ambitions for development and design within the District and for particular sites. Such information, available from the Council, can assist applicants in producing proposals which are in tune with the Council's policy objectives and which are more likely to be successful in gaining planning permission.

Development Team Approach

2.9

The District Council has Adopted Practice Note 15 on the Development Team Approach, which is defined as: "The Implementation of a more customer-orientated approach thereby making requirements clear, advertising the service well, and making the necessary staff available to discuss development projects at times to suit the customer".

2.10

The 'Development Team' will include representatives from the Council's Divisions and external partners (such as the Environment Agency and the Highways Partnership Unit) and will only apply to large or major development proposals. The approach will help to improve linkages, whilst delivering better outcomes through early pre-application scoping. It will also ensure that applicants are aware of key requirements from the outset.

Pre-application assistance to developers/designers

2.11

Positive early dialogue can ease unnecessary tension and protracted negotiation. The District Council encourages developers/designers to have pre-application discussions with themselves and other relevant bodies, since this can highlight important issues at an early stage and prevent unnecessary abortive work for all parties. Applicants should be aware of the need to allow realistic time to allow for such consultations.

Stages in the development/planning process and possible concerns which may need to be discussed include:

- Principles/development potential/scoping
- Concept Designs- initial response to planning & design challenges / developer aspirations.
- Scheme Design - the basic components of the proposal.
- Detailed Design- the designed scheme including fully worked up plans, elevations and sections, materials etc.

2.12

The design principles of a scheme should be identified at the outset, either by the developer, the Council or in partnership. These principles should shape the design process as proposals become more detailed. It is important that these principles are agreed with the Council as early as possible and these must accord with relevant planning and design guidance. Existing documents which developers may need to refer to including development briefs and conservation area character appraisals are summarised on page 4 of the introduction to this document.

2.13

In the spirit of teamwork the planning authority wishes to create an open and honest discourse. The clear identification of ambitions on the part of the applicant and Council will greatly reduce the chance for delay, disappointment and potential failure later in the process. The Council takes a promotional view to development which is in line with the development plan, this design guide and other relevant site planning advice.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

2.14

The normal time within which the local authority will be expected to make a decision on a planning application is eight weeks or thirteen weeks for major projects. To assist the Council in the quick and accurate determination of planning applications, officers require a detailed set of information at the outset. Such information will help to establish the proposal within its local context and aid its assessment. The minimum requirements expected for all planning applications are:

- i. A site plan illustrating the development within its wider context
- ii. All relevant existing and proposed floor plans, site plans, elevations and sections
- iii. Application forms and appropriate certificate
- iv. Correct fee
- v. An ownership certificate

2.15

In addition the Council strongly advises that developers submit the following:

- i. Contextual photographs.
- ii. A design statement explaining the design philosophy of the scheme and in particular contribution to local character.
- iii. Perspective drawings of the proposed development in its context
- iv. A landscaping scheme detailing physical works and maintenance responsibilities.

2.16

On sites that either contain or are adjacent to trees of amenity value which might be affected by the development:

- i. A tree survey stating species, age, condition, height, girth, crown and spread in accordance with policy D.4

2.17

In certain cases due to the location, size or character of the site or development, additional information may be required in the form of:

- i. A planning policy statement
- ii. An accessibility statement
- iii. A sustainability statement
- iv. A three dimensional model
- v. Where applicable section 106 statements eg. affordable housing

Consultation with the District Council will clarify what information will be required for a particular proposal.

Design Statements

2.18

Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policy and Principles, advises applicants for planning permission to include a short written statement with their application setting out the design principles adopted in the proposal.

2.19

These statements will help to demonstrate to officers that the applicant has responded to design policies in the Adopted District Local Plan, to the guidance in this SPG and to the specific characteristics of the site. The size and nature of the development will define the degree of detail required for design statements.

Paragraph 5.28 of the Adopted District Local Plan is a starting point for designers and decision makers for analysing local character and assessing the suitability of the chosen design:

2.20

The design statement should provide details on scheme design related to each of the components of character identified in Chapter 3 (Design Guidance for Residential Development part 1).

Consultation

'Consultation is an integral part of the planning system and all development proposals will be subject to statutory consultation. For larger schemes or for development which may generate significant local interest developers are encouraged to consult with relevant groups prior to submission of planning applications. There is evidence that involving the public and stakeholders in the design process early on increases the likelihood of acceptability and the quality of the scheme. Developers are encouraged to discuss their approach to engaging with the public at the pre-application stage. The detail over how consultation is undertaken and recorded will be a matter for the Statement of Community Involvement to be produced by the District Council.'

REVIEWING DESIGNS AND NEGOTIATING QUALITY

2.21

Applications for planning permission will be assessed by the Council's Development Control Team. A significant number of applications will be determined by officers using delegated powers of decision making. The majority of the remainder will be determined by

the Planning (Development Control) Committee. In rare instances applicants will be dealt with by the Secretary of State following call-in procedures or appeals following non-determination.

2.22

Design quality is afforded a high priority by the Council. Development proposals which respond to the guidance within this document will be more likely to be supported by the District Council. Those which do not are more likely to be refused. There should be no doubt that design is a legitimate development control issue.

2.23

Development control officers will review proposals on the basis of the guidance within this SPG as well as the Adopted District Local Plan. This provides applicants with clarity regarding the design criteria against which development proposals will be judged. In this way reviewing design quality becomes an objective rather than a subjective activity.

2.24

This SPG provides a framework through which design quality can be assessed. To help provide the basis for design review, key performance criteria are identified at the end of this chapter. These focus on General Design requirements (based on Chapter 1).

Design Quality Assessment Method

2.25

Reviewing Design Quality using the quality assessment method can provide a simplified snapshot of a schemes performance against a range of general design principles. This can be undertaken at various stages in the design process as well as for completed projects as

part of ongoing monitoring and review. This process can be useful in highlighting improvements negotiated through design review and demonstrate the value added by the Design Quality SPG.

2.26

Assessing performance is a two stage process. First review a scheme based on the headings identified in table 1 and 2 respectively using the scoring system below. Complete this table calculating percentage scores for each of the 4 main themes in each table. Scores should be calculated as follows

- 0 = Poor – This issue is poorly addressed
- 2 = Satisfactory – Issue addressed but improvements are possible
- 4 = Good – This issue is well addressed
- 1 and 3 provide increments within this scale (Where issues are not relevant they should be identified as such and not scored)

2.27

The second Stage of analysis is to complete the two charts based on the percentage scores to map out performance. The templates forms for completing this assessment are located in the appendix to this chapter. This approach seeks to apply a more analytical approach to design review. It will be no substitute for informed knowledge of the issues or places involved and will need careful interpretation.

The following points should frame the use of the quality assessment method.

- This is not intended to be used as a simple boiling down of design quality to these main indicators.

- There will always be a subjective view when scoring quality based on this scoring system
- The intention is that these provide a ‘rounded’ basis for considering design aspects of a project by developers and planners. This will be particularly important in pre application discussions.
- This is not a new way of assessing design quality for planning applications in isolation. It can help frame a view but will not replace the detailed checks and guidance set out in the guide or other important planning documents.
- This design quality assessment system will provide a tool for monitoring design quality by the District Council.
- Developers and designers are encouraged to think about their schemes in relation to this quality assessment method to understand areas of strength and weakness. The performance of a scheme against the assessment criteria might form part of a design statement for a development.

NOTES:

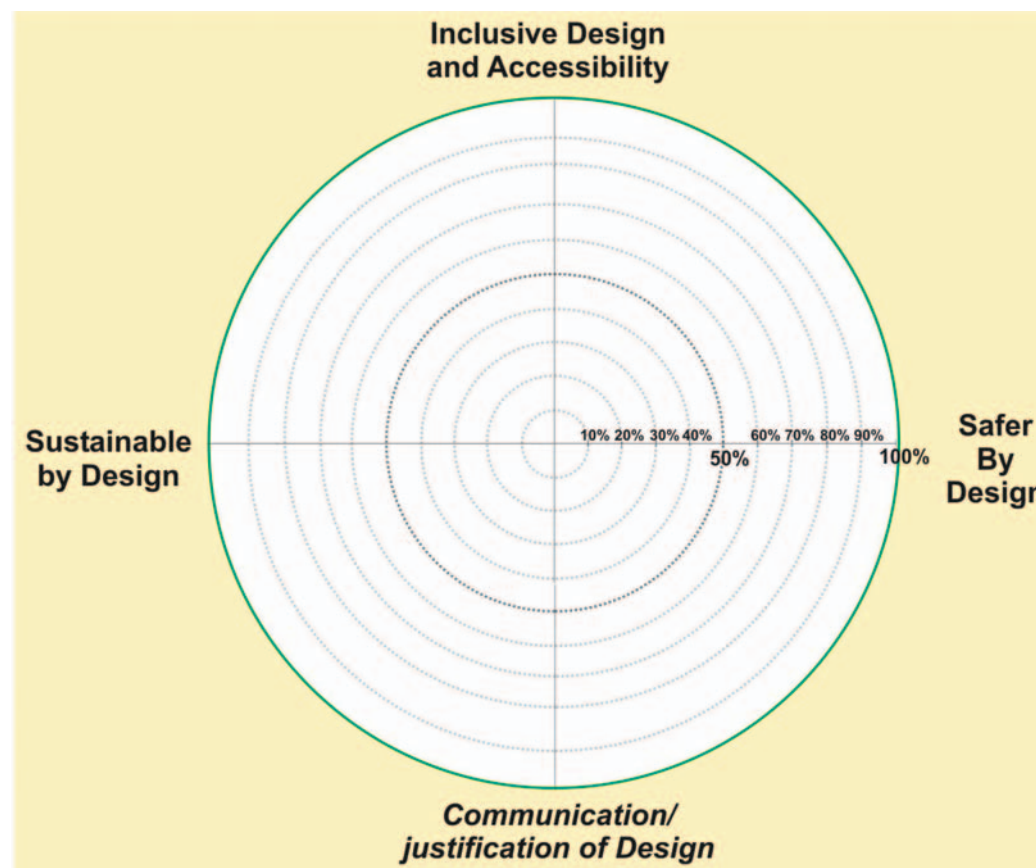
Design Quality Assessment Method

Table 1 - Cross Cutting Themes

Theme	Key Messages	Ratings /Scores				
		Very Poor	Good			
Inclusive Design		0	1	2	3	4
	Compliance with Building Regulation Requirements					
	Accords with Code of Practice BS 8300:2001					
	Accords with Disability Discrimination Act Requirements					
	Accords with County Council Standards/Design Guide					
	Building and their approaches should be designed to be accessible to all					
	Requirements of people with impaired mobility considered in the design of new development					
	The public realm should be clutter free and help everyone to move around freely					
	Balance between pedestrian and vehicular traffic					
Sustainable Design		1	2	3	4	5
	Evidence of commitment to sustainable development					
	Sustainability proven in design, construction and lifetime costs					
	Development Score of Good is Target through BREEAM rating					
Safer by Design		1	2	3	4	5
	Contribution to vitality and street life					
	Contribution to overlooking and natural surveillance					
	Secure but sensitive developments					
	Connected layouts					
	Lighting/safety at night					



Theme	Key Messages	Ratings /Scores				
		Very Poor	Good			
		0	1	2	3	4
Communication and Justification of Design	Plans and elevations					
	Illustrations / artists impressions					
	Models (computer/ Physical)					
	Evidence of analysis					
	Design Statement responding to SPG					



NOTES:

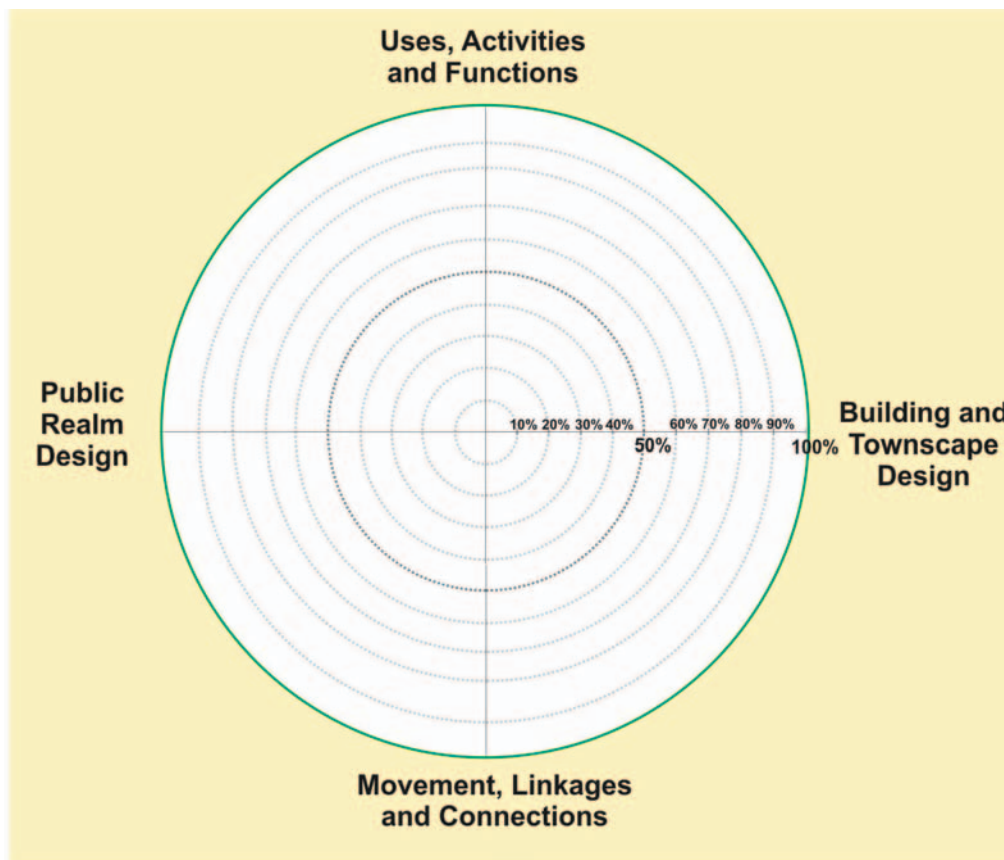
Design Quality Assessment Method

Table 2 - Place Making Themes

Theme	Performance Criteria	Ratings /Scores				
		Very Poor	Good			
Use, Activities and Functions		0	1	2	3	4
	Density within correct range					
	Internal space maximised within the building footprint					
	Car parking integrated in efficient manner					
	Are uses contributing to vitality					
	Contribution to mix of uses within a development					
	Ground floor uses animating and enlivening the public realm					
	Compatibility of uses					
	Re-use of buildings					
	Adaptability of flexibility demonstrated					
Movement & Linkages		0	1	2	3	4
	A well connected structure internally					
	Well integrated within wider street network					
	Direct, safe walking connections					
	Accessible by public transport					
Townscape		0	1	2	3	4
	Positive response to context (overall)					
	▪ <i>Height & massing</i>					
	▪ <i>Scale & Proportion</i>					
	▪ <i>Plot Width & Building Line</i>					
	▪ <i>Materials & Details</i>					
	Continuity and enclosure on street					
	Collective value/Integration of scheme					
	Architectural creativity/quality					
Public realm						



Theme	Performance Criteria	Ratings /Scores				
		Very Poor	Good			
		1	2	3	4	5
Public Realm	Public & private delineated					
	Positive relationship between building frontages and public spaces					
	Integration / provision of open space					
	Good quality street design (coordination and simplicity where improvements are proposed)					
	Maintenance requirements fully considered					



Implementation of projects

2.28

After granting planning permission for a development, the District Council wishes to guard against any changes in specification or design, which may undermine the quality of original proposals as conditions are discharged. Changes may be possible to original designs, where they are demonstrated to be equal or better than approved designs. Where amendments are sought by a developer, the planning authority will expect written justification for the changes before considering them and expects further discussions with applicants before amendments are submitted.

2.31

The key means of maintaining the contact between applicant and the Council over an approved development is the requirement placed on the applicant to demonstrate conditions have been successfully discharged. Conditions will be used to secure certain aspects of a proposal which are deemed important to the overall quality of the scheme. In instances where further information is required in terms of design and specification the Council will attach conditions requiring such information, which may include larger scale drawings, sample materials and detailed landscape specification. The conditions will demand that such details are submitted and approved at particular milestones often before work commences and that the development must be carried out in accordance with approved details.

2.29

Where development is undertaken which contravenes approved drawing and specifications the Council is prepared to take enforcement action.

Layers of Design Guidance

A number of specific types of design guidance have been referred to in the design guide. This appendix to chapter 2 provides a summary of the main types of design guidance.

Thematic Design Guidance

The Adopted District Local Plan provides a range of thematic planning and design policies which are developed in this document.

In this SPG, chapters 1 (District-Wide Design Issues) and 3 (Residential Development) provide guidance of this nature which establishes general guidelines for the district as a whole. In addition, the suite of additional planning advice notes 1 (The 45 Degree Code) through to 8 (The Protection of Trees) provides such thematic guidance.

Area Design Frameworks

More focused and place specific design guidance can be developed in the form of Area Design Frameworks.

These illustrate how general planning policy and thematic design guidance can be applied to particular areas. This requires detailed area and context analysis since the aim is to address local issues and make the most of any unique opportunities, for instance heritage townscape, waterways and topography. The Adopted District Local Plan provides a context within which to develop Area Design Frameworks.

The Design SPG provides urban design analysis and guidance for each Town Centre of Wyre Forest District, which could be developed into more detailed Area Design Frameworks. This information is contained within Chapter 4. The design guidance for Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley complements

the existing Town Centre Strategies and Action Plans, which have been established through the Town Centre Management Forums.

Development Briefs

Development briefs provide more detailed planning and design guidance for particular sites. They can develop plan policy and provide the basis for more efficient planning and a better quality development output. Briefs can be prepared for:

- Large areas in need of a strategic direction and a coordinated approach.
- Individual sites which are sensitive to development or where urban design and planning issues warrant special attention.

Their scope should be established by relevant planning and design issues but should as a minimum address the following:

- Constraints to development on the site
- Access arrangements including servicing
- Prospective land uses
- Rights of way and pedestrian connections
- Existing and proposed build fabric
- Existing and proposed public realm.
- Character and sense of place (value added)
- Planning processes and useful contacts

Consultation is an important aspect of producing a brief, which will be given more weight as a material planning consideration if public consultation has been undertaken and recorded.

A brief can be promotional as well as controlling and provide flexibility for design innovation and creativity whilst establishing the important ground rules for new development. To be most effective, a planning brief has to influence land value and design before the development process has advanced.

Concept Statements

In some cases planning and design advice may need to be produced for a site more quickly. Often the timescale (and resource implications) required to produce development briefs may not be available, but the need for additional planning and design advice is nonetheless urgent, to influence development at the right time. To address this scenario the use of concept statements is encouraged to assist in pre-application discussions to provide consistent and targeted planning and urban design advice.

These should, for example, be produced for small/medium sized windfall sites, where it would be advantageous to have a statement setting out the Council's preferred approach. They will be prepared by the District Council and will not be subject to formal consultation. These statements should be quick to produce and provide a clear guide to developers and although not subject to consultation will be based upon, and given legitimate planning mandate, by the existing plan policy and guidance within this SPG.

If circumstances dictate, these informal statements of intent may be developed into full development briefs depending upon the scale and complexity of the site.

Typically the concept statement should provide:

- Summary of main planning issues
- Photography and brief SWOT analysis
- O/S map base to a recognised scale
- The size of the site
- A list of urban design principles to be followed
- An indication of preferred uses
- An indication of initial access options (if known)
- An indication of buildings to be retained

A concept statement has been produced for the Church Street site in Kidderminster. More will need to be prepared by the Council as this practice becomes an established part of the planning toolkit.

Masterplans

Masterplans are detailed pieces of design work which can establish a physical form for a site based upon the urban design principles and planning issues. Masterplans will be more effective when devised in the context of concept statements or development briefs, which make clear the requirements for the site.

This approach will provide a more detailed three dimensional spatial plan for how a site is to be developed. It will usually be more effective when produced by multidisciplinary design teams where issues of layout, highways implications, planning policy, urban design, ecology, landscape design, architecture, phasing, implementation and costs can be considered together. Such detailed design work will be expected for large developments. The obligation will usually rest with the landowner and/or their developers. This may involve the public and/or private sector. A key requirement is to ensure the design team provides the skills and experience to undertake the task.

A Masterplanning approach is encouraged on larger redevelopment schemes, such as the British Sugar Factory site. Where such Masterplans are produced by developers, early and continued consultation with the District Council is important to ensure planning and design issues are properly addressed from the outset.

Village Design Statements

Village Design Statements help in understanding the character of existing villages. More than this they can assist in guiding the form and detail of new development in that village. Local people should be fully involved

in this process. Advice on how to undertake Village Design Statements is provided in Chapter 5.

Conservation Area Character Appraisals

Of the District's fifteen conservation areas, conservation area character appraisals have been produced for six. These documents describe the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area in pictorial and text form, aimed at assisting those concerned with the use and development of this area and adjoining properties with its preservation and enhancement.

Summary

All of these forms of design guidance add more detail and substance to the policies contained within the Adopted District Local Plan. The Design Quality SPG is the key document for design quality in the District. Additional Design Guidance will support the Development plan and the Design SPG. Developers should not be

Developers will be required to identify how their proposals respond to the relevant design guidance for a particular issue or location. The District Council may produce additional design and planning material from time to time to assist in the redevelopment of the District.

Main messages from Design and Planning Process Chapter:

- ✓ A thorough design process should be followed to help to evolve a scheme.
- ✓ Early consultations with the Council are encouraged.
- ✓ Use of the Design Quality SPG to identify basic design parameters for a scheme is vital.
- ✓ Open and honest debate on design quality issues will be required and the Council seeks to promote a new culture of 'Design Awareness and Review'.
- ✓ Pre-application discussions are seen as vital to efficient planning process, improving the prospect of swifter and more positive determination.
- ✓ Identify the information requirements which should support a planning application – Consult with the Council to confirm.
- ✓ A clear framework for the analytical assessment of 'Design Quality' is provided in the Appendix to this Chapter. This is based on the SPG content and will provide the context for design review and negotiation.

- ✓ Ensure quality is maintained through to implementation.
- ✓ Use the performance criteria approach to assess and negotiate quality in development proposals and the quality of finished schemes.

Monitor design quality and uplift in quality – from proposals to implemented projects – to record the effectiveness of the Design SPG

Chapter 3

Residential Design Guide

CHAPTER 3 - RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

3.0

This Chapter provides design guidance to improve the quality of new residential development within the District. The residential guide is based on three interlocking parts, which address key aspects of residential design. Parts 1 and 2 address particular types of new residential development and although developers would benefit from reading both together, the guidance provided is tailored to the scale of development each seeks to inform. Part 3 is applicable to all types of new residential development though and should be read by anyone designing new residential development. This section specifically targets design issues which are commonly poorly addressed.

Part 1. Smaller Scale Developments - Contextual Design

Part 2. Larger Scale Residential Development - Place Design

Part 3. Specific Design Challenges - Targeted Advice

Each of these parts develops the design advice contained in Chapters 1 and 2.

The need for better residential design

3.1

It is vital that new residential development adds to the quality and distinctiveness of the Wyre Forest District. New residential development will have a profound influence on the character of the District and the quality of life offered to new and existing residents. This section of guidance provides the basis for creating high quality and contextually responsive residential developments.

3.2

There are four main reasons why design guidance is required for new residential development within the district. These provide the underlying principles of the Guide and inform subsequent more detailed advice.

i) **The need to better reflect local character and context**

3.3

A national trend, reflected within the District, has been for newer residential developments to be based upon standard designs, with limited reference to local character and settings. This has created many residential developments which could be anywhere. The expectation will be for new housing development to reflect the qualities that make Wyre Forest distinctive so that new forms of architecture interpret traditional design language. The aim is not to create places to live which look old, but to create residential areas which are distinctive and add to the character of the District. In too many new developments the relationship between new development and existing buildings is weak, with little or no attempt made to relate new to old. This residential guide explains what important contextual issues should be addressed as a starting point to more creative and innovative architecture, such that new development can respond positively to setting.

ii) **The need to create places and communities not estates**

3.4

The physical design of residential areas sets parameters for their success as places to live. A good range of living opportunities in a striking and distinctive physical setting will help to provide the basis for a more sustainable and successful community. The aim is to create places rather than estates.

Estates are generally composed of large numbers of similar properties based upon rigid highway standards. These are all features which new development should move away from.

3.5

Socially, residential development should provide a range of living opportunities to help create more balanced and sustainable communities. Physically, new residential places should be much more than collections of houses served by roads. This requires a greater emphasis on design and appreciation of the character and setting of the site.

iii) **The need to stop designing solely for the car and start designing for people**

3.6

It is not sensible when designing residential developments, to ignore that for many people, car use and storage are important considerations when choosing where and how to live. Accommodating access requirements and sensible levels of parking within schemes are important design considerations. The design of residential areas must not however, be driven by access and parking demands. A more balanced approach is required which integrates traffic into schemes in a more sensitive and less dominating manner. This relates to the layout of scheme and the physical characteristics of the streets themselves.

3.7

By designing more for people and less for cars, residential areas will become safer for everyone. This involves a more flexible and creative approach to the design of residential roads but one which is likely to create residential places that are more characteristic of the residential vernacular of the District's housing areas.

iv) The need for safer places to live

3.8

The residential areas in Wyre Forest do not experience unusually high incidents of crime or disorder. Nevertheless the design of new residential development will need to assist in creating safer communities.

3.9

This involves much more than merely designing secure buildings. The layout and design of buildings, of public spaces and the interaction between the two are critical in achieving safer residential areas. By thoughtful design, opportunities to commit offences against people and properties will be reduced. This section of the guide provides some simple design approaches to designing intrinsically safer residential developments, which people can enjoy without fearing crime.

PART 1 SMALLER SCALE DEVELOPMENTS

– Contextual Design

3.10

Part 1 focuses on the most typical kind of new residential development in Wyre Forest which is within established streetscapes where new buildings must relate positively to their setting. These will tend to be smaller developments on gap brownfield sites where new development will fill in the urban fabric. This may include gaps in street frontage or at corner sites. Guidance here is based upon a thorough understanding of existing character and how new designs can relate positively to it. Part 1 is based upon a number of sections including:

1. Understanding Character
2. Character Areas and Classification
3. Designing to Respond to Local Character
4. Examples of designing in context
5. Designing residential extensions
6. Designing Residential Conversions

Understanding Local Character

3.11

Smaller Scale “infill” development should be designed in a manner which is sensitive and responsive to existing street patterns and characteristics of the surrounding area. The notion of infilling means exactly this and new development will be expected to relate to and complement existing development as well as filling in the gaps within the urban fabric.

3.12

The approach to infill development is based upon an understanding of the character of the locality, particularly individual streets.

The definition of character used within the guide is not based upon architectural style. Character is based upon a number of elements which combine to create the sense of place.

Designing well in context requires a staged approach to analysis and understanding, as set out below and opposite:

3.13

These are basic components of character because they DO NOT seek to identify vernacular style or architectural design features. The aim is to understand the structural elements of the immediate context as a starting point for new development.

Residential Character and Character Types

3.14

Broad character types are identifiable within the District’s residential stock. These include a variety of design styles reflecting many years of urban change.

3.15

A broad range of residential ‘character types’ are identifiable within the District. These ‘character types’ demonstrate a different design language based on the ‘basic component parts to character’ identified previously. Importantly, these relate not just to one place, but a number of places of that general ‘character type’.

3.16

It is worth reiterating that architectural style is not identified as a basic character component. Any number of architectural approaches may be possible and each will be considered on their merits.

The housing character types comprise:

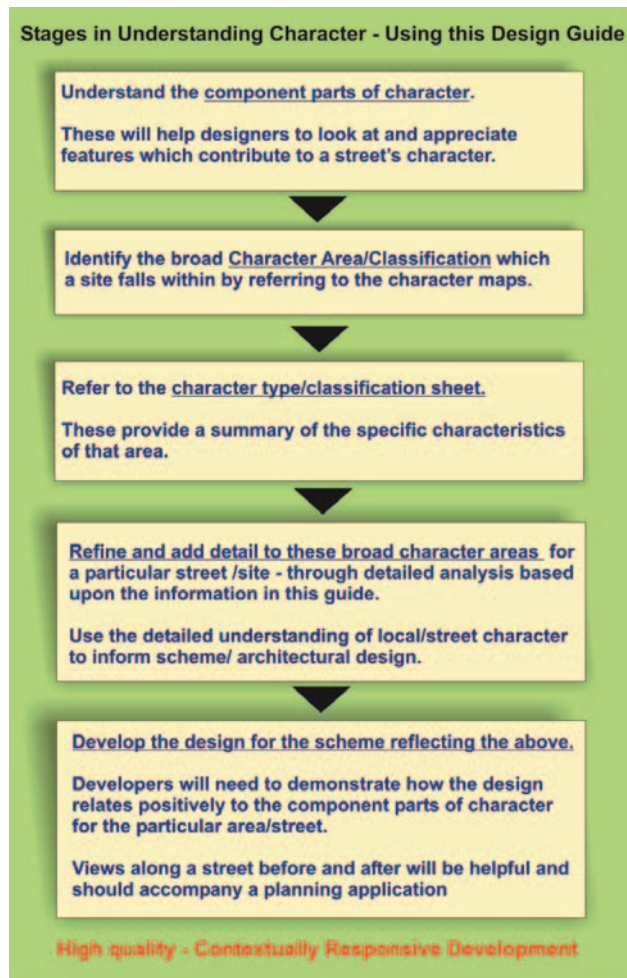
1. Functional Victorian/Edwardian Streetscape
2. More Ornate Victorian/Edwardian Streetscape
3. Villas and free standing historic Town Houses
4. Inter War Suburban Housing (1920's-1940's)
5. Municipal Housing Areas (1940's-60's)
6. Suburban Estates (Post war)
7. High Rise and Apartments
8. Contemporary Infill
9. Contemporary Suburban Development
10. Low Density Executive

3.17

Housing character sheets (p.75 - 88) illustrate the various character types identified. It is worth pointing out that these character sheets are there for the benefit of the designer to help their understanding of character and to inform creative designs. These are guidance and can inform solutions and are not intended to prescribe exacting approaches. Simply aping the style or architectural forms of existing residential areas is not a requirement of the guide and is something which the Council would tend to discourage in favour of contemporary interpretation in the design of new places to live.

3.18

Developers and their designers are encouraged to undertake more detailed analysis of the immediate context to their site, to confirm and add more local relevance to the overall character area classification. Any such supporting information should accompany planning applications in the form of a design statement.



Designing to Respond to Local Character

3.19

Building upon the 'Character Types identified previously, and structured around the 'Basic Component Parts of Character', the guidance within this section establishes general design approaches.

3.20

Designers should ensure that new development is well related to the specific characteristics of the site/street, based upon these character classifications. A site's associated character sheet will be a primary consideration when determining how successful new development is in responding to its context.

3.21

It is worth reiterating that these are only really a starting point though, establishing general design treatments which can assist new developments to relate better to adjacent existing properties.

3.22

Architectural flair and variety will still be possible in the context of this guidance. There may be some cases where innovative and high quality designs justify departure from some of these guidelines.

Component Parts to Character

Street Proportion: The height and width of the street in section this creates the scale and sense of enclosure.

Building Form: The forms of built development including storey heights and reference to terraces/detached houses/apartments etc.

Plot Width: The typical width of individual development plots or dwelling frontages along the street.

Building Line Set Back: the set back of the building frontage from the front boundary of the property - In some cases this may be zero (e.g. Terraces at back of footway).

Frontage Composition: The proportion and arrangement of the vertical plain of building frontages addressing the street.

Facing / Construction Materials: Construction materials for walls The palette construction materials, colours, textures and finishes.

Roof Materials/Types: Construction materials for roofs and their forms including pitch, gables, hips, dormer windows.

Typical Details: Design details can add to the integrity and distinctiveness of a development and are often prevalent in historic setting.

Front Boundary: The construction and type of any front boundary wall or fence between the public and private realm.

Landscape: The existence and typical composition of front gardens and public green space

Parking: Arrangements and provision related to the dwelling.

Despite lower floor to ceiling heights in modern houses continuity can be maintained by customizing the arrangement of floors (see opposite)

- iii. Increasing the height of new development above the established skyline may be acceptable on corner plots or on sites which terminate vistas from other streets.
- iv. The width of the street and its cross section should be shown before and after development, to identify that development is in tune with the scale and proportions of existing buildings, for example building height and set back.

Building Type

3.24

- i. The type of built development proposed may vary from the established context, for instance new flats within a street of villas. The physical massing of new development should however relate well to existing buildings.
- ii. The important considerations in terms of massing are the physical bulk of building in terms of its length and height in relation to the street.
- iii. Creating habitable space within the roof may be possible, although windows must not appear out of place.
- iv. Opportunities for new building forms and architectural statements exist at corner plots where new local landmarks are encouraged.

- v. Where buildings increase in height at corner or other locations, a suitable relationship with adjacent properties will still need to be demonstrated and buildings may need to step up (in height) across the plot to achieve this.



Street Proportion

3.23

- i. New development should not reduce the scale and enclosure of the existing street.
- ii. Specifically lowering the established height of the street at ridge levels will not normally be acceptable.

Plot Width**3.25**

- i. New buildings should relate well to the rhythm of the established street; the distribution of plots should be consistent with the established street scene even where a development site has been created by the amalgamation of individual plots.
- ii. This relates to the presence of 'gaps' in the frontage as well as the frontage itself; development should maintain the rhythm of gaps and not create uncharacteristic openings.

Building Line Set Back**3.26**

- i. New development will be expected to reflect established building lines within the street setting.
- ii. The relationship between building line and front boundary should refer to adjacent proportions and in general follow the line and set back established by context.
- iii. There may be limited exceptions to this general rule at corner locations where buildings may step forwards or back to frame the corner.
- iv. There may be locations where traditional terraced streets are located at the back of the footway. Resistance to matching these traditional building forms will not be acceptable in contextual terms; with good design properties at the back of footway can work perfectly well.

- v. In some cases variation between new and existing building lines may be acceptable, where these add positively to the experience of the street and the townscape experience. The spaces which can be created by 'stepping back' building lines can add to visual interest and provide relief from tightly enclosed streetscapes. The function of any such spaces will need to clear and the design of a high standard.

Frontage Composition**3.27**

- i. New design and composition of development frontages should be properly related to the adjacent or established built frontages.
- ii. The aim is to create new designs which are in proportion with the existing. This does not require that new copies old, but that building frontages reflect general building patterns and distributions.
- iii. This is based upon the key vertical or lateral design elements of a building, particularly; fenestration - window and doors alignment; contrasting brick courses and other changes in materials; Relief with frontage – bays and set backs; other details including down pipes and roof features.
- iv. It is particularly important that infill developments reflect the rhythm, scale and proportions of original buildings, since this helps to define the nature and feel of the street.
- v) Whilst not wanting to inhibit architectural approaches, as a general point, simplicity

is preferred to over decoration and a strong relationship with nearby buildings will be sought. In some cases this may mean juxtaposition rather than harmony, but this would only normally be supported where design quality is clearly demonstrable.

Facing / Construction Materials**3.28**

Note: In developing guidance from Chapter 1 the following points of clarification are made regarding small scale developments.

New materials will need to relate positively to the buildings within the street. The test as to whether a material is suitable within a context will be based upon its relevance to the location based upon the following:

- i. Indigenous: A preference for materials which are already used within the street.
- ii. Colour: Sympathetically coloured materials will be preferred - often to match existing in sensitive settings.
- iii. Texture and Finish: New materials should relate to the textures and finishes of original features within the street. Where variety in finishes is evident new development may respond to this theme.
- iv. (for example individual rendered properties set against mainly brick finished properties).
- v. Scale: Unit sizes for brick stone, block work, tiles, screens, panelling and so on should reflect the scale of the established setting.

- vi. Contrast: Limited use of contrasting elements can be used sensitively to add to the character and distinctiveness of a development.
- vii. Quality: New materials should be as high in quality as traditional materials.

Roof Materials/Types

3.29

- i. Roofing materials should generally be selected to match those adjacent. These should create robust and functional elements to the composition.
- ii. The pitch of roof planes is as important as the more obvious characteristics of hip and gable composition and in each case new designs should generally reflect the established street setting. Traditional buildings have tended to have steeper roofs in excess of thirty degrees.
- iii. Traditional dormer windows or feature gables are integral features within many building frontages. These features should be considered only where evident in existing buildings.
- iv. Contemporary roofs and roof details will be considered on their merits as part of the overall frontage design. Such features should be well related to the proportions of other more traditional roofing features evident within the locality.
- v. Extensions to existing properties may include the conversion of roof space to provide additional accommodation. New windows within such schemes should avoid introducing new features such as dormer windows when

they are not part of the existing street scene and where new windows would be highly visible from the street. Day light to roof space should be provided by roof windows such as 'Velux' windows.

Typical Details

3.30

- i. Greater relief, integrity and character are often attributed to traditional vernacular architecture. New development is encouraged to make reference to such traditional features.
- ii. This should not be simple copying. An interpretation is required which demonstrates an appreciation of the original detail and an acknowledgement of this feature within new development.
- iii. Such details may include; ornate brickwork or stonework, doors, windows and their casing, decorative eave and cornice treatment, name and date plates, mosaics, ridgeline treatments and so on.
- iv. Original features and traditional materials such as sash windows may be required in historic settings particularly Conservation Areas.
- v. Including details is not just about the building itself. Landscape design and boundary treatment all present opportunities.

Front Boundary

3.31

- i. Front boundaries should be aligned to match adjacent properties. Deviation from this will generally undermine the linear qualities of the street.
- ii. The materials used to form the boundary, and their proportions, should relate well to the street and its wider setting whether it be urban or rural. A consistent approach is needed to help unite the street edge.
- iii. New developments consistently under perform when designing front boundaries to residential properties. Developers should be in no doubt of the importance of this often overlooked feature to the quality of a scheme.
- iv. Lateral boundaries between properties within front gardens are not always necessary and can harm the rhythm of the street if they are too high or of unsympathetic materials. The extensive use of panel or palisade fencing for such a use is strongly opposed. Consider the use of other materials and particularly planting which provide a softer edge and allow views through.

Landscape

3.32

- i. The landscape character of a site needs to be properly addressed in development proposals.
- ii. Planning policy affords protection to significant trees and landscape features most notably in Local Adopted Plan Policies D.4 Design

(existing trees), D.11 Design of Landscaping Schemes and NR.6 Development adjacent to Watercourses .

- iii. Where a site provides a rich landscape, then this should be one organising feature of the design.
- iv. Where the established character of a street is based on trees or vegetation within front or back gardens, then new development should provide similar features to match existing.
- v. The scale and design of front gardens should be in keeping with the overall street.
- vi. Where no front gardens or private external space exists within a street new development should not normally introduce this new feature as it will look out of place.
- vii. Corner plots provide greater flexibility in terms of a landscape response.

Parking

3.33

- i. Parking arrangements and provision may need to be different in new development. Local Adopted Pan Policy TR.17 Car Parking Standards and Provision sets out the policy context for car parking, whilst Local Adopted Plan Policy TR.6 Cycling Infrastructure deals with cycle parking. Relevant standards are referred to in Appendix 9 of the Adopted District Local Plan.
- ii. There will be a general presumption in favour of a continuation of existing car parking

arrangements – where there is a tradition of back of footway development or on street parking and where access/courtyard parking arrangements are not practical in physical or design terms, the design imperative will take precedence over Local Adopted Plan Policy TR.17.

- iii. Car parking should not dominate the dwelling or the street scene unduly. Whole areas of front garden given over to hard standing are discouraged, particularly where this is not a traditional design feature of the street.

3.34

Small scale developments are particularly sensitive to changing design trends. Designers need to demonstrate a creative approach towards interpreting local and street character as described in this section. The classifications and their component parts establish the ground rules for new development; these do however provide sufficient flexibility for creative interpretation.

3.35

The emphasis is placed upon sensitive interpretation. If a designer gets the basics right – massing, skyline, proportion, scale, rhythm, composition, colours, details, – then the architectural language is more likely to be successful – be that in a contemporary or traditional style.

3.36

In this sense new development will be expected to be more than a pastiche of historical references. Indeed the superficial use of elements without an understanding of the design principles behind them can lead to poor imitations of traditional forms and this should be avoided. Innovation and creativity are actively encouraged.

3.37

When assessing the quality of infill development, the relationship established by building design, between new development, adjacent properties and the established character of the street will be as important as the architecture itself.

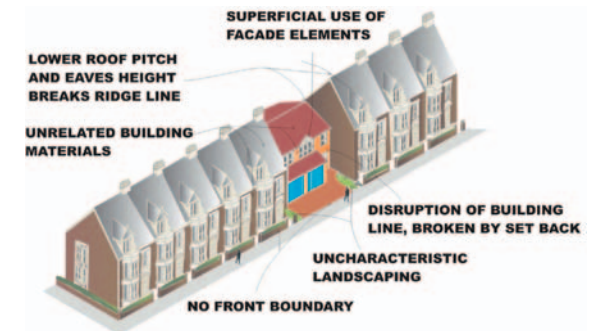
Infill Development Examples

3.38

The following two pages illustrate how this guidance can be applied to two hypothetical situations – Infill along an established street and development at a corner gap site.

3.39

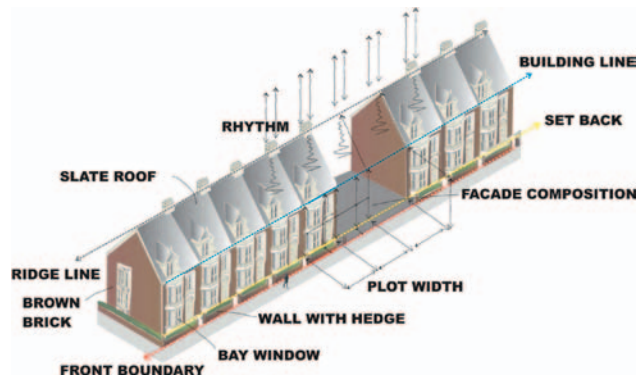
A common approach to housing development is the use of generic house types. In an infill situation such a response is unlikely to produce a quality of development in harmony with the established street scene. Typical weaknesses include:



Example 1 – Street Infilling
The Standard Solution – Ignoring Context

3.40

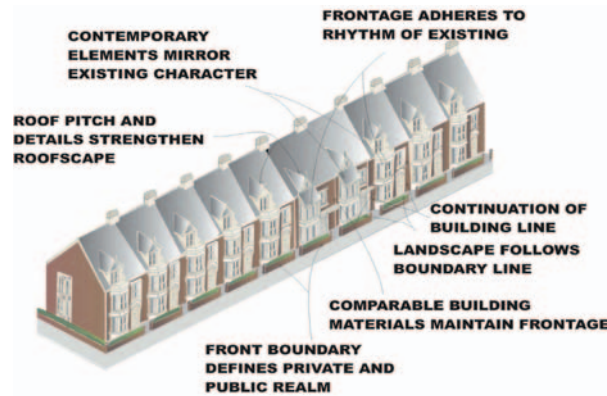
The method outlined in this design guide is for designers and developers to understand the component parts of character in a street, work with these elements, and conceive a solution that is a 'good neighbour.' The starting point will be to refer to the character type/ classification sheet which applies to the site and build upon this with a thorough analysis of the adjoining buildings. In doing so, likely pointers to a successful design could be:



The Contextual Method – Understanding Context

3.41

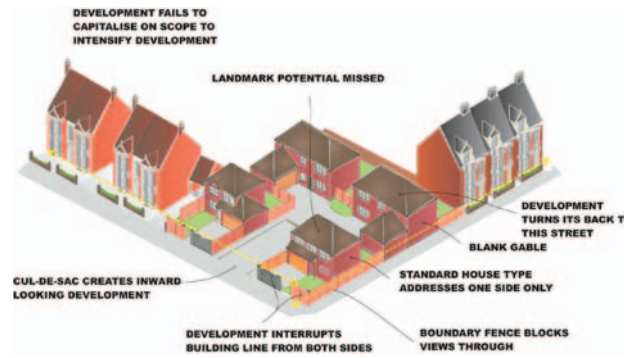
Using the information gained from the character assessment, designers can then build up the component parts as a basis for a design. This is not a bar to creativity; new development must do more than mimic the past. Successful designs will sympathise with tradition but be rooted in the twenty first century:



A Better Result – A Considered Response to Context

3.42

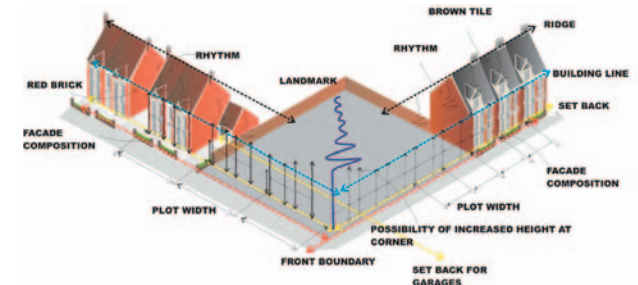
The design of corner developments requires a particularly sensitive response since the constraints of the site are more complex than a length of street. It is here most often that the use of standard house types is less likely to achieve a solution corresponding to both sides. Typical weaknesses include:



Example 2 – Corner Gap Site Redevelopment
The Standard Solution – Ignoring Context

3.43

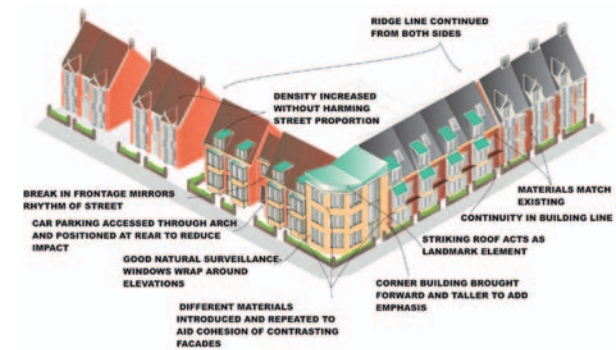
An analysis of the surrounding context in this case will refer to both sides of the development, which may be of opposing typologies. Pointers to a successful design could be:



The Contextual Method – Understanding Context
The Enlightened Response

3.44

A successful development will reconcile the differences between each street in one design. Since corner sites are often highly visible the opportunity for creating a focal point should be capitalised. The development should draw upon existing materials and details unified by a contemporary architectural language:



A Better Result – A Considered Response to Context

Designing Residential Extensions

3.45

Residential extensions can potentially have a significant impact on existing streets if executed poorly. In addition to the guidance provided elsewhere, this section outlines the approach to the design of residential extensions.

3.46

Adopted District Local Plan policy D.17 sets the Council's policy context in regard to such development. Advice in regard to extensions already exists in the following good practice leaflets:

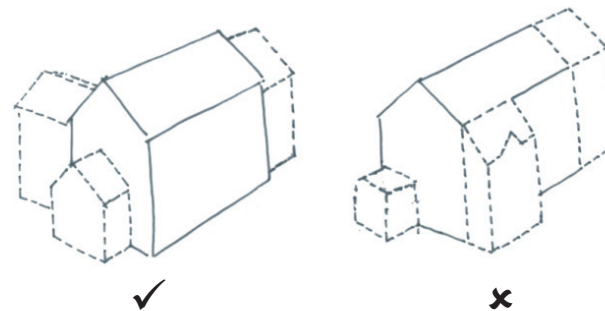
1. The 45°- Guidance in regard to preserving natural daylight for neighbouring properties.
2. A Guide to House Extensions- General principles to designing good extensions.
4. A Planning Guide to Conservation Areas- Listing of conservation areas in Wyre Forest and additional restrictions relating to development within them.
5. A Householder Guide to Permitted Development- Details of alterations which do not require planning permission.

3.47

Extensions to existing residential development will need to be sympathetic to the original buildings, to which the design should be visually subservient. To help achieve these extensions should address the following:

- i. Maintain original frontage rhythms by stepping back slightly from the original building line.
- ii. Ensure that ridge heights and eave heights are lower than the original building.

- iii. Avoid creating overly large single extensions which overwhelm the original property.
- iv. Ensure that the 'front face width' of extensions is based upon the existing vertical proportions of the house to be extended.
- v. Avoid terracing streets by extending properties along the street
- vi. Any projections should not damage an established building line at the front of the property.
- vii. Building materials for roofs and walls should match existing.
- viii. Distinctive landscape elements such as trees should not be compromised.



3.48

These simple steps will help to maintain the visual prominence of the original building envelope and massing and avoid the amorphous growth of buildings. The drawing below helps to explain this approach.

3.49

Ideally extensions should be positioned to the rear or side of properties where the effect of new building is less likely to impact on the street scene. Privacy and amenity of adjacent or nearby properties will need to be retained.

Residential Conversions

3.50

Only in very particular circumstances does Policy H.2 of the Adopted District Local Plan, indirectly, allow for possible conversion of architecturally interesting industrial or agricultural buildings to residential use. In such cases, sympathetic conversions will be encouraged that will help to re-enforce local character and richness.

There is a particularly strong emphasis on bringing new economic uses to character buildings which have lost their original function.

3.51

Consideration of a building for conversion will first depend on its suitability not only in terms of design but also its effect on transport, local amenities, the natural environment and the local economy, amongst other factors.

3.52

The design of residential conversions places extra demands in terms of servicing, circulation and accessibility on older buildings. Contemporary development can compromise the quality and integrity of these buildings if works are not undertaken in a sensitive manner with care taken over the design and integration of new features.

3.53

Alterations to older buildings which may be required to bring them into use in line with modern standards include:

- i. Stairwells
- ii. Lifts/Stair lifts
- iii. Additional entrances or windows
- iv. Removal of internal walls
- v. Ramps
- vi. Division of internal space – laterally and/vertically
- vii. Guttering/soil pipes
- viii. Ventilation
- ix. Information/technology capability
- x. Car parking

Wherever possible these requirements should be met by redesign of internal space within the building to limit visual impact on the exterior of the building.

3.54

In some cases it may not be easy to fit certain requirements within the confines of the building and alterations may need to be made to the outside of the building.

3.55

Chapter 1 described an approach to building design where any additions to older buildings are to be undertaken in a contemporary design language to look clearly affixed to the original building. Against this general principle a number of further design considerations should be addressed:

- i. Draw from the existing palette of materials and traditional construction materials and elements when repairing original features.

- ii. Elements which are obviously contemporary should be designed as such to contrast with older buildings in terms of colour, texture and finish.
- iii. The use of modern lighter materials such as steel and glass to reduce physical massing and bulk and to allow views of the original building are encouraged.
- iv. Larger structural elements need not be in scale with older buildings – in terms of materials and unit sizes - but they should be in proportion with building rhythms, particularly fenestration and vertical relief.
- v. Avoid large extensions which occupy significant proportions of historic frontages. Smaller segments or plains (vertical/horizontal) of development will create a more striking and balanced aesthetic.
- vi. Less attractive alterations such as soil pipes and guttering should be positioned to the rear or side, out of view.
- vii. Carefully consider floor to ceiling heights and the impact on fenestration since particularly low ceilings will require alterations to floors.
- viii. Preserve the building's setting by incorporating other natural and man made features within the grounds.
- ix. Situate large areas of car parking to the back and out of view.

Backland Development**3.56**

Backland development will be controlled through Adopted District Local Plan Policy H.6. Key design tests will be to ensure:

- i. No significant adverse impact on amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, space, overlooking, overshadowing and vehicular access arrangements.
- ii. No significant adverse impact on local Character, which will need to be reflected in any new development, in terms of scale, height and massing of new development.

3.57

Where backland development is proposed and supported in planning policy terms by the Council, the following design advice will need to be followed:

- i. New development forms should be visible only from their principle access points. New development should not be visible above existing properties.
- ii. Where possible create more than one point of access/egress for pedestrians and vehicular traffic – these should be based on streets.
- iii. Pedestrian alleyways should be avoided, and if pedestrian only routes are proposed, these need to be well overlooked from residential frontages.
- iv. The contextual approach as described in Part 1 of the Residential Guide will need to be followed for these sites.

- v. The design of new development within back land schemes will need to be visually well related to the surrounding development. This can be achieved through similar massing, scale and proportion, as well as use of materials which harmonise with their surroundings.
- vi. Opportunities to introduce new types of properties on back land sites should be investigated, to increase the range and of residential options locally.
- vii. Schemes based purely on bungalows within areas of two storey housing should be avoided. A mix of single and two storey developments may be possible on some back land sites, with new two storey development helping to step down in scale, providing continuity with context.
- viii. The principle of rear aspects addressing other rear aspects and development frontages facing onto each other and defining the street will need to be demonstrated on back land sites.

3.58

Where sites are particularly challenging in terms of their size, topography and or proportions, innovative designs and layouts will be required to ensure development accords with the design principles in this guide.

Main points from Chapter 3 - Part 1: Smaller Scale Developments

- The development of gap and infill sites should act to consolidate and repair the urban fabric.
- The quality of infill developments will have profound impact on established townscape settings. This can, if not undertaken sympathetically, undermine local character.
- Development on infill/gap sites will need to respond positively to the key characteristics of the setting.
- To help understand the elements which make up local character, the Guide establishes 'Component Parts of Character'.
- Based upon this 'Character Classifications' for residential areas across the District provide more detailed information on key characteristics.
- Both the Component 'Parts of Character' and 'Character Classifications' should be used by developers to develop an understanding of local character.
- These are resources for designers. These also provide a means of critique as part of the design review process.

- The Guide outlines a series of design responses based on the developing local character. These set the ground rules for new development.
- Basic street elements such as proportions, plot widths, building lines, frontage composition, boundary treatment, rooflines and pitches, eave and ridge heights, should all be drawn from the immediate context.
- Materials will be expected to be of a high quality and harmonise with existing. Schemes may achieve this by matching existing or contrasting with existing.
- Contemporary design and architecture is encouraged, which reflects the basic street elements, but creates an exciting design response.
- Extensions and conversions should be sensitively undertaken to ensure the integrity of the original building is not undermined.

PART 2 LARGER SCALE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT- PLACE DESIGN

3.59

Part 2 focuses on larger scale residential development and whole scheme design, rather than new additions to established residential settings. It is applicable to new residential sites, including those identified in the Adopted Local District Plan and larger windfall sites. Where developers are unclear which approach to follow, consultation with the Council is encouraged.

3.60

Such development will be of a scale and location that deriving a design response from context alone may not be possible or desirable. In such cases another design approach is required. Whilst recognising that context remains important, such larger scale developments require a much fuller design approach aimed at creating new and high quality residential places, which contribute to the character of the District.

3.61

Planning Policy will determine where and in what numbers such larger scale residential development occur within the District. Within this context this section provides guidance which can help to improve the quality of any such developments.

3.62

The guidance provides design advice, structured around the following issues:

1. Understanding the Potential of the Site
2. Creating the Structure of the Site
3. Residential Streets
4. Creating Townscape
5. Housing Design

3.63

This structure provides a chronological sequence of design considerations which help to develop the layers of the scheme. These are based upon the design process described in Chapter 2. This layered approach is encouraged when designing any scheme, not just residential developments.

Understanding the Potential of the Site

3.64

Considering the site in context should be the first task of any designer or developer. This relates to the social and community context as well as the physical setting to include issues such as walking time/distance to local shops, schools and services.

3.65

Access to local and community facilities will need to be considered when designing new or extended residential communities. Although planning policy sets the context for mixed use developments, it may be a requirement for new residential developments (of a significant scale) to provide ancillary uses to new homes to help to meet daily needs locally. The threshold for including such ancillary uses within a development scheme will need to be determined in consultation with the District Council. Such uses may include a local shop, schools, village pub, cafe or launderette or community centre or crèche.

3.66

A starting point will be access to existing facilities within walking distance of the site. The ambition should be for all dwellings within a development to be within a seven minute (500 metre) walk of local facilities.

3.67

Designing to meet local needs which arise from new residential development is important if the new houses created are to become properly functioning communities rather than satellite estates tacked onto the existing infrastructure of the district. Such new uses should complement and not threaten the viability of existing local centres.

3.68

The mix and type of properties will also be relevant with the creation of more balanced communities a key planning ambition. Planning policy within the Adopted District Local Plan (Policy H.4) will set the context for creating more mixed residential communities, including provision of affordable housing.

3.69

An early task will be to carry out a rudimentary capacity study for the site to understand the scope for new residential development. This should identify likely constraints on developable areas within the site and relate development capacity to the Council's density standards. An initial property market appraisal – identifying potential residential sectors should be balanced with planning policies for mixed communities. Early consultation with the council regarding these two important baseline issues is encouraged.

3.70

The **physical context** of the site should inform the specific design response. To help understand the special qualities of the site and to identify accurately opportunities, both desktop review and field work will be required.

3.71

A number of strategic contextual issues are identified. These are higher level concerns than those identified in Part 1 and should be used to inform the layout of new development. Key contextual features which should feed into scheme layout and design include:

- i. Solar orientation
- ii. Topography and natural features
- iii. Important view / attractive aspects – such as river frontages
- iv. Immediate streets connecting to the site – their scale, proportions and transit functions
- v. Traditional street alignments, lengths and block sizes
- vi. The character of nearby townscape
- vii. Historical development patterns – What has been lost could inform what is to be created
- viii. The constraints of the site, including protected trees drainage and rights of way

3.72

The key questions which context analysis must answer, which are raised in Chapter 2 are:

- i. What can we learn from the context – built fabric, landscape, historical change, social issues?
- ii. What is the potential of the site – What makes it special and how best can new development address this?

- iii. Is new development adding value to the existing setting? - New development can and should improve places.

Creating the structure of the site**3.73**

Scheme layout may vary considerably within the district. This guide seeks to prompt a greater awareness of location and context when laying out a scheme. A number of general principles should be followed and these apply to any site:

- i. Make the most of the setting by orientating building frontages to face onto and provide views over landscape features.
- ii. Create a structure which is well connected both to its wider environment and in itself. These linkages should be based upon streets and not pedestrian alleyways. Even if through traffic is not desirable the street (in whatever form) should be the basis for any layout.
- iii. Layouts should avoid being inward looking and cellular. Such cellular layouts have led to cul-de-sac forms. These have no relevance to the vernacular of the District and work against the principle of connectivity and integration.
- iv. Traditional street networks, which provide different choices and options to move around a site, should be created. The aim is not just to create a housing layout, but to establish new townscapes and village settings.

- v. Layouts should clearly relate to their location in terms of street and block design considering the following:

- a. Street lengths and alignments - Including any characteristic changes in direction.
- b. Development blocks sizes and proportions - including any characteristic shapes.
- c. The relationship between street and the block will be important in developing character. Formally laid out schemes and organic schemes being typical examples.

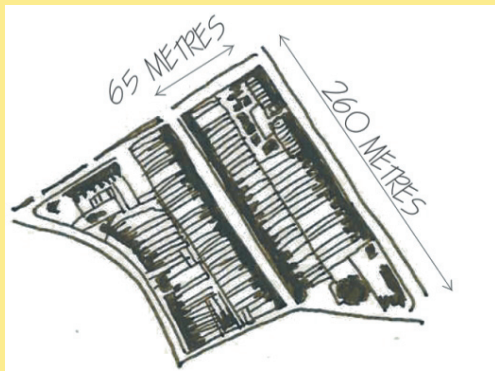
3.74

Development blocks should form the basis of any design. It is not a recent concept, the practice of establishing a block structure was widespread until the mid twentieth century.

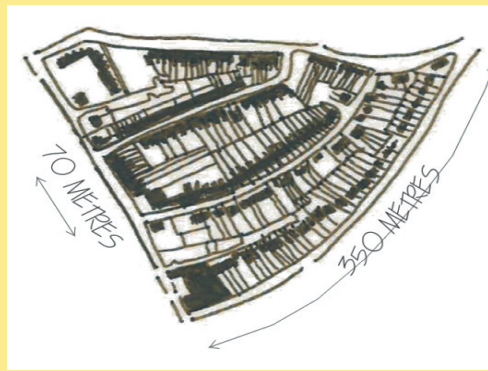
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The area created by an alignment of streets establishes a structure of blocks or plots where houses can then be positioned. The principle of the block is that building frontages should address and overlook public streets whilst private spaces to the rear are located together, enclosed by buildings in order to establish a robust and secure island of development. A multitude of development possibilities can be created based upon the urban block principle. The three main settlements of Wyre Forest all exhibit forms that are characteristic of development blocks.

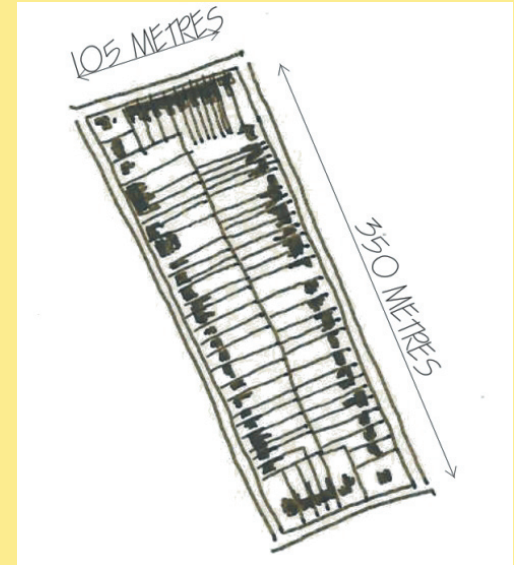
Kidderminster (example 1)

*Park Street / Wood Street / Woodfield Crescent*

Kidderminster (example 2)

*East Street / St Georges Terrace / Cherry Orchard*

Kidderminster (example 3)

*Shrubbery Street / Roden Avenue***3.76**

Of the three towns Kidderminster has the most developed block structure. Blocks to the inner west of the town in areas such as Foley Park and Brinton Park and Greenhills to the west, are regular in character with a straight grid iron network of streets.

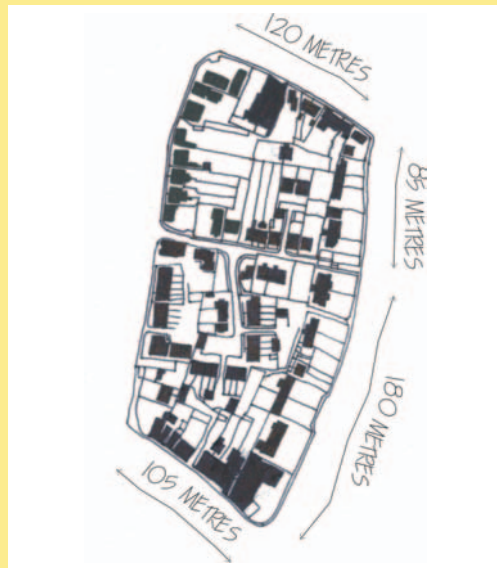
3.77

The topography of Comberton Hill dominates the inner eastern residential areas of Kidderminster making a regular grid less suited to this location. Here an organic variation of the block has developed.

3.78

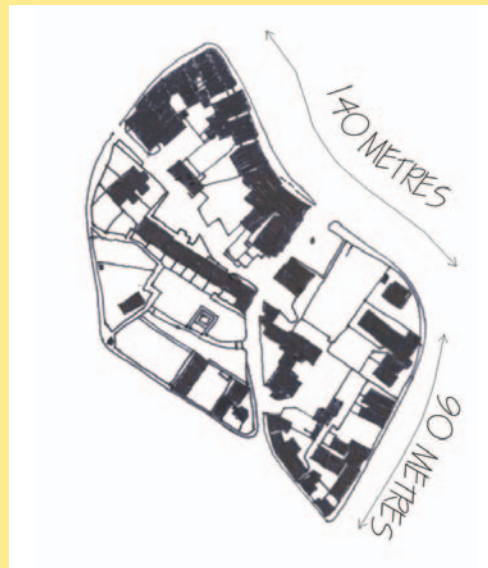
Further north, the 'Shrubbery' area of Kidderminster demonstrates a much grander scale of block. Streets are wide and straight, often tree lined, fronted by grand villas.

Stourport-on-Severn



*Lion Hill / Vale Road, Gilgal, Mitton Street,
Severn Road, Lichfield Street*

Bewdley



*Kidderminster Road, Westbourne Street,
Stourport Road*

3.79

In Stourport development blocks are likely to be regular in shape, similar to Brinton Park in Kidderminster but smaller in scale. The development of the Severn Road/Lichfield Basin area in particular presents an opportunity to extend the block network eastwards.

3.80

Like Stourport the structure of blocks in Bewdley is mainly confined to the town centre. Blocks tend to be small in scale and irregular in shape. The block contained by Severn Side South, Lax Lane, High Street and Load Street is a large regular block which contains a park in its centre.

3.81

Integrating open spaces from the outset is an important consideration during the development of streets and blocks. Open space should be viewed with equal measure so that it is not merely landscaped leftover space but a fully incorporated feature of the scheme.

3.82

The provision of public open spaces should create usable external areas; its location and design will be a significant factor to whether open space is well used and successful in contributing to the amenity value of a scheme.

Existing natural features are a good starting point for any design. In general open spaces within residential developments should:

- i. Be located at junctions within the street network.
- ii. Create focal points for social activity and contribute to the amenity and ecology of the scheme.
- iii. Be well overlooked from building frontages, especially in the case of children's play areas.
- iv. Form part of a network of hard and green spaces for larger sites.
- v. All open spaces within a scheme must have a specific purpose with clarity regarding ownership and maintenance responsibilities.
- vi. Inclusion of formal recreation areas, (such as children's play) is encouraged within larger developments.

- vii. Open spaces – public or private – should be delineated.

3.83

Private and semi private external spaces will be important to the enjoyment of properties and developers will need to demonstrate how this issue has been addressed. This is particularly challenging for higher density developments.

Residential Streets and Traffic

3.84

Street design is a critical factor for the creation of successful residential areas. Establishing a hierarchy of streets within a scheme should drive the layout process and help to inform all subsequent design decisions. The basic point is that streets are not all alike. The layout should provide a linked network of streets which form layers, moving from main streets, where traffic and pedestrian flows will be greatest, to more local streets where flows will be less intensive. A typical hierarchy may comprise the following, which is based upon the illustrated example:

- i. Primary Streets (Village Street) – To provide main access/egress points to the scheme and act as the spine.
- ii. Secondary Streets (Residential Streets) – To link into the primary street and provide access to lower levels in the hierarchy.
- iii. Tertiary streets (Residential lanes) – To connect secondary streets providing a further level to the permeable and connected street structure.



Primary Streets



Secondary Streets



Tertiary Streets

3.85

The hierarchy should help to determine levels of traffic penetration into a scheme, as well as the approach to traffic calming and the design of the street itself – from its cross section and to detailed materials specification. Street proportion (building lines / frontage heights / boundary alignment / carriageway widths) will establish the hierarchy. As a general rule, primary streets should start off wider and be enclosed by taller buildings, with spaces becoming more intimate and smaller in scale through the lower levels of the hierarchy.

3.86

In some schemes, particularly in or close to town centres, all streets may be primary in nature and so careful consideration needs to be given to how a particular site can be structured which balances high levels of traffic and the need to establish a pleasant residential environment.

3.87

Traffic integration is often the reason why residential development lacks relevance to its setting. When the demands of traffic are considered in a vacuum the layout is unlikely to create a pleasant environment.

3.88

It is best to design streets through the positioning of buildings first and then to track vehicular movement as a check. Building alignments and relationships can then be developed to reflect local vernacular forms and create townscape so that streets are designed as places for people. This is opposed to the design philosophy of many 'anywhere' suburban schemes, where roads are the main organising feature around which houses are then placed.

The approach should be to design for the place and not for traffic access –integrate traffic into the scheme, rather than designing the layout around the roads.



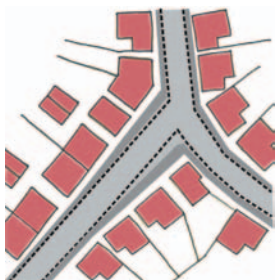
Standard road layouts have tended to inform most housing developments.



Design and arrange buildings to fit the context.



Place footways to emphasise the building line and maximise public space.



Check the carriageway width by plotting vehicle tracking paths using minimum widths.



3.89

One measure of quality for new residential settings will be 'walkability', the extent to which the design and layout of streets promotes ease of movement for pedestrians.

3.90

The District Council will work with developers and the Highway Authority to achieve this important aim. It is anticipated that in most cases, new residential streets will become adopted highway for maintenance by Worcestershire County Council in its role as Highway Authority. The adoption process should not act as a barrier to achieving quality in design, layout or specification. A flexible approach to highway design is required to implement the guidance within this chapter of the SPG. More detailed considerations for the design of residential roads is contained within Part 3 of this Chapter.

Creating Townscape

3.91

Development will be more successful if the scheme is considered in a coordinated manner, with thought given to site as a whole. This section develops advice provided within Chapter 1, where emphasis is placed on **creating townscape** value and defining public space.

3.92

Before any detailed consideration is given to the architecture of a scheme a number of design issues should be addresses, which will help to give structure to the development forms on the site. The following questions should be considered.

- i. What references and relationships need to be developed with the setting/context?

- ii. What is the townscape vernacular of the location and how can new development relate positively to this precedent?
- iii. Where are the important views in and out?
- iv. Where are the gateways to the scheme? How can the townscape help to frame these?
- v. Are there any visually prominent locations across the sites, where potential landmark buildings could be located?
- vi. How will corners be addressed in the scheme in terms of heights, set backs and so on?
- vii. Where are the prominent frontages which create most impact? How can the design emphasise the importance of these frontages?
- viii. Is there potential for set piece urban forms (Crescents, Squares etc.) to help build local distinctiveness? These are often best located around new or existing open space and landscape.
- ix. How will building heights be arranged on the site? Is there scope for taller buildings? How will the heights of established areas inform site development?
- x. How can the townscape add to the legibility of the site and help people to understand and move through the scheme?
- xi. How will the scheme be distinctive and special in its architecture and design, whilst still reflecting local character?

3.93

The site analysis should provide responses to these questions and help to create a framework for built forms on the site. These key questions can relate to other large scale sites, not just residential developments.

3.94

The **detail of architectural designs** should be considered on a site by site basis and designs will be assessed on their merits in relation to guidance elsewhere in this document. A number of pointers towards better practice should be considered during the design process.

- i. People in general like to see and be able to access their homes directly from the street.
- ii. In apartments shared circulation areas are more successful where they serve a small number of properties.
- iii. The orientation of living rooms to track the path of the sun can be helpful in creating light spaces.
- iv. Domestic scale and architectural richness are the tradition in the districts housing stock. Contemporary designs should not lose sight of this tradition.
- v. The architectural language of housing is less suited to industrial/commercial building design and techniques. Features such as curved roofs, synthetic materials and industrial scale cladding and large roof overhangs should be avoided.
- vi. Stepped roofs and chimneys may be used in order to avoid a monotonous roofline and reinforce the domestic character of the area.

- vii. Residential conversions of heritage townscape should preserve the integrity of the existing building.

The choice of materials in larger scale residential developments should reflect advice in Chapter 1.

Housing Design**3.95**

Density will play an important role in determining the nature and character of development. The Wyre Forest Adopted District Local Plan identifies a (net) density profile for the district in Local Adopted Draft Local Plan policy H.5, summarised as:

- i. 70 dwellings per hectare in Kidderminster Town Centre
- ii. 50 dwellings per hectare within 500 metres of Kidderminster Town Centre Inset (Adopted District Local Plan Proposals Map) and Kidderminster Railway Station.
- iii. 50 dwellings per hectare in Stourport on Severn Town Centre.
- iv. 40 dwellings per hectare in Kidderminster and Stourport for sites within 300 metres of a bus stop on a high frequency bus corridor.
- v. 30 dwellings per hectare elsewhere.

3.96

These are minimum not maximum thresholds. Net density refers to the number of dwellings on a site including:

- i. Access roads within the site
- ii. Private garden space

- iii. Car parking areas
- iv. Incidental open space and landscape
- v. Children's play space

but excludes:

- vi. Major distributor roads
- vii. Primary schools
- viii. Open space serving a wider area
- ix. Significant landscape buffer strips

3.97

Higher densities provide the basis for more economical use of land, more viable communities and more sustainable communities. This guide provides the advice to help achieve these higher densities within the District.

3.98

In responding to this policy new development must ensure that the scale and density of the scheme is relevant to its setting. Whilst increasing residential densities is an acknowledged planning objective, it is not in itself a measure of design quality.

Good design will be integral to achieving the required density levels.

3.99

The following design approaches will help in making most effective use of the site and achieving higher densities and a pleasant residential environment.

- i. Build taller in the right locations. This is not about tower blocks. Even at three storeys a greater volume of properties is possible. Medium rise – medium plot is the preferred approach although this will always need to be applied and be sensitive to context.

- ii. Don't waste space – Left over open spaces and unnecessarily wide roads all undermine the land economy of a site. Creative layouts and innovative building design will increase the density of a scheme when compared to standard approaches.
- iii. A mix of uses and sizes will be as important as the density itself. A proportion of smaller properties, flats and apartments will all help to lift the density levels.
- iv. Where higher densities are proposed issues of privacy and amenity will be more important than ever.
- v. Creative integration of parking – which reduces visual and physical land take on a plot – will provide the basis for more successful schemes.

3.100

Designs must demonstrate that acceptable levels of privacy and amenity are created within developments. Achieving higher densities should not compromise these two important design considerations.

Adaptability & Flexibility

3.101

Residential developments should be designed to accommodate a degree of flexibility. Unlike commercial buildings – for which a greater level of flexibility may be specified, residential dwellings will provide a specific space allocation based primarily on the numbers of bedrooms. The scope for flexibility in terms of adapting internal space as needs change should not be inhibited by the internal configuration of the dwelling.

3.102

A greater variety and mix of properties within an area and development will create more robust and well balanced communities which avoid past problems of unsustainable communities based upon single types of dwelling type. By creating a range of residential options new housing areas will be better able to absorb changing demands and adapt successfully to meet new demands.

Type & Size

3.103

Based on the assumptions above about why people look to change their homes, it becomes increasingly important to cater for a variety of housing needs within developments. This will enable people to meet their changing housing needs without moving away from an area. This lifetime approach to residential provision is important towards achieving more flexible residential stock. Adopted District Local Plan policy provides the basis for securing a mix of sizes and types of houses within new development. (based on ensuring a proportion of 1 and 2 bedroom properties). As well as a range of types and sizes of accommodation, affordable housing will also be required to support the ambition for more socially balanced communities. Plan Policy again governs the levels which the District Council will seek to secure (generally 30% will be the target).

3.104

With regards to type and size of dwellings in new developments, the following design guidance will apply:

- i. Different dwelling types and sizes will be encouraged to be developed within building blocks as well as on different parts of a site.

- ii. This might include town houses next to apartments, single plan apartments below stacked duplex and so on.
- iii. With thoughtful and creative design, developments can accommodate a variety of residential types behind coordinated and consistent frontages.
- iv. If plot and footprints are to differ from a street scene in order to accommodate different dwelling types - the building line should retain a sense of coherence by varying the depth and back elevation of the building.
- v. Stepped frontages can sometimes assist to break down the frontage in any event and good effects can often be achieved in apartment developments through the use of penthouses as a design feature.
- vi. Apartments will be better suited to corner locations where more flexible footprints, access shafts, parking areas and communal spaces can help to create a more urban response to the plot.
- vii. Smaller properties providing one bedroom are likely to be achieved through apartment developments. Such single person accommodation should not take the form of studios. Well laid out and separated rooms/spaces are a fundamental requirement of any decent home.
- viii. Two bedroom developments may take a greater variety of forms, including flats and smaller houses.

In terms of houses, traditional terraced streets are encouraged as these provide a better design approach, rather than a mass of small detached or semi detached developments.

Tenure

3.105

The Council currently operates a partnership agreement with a number of Registered Social Landlords locally, to ensure consistency in the quality and standard of provision. More information on the Council's approach towards the provision of affordable housing is set out in Policy H.10 of the Local Plan.

Affordable housing should be well integrated within that scheme, so as to be unnoticeable and to match with private for sale/rent properties. To achieve this, the following will be encouraged:

- i. Group affordable units in several locations within (larger) sites, and avoid clustering all units together in one corner – as has often been the case.
- ii. Ensure that access arrangements and parking provision are the same for affordable units as they are for private for sale/rent properties.
- iii. The layout, scale, massing and proportions of affordable housing elements tie in with overall scheme design.
- iv. Ensure that external specification and finishes are consistent with the specification and finish of private for sale/rent properties.

- v. Provide a range of residential options (mix of sizes of properties), in co-ordinance with Registered Social Landlord advice and requirements.

3.106

The Council currently operates a partnership agreement with a number of RSL's locally, to ensure consistency in the quality and standard of provision locally. More information on the Council's approach towards the provision of affordable housing is set out in Policy H.10 of the Local Plan. In addition to the guidance within this document, the design of affordable housing must address Scheme Development Standards as set out by the Housing Corporation (for more information see: www.housingcorp.gov.uk) which provide a comprehensive design specification.

3.107

Where there may be a conflict between advice in this document and the overall scheme design for a residential development which contains affordable units, consultation with the District Council and relevant registered social landlord will be required.

Mixed Use

3.108

Mixed use residential developments are encouraged through planning policy. Accommodating residential uses above other ground floor uses helps to make more efficient use of limited development space within the District. This can also help to create a sense of scale and verticality in developments which have traditionally lacked urban scale – such as large retail units. This principle applies to new build development, and conversions of existing upper floors for new accommodation.

Mixed use schemes where local shops, services or commercial operations are located below residential properties, should be located at prominent junctions or nodal points within schemes. Such schemes are often more successful when set within good quality public spaces.

3.109

In supporting this general approach a number of specific design issues are identified:

- i. Uses must be compatible in terms of function and hours of operation, with adequate levels of privacy maintained.
- ii. Separate parking and servicing spaces are required to serve the residential and other uses. These areas need to be secure and distinctly separate – physically and visually.
- iii. Servicing and parking for residential uses should in general be provided to the rear of the property with servicing taken from the front to other uses – similar to the operation of traditional streets – where decked or side by side options are limited.
- iv. Trade waste, servicing regimes and other operational considerations need to be addressed at the stage where proposals are made for upper floor uses.
- v. Access to dwellings above other uses should be taken directly from the street as well as from rear areas, where parking/servicing is provided here.

- vi. The Council will adopt a flexible approach to parking and amenity spaces where residential development is proposed above other uses where the design is demonstrated to be of the highest order.

Amenity Space

3.110

Cramming a site with development and car parking, with no thought given to amenity space in the name of higher density development will not be tolerated. Green spaces and landscape should be included in some form in all residential developments.

- i. Higher density schemes may require a more innovative approach – such as communal gardens above car parking areas (or other uses).
- ii. Communal space should relate well to properties and be accessible from dwellings, perhaps with French windows, to ensure its use and a sense of ownership.
- iii. Communal outdoor space should be designed to accommodate a range of activities which could include sitting areas, areas to dry clothes, barbecue and entertaining areas and play areas.
- iv. Balconies should be large enough to use and located to take maximum advantage of the sun's path. Balconets should be avoided where proper balconies can provide private external space.

Privacy

3.111

Privacy will need to be afforded to the inhabitants of new residential schemes, to ensure dignity and retreat is possible within the home. This relates to the obvious requirement for visual privacy, but also the need for privacy from noise, both from and to individual properties.

3.112

In higher density schemes a balance will need to be made in terms of offsetting visual privacy against overlooking. Ensuring every dwelling is spaced twenty or more metres from back to back, is an ideal and may not be possible on every site – particularly on tricky corner plots. Such requirements can often drive the layout of a scheme to its detriment and this should be avoided.

3.113

The layout of internal rooms should place more private rooms away from the public aspect of buildings, particularly at ground floor level. Overlooking of rear gardens will also need to be considered. Houses will inherently provide more private garden space than apartment developments, which may typically provide small terraced areas and communal gardens to better effect.

3.114

Noise from and to individual dwellings can lead to social tension and embarrassment. There is a perception that new residential developments allow greater transfer of noise through use of inferior materials and thinner walls. The design and construction of properties should ensure good levels of insulation and limit noise transfer, specifically through party walls.

In mixed use schemes or where developments front onto busy roads noise attenuation methods will be required, particularly to windows and doors.

3.115

The Council seeks to achieve pragmatic designs which demonstrate acceptable levels of privacy. The following will be important.

- i. Wherever possible achieve a 20 metre distance between rear windows in opposite properties. Where this would undermine the layout and design of a scheme – with respect to its response to context in particular – innovative solutions will be required relating to window alignment, orientation and finish.
- ii. Bedrooms located at the rear of properties or above ground floor level – so as not to front onto the street.
- iii. Front living rooms at ground level may be raised slightly above the level of the street to enable better overlooking of the street and afford the dwelling more privacy.
- iv. Bathrooms located to the rear or side of properties and generally not located at the front of the property or at ground level (where they would front the street).
- v. Bathrooms/Toilet windows to be obscure glazed to restrict views in.
- vi. Noise attenuation to windows and doors will be required where development fronts busy main roads and so on.

- vii. Noise attenuation measures will need to be demonstrated where residential properties are proposed above other uses, in addition to an in principle agreement over the compatibility of uses in planning terms.
- viii. The design and construction of properties should be robust so as to minimise noise flow particularly through party walls.

Main Messages from Part 2: Larger Scale Residential Development

- ✓ Ensure local facilities are available close by, preferably within walking distance. If they are not consider providing ancillary uses within the scheme.
- ✓ Respond to context to create residential developments which make the most of sites; are well related to traditional townscape vernacular and are themselves distinctive places to live.
- ✓ Create a well connected network of residential streets, which promote walking and minimise dead ends.
- ✓ Ensure streets are designed as people places serving social functions as well as affording access to properties.
- ✓ Provide external amenity space, both public and associated to the development. Pleasant places to sit outside are desirable.

- ✓ Ensure the architectural design of properties is relevant to the district and creates places where people will want to live.
- ✓ Consider new forms of residential development such as town Centre Living.
- ✓ Design to higher residential densities – Good design will be integral to achieving this.
- ✓ Design for a mix of residential opportunities. Different types, sizes and tenures of properties - including affordable dwellings - should be integrated within schemes.
- ✓ Provide opportunities to adapt internal space to changing requirements.
- ✓ Ensure amenity and privacy are not compromised.

PART 3 SPECIFIC DESIGN CHALLENGES-TARGETED ADVICE

3.116

Part 3 of the residential guide provides specific design advice regarding some important design issues which are commonly poorly resolved. This targeted advice can apply to both smaller and larger scale residential developments and will help to inform more appropriate design solutions and ensure that new development is not let down by getting the basic design elements wrong.

3.117

Part 3 provides design advice on the following important design issues:

- Safer residential streets that encourage street life
- Sensitively designed residential car parking
- Community safety
- Sustainable residential requirements
- Residential development on corner plots
- Gated developments
- Fronts and backs
- Service Infrastructure
- Collective value
- Intensification
- Backland development
- Boundary treatments

Safer Residential Streets

3.118

It is important to create safer and more people-friendly residential streets. This is a very serious challenge for new residential development. Achieving this objective offers wide ranging benefits including:

- Fewer accidents (particularly involving children)
- Greater social interaction within the community
- A safe environment for outdoor play
- Encouragement of walking as an alternative to the car
- A sense of ownership and care over the street by residents
- More efficient use of carriageway space

3.119

House builders are challenged to create places which achieve these benefits. This requires a commitment to the design of the scheme at the outset but should repay that investment in the success of the scheme. An **innovative and flexible** approach to highway design will achieve the kind of residential streets this guide promotes. Junction radii, sight lines and carriageway widths will need to be kept to operational minimum levels. In addition, the use of shared surfaces for some streets and spaces will provide a challenge in terms of landscape designs and traffic management.

3.120

Developers should refer to the Highway Authority's (Worcestershire County Council's) Residential Street Design Guide, which outlines the requirements for adoption and maintenance of residential roads by the County Council.

3.121

Home Zones can achieve safer streets and are based on the concept of slowing traffic through innovative street design which prioritizes pedestrians over traffic. An integral part of the process in creating home zones is the involvement of local communities in their design. The concept can be applied to new development or be retro fitted to existing streets.

Design features of successful home zone schemes, which are encouraged in new development - to create more sociable and safe streets - include:

- i. Parking and landscape features which do not allow vehicles to drive too close to residential properties.
- ii. Coordinated use of signage, landscaping and street furniture to ensure these elements are visually integrated and attractive without cluttering the street.
- iii. Defined thresholds and/gateways to residential streets where pedestrians have greater priority over cars.
- iv. Traffic calming features such as parking bays, traffic tables, landscape features, street furnishings and changes in materials, which are incorporated into the street scene as opposed to a serious of 'add on' elements.
- v. Public lighting that illuminates speed-reducing measures at night.
- vi. Carriageway dimensions which provide for slow moving through-traffic, parking and service vehicles.
- vii. Pinch points and passing points in certain locations.
- viii. Adequate parking for residents close to people's homes.
- ix. Facilities for informal play and sitting outside within the street.

- x. 'Shared-surfaces' wherever practical.
- xi. Traffic tables and reduced kerb depths to encourage pedestrian movements across the street.

Sensitively Designed Residential Car Parking

3.122

Parking levels for new development are established within the Adopted District Local Plan. Since car parking can have a significant effect on the quality of environment, options need to be explored to best mitigate the dominance of parked cars. Ways of achieving this are described with associated design advice:

On street parking

3.123

Where vehicles are parked up against or alongside the vehicular highway:

- i. Street parking can often be used as a mechanism for slowing vehicle speeds with street trees helping to define parking areas.
- ii. Designs should provide formal bays with regular pinch points providing pedestrian crossing opportunities.
- iii. Lateral, echelon or 'end-on' parking may all be options, depending upon the width of the street in question.
- iv. Within existing terraced streets, where parking is already considered to be an issue, proposals involving additional on-street parking will be subject to particular scrutiny.

Applicants may need to demonstrate that parking cannot be provided to the rear of properties.

In curtilage parking

3.124

Where vehicles are parked in front or to the side of the dwelling:

- i. In curtilage parking should not dominate or undermine the quality of front gardens and front garden boundaries of properties.
- ii. Infill developments should take the lead from existing parking arrangements to achieve consistency within the street.
- iii. Boundary walls and gates should be provided to the front of properties to ensure clarity over public and private areas.

Parking within the building footprint in the form of a ground floor garage or secure car port

3.125

These are often integrated into three storey Town Houses where the garage occupies the ground floor.

- i. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the design of such parking is well integrated within the building frontage.
- ii. A proliferation of garage doors at street level can undermine the quality of a scheme. Such features can create blank and lifeless edges to developments and this should be avoided.
- iii. This approach has been used close to rivers and flood plains where habitable rooms are located at first floor level.

- iv. As matter of principle double length garages as opposed to double width are preferred to minimize visual intrusion within the frontage.

Courtyard car parking

3.126

Where car parking is located within the interior of development blocks:

- i. Open space within development should provide amenity and ecological value and not just places to park cars.
- ii. These areas should be designed as courtyards rather than car parks; the courtyard is defined by the arrangement of buildings rather than cars.
- iii. Landscape should be incorporated to soften parking courts without creating potential hiding places.
- iv. Providing two points of access/egress can assist in the more effective operation of larger car parking courts.
- v. Large numbers of cars parked within such courtyards should be avoided and parking spaces should be broken up as a series of smaller courtyards wherever possible.

Stand alone garages

3.127

- i. Large banks of communal garages should be avoided as they create single use and often lifeless parts to residential schemes.

- ii. Small groupings are better and these should be designed in the same theme as the main residential properties.
- iii. Garages to the interior of development blocks are preferred.
- iv. Consideration should be given to 'coach house' style designs, where accommodation over several thoughtfully designed garages can maximise opportunities for overlooking and make more effective use of available space.

Under-croft car parking

3.128

For larger scale apartment developments, at basement or sub-basement levels:

- i. This approach is often relatively expensive to implement, but does ensure parking is less visually intrusive and external areas contribute more in terms of ecology and amenity.
- ii. Safety is a very important consideration and such areas need to be well lit and secure for resident's access only.
- iii. In parts of the district, the threat from flooding may limit this approach in particular locations.

Additional Points

3.129

- i. Car parking should not drive the layout of development. Where car parking is poorly resolved schemes may be rejected by the District Council on design grounds if it is believed that parked cars will dominate the

scheme.

- ii. All car parking areas should be well overlooked from adjacent properties, preferably with opportunities for direct sight lines from an individual's home to their car.
- iii. Large blocks of car parking to the front of developments are unacceptable the dominance of cars should be avoided by varying their layout.
- iv. In terms of infill development, the approach should be based upon the analysis of context and the desire to ensure new development is well related to established urban forms, particularly building lines and boundary treatments.
- v. In new development private car parking within development blocks is preferred; with limited visitor parking in designated bays may be possible on street.
- vi. The design of new streets (particularly their width) should avoid creating opportunities for 'a sea of car parking' where reasonable levels of off street parking are provided. This will be particularly important where specific parking levels are set through a planning approval and where high levels of on street parking will represent a departure from the original approval. This will require parking provision is used as the design intended.
- vii. The particular approach to accommodating car parking in a given scheme will be judged on its merits.

Community Safety

3.130

Creating a safe and secure residential environmental is a basic requirement of any scheme. The schedules below provide additional design advice to that already referred to in Chapter 1 District Wide Design Guide-Safer By Design.

Good Practice Pointers

3.130

- i. **The design and layout of new residential schemes should help create a sense of ownership over the public realm.** Physical design features such as special gateway and threshold treatments to residential streets are encouraged. In addition the design of the street itself can create a more useable and locally relevant setting which residents of the street can enjoy and care for.
- ii. **Semi-private spaces between dwellings and the public street should be designed to belong to and be used by the properties which they serve.** In housing schemes distinction of separate ownership for front gardens/spaces will be preferred, although a common theme may be established. For communal areas, serving apartment all open areas should be designed for use and enjoyment of all residents. Often in apartment schemes, poor design of open spaces, mean few people use or enjoy the spaces which developments are set within.
- iii. **Small semi-private spaces at the front of properties are encouraged where this will not conflict with established building/boundary**

alignments. This can assist in creating a buffer between the public street and private dwelling. These can be designed as hard or green areas with low walls or railings with gates defining their extent. These boundaries should be of a high quality.

- iv. **Designers should not be afraid to create new dwellings which front directly onto the street.** There are many examples of successful and safe terraced streets which are well loved and provide safe and places to live. This approach will be more successful in more intimate residential streets and away from arterial traffic routes. This approach will be required where infill development seeks to reflect traditional terraced streets. Noise attenuation will need to be considered in such properties.
- v. **Dwellings should have a front door addressing the public realm/street.** Even where the main access point is likely to be from the rear of the property, for example where communal car parking courts are used, a second front door onto the street will assist in supporting street life and natural surveillance.
- vi. **Habitable rooms, particularly at ground level, should be visible from the street.** Living rooms and bedrooms, and possibly kitchens, should have windows facing on to public space.
- vii. **Residential frontages should always overlook areas of communal open space,** such as village green or canal towing paths. Such contextual features can often add value to a scheme if properly integrated into the site.
- viii. **Housing layouts should avoid the creation of potential hiding places.** Care should be taken

with elements such as porches or bin stores and planting to eliminate hiding places.

- ix. **Play space should be an integral part of any scheme design** and should be well overlooked from nearby uses.

Bad Practice to be Avoided

3.131

- i. **Residential back alleyways should be avoided.** This will require that refuse and storage needs to be accessible from the front of properties. Secure passageways may be required to provide access under and through terraced properties where gaps in the frontage are not part of the established street context.
- ii. **Cul-de-sac schemes should be avoided** wherever possible based upon the aspiration to create well connected street networks.
- iii. **Rear garden walls/fences or blank house walls should not directly address primary public street or spaces.** This will have implications for the layout of housing schemes as well as the design and orientation of individual properties. Corner plots will often require specialist treatment.
- iv. **Visual separation of car parking areas and the properties which will use them should be avoided wherever possible.** Providing opportunities for residents to keep an eye on their cars from their properties helps to maintain a sense of security.
- v. **Stepped frontages where building frontages are orientated at an angle to the street**

should be avoided. Such designs break up the traditional street vernacular and have a deadening effect on the public realm.

- vi. **Narrow windows and obscure glass to front elevations** will undermine any efforts to improve surveillance on to the street.

Sustainable Residential Requirements

3.132

The District Council is committed to achieving more sustainable residential development. To realise this ambition new development will need to demonstrate the measures it has taken towards environmental design. The production of a sustainability strategy may be one way of undertaking this. Other approaches include various accreditation schemes which rate the environmental performance of developments. The Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method is one such approach. The BREEAM scheme for residential developments is 'EcoHomes', and developers are encouraged to adopt this scheme to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable development. Developments which score a 'Good' rating (or better) will be welcomed by the District Council as a tangible measure of scheme quality.

3.133

In addition, The National Energy Foundation scheme known as NHER (National Home Energy Rating) provides another approach to measuring the environmental performance of residential development. The District Council will encourage a NHER rating of 8.0 (or better) for all new development.

Scheme Design Issues

3.134

Developing on guidance contained in Chapter 1 District Wide Design Guidance- Sustainable Design, the following should be considered in new residential developments

- i. Renewable energy sources: Opportunities for sustainable energy sources to meet development requirements will be encouraged. These may be aimed at communal facilities or at individual properties.
- ii. On site treatment of grey water: Limited treatment of waste water on site through the use of natural filtration methods and reed beds before return to the water table. Local storage and basic treatment of precipitation for use in gardens, external taps, and flushing toilets etc.
- iii. Sustainable drainage: Investigate scope for collection and retention of site run off locally towards aim of recharging local water tables. Such features can become integral to scheme's character. Use of porous streetscape materials and parking hard standing may be considered but these should not undermine the structural integrity of properties.
- iv. Solar orientation of buildings: Ensure that street alignments, the location of gardens and housing orientations make the most of the sun's path and southerly aspects.
- v. Shared/recovered heat sources: Investigate the potential communal heating systems as an alternative to cellular approach in higher density schemes.

- vi. Landscape and planting scheme: Make the most of existing landscape, greenery and habitats, to ensure new residential developments make a contribution to the ecology of the District.
- vii. Construction methods: Investigate opportunities for re-use of buildings and/or materials – particularly on brownfield sites. Sustainable construction practices will also be encouraged.

practical) guidance on attracting wildlife to gardens, guidance on indigenous flora and fauna, infrastructure such as composting kits and green houses.

- vi. In higher density schemes, allotment space/ subsistence gardening plots could be designed on site and made available to residents.
- vii. 'Bin space should be adequate enough to provide room for bins and recycling boxes' issued by WFDC. Where appropriate recycling facilities should be available on site in large schemes.

Residential Development on Corner Plots

3.136

A worked example of designing residential development on corner plots is provided in part 1 of this Chapter. This illustrates the right approach to designing to respond to corner sites. Based upon this, schemes should ensure that buildings at corner locations address the following guidance:

- i. Articulate the importance of junctions/nodal points through scale, massing and design.
- ii. Maintain the continuity of the frontage around the corner. Buildings should wrap around the corner to maintain on street or at the very least return to address both the front and the side.
- iii. Greater enclosure and continuity will be possible where apartments are located at corner locations.
- iv. Ensure good levels of overlooking at ground floor level from dwellings or other uses over

each aspect the building addresses.

- v. Each frontage addressing the public realm should include at least one window from a habitable room (living rooms/kitchens – not bedrooms/bathrooms). Other windows (above) are encouraged.
- vi. Ensure adequate levels of privacy are maintained for the dwelling from the street and from adjacent dwellings.
- vii. Ensure good levels of natural light penetration into the property and any rear amenity space.
- viii. Blank edges or boundary walls are not acceptable.

Gated development

3.137

Gated developments, where several dwellings or even entire streets, mews or cul-de-sac are cut off from the wider setting are not inclusive places and should be avoided at all costs. This is particularly important where gated communities would sever pedestrian desire lines or public rights of way, reducing permeability and accessibility during the day.

3.138

Controlled access may be used sensitively to provide secure areas in higher density schemes in town centres, where other uses and passers by will need to be restricted from 'wandering into' residential areas. Apartment blocks are a good example of where such access restrictions may be desirable.

Design Issues

3.135

- i. Cycle storage should be provided in apartment schemes, located and designed in a manner which promotes cycling.
- ii. Building design and orientation should contribute towards natural ventilation and passive solar gain, to create inherently more environmentally friendly dwellings.
- iii. Low energy fixtures and fittings should be used. Where appliances are to be included Eco-labelled white goods (B ratings for fridges, freezers, washing machines / C rating for washer dryers/tumble driers) are preferred.
- iv. More economical use of water is encouraged through the use of facilities such as dual flush toilets, low flow tap and water butts for garden irrigation.
- v. Providing external greenery – from window boxes to gardens will be welcomed wherever possible. Developers will be encouraged to provide starter kits for environmental awareness. These may include (where

3.139

Physical barriers should be used sparingly and not be visually prominent. More subtle design cues can be used to signify transition to private residential spaces. It will be important to limit and control access into communal residential car parking areas, particularly undercroft parking where visibility and overlooking will be limited.

Fronts and backs**3.140**

As noted elsewhere in this guide, designers should avoid creating layouts where private boundary walls face onto streets and pedestrian routes as shown below. These undermine the quality of residential streets and reduce opportunities for overlooking from properties.

3.141

Achieving active building frontages, facing onto the public realm can be difficult to achieve on narrow sites, where development has two public faces, for example a canal and street. Creative design solutions will be sought on such sites to ensure development addresses each aspect positively with a development frontage. This will be a key consideration on any site.

3.142

The first impression of a scheme should not be a timber fence or brick wall. All public streets should be addressed by building frontages. This is a key requirement of this guide.

Servicing Infrastructure**3.143**

All soil vent pipes and associated plumbing should be enclosed within the dwelling, or at the back of

the dwelling where this is not visible from the street. Meter boxes should be located away from the main façade and be dark coloured. In the case of dual aspect dwellings, both aspects are considered to be main façades. Positions of both soil vent pipes and meter cupboards must be indicated on house type drawings. Purpose built accommodation shall be provided for wheeled refuse bins, to ensure these do not undermine the visual quality of the development.

3.144

Good quality levels of street lighting will be required in residential areas. However, lighting columns may actually add to street clutter and careful consideration will need to be given to the location and numbers of columns within residential streets. Wherever possible, street lighting is encouraged to be affixed to new buildings, to minimise the requirement for street lighting columns. This is particularly important in streets of intimate scale, where columns can be visually intrusive and create obstacles to movement. Where street lighting is affixed to properties, the impact on the interior of properties, particularly bedrooms will need to be controlled to avoid light pollution and nuisance.

Collective Value**3.145**

A diverse urban landscape is more interesting but often large developments are just a 'hotch-potch' of designs lacking any unity or structure. Diversity is encouraged but should be handled with care. Points to consider are:

- i. Developments should employ a well related and simple palette of materials to ensure visual coherence.

- ii. Designing within a theme (as described in Chapter 1) to ensure variations of similar and related elements add diversity, but hang together.
- iii. Building line, set back, plot width and roof pitch should be proportionate aimed at creating a consistent and co-ordinated approach to massing and morphology.
- iv. Building elements should be an integral part of the design, not a series of 'stuck on' features.
- v. Ensure views are framed, vistas are terminated and are turned.
- vi. Large schemes should be the subject of a Masterplan to ensure a coordinated approach.

Intensification**3.146**

The demands on land supply and housing need have resulted in an increase in speculative applications for apartment blocks on sites of existing properties set in large grounds/gardens. Although these building types may differ from the established context, such as apartment blocks in areas of large detached housing, the intensification of sites is less intrusive when:

- i. The building respects the height, scale and massing of the street (see Part 1. Infill Development – Contextual Design)
- ii. Roadside elevations reflect the hierarchy route (for example, primary, secondary or tertiary).
- iii. It does not involve the demolition of a locally recognisable landmark.

- iv. On corners or other landmark sites the design shows a suitable uplift in scale and/or design feature to create a local landmark.
- v. The privacy and amenity of new and existing residents is not compromised.
- vi. Car parking is handled sensitively and does not dominate.
- vii. Servicing, such as bin stores, is designed appropriately.

Boundary Treatments

3.147

Demarcation between public and private space should be clear but boundaries should not limit the potential of natural surveillance from surrounding properties. Advice for boundary treatments favours:

- i. A common boundary type to dwellings whether it be a brick wall, fence, hedge or combination of these.
- ii. A limit in the height of front boundaries of 1 metre.
- iii. The avoidance of large expanses of private garden fencing or walls against the footway. Where this is unavoidable there should be relief by varying and mixing materials and details.
- iv. Incorporation of existing elements such as hedgerows or stone/brick walls.
- v. The use of native species for planted boundaries.

- vi. The consideration of locally characteristic styles or materials in the case of man made boundaries.
- vii. Low boundaries particularly at corners or the use of materials that allow views through.

Main Messages of Part 3: Specific Design Challenges

- ✓ Residential streets should be more attractive places, where traffic is subservient to the quality of the street as a social space.
- ✓ Car parking should be incorporated in a sensitive manner and should not dominate the development.
- ✓ Good design should create residential developments which are safe and secure.
- ✓ Residential development should support more sustainable lifestyles. Validation of environmental performance includes: BREEAM Rating of 'Good' (or Better) is encouraged NHER Rating of '8' (or Better)
- ✓ Standard house types on corner plots, gateways and at highly visible locations don't work well.
- ✓ Gated communities should be avoided.

- ✓ Clarity is required between the fronts and backs of dwellings, with public and private areas delineated.
- ✓ Properties should address street frontages. Development which 'turn their back' on the street should be avoided.
- ✓ Narrow or constrained sites will require individual/bespoke design solution.
- ✓ Intensification of sites and backland development should not undermine the character of the locality.
- ✓ Collective value will be required in all schemes. New residential places are required – not lots of separate housing boxes.

Housing Character Types

Street Structure

Grid iron network of straight connected streets.

Street Proportion

Narrow to medium width streets. No grass verges. Pavement approx 2.5 metres.

Building Type

Mostly terrace, some semi-detached. 2-3 bedrooms. 2 storey or 2 1/2 storey with dormer.

Plot Width

Approximately 4 metres.

Building Line Set Back

Building line ranges from no set back from footway (most cases) to approx 2.5-3 metres.

Frontage Composition

Long terraces of 12 dwellings or more from street to street or street to alleyway.

Wall Materials

Smooth red brick sometimes with engineering brickwork to first 4 courses. Stone lintels and archways.

Roofing Materials/Type

Slate pitched roof (typically 40-50 degree roof pitch). Some ridge detailing.

Detailing

Largely flat fronted façade, sometimes with bay window to ground floor. Sash Windows. Front door with fan light. Stone archway above. Elaborate detailing to stone lintels. Chimneys.

Front Boundary

Boundary formed by dwelling or low brick wall with hedge.

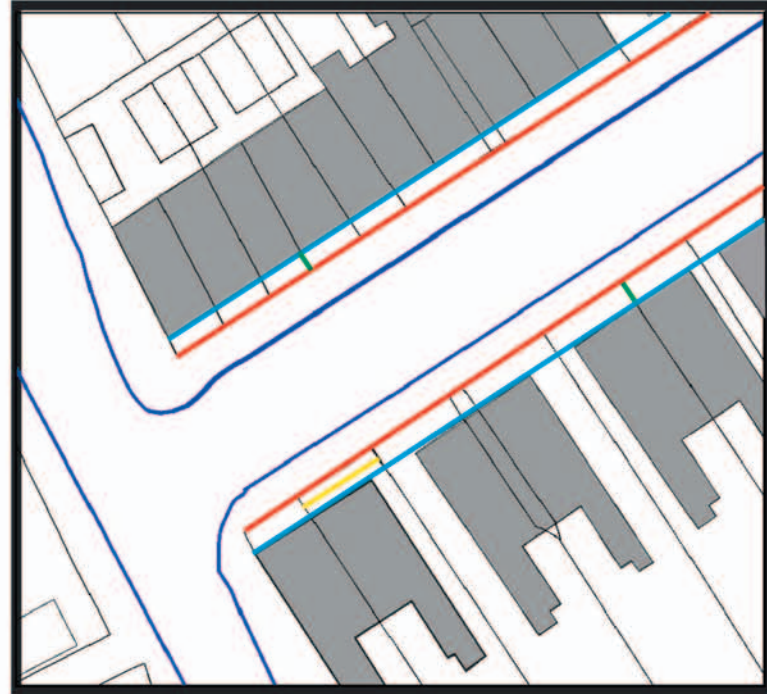
Landscape

Hard landscape, except for hedgerows where there is set back.

Parking

Mostly on street. Some front gardens have hard standing.

Functional Victorian/ Edwardian 1850-1919



Street Structure

Grid iron network of straight connected streets.

Street Proportion

Medium to narrow street. No grass verges. Pavement approx 2.5 metres.

Building Type

Semi-detached and terraced. 3-4 bedrooms. Mostly 2 1/2 storey.

Plot Width

Average 6 metres.

Building Line Set Back

Approx 4 metres.

Frontage Composition

Building line formed by dwelling and up to 1.2 metre sideway (semi-detached) or completely by dwellings in terraces up to 8 dwellings (mostly 4).

Wall Materials

Mostly red brick with yellow or grey brick detailing. Stone archways and lintels.

Roofing Materials/Type

Slate/tile pitched roof 40-50 degrees.

Detailing

Diversity of elaborate detailing incorporating gables, dormers, bay windows and chimneys. Sash windows. Use of decorative stone or timber work.

Front Boundary

Low brick wall with hedge. Elaborate post detailing.

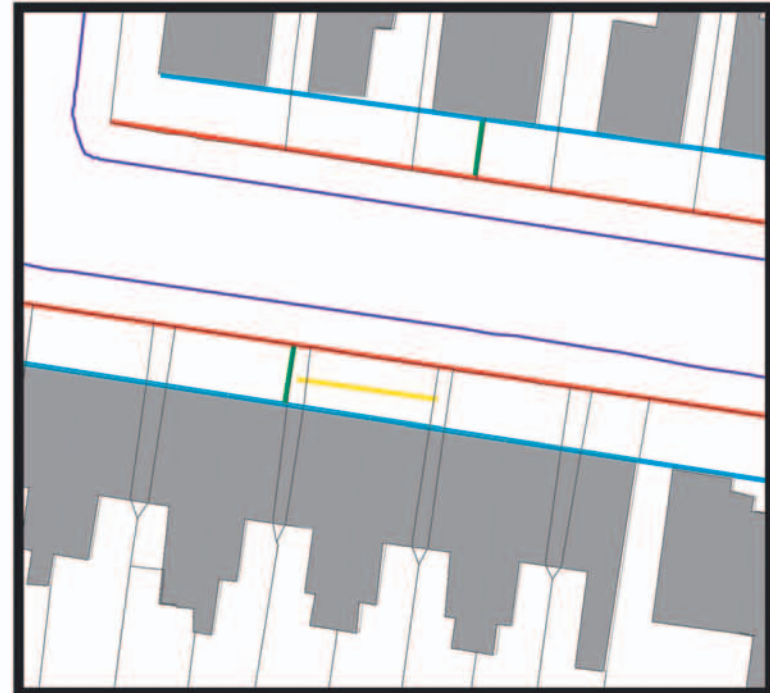
Landscape

Small front gardens with hedge and hard/soft planting. Some street trees.

Parking

On street.

More Ornate Victorian/Edwardian 1840-1919



Villas and Free Standing Town Houses 1720-1919

Street Structure

Network of straight avenues or main roads.

Street Proportion

Wide tree lined road. No grass verges. Wide pavements.

Building Type

Substantial double fronted 4+ bedroom homes. Mostly detached or semi detached. 2-2 1/2 storeys.

Plot Width

9-12 metres. Large corner plots average 25-35 metres.

Building Line Set Back

5-9 metres.

Frontage Composition

Semi-detached: Building line formed by dwelling and space (between 1 metre to width of car). Detached: space each side ranging from 1 metre to 4 metres.

Wall Materials

Red/Orange/Yellow brick or painted plasterwork (mostly Georgian).

Roofing Materials/Type

Slate roof. Low pitch hipped roof (Georgian). High pitch (45-55 degrees) pitched or hipped roof (Victorian/Edwardian) with ridge detailing.

Detailing

Extensive range of detailing elements incorporating orange/red brick or stone window/door detailing. Bay windows to ground floor with intricate iron work to roof and ornate gables with patterned timber fascias. 2 or more chimneys. Sash windows.

Front Boundary

Low brick wall with tall hedge or 6 foot high brick wall. Entrance for vehicles sometimes with elaborate post detailing.

Landscape

Mature front gardens with range of shrubs or trees. Gravel/block driveway.

Parking

To side, either hardstanding or garage (single).



Street Structure

Straight or curved network of avenues/closes.

Street Proportion

Medium width street. Wide pavements mostly with grass verges or mature street trees.

Building Type

Mostly 3 bedroom semi-detached or detached 2 storey family homes.

Plot Width

Typically 8 metres.

Building Line Set Back

Approximately 6 metres.

Frontage Composition

Frontage formed by dwelling and space for car to side (sometimes attached garage with side way approx 1.2 metres). Corner plots composed of semi-detached dwellings at right angle to corner.

Wall Materials

Mixture of brown brick and painted (white) plasterwork/pebble dash in various formations.

Roofing Materials/Type

Red tile hipped roof.

Detailing

Bay window to ground and first floor with gable above and mock tudor timber work. Archway above front door. Transom windows with leaded glass/stained glass to top.

Front Boundary

Low brick wall or hedge.

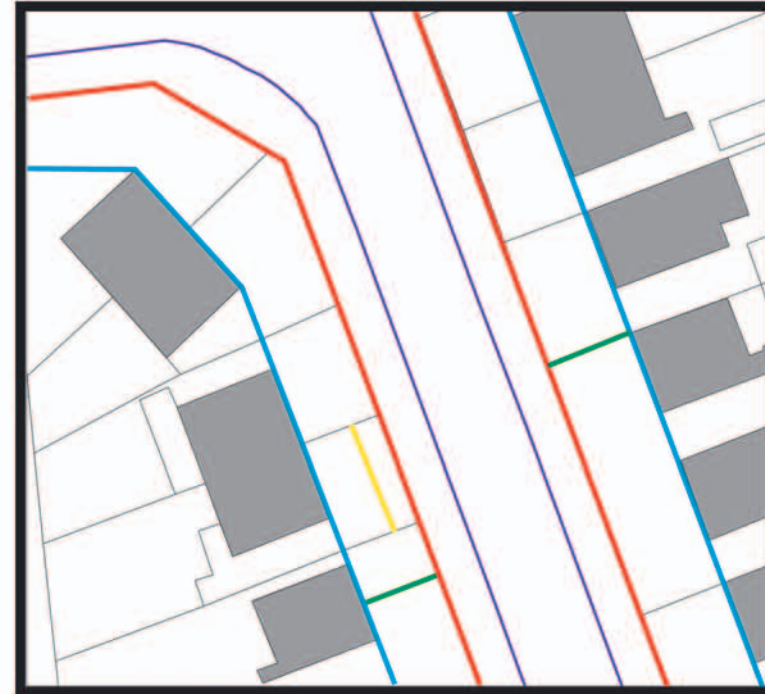
Landscape

Front gardens laid to lawn with shrub borders.

Parking

Attached garage to side with driveway.

Inter War Suburban Housing 1919-1939



Street Structure

Curved streets arranged in avenues and closes, sometimes facing areas of public open space.

Street Proportion

Narrow to medium width street. Pavements with grass verges.

Building Type

Mostly 2 storey semi-detached 3 bedroom homes or terraces. Bungalows and maisonettes (mostly 1950s/60s).

Plot Width

5.5-10 metres.

Building Line Set Back

Typically 7 metres.

Frontage Composition

Dwelling with wide sideways (approx 2 metres). Corner plots composed of semi-detached dwellings at right angle to corner.

Wall Materials

Mostly pebble dash unpainted/cream, or orange brick.

Roofing Materials/Type

Pitched or hip roofs in red/brown tile, typically 40-45 degrees pitch.

Detailing

Largely featureless. Some window or quoin brick detailing to older houses. Flat or pitched porch. Chimneys (up to 1950s). Transom windows.

Front Boundary

Low hedge or timber fence with hedge. Open plan (1960s).

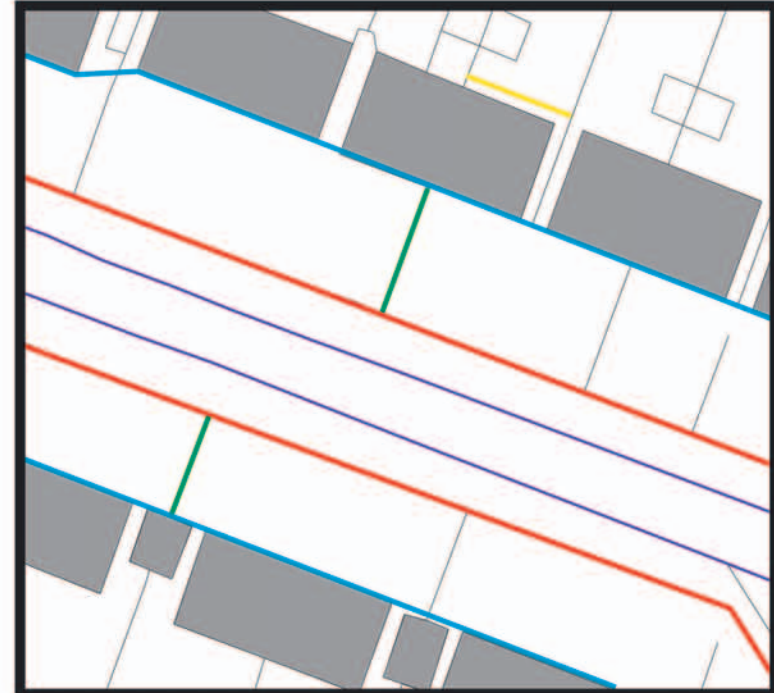
Landscape

Some mature trees/hedgerow. Front gardens laid to lawn with shrubs. Areas of open space grassed with few trees.

Parking

Mostly on street or hard standing to front garden.

Municipal Housing Areas 1925-1965



Street Structure

Very large housing estates composed of hammer head closes arranged off access roads faced by houses.

Street Proportion

Narrow to medium width streets with pavement.

Building Type

3 bedroom semi-detached and detached family homes. Some bungalows/chalet bungalows.

Plot Width

8-10 metres.

Building Line Set Back

No more than 7 metres for houses, 6-10 metres or more for some bungalows.

Frontage Composition

Frontage formed by dwelling and space for car to side (sometimes attached garage) and side way (approx 1.2 metres).

Roofing Materials/Type

Pitched roof 35-40 degrees. Grey/red concrete tiles.

Wall Materials

Largely brick in grey/yellow/brown/orange with either concrete tile hung, painted white timber or stone cladding.

Detailing

Largely featureless. Flat roof porches and garages. Modern chimneys. Transom picture windows.

Front Boundary

Open plan.

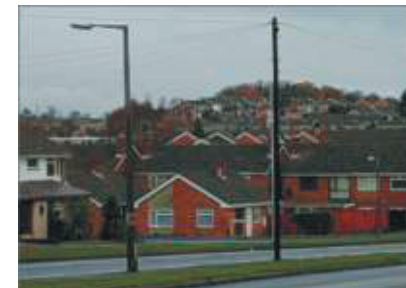
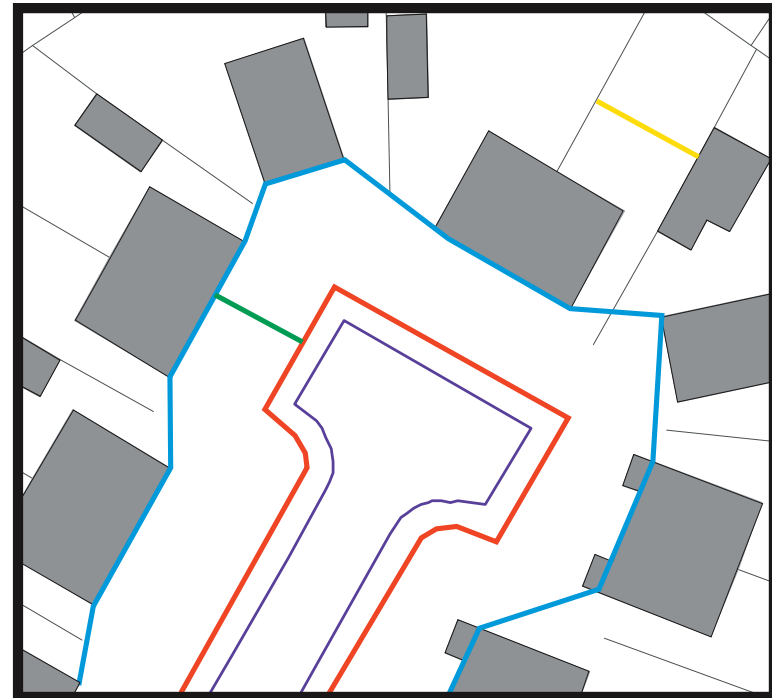
Landscape

Front gardens laid to lawn with shrubs, few trees.

Parking

Garage to side with driveway.

Suburban Estates 1950-1980



High Rise And Apartments 1960s and Now

Street Structure

Enclosed court accessed from main road.

Street Proportion

Narrow to medium width street with pavement.

Building Type

High rise blocks of flats up to 12 storeys arranged in landscape setting.

Plot Width

Not applicable

Building Line Set Back

Block set back ranges between no set back to 2 metres (3-4 storeys), up to 18 metres (12 storeys).

Frontage Composition

Not applicable

Roofing Materials/Type

Mostly flat roof or pitched roof (up to 3 storeys).

Wall Materials

Brick or concrete panels.

Detailing

Plain modern style with no detailing. Picture windows.

Front Boundary

Open plan or low wall.

Landscape

Grass and shrubs.

Parking

Courtyard parking.



Street Structure

Infill developments of courts, mews or closes.

Street Proportion

Narrow to medium width street with pavement.

Building Type

2-3 storey town houses of 2-4 bedrooms.

Plot Width

4-10 metres.

Building Line Set Back

3.5-8 metres.

Frontage Composition

Terrace: formed by up to 5 dwellings. Semi/detached: dwelling with attached/integral garage and possible side way to other side or link detached.

Wall Materials

Mostly plain brick with some decorative brick/plaster work.

Roofing Materials/Type

Brown/grey tile or slate pitched roof (typically 40 degree pitch).

Detailing

Decorative window frames. Some use of bays, gables or porches.

Front Boundary

Open plan.

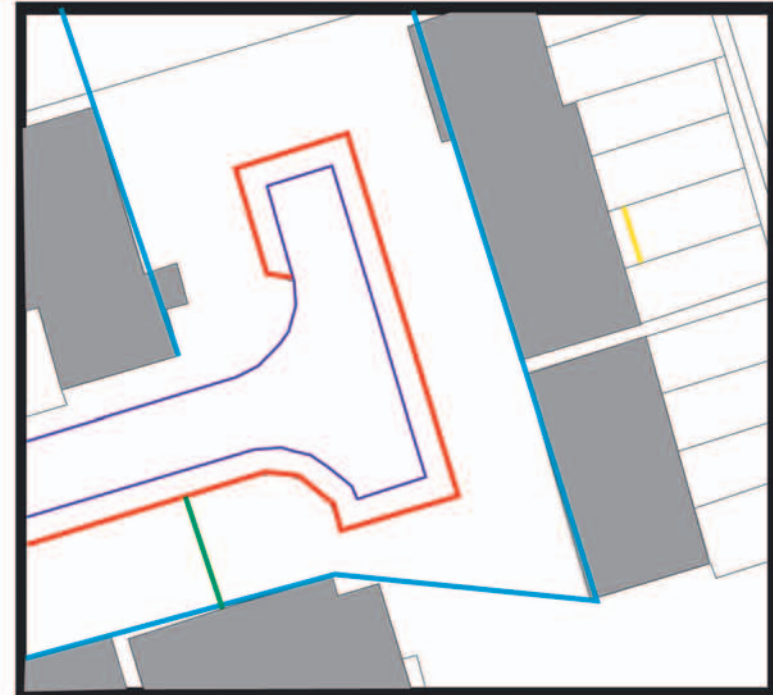
Landscape

Low level shrubs or established trees.

Parking

In mews court or integral garage.

Contemporary Infill 1980s-Now



Contemporary Suburban Development 1980-Now

Street Structure

Housing estates composed of cul-de-sacs/courts accessed by server road (usually backing on to).

Street Proportion

Narrow to medium width street with pavement.

Building Type

A range of houses largely 2 storey and detached, but including semi-detached and short terraces. Ranging from 2-5 bedrooms.

Plot Width

4-10 metres.

Building Line Set Back

3.5-5.5 metres.

Frontage Composition

Terrace: formed by up to 5 dwellings. Semi/detached: dwelling with attached/integral garage and possible side way to other side or link detached.

Wall Materials

Plain red/yellow/orange brick.

Roofing Materials/Type

Pitched roof in red or grey tile (35-40 degree pitch).

Detailing

Georgian/Tudor/Cottage style elements including bays, dormers, gables and decorative windows.

Front Boundary

Open plan.

Landscape

Front gardens laid to lawn, some with shrubs. Some young trees.

Parking

Driveway or parking court. Single and double attached/integral garages.



Street Structure

Country lanes, main roads or private roads. Infill developments of closes.

Street Proportion

Varying from narrow lanes with no pavement to wide avenues. Substantial grass verges.

Building Type

Large detached houses (2 storeys) or bungalows with 4+ bedrooms.

Plot Width

15-30 metres.

Building Line Set Back

From 7 metres up to 40 metres.

Frontage Composition

Irregularly arranged dwelling with grounds to both sides and single or double detached garage.

Wall Materials

Brick or painted plasterwork.

Roofing Materials/Type

Hipped and pitch tiled roofs (40-50 degrees).

Detailing

Range of styles varying from mock Tudor to modern Scandinavian style homes.

Front Boundary

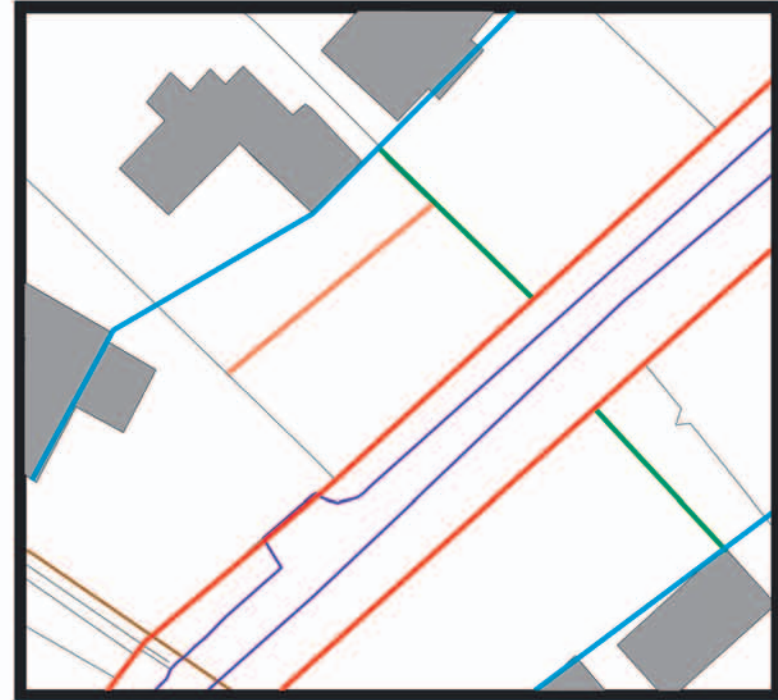
Tall dense hedge or wall with gates.

Landscape

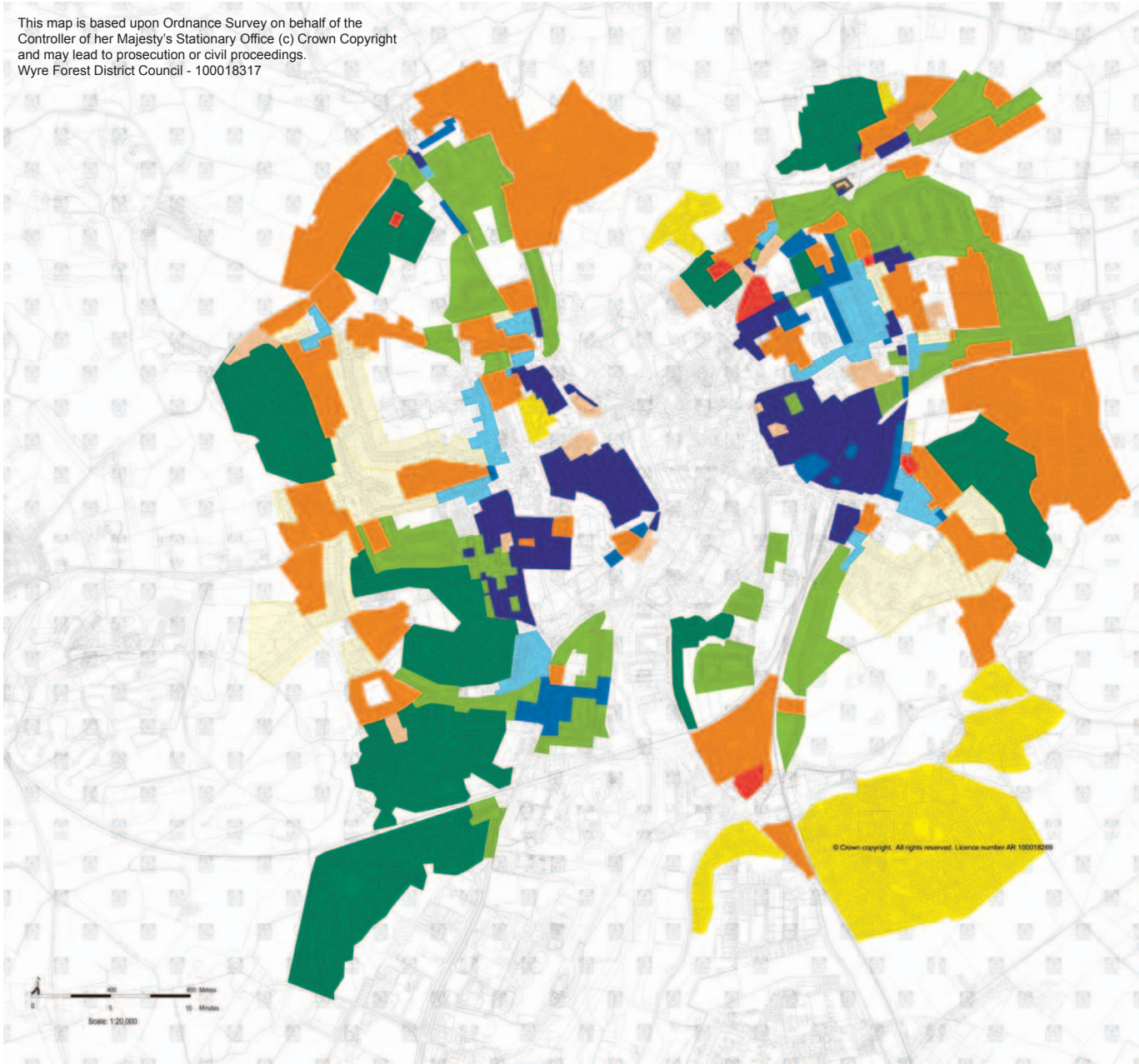
Mature deciduous trees and shrubs.

Parking

Extensive gravel/hardstanding area plus single/double garages.

Low Density Executive 1930-Now

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Wyre Forest Design SPG
Residential Typologies
Plan 1 Kidderminster

Key

- Functional Victorian/Edwardian
- More Ornate Victorian/Edwardian
- Villas and Freestanding Town Houses
- Inter War Suburban Housing
- Municipal Housing Areas
- Suburban Estates
- High Rise and Apartments
- Contemporary Infill
- Contemporary Suburban Development
- Low Density Executive

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 date: Mar 2004
 drawing no: 2349.13
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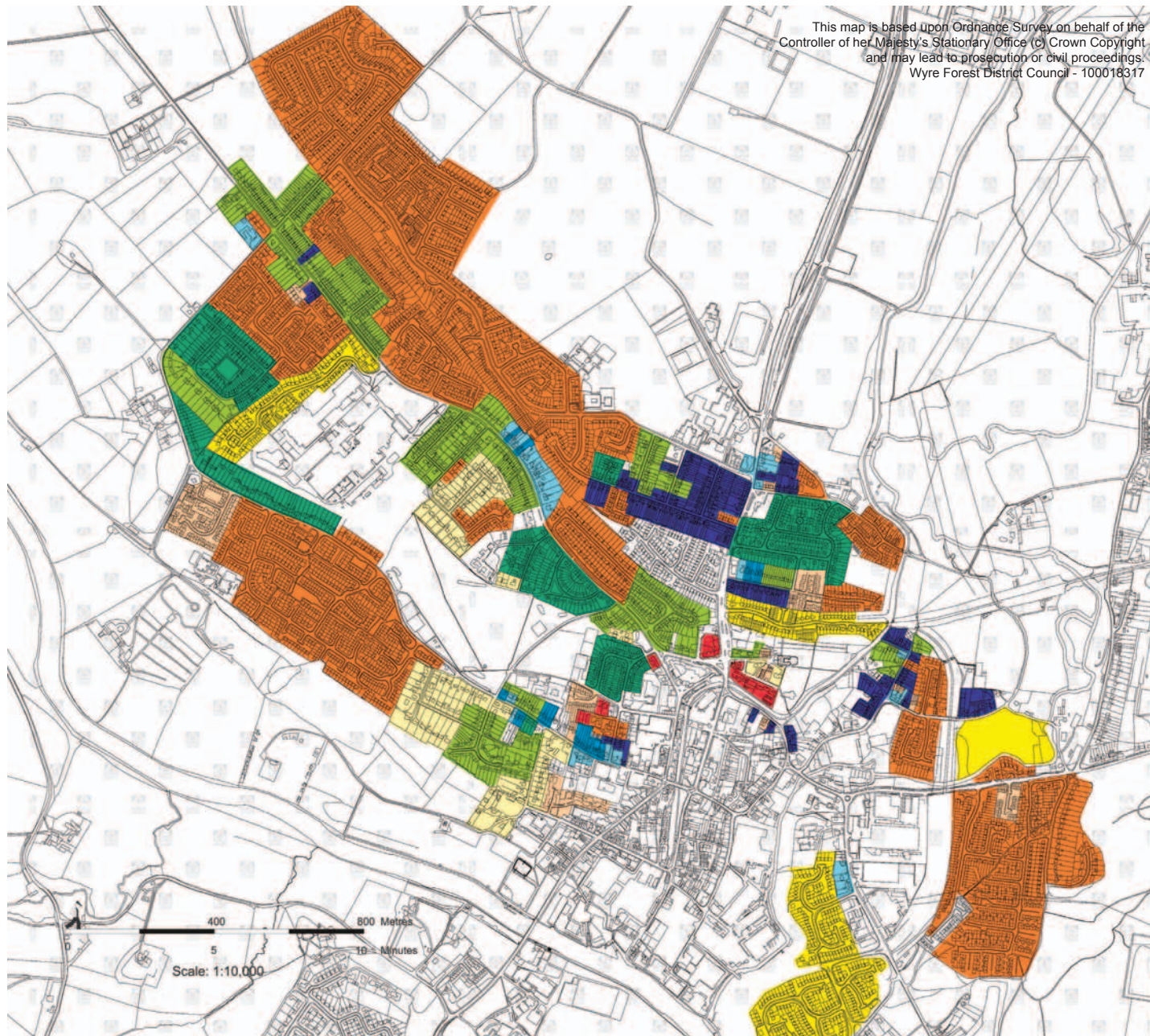
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Wyre Forest Design SPG
Residential Typologies
Plan 2 Stourport North

Key

- Functional Victorian/Edwardian
- More Ornate Victorian/Edwardian
- Villas and Freestanding Town Houses
- Inter War Suburban Housing
- Municipal Housing Areas
- Suburban Estates
- High Rise and Apartments
- Contemporary Infill
- Contemporary Suburban Development
- Low Density Executive

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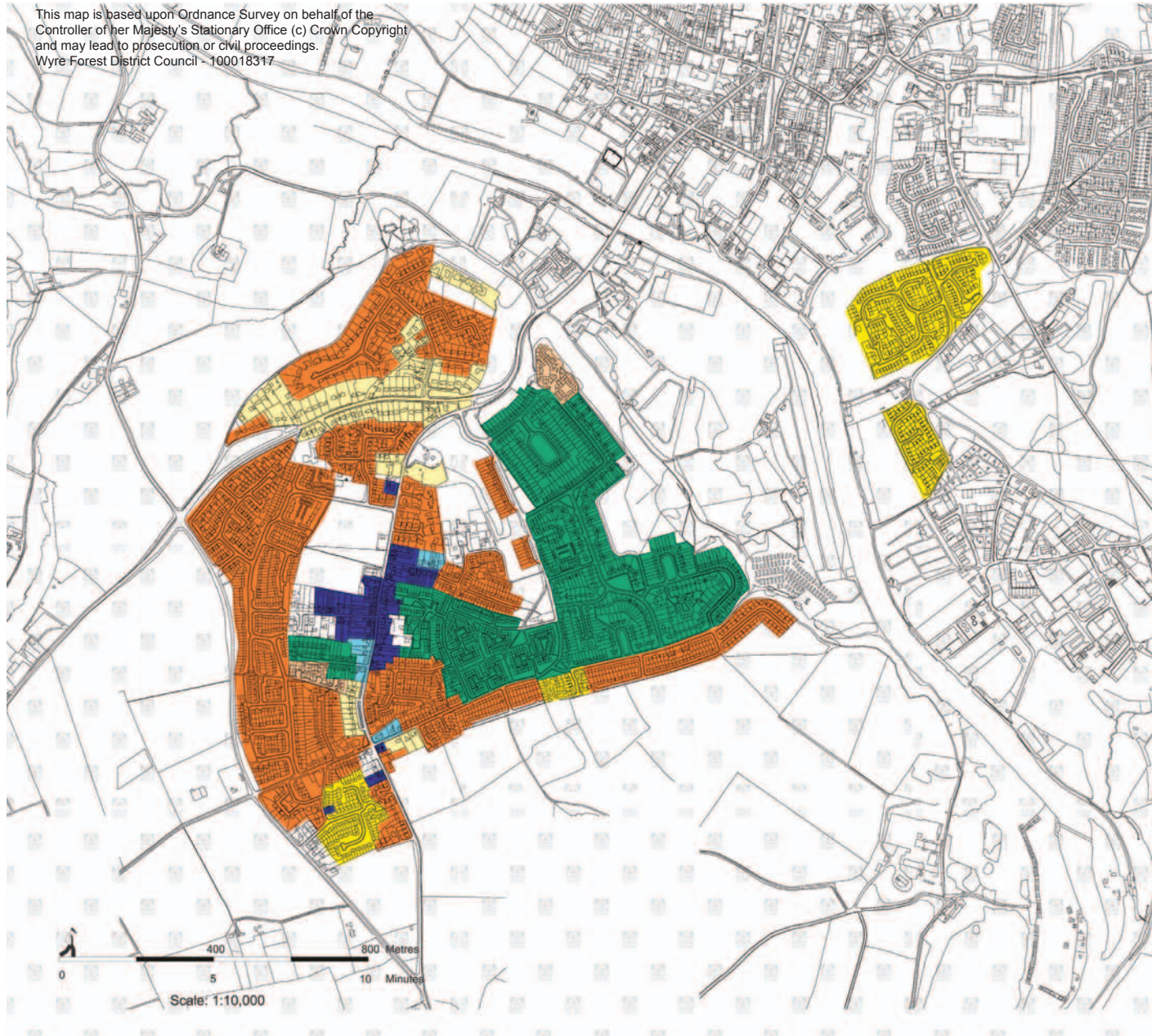
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Wyre Forest Design SPG

Residential Typologies

Plan 3 Stourport South

Key

- Functional Victorian/Edwardian
- More Ornate Victorian/Edwardian
- Villas and Freestanding Town Houses
- Inter War Suburban Housing
- Municipal Housing Areas
- Suburban Estates
- High Rise and Apartments
- Contemporary Infill
- Contemporary Suburban Development
- Low Density Executive

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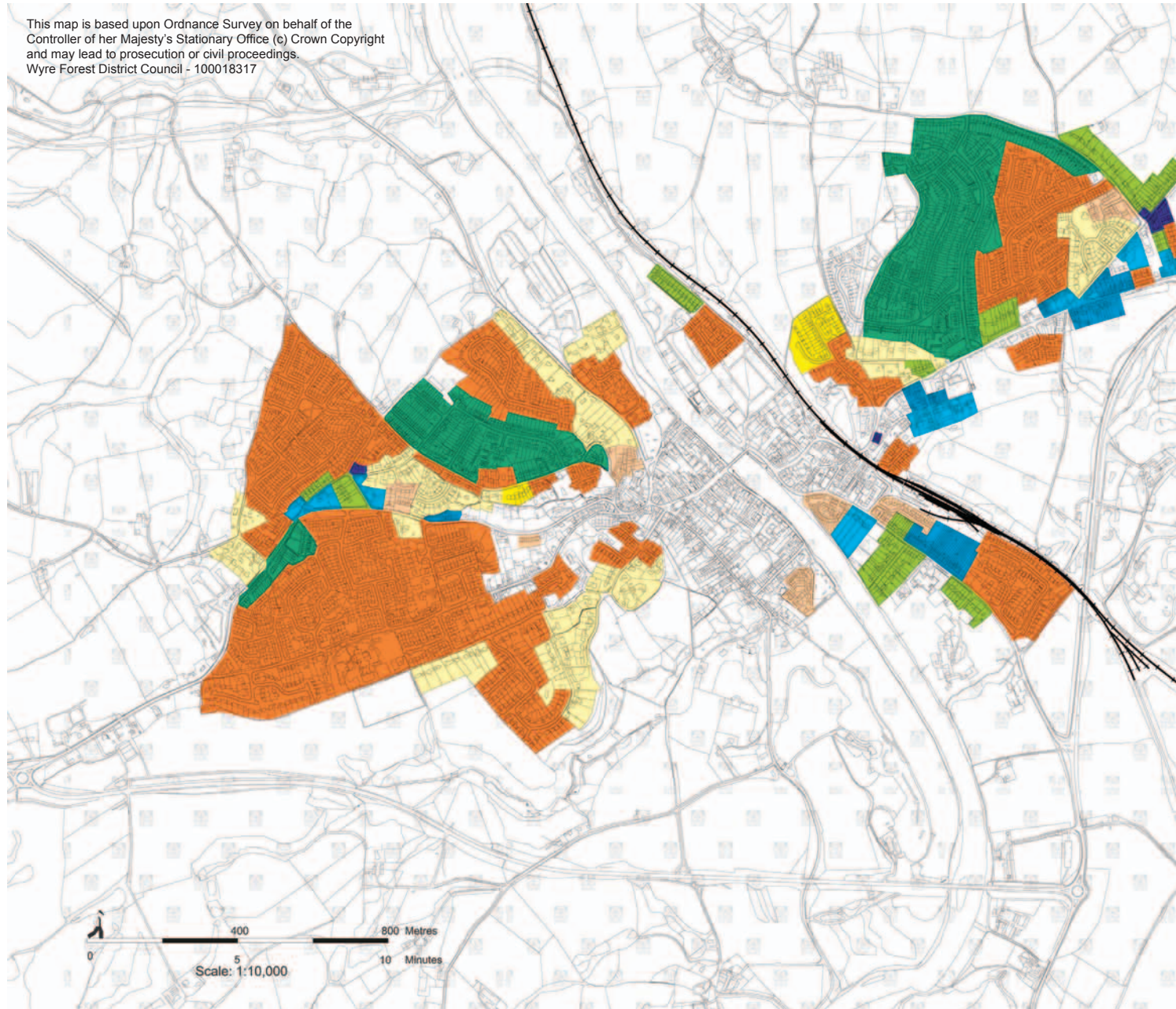
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Wyre Forest Design SPG

Residential Typologies

Plan 4 Bewdley



Key

- Functional Victorian/Edwardian
- More Ornate Victorian/Edwardian
- Villas and Freestanding Town Houses
- Inter War Suburban Housing
- Municipal Housing Areas
- Suburban Estates
- High Rise and Apartments
- Contemporary Infill
- Contemporary Suburban Development
- Low Density Executive

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Chapter 4

Town Centre Design Guides

CHAPTER 4 - TOWN CENTRE DESIGN GUIDES

INTRODUCTION

4.0

This chapter focuses on the urban design challenges within the District's three town centres:

1. Kidderminster
2. Stourport-on-Severn
3. Bewdley

4.1

The town centres are vital to the District's success, providing a focus for commerce, retail, culture and civic life. Improvement of these town centres based upon urban design principles and responding to the specific objectives raised in this section will be encouraged.

The guidance within this section adds to the framework of design (and planning) advice for the town centres of the District established in the Local Plan. Importantly key physical aspects are mapped and illustrated and a number of objectives for each town identified. The section focuses attention on the main design issues facing the town centres, providing a context against which to assess and promote change and the preparation of more detailed guidance.

4.2

The District Council is committed to the success of Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport. Of the three towns, Kidderminster faces more significant design challenges, than both Bewdley and Stourport. Accordingly, Kidderminster receives more detailed consideration in this chapter.

Kidderminster

4.3

For **Kidderminster** design guidance is based upon the following:

- *Historical Biography*
- *Design Principles*
- *Structural Concept*
- *Guidance Plans focusing on the following:*
 1. *Improving Gateways and Approaches*
 2. *Strengthening the Structure and Improving Quality in the Public Realm*
 3. *Improving Townscape Value and Consolidating the Urban Fabric*

4.4

Guidance for Kidderminster is **promotional** and identifies where physical improvements to the town centre are required. Development should respond positively to this proactive design guidance, which builds upon Adopted Local Plan Policy. Proposals for new development in Kidderminster town centre should respond positively to the '**Design Ambitions**' established in this section.

Stourport and Bewdley

4.5

For **Stourport and Bewdley** the approach is somewhat different, with guidance based on the following:

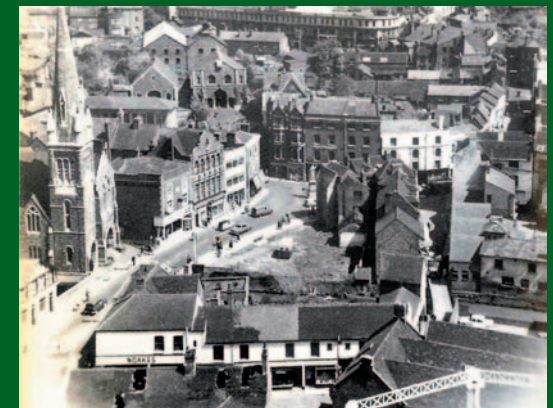
- *Historical Biography*
- *Design Principles*
- *Analysis of Place:*
 1. *Public Realm and Movement Structure*
 2. *Townscape and Urban fabric*



An artist's impression looking up Load Street towards the church from 1820 (Image Credit: 'Bewdley and its Surroundings' by I.L. Wedley-1964)



High Street, Stourport at the turn of the century (Image credit: 'Stourport-on-Severn: History of the Town and Area' by A. Bradford & M.R. Kettle (2002))



The last view of the Bull Ring (1965) taken from the gas holder (Image Credits for images opposite/above: 'Images of England: Kidderminster' by Robert Barber (1999) and 'Images of England: Kidderminster the Second Selection' by Robert Barber, (2002)).



4.6

This guidance is structured around an analysis of the town centres to highlight the **problems and opportunities** which new development in Stourport and Bewdley will need to respond to. This form of guidance is less prescriptive and a stage less advanced than the guidance for Kidderminster. Proposals for new development in Stourport and Bewdley will need to respond positively to the **'Design Context'** established for each town centre.

4.7

The guide is based upon several interlocking design objectives for town centres. These reflect Local Adopted District Plan Policy and flow from an overall ambition to lift the quality and condition of the town centres.

Overall Aim

4.8

Promote design excellence within existing town centres to improve the image, enhance the experience and promote the enjoyment of these places.

Development proposals for town centres will need to make a contribution to achieving the overall aim and related objectives.

Interlocking Design Objectives

4.9

i. Improve the 'townscape' value of the towns; targeting areas where quality is poor, capitalising on existing strengths and setting the context for high quality new developments.

- ii. Strengthen linkages and connections for pedestrians by increasing pedestrian priority at junctions so that walking into and around town centres is made easier and the impact of traffic is reduced.
- iii. Achieve uplift in the provision, condition and quality of public realm in town centres, so that these areas become 'people places' where people enjoy spending time.
- iv. Make the most of contextual assets, particularly the canal and river sides and nearby open spaces, which are consistent features of the District's towns.
- v. Strengthening the mix and intensity of uses offering more for people to do in town centres and a greater variety of lifestyle choices.
- vi. Improve the image, identity and character of the town centres within the Region and District, based upon recognition of their particular role and function, as identified through planning policy and town centre strategies.
- vii. Make more economic use of limited space in town centres, promoting more active use of existing upper floors and the intensification of underutilised sites, where integrated development can ensure more than one primary function is provided.

General Adopted District Local Plan Policy/ Objectives

5. Design

Policy D.1:

Design Quality

Policy D.2:

Tall Residential and Commercial Buildings

Policy D.15:

Car Park Design

Flood Risk

Policy NR 5: Floodplains

Policy NR.6:

Development adjacent to Watercourses:

Provides the planning justification to 'open up' culverted watercourses.

11. Leisure, Regeneration & Tourism

Objective 49: Commercial Leisure

Town Centre Sites promoted.

Policy: LR16 Arts, Entertainment & Museum Facilities

...should be located in Town Centre locations...

Policy: LR17: Commercial Leisure developments

...major new commercial leisure development will only be permitted in Kidderminster and Stourport Town Centres

Policy TM2: Development of Hotels & Guest Houses

...major new hotel development will only be permitted in or close to Kidderminster Town Centre.

Policy TM8: Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal

...tourism, leisure & recreation role of canal developed.

Policy TM9: Stourport-on-Severn Tourist Information Centre & Heritage Centre

...should be developed subject to funding in the canal basin.

12. Community

Objective 57: Identity

Ensure separate identity of the three Towns retained

Objective 58: Safety & Security

Improve community safety & sense of community

13. Retailing

Policy RT1 Sequential Approach

Sequential test for new retail sites will apply

Policy RT2 Primary shopping areas:

Groundfloor Uses

Protected from change in use from retail

14. Town Centres

Objective 67: Environment

...creations of safe and attractive town centre environments.

Objective 68: Design

...ensure design is of a high quality design that enhances the environment and further develops sense of civic identity.

Objective 69: Mixed Uses

...promote mix of uses within town centres and mixed use schemes to compliment primary retail functions.

Objective 71: Integrated Traffic Management

...promote improved accessibility to town centres...emphasis on modes other than private car.

Objective 72: Pedestrianisation & Mobility

...promote measures which afford greater priority to pedestrians...

Objective 73: Housing

Promotes town centre living through conversions and new build

Objective 74: Evening Economy

To promote...appropriate level of evening economy...

Policy TC1: Town Centre Strategies

Development to make contribution to objectives of relevant town centre strategies (as developed by Town Centre management Forums)

Policy TC2: Town Centre Uses

Identifies the nature of land use mix allowed in the town centre areas

TC4: Key Movement Corridors

TC5: Town Centre Parking Areas

Deals with protection of existing car park areas and factors when development of these sites may be considered amongst other issues

DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR KIDDERMINSTER TOWN CENTRE

Historical Biography

4.10

Although the first documentary evidence of the existence of Kidderminster is the Domesday Survey of 1086, the town probably has its origins in the seventh-century monastic settlement at a crossing point on the River Stour. Indeed, the river is of great significance in the development of the town, in that a thriving cloth trade developed in the early-thirteenth century, which grew to form the basis for the development of other trading and merchant activities in Kidderminster. The town was awarded a Royal Charter by King Charles I in 1636, which led to its self-government by twelve burgesses, a system that remained until local government law reform in 1835 and led to the establishment of a town council presided over by a Mayor.

4.11

The establishment of the cloth trade in the town grew to form the basis for later commercial success in the carpet industry around 1735. Out of the carpet industry grew a Chamber of Commerce, formed in 1878. The expansion of industry, employment and population within Kidderminster was enabled by the plentiful supply of water from the River Stour and taken forwards by the construction of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, running for 46 miles, from the Trent and Mersey Canal to Stourport where it joins the River Severn. Opened for traffic in May 1772, it was built by the great canal engineer James Brindley as part of his 'Grand Cross': a far-sighted scheme to link the ports of Hull, Liverpool and Bristol by connecting up the rivers Mersey, Trent and Severn.

The canal passes through the town in a north-south direction linking into the River Stour.

4.12

The carpet industry has left a legacy of attractive and ornate building frontages, which were created to showcase the wealth and luxury of the carpets of the time. These facades screened large weaving sheds of more standard design. Mill buildings utilised locally available red bricks with stone and brick detailing to contrast and employed a fashionable Italianate style reflected in the campanile towers, window and eave details and similar neo classical features.

4.13

The prosperity brought to the town in this period was reflected in other prominent public and corporate buildings again displaying the fashionable and highly decorative Italianate style, with neo-classical features, such as the columns on the building above.

Development of the Railway

4.14

Transport connections were further enhanced by the introduction of the Oxford, Worcester & Wolverhampton railway line to the south-east of the town. The route and railway station appear on a "plan of the Town of Kidderminster" dating from 1859, indicating their construction by this date. The railway provided fresh impetus to the carpet industry within Kidderminster by speeding the distribution process. The railway line continues to provide direct services to destinations including London Marylebone, Birmingham and Worcester.

The Canal and Railway as Leisure Attractions

4.15

The two networks of canal and railways allowed the transport of a vast variety of goods, including coal, steel and carpets, which generated revenue through the town. The railway line between Bridgnorth and Kidderminster is now run as a heritage steam railway tourist attraction known as the Severn Valley Line. The canal is used for recreational purposes with large numbers of narrow boats passing close by Kidderminster town centre. Historically the town provided a working basin at Weavers Wharf but this has subsequently been filled. The canal provides a focus for leisure and retail uses through the town, although it is perhaps understated and boating facilities are limited.

Changing Street Patterns

4.16

Mid-19th century Ordnance Survey maps of Kidderminster indicate the form of the town, with significant areas dominated by commercial and industrial uses, such as a brick yard (to the south), corn mills and the carpet mills. The historical part of the town would appear to be located on the east bank of the River Stour, principally at the Bull Ring, Vicar Street and Swan Street, with their age being suggested by the irregular plot sizes and meandering street patterns.

4.17

The historic town was altered beyond recognition by architectural projects and highway construction in the 1960's, insensitive to the original character, scale and detail of the town. The construction of the ring road whilst alleviating traffic congestion in the town centre cut through and swept away the original street pattern and many historic buildings were lost.

The speedy circulation of traffic around the town centre was placed over pedestrian flows. Subways were introduced and the public face of the town was changed forever.

4.18

New large scale development was occurring at an unprecedented rate. New retail precincts at Vicar Street, the Swan centre and later the Rowland Hill centre were created. Accompanying multi-storey car parks were built to service the town, although in recent years two have been removed. The skyline of Kidderminster was re-profiled with the erection of Crown House, which today looks down at heel and out of place next to the spire of Baxter Church.

The Modern-Day Town

4.19

Despite the impact of more recent development the town remains notable for its impressive heritage townscape. These include the striking churches located in and around the town centre, the richly decorative Italianate architecture of the Town Hall, Lloyds Bank and Midland Bank. Materials used include red-brick with the use of blue (engineering) brick and buff coloured brick detailing. The Victorian Italianate buildings are complemented by Neo-Gothic and Georgian architecture within Church Street, which also provides the location of one of the town's few remaining timber framed buildings. The heritage processions at Green Street/ New Road are important to the character and distinctiveness of the town centre and show a strong link to the heritage of Kidderminster. These need to be enhanced and conserved.

4.20

More contemporary development in the town, including Kidderminster Library, the college and the Magistrates Courts, demonstrate thoroughness and relevance in design which befits the historical imperative for quality. The conservation of historic buildings through regeneration, such as Slingfield Mill, its boiler house and associated chimney in the Weaver's Wharf, is welcomed.

Design Principles for Kidderminster Town Centre

4.21

- i. **Built fabric needs to be consolidated and redefined.** Gap sites and missing frontages need to be repaired, especially facing onto major pedestrian routes and the ring road.
- ii. **Improve the quality of development on prominent plots.** Highly visible corner and frontage plots need to be targeted for new and high quality development. These are the first impression of the town centre and are in too many cases uninspiring.
- iii. **Improve the public face of the town centre from the ring road.** The profile of the town centre from the ring road needs to be significantly improved. Where new development is proposed on sites adjacent and at grade with the ring road, buildings should provide a frontage overlooking and defining this important route.
- iv. **Conserve townscape heritage, particularly mill buildings associated with the carpet industry.**

These buildings need to contribute to the life and character of the town centre through creative reuse and refurbishment where necessary.

- v. **Enhance heritage processions.** The important routes of New Road and Green Street are instrumental to the character of this part of the town centre. This area needs to connect better to the town core. Traffic needs to be calmed with a preference for two way movements (to stop the fast one way flow of traffic) and the heritage of these special routes more fully developed.
- vi. **Views over and across the town centre from the east, need to be retained.** Due to the town's location settling within a river valley, views across the town to landscape beyond are possible. These are important to retain and any new development must not unduly undermine these important view corridors.
- vii. **Enhance the skyline.** Skyline features including mill towers, chimneys and church spires are integral to the character of the town's skyline. New development should not remove, compete or detract from existing skyline features. Adopted Local Plan Policy identifies that tall buildings are more suitable in Kidderminster town centre. Tall buildings should contribute to the distinctiveness of the skyline. Where existing development undermines the skyline and the setting of historic landmarks there may be a case for removing offending buildings.

viii. **Make the most of landmark buildings.**

High quality landmark buildings new and old should contribute to the character of the town. Clear and unobstructed views of buildings should be developed. The setting of buildings should not undermine overall quality. These buildings should be targeted for architectural lighting

ix. **Reduce the visual impact and break the physical barrier created by the ring road.**

The traffic function of this route dominates to the detriment of pedestrian connections into the town centre. The route needs to be developed as a '**Green Boulevard**' (further to the south) where boulevard planting and improvements to the escarpment will be encouraged. Further north (beyond the Comberton Hill Roundabout) the ring road should be developed as a '**Town Centre Boulevard**'. Subways should be replaced by at grade crossing where possible. Consideration should be given to replacing roundabouts with cross roads and junctions. Reducing road widths and land take from highway infrastructure should be sought.

x. **Stronger connections between the railway station and the town centre are required.**

The quality and condition of the approach to the town centre from Comberton Hill needs to be enhanced. This needs to address the public realm and townscape of Comberton Hill as well as the barrier created by the ring road. The ambition should be to replace the

xi. **Pedestrian crossing at street level wherever possible.**

xii. **The connection from Church Street over the ring road to St. Mary and All Saints Church needs to be re-established.** Church Street is one of the most attractive streets in the town centre. Its function as a through street has been eroded by the ring road and subway. The ambition should be for a new pedestrian crossing at street level, wherever possible. This should provide direct access to the large civic space outside the church.

xiii. **The hierarchy of streets within the town centre needs to be more fully developed** (in accordance with the accompanying plan – Strengthening the Structure and Public realm). Reviewing the function, requirements and potential of streets within this hierarchy will help to inform any improvement and refurbishment.

xiv. **Traffic needs to be brought under control in the town centre.** Greater pedestrian priority is required within central streets. This does not mean pedestrianisation but will involve the redesign of spaces for people, where cars and service vehicles are controlled and subservient to walking.

xv. **The retail heart needs to become a beacon for quality public realm.** The aim will be to create a pleasant and attractive streetscape, which provides for an enjoyable experience and encourages people to use and stay within the town centre.

xvi. **Arrival points to the town centre should be of high environmental quality and well connected into the core area.**

These include the bus station, the railway stations and car parks. The condition and quality of new and existing car parks will be particularly important as these are often poorly resolved. The bus station has recently been improved. The mainline railway station would benefit from improvement including a stronger pedestrian connection across the car park.

xvii. **Develop a network of new and improved public spaces.**

By better managing traffic movements in the town centre greater potential for public open spaces can be realised. At present the town has no clear centre of gravity in terms of public realm and open spaces. There are a number of clear opportunities to create striking new open spaces, including:

- a. *St. Mary's & All Saints Church*
- b. *The Bull Ring*
- c. *Vicar St./Exchange St./Oxford St. intersection*
- d. *Space outside former magistrates Court/Worcester Cross*

xviii. Such a sequence of new spaces would enrich the experience of the town centre. New development at Weavers Wharf has begun this process of investment in new open spaces.

xix. **Enhance the setting of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal along with the town's riverside including the mill channels which run from the River Stour.** New development should look to derive value from the water as a key contextual feature. In new development watercourses should be a centre point to any scheme with frontages defining and overlooking waterfronts. This will add to the distinctiveness and amenity of schemes. There will be a preference for pedestrian access along (at least one bank) of the river and canal towing path. Recent improvements to the town's riverside, the canal side adjacent to the college and at Weaver's Wharf demonstrate what can be achieved.

xx. **In line with Adopted Local Plan Policy and guidance within chapter 1 of this guide, new development should seek to strengthen the vitality and viability of the town centre.** This is about strengthening the uses and functions of the town centre. Specific themes within this overall ambition which new development can support will include:

- a. *Creating a new town centre **residential community**.*
- b. *Develop a more robust and inclusive **evening economy** with a broad appeal to all sectors of the community.*
- c. *Develop and strengthen existing retail, commercial, leisure, cultural, civic and education functions.*

Illustrative Plans

4.22

The principles described in this section are illustrated on the following plans found on pages 97-99.

- i. Kidderminster Plan 1: Improving Gateways and Approaches
- ii. Kidderminster Plan 2: Strengthening the Structure and Improving Quality in the Public Realm
- iii. Kidderminster Plan 3: Improving Townscape Value and Consolidating the Urban Fabric

Adopted District Local Plan Policies – Specific to Kidderminster Town Centre

Objective 60: Kidderminster Town Centre
Safeguard and enhance role within sub regional hierarchy as focus for large scale retail development.

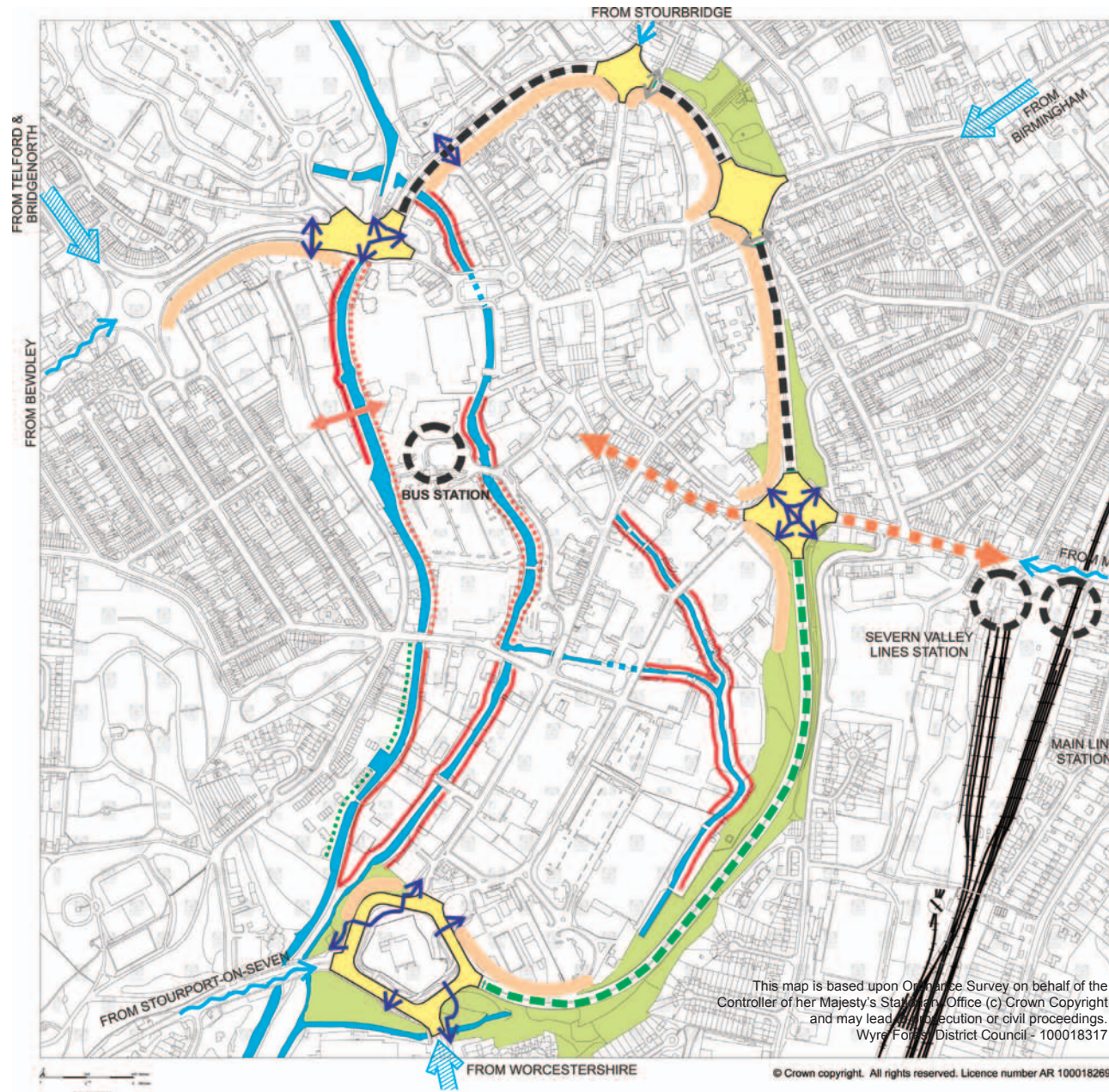
Policy TC3 Commercial Leisure
Commercial leisure will be allowed in Kidderminster Town Centre on KTC1/3/4(north) subject to other material considerations

Site Specific Town Centre Policies - Kidderminster Town Centre

The Adopted District Local Plan provides policy relating to a number of important sites within Kidderminster Town Centre. The substance of this policy is not repeated, but subsequent design guidance for the Town and these sites are set within the context of this guidance.

Policy KTC1: Kidderminster Town Centre Redevelopment Area
Policy KTC2: Bromsgrove Street
Policy KTC3: Worcester Street Enhancement Area
Policy KTC4: Green Street Mixed Use Area

No additional development briefs have been undertaken at this stage to elucidate the design challenges and development potential of these sites. In addition to the sites identified in the Adopted District Local Plan, windfall sites (i.e. those which accord with the Policy but are not specifically identified proposals) may present further opportunities to improve the urban design of the Town Centre.



**DESIGN AMBITION
KIDDERMINSTER TOWN CENTRE**

**Kidderminster Plan 1:
Improving Gateways and Approaches**

- Create green boulevard along ring road
- Strengthen Urban Character along ring road (Create a new Town Centre frontage)
- Enhance 'Green Edge' to Town Centre
- Overcome traffic dominance at major junctions
- Replace subways with at grade pedestrian crossings
- Enhance canal, river and Mill channels
- Ensure value added from waterside is realised through new development
- Areas of existing waterside improvements
- Potential to reconnect waterways
- Improve public face of Town from Ring Road - Implications on new development in terms of building frontages
- Key Connection into Town Centre to develop from Comberton Hill and Railway Stations
- Major public transport arrival points
- Potential new bridge approach

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**DESIGN AMBITION
KIDDERMINSTER TOWN CENTRE**

**Kidderminster Plan 2:
Strengthening the Structure and
Improving Quality in the Public Realm**

Key

-  Town Centre Development Blocks
-  **Strategic Routes** - Improvements to physical condition and landscape required. Pedestrian crossing points at grade are preferred.
-  **Heritage Processions** - Create better balance between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Consider two way flows. Develop special character
-  **Town Centre Streets** - Important approaches to the Town Centre. Set first impression. Require significant improvements.
-  **Town Centre Core** - To be developed as gleaming heart of Town. Highest specification required
-  **Pedestrian Lanes** - To be developed as key people places.
-  **Retail Lanes (Precincts)** - Potential for further improvements to Retail Lanes. Connection from Lion Street to Worcester Street to be strengthened
-  **New/Improved waterside links**
-  **New and improved public spaces**
-  **Improved pedestrian priority at junctions**

Note: This hierarchy will be applied/extended where new links are desirable/possible - Refer to Concept for movement.

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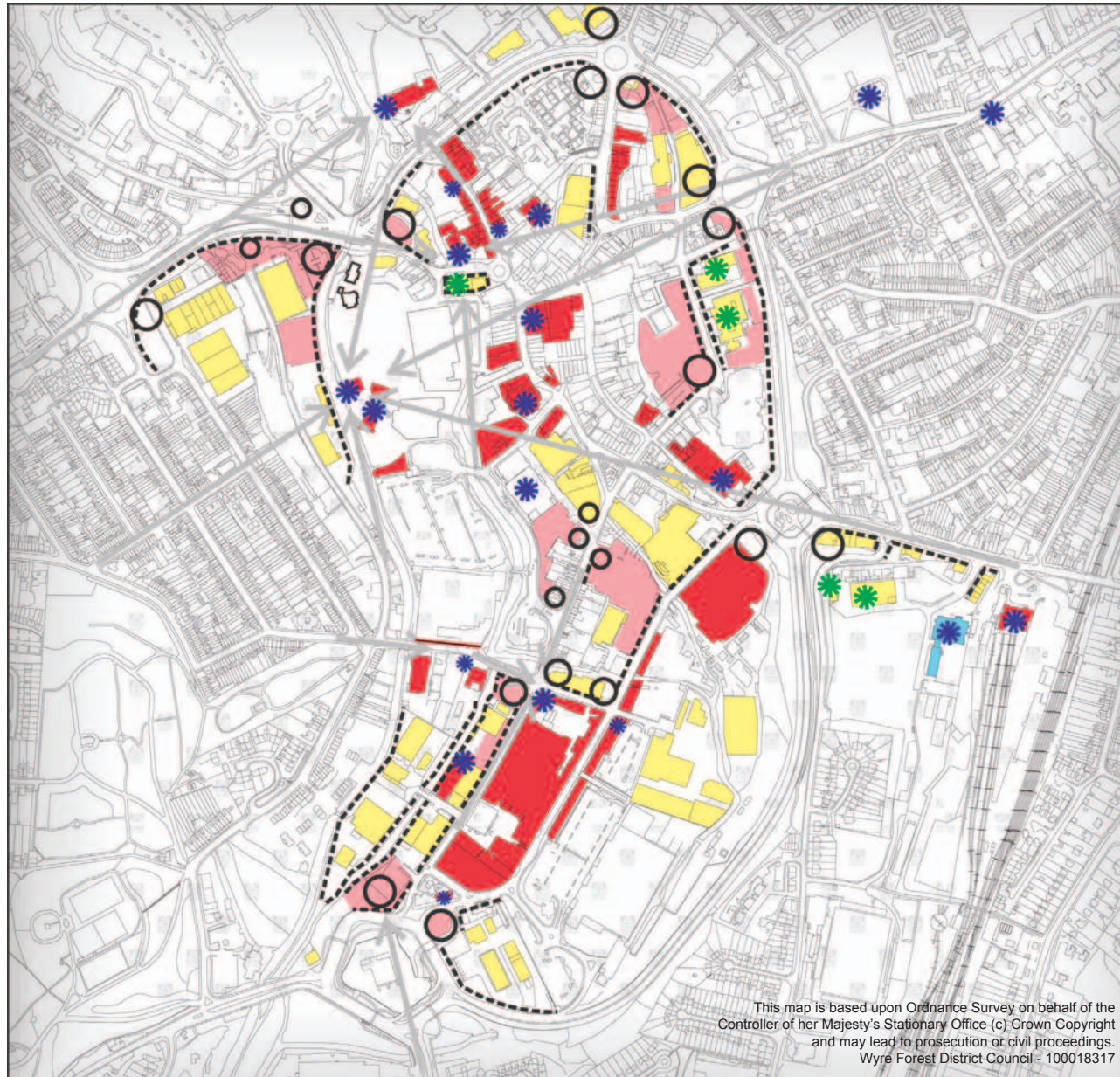
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DESIGN AMBITION KIDDERMINSTER TOWN CENTRE

**Kidderminster Plan 3:
Improving Townscape Value and
Consolidating the Urban Fabric**

- Heritage townscape* - Conserve and improve Profile/setting
- Enhance profile and setting of contemporary landmark
- Gap sites - Potential to repair urban fabric
- Buildings where improvements in townscape quality could be achieved
- ★ Prominent/landmark building - potential for new/improved architectural lighting
- ★ Highly visible 'ugly buildings' (undermining image) Consider long term future and potential removal
- Corners to be strengthened
- Frontages to improve / reinstate
- / Historic frontages to retain
- ↖ Important long views and vistas to retain

* To identify other buildings of local value, please refer to the Local List of Buildings and Conservation Area Character Appraisals



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DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN TOWN CENTRE

Historical Biography

4.23

Although evidence for settlements in this area date as far back as the Domesday Book (1086), the creation of Stourport was effectively instigated by an Act of Parliament in 1766. This was when the first Canal Navigation Act for Worcestershire received the assent of King George III. The town is by comparison with other country towns a relatively recent settlement and owes its origin solely to the construction of the canal.

4.24

James Brindley was commissioned to supervise the planning and construction of the new Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal, completed in 1771. The canal terminated with a series of basins located above the Severn beyond which a series of terraces and locks step down to the river. The construction of the canal and its basins provided a focal point for residential and commercial development in Stourport. In addition to the basins that exist today a further two have existed historically.

Vernacular Traditions

4.25

The heritage townscape of Stourport can be delineated into two distinct scales and for differing function but constructed at largely concurrent times. The domestic scale of the core town centre is based upon well mannered Georgian buildings at between two and generally three storeys in height. These create a fine grain and intimate scale in contrast to the larger mass of several industrial buildings located within the Severn

Road area. Severn Road contained the oldest vinegar works in the Country established in 1798, drawing on the readily available water supply.

4.26

A number of other industrial uses were located in this part of the town, prospering as a result of its strategic location. These buildings were constructed in local brick in Victorian and later styles and echoed the polite style of the Georgian Period. These buildings are valued and protected through planning policy and form an intrinsic part of the character of Stourport.

4.27

A consistent character within the town is achieved through similar materials, construction processes and architectural style, all of which are typical of the eighteenth century. Locally relevant red brick is used in the town, with stone detailing and simple elegant forms.

4.28

Water is a key feature of the town centre, although High Street and the basins are somewhat remote and water space is sheltered to the back of Bridge Street and York Street. One of the most striking buildings within the town is The Tontine, formerly a hotel, which stands at the head of the canal basin and provides an imposing aspect from the Severn.

4.29

The historic core of the town is defined by the intersection of Bridge Street, High Street, New Street and York Street, to the north of the Severn. Most of the buildings on the high street were built in the early 1800's. York Street is named after Aaron York, a boat builder and wharfinger from Bewdley who lived in Stourport between 1775 and 1825. He built his own house there, known as York House, which is said to be

the first house to be built in the new town of Stourport. The bridge over the river provides a distinctive local landmark and the gateway to the town centre is defined by this feature along Bridge Street in conjunction with the gables of the Bridge Inn and Old Crown Inn.

4.30

High Street beyond Bridge Street provides the focal point for retailing and commercial activities in the town. As this photo dating from 1900 shows, High Street, was busy with trams until they were removed in 1929. The consistent architectural form of the town is clear from this photo, and comparison with a present-day scene of the town shows that the historical fabric is largely surviving in good condition, although several insensitive shop fronts can be observed.

The Modern-Day Town

4.31

Traffic remains an issue in the town centre. The absence of a relief road means high levels of traffic pass through the centre and as a result a one way gyratory is in operation directing traffic around an inner loop.

4.32

As a result pedestrian movement in the heart of the town is undermined. Despite this a reasonably successful public realm scheme has been undertaken within the central part of High Street. The junction at High Street/York Street and Bridge Street (above) is particularly congested.

4.33

Bridge Street is a particularly interesting part of the town centre. Uses on the western side of this street reflect the tourist function of the town and include amusement arcades and gift shops, accommodated in vernacular properties. To the eastern edge of this street

more contemporary buildings and lower value uses undermine the quality and offer of this street. These include garages and workshops. Links to the basins are poor. Adopted Local Plan Policy identifies the scope for significant improvement. The vacant Post Office within High Street offers a significant opportunity to strengthen the vitality and viability of the town centre and this site is subject to an existing planning approval for community housing uses.

4.34

The canal continues to play a significant role within the town and regeneration initiatives and planning policy seeks to reinforce the importance of the basins. There is a strategic ambition to reopen part of the original Lichfield Basin as part of the planned redevelopment of the Severn Road sites. This has received the support of British Waterways (BW) through the adopted Design Guide for Lichfield Basin and BW seek to enhance the basins as a more significant and attractive destination for tourists.

4.35

The industrial heritage of buildings including the former carpet mills and vinegar works provide another theme which will be important in the regeneration of the town, focused on Severn Road, where buildings are to be conserved and reused. The scope to find a new use for The Tontine is a priority, although significant conservation challenges will need to be addressed to ensure this building can meet contemporary requirements, not least access for all.

4.36

Contemporary development is apparent within Stourport adjacent to the basins and along the canal side, principally for residential uses. On the whole these schemes are successful in their integration within the historic town. New development has respected the

town's scale and recognised the potential added value from the waterside. Materials used in contemporary schemes harmonise with traditional townscape and for the most part infill sites are handled with sensitivity. Recent development has seen timber used in the town, something which is not indigenous but which none the less adds to the richness of the place.

Design Principles for Stourport-on-Severn Town Centre

4.37

- i. **Alleviate vehicular congestion and traffic passing through the town centre, which undermine the pedestrian experience.** This will be critical to realising the full potential of the town centre as a place to walk around and enjoy.
- ii. **Incorporate the basins into the town centre movement network by visually and physically knitting these together.** A strong pedestrian circuit should be created linking the basins with Bridge Street (and High Street), York Street and Mart Lane. Stronger connections are required both physically and visually.
- iii. **Create an improved destination at the canal basin.** This will include creation of new water space at the canal site on Lichfield Basin. Tourist and leisure facilities should be developed to support the vitality and appeal of the town for visitors and local people, capitalising on the canal heritage as a key attraction.

iv. **Enhance townscape quality east of Bridge Street.** This will develop greater integration with the basins and re-establish traditional building lines. New and better quality building and uses will need to support local distinctiveness and improve the vitality and viability of the town centre.

v. **Improved linkages are required to access the town centre from the east.** The River Stour and existing land uses at the eastern edge of Stourport restrict accessibility and permeability.

vi. **The redevelopment of sites at Severn Road will need to add value to the town centre and enrich the public realm.** More detailed design principles are set out in the Severn Road Development Brief SPG and Lichfield Basin Design Guide.

vii. **Develop greater physical and visual integration between the town centre, the River Stour and Severn,** based on new development and landscape projects. The quality and settings of each river frontage is an important part of the character of the town.

viii. **New development should conserve and make the most of heritage townscape,** particularly at Severn Road where major changes are planned.

- ix. **Improvements to the public realm** within the town centre, particularly at High Street, York Street and Bridge Street are encouraged.
- x. **New development within the Severn Road site must respond positively to the character and distinctiveness of Stourport.** This will include responding creatively to townscape heritage on the site, in terms of layout, massing, materials and design features. Development on this site should be intimate and tight knit, reflecting a scale consistent with adjacent streets (particularly Mart Lane). More detailed design guidance is provided within the Adopted Development Brief for Severn Road.

Adopted District Local Plan Policies – Specific to Stourport Town Centre

Objective 61: Stourport-on-Severn Town Centre Safeguard position...as convenience centre...

Planning and design parameters for the redevelopment of the following sites are outlined in the Adopted District Local Plan within the following Policies. These are developed in greater detail within the Development Brief for Severn Road and the Design Guide for Lichfield basin:

Policy STC1: Lichfield Basin – Severn Road Phase One

Policy STC2: Carpets of Worth – Severn Road Phase Two

Policy STC3: Cheapside – Severn Road Phase Three

Additional Plan policy provides the context for the redevelopment of the following sites:

Policy STC4: Bridge Street Link

Policy ST5: Canal Basins Area

Policy STC.6 Vale Road Wes

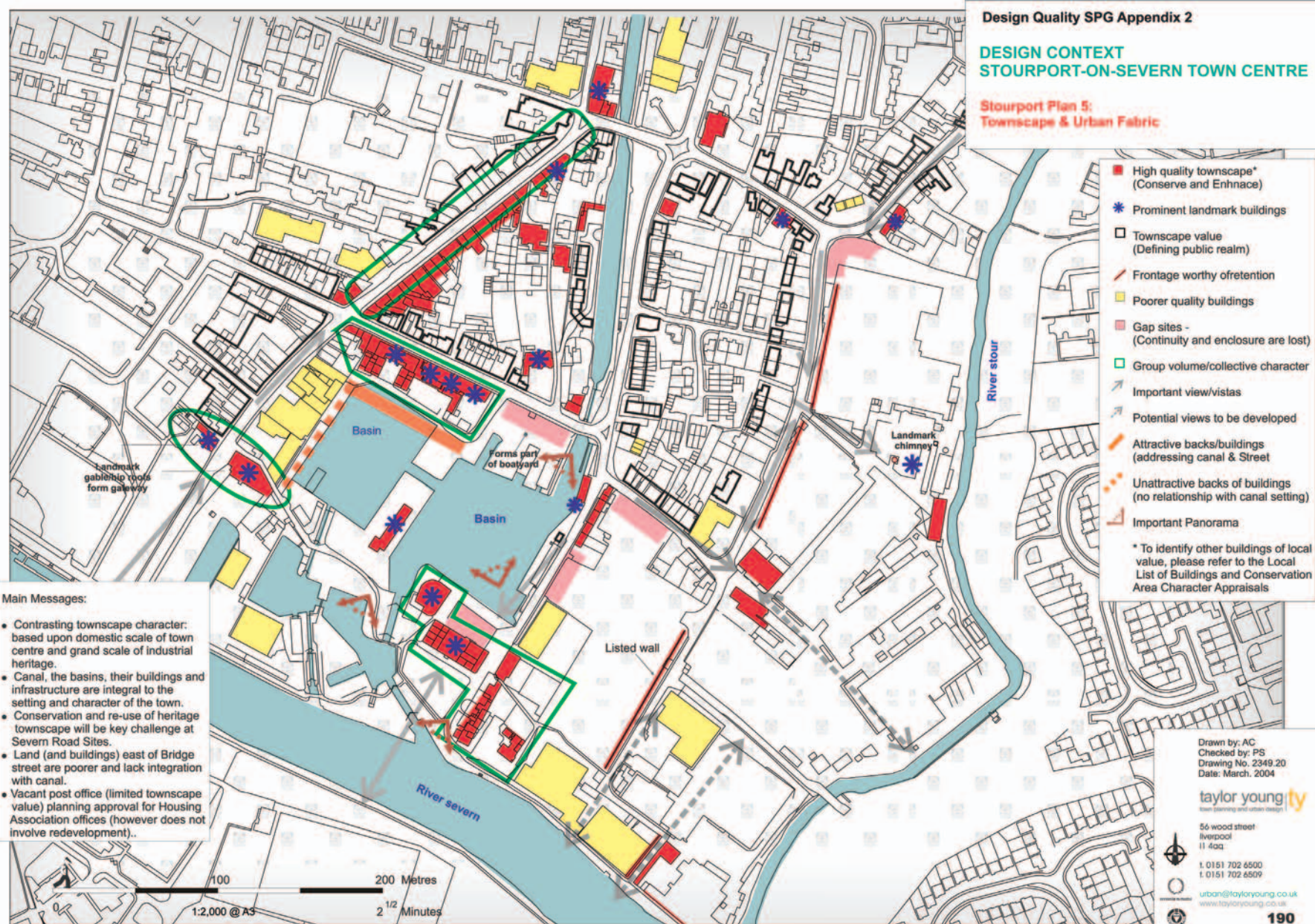
Illustrative Plans

4.38

Analysis plans, which highlight the urban design opportunities and problems in Stourport, are provided on pages 103/104 and address:

- i. Stourport Plan 1: Public Realm and Movement Structure
- ii. Stourport Plan 2: Townscape and Urban fabric





DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR BEWDLEY TOWN CENTRE

Historical Biography

4.39

The name of “Bewdley” (“beau lieu”) first appears on a map in 1304, and pertained to a town situated on the high ground of Wyre Hill. Bewdley was conferred with Royal Borough status in 1472, and remained loyal to the King during the Civil War (1642-51). This date is significant in terms of the civic development of the town, from which point it held its own markets, courts, it had its own coat of arms and had the right to elect a Member of Parliament.

4.40

The town developed as an important crossing point on the river with the first bridge being built in 1447. The River Severn represented an important communication artery and the bridge provided a strategic focal point within the landscape. Bewdley was formerly an important inland fishery harbour and by the mid eighteenth century had become one of the most important inland ports in the country.

4.41

The prosperity generated by this and other commercial activities is reflected in fine Georgian buildings and the town has been described as the most perfect small Georgian town in Worcestershire. Bewdley provides a rich townscape heritage. Its strongly defined character is based upon a well related collection of fine historic buildings and a series of landmark set pieces which include; Thomas Telford’s Bridge (1798), the imposing St. Anne’s Church at the head of Load Street and the river frontage and former quayside.

The Importance of the River

4.42

The River Severn is the central feature within the town and offers good views to open countryside beyond to the south and north. The town addresses the river and is set within a rich and undulating landscape. Whilst the town occupies both banks of the river, the heart of the town is located to the south-eastern bank where a formal promenade has been laid out. This provides a fine setting for Georgian town houses which create an impressive frontage overlooking the river.

Vernacular Traditions

4.43

There are three particularly important styles of buildings within the town:

- *Vernacular timber-framed buildings of late medieval to seventeenth century origin.*
- The predominant style of Georgian architecture, with classically inspired facades. These range from elegant town houses to grand public buildings.
- To a lesser extent Edwardian buildings with gothic and vernacular influences.

4.44

Materials include locally derived red/plum coloured brick, with decorative treatment of cornice and doorways. Important civic and commercial buildings, such as the museum and St. Anne’s Church are faced with buttery-coloured sandstone, which provides a pleasant visual contrast and denotes their local importance. The prevalence of oak framed buildings with a natural cream washed infill provides a further layer of contrast within the town.

4.5

St. Anne’s Church, which occupies a prominent position, is a good example of Georgian architecture. The square stone tower features a classically-inspired urn on the corners of the balustraded parapet and a serliana (triple window) to the west end.

4.46

The character and completeness of the town centre is a real asset for the town. The river and Severn Valley Railway provide additional points of interest and its setting within the countryside is an important part of the town’s character which will need to be preserved.

The Modern-Day Town

4.47

Development opportunities within Bewdley are limited, due to the town’s heritage. There are few gaps in the fabric and the conservation of this special place is the main priority.

4.48

Contemporary development is notable within the residential sector and varies in quality. New development on the riverfront and within the formal Georgian river frontage has respected the scale and proportion of the established townscape. Materials have been sensitively used in these examples, although the relief and richness of new frontage does not reflect historical development close by. In general new development is sympathetic to the setting and of a historicist style. Basic design issues such as building set backs and the detail and richness of facades is poorly resolved.

4.49

The only area where the townscape structure breaks down within the core of the town is around the surgery, library and fire station. These buildings lack the scale and quality to live up to their location and are of an 'anywhere' design.

The sheltered location away from Load Street ensures that this does not impact critically on the character of the town but in the longer term this area could present an opportunity to mend the fabric of the town and strengthen its vitality and viability.

4.50

It will be critical that any new development within the town centre of Bewdley is sensitive to the townscape traditions and special character of this settlement. The issue of traffic management and public realm quality within the central area provide potential to improve the overall experience of the town centre.

Design Principles for Bewdley**4.51**

- i. **Ensure the village green parkland character of high quality townscape beyond is maintained** to the eastern banks of the River Severn.
- ii. **Ensure the urban character and striking building frontages** are maintained to the western banks of the River Severn with a high quality pedestrian promenade an integral part of the urban setting.

- iii. **Calm traffic in Load Street**, reducing widths of carriageway where possible to create more space for pedestrians. Assess the potential to accommodate traffic around St. Anne's Church in a more pedestrian friendly setting.
- iv. **Improve the quality of public realm within the town centre** and specifically within Load Street, which should become a more pedestrian friendly setting and focal point for town life.
- v. **Enhance pedestrian alleyways improving their condition and safety**, so that they contribute to the character and permeability of the town.
- vi. **Improve the quality and condition of shop front design** within the central area to help develop a coordinated language/brand and reinforce local distinctiveness.
- vii. **Illuminate townscape gems more fully and successfully** to maximise impact at night.
- viii. **Any new development within the historic fabric of Bewdley must be undertaken with care and sensitivity** to respond to the rich townscape tradition and to ensure the special characteristics of the town are reflected in new buildings and spaces.

Illustrative Plans**4.52**

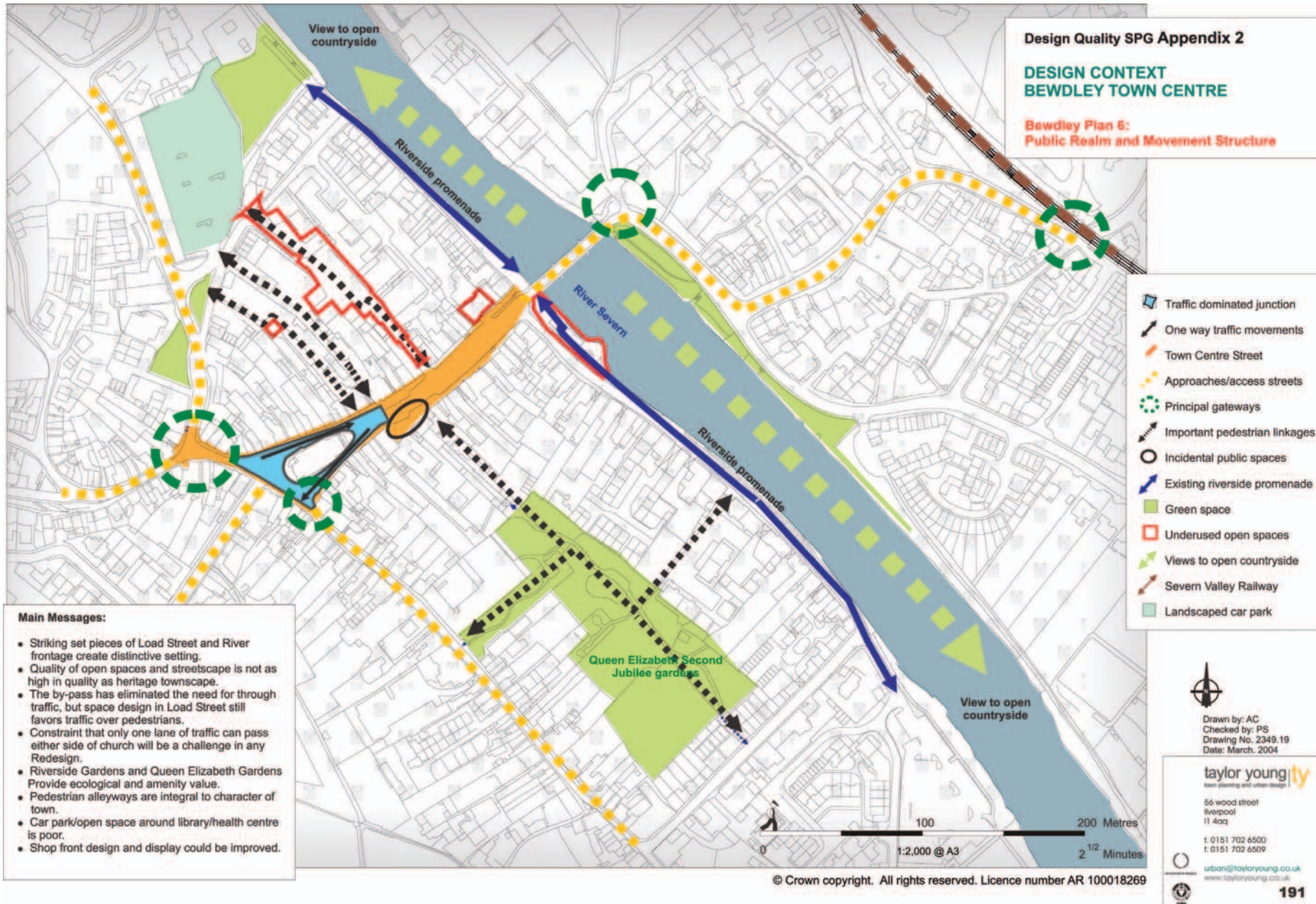
Analysis plans, which highlight the urban design opportunities and problems in Bewdley, are provided on pages 107/108 and address.

- i. Bewdley Plan 1: Public Realm and Movement Structure
- ii. Bewdley Plan 2: Townscape and Urban fabric

Adopted Local District Plan Policies – Specific to Bewdley Town Centre

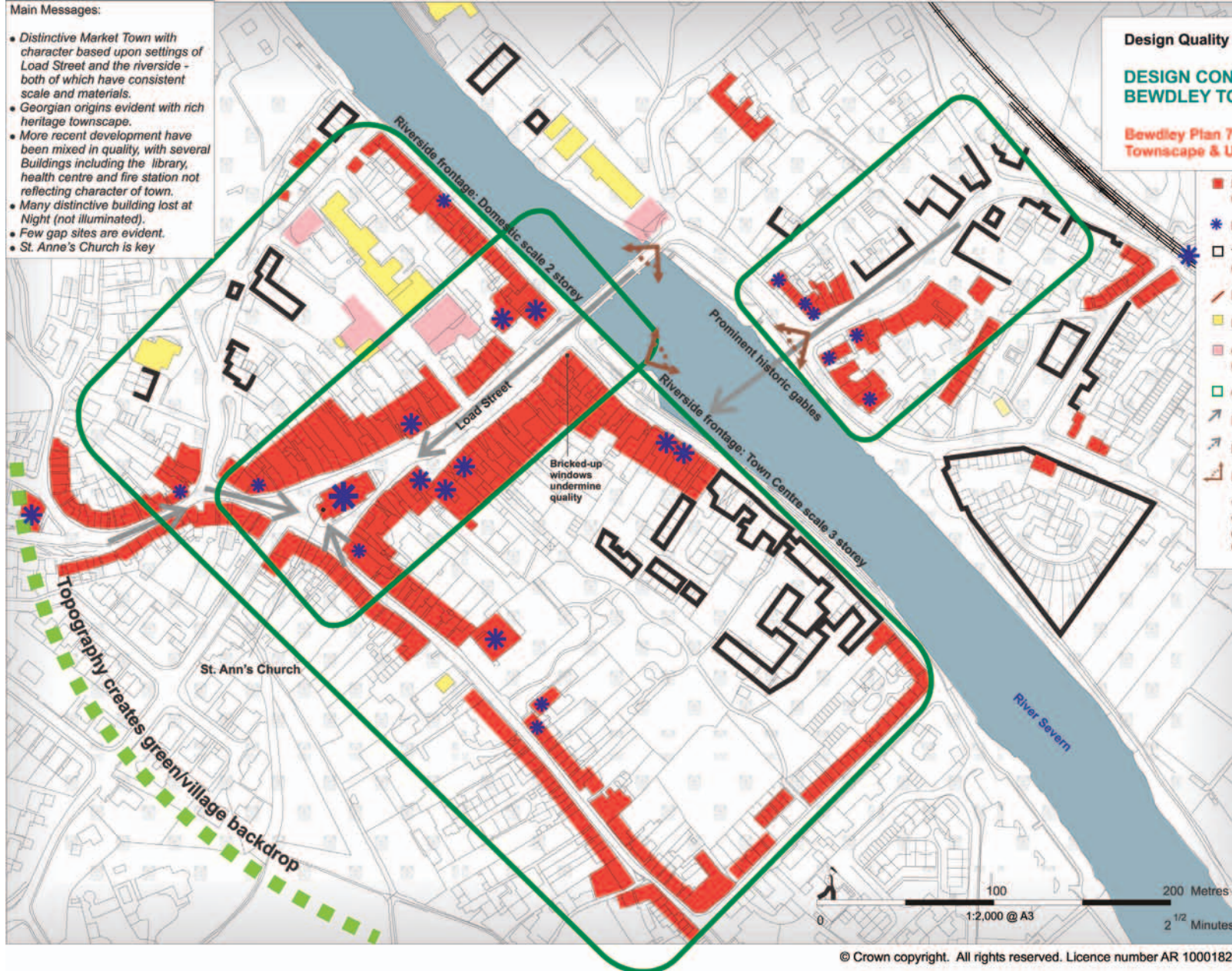
Objective 62: Bewdley and Local Centres
...maintain presence of suitable mix of retailing...

Policy RT3: Bewdley District Centre
Large scale retail will not be allowed
(Smaller scale retail development will be permitted subject to tests)



Main Messages:

- Distinctive Market Town with character based upon settings of Load Street and the riverside - both of which have consistent scale and materials.
- Georgian origins evident with rich heritage townscape.
- More recent development have been mixed in quality, with several Buildings including the library, health centre and fire station not reflecting character of town.
- Many distinctive building lost at Night (not illuminated).
- Few gap sites are evident.
- St. Anne's Church is key



Design Quality SPG Appendix 2

DESIGN CONTEXT
BEWDLEY TOWN CENTRE

Bewdley Plan 7:
Townscape & Urban Fabric

- High quality townscape* (conserve & Enhance)
- ★ Prominent landmark buildings
- Townscape value (Defining public realm)
- ↗ Frontages worthy of retention
- Poorer quality buildings
- Gap sites - (Continuity and enclosure are lost)
- Group value/collective character
- ↗ Important view/vistas
- ↗ Potential views to be developed
- ↗ Important Panorama

* To identify other buildings of local value, please refer to the Local List of Buildings and Conservation Area Character Appraisals

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Chapter 5

Design In The Parishes



CHAPTER 5 - DESIGN IN THE PARISHES

INTRODUCTION

5.0

At a Parish level the focus in terms of new development will be on existing settlements, particularly established villages. The Adopted District Local Plan will govern where and at what scale new development occurs within the villages and rural settlements of the District. This chapter identifies the process which developers will need to go through to ensure that any new development within villages and rural settlements properly respects the character of that village and supports local distinctiveness.

5.1

A Village Design Statement, which will act as a brief within which any development proposals will need to be judged. A methodology for producing Village Design Statements is provided later in this chapter. This section is based upon four parts:

1. *Existing Settlements within parishes*
2. *Design Guidance for new development in existing villages*
3. *How to undertake a Village Design Statement.*
4. *The Landscape of Wyre Forest*

EXISTING SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE PARISHES

Conservation Areas

5.2

To assist this process, the Adopted District Local Plan provides detailed character descriptions of several villages and rural settlements, which have been designated conservation areas.

As such these villages are afforded a greater degree of protection from new development towards conserving their special character.

5.3

These villages where existing character analysis exists within the Development plan are listed below:

- i. *Broome*
- ii. *Chaddesley Corbett*
- iii. *Churchill*
- iv. *Harvington*
- v. *Ribbesford*
- vi. *Upper Arley*
- vii. *Wolverley*

5.4

The heritage quality of these settlements is recognised through their conservation area status and they include some of the best examples of historic rural architecture and country homes within the District. There is merit in referring here to what are neat summaries of character in the Adopted District Local Plan, but interest is drawn to Chaddesley Corbett and Broome, which offer a quintessentially English picture-post-card aesthetic.

Notable Villages

5.5

Other villages within the district which are of notable quality, but which are not designated as conservation areas include:

- viii. *Bliss Gate*
- ix. *Callow Hill*
- x. *Clows Top (part of)*
- xi. *Far Forest*
- xii. *Rock*



5.6

These villages provide further examples of the varied building palette of the rural District. Despite their not being afforded conservation area status there is an identifiable indigenous character to the architecture of these settlements. The church at Rock is particularly striking as are the simple agricultural cottages at Clowes Top which contrast with the more formal and ornate village Post Office. The sandstone cottages at Far Forest provide another dimension to the local building range and this style has been adopted in several more recent developments here.

5.7

Original work will be required to begin to understand and record the character of the original settlement within these developments, several of which have been undermined by insensitive residential development over the recent past. The key is to ensure any new developments relate well to original properties.

Larger Rural Settlements**5.8**

Larger rural settlements within the landscape of Wyre Forest District include:

- xiii. Fairfield
- xiv. Cookley
- xv. Blakedown

These settlements have absorbed greater levels of new development than the other settlements identified previously. They remain however distinct and separate from the main towns and although each accommodates a significant proportion of suburban housing each remains relatively distinct, mainly by virtue of their relationship with the wider landscape.

Development in the Parishes**5.9**

Development within the landscape will be controlled through existing planning policy and it is not anticipated that significant new development will take place in the villages outlined above. The exception to this general rule will be governed by Policy H11 'Affordable Housing Exception Schemes in rural locations', which will provide a mechanism for addressing locally demonstrated need for affordable housing which cannot be provided through private housing mechanisms at a Parish level.

5.10

The Adopted Draft Local Development Plan makes no provision for major new development in the rural parishes. Development opportunities will be limited to infill, conversions and small-scale exceptions in accordance with the policies of the Adopted District Local Plan. Where development on smaller sites comes forward it will be important to ensure that the original characteristics of that settlement are reflected in a thorough and high quality design.

DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR VILLAGES AND RURAL SETTLEMENTS**5.11**

When considering new development within settlements the design approach should reflect the approach established in earlier Chapters of the SPG. In addition more detailed guidance is provided within this section for new development in existing villages, which reflects the greater sensitivity attached to the physical design of new development in these settings.

Villages are particularly sensitive for a number of reasons including:

- i. A limited number of individual dwellings.
- ii. An intimate scale and integrity based on many years of small scale growth.
- iii. Established settings and key characteristics are amplified.
- iv. Consistency and character are highly developed.
- v. Individual developments have greater impact as a result.

Design Guidance**5.12**

The guidance which follows summarises the design philosophy within villages.

Contemporary/Traditional Design

- i. *In general a traditional design approach is likely to give rise to a development which is in keeping with the established character of the settlement. If executed properly and to a high specification this will avoid pastiche and merely create a building which is unsurprising in its location.*
- ii. *In exceptional circumstances a contemporary design approach may prove to add value to historic settings. In such cases the quality of the design must be clearly demonstrated to be of the highest order. An architect will need to be involved in drawing up any such contemporary designs.*

- iii. Contemporary designs should provide strong historical references. Contemporary elements should be balanced against understated and simple natural materials specific to the local context. This will require careful analysis of the context and an innovative approach towards the integration of new and old.

Sensitivity and Context

5.13

- i. New development should be sensitive in style, construction and proportions to the original buildings within the settlement. This will require a sensitive design language – well related to the vernacular of the place.
- ii. Traditional/reclaimed materials (or similar to match existing) should be adopted for walls and roofs and traditional construction methods should be employed.
- iii. Through the use of good quality materials new development will age well over time and become an established part of the landscape of the settlement.
- iv. The massing, elevations and proportions of new development should be closely related to those established within the street, without copying other buildings too closely.
- v. Details such as windows, doors, down-pipes, cornices, lintels and so on should all draw influence from the settlement and can provide a further level of authenticity.

- vi. Boundary treatment/alignment and building lines should provide a seamless joint to adjoining properties.

Public Realm

5.14

- i. Public realm design and threshold treatments should be as high in quality as adjacent properties and the architecture of the new development itself, utilising similar high quality materials.
- ii. Entrances into the rear of developments, which may be required for servicing, need to be sensitively addressed as these can often undermine the quality and continuity of the street, particularly in village settings.

Criteria

5.15

Key criteria¹ for considering the response to context will include:

- i. Street Structure/type
- ii. Street proportion
- iii. Building type
- iv. Plot/unit width
- v. Building line set back
- vi. Facing/construction materials
- vii. Roof materials/types
- viii. Typical details
- ix. Front boundary
- x. Landscape
- xi. Parking arrangements

Village Design Statements

5.16

The preparation of Village Design Statements (VDS) is encouraged as a means of identifying what is special about particular settlements and what features contribute to character and local distinctiveness. They will assist in setting the context for new development in the parishes and therefore such statements should be prepared where new development might be expected in the first instance.

5.17

Such statements may be developed by the local community facilitated by the public sector or by developers with full involvement of the community. Whether a development requires a Village Design Statement to be undertaken will be a matter for discussion with the local parish council and will depend on a number of factors including:

- i) The scale of development proposed in relation to the size of the Village,
- ii) The relative location, prominence of the site, and therefore
- iii) The likely impact on the village from development.

Village Design Statements need not be long or labour intensive to produce. Development proposals can then be formulated within the context of these statements. Development proposals can then be formulated within the context of these statements.

5.18

Design Statements which are required to accompany planning applications should respond to the character analysis contained within any existing VDS.

What are Village Design Statements?

5.19

Village Design Statements were developed by the Countryside Agency as part of its 'Design in the Countryside' initiative. They can supplement the design policies in development plans and help encourage a more regionally and locally based approach to design and planning. They are neither prescriptive nor expensive to produce. The VDS is a mechanism to encourage new development that better reflects location and respects local character.

Purpose and Role of Village Design Statements

5.20

A VDS is intended to provide a long-term framework for development, not to prevent it. The purpose of Village Design Statements is as follows:

- i. A VDS can set out the criteria which a development must meet in the locality if it is to be 'good enough to approve'.
- ii. VDS's are an effective way of helping communities to determine how best their settlements might change;
- iii. A VDS can help articulate what high quality development means in the context of a settlement and its surrounding countryside;
- iv. VDS may be suitable for approval as more detailed planning guidance dependant upon the preparation process.

Preparation of Village Design Statements

5.21

Planning Policy Guidance 7, (Countryside), notes the value of a VDS in contributing towards the following:

- i. Offering a framework for engaging local people;
- ii. Helping developers to understand local views at the outset;
- iii. Helping developers promote new buildings that are likely to gain local support rather than generate uninformed opposition.

5.22

VDS should provide guidance at the following levels:

- i. The landscape setting of the settlement;
- ii. The shape of the settlement (built form and open spaces);
- iii. The nature of the buildings and open spaces themselves.

5.23

Although there is no set format or list of factors that have to be taken into account in undertaking the assessment, the following provide a basis for analysis and guidance:

- i. A concise physical history of the settlement;
- ii. Detailed design features of buildings eg. building materials, roofs and chimneys, doors and windows;
- iii. Local building techniques,
- iv. Local materials
- v. Particular local building forms
- vi. Relationship to landscape
- vii. Street patterns and open space
- viii. Views in to and out of the settlement;
- ix. Trees, hedgerows, landscaping;
- x. Boundaries, e.g. walls & fences;
- xi. Shop fronts, signs and advertisements;

- xii. Streetscape – the floor of the settlement
- xiii. Highways and traffic;
- xiv. Street lighting;
- xv. Street furniture.

This advice can inform a series of key design principles based upon this distinctive local character and communicated through plans text and photography.

Key Stages in Preparation of Village Design Statements

5.24

A number of general stages are identified:

Project Identification

The need for a VDS is identified – based upon planning and/or development issues. All key interests are advised. The feasibility and funding should be investigated by lead agency (Public sector, developer, community).

Project Start-up

5.25

All interests contacted and a working team is established to produce and manage the project. The team producing the VDS should include and report to the local community. Representation/consultation with the District Council as planning authority is crucial.

Character Assessment

5.26

The objective assessment of the character of the settlement and its surroundings is undertaken and disseminated. This should identify features which contribute to character and local distinctiveness – based upon the issues identified previously.

Proposal of Guidelines

5.27

Based on the findings of the character assessment, guidelines on how these local characteristics could be reflected in new development should be developed. Phraseology should not be overly prescriptive, as any guidance will need to be implemented through the planning system.

Review and confirmation

5.28

Consultations on the final guidelines should be undertaken to road test the VDS. If the document is to be formally adopted by the District Council as local planning authority then statutory consultations will be required and this will involve a prescribed approach and timetable.

Adoption of Final Village Design Statement

5.29

Subject to relevant endorsements and approval the document may be afforded material consideration as an adopted planning document. Wherever possible this is always advantageous as this affords more weight to the document in planning negotiation and application determination. For this reason, preparation of VDS will need to be undertaken in partnership with the local

planning authority in the context of existing planning policy.

Responsibilities for Preparation

5.30

Preparation of a VDS should involve residents of the settlement to reflect their special understanding of their place. This process is usually facilitated by place makers such as planners or other designers. The resources to undertake such initiatives may not be available from the District Council, and other organisations may need to lead and fund these initiatives. Parish Councils may take a pro active lead in defining need for example through Parish Plans; attracting funding and managing the process in partnership with the District Council.

5.31

Developers may reasonably be expected to undertake a VDS in concert with local people where a new development may have significant impact on the quality and character of that settlement. Where a scheme provides more two or more properties the council will encourage the developer to undertake a VDS prior to detailed scheme design. Early consultation with the council is encouraged.

The Landscape of Wyre Forest

5.32

The landscape is also a striking feature of Parishes within the District. This relates to farmland, woodland and other open areas which frame the main settlements. The interaction between town and country is of particular importance.

In May 1999 Worcestershire County Council published draft Landscape Character Assessment as Supplementary Planning Guidance to assist with interpretation of Worcestershire County Structure Plan. This continues to be developed.

Wider landscape issues

5.33

- i. The red sandstone embankments to country roads. This characteristic stone is used to good effect in boundary treatment to higher quality residential schemes, but is not a major building material itself.
- ii. Long views into the landscape from all three main settlements. This is made possible by the undulating topography and the towns locations within river valleys of Stour and Severn. This presents opportunities to view townscape against the backdrop of the rural hinterland.
- iii. Topography is one of rolling hillsides and sweeping shallow valleys. The valleys of the Severn and the Stour provide valuable landscape features within the district. Beyond this the District is recognised for a prevalence of small hills which create locally distinctive landscape settings.
- iv. The consistent theme of water which is an intrinsic part of the District's character. The canal and river corridors bind the towns together and provide amenity value.

- v. Trees and forested areas are a characteristic feature of the district which takes its name from one of the most important natural forests in the country. The rich landscape setting provided by vegetation is a key structural element.

Gateways

5.34

Gateways are considered as integral part of the landscape character of the district, where town meets country to mutual benefit and striking effect. The following are of note within the District.

- i. The distinctive gateway to the Kidderminster urban area from the north (Bridgnorth) along the A449 is a readily recognisable feature, where open countryside is funnelled into a narrow rising gully which framed firstly with landscape and then built form before opening out into residential Kidderminster.
- ii. The gateway to Kidderminster from the south is similarly striking although the transition from countryside to urban area is less contrasting. The expanse of the roundabout with the shelves of low grade showroom uses and the squat residential towers signal arrival within the town for all the wrong reasons. The viaduct to the east offers an additional landmark feature.
- iii. The arrival point in Bewdley from Kidderminster, when the Georgian frontage reveals itself against the landscape backdrop of the hills beyond as the corner is turned and the Thomas Telford's bridge.
- iv. The arrival in Stourport over the bridge with the settlement beyond and the river beneath, the notional gateways framed by the gables of the Bridge Inn and Old Crown Inn.

Key Messages for Design in the Parishes

- ✓ Villages are particularly sensitive to new development.
- ✓ New development will be expected to demonstrate sensitivity to context and provide a thorough and high quality design response.
- ✓ Contemporary design language will be judged less successful if it dilutes the original character of the village setting.
- ✓ Contemporary designs will need to demonstrate that they respond positively to context and actually add value.
- ✓ Traditional vernacular architecture can help to create buildings which accurately reflect original characteristics.
- ✓ Vernacular design should avoid bad pastiche by using traditional materials, construction techniques and finishes.
- ✓ In this way new building will blend in and age with the village - subservient to the overall effect.
- ✓ Village Design Statements can help local communities to understand what is special about their Village.
- ✓ Developers may be expected to produce Village Design Statements to help inform subsequent design proposals.
- ✓ New development will be expected to conserve and enhance the special landscape character of the District.

Direct Adopted District Local Plan policy linkages to Design in the Parishes

Objective 6: (Housing) Quality
 Objective 14: (Design) Local Distinctiveness
 Objective 18: (Design) Design Statements
 Objective 32: (Heritage) Conservation Areas
 Objective 33: (Heritage) Local Distinctiveness
 Policy H.11 Affordable Housing Exception Schemes in Rural Areas
 Policy D.3 Local Distinctiveness
 Policy D.5 Design of Development in the Countryside
 Policy D.10 Boundary Treatment
 Policy LA.1 Landscape Character



PUBLIC CONSULTATION STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This statement describes the consultation undertaken by Wyre Forest District Council for the preparation of the Design Quality Supplementary Planning Guidance.

CONSULTATION

Public consultation began on 25th March and ran for six weeks until 7th May 2004. A press release was published to raise awareness of the consultation. Complimentary copies of the Draft Design Guidance, together with a covering letter, were forwarded to the following organisations:-

Advantage West Midlands
Local town and parish councils
Disability Action (Wyre Forest)
Local civic societies and the Civic Trust
British Waterways
 CABE
 English Nature
 English Heritage
 Environment Agency
 English Historic Towns Forum
 Highways Agency
 Government Office for the West Midlands
 House Builders Federation
 West Mercia Police Authority
 Housing Corporation
 Opportunity Bewdley
 Worcestershire County Council
 Stourport Forward
 Wyre Forest Arts Forum
 Bewdley Town Centre Management Forum
 Wyre Forest Primary Care Trust
 Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership
 Wyre Forest Community Housing

Stourport-on-Severn Town Centre Forum
Other locally active housing associations
Wyre Forest Business Forum

In total, nearly 300 notification letters were sent to architects, design consultants and interest groups. The document and response form were also available to view and download off the council's website.

EXHIBITIONS

Three staffed exhibitions were held at Bewdley Library on 29th March 2004, at Kidderminster Corn Exchange on 31st March 2004 and at Stourport Civic Hall on 5th April 2004. During the six-week consultation period small displays were also mounted at the libraries in the three towns.

RESPONSES

A total of 100 responses were received from 22 respondents. Copies of the responses were made available at Duke House in Kidderminster and at the Civic Centre in Stourport-on-Severn. All of the comments were scrutinised and assessed by the Forward Planning Section and Taylor Young and formally considered at Council on 30th June 2004. More detailed information on the consultation is available from the District Council.



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