

# ST ALBANS STRATEGIC SITES DESIGN GUIDANCE: DESIGN PRINCIPLES

This document was published in July 2023.

It is a part of the suite of documents known as the Strategic Sites Design Guidance, that the Council has developed to introduce a step change in the quality of developments within the District that the Draft Local Plan requires.

The Design Guidance applies to planning applications and sites within the District, which are identified as Broad Locations and Large sites (100+ homes) or 10,000m<sup>2</sup> and more of commercial uses.

The Strategic Sites Design Guidance compromise of the following documents:

- **01. Strategic Sites Design Principles**  
This provides guidance on the design principles that developments are required to meet for Strategic sites.
- **02. Strategic Sites Design Toolkit**  
This provides guidance on the design process for Strategic Sites.
- **03. Strategic Sites Masterplanning Toolkit**  
This provides guidance on the planning process for Strategic Sites.
- **04. Strategic Sites Employment Uses Design Toolkit**  
This provides guidance on the design principles for developments with substantial employment uses of 10,000m<sup>2</sup> or above.

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Version	Date	Commentary
1.0	03 March 2020	Original version developed collaboratively by St Albans City & District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, HertslQ, Proctor & Matthews Architects and David Lock Associates. This version was not published on the SADC Council website. Dacorum Borough Council adopted their respective Strategic Design Guidance as an Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2021.
2.0	12 July 2023	This version has been updated by St Albans City and District Council to include changes which reflect the Local Plan process and policy context including updates to the NPPF (July 2021) and the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code

**Extracts of this document can be obtained in alternative formats on request in braille, large print, on audio tape, by email or in different languages by contacting the Council on 01727 866100.**

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# Introduction

## Setting the scene

The new Draft St Albans City and District Local Plan, which covers the period to 2041, sets out significant planned growth in the District that will lead to the development of new communities and economic activity, enhancing housing choices and providing new opportunities for local residents. Some of this growth will be accommodated on greenfield sites in the Draft Local Plan.

Strategic-scale sites are defined as 100+ homes or 10,000 square metres of commercial floorspace (retail, leisure and industrial), and reflect the Broad Locations and Large Sites identified in the Draft Local Plan. The principles may also be applicable to smaller-scale development.

It is essential that the development of these sites creates high quality, sustainable new places, with efficient delivery of the highest quality development. The Draft Local Plan requires that developments within the Broad Locations and Large Sites achieve "excellence in design, energy efficiency and water management". This document provides clear guidance to landowners/developers and their design teams on how this may be achieved.

The design principles embrace the nationally recognised best practice in design and the established frameworks for achieving excellence. In addition to this they set out a route toward developing a local vernacular-led design proposition through the use of extensive analysis of the built and natural context of the development site.

## Status

This document has been developed to inform the Masterplanning of Broad Locations and Large Sites as identified in the Draft Local Plan.

## Relationship with Hemel Garden Communities

This document has been prepared in cooperation with Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) and Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ) to inform the significant growth potential within the area adjacent to Hemel Hempstead, including the four Broad Locations within St Albans City and District Council (SADC). Collaboration to prepare this guidance also provides the basis for a joined-up approach to design for the cross-boundary Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) programme.

The Authorities have also collaborated to produce a HGC Spatial Vision (2021), which provides an additional layer of guidance to the Strategic Design Guide for new development within Hemel Hempstead and the North and East Hemel Hempstead Growth Areas, which are on land split roughly equally between DBC and SADC.

A version of this document was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by Dacorum Borough Council in 2021.

## Purpose and Scope

This guidance document has been prepared to address the draft policies set out in the Draft Local Plan in relation to the allocated Broad Locations and Large sites in Chapter 3 – Sustainable Use of Land and Green Belt.

The Design Guidance applies to planning applications and sites within the District, which are identified as Broad Locations and Large sites. The document sets out a number of principles that the Council will expect developments to demonstrate compliance with.

It is a part of the suite of documents that the Council has developed to introduce a step change in the quality of developments within the District that the Draft Local Plan requires. These documents include:

- **Strategic Sites Masterplanning Toolkit**  
This provides guidance on the planning process for Strategic Sites.
- **Strategic Sites Design Toolkit**  
This provides guidance on the design process for Strategic Sites.
- **Strategic Sites Employment Uses Design Toolkit**  
This provides guidance on the design principles for developments with substantial employment uses of 10,000m<sup>2</sup> or above.

## Strategic Sites

The new Draft St Albans City and District Local Plan which covers the period to 2041, allocates sites for development to meet the housing and employment need within the District.

In Chapter 3 of the Draft Local Plan it identifies a number of Broad Locations (each delivering more than 250 homes), and defines Large Sites as delivering 100-250 homes. These sites are shown on the Local Plan's Policies Map.

# Policy Context

## National Context

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), last updated July 2021, places strong emphasis on high quality design and well-planned places.

Paragraph 130 provides key elements of focus for planning policies and decisions that should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

Paragraph 128 specifically sets out that:

*To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety.*

Paragraph 134 sets out that 'Development that is not well-designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design....':

Further guidance on the policies contained in the NPPF is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which has been taken into consideration in the production of this document.

### National Design Guide (NDG)

The National Design Guide (NDG) sets out best practice design guidance and key characteristics of beautiful, enduring and successful places. The NDG forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance.

These characteristics are:

- i. Context (enhance the surroundings)
- ii. Identify (attractive and distinctive)
- iii. Built form (a coherent pattern of development)
- iv. Movement (accessible and easy to move around)
- v. Nature (enhanced and optimised)
- vi. Public spaces (safe, social and inclusive)
- vii. Uses (mixed and integrated)
- viii. Homes and buildings (functional, healthy and sustainable)
- ix. Resources (efficient and resilient)
- x. Lifespan (made to last)

This document directly responds to Paragraph 10 of the NDG that states:

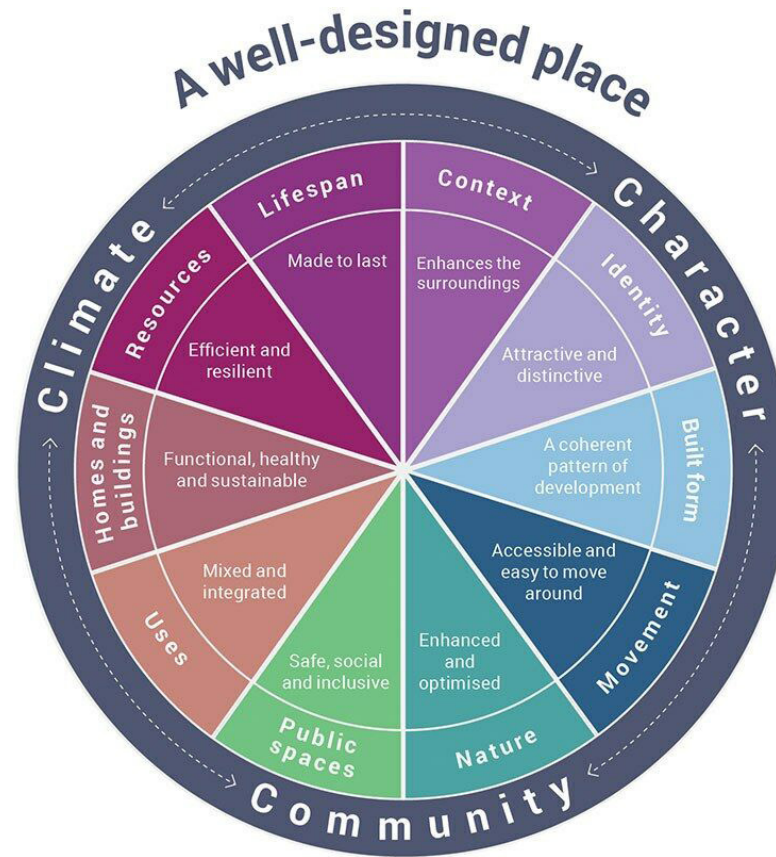
*[NDG] is based on national planning policy, practice guidance and objectives for good design as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set out at the local level. They may take the form of local authority design guides, or design guidance or design codes prepared by applicants to accompany planning applications.*

The National Design Guide helps to inform development proposals and their assessment by local planning authorities. The St Albans' Strategic Design Guidance is consistent with the National Design Guide's aspirations and principles for creating beautiful, enduring and successful places, but provides further local detail for designers.

Both the National Design Guide and the St Albans Strategies Sites Design Guidance should be read in conjunction and underpin St Albans' approach to delivering on paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### National Model Design Code

The National Model Design Code and guidance notes also form part of the government's planning practice guidance and complements the National Design guide. It provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide, which reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design.



10 Characteristics of Well Designed Places (National Design Guide Extract)

# Policy Context

## Hertfordshire County Policy Context

### Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

The Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2018 sets out a transport approach centred on sustainable transport modes, in particular in Policy 1 that states:

*To support the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes, the county council will in the design of any scheme and development of any transport strategy consider in the following order:*

- *Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel;*
- *Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists);*
- *Passenger transport user needs;*
- *Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs;*
- *Other motor vehicle user needs.*

Additionally, a number of policies contained in the LTP 2018 have informed this document, in particular:

Policy 2: Influencing land use planning

Policy 4: Demand Management

Policy 7: Active Travel - Walking

Policy 8: Active Travel - Cycling

Policy 9: Buses

Policy 17: Road Safety

Policy 21: Environment

LTP4 sits above a wide range of supporting strategies many covering elements of design. This currently includes the Roads in Hertfordshire: **Highways Design Guide** document and will be replaced in time by the emerging Hertfordshire **Place & Movement Planning and Design Guidance**.

The Hertfordshire County Council is preparing '**The Service Provision and Place Making Guide**'. The guide will offer a combination of specification requirements, locational criteria and design principles to ensure that facilities being provided are fit-for-purpose and have a positive impact on the places being created.

The County Council is also developing the **Hertfordshire Sustainable Design Guide** for new build construction projects and how to achieve net zero operational carbon for all projects led by the county council.



## SW Hertfordshire Policy Context

### **South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan**

St Albans City and District Council is working with other Councils in South West Hertfordshire (Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council) to deliver a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South West Hertfordshire.

The JSP will provide a long-term blueprint for the area to 2050. It will be able to consider and address issues that cross council boundaries and set out a strategic vision for the area. It will also help guide future plans and strategies by setting out high level policies on topics such as climate change, infrastructure, environmental protection, employment and housing.

## Local Policy Context

The SADC Draft Local Plan sets a number of place-specific policies for all developments within the District. The key design chapter of the Local Plan is Chapter 12 (High Quality Design). Strategic Policy 12 – High-quality design establishes that developments within the District must accord with.

Additionally, a number of detailed policies contained in the Draft Local Plan have informed this document, in particular those within:

Chapter 1 - A Spatial Strategy for St Albans City and District

Chapter 2 – Climate Emergency

Chapter 10 – Natural Environment and Biodiversity

Chapter 12 - High Quality Design

# The Guidance within the Planning Process

The diagram to the right provides a broad overview of the planning process for strategic sites and highlights how the chapters within this Guidance typically relate to each stage.

Outline and Reserved Matters Applications have been separated out, but this guidance also applies to Full Planning Applications which combine the two.

The number of Design Review Panels (DRP) will depend on the scale and complexity of the project and should be agreed with the Council, normally in a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). The overleaf diagram sets out potential points in the process where a DRP may be required.

Further detail on the planning process for strategic sites can be found in the Strategic Sites Masterplanning Toolkit.

Further detail on the design process for the strategic sites can be found in the Strategic Sites Design Toolkit.

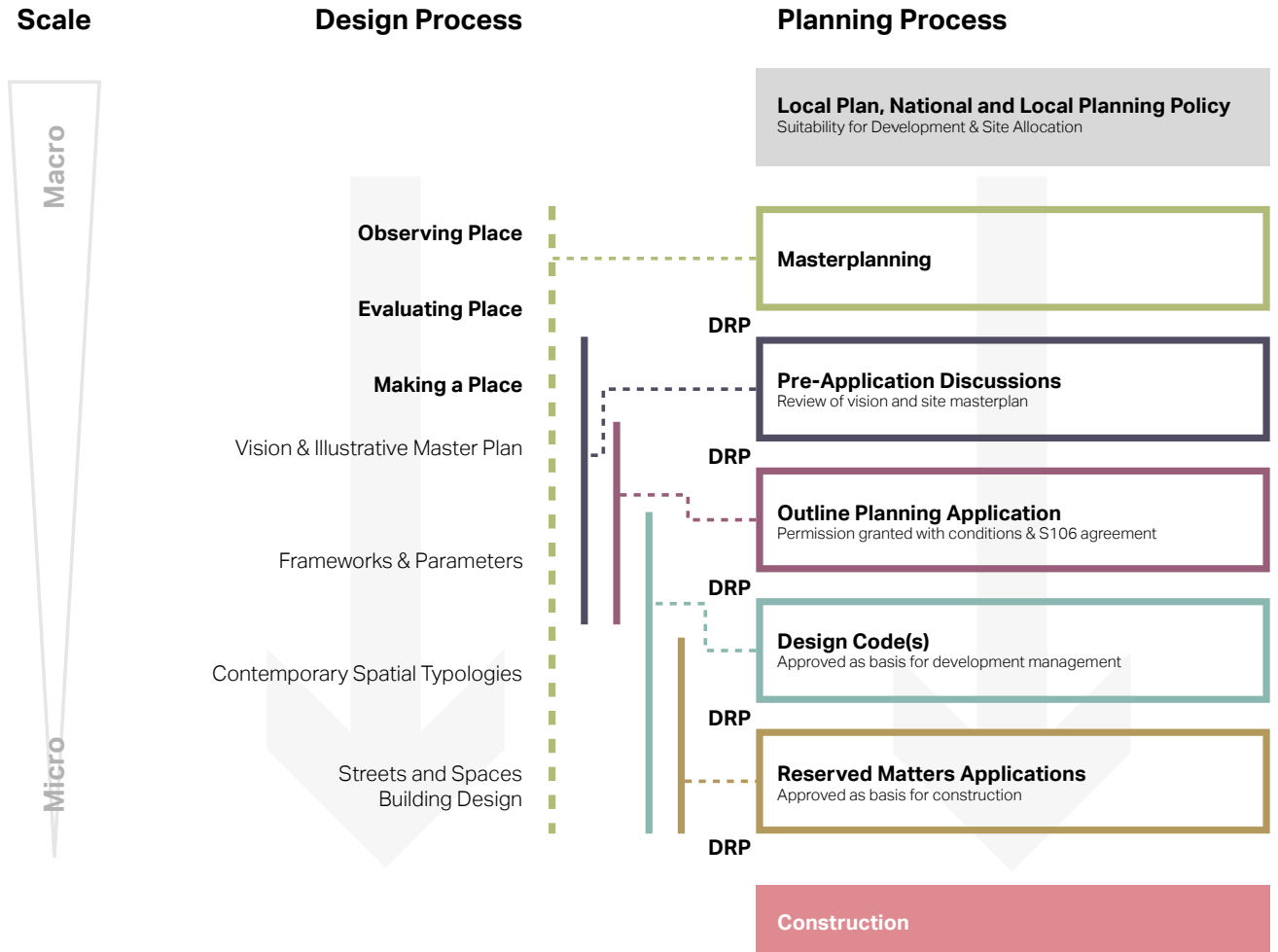
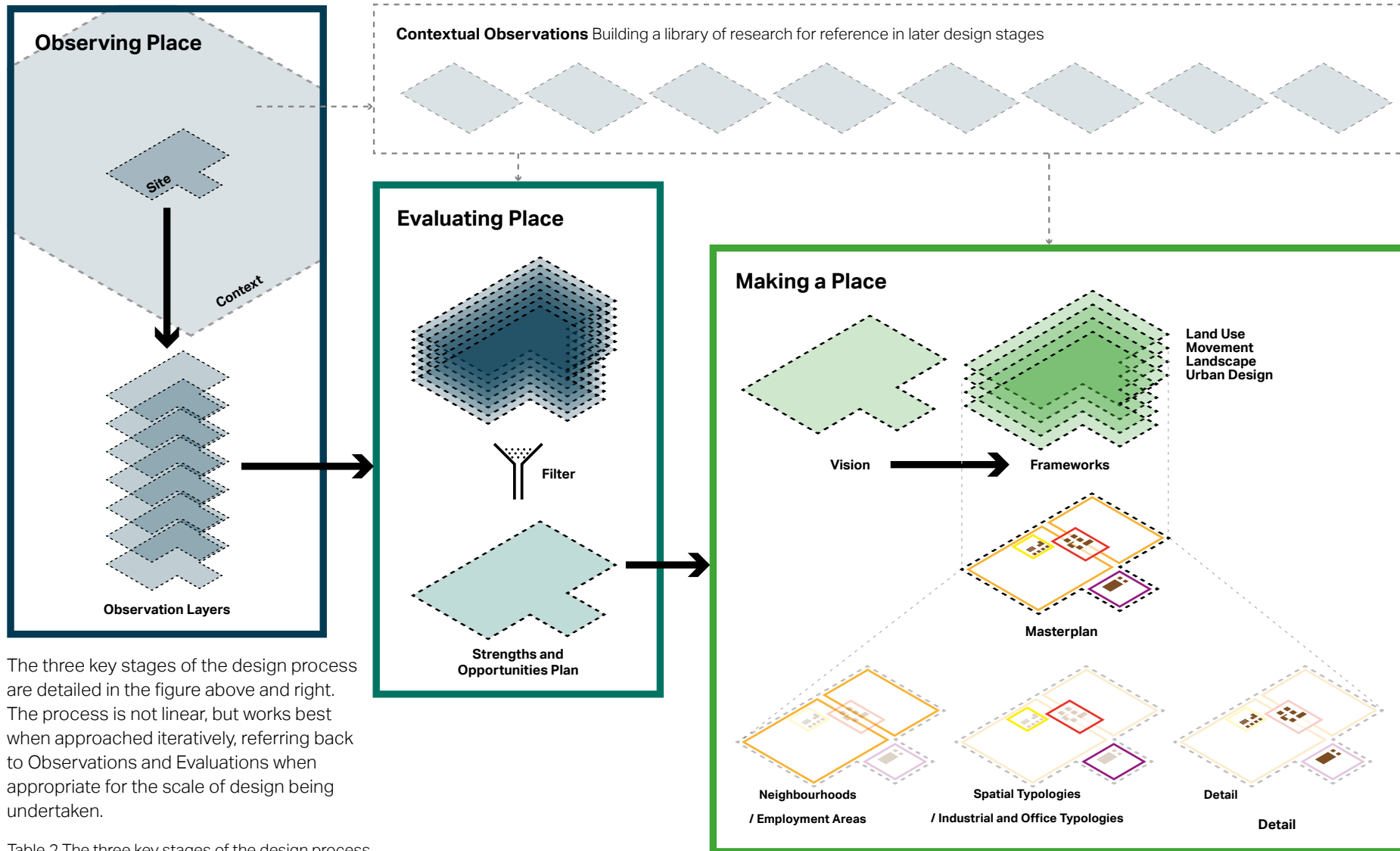


Table 1 Relationship between the design process and the planning process at SADC.

# The Design Process



The three key stages of the design process are detailed in the figure above and right. The process is not linear, but works best when approached iteratively, referring back to Observations and Evaluations when appropriate for the scale of design being undertaken.

Table 2 The three key stages of the design process.

# How to Use This Guide

## Design Principles

This guidance establishes design principles that SADC will expect strategic sites to adhere to.

The Design Principles are arranged under 10 categories, each of which links overarching aims to practical, measurable principles which designers and their teams can implement.

The Design Principles accord with the National Design Guide's aspirations and principles for creating beautiful, enduring and successful places, but provides further local detail for designers. Both documents should be read in conjunction and underpin St Albans' approach to delivering on paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

These design principles are supported clearly by the bespoke design process which helps to relate them closely to the local contexts of SADC. This process is outlined on the previous pages and in much more detail in the Strategic Sites Design Toolkit (SSDT).

## Principle of 'Comply or Justify'

This guidance will be used following a principle of 'Comply or Justify'. Deviation from the principles and design processes set out within this document will only be permitted with robust and evidence-based justification for doing so. In such cases, developers and their design teams must demonstrate that their proposals will deliver the very highest quality design that aligns with the aims of each Design Principle theme.

# Introduction to the Design Principles

## Design Principles

The Design Principles, which have been developed in accordance with the National Design Guide's principles, underpin our aspiration to encourage the delivery of the highest quality development, which will contribute to sustainable growth and continue the tradition of distinctive, attractive and successful development in the St Albans City and District.

The Design Principles are categorised and are accompanied by an explanation of why they are important:

**Theme**  
**Explanation**  
**Requirement**  
**Further Information**

### Design Principles


- 1 A Distinctive Place
- 2 A Compact Place
- 3 A Place for All
- 4 A Connected Place
- 5 With Great Streets and Spaces
- 6 With Great Homes
- 7 Active and Healthy
- 8 Facing the Climate Crisis
- 9 Flexible and Adaptable
- 10 For the Long Term

### Example

## 2. A Compact Place

### 2.1 Create Walkable Neighbourhoods with Identifiable Centres

**Design Aim**  
Compact, walkable neighbourhoods are the building blocks of inclusive, distinctive and successful places. They make efficient use of land, provide easy and environmentally-friendly access to everyday facilities.



**Designs should demonstrate:**

2.1.1 Walkable neighbourhoods that are compact and with a recognisable centre. A centre may be comprised of a mixed use local centre or a higher order district centre, or a community asset such as a primary school, community centre or public park.

2.1.2 Walkable distances to amenities such as schools, community facilities, parks and public transport.

**Additional Guidance**  
• Living Streets: Creating Walk-able Cities, A Blueprint for Change

- ← Design principles are grouped into themed sections
- ← A short, self explanatory title for each design principle
- ← An explanation as to why the principle is important
- ← A photo example of successful implementation of the principle
- ← What is expected in designs and will be examined during the approvals process
- ← Relevant supporting studies, standards or policies

# 1 A Distinctive Place

## Overview

The pre-existing context of a site should inform future design, ensuring the form and character of the new place reflects a locally derived narrative about placemaking. Putting lessons from the local context into practice should be achieved through good modern design and innovation, not in a tokenistic or cynical way, or through pastiche.

Design explorations that are informed by a site's wider economic, social, historical and physical contexts lead to the creation of a strong 'Narrative of Place'. Taken from the perspective of the resident or the visitor, each new neighbourhood should unfold through a sequence of consciously curated spaces and design details that link a site back to its wider urban and / or rural context.

Horsted Park, Kent. Proctor & Matthews Architects. Photo: Tim Crocker



## 1.1 Build a Narrative of Place to Inform Designs

### Design Aim

To build a place narrative as a starting point for exemplar design which responds to the local context.

Abode, Cambridge. Proctor & Matthews Architects. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 1.1.1 A clear spatial narrative forming part of the development vision and underpinning, and rationalising design decisions.
- 1.1.2 Use of the Observing, Evaluating and Making a Place design process outlined in this Guidance and the Strategic Sites Design Toolkit.

## 1.2 Understand and Interpret Local Development Patterns

### Design Aim

To draw on local historic development patterns in the design of new places and to continue traditions which reinforce local distinctiveness.

Accordia, Cambridge. Feilden Clegg Bradley. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 1.2.1 How local spatial typologies (including but not limited to those outlined in Table 3) have been interpreted and applied.
- 1.2.2 How local landscape (including but not limited to field patterns, tree species or hedgerows) has been interpreted and responded to.

### Additional Guidance

- [Hertfordshire's Landscape Character Assessment](#)

## Local Spatial Typologies

Refer to the Strategic Sites Design Toolkit for further detail on how to observe and interpret the local vernacular.

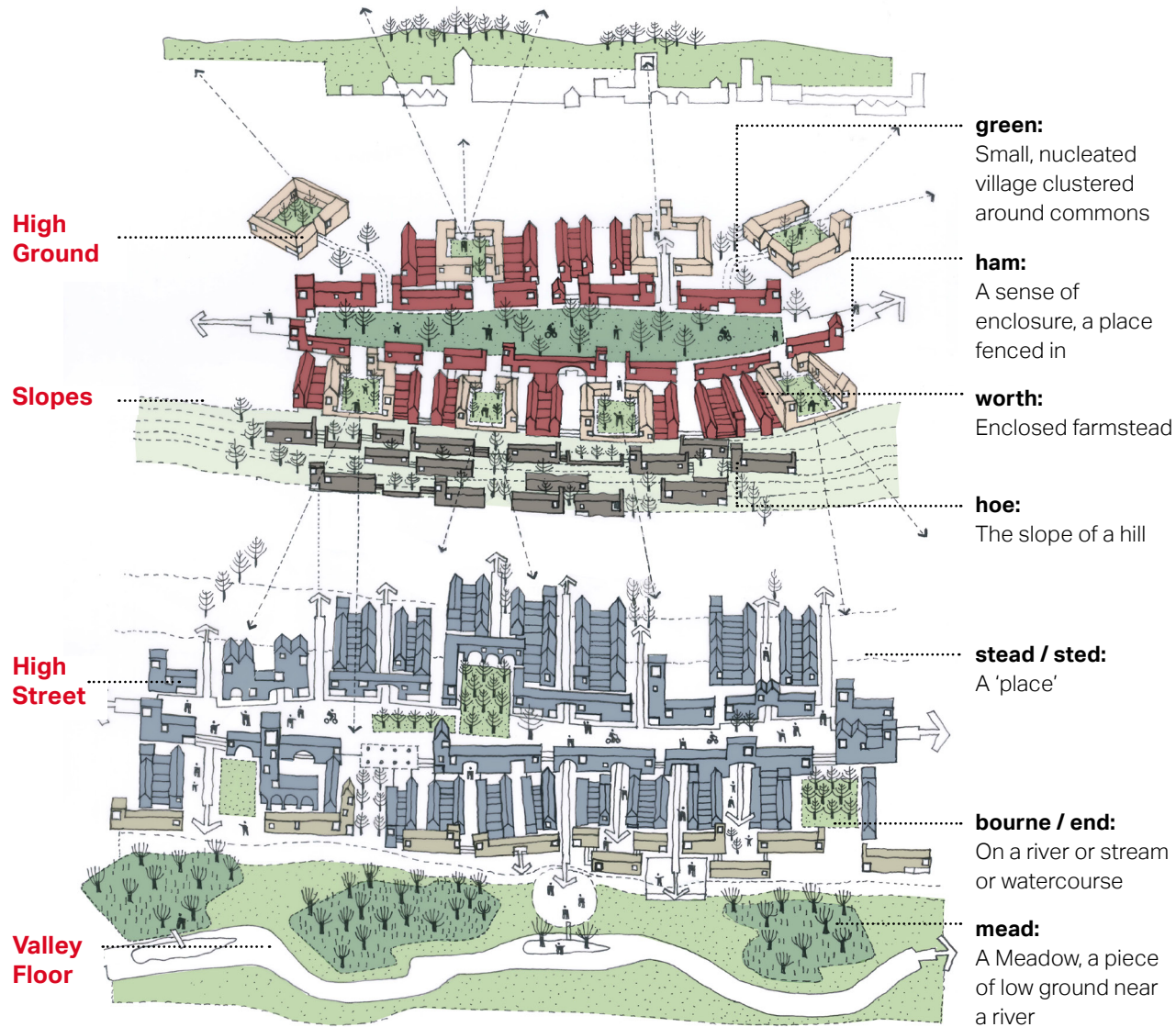


Table 3 Concept cartoon of patterns of built form © Proctor & Matthews Architects

## 1.3 Be Historically Inspired, Design for the Future

### Design Aim

To use and innovate with local patterns, street forms, soft and hard landscaping, vernacular building forms, materials and textures so that places reflect the district's character.

Courtyard Housing, Barking. Patel Taylor. Photo: © Patel Taylor



### Designs should demonstrate:

1.3.1 Application of a palette of local patterns, street forms, soft and hard landscaping, vernacular building forms, materials and textures applied to meet contemporary design challenges.

### Additional Guidance

- [Distinctively Local, Proctor and Matthews Architects](#)
- [Identity and Place: Where do Houses Live?](#)

## 2 A Compact Place

### Overview

Future neighbourhoods will frequently need to be built at higher densities than existing nearby settlements, owing to national policy imperatives for sustainable development and efficient use of land.



Market Place, St Albans

### 2.1 Create Walkable Neighbourhoods with Identifiable Centres

#### Design Aim

To create compact, walkable neighbourhoods as the building blocks of successful communities, with easy and environmentally friendly access to everyday facilities.



Eddington Square, Cambridge

#### Designs should demonstrate:

2.1.1 Neighbourhoods that are compact and with a recognisable centre. A centre may be comprised of a mixed-use local centre or a higher order district centre, or a community asset such as a primary school, community centre or public park.

2.1.2 Walkable distances to amenities such as schools, community facilities and public transport.

2.1.3 Application of the principles of low traffic neighbourhoods.

#### Additional Guidance

- [Living Streets: Creating Walkable Cities, A Blueprint for Change](#)
- [Living Streets: A Guide to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods](#)
- [TCPA guidance](#)

### 2.2 Include A Rich Mix of Uses

#### Design Aim

To achieve a mix of complementary uses to enhance life for existing and new residents, and to create an active and vibrant neighbourhoods rather than dormitory housing estates.

#### Designs should demonstrate:

2.2.1 A mix of complementary uses that provide for the social, economic and leisure needs of existing and new residents and visitors.

2.2.2 Adequate provision of land for business and infrastructure including transport, utilities, community and green infrastructure, which as a minimum achieves/complies with the required space standards for each type of infrastructure.

2.2.3 Co-location of different uses to maximise public realm activity throughout the daytime and evening to provide opportunities for diverse social interactions, especially along strategic routes and at key nodes.

2.2.4 Measures to minimise adverse impacts from co-location of uses, such as the use of landscape buffers for industrial buildings or separate service access for large-footprint retail units.



## 2.3 Make Efficient Use of Land

### Design Aim

To use all land efficiently and effectively and ensure no ambiguous spaces are created.

Fishpool Street, St Albans



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 2.3.1 Street layouts which lead to efficient development parcels.
- 2.3.2 No unused or undefined areas of land without a clear purpose or ownership.
- 2.3.3 Use of land for multiple purposes where possible, such as shared sports facilities, or residential units above ground floor retail, services or facilities.

## 2.4 Use a Hierarchy of Density and Scale

### Design Aim

To embed place hierarchies based on the inter-play between density, accessibility, function and scale to create active, memorable places and legible neighbourhoods.

Abode, Cambridge. Proctor & Matthews Architects. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 2.4.1 A clear spatial hierarchy that will direct the detailed design of each neighbourhood, including the design, height, bulk, massing and configuration of buildings, the width and capacity of streets, the scale and function of spaces and the landscape character.
- 2.4.2 A spatial hierarchy that locates higher residential densities, facilities and employment closest to neighbourhood centres, accessible transport corridors and to existing settlements.

# 3 A Place for All

## Overview

Buildings, streets and spaces should be welcoming and should meet the needs and wants of people. The guidance demonstrates how new developments can be welcoming to and meet the needs of all people.

Steepleton, Tetbury. Proctor & Matthews Architects. Photo: Tim Crocker



## 3.1 Provide Housing and Facilities for Different Ages

### Design Aim

To achieve integrated and inclusive neighbourhoods that can accommodate people in homes that meet their needs and care requirements, enabling them to remain within their community at each stage of their lives.

Park House, Harpenden. RCKA. Photo: RCKA / Jakob Spriestersbach



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 3.1.1 Accommodation suitable for older people close to local centres and facilities.
- 3.1.2 Residential accommodation providing different levels of care for older people.
- 3.1.3 Intergenerational living opportunities within residential areas.
- 3.1.4 Provision of social and community facilities that bring together all ages, such as co-located nurseries and residential care homes.

### Additional Guidance

- [RIBA - Designing for an Ageing Population](#)
- [RIBA - Age-Friendly Housing: Future design for older people](#)

## 3.2 Integrate Different Housing Tenures

### Design Aim

To provide housing for all socio-economic groups as a vital part of creating mixed, integrated neighbourhoods and facilitating social cohesion.

Abode, Cambridge. Proctor & Matthews Architects. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 3.2.1 A range of tenures, dwelling sizes and housing typologies which reflects the housing need set out in the Local Plan.
- 3.2.2 Affordable dwellings distributed across the development, with affordable dwellings available across housing typologies and dwelling sizes proposed in the development.
- 3.2.3 Tenure blind design, with no discernible difference in appearance or construction quality between affordable and market dwellings, and, where possible, mixed tenures within buildings avoiding separate entrances and open spaces.

### 3.3 Ensure All Places are Accessible to Everyone

#### Design Aim

To design buildings, streets and public spaces for a wide range of users, including those with visual, hearing, movement and other impairments, through to people with pushchairs, carrying shopping or performing other everyday activities, to ensure everyone can live and get around easily.

#### Designs should demonstrate:

- 3.3.1 Public realm that is accessible for those with mobility impairments, with clear and direct routes between places and step free alternatives where local topography or level changes may present impediments to movement.
- 3.3.2 Tactile surfaces to delineate space for those with visual impairments.
- 3.3.3 Regular street crossings, with clear sight lines, to help those with hearing difficulties.
- 3.3.4 Safe, comfortable and frequent places to stop and rest in the public realm.
- 3.3.5 Clear wayfinding to help those with dementia or learning difficulties.
- 3.3.6 Accessible and step free buildings and public spaces throughout, including homes, commercial buildings, public facilities and all other uses.

#### Additional Guidance

- [DfT: Inclusive Mobility, Roads in Hertfordshire: A Design Guide](#),
- [CABE: Sight Line, Designing Better Streets for People with Low Vision](#)
- [Sign Design Society: Sign Design Guide](#)

### 3.4 Integrate Play

#### Design Aim

To integrate play throughout new places, creating fun and interesting focal points and meeting places for a wide range of age groups.

Polnoon, Eaglesham. Proctor & Matthews Architects. Photo: Dapple



#### Designs should demonstrate:

- 3.4.1 Exciting multi-sensory play spaces for children and young people of all ages which are well integrated within the urban realm or the open space network and located where they can be overlooked.
- 3.4.2 Shade and benches within play areas to provide comfort.
- 3.4.3 Inclusion of play opportunities in the public realm beyond formal play areas, by the provision of features that are of interest to children, teenagers and young people and by making the most of green infrastructure for natural play opportunities, in particular along the routes to school and recreational facilities.

#### Additional Guidance

- [Active Design Guidance \(2023\)](#)

# 4 A Connected Place

## Overview

New development needs to be spatially and functionally integrated with existing urban areas, green infrastructure and surrounding countryside.

Northstowe Town Park. CGI: Allies and Morrison for Homes England



## 4.1 Be Physically Connected

### Design Aim

To ensure a high degree of connectivity between and throughout neighbourhoods, reflective of the historic pattern of urban settlements within the districts.

Goldsmith Street, Norwich. Mikhail Riches. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

4.1.1 Clear, frequent and direct links between new and existing places, achieved where possible by extending existing routes to achieve seamless integration.

## 4.2 Be Socially Connected

### Design Aim

To achieve functional integration between new and existing communities through the provision of new facilities, or by enhancing the existing facilities present in adjacent neighbourhoods.

The Enterprise Centre in Priors Hall, Corby



### Designs should demonstrate:

4.2.1 The extent and scale of new services and facilities to meet the needs of new development.

4.2.2 New community facilities located in the densest part of the development, also considering walking, public transport links where they can be easily accessed and used by both existing and new residents.

4.2.3 Where preferable and justifiable in planning terms, improvements to the quality and capacity of existing facilities in nearby neighbourhoods.

4.2.4 Locations where temporary uses could be provided to support the development of community and place during the phased build-out of the site.

## 4.3 Be Visually Connected

### Design Aim

To visually connect places in order to improve legibility and enhance local character and distinctiveness.

Mountfield Park, Canterbury. Proctor & Matthews Architects



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 4.3.1 A carefully considered approach to the location and alignment of views and vistas to achieve visual links between places and spaces and to the surrounding landscape,
- 4.3.2 Deliberate placement of townscape markers, and the careful integration of any landscape and historic features, at key nodes within the movement network.
- 4.3.3 A roof-scape and silhouette which responds to the topography and is based on local spatial typologies.
- 4.3.4 Any mitigation measures aimed at reducing the visual impacts of new development on sensitive receptors (such as listed buildings).

## 4.4 Be Economically Connected

### Design Aim

To accommodate changing work patterns, such as home working and flexible hours, and create the opportunity to integrate economic activity with residential areas and create vibrant places.

The Enterprise Centre, Alconbury



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 4.4.1 Integration of local economic activity, community enterprise and job creation through provision of office, retail or workshop spaces of different sizes and costs within the neighbourhoods and shared office spaces/hubs.
- 4.4.2 The potential for live-work units.
- 4.4.3 Provision of Fibre to Home to multiple providers for all dwellings, and fibre-optic infrastructure to business and community spaces.

## 4.5 Be Historically Connected

### Design Aim

To enrich the narrative of place through the integration, renovation and reuse of existing heritage assets.

Dollman Farm, Houlton, Rugby



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 4.5.1 Where appropriate, innovative uses for existing heritage assets, including farm buildings and farm houses, such as community facilities, cafes or meeting places, which meet the needs of a wide range of different user groups. Where innovative use/ re-purposing is not appropriate, active measures should be taken to enhance the accessibility (visual/ physical) of heritage assets.
- 4.5.2 Suitable settings (either built or landscape) for existing listed buildings and other identified heritage assets to avoid negative visual impact on the asset.

## 4.7 Be Naturally Connected

### Design Aim

To enhance opportunities for new and existing residents to access the natural environment, to promote health and well-being, and enjoyment of the green character of the St Albans District.

Derwenthorpe, York. Richard Partington. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

Designs should demonstrate:

4.5.1 Safe, direct and attractive walking and cycling routes to nearby open spaces and landscapes, conveniently located for all residents and visitors. Routes should be accessible for all and cater for a range of users. Contributions will be sought for substantial off-site improvements to such routes.

4.5.2 At Masterplanning and outline planning stage a technically-evidenced exploration of changing priorities on rural lanes adjacent to the Broad Locations, to create pedestrian and cycle-priority countryside routes. The needs of horse riders for safe, off road, circular routes should also be taken into account.

4.5.2 Address severance of the existing rights of way network and contribute to delivering the aspirations of the HCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

4.5.2 A connected network of green and blue infrastructure within the new development that connects into the green infrastructure network outside of the site so that green, biodiverse routes are integrated seamlessly into residents' and employees' everyday journeys and activities.

4.5.3 Existing wildlife corridors should be linked in order to enhance the local GI network and address fragmentation of habitats and isolated wildlife populations. Enhancement of the GI network should include habitat restoration, new habitat creation and substantial new native woodland planting.

### Additional Guidance

- [Natural England: Green Infrastructure Framework \(Principles & Standards for England\) \(2023\)](#)
- [Hertfordshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan \(2011\) with updated expected in Autumn 2023](#)
- [UK Green Building Council: Demystifying Green Infrastructure \(2015\)](#)

## 4.6 Be Sustainably Connected

### Design Aim

To maximise the number of journeys beyond the neighbourhood which are made by sustainable travel modes.

### Designs should demonstrate:

4.7.1 Adherence to local travel plans and transport strategies so that developments actively contribute towards achieving the aims of local travel plans and transport strategies.

4.7.2 Principal or primary streets designed for public transport access, functioning as part of the wider transport strategy, with bus stops located within neighbourhood centres and within a 400m walking distance/ 5-minute walk from all homes and workplaces.

4.7.3 Transport corridors which provide direct routes, prioritise public transport and minimise journey times.

4.7.4 Extension of existing strategic cycling networks to the new place.

4.7.5 Walking and cycling routes to neighbourhood centres and employment areas that are safe and more convenient than vehicle routes.

4.7.6 Future proofing in anticipation of changes in transport, such as on-demand minibuses, autonomous public transport and integrated transport systems.

# 5 Great Streets and Public Spaces

## Overview

Public spaces, including streets, squares, open spaces and focal points, determine the character of an area and its identity. Successful public spaces are well-used by a range of people, facilitated by designs which promote a sense of safety, comfort and pedestrian priority.



Greenwich Millennium Village, Greenwich. Proctor & Matthews

## 5.1 Create a Legible, Navigable, Memorable Place

### Design Aim

To make it easy for all users to find their way around a place to encourage walking, facilitate the discovery of locally accessible services, and the creation of distinctive and memorable public spaces for meeting, socialising and business.

### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.1.1 A rich and well-articulated townscape that utilises townscape markers, thresholds and boundaries to enhance legibility and wayfinding with larger scale and height along strategic routes or within local centres.
- 5.1.2 A connected grid of streets and routes which respects desire lines and minimises the use of cul-de-sacs and counter-intuitive changes in direction.
- 5.1.3 Locations requiring a bespoke architectural design approach as part of the legibility and orientation strategy.
- 5.1.4 Neighbourhoods that are characterised by a rich variety of streets, lanes, parks, mews, squares and civic spaces to enhance urban diversity and allow for a range of uses.

### Additional Guidance

- [Urban Design Compendium](#) (2000, withdrawn and awaiting update)

## 5.2 Create a Clear, Flexible Hierarchy of Streets

### Design Aim

To ensure the structure and function of a place is reflected through a hierarchy of streets and spaces, from primary streets and civic squares down to quiet residential streets and pocket parks.

### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.2.1 A clear set of principles to define primary, secondary and tertiary streets in a way that reflects their relative importance and intended use, and responds to the identified local spatial typologies.
- 5.2.2 Primary streets that connect neighbourhoods, promote and encourage sustainable and active travel, deliver good quality hard and soft landscape solutions to create a pleasant pedestrian environment and integrate car parking opportunities where appropriate.
- 5.2.3 Secondary streets that permeate neighbourhoods, with footpaths on each side and a variety of formal and informal street planting. Their design should require slow traffic speeds.
- 5.2.4 Tertiary streets that provide access to homes, and use shared surfaces and Home Zones principles, where appropriate. Their design should require very slow traffic speeds.
- 5.2.5 For all street types, carriageways with the minimum width possible and clear pedestrian priority.

### Additional Guidance

- [Roads in Hertfordshire: A Design Guide](#) (2011)
- [TfL: Streets Toolkit](#)
- [Emerging HCC Place & Movement Planning and Design Guidance](#)

## 5.3 Create Opportunities for Interaction

### Design Aim

To facilitate social interaction through creating great streets and spaces, which help build social ties and inclusivity, with the knock-on impacts of improving mental health and reducing social isolation.

Dujardin Mews, Enfield. KCA & MLA. Photo: Jim Stephenson



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.3.1 Opportunities for social interaction and meeting, sitting and business 'spill-out' space in the public realm.
- 5.3.2 Entrances and front gardens located so as to facilitate interaction between neighbours.
- 5.3.3 Shared workspaces for meetings and collaboration between the users of different commercial units, to be provided either within the individual units or as part of the wider employment area.
- 5.3.4 A public realm that incorporates the smart use of internet and outside areas for working with Wi-Fi connections.

## 5.4 Create Safe, Overlooked Spaces

### Design Aim

To generate a sense of safety in the urban realm by ensuring on-street activity is visible and is strengthened by passive surveillance from homes and businesses.

St Andrews, Bromley by Bow. Maccreanor Lavington. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.4.1 Active frontages to all streets, with entrances and windows or active ground floor uses located to enable overlooking of the street. Where buildings cannot achieve an active frontage for justifiable reasons, buildings on the opposite side of the street should enable natural surveillance.
- 5.4.2 Street lighting that is appropriate to the street and public realm character and function.
- 5.4.3 Building typologies that address corners effectively, offering good overlooking on both sides.

### Additional Guidance

- [Manual for Streets \(2007\)](#), [Manual for Streets \(2010\)](#)
- [Secured by Design](#)
- [Urban Design Compendium \(2000, To be updated\)](#)

## 5.5 Create Good Frontages

### Design Aim

To create a memorable place with an interesting and enjoyable street-level experience for pedestrians, using high quality, varied frontages which are responsive to local patterns and traditions.

### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.5.1 High streets or retail and commercial streets and spaces with a high frequency of building entrances.
- 5.5.2 Activity inside buildings containing commercial or retail uses at ground floor that is visible from the public realm.
- 5.5.3 Residential layouts where the design of car parking and front boundary treatment does not undermine the street frontage.
- 5.5.4 Consistent frontage principles on high streets or short parades of shops to reduce visual clutter. As a general principle, high streets should have a consistent building line and strong continuity of built form to reinforce their position in a spatial hierarchy.
- 5.5.4 Building frontages that are integrated with high quality landscape treatments and maximise opportunities for greening.

### Additional Guidance

- [St Albans City and District: Shopfronts and Advertisements \(2023\)](#)



## 5.6 Enclose and Scale Streets and Spaces Proportionately

### Design Aim

To create streets and spaces that are human in scale through careful consideration of proportion and enclosure. Reference should also be made to local examples of best practice.

Clock House Gardens, Welwyn Garden City



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.6.1 Streets and public spaces which are enclosed and of dimensions informed by successful case studies, drawn from locally and further afield.
- 5.6.2 Continuous building lines along streets and spaces where this is supported by the identified local spatial typology, for example along high streets.

### Additional Guidance

- [Urban Design Compendium](#) (2000, withdrawn and awaiting update)

## 5.7 Introduce Trees and Planting

### Design Aim

To use trees and planting to provide shade and reduce heat in summer, improve environmental quality and biodiversity, slow or capture surface water run off, provide visual variety and interest and to reinforce green infrastructure networks.

Elwick Road, Ashford. Turkington Martin



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.7.1 A minimum future canopy cover of 30% of the site area to be achieved through the retention of existing and planting of new trees, including a minimum of 30% street tree canopy coverage for primary non-adopted streets within the developments (measured for projected growth 30 years after planting).
- 5.7.2 Use of tree species and planting sizes that are appropriate for the local environment and scale of new development, including allowing space for semi mature and wide canopied trees in streets and public spaces to create a feeling of maturity, as well as the use of trees with a more fastigiate form. Street tree planting should take into account the street hierarchy, need for shade and wind protection, daylighting and outlook.

5.7.3 Retention of existing landscape features such as mature trees, woodland and hedgerows.

5.7.4 A planting strategy which optimises the use of wildlife friendly and indigenous tree and plant species, delivering benefits for shade, drainage, air quality and biodiversity.

5.7.5 A mixture of high quality formal and informal planting to respond to the local character, including a mixture of trees, shrubs and herbaceous planting to promote biodiversity and support pollinators.

5.7.6 Advance planting strategies including species resilient to predicted climate change, so that landscape can mature ahead of the arrival of the new community.

5.7.7 Use of rain gardens, filter strips and other SuDS surface treatment measures on streets in order to intercept rainfall, reduce runoff and promote biodiversity.

### Additional Guidance

- [Trees and Design Action Group: Trees in the Townscape](#)
- [Trees and Design Action Group: Trees in Hard Landscapes](#)

## 5.8 Create Spaces with Comfortable Microclimates

### Design Aim

To design comfortable outdoor spaces that protect against excessive sun, re-radiated heat and do not create cold, windy or gusty environments, in order to significantly extend the usable period of outdoor public spaces.

Accordia, Cambridge. Grant Associates. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.8.1 Public spaces that use solar exposure for warmth and are protected against cold winter winds.
- 5.8.2 Public spaces and streets that provide adequate shade in the summer and do not overheat through re-radiated heat from buildings.
- 5.8.3 Building frontages with retractable canopies or other means of providing shade, where they are exposed to the summer sun, to maximise usable outdoor space.

## 5.9 Reduce Car Dominance

### Design Aim

To design places which prioritise people, active and public transport and, lastly, private vehicle users.

Abode, Cambridge. Proctor & Matthews Architects. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.9.1 Prioritisation of pedestrian and cyclist needs before those of vehicles.
- 5.9.2 Traffic calming measures that are integral to the street design, rather than an after-thought. Reliance on speed bumps, cushions and similar mechanisms is discouraged.
- 5.9.3 A palette of materials and landscape design which produces attractive and safe environments for using and moving around public spaces and streets as a pedestrian.

### Additional Guidance

- [Manual for Streets \(2000, 2004\)](#)
- [CycleNation: Making Space for Cycling \(2014\)](#)
- [TfL: Healthy Streets \(2017\)](#)

## 5.10 Integrate Car Parking

### Design Aim

To integrate parking in order to minimise its impact on public spaces, creating a visually attractive and functional environment for people.

### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.10.1 An imaginative use of layout, materials and planting to integrate parking into the fabric of a neighbourhood with minimal visual and functional impact.
- 5.10.2 The use of on-street parking and minimal use of rear parking courts. Rear access to properties via parking on mews lanes will be permissible where there is no vehicle access to the front. In such instances, flats over garages (FOGs) should be built to provide passive safety surveillance and activity.
- 5.10.4 Use of landscaping to minimise the visual impact of surface car parks, where they are necessary, and where possible the integration of surface car parks into blocks to reduce their impact on the public realm.
- 5.10.5 Designs that discourage parking cars on footways.

### Additional Guidance

- [English Partnerships: Car Parking, What Works Where?](#)
- [IHIE: Home Zone Design Guidelines](#)

## 5.11 Use High Quality Materials

### Design Aim

To enhance civic pride, improve the appearance of a place over the long-term, reduce maintenance requirements and improve wayfinding using high quality, long-lasting materials.

Wilderness Mews, Sevenoaks. Morris+Company



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.11.1 Use of materials that are high quality, long-lasting and low in maintenance and sustainable.
- 5.11.2 Public realm surface materials that reduce visual dominance of carriageways, and clearly delineate use of space such as parking, footpaths, crossings, edges and spaces to meet or rest. The use of black top surfaces is discouraged.

### Additional Guidance

- [Manual for Streets \(2000, 2004\)](#)
- [Hertfordshire Building Futures Toolkit](#)

## 5.12 Ensure Servicing is Discreet

### Design Aim

To ensure servicing for commercial, retail or catering units does not dominate the street or frontages.

Fenman House, Camden. Maccreanor Lavington. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 5.12.1 Service lanes and yards which are integral to the layout of the block and sufficiently discreet to avoid a negative impact on neighbourhood amenity. Hours of servicing may be limited by planning condition.
- 5.12.2 Discreet accommodation of commercial bins, service equipment and service entrances so that they do not dominate the streetscape or compromise the principle of active frontages and overlooked streets.
- 5.12.3 Provision of loading bays in neighbourhood centres to ensure small service vehicles can unload and deliver to local shops and businesses without blocking the street.

# 6 Great Homes

## Overview

The homes we build over the coming decades need to drive a change in residential architecture and move towards locally distinctive, contemporary housing which meets the needs of residents whilst responding to the characteristics of a place. Additionally, these homes need to surpass those of recent times to achieve far greater levels of sustainability in their construction and operation.

Woodside Square, Pollard Thomas Edwards. Photo: © Morley von Sternberg



## 6.1 Housing Fit for the 21st Century and Beyond

### Design Aim

To deliver homes that meet the changing needs and demographics of society and contribute to socially mixed and integrated neighbourhoods.

### Designs should demonstrate:

- 6.1.1 Neighbourhoods with a wide variety of dwelling sizes responding to the spatial typologies. Homes should cater to contemporary household types, including single person households as well as small and large families, sharers, older people and downsizers.
- 6.1.2 Internal layouts to cater for contemporary living preferences including integrated kitchen/family rooms, home-working space, dedicated utility spaces and good levels of storage.
- 6.1.3 Homes that are digitally connected, integrate sustainable technologies and are future proofed to anticipate the potential for emerging technologies, such as electric car charging.

## 6.2 Offer Privacy and External Amenity

### Design Aim

To enable residents of areas of higher and lower density alike to enjoy high quality private space and access to the outdoors at home, to promote personal space, contact with nature, and respite from busy lifestyles.

Moray Mews, Enfield. Peter Barber. Photo: Morley von Sternberg



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 6.2.1 A range of outdoor amenity space that is appropriate to the typology and density, relates directly to the living environment and offers opportunities for extended seasonal use.
- 6.2.2 Apartment balcony space of a minimum of 5m<sup>2</sup> per 1 bed dwelling and 7m<sup>2</sup> per 2-bed dwelling for at least 90% of apartments. Principal balcony space should generally be no less than 2 meters deep.
- 6.2.3 Arrangement of dwellings and amenity spaces to carefully consider privacy.

## 6.3 Clear Points of Entry from the Street

### Design Aim

To design homes which positively address the street.

Portobello Square. Kensington. PRP. Photo: PRP



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 6.3.1 Building entrances positioned to create active street frontages and a clear address. Ground floor duplex maisonettes should generally be provided in apartment buildings.
- 6.3.2 The importance given to entrances and provision of adequate threshold space to dwellings.
- 6.3.3 Landscape and privacy strips as an integral part of the design and not as an afterthought.
- 6.3.4 Short thresholds with private space delineated from the public realm by an appropriate and attractive boundary material.
- 6.3.5 Shared access to apartments provided on the principal street-facing frontage.

## 6.4 Maximise Space and Daylight

### Design Aim

To maximise opportunities to bring sun and daylight into the homes, including the circulation space, to create a sense of spaciousness in all homes.

Terrace of the Future. HTA Design LLP



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 6.4.1 Dwellings of adequate size for the number of occupants. This may be achieved by meeting the nationally described space standards and exceeding them for family-sized dwellings.
- 6.4.2 Dwellings that enable flexibility and adaptability to support a lifetime use. This may be achieved by seeking a Lifetime Homes certification, or a similar standard.
- 6.4.3 Generous fenestration and opportunities for large areas of glazing, where it suits the typology, should be maximised to allow for naturally well-lit homes and a seamless connection between living and external amenity spaces. Glazing to all habitable rooms should be not less than 20% of the internal floor area of the room.

6.4.4 Apartments that are dual aspect wherever possible. Corner apartments will count as dual aspect if the short elevation measures no less than 50% of the long elevation of that apartment.

6.4.5 A minimum floor-to-ceiling height of 2.5 metres for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area.

## 6.5 Storage and Utilities

### Design Aim

To provide good amounts of storage for all homes to meet short, medium and long term storage needs that are generous and usable and to ensure spaces including balconies and garages do not need to be used for storage.

#### Designs should demonstrate:

6.5.1 Adequate storage is provided throughout the home: kitchens that maximise storage opportunities; bedrooms that allow for the easy installation of fitted wardrobes, an alternative furniture layout and access around all sides of the bed; general storage cupboards that provide usable shelving, and lofts that are designed to allow long term storage. Built-in storage provision should as a minimum comply with the areas set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards.

6.5.2 Separate utility rooms for 4 and 5-bedroom homes.

#### Additional Guidance

- Ipsos MORI / RIBA - *The Way We Live Now* (2012)

## 6.6 Discreet Waste Storage

### Design Aim

To successfully integrate bin storage and ensure waste management systems are easy to use to ensure refuse vehicle access does not adversely affect the design of the built environment.

Goldsmith Street, Norwich, Mikhail Riches Photo: Tim Crocker



#### Designs should demonstrate:

6.6.1 Discreet domestic bin storage areas, which meet the SADC waste guidance.

6.6.2 Innovative solutions for waste in higher-density areas or where tracking for waste disposal vehicles to all homes would compromise the intended character of a space or street. These may include underground waste containers.

6.6.3 Litter bins in all main public spaces. Street litter bins should allow for mixed recycling. General recycling bins should be located on the side of general waste ones and have a distinct marking.

## 6.7 Discreet Utilities

### Design Aim

To successfully integrate utilities to ensure they do not adversely affect the design of the built environment.

William Street Mews, London. AHMM. Photo: Rob Parrish



#### Designs should demonstrate:

6.7.1 Outdoor utility/meter boxes that are integrated into the dwelling design and are not located on the principal elevation.

6.7.2 Flues and service risers that do not appear on the principal elevation.

# 7 Active and Healthy

## Overview

New places should support healthy communities through the integration of open space, good access to sports and community facilities, prioritisation of active travel and reduction of air pollution, and well-planned, contemporary healthcare facilities.



## 7.1 Create Attractive Safe and Usable Walking and Cycling Routes

### Design Aim

To deliver attractive cycle routes which protect cyclists from traffic, provide direct connections and pass through high-quality spaces, in conjunction with the delivery of a high quality walking network.

#### Designs should demonstrate:

- 7.1.1 A comprehensive walking and cycling network throughout the development, overlooked by active frontages to ensure passive surveillance and feelings of safety.
- 7.1.2 Cycling routes and safe off-road routes between homes and key destinations - schools, employment, neighbourhood centres, and links to the existing cycle network.
- 7.1.3 Cycle lanes that are physically segregated by kerb or upstand on primary streets where traffic speeds or volumes are high, or where traffic flows include a large number of HGVs.
- 7.1.4 Pedestrian and cycling priority at junctions with side-roads, reinforced using materials and level changes.

#### Additional Guidance

- [Public Health England - Spatial Planning for Health \(2017\)](#)
- [Manual for Streets \(2007\)](#)
- [Cyclenation: Making Space for Cycling \(2014\)](#)
- [TfL: London Cycling Design Standard](#)

## 7.2 Incorporate Cycle Parking

### Design Aim

To provide convenient and secure cycle parking at home, at nodes and destinations and as a key feature of all public transport infrastructure in order to facilitate multi-modal trips.

#### Designs should demonstrate:

- 7.2.1 A minimum provision of one cycle parking space per studio or 1 bedroom dwelling, 2 cycle spaces for 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings and 4 cycle spaces for 4 bedroom and larger dwellings.
- 7.2.2 Convenient cycle storage for all dwellings. Apartment buildings should have ground-floor, secure storage areas indoors or in covered structures within the communal amenity space. All houses should have secure private outdoor or indoor cycle parking spaces with convenient access. All cycle storage should have step-free access, and should make space available for larger models, including cargo and electric bikes.
- 7.2.3 Secure, covered bicycle and scooter parking at all employment locations, such as secure bike lockers, and at schools. Good quality cycle parking at schools should be located within footprint of the facility, be easily accessible, sheltered and overlooked.
- 7.2.4 Groups of cycle stands near retail or community facilities, at bus stops. Cycle stands should be located in secure, well-lit and overlooked places as close as possible to the destination.
- 7.2.5 Visitor cycle stands provided at regular intervals within residential streets.

## 7.3 Give Prominence to Health

### Design Aim

To ensure that trends relating to population change and life expectancy are acknowledged in the planning and design of new communities, and that adequate provision is made for healthcare at the earliest point in the development.

Old See House, Belfast. RPP & Richard Murphy Architects. Photo: Gary Parott



### Designs should demonstrate:

7.3.1 That adequate land in the right location has been identified and safeguarded for the provision of necessary healthcare facilities.

7.3.2 Incorporation of the principles of the NHS England's Healthy New Towns initiative and Putting Health into Place.

7.3.3 Provision of space suited to formal and informal community-oriented well-being events, such as 'Parkrun'.

### Additional Guidance

- [Building for a Healthy Life \(BHL\) \(2020\)](#)
- [NHS England: Healthy New Towns](#)
- [NHS England: Putting Health into Place](#)
- [UK Green Building Council: Health and Wellbeing in Homes](#)

## 7.4 Enhance Access to Sport

### Design Aim

To offer easy access to sporting facilities, as well as gyms and free informal sport provision, to sporting facilities, gyms and spaces which can support free informal sport, to make participation in sports convenient and appealing.

### Designs should demonstrate:

7.4.1 Adherence to the SADC open space standards and Sports England's Playing Pitch Calculator for the provision and location of formal open space including sports pitches, and adherence to the principles of Sport England's Active Design Guidance.

7.4.2 Easy, safe and convenient access to sports facilities and opportunities for more informal exercise as part of the public realm.

7.4.3 Indoor and outdoor sports facilities. Designs should be robust and durable whilst making provision for a range of sports.

7.4.4 Parks that meet Green Flag standards.

### Additional Guidance

- [Active Design Guidance \(2023\)](#)
- [Green Flag Award - Raising the Standard, The Green Flag Award Guidance Manual \(2016\)](#)

## 7.5 Incorporate Food Production

### Design Aim

To provide community food infrastructure, through the provision of and access to growing and foraging spaces.

Incredible Edible, Salford



### Designs should demonstrate:

7.5.1 Dwelling typologies that explore opportunities for shared food growing spaces. This might include elements of productive landscapes, such as allotments and opportunities for food growing in communal gardens. This is particularly important for homes which are Age-Restricted or designed for Later Living.

7.5.2 Public realm spaces that incorporate opportunities for communal food production, including community orchards.

7.5.3 Edible plant species forming part of the public realm landscape strategy including the use of fruiting trees and shrubs where appropriate and native mixed hedgerows to provide opportunities for foraging and wildlife benefits.



## 7.6 Mitigate the Effects of Pollution

### Design Aim

To offer mitigation measures to air and noise pollution to make spaces more healthy and appealing.

#### Designs should demonstrate:

7.6.1 Reduced exposure to nitrogen oxide, particulate matter and other pollutants, through a commitment to reduced car dependency and provision of alternative forms of sustainable transport.

7.6.2 Layouts that avoid the creation of street canyons or building configurations that inhibit the effective dispersion of pollutants. Habitable rooms should be located away from busy roads.

7.6.3 The use of Green Infrastructure and vegetation barriers for screening in order to control the dispersion of pollutants, particularly on primary streets.

7.6.4 Reduced exposure to excessive noise through the siting of buildings, mitigation measures on the façade and use of topography and Green Infrastructure for screening.

#### Additional Guidance

- [NICE - Air pollution: outdoor air quality and health - Quality statement 2: Planning applications \(2019\)](#)
- [IAQM - Land-Use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality \(2017\)](#)

# 8 Facing the Climate Crisis

## Overview

Resilience to climate change should inform every stage of the design and development process, with an emphasis on capturing opportunities for habitat creation, water conservation and green energy production.

Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford. Photo: © Morley von Sternberg



## 8.1 Certify Sustainability

### Design Aim

To make it clear that homes and workplaces have been designed and assessed to meet specific sustainability standards.

### Designs should demonstrate:

- 8.1.1 BREEAM UK New Construction certificates of a minimum level of 'Very Good' for buildings below 500m<sup>2</sup> and specifying a minimum BREEAM level of 'Excellent' for each non-residential building of 500m<sup>2</sup> or more.
- 8.1.2 BREEAM Communities Excellent for all masterplans.
- 8.1.2 BRE's Home Quality Mark Five Star for all residential buildings.
- 8.1.3 Route toward achieving zero-carbon homes. This may be achieved through certification such as Passivhaus for at least a substantial part of the development and appropriate carbon offsetting.

### Additional Guidance

- [BREEAM: Technical Manual](#)
- [BRE: Home Quality Mark ONE Manual \(England\) \(2018\)](#)
- [UK Green Building Council: Zero Carbon Non-Domestic Buildings](#)
- [Mayor of London - Design for a Circular Economy – Primer](#)
- [Passivhaus Trust](#)
- [LETI \(Low Energy Transformation Initiative\)](#)

## 8.2 Enhance Biodiversity and Habitats

### Design Aim

To enhance biodiversity to ensure it is protected for the future and becomes a valuable asset for residents.

### Designs should demonstrate:

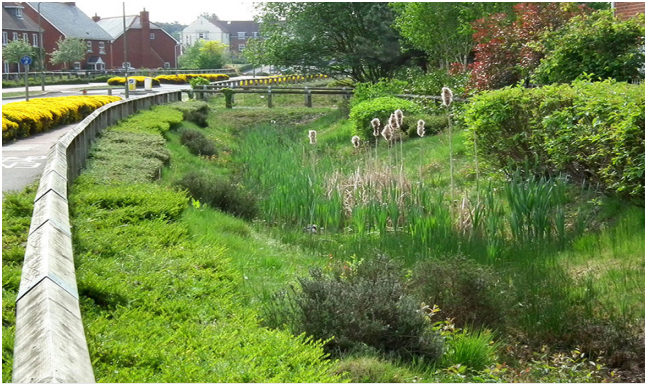
- 8.2.1 That opportunities for long lasting, measurable net gains in biodiversity are maximised by the protection and enhancement of existing habitats and creation of a variety of new habitats, green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity assets.
- 8.2.2 Achievement of a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain, as measured by DEFRA's assessment methodology, preferably on-site or as part of enhancement and expansion of nearby natural habitats. A mitigation hierarchy should be used following a sequential approach to avoid, minimise, restore and offset as a last resort (preferably on-site).
- 8.2.3 Retention of mature trees, hedgerows and substantial net gains in tree cover, using UK sourced and locally-significant native species wherever possible, to meet the local authority standards.
- 8.2.4 Retention and enhancement of valuable green infrastructure assets, especially wildlife corridors, with substantial buffers to valuable habitats.
- 8.2.5 Retention of grassland on road verges and securing appropriate site preparation and long term management to enable the creation of wildflower meadows.

## 8.3 Drain Places Naturally

### Design Aim

To maximise opportunities for natural drainage at all project stages, from masterplanning through to detailed design to ensure the development and local watercourses are protected in the event of extreme rainfall.

Elvetham Heath, Fleet, Hampshire. Photo: © Hydro International



### Designs should demonstrate:

8.3.1 Landscape and urban form accommodating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to achieve greenfield run off rates, while contributing to increased biodiversity and improving the water quality of surface water run off.

8.3.2 SuDS infrastructure to provide multiple benefits, aiming to incorporate the management of water quantity, improvements in water quality, amenity provision and increased biodiversity, including a consideration of biodiversity net gain.

Bridget Joyce Square. Community SuDS Park & Robert Bray Associates



8.3.3 SuDS measures should be designed at or near the surface and located with discharge routes following the SuDs hierarchy. Infrastructure may be located in informal or semi-natural areas of open space, parks and amenity green spaces (using, for example, measures such as swales or attenuation ponds), as well as in built up areas (using, for example, measures such as rills, rain gardens and green walls and roofs).

8.3.4 Designs should demonstrate a sub-catchment approach utilising source control methods where possible (using, for example, permeable surface materials to facilitate sustainable surface water drainage at source).

8.3.6 Minimal reliance on solutions requiring extensive and ongoing maintenance. Ensure SuDs and soft landscape maintenance plans are co-beneficial in order to minimise both current and future risk of SuDS failing due to lack of maintenance.

8.3.7 Drainage must be able to perform under extreme rainfall events and meet national non-statutory technical standards with an appropriate uplift for climate change in line with the latest national climate change models.

8.3.8 SuDS should demonstrate an appropriate management and treatment train to assist in meeting water quality objectives under the EU water framework directive.

### Additional Guidance

- [Ciria: The SuDS Manual \(2007\)](#)
- [TfL: SuDS in London \(2016\)](#)
- [UDL: Designing Rain Gardens, A Practical Guide \(2018\)](#)
- [HCC Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2019-29](#)

## 8.4 Conserve Water

### Design Aim

To maximise water efficiency, in order for the development to be more environmentally sustainable, while providing lower cost benefits to residents.

Langport, Somerset.



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 8.4.1 That BREEAM credits for water efficiency in non-residential buildings will be maximised.
- 8.4.2 That maximum rainwater and grey water recycling has been incorporated in homes and the public realm.

## 8.5 Maximise Natural Heating and Ventilation

### Design Aim

To follow the energy hierarchy and follow a fabric first approach, as set out in the National Design Guide (R1).

Langport, Somerset.



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 8.5.1 Reduce the need for energy through passive measures including form, orientation, layouts and fabric.
- 8.5.3 An appropriate mitigation strategy to avoid summertime overheating under future forecast climate scenarios. Specifically, layouts, glazing, shading and façade treatment.
- 8.5.4 Internal service designs and ventilation strategies should take account of the anticipated local climate to 2050 and beyond.

### Additional Guidance

- [UK Green Building Council: Sustainable Innovation Manual \(2019\)](#)
- [National Design Guide \(2021\)](#)

## 8.6 Conserve Energy and Reduce Carbon Emissions

### Design Aim

To make low-carbon building techniques and locally sourced sustainable materials the norm for all development in order to reduce energy use and embodied carbon emissions. To deliver carbon neutral where possible.

### Designs should demonstrate:

- 8.6.1 Vehicle charging points in all residential parking spaces and in all operational parking spaces within neighbourhood centres. Discrete on-street charging points, such as in lamp posts, should be used in public realm.
- 8.6.2 LED street lighting throughout.
- 8.6.3 Smart meters installed in all homes.
- 8.6.4 Source low carbon and locally sourced materials for construction with minimum 25% of materials to be recycled.
- 8.6.5 Reducing the development's use of resources across its life cycle, including during the construction phase. Low-carbon and recycling targets should be included in development contracts.

### Additional Guidance

- [UK Green Building Council: Sustainable Innovation Manual \(2019\)](#)
- [UK Green Building Council: Net Zero Framework](#)

## 8.7 Create Opportunities for Energy Production

### Design Aim

To secure opportunities for carbon-free energy production within developments to meet on-site needs insofar as possible.

Abode, Cambridge. Proctor & Matthews Architects. Photo: Tim Crocker



### Designs should demonstrate:

8.7.1 Installation of solar panels and battery storage in homes and commercial buildings. These should be integral to the design with consideration given to innovative use of materials. Any buildings that do not have solar panels integrated should be future proofed to enable future installation of panels.

8.7.2 For large developments, incorporation of sustainable district energy networks.

### Additional Guidance

- [Mayor of London: London Heat Network Manual II \(2021\)](#)

## 8.8 Be Resilient to Climate Change and Extreme Weather

### Design Aim

To ensure high degrees of comfort and protection within the public realm.

### Designs should demonstrate:

8.8.1 Designs should meet UK biosecurity policy and planting should be of known provenance and UK grown wherever possible. Planting species should be diverse and avoid reliance on a small number of species in order to increase long term resilience.

8.8.2 Use of green infrastructure to mitigate the Urban Heat Island Effect and in creating shade.

### Additional Guidance

- [Technology Strategy Board: Design for Future Climate Change \(2018\)](#)
- [Hertfordshire Building Futures Toolkit](#)
- [TCPA guidance - Planning for Climate Change](#)

# 9 Flexible and Adaptable

## Overview

Buildings and spaces need to be designed and constructed with adaptability in mind and anticipating social, economic and technological trends. Over the longer term this will save resources and materials and will avoid disruption to urban life.

Ryle Yard, NW Cambridge. Maccreanor Lavington. Photo: David Grandorge



## 9.1 Create Space for Future Utilities

### Design Aim

To ensure that utilities infrastructure is designed and located to enable future changes to be accommodated

### Designs should demonstrate:

- 9.1.1 Under-pavement or under-verge channels with routing to all homes and buildings which can incorporate future digital or other infrastructure.
- 9.1.2 Space provision for potential future installation of 5G technology in street furniture.

## 9.2 Facilitate Future Adaptation of the Built Environment

### Design Aim

To design buildings and streets with future change in mind so that they may be adapted to meet the demands of future change.

### Designs should demonstrate:

- 9.2.1 Plot sizes and shapes that enable alternative uses or typologies in the future, ideally right-angled and with suitable minimum frontage widths.
- 9.2.2 Building typologies that permit uses to be changed over time, such as incorporating convertible ground floors in mixed-use centres and employment areas.
- 9.2.3 Future adaptability of specialist accommodation so that it may be converted to general residential accommodation.
- 9.2.4 Public realm that is adaptable to temporary uses and future changes, with the minimum amount of street 'clutter' and the maximum amount of amenity.

### Additional Guidance

- [Urban Design Compendium \(2000. awaiting update\)](#)
- [MHCLG / DHLUC: Lifetime Neighbourhoods \(2011\)](#)
- [CABE: What Home Buyers Want \(2005\)](#)

## 9.3 Anticipate Changes in Mobility

### Design Aim

To consider flexible designs that do not 'lock in' current modes such as private cars, and provide space for future shared or autonomous mobility options.

Van Gogh Walk, Lambeth. Photo: Archie Bashford



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 9.3.1 Dedicated spaces for vehicle sharing or car clubs near to dwellings.
- 9.3.2 Streets that can accommodate future changes in transport, for example the reduction of private vehicle use, advances in autonomous vehicles and increased cycling.
- 9.3.3 Car parks and car parking spaces for housing that are designed to adapt to alternative uses in the longer term.

### Additional Guidance

- [Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan \(4\)](#)

# 10 For the Long Term

## Overview

The long-term sustainability of a place requires proactive stewardship by, and on behalf of, the community. Good places are designed and constructed with an eye to ease of management and maintenance, with quality and robust detailing and materials that minimise the potential for damage and replacement. A good place has a clear approach to phasing that supports placemaking from the very start.



New Ground co-housing, High Barnet

## 10.1 Deliver on the Vision

### Design Aim

To ensure compliance and consistency with the approved vision for a development throughout the delivery process.



### Designs should demonstrate:

- 10.1.1 Retention of the original design team or provision for a design guardian to assess ongoing delivery proposals against the vision.
- 10.1.2 Engagement with and responsiveness to the St Albans Design Review Panel to deliver better designs.

### Additional Guidance

- [CABE: Design Review Principles and Practice \(2019\)](#)
- [DSE: St Albans Design Review Panel](#)

## 10.2 Be Proactive with Stewardship

### Design Aim

To provide certainty about the future management and maintenance of community assets, and the means by which this will be funded.



Milton Keynes' Parks Trust

### Designs should demonstrate:

- 10.2.1 A strategy and action plan for the management of community assets in perpetuity.
- 10.2.2 Mechanisms to allow community involvement in decisions affecting the maintenance and management of community assets.

### Additional Guidance

- [TCPA: Long Term Stewardship](#)
- [UK Green Building Council: Role of Local leadership in creating sustainable homes \(2017\)](#)



## 10.3 Make Maintenance Easy

### Design Aim

To ensure a high standard of maintenance is possible at all times in order to contribute to place quality and local civic pride.

Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford



### Designs should demonstrate:

10.3.1 Use of materials that are high quality, long-lasting and low in maintenance.

10.3.2 Choice of planting that minimises long-term maintenance requirements.

10.3.3 Long term management and maintenance plans provided for trees and soft landscaping that cover the life cycle of the development.

## 10.4 Build a Community from the Start

### Design Aim

To help new communities get started through a variety of techniques in order for new communities to establish themselves well before the scheme is fully built-out.

Milton Keynes' Parks Trust



### Designs should demonstrate:

10.4.1 Early activation projects with community involvement. This may include the appointment of a community team to lead this process, following examples of best practice from other strategic sites within the UK.

10.4.2 The early provision of community meeting places, on a temporary basis if necessary, to begin to generate a community-based activities.

10.4.3 Engagement with existing nearby communities from the start of the process, through a robust and comprehensive community engagement programme as part of the Masterplanning process.

### Additional Guidance

- [LLDC: Building Community, An Action Plan for Building Community in a New Estate \(2014\)](#)

## 10.5 Secure Quality at the Planning Stage

### Design Aim

To ensure a high-standard of design is taken forward from planning stage to delivery.

### Designs should demonstrate:

10.5.1 At the planning stage, applicants should submit 1:20 bay studies (including part elevation and associated sections) of typical elevations. These should indicate the proposed materials and intended details of key elements of the façades including:

- copings;
- windows heads and cills;
- the ground level;
- detail of cladding;
- proposed materials;
- location of meter cupboards and similar; and an
- outline specification for building materials

10.5.2 At the planning stage, applicants should submit 1:20 details of key hard and soft landscape features. These should indicate the proposed materials and intended details of key elements including:

- indicative planting plans at appropriate scale;
- proposed paving materials and edging;
- street furniture and built planters;
- boundary conditions;
- soft and hard landscape build up;
- tree pit detail/specification;
- green roofs or walls if relevant; and an
- outline specification for hard and soft landscaping.

