Urban Design

Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted February 2010

Waltham Forest

INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATION ASSISTANCE

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كما يمكن توفير خدمة الترجمة عند الطلب. إذا احتجت لهذه الخدمات فضلاً اتصل بنا على العنوان المذكور أدناه.

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GUJARATI

આ માર્ગદર્શિકા બીજી ભાષા, મોટ અક્ષર, બ્રેઇલ અને ઓડિયો ટેપના માધ્યમથી મળી શકશે અથવા તો માંગણી કરવાથી ભાષાંતર સેવા ઉપલબ્ધ કરવામાં આવી શકશે. જો તમને આ સેવાની જરૂરત લાગે, તો કૃપા કરીને અમારો સંપર્ક સાધો.

HINDI

यह मार्गदर्शन अन्य भाषाओं, बड़े प्रिंट, ब्रेल, ऑडियो-टेप प्रारूप में उपलब्ध कराया जा सकता है अथवा अनुरोध पर अनुवाद सेवा प्रदान की जा सकती है। इन सेवाओं तक पहुँच बनाने के लिए कृपया नीचे दिए गए पते पर हमसे संपर्क कीजिए।

PUNJABI

ਇਹ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ-ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ, ਵੱਡੇ ਛਾਪੇ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ ਫਾਰਮੇਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਕਰਾਏ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਸੇਵਾ ਮੁਹਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਪਤੇ ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

TURKISH

Bu rehberi bir başka lisanda, büyük punto yazıyla, görme özürlülere mahsus kabartma Braille alfabesiyle, ses kaydıyla ya da istek üzerine çeviri servisi tarafından tercüme edilmiş şekliyle edinmek mümkündür. Eğer bu hizmetlerden yararlanmak istiyorsanız, lütfen bizimle aşağıda belirtilmiş olan adres yoluyla temasa geçiniz.

URDU

یہ رہنمائی دیگر زبانوں، بڑے حروف، بڑی اشاعت، بریل اور آڈیو ٹیپ کی شکل میں مہیا کی جاسکتی ہے یا درخواست کرنے پر ترجمے کی خدمت فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔ اگر آپ ان خدمات تک رسائی حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ مہربانی ہم سے نیچے دیئے گئے پتے پر رابطہ کریں۔

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Foreword

As Urban Design Champion for Waltham Forest, I have great pleasure in publishing the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Urban Design. The document has been subject to extensive public consultation with local people, statutory agencies and other interested parties and we have sought to incorporate the majority of comments and views expressed within the guidance.

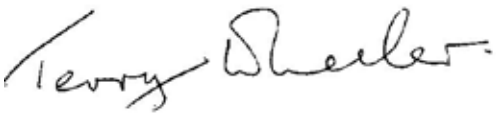
The Council is committed to raising the standard of design in Waltham Forest. Good design is fundamental to making better places and improving the quality of people's lives. There is of course much within Waltham Forest we can rightly be proud of - the attractiveness of many of our residential areas, our green spaces, conservation areas and listed buildings.

However, we face a number of important challenges over the coming years in seeking to achieve our key regeneration objectives, meeting some very demanding housing targets and pressures for intensification in existing areas, and at the same time improving the overall quality of new development without losing the essential character of the borough. We have to recognise that some recent development has been disappointing in that respect, both in terms of its overall quality and the tendency towards 'anywhere' design solutions which ignore local character and context.

The overriding aim of this document is therefore to significantly raise the quality of design within the borough and to build upon and improve local character in all new development. I want to see proposals which are attractive, sustainable, modern, well connected and inspiring and which raise our expectations about what we want to see in relation to high quality urban and architectural design in the future.

I hope you will find this document interesting and useful and an important step in helping us further develop our design agenda for Waltham Forest as a place where people are proud to live, work and visit.

Thank you,



Councillor Terry Wheeler
Urban Design Champion


Lawton's
FOR LUGGAGE

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 What is Urban Design & why is it important?

Urban Design is essentially about making good places in which to live, work and visit. It brings together various strands of professional disciplines including planning, transportation, architecture, landscape and engineering to create a vision for an area which seeks to achieve better and more sustainable places for all. As defined by the Urban Design Compendium,

It is … concerned with how (places) function, not just how they look. It covers the connections between people and places, movement and urban form, nature and the built environment and the processes for ensuring successful places are delivered and maintained. (Urban Design Compendium. English Partnerships. 2000)

Urban Design is essentially about making good places in which to live, work and visit

A key objective in achieving good urban design is in adopting an integrated approach to development where all elements combine successfully to produce better, attractive and more sustainable places.

The failure of so many previous developments has often been a result of a number of factors; an overly 'standards-driven' approach to design, a lack of vision and joint working across the professional disciplines, a tendency towards single-use, often unsustainable schemes and buildings, poor quality architecture and living spaces, and a repetition of standard house types and layouts with little regard for context.

The Council also face the challenge of intensifying development to achieve regeneration objectives and meet demanding housing targets, whilst at the same time ensuring the essential character of the borough is not lost. It is therefore essential that new development is of high quality.

Good urban design brings a number of significant benefits. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) suggest that, amongst other things, good quality design;

- adds economic, social and environmental value and does not necessarily cost more or take longer to deliver,
- Helps to deliver places accessible to and enjoyed by all, and
- Benefits all stakeholders – investors, developers, designers, occupiers, public authorities and everyday users of developments

(CABE/DETR, 2001)

Good urban design adds economic, social and environmental value

The Council is committed to raising the standard of urban design in the borough, improving the quality of new residential and commercial development and creating sustainable communities for both existing and future residents and businesses.

Creating sustainable communities

Good planning and urban design can make a positive difference to people's lives and deliver homes, jobs and opportunities for everyone. Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning this guidance with the aim of creating sustainable communities and the efficient use of energy and resources which help to mitigate against, and adapt to, climate change. The natural and historic environment should also be protected and enhanced, as these are vital resources that impact on the quality of lives.

Central Government defines sustainable communities as *'places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all'*.
(www.communities.gov.uk/archived/general-content/communities/what is/)

Successful places are therefore those which are inclusive and allow access and ease of movement for everyone, including disabled people.

Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning this guidance with the aim of creating sustainable communities and the efficient use of energy and resources

The Waltham Forest Sustainable Communities Strategy (2008) sets out a vision for the borough where it becomes a place where people aspire to and are proud to live. This is to be achieved by creating the right housing in the right places, friendly neighbourhoods, distinctive town centres, quality public spaces and ensuring new developments are environmentally sustainable. All of these ambitions will be affected by the quality of urban design in future development.

Successful places are those which are inclusive and allow access and ease of movement for everyone, including disabled people

Climate change

The Council is also committed to addressing the impacts of climate change within all developments within the borough. The Waltham Forest Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which includes the Council and its partners such as the police, health authority, local

businesses and the voluntary sector, is responsible for the borough's Climate Change Strategy (CCS) and has set up a multi-sector Task Force to oversee its development and delivery.

The CCS supports the wider Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The key climate change commitments within the SCS are:

- To involve residents, businesses and the public sector in reducing landfill waste, energy use and carbon emissions.
- To promote sustainable forms of private and public transport
- To ensure new developments and existing public sector buildings are environmentally sustainable.

Delivering these commitments is therefore fundamental in making sure that development happens in the right place, is close to existing or proposed new facilities, has good access to public transport and provides energy efficient homes and layout. Further detail on climate change mitigation measures can be found at section 5.12.

Delivering the Council's commitments on climate change is fundamental in making sure that development happens in the right place, is close to existing or proposed new facilities, has good access to public transport and provides energy efficient homes and layout

1.2 Purpose of the document

The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document is to provide clear guidance on urban design to developers, applicants, planning officers, the public and other interested parties in bringing forward proposals for development in Waltham Forest. Whilst the majority of new development in the borough is residential, the urban design principles contained within the document relate to all new development.

The document sets out a range of principles for achieving good design with the key objective of significantly raising the quality of development within the borough.

1.3 Status of the document

This document is produced as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the Waltham Forest Unitary Development Plan (UDP) First Review 2006, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and in relation to appeals and public inquiries. Development proposals will therefore need to take into account the guidance set out within this document, in addition to other relevant guidance being

prepared by the Council (including for example emerging SPDs on residential extensions and alterations and access and inclusive design).

Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and in relation to appeals and public inquiries

The document replaces Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 1 (Residential Development Design Standards, 1996) and has been subject to public consultation in accordance with the principles set out in PPS12 (Local Spatial Planning) and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

1.4 How the document was prepared

The Process
The initial evidence gathering included the production of a Characterisation Study (see Chapter 4 for the key findings) and research into current policy and best practice guidance. This was then followed by a workshop with key stakeholders in December 2008.

The draft SPD was then prepared with an Equalities Impact Assessment taking on board the findings of the evidence gathering, and this was followed by a 6 week consultation period. Representations were made in this consultation period, which were considered and taken into account in the final draft.

Sustainability Appraisal
Following recent amendments to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, it is no longer a statutory requirement for Councils to produce a sustainability appraisal for supplementary planning documents. However, in preparing this SPD, the Council has taken into consideration the best practice guidance and requirements in addressing sustainability and the climate change agenda. A Climate Change Impact Assessment was completed to ensure the SPD places sustainable development at the heart of good design and that development fully considers the future impact of climate change.

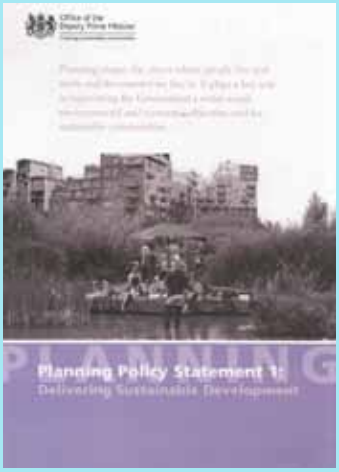
1.5 How to use the document

This document is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 2 sets out the policy and planning context for development proposals with Chapter 6 providing details on how the Council will monitor and review this document.

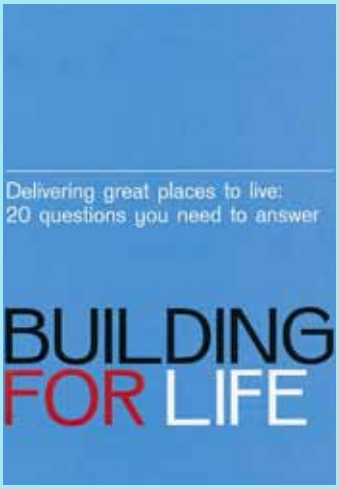
Chapter 5 'Urban Design Principles' is the heart of the document and is the part most important to consider when developing design proposals for a site. This cross-relates to a toolkit which can be found at appendices 2 and 3 of the document. Appendix 2 provides the points to consider when surveying and assessing a site, and appendix 3

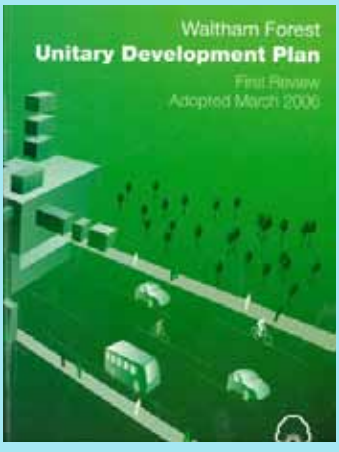
sets out CABE's Building for Life criteria which the Council will be using for assessing the overall quality of new housing development.

Chapter 5 'Urban Design Principles' is the heart of the document and is the part most important to consider when developing design proposals for a site.


Planning Policy Statement 1:
Delivering Sustainable Development


Design and access statements
How to write, read and use them


Delivering great places to live:
20 questions you need to answer
BUILDING FOR LIFE


Waltham Forest
Unitary Development Plan
First Review
Adopted March 2006

Chapter 2

Policy Context

This document is written within the context of current national and regional planning policy guidance on design. For a list of broad policy and guidance and other reference material relevant to the production of the document see Appendix 1.

2.1 National Policy

At the national level, Planning Policy Statements (PPS) 1 and 3 both set out clear objectives in seeking to achieve high quality urban design and better place-making and state that high quality and inclusive design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process (PPS1, paragraph 35).

2.2 London Plan/Regional Policy

Regional policy on good design is reflected in the London Plan (2008, consolidated with alterations) which reinforces the importance of high standards of design in making London a better city to live in and one which is healthier, more attractive and green (paragraph 4.96).

Regional planning guidance on housing design has also recently been published for consultation by the London Development Agency (London Housing Design Guide, Draft for consultation, July 2009). Where any significant changes to this SPD are required as a result of the publication of the LDA guidance (anticipated formal adoption April 2010), further specific consultation may be undertaken accordingly.

2.3 Local/Waltham Forest Policy

2.3.1 Waltham Forest Sustainable Community Strategy

This document is also in accordance with the principles and priorities set out in the Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), the key strategic objectives of which are to manage population growth and change, create wealth and opportunity for all residents and retain more wealth in the borough. The development of the SCS involved a rigorous examination of a comprehensive evidence base supported by discussions with the Council's partners and engagement with thousands of local residents.

Public consultation carried out as part of the development of the SCS raised a number of issues relevant to the preparation of this document. Local people recognised the various challenges facing the borough, particularly in relation to access to quality housing, and wanted to see a high quality of design and materials in all new buildings and public

spaces. Good design was felt to be particularly important where higher buildings were proposed, along with the capacity of local facilities to accommodate the increase in local population.

Many people felt that the borough lacked identity and wanted to see development that was in keeping with its immediate environment. There was significant support for higher quality town centres which were prosperous and vibrant, along with better quality public spaces and streetscape. There was also an underlying view that the public realm was important to the overall quality of life, and that public spaces should therefore be safe, well designed and maintained.

2.3.2 Waltham Forest Unitary Development Plan

Finally, the Waltham Forest Unitary Development Plan (First Review, 2006) sets out the Council's key policy objectives for new development in making a positive contribution to improving the quality of the urban environment in the borough.

The relevant UDP policies to this document are as follows;

SP2
New development will be expected to make a positive contribution to improving the quality of the urban environment in Waltham Forest. It should be designed with proper consideration of key urban design principles relating to:

- townscape (local context and character)
- urban structure (space and movement)
- urban clarity and safety
- the public realm (landscape and streetscape – including public art)
- wildlife habitat
- architectural quality
- sustainability

HSG 4
In accordance with strategic guidance the Council will seek to ensure new housing schemes (including mixed use schemes with an element of housing) are well designed and make a contribution to promoting urban renaissance and quality of life.

Major Opportunity Sites identified on the Proposals Map are significant mixed use development opportunities in respect of which the Council will seek to ensure that the above objectives are met

BHE 1
New development proposals will be permitted if:
A) they are compatible with or improve or improve their surroundings in:

i) Layout
ii) Site coverage

iii) Architectural style
iv) Scale
v) Bulk
vi) Height
vii) Materials
viii) Landscaping
ix) Visual impact
x) Their relationship to nearby properties; and
xi) Their relationship to mature trees

B) they harmonise with the townscape and general character of the areas in which they are set; and
C) they provide appropriate facilities for the benefit of occupiers and visitors

BHE 2
New developments must be of a high standard of design in accordance with urban design objectives. Proposals on larger sites (0.25 ha or above) or at prominent townscape locations and other sensitive sites should be submitted with an 'urban design statement'. Planning permission will not be granted for poorly designed proposals.

BHE 6
The erection of buildings or structures that significantly exceed the height of their surroundings will be permitted where the following apply:

A) the development is carefully related to other high buildings or prominent features in the area;
B) it is of high architectural quality
C) it does not have significant disadvantages to its surroundings;
D) the site is large enough to provide an appropriate setting, and;
E) account has been taken of wind turbulence, noise reflection, important telecommunication routings and the effects on nature conservation and watercourses.

PSC1
All new residential developments should seek to maintain the diversity of character and interest of the different parts of the borough. In addition:

A) the design and layout of residential development should encourage the informal supervision of the spaces around buildings by their occupiers, with front elevations containing the major entrances and facing outwards onto the street or public space;
B) parking spaces within new residential development should be located close as possible to individual dwellings;
C) the location and design of communal landscaped areas, particularly in flatted developments, should have regard to the safety of local residents and passers by;
D) whenever possible, family accommodation should be located at ground floor level with direct and exclusive access to amenity open space.

PSC2
The Council will encourage the provision of secure and usable private amenity open space in all new residential developments. In proposals for family accommodation private garden space should be provided for the exclusive use of residents. Where balconies are to be provided they should be designed, if possible, to enable them to be used without overlooking adjacent properties.

PSC3
New housing proposals should aim to provide adequate levels of privacy in principal rooms and in private amenity open space. Windows of habitable rooms should not directly face the side walls of other buildings at a distance of less than normal garden depth.

Under recent planning legislation, the Council are required to produce a new set of documents to guide development called the Local Development Framework (LDF). Once the Council has produced the main or 'Core' document of the LDF, it is intended that this SPD will be updated to correspond with changes in Waltham Forest planning policy and supplement the Framework.

2.4 Design & Access Statements

In 2006 legislation was introduced that requires those submitting planning applications (with limited exceptions) or those applying for listed building consent to include a Design and Access Statement with their application.

A Design and Access Statement is a short description setting out the design principles and concepts that have been applied to a particular development; and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.

For further advice on how to a write Design and Access Statement please refer to Appendix 4, or alternatively the Council's internet website at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/design-access-statements-guidance27mar07.pdf

In 2006 legislation was introduced that requires those submitting planning applications (with exceptions) or those applying for listed building consent to include a Design and Access Statement with their application

2.5 Building For Life

'Building for Life' is an urban design tool for assessing the quality of planned or completed housing development. Building for Life is a partnership between a number of national agencies, led by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the House Builders Federation.

Building for Life uses 20 different criteria for assessing new residential development around four main headings - Environment and Community; Character Streets, Parking and Pedestrianisation; and Design and Construction.

Building for Life is seen as the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods and the Council will use the criteria to assess the overall quality of new residential schemes, both at the planning stage and on completion of development.

Developers and planning applicants should therefore have regard to the criteria in bringing forward proposals for residential development. Where residential developments are of 10 units or more a Building for Life assessment may be required as part of the planning application. Further information about Building for Life can be found at www.buildingforlife.org/. Appendix 3 provides a full list of the 20 assessment criteria.

The Council will use the Building for Life criteria to assess the overall quality of new residential schemes, both at the planning stage and on completion of development

Where residential developments are of 10 units or more a Building for Life assessment may be required as part of the planning application


PUBLIC SPEAKER
LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST
PLANNING COMMITTEE
Tuesday
18th August 2009
at 7.30 pm
AGENDA
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21ST JULY 2009
4. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Chapter 3

Understanding the Planning process

3.1 The Process

Most new buildings, or major changes to existing buildings or to the local environment, will need planning permission.

An application for planning permission should be made to the Development Management team within the Council, and must include sufficient detailed information to assess the proposed development and its potential impact on the local area. The flow diagram below shows the process for applying for planning permission.

The Council also provides a pre-application service for which there is usually a charge. This service can be useful in enabling an applicant to discuss the principles and details of a proposal with the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of a formal application. The Council encourages use of this service, and further information can be obtained from the Development Management team (contact details are in Chapter 7 below).

The Council provides a pre-application service for which there is usually a charge. This service can be useful in enabling an applicant to discuss principles and details of a proposal with the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of a formal application

3.2 Special protections

Some areas, buildings or monuments have protection with regards to certain developments because they are of special cultural, architectural, historic, or wildlife interest. These include archaeological priority zones, conservation areas and listed buildings. Trees within or adjacent to a development site may also be protected.

If your development proposals affect one of these designations or protection orders, additional controls are likely to be imposed. In some instances, such as work to a listed building or development within a conservation area, additional consent to the standard planning permission may be required.

It is therefore advisable to check with the Council's Development Management Team (contact details in Chapter 7) or consult the Council's Unitary Development Plan to see if there are any designations that affect the site.

It is advisable to check if there are any Unitary Development Plan designations that affect the site

This flowchart is taken from the Planning Portal website and shows the planning policy process

3.3 Appeals

If the local authority refuses planning permission, the applicant can appeal against this decision to the Planning Inspectorate. The address of the Planning Inspectorate is:

The Planning Inspectorate
Room 3-4 Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

Tel: 0117 372 8000
e:mail: www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk


stakeholder workshop

Chapter 4

Waltham Forest Characterisation Study

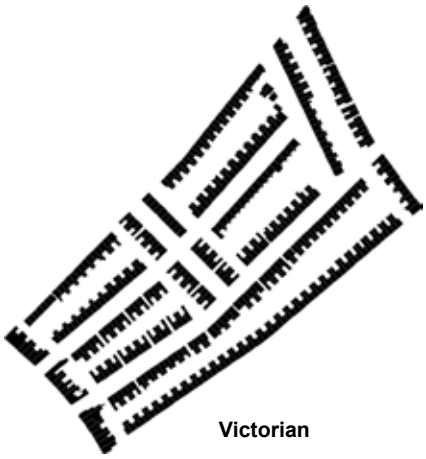
As part of the preparation for this document, the Council commissioned a Characterisation and Local Distinctiveness Study in accordance with the principles set out PPS1, paragraph 19. This study included an analysis of the Borough's overall character and set out a number of key findings and recommendations which have informed a number of the design principles within this document.

In December 2008, the Council held a workshop with around 40 expert stakeholders to present the draft findings of the Characterisation Study and to assist in identifying the scope and content of the Urban Design SPD. The stakeholders included developers, local design professionals, councillors, residents, and council officers.

4.1 Key findings and recommendations of the study

Street layout

- The borough's streets are predominantly grid-based. New development should seek to maintain, repair or establish streets following this format, unless clear character reasons suggest otherwise.



Victorian

Inter-war

The composition of the area

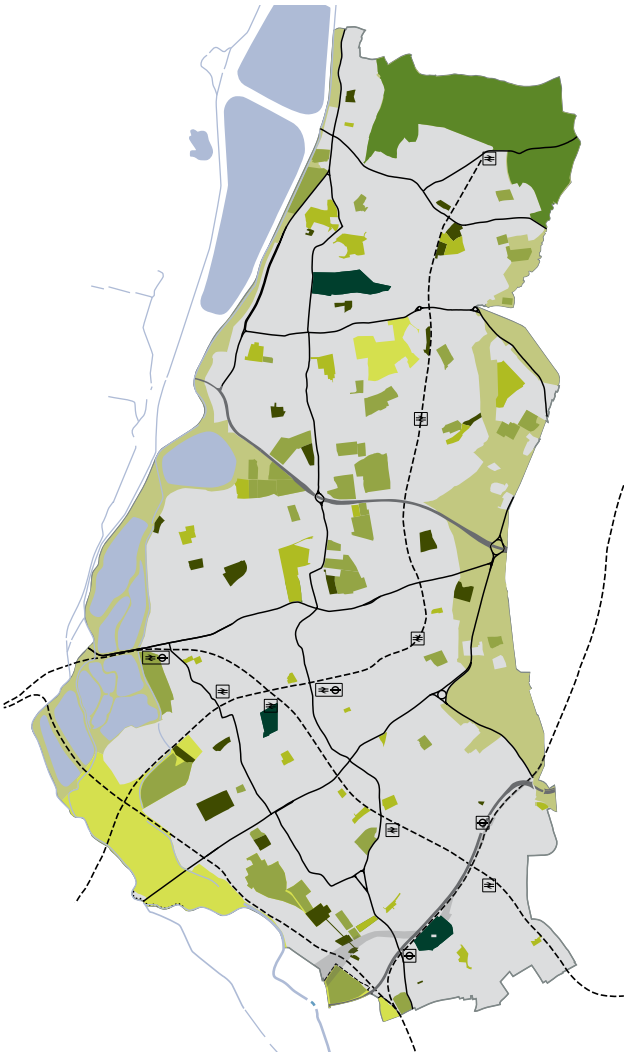
- In order to maintain or improve local character, the scale of new development should have regard to how it fits into the overall neighbourhood, block and street.

Building heights

- Two storey buildings predominate in the residential areas of the borough. New development should generally reflect this building height as a key characteristic of the borough, unless clear and demonstrable design reasons suggest otherwise. Storey heights can be increased where appropriate along key routes and in central locations. Taller buildings should only be considered in line with the policy recommendations on topography.
- Higher residential densities can be achieved without resorting to excessive building heights or small housing units. Cues should be taken from the borough's existing higher density, low-rise developments such as the Warner half-houses.
- The location of tall buildings should consider the effect on the skyline and have regard to topography, legibility, and proximity to centres and transport nodes so that they act as meaningful landmarks.

A green borough

- A core characteristic of the borough is that it is green. Street trees should be considered an essential element in new developments and enhancements.
- New developments should support objectives to provide a network of high quality green spaces throughout the borough and a good level of access to spaces.
- Private amenity space is a characteristic of the borough so where possible should be provided for all new residential development wherever appropriate.



Front boundaries and building facades

- Front gardens of new residential developments should have clear ownership and support the streetscape.
- A significant part of local character and the street scene is the detailed design of building facades. New development should therefore include attention to detail

on building frontages, giving consideration to elements such as brick and window detailing, porches and roof edging

Parking

- Parking should be carefully considered in the design process with on-street parking preferred to support streetscape character.

Utilities

- The provision of utility infrastructure (including waste bins and telecommunications) should be carefully considered in the design process to avoid cluttering the street.

In preparing this SPD, the Council has taken full account of the findings and recommendations of the Characterisation Study, within the context of a range of other important policy documents including the Council's Unitary Development Plan, the Waltham Forest Sustainable Community Strategy, national and regional design policy (including the London Plan housing targets for the borough), and other relevant urban design guidance.

The full Characterisation Study document can be found on the Council's website at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/wf-characterisation-study-jul09.htm


NOTTINGHAM RD

Chapter 5

Urban design principles

In broad terms, the three key objectives of any development are to ensure it functions well, it is pleasing to the eye, and it endures. The urban design principles set out below should be fully considered in seeking to achieve these aims.

The predominant form of development in Waltham Forest is infill, usually in the form of small or medium size residential and/or commercial development, with some larger sites occasionally coming forward. The principles below apply to both of these types of development, although their importance and practical application may vary depending on the size and nature of the site and the development.

the three key objectives of any development are to ensure it functions well, it is pleasing to the eye, and it endures

5.1 Appreciate the context and appraise the site

A key objective of any development must be its successful integration with the surrounding context. As PPS1 clearly states;

'Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.' (PPS1, paragraph. 34)

Where distinctiveness is ignored, new development can tend to reflect the marketing policies or corporate identities of large companies, standard building types or products of the construction industry, or the latest fashions amongst design professionals. Ignoring context can also lead to 'anywhere' places or buildings.

The first crucial step in the development of any proposal is therefore to carry out an assessment of the site context and the immediate surroundings within which the proposed development will sit.

Key elements which should be considered are:

- existing features that can help to make the site easier to understand, such as important views into and from the site or important buildings or landmarks
- the accessibility of the site including existing footpaths and cycle routes, public transport, and roads
- type and mix of surrounding land uses
- natural features such as topography, existing trees or vegetation or rivers

- solar orientation and microclimate
- the history of the site and surrounding area including historic uses
- any designations or protection orders
- character and nature of the built environment

5.2 Make places easy to understand and get around

It is important in designing places and buildings that developments have a clear image and are easy to understand. In design terms, this quality is often referred to as legibility, which means the clarity of a place, and the degree to which it is easy to find your way around an area without getting lost.

The best places are memorable, easy to understand and have a character with which people can identify. Development should therefore aim to give a strong identity to the area through the form and layout of buildings and the creation of new spaces between them.

This is an important part of context analysis and needs to be considered at an early stage in the design process, particularly in integrating new development both visually and physically with its surroundings. A list of the points to consider when analysing a site can be found in Appendix 2.

A number of techniques can be used to improve the clarity and understanding of a development including;

- Providing and reinforcing clear layouts and integration with existing important and well-used routes (further detail on this given in section 5.3 below)
- Reinforcing visual links to nearby landmarks, focal points and important areas

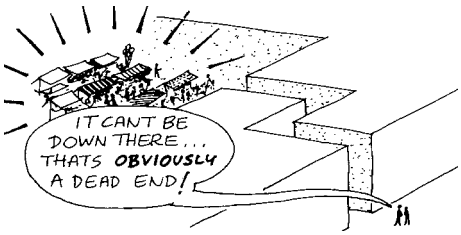


Image from Responsive Environments

- Locating tree planting and appropriate lighting to reinforce routes and give a clear sense of direction

- Providing the right quality and location of signage

- At the detailed level, legibility is also important in relation to the design and layout of individual buildings.

- Accentuating corner buildings can also help in providing identity and direction, by increasing height and/or architectural treatment.

- Entrances into buildings, particularly public buildings, should be clearly visible and easily understood.

- Close attention should also be paid to the detailing and quality of materials, particularly at ground floor where people are more likely to see the development at close hand (further detail on this can be found in section 5.7.5 below)

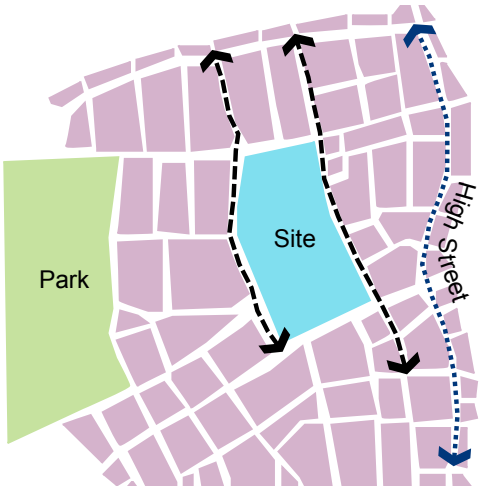
5.3 Make places easy to get to and move through

Successful places allow people to move easily to and from their day-to-day destinations. It is therefore important that new development connects to or improves existing routes in or surrounding the site. In order to achieve this, the following steps should be followed.

5.3.1 Connect to existing streets through the site

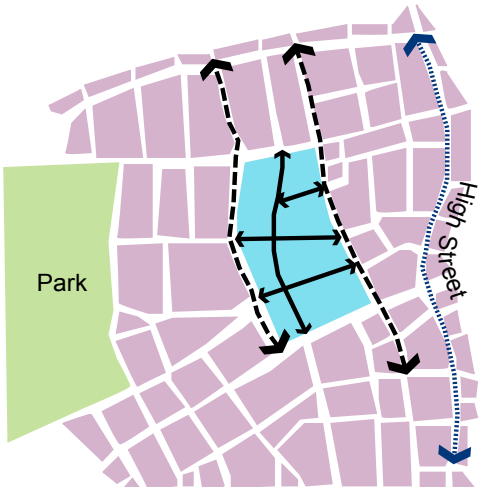
When considering the development of a site it is important to assess the street pattern beyond the site boundary and identify key linkages and wider destinations. Where appropriate, connections should therefore be made through the site that also link to routes outside. This will create a place that is easy to get to and move around. As a rule of thumb the distance between routes should be in the range of 100 - 150 metres.

The following images show the steps a designer should go through to achieve a connected site.

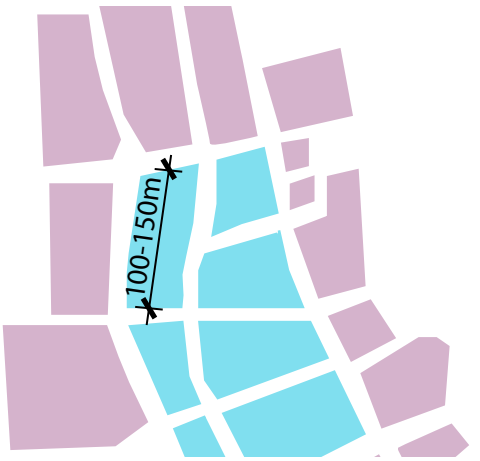


Consider how the site can be connected to nearby routes and public transport nodes

This layout restricts east-west movement creating a barrier between the High Street and the park



This approach integrates the surrounding streets allowing movement to the key destinations in the area



As a rule of thumb the distance between routes should be between 100 - 150 metres

Cul-de-sacs are a feature of some areas of the borough. Where they are a predominant feature, they can create introverted layouts which fail to integrate with the surrounding streets. Whilst the Council will generally resist developments that create new cul-de-sacs, they may be acceptable in some instances if they are shown to be part of a wider well-connected network.

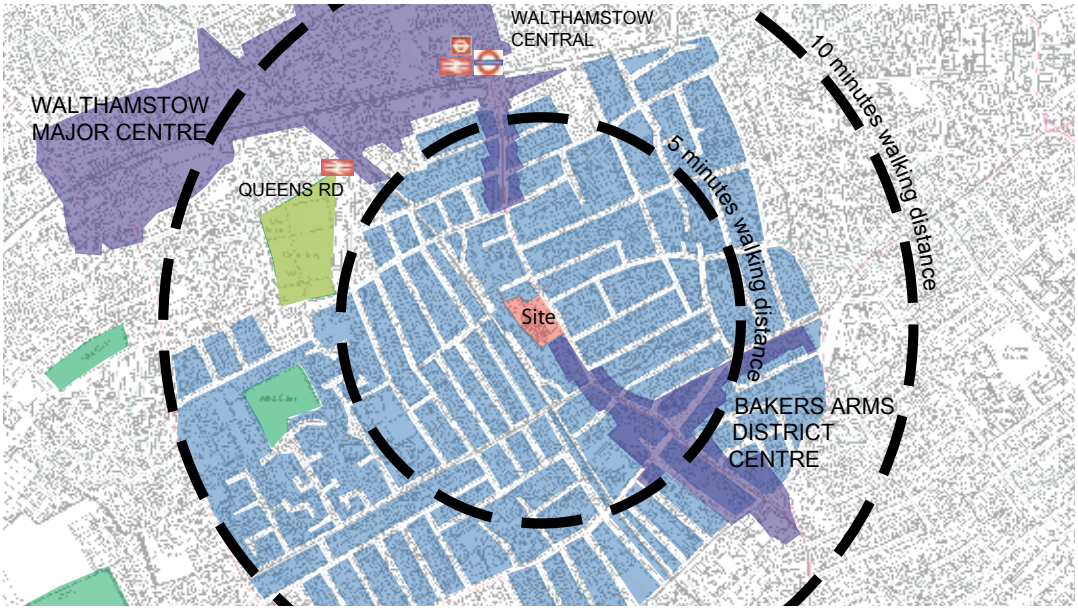
5.3.2 Consider all forms of transport

When setting out routes, it is important to consider the needs of all users including pedestrians (both disabled and able bodied), cycles, cars, buses, emergency vehicles, service vehicles and refuse vehicles.

When designing for different forms of transport pedestrians should be considered first and motor traffic last to ensure the street will serve all of its users in a balanced way. The table below shows who should be considered and in what order.

Consider first	Pedestrians
	Cyclists
	Public Transport Users
	Emergency and service vehicles
Consider last	Other motor traffic

When designing for cyclists or pedestrians, layouts should be well connected and offer a choice of direct routes to all destinations. Links should be made to the borough's existing cycle network, and all routes should be safe, convenient and pleasant. As a rule of thumb, and where possible, key daily destinations including bus stops should be reachable in around 10 minutes by foot.



Where possible key daily destinations should be reachable in around 10 minutes by foot

Whilst it is important to provide good connections and a choice of routes between places, in some instances creating new routes may not always be appropriate or desirable. For example, too many connections can sometimes result in underused routes which are often unsafe and inconvenient for pedestrians, particularly where they are too long, not well overlooked or do not provide convenient access to local facilities.

Segregation of different users (such as providing pedestrian-only routes) should generally be avoided, however in some instances they may be appropriate. Where pedestrian-only routes are planned, they must be overlooked, well lit, straight (avoiding dog-legs and other potential hiding places), wide, highly visible, and busy.

Access for emergency and refuse vehicles must also be considered. Requirements for emergency vehicles are generally dictated by the access requirements for the fire service. Well-connected streets have significant advantages for emergency, service and refuse vehicles. They decrease emergency response times and reduce or avoid the need for service or refuse vehicles to reverse.

Well-connected streets also minimise land-take by avoiding the need for wasteful turning areas at the end of cul-de-sacs.

Further detail on designing for emergency, service or refuse vehicles can be found in the Manual for Streets (www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/322449.pdf).

A poorly designed pedestrian route which is too long, not overlooked or well lit

This pedestrian route is dog-legged and creates a potential hiding place for anti-social behaviour

This pedestrian route is wide, highly visible, overlooked and well lit (Jonathan Rawle)

5.4 Get the layout right

Layout refers to the arrangement and inter-relationships of streets, buildings, places for leisure, gardens, and areas for parking. Getting the layout right is fundamental to the success of any development.

5.4.1 Create a grid of streets

As identified in Chapter 4 above, one of the key findings of the Waltham Forest Characterisation Study is that the borough is typified by a network or grid of streets. This has proved to be resilient over time and therefore new development should seek to maintain, repair or establish streets that follow this format.

The layout of these grids and blocks can take a wide variety of forms and scales, creating streets and routes of different character. The following images show the different layouts that some of the boroughs streets take. When considering a street layout for new development it is important to understand and, where appropriate, follow the street grid pattern surrounding the site. This will help the development fit seamlessly within its context.

Victorian streets laid out in a tight grid pattern

Inter-war streets laid out in a larger grid pattern

5.4.2 Keep it simple

Many of the environments that have failed the test of time, such as much of the boroughs 1960's housing, have been based on experimental or convoluted layouts. Historic layouts such as those defined by the Victorian and Edwardian terraces within the borough have survived the test of time because they are simple. They allow easy movement for people, make efficient use of land, and are adaptable.

Typical 1960s building layout based on a non-traditional grid pattern and configuration

5.4.3 Orientate fronts and backs correctly

Once the layout of the grid and blocks has been established decisions can then be made on the arrangement of buildings within each block. One of the most practical and robust arrangements of buildings is the 'perimeter block', a layout which is prevalent throughout the borough and which has stood the test of time. In this layout, front doors face onto the street and, in the case of residential development, gardens are located at the back. This arrangement brings all the pedestrian movement from buildings directly onto the street, which helps to ensure the street is informally watched over by people going about their daily activities, sometimes referred to as natural surveillance or 'eyes on the street'.

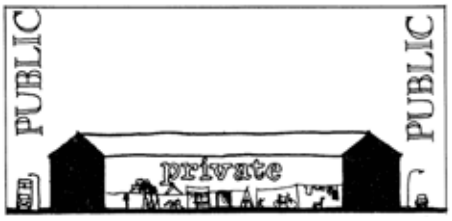
Proposed Stratford City development showing buildings arranged in perimeter blocks (Space Syntax)

A pedestrian route along the back of one of the Borough's housing estates which is used for dumping rubbish

5.4.4 Public and private space

The perimeter block layout also provides a much clearer distinction between public and private space. Private space, usually in the form of private

gardens or communal space, can be located at the rear of development, allowing a high degree of privacy and ownership, with public space located at the front, providing access to buildings and where most public activities take place. This is a key element in successful urban design and should be considered at an early stage in the design process.



A clear distinction between public and private space is important. (Responsive Environments)

Failure to distinguish clearly between public and private spaces in development can often result in ill-defined areas lacking clear ownership or responsibility, which can result in wasted or 'nuisance' spaces in otherwise successful schemes.

Open space within a housing development where the distinction between public and private space is not clear

5.4.5 Designing for community safety

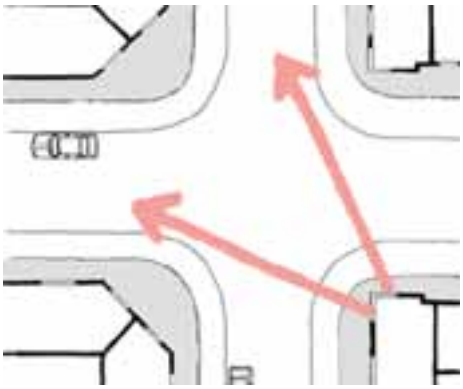
Designing building blocks to face the street or public areas can also help in making places feel safer. 'Active frontages' onto the street, as opposed to blank walls, windowless elevations or the backs of buildings, provide natural surveillance for the benefit of both residents and businesses. This can be further improved by providing a mix of uses and/or dwelling types, encouraging greater activity throughout the day and evening (see 5.5 below)

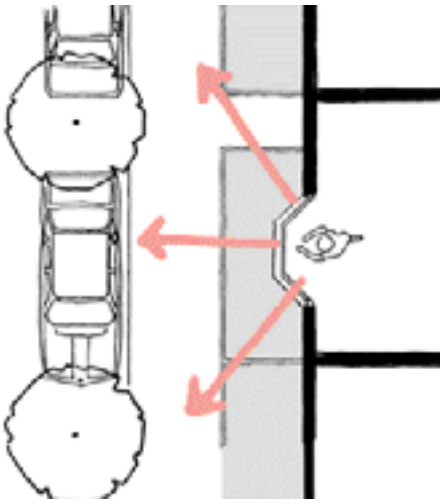
Rear garages with no natural surveillance

Not only is it beneficial to have front doors facing onto the street, windows also help with natural surveillance, and corner or bay windows that allow views in more than one direction are particularly beneficial.

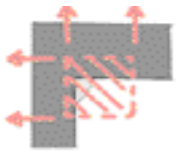
Corners can be difficult to deal with when trying to avoid blank walls, particularly when designing houses with rear gardens.

A housing development with no windows and inactive frontages

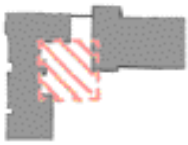




Corner or bay windows can improve overlooking into the street. Images taken from 'Better places to live, a companion guide to PPG3'



Unusable space in the corner

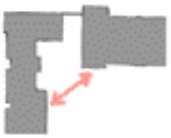


Creating space in the corner

Fitting in the gardens

Relating gardens to habitable rooms

Light penetration in the corner



Ensuring privacy

Illustrations taken from 'Better places to Live, A companion guide to PPG3 ' suggesting design solutions that minimise blank walls facing onto the street

As advised in section 5.9.2 below, internal residential layouts should avoid ground floor bedrooms facing the street, which do not generally offer passive surveillance by residents during the day and also compromise privacy.

Routes and entrances to buildings should be direct, easy to find and well lit, with a clear line of approach from the street. Pedestrian routes which are not overlooked, run around the backs of buildings and/or are confusing to navigate should be avoided.

Bedrooms on the ground floor often have permanently closed curtains

For flatted developments, appropriate and secure access control systems should be provided. Larger flatted schemes may also require additional security measures such as a concierge and audio-visual verification measures.

On-street car parking can also help in making streets more active, as opposed to developments with parking wholly to the rear or in private garages, which generally reduce on-street activity.

Care should be taken with developments with large floor spaces such as supermarkets, industrial units, offices or cinemas. They should be designed to make a positive contribution to the street, by minimising blank walls and service areas that create 'dead' frontages. This can be achieved by incorporating smaller uses such as shops, restaurants and small businesses at ground floor level, either by 'wrapping' them around the large footprint use or by locating the larger use above ground level.

Development should also include good lighting outside buildings, along pedestrian routes and in and around car parks, in addition to clear and visible signage where appropriate.

The Council works closely with the borough's Metropolitan Police Crime Design Advisor, who should be contacted at an early stage in the design process for specific advice. Further information on designing areas to help reduce crime can be found at www.securedbydesign.com.

Garages that are not well overlooked and are frequently broken in to

Thumbnail showing smaller units to the periphery of a large unit site (Collado Collins Architects & Masterplanners)

Good lighting helps to improve safety

5.5 Encourage diversity and mixed use

Sustainable communities comprise a mix and range of local services and facilities. Social diversity that takes account of people of all lifestyles creates vibrant and mixed places that are more interesting with greater choice. These places also encourage social interaction.

5.5.1 Mixed uses

Where appropriate, mixed uses should be promoted for development, particularly in town centres. Single uses should be avoided on major sites unless it can be demonstrated that they would not detract from the vitality and vibrancy of the area, or that alternative uses are not viable.

The benefits of mixed development include:

- Access to facilities is more convenient.
- Travel-to-work congestion is minimised as this allows potentially more journeys by bike or on foot.
- There is greater opportunity for social interaction
- Streets are generally more active at different times of the day, bringing with it a greater feeling of safety.

Where appropriate, residential uses should be encouraged in local centres above existing shops or offices. This type of living provides 'eyes on the street' outside normal working hours providing additional vitality and economic sustainability for local businesses. Mixing day-time and evening uses can further improve the natural surveillance of an area.

5.5.2 Vary unit size

Whether development is designed for a single use or a mix of uses, diversity can also be introduced by varying the size of units. This can be achieved by including differently sized retail or office units or providing a variety of house sizes. By providing different sized units, whether that is office space, industrial units or homes, development can cater for a variety of needs thereby encouraging a more mixed and stable community. This approach means that people who have aspirations to move to larger premises or homes do not have to move out of the area.

Smaller units can be wrapped around the edge of larger unit uses such as supermarkets to provide active frontages (Collado Collins Architects & Masterplanners)

5.5.3 Mixed tenures

New housing development should seek to encourage social diversity and more sustainable communities by providing a range of tenures. With new developments of 10 or more units, London Plan policy requires 50% of that housing to be affordable. Within that affordable housing element, 30% should be intermediate (accommodation that is provided with rents below open market rates, low cost ownership or shared ownership), and 70% social (this is accommodation provided by a social landlord with rents that are no higher than target rents set by central government).

The design of affordable housing should have no discernible differentiation in quality from private market housing.

Adelaide Wharf housing scheme in Hackney shows no discernible difference between social and private housing (AHMM)

5.6 Housing density

The desire to make the best use of land, the creation of more sustainable forms of development and an increasing demand for new housing within the borough, has led to new approaches to residential development with an emphasis on generally increasing housing densities. In all development proposals, opportunities should be taken to make the best use of land through achieving the optimum level of density appropriate to the site's location, context, existing or proposed social infrastructure and public transport accessibility.

The quality of design is particularly important for high density developments, and proposals should respond positively to reinforcing or improving local character and good place-making. Particular consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Layout and integration with surrounding development
- Providing a high standard of architectural design and detailing

- Using quality materials and finishes
- The size and quality of internal spaces
- The quality and usability of private and communal spaces
- Privacy and overlooking
- Sound insulation
- Landscaping and boundary treatment
- Durability

In the right location, higher density can provide the following benefits:

- Improving the viability and access to local facilities and community services
- Reducing car travel and parking provision
- Supporting public transport
- Improved natural surveillance particularly if the density is increased at ground level
- Increasing energy efficiency
- Better use of land

However, the issue of density is complex and successful high density housing demands careful consideration to the overall quality of design and place-making. A particular concern is how high density housing forms can respond to context and character, particularly in a borough like Waltham Forest which is characterised generally by two-storey suburban housing.

Therefore, whilst higher density development (up to and above 450 habitable rooms per hectare) can work successfully in the appropriate location, there are other areas of the borough where careful consideration needs to be taken to protect and/or reinforce existing character. For example, simply increasing the density of suburban forms and layouts by insensitive infill or by squeezing standard house types closer together and reducing space standards is unlikely to produce a quality living environment for residents. This is particularly relevant in relation to some forms of affordable/social housing and housing for families.

Internal space needs to be the right size and good quality (London Housing Design Guide, Mayor of London)

Private and communal spaces need to be usable and of high quality (Transition Culture)

5.6.1 Density Standards

The London Plan sets out density standards as follows (Table 3A.2)

	Public Transport Accessibility Levels		
Setting	0-1	2-3	4-6
Suburban	150-200 hrph	150-250 hrph	200-350 hrph
Urban	150-250 hrph	200-450 hrph-	200-700hrph
Central	150-300 hrph	300-650 hrph	650-1100 hrph

hrph – habitable rooms per hectare. 'Habitable Rooms' include all rooms normally used for living and sleeping as well as kitchens of 13 sq.m. or more in size.

Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL) - this is a method that assesses the access level of areas to public transport. PTAL is calculated by considering the distance from any point to the nearest public transport stop, and service frequency at those stops. A PTAL database can be found at Transport for London on webpid.elgin.gov.uk/.

Settings are defined as follows:

- **Central** – areas with very dense development, a mix of different uses, large building footprints and typically buildings of four to six storeys, located within 800 metres walking distance of an international, metropolitan or major town centre
- **Urban** – areas with predominantly dense development such as for example terraced houses, mansion blocks, a mix of different uses, medium building footprints and typically buildings of two to four storeys, located within 800 metres walking distance of a District Centre or, along main arterial routes
- **Suburban** – areas with predominantly lower density development such as for example

detached and semi-detached houses, predominantly residential, small building footprints and typically buildings of two to three storeys.

The London Plan goes on to state that, in addition to PTAL, where alternative transport assessments can reasonably demonstrate that a site has either good existing, or planned, public transport connectivity and capacity, the density of a scheme can be at the higher end of the appropriate density range. Where access to and capacity are limited density should be at the lower end of the appropriate density range (para 3.24).

None of Waltham Forest can be considered as lying in a Central location as defined by the London Plan. The highest PTAL levels are in the area around Walthamstow Town Centre (PTAL 4-6), and beyond this area, PTAL levels generally fall into the categories of moderate or poor. Proposed density levels should therefore reflect this range.

5.7 Building form and detailing

5.7.1 Scale, height and massing

In bringing forward proposals for development, it is important to give careful consideration to the immediate surroundings and general context of the area within which the development will sit. The scale, height and massing of proposed development should therefore be considered in relation to its surrounding context, including adjoining buildings, the general pattern of heights in the area, the streetscape and urban grain, and where appropriate the impact on the skyline and local views.

Where uniform building height is part of the character of a street it will not normally be appropriate to permit major variations in the general roof line or eaves line, while in other areas irregular building heights might be appropriate.

This new development responds to the scale and height of adjacent buildings

In these circumstances, a degree of variety in building heights can provide visual interest at roof level, although care needs to be taken to ensure that no one building is allowed to overly dominate its neighbours.

5.7.2 Tall buildings

2-3 storey housing is typical in Waltham Forest, in the form of Victorian and Edwardian terraces generally found in the middle and south of the borough, with later inter-war housing in the north. Following the redevelopment of four major Council estates during the 1990's, there are now only a small number of residential tower blocks left in the borough, notably in Wood Street/Forest Road, which rise to 12-14 storeys.

Typical two storey development in Walthamstow

Within this broad context, any building above 5-6 storeys could be considered as tall, although this of course will depend on other factors such as location, the scale and pattern of adjacent development and the proximity of other taller buildings.

One of the few remaining 1960s tower blocks in Waltham Forest

In the right location, tall buildings can contribute to good place-making, provide important urban landmarks and create distinctive skylines. For example, it is often desirable to place taller buildings in key locations such as urban centres, corner plots, along main routes, at the end of vistas or in areas around parks and other large open spaces. However, their success will usually depend on an assessment of a number of other factors including:

- The quality of design and architecture
- The quality of construction and materials
- Detail and impact at ground floor level
- Impact on privacy and amenity with adjacent properties
- Accessibility to transport interchanges and nearby facilities such as shops,
- Community facilities and other services
- Impact on local or strategic views

Taller buildings grouped at the proposed Stratford City development (Stratford Renaissance Partnership)

- Impact on microclimate for example wind, sun, and reflection
- Impact on historic context
- Relationship to topography and surrounding land form
- The management regime, particularly in relation to residential mix

Developers should also take account of English Heritage and CABE's joint guidance on Tall Buildings (July, 2007) which can be found at www.cabe.org.uk/files/guidance-on-tall-buildings.pdf.

5.7.3 Building composition and visual harmony

An informed analysis or character appraisal will help define the appropriate response to local context and provide a clearer basis for developing the design concept for the site. This should include an understanding of detailed building composition, including prevailing widths and heights, the pattern of vertical and horizontal elements, such as the size and location of windows and doors, and any other significant features or detailing which can be usefully drawn upon to inform the design approach. Depending on the complexities of the site, particular design responses could include one of the following approaches:

Distinctive character areas

In some places within the borough, such as some Victorian or Edwardian terraced streets, the character is very distinct with strong building 'rhythms' and a prevalence of unifying features, materials and detailing. New development should therefore take these into account in the design response, by seeking to reflect the prevailing scale, proportion and detailing of buildings, albeit not necessarily by way of a pastiche response to context.

A distinctive Edwardian terraced street with strong building rhythms

Mixed character areas

In more mixed streets where there is a greater variety in character, contextual features are likely

Mixed character area

to be diverse. This may allow for a more flexible architectural approach, albeit one which still follows the key components of harmony such as building line, widths, height and scale.

Fragmented character areas

Where the context is less cohesive or undesirable, the response can be more creative. This can help in achieving a new character for the area, but should still respond to the basic characteristics of the site such as topography or natural features.

Fragmented character area

5.7.4 Responding to context with contemporary or multi-cultural building styles

A positive response to local context does not have to mean a replication of existing building styles. A successful proposal can be achieved through following common building lines, heights and widths, and window and door proportions. The Council is keen to encourage contemporary design wherever appropriate, and appreciates that this can enrich a place through a contrast of styles. Furthermore, where cultural or religious buildings are proposed, the Council supports the use of alternative building styles that reference the context of the site.

The adjacent image is taken from Bexley's residential design guide 'Design for Living' and shows two different contemporary responses to infill development, one successful and the other less so.

Contemporary responses to infill development taken from Bexley's residential design guide. The top image does not reference cues from its context and works less well than the lower example

5.7.5 Richness and detailing

Richness refers to the composition and detailing of elements that can be seen when entering or passing a development at close hand. Rich environments provide greater visual stimulation and interest. Richness or variety should be achieved for both long and near distance views. This can be seen in images of one of the borough's Victorian terraces. Richness is provided in the long distance view

Richness at a distant view

by the chimney stacks in the roof line, the bay windows, and the rendering and arched treatment of the porches. Richness is also created at a human scale or near distance view by the detailing at the top of the bay windows and on and inside the porches.

Richness can also be achieved with modern designs. The image below of Islington Square in Manchester shows a modern development that brings richness at the human scale.

A modern retail scheme in York adjacent to contemporary buildings. The modern design has a calm low key approach, and the curve of the building and use of the stone matching the adjacent church ensures it fits well with its context (Building in Context, CABE and English Heritage)

Richness at a close view

Richness with modern buildings - Islington Square Manchester (Archidose)

5.8 Trees and planting

5.8.1 The benefits

As recognised in the Characterisation Study, trees are a significant positive feature of the street environment in Waltham Forest. Trees and planting provide an essential balance to the hard materials of buildings and streets at a scale appropriate to buildings.

Furthermore trees and planting provide habitats for wildlife, particularly birds; they can also be used to screen areas; help to bring shelter from wind and sun; and contribute to sustainable urban drainage. Existing trees should be retained wherever possible.

Street trees can provide significant benefit in residential areas

5.8.2 Design considerations

New planting needs careful and specialised consideration according to the location. Soils, drainage, sunlight and shelter are critical factors and locally native species should be used wherever possible.

5.8.3 Maintenance

Maintenance is required for all planting, particularly where this is close to buildings, where robust and regular maintenance is essential.

5.9 Create places that are usable

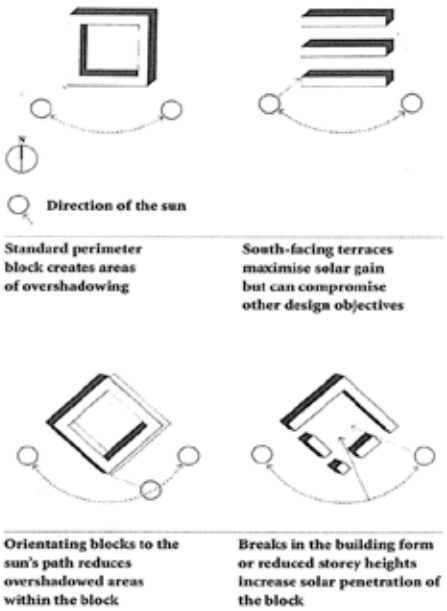
5.9.1 Sunlight and daylight

Building layouts should be designed to maximise daylight and sunlight as far as possible. This should not, however, be to the exclusion of other considerations, such as privacy or the achievement of an attractive streetscape.

The daylight and sunlight of neighbours should also be considered. As a general rule the Council will normally expect a minimum of 12m clearance between the window of a habitable room and the blank flank wall of an opposing two storey building. For three storey buildings the clearance should be a minimum of 18m.

The use of skylights as the only windows to a habitable room will not be acceptable and habitable rooms which directly face onto a blank wall at close range will be resisted. For example, the Council will normally expect a minimum 12 metres clearance between the window of a habitable room and the blank flank wall of an opposing two-storey building. For three-storey buildings the clearance should be a minimum of 18 metres.

The careful orientation and arrangement of buildings within block layouts can provide good



Building orientation to reduce shadowing "Better Places to Live" (DTRL, 2001)

opportunities for solar gain and daylight penetration to rooms, whilst at the same time achieving other key principles of good urban design.

New development should be expected to achieve the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) daylight and sunlight tests set out in their report on 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight & Sunlight – a guide to good practice' (1992).

When considering the arrangement of units within a residential development north facing single aspect units should be avoided.

With residential development orientation of dwellings is important not only in relation to the arrangement of gardens and other private space but also in maximising energy efficiency within the home. For example, as advised in 'Better Places to Live' (DTRL, 2001), 'Day lighting reduces the need for artificial lighting and passive solar gain reduces the need for internal space heating'.

It is also important to note that the need for sunlight should be balanced with the need for shade, specifically in the summer months to avoid the requirement for air conditioning as temperatures increase. This can be achieved through design features such as roof overhangs to provide shade for high-sun angles, smart glazing materials, or allowing for an air flow through a building by making them dual aspect with opening windows.

5.9.2 Privacy and the public/private boundary

Privacy is important to enable residents to feel comfortable in their own homes. The development of housing layouts in particular should therefore aim to balance the need for internal privacy of the home from overlooking and the need to retain good natural surveillance of the public realm ('eyes on the street').

Previous design guidance on residential developments (SPGN1) set out the following minimum clearance separation distances between

the windows of habitable rooms and kitchens in opposing dwellings. (Habitable Rooms include all rooms normally used for living and sleeping as well as kitchens of 13 sq. m. or more in size. Bathrooms, toilets, closets, landings, lobbies and recesses are excluded.)

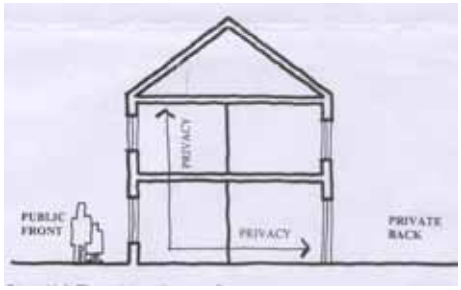
- 20 m between two-storey dwellings,
- 30 m between dwellings with a maximum height of three storeys,
- 40 m between dwellings with a maximum height of four storeys,
- and so on.

Independently of the minimum separation distances between buildings, new developments with habitable rooms overlooking existing private gardens will generally need to be set back 5m per storey from the common boundary.

However, whilst these provide a useful starting point, the Council recognises that a 'blanket' approach to the adoption of these standards can sometimes result in the creation of unattractive residential environments by denying the ability to provide privacy through careful design, for example in the case where dwellings face each other. The above criteria will therefore be applied flexibly in relation to the specific context of proposed development and in recognising that the objective of privacy can often be better secured through careful and imaginative detailed design rather than physical separation alone. This is particularly the case in relation to higher density residential proposals. For example:

- a varied building line can create oblique views thus allowing the fronts of dwellings to be brought closer together than where facing views are direct,
- ground floor dwellings can be designed so that living rooms and kitchens face directly on to the street or public realm, rather than more private rooms such as bedrooms. This arrangement provides a better interaction between the private dwelling and the public

A varied building line can create oblique views across the street. Image taken from 'Better Places to Live'.



Privacy gradient showing the relationship between internal rooms and public and private space (Reference - Bentley 1999)

realm, whilst protecting the privacy of residents. Ground floor bedrooms fronting the 'public' side of the dwelling will often result in a facade dominated by drawn blinds and curtains, with a consequent loss of natural light to the dwelling and a loss of surveillance to the street.

- Windows can also be designed in relation to the function of the room: for example, larger windows for living rooms and smaller windows for kitchens and bedrooms. Bay windows can also provide oblique views down a street;
- Screening and landscaping can reduce overlooking between facing rear windows.

Ground floor bedrooms with curtains drawn fronting public space

5.9.3 Front gardens

Front gardens, or 'set-backs', are a particular feature of the borough's residential environment which, when defined by a boundary such as a hedge or low wall, give a clear definition between the public and private realm.

Modest front gardens can be sufficient to accommodate bin and cycle storage and provide privacy to front rooms, whilst a threshold of 3-5 metres can provide for a small front garden.

Developments should clearly articulate the front boundaries of properties to make ownership clear and give an edge to the street.

Front gardens with boundaries that give a clear definition between the private and public realm

5.9.4 Internal space standards

Minimum floor area standards should provide an adequate amount of internal space within residential developments to achieve a pleasant and healthy living environment.

Internal layouts should also be designed to allow for the sub-division of different functions such as living, dining, cooking and storage, as well providing flexibility to allow for cost effective alterations in the future to respond to changing

Internal space within residential development should provide a pleasant and healthy living environment (Tim Crocker)

social and domestic needs.

The table at Appendix 5 sets out the minimum floor areas for dwellings based on the number of bedrooms. These are minimum standards, although applicants should seek to provide larger floor areas in developments where possible.

Space Standards for social rented affordable housing

Applicants should note that proposed developments for social rented affordable housing which are subject to grant funding from the Housing and Communities Agency will be required to satisfy the Housing Corporation's Housing and Quality Indicators (HQI) standards for internal space (version 4, updated April 2008). These can be found at the following website address: www.housingcorp.gov.uk/upload/pdf/721_HQI_Form_4_Apr_08_update_20080820153028.pdf.

In addition to these standards, applicants should also refer to the Housing Corporation's Design and Quality Standards for all affordable housing (at www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.10783).

Draft regional design guidance on internal space standards

Regional planning guidance on housing design has recently been published for consultation by the London Development Agency (London Housing Design Guide, Draft for consultation, July 2009). This sets out amended guidance on minimum internal space standards for all publicly funded housing, with an intention to apply these standards consistently for all new housing, regardless of tenure.

The consultation period for the LDA guidance ended in September 2009, with an anticipated adoption date of April 2010. If the regional guidance result in amended internal space standards across London, the Council will review

its current standards at that time and, if necessary, undertake further public consultation on this issue.

5.9.5 Internal communal areas

Internal communal areas, such as entrance halls or corridors can significantly affect the social dynamics of housing developments. Residents who share access to their home with a smaller number of others on their floor tend to enjoy greater privacy and a greater sense of ownership of the space outside their home. This may lead to them taking more responsibility for the upkeep of these shared spaces. The Mayor's draft London Housing Design Guide recommends the number of dwellings accessed from a single core should be no more than eight per floor, and a smaller number is considered preferable.

The size of circulation areas also need consideration. Entrance lobbies should be large enough for residents to manoeuvre with shopping, a pram, or a wheelchair, and hallways wide enough to enable residents to easily pass each other.

Internal circulation space should also be well lit, with good levels of natural light, and have natural ventilation. Where good views are available they should be provided.

Good maintenance and management of internal communal areas is essential, and levels of maintenance and management should increase when greater numbers of residents use them.

Good maintenance and management of internal communal areas is essential

Communal amenity space at Coin Street (Transition Culture)

5.9.6 Amenity space

Amenity space is an essential part of any residential development and should be considered an integral part of the design. Depending on the nature and scale of the development, this

will normally comprise a mix of private and/ or communal space. It is important that the role and function of each space is clear and that the boundaries between these different types of space are clearly defined. For example, private space should be specific to one dwelling and accessed only by the people living within that dwelling. Communal space is shared space available for use by a group of residents within the development, usually for those living within the same block. Communal space should also be designed to enable convenient and direct access by residents, and be well managed and maintained.

'Left-over space is wasted space which in time is likely to become a source of nuisance' (Better places to live p52)

The emphasis for amenity space provision should be on its quality and usability, rather than simply the inclusion of featureless, uninviting areas of open space within developments that provide little interest or use for residents.

Unused communal space

The emphasis for amenity space provision should be on its quality and usability

All dwellings should have access to a private space that is not overlooked from public areas. For example, family houses should have some private space in rear gardens and a block of apartments should have private balconies where practical and access to some private communal space. In flatted schemes, ground floor dwellings should generally have direct access to a private garden space which should also have direct access to communal space beyond. Locating amenity space at the rear of developments can provide residents with greater privacy and security.

Rear gardens should have usable space and should not be steeply sloping, awkwardly shaped or very narrow.

A balcony for an apartment should accommodate a table and chairs to allow residents to sit out

Balcony with sufficient and usable space (Tim Crocker)

comfortably. Balconies can count towards private amenity space and are often of greater value in terms of privacy and usability than communal areas. However, their design and appearance can impact considerably on the visual quality of the street and therefore should be constructed with high quality materials and finishes where they can be seen from the street.

Green roofs and roof gardens should be located appropriately to avoid problems of overlooking. Screens and suitable landscaping can be used to help overcome potential overlooking.

Kensington roof gardens provide quality amenity space in a high density environment (Homes & Property)

Amenity space standards

Whilst the emphasis for amenity space provision should be on quality and usability, the Council will seek a level of provision in line with the following guidelines:

Family housing (terraced, semi detached and detached) – a minimum of 50 sq metres of private garden space for 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings. For dwellings containing three or more bedrooms, an additional 10 sq metres per bedroom should be provided (ie: 3-bed - 60 sq metres, 4-bed - 70 sq metres etc)

Flatted developments – The minimum area for usable communal space in flatted developments is 50 sq metres.

- For units containing three or more bedrooms, an additional 10 sq metres of amenity space per unit should be provided.
- For units containing two bedrooms or less, and where there are more than 5 units proposed, 10 sq metres of amenity space should be provided per unit.
- Private amenity space in flatted developments should be of a sufficient size and shape to be usable for residents.

Balconies should be a minimum width of 1.5m and an overall minimum size of 5m²

5.9.7 Play Space

In addition to the above, children's play areas should be provided in all new flatted developments containing the potential for 10 or more child bed spaces (as per London Plan Policy 3D. 13). A minimum of 10 sq.metres of playspace per child bedspace should be provided within the development, and where appropriate, the playspace should be equipped.

Childrens play areas should be provided in all new flatted developments where appropriate (London Housing Design Guide, Mayor of London)

Play areas should be overlooked by nearby housing to increase passive surveillance and provide amenity space which is safe and secure for children and families to use.

Where an adequate amount of amenity space cannot be provided on-site, developers will need to justify this in their Design and Access Statement. In these circumstances, the Council may require the developer to provide a financial contribution towards open space improvements in the vicinity of the development, in accordance with the formula set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Planning Obligations (2008).

5.9.8 Cycle storage

The importance of providing some form of bike parking space for flats and houses cannot be overemphasised. Small halls and flats up stairs cause real problems for those wishing to cycle and deter those who might otherwise use this form of transport. New developments should therefore provide either a space inside the block of flats to secure bikes or provide a separate bike shed within the housing development. The Council has produced a separate guidance note on cycle

Secure cycle provision within a flatted development (Bornat Architects)

parking and storage which can be found at: www.walthamforest.gov.uk/cycle_storage_in_dwellings.pdf.

5.9.9 Refuse and utilities

The service areas of properties which face the public realm require careful design and can have a significant visual impact on the success (or otherwise) of new development. Careful consideration therefore needs to be given to refuse collection (particularly the storage of large wheeled bins), storage for recycling and meter/inspection boxes. These requirements should be integral to the design of new development and not left as an 'afterthought' to be dealt with at a late stage.

Consideration needs to be given to the storage of wheelie bins as part of overall design

5.10 Streets and Public Areas

Public areas include streets, parks, squares, and courtyards. Waltham Forest has an exceptional wealth of public open space including access to the Lea Valley Park and Epping Forest, local parks, playing fields and allotments. Public squares and spaces are more limited, with the town square and gardens in Walthamstow shopping centre being a notable and well-used exception.

A typical Victorian park at Coronation Gardens in Leyton

New development is unlikely to create large open space on this scale, but streets, squares and neighbourhood parks may well be created. It is important to design these areas to be attractive and successful as they will affect everyday lives. Successful public spaces can encourage people to value their neighbourhoods; provide imaginative places for children to play; improve flood management and urban cooling; and provide opportunities for physical activity, relaxation, mental well-being and healthy living.

New high quality public open space at Walthamstow Gardens

5.10.1 Public open space

At the concept stage, before any detailed design is taken, it is important that equal thought is given

to outdoor areas. Public space should be planned in a strategic manner so that it makes a positive contribution to new development, and thought should always be given to the scale of public areas in relation to the amount of development.

Public spaces, either in the form of local parks or squares, should be easily accessible and integrated into the surrounding urban fabric. They should have a clear identity and have an intended and feasible use that encourages social activity.

Successful places are well overlooked and busy, which is best achieved by enclosing the area with buildings of an appropriate scale that have active frontages on to the space, and making it part of a convenient and safe route. People can then pass through or linger as appropriate.

Detailed design should be simple and avoid excessive number of signs or other furniture, whilst providing appropriate seating in the right location. In the interests of security, public spaces should also be well lit.

5.10.2 Streets

Streets are places too and can contribute significantly to the quality of the built environment. In residential environments, streets should not be designed simply to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles but place a high priority on the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

A homezone street designed as a place providing a play area for children as well as access for vehicles (Portland Courtyard Housing)

The recent (2007) CLG/Department for Transport publication 'Manual for Streets' suggests that streets that are good quality places achieve a number of positive outcomes, including playing a crucial role in the delivery of sustainable communities:

- attractive and well-connected permeable street networks encourage more people to walk and cycle to local destinations,
- more people on the streets leads to improved personal security and road safety,

- people meeting one another on a casual basis strengthens communities and encourages a sense of pride in local environments,
- people who live in good quality environments are more likely to have a sense of ownership and a stake in maintaining the quality of their local streets and public spaces.

A typical and successful traditional street

Street character

The character of streets should form part of an integrated design approach to development, giving consideration to issues such as pavement and carriageway widths, the street's relationship to buildings and private space, and other important details such as parking arrangements, street trees, surface materials, signs, planting and lighting. The excessive or insensitive use of traffic signs, street furniture, road markings and inappropriate lighting should be avoided.

A key objective of street design should be focused on the street as a rich and fulfilling environment, not one which simply enables users to reach their destination. Visual quality, local distinctiveness and the propensity to encourage social activity are key factors in seeking to achieve this aim. Heritage assets (such as granite kerbs, historic railings, lights and seats) also have an important role in contributing to the character of streets and public spaces. Where possible, these features should be retained.

Street widths should be appropriate for the particular context and uses of the street, including the volume of traffic, pedestrian activity and parking arrangements. Recent developments have sometimes paid too much attention to the functional requirements with standardised solutions, resulting in places of poor visual quality. Street width, or the distance between buildings, also should generally relate to building height.

A street where the design focus has been on access and highway standards rather than as a place

Street lighting and other utilities

Lighting should be planned as an integral part of the street design, considering its proximity to planting (allowing for growth), and where appropriate locating on buildings so lighting columns do not impinge on available pavement widths.
Lighting should also be appropriate to the function of streets. For example main routes or shopping areas can be lit by a more intense light than a residential street. Care should be taken not to 'over light' as this can lead to unnecessary light pollution, nuisance and energy consumption.

Appropriately designed street lighting

Further details on appropriate technical street lighting requirements should be directed to the Council's Lighting Engineers, Public Realm. Please refer to Chapter 7 for contact details.

Streets are also the main conduits for pipes and cables for service providers, for example water, electricity, gas, and cable television. Underground services can have a major impact on the design and maintenance of streets, as they can dictate the locations of trees, street furniture, and where services are shallow can dictate the location of kerbs and the type of paving used.

Poorly sited utilities

When designing new streets, service providers need consultation early on in the process, and the discussion should be around the location of the services and requirements associated with access and maintenance. Care should be taken to co-ordinate access covers with paving design. Equipment boxes should be hidden wherever possible, for example set into boundary walls or hidden in shrubbery.

The Council produced a Streetscape Manual in 2005 that provides broad design principles for streets, including street furniture, lighting and signage. For further details on this document, please contact Public Realm whose details are in Chapter 7 below.

New guidance on streetscape design is planned and further detail on this can be obtained by

contacting the Public Realm department (see contact details at Chapter 7).

5.11 Parking

5.11.1 Car Parking Design

Parking designed as an integral part of the street scene and not as an after thought

Parking needs to be considered as an integral part of the overall urban or landscape design and not simply as an afterthought or policy requirement to provide a particular number of spaces associated with the proposed development. The most successful schemes are designed as places first which have car parking in them, rather than purely functional or stand-alone car parking areas effectively isolated from the overall site layout.

Parking arrangements should be safe, attractive and located where people want to park, which is usually directly outside their destination.
There is no single solution to providing car parking, and good parking design is often about achieving the right balance between different solutions.

On-street parking

Typical on-street parking layout

When considering parking layouts, on-street parking should take preference over other forms, including as part of a mixed approach to parking layout and provision. A well-designed arrangement of on-street parking provides convenient access from vehicles into buildings, improves the vitality of the street, is well overlooked, and can provide a potential traffic-calming effect. On-street parking can also provide a buffer between the pavement and the road, providing a sense of safety for pedestrians.

Achieving the right levels of on-street parking is also important. Too much can detrimentally affect the quality of the street scene and undermine character, and too little can create streets that are inactive. To reduce the visual dominance of cars, trees or other planting should be located at regular

intervals between parking areas.

It is important, however, to consider the impact that these different forms of on-street parking will have on the character of the area. Perpendicular or angled parking require wider streets to accommodate them. They should only therefore be proposed where a wider street is appropriate in relation to the scale of the buildings and where it will not detrimentally affect the character of the area.

Perpendicular parking

Front courtyard or central square parking

This form of parking can provide safe and convenient access for residents. However, the main disadvantage is that it widens the street width and reduces the sense of enclosure. Careful attention to detail and landscape quality is therefore required and the detailed design of surface materials or dropped kerbs may be needed to delineate the boundary between public highway and private parking space.

Central courtyard parking (Manual for Streets, DfT/CLG)

Rear parking courts

These are areas of parking at the back of development that are shared. They can be designed as an integral part of the site layout and help relieve pressures from on-street parking, particularly in larger, flatted developments. This form of parking should be secure and overlooked by surrounding buildings, and ideally be designed in small parking 'cells' of not more than around 10 spaces to avoid large expanses of parking. Soft landscaping should be included to reduce the impact of large areas of hard surfacing.

Rear parking court

Whilst appropriate in certain circumstances, this form of parking does have disadvantages. Firstly, because it requires separate access and circulation space it can duplicate streets or access routes making it a less efficient use of land than on-street parking. The internal routes and spaces required can also result in reduced garden sizes.

Secondly, if not carefully designed it can sometimes result in a loss of security and privacy to the rear of the home, and with parking to the rear of development, residents may be less likely to use their front doors with a consequent loss of activity on the street.

Undercroft parking

Careful consideration needs to be given with this form of parking as it can often have a negative impact on the street scene, particularly where long stretches of parking are proposed. Detailed attention needs to be paid therefore to ensure that active and safe frontages are maintained at street level.

Undercroft parking

However, despite its potential disadvantages, in certain circumstances undercroft parking can, providing it is designed well, be an appropriate way of providing off-street parking as part of a mixed parking layout.

Underground/basement parking

Although more costly, and perhaps not ideally suited to many suburban developments, underground parking can have potential advantages in larger schemes as it can allow street frontages to be maintained. However, the design, layout and management of underground car parking is fundamental to achieving a safe and successful scheme.

Underground parking

Large areas of underground parking should be avoided as they are usually perceived to be less safe. Large areas should be divided into smaller ‘cells’ with their own entrances, be well lit, and provide safe and direct access to homes for residents. Additional security measures such as CCTV are also likely to be required. The location of entrances and exits also needs to be carefully considered to minimise impact on the street scene.

Avoid allocating spaces

Allocated spaces are usually found within the

curtilage of a property such as in the garage or on the driveway. Whilst these can be more secure, they make overall parking more inefficient because their access takes space away from on-street parking, and when the allocated space is not in use no other vehicle can use it.

Parking spaces for disabled people

Attention needs to be paid to the needs of those with disabilities or other restricted mobility, especially in getting in and out of parked cars and approaching the front door of a house. Parking bays should be of the appropriate width and located as close as possible to the front entrance of dwellings or other buildings.

Other parking layouts can be found in the recent document 'Car parking; What works where', published by English Partnerships (March 2006)

Car clubs

A car club provides its members with quick and easy access to a car for short term hire. Members can make use of car club vehicles as and when they need them.

With large new developments, the introduction of a car club may be a requirement of the Council and one or more dedicated bays will need to be provided. These bays should ideally be located on street, but where this is not possible, they should be provided within the new development and be accessible to members of the public who are also members of the car club scheme.

Car clubs may be a requirement for large new developments (Streetcar)

5.11.2 Cycle parking design

All new housing development should provide secure, convenient, sheltered cycle parking to encourage people to use their bicycles for everyday journeys. The Council has produced a separate guidance note on cycle parking and storage which can be found at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/cycle_storage_in_dwellings.pdf

5.11.3 Motor cycle parking design

Motor cycle parking should be provided at locations such as educational establishments and workplaces, and at shopping or entertainment areas. When planning for residential parking, in most situations motorcycles will be able to use car parking spaces.

When designing for motor cycle parking, provision should be made close to destinations in places where they can be secured. Motor cycles are prone to theft as they can be easily lifted onto another vehicle, therefore security should be a key consideration. Where motor cycles are expected to be parked overnight secure spaces should be provided off street.

Motor cycle parking (Surrey County Council)

5.12 Planning for the future

Successful places provide equal opportunities for everyone, both now and for future generations. Building for the future ensures that new development contributes to environmental sustainability, while supporting a mix of compatible uses and tenures. Moreover, this ensures that development considers the future impacts of climate change and seeks to manage resources responsibly and effectively. The design and layout of new development can play a key role in supporting sustainability objectives and make a significant contribution to tackling climate change and reducing carbon emissions.

Waltham Forest is a diverse and mixed community. This diversity crosses ethnicities, economic status and age. Diverse societies are successful and interesting as they lead to a better balance of demand for facilities and assist with community cohesion. Communities that stay together are stronger than those that are transient. However, a community's needs change over time, and therefore buildings and places which are designed to be adaptable will prove more robust than those that have been tailored specifically to a particular need.

5.12.1 Adaptability

Building uses change over time and it is important to build in flexibility wherever possible to allow occupiers to modify and personalise their homes and workplaces as needs change. Buildings which are designed to be adaptable are more robust in the long term and are more likely to remain in use.

Whilst designing for adaptability can be difficult in terms of predicting changing social, environmental and technological needs, the design manual *Responsive Environments*, suggests there are three key factors which support long term robustness;

- Building depth - the vast majority of building uses require natural light and ventilation. Buildings which are too deep for this cannot easily change in use.
- Access - the number of access points is a key factor governing how easily a building can be adapted to a variety of uses.
- Height - the importance of access also affects building height: in a tall building, the upper floors have restricted links to the outside, and are therefore less suitable for a wide range of uses

(Responsive Environments, 1985)

A listed building in Leytonstone successfully adapted for an alternative use

5.12.2 Lifetime Homes

Council policy is to ensure that all new housing is built to 'Lifetime Homes' standards. The concept of Lifetime Homes is a key concept in achieving sustainable residential development which is flexibly designed and capable of meeting the needs of changing domestic circumstances over time. Lifetime Homes aims to make life as easy as possible for as long as possible, by providing accessible and adaptable accommodation for everyone, from young families to older people and individuals with a temporary or permanent physical impairment.

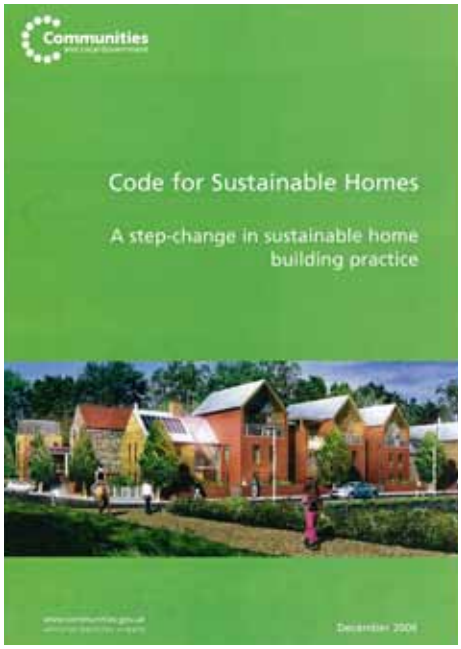
The Lifetime Homes standard consists of 16 criteria relating to interior and exterior features of the home. These include external entrances, doorways and hallways, internal layouts, wheelchair accessibility, and fixtures and fittings. Further information on Lifetime Homes can be found at www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/home.html.

5.12.3 Wheelchair homes

For residential developments of 10 units or more, the Council will require specialist wheelchair units. These are additional to the requirements of Lifetime Homes, and the units should be designed with the needs of wheelchair users in mind. For further advice please contact the Access Officer (see Chapter 7 for contact details).

5.12.4 Code for Sustainable Homes & BREEAM

The Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) is the national performance standard to achieving sustainable housing development. The Code measures the sustainability of a home against nine design categories, rating the 'whole home' as a complete package. These categories are:



- Energy and CO_2 emissions
- Water
- Materials
- Surface water run-off
- Waste
- Pollution
- Health and well-being
- Management
- Ecology

(Code for Sustainable Homes (CLG, 2008))

Each category includes a number of environmental issues which have a potential impact on the environment, and which are scored against a number of credits and weightings.

At the present time, regional planning guidance requires all new publicly funded homes to adhere to a minimum requirement of Code Level 3 between 2008-2011, as set out in the draft London Housing Strategy. However, the recent London Housing Design Guide consultation draft (July 2009) sets a higher minimum target of Code Level 4 for all new publicly funded homes from 2011 onwards. Also in July 2007 the Government's set a target for all new homes to be zero carbon from 2016. This is set out in the Government's Building A Greener Future: Policy Statement.

The consultation period for the draft LDA guidance ended in September 2009, with an anticipated adoption date of April 2010. Should the regional guidance result in amended targets across London, the Council will review its current standards at that time and, if necessary, undertake further public consultation on this issue.

Developers should refer to the CSH guidance at: www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/codesustainhomesstandard.pdf.

BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is an environmental assessment method for all buildings and is generally used for commercial/industrial buildings. It sets the standard for best practice in sustainable design and has become the de facto measure used to describe a building's environmental performance. Further detail on BREEAM can be found on www.breeam.org/.

5.12.5 Climate Change measures

Regional planning guidance in the London Plan requires the highest standards of sustainable design and construction and that all new developments make the fullest contribution to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. Measures include improving energy efficiency, making use of sustainable energy sources, minimising overheating, managing internal and

Bedzed zero carbon scheme (Greenroofs.com)

external water use, the use of more sustainable materials and construction, and the protection and management of biodiversity.

Minimising energy usage can be achieved, for example, by using energy efficient street lighting or providing adequate building insulation. Maintenance can be minimised by using materials that are robust and durable.

When designing to harness renewable energies it is important that structures are discreet and well designed and do not have an adverse impact on amenity or townscape character, especially in areas of heritage quality.

Renewable energy features which are not discreet may have a detrimental impact on the street scene

Some key considerations in mitigating and adapting to climate change in new development include:

- Passive solar design including orientation and location of windows and roof overhangs so that natural light and solar heat gains are controlled thereby reducing the need for electric lighting and air conditioning.
- Use of natural ventilation thereby reducing the need for air conditioning
- Energy efficient window glazing and frames, lighting and appliances
- Enhanced insulation
- Encouraging car free development and good access to sustainable forms of transport
- Planting deciduous trees to provide summer shade where necessary, whilst still allowing light through in winter.
- Designing ‘living roofs or walls’ which contribute to biodiversity, reduce heat loss and contribute to sustainable urban drainage.
- Combined heat and power (CHP) networks in larger developments
- Managing surface water run-off from buildings by collecting, storing and recycling rain water, using measures such as green roofs, soft landscaping, and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS)
- Making use of on-site waste during construction such as reusing bricks or tiles, or using demolition materials for rubble and hard-core.

Living walls reduce heat loss and contribute to biodiversity (Kayak)

Sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) (Cyria)

- Using construction materials manufactured from recycled or renewable resources in preference to those that are not.
- Providing facilities for the recycling of household waste, including space for internal storage that is accessible to disabled people.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Chapter 6

Monitoring & Review

It is important the Council monitors and reviews this document to ensure it fulfils its key objective of significantly improving the urban design quality of development within the borough. The impact and value of this Supplementary Planning Document will be evaluated using the following methods:

- Review of appeal decisions where design has been a reason for refusal.
- Feedback from users (developers, agents, applicants, Development Management officers, Housing officers and other interested parties)
- Scores in the Building for Life Assessments which form part of the Annual Monitoring Report.
- Changes in national, regional or local design policy and its relevance and impact on this document

It is important the Council monitors and reviews this document to ensure it fulfils its key objective of significantly improving the urban design quality of development within the borough

The review will assess the performance and impact of this Supplementary Planning Document and identify measures that may be necessary to strengthen or amend particular design principles or policy objectives.

Chapter 7

Contacts for further advice

For general advice on development proposals please contact:

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For specific design advice please contact:

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For details on the Streetscape Manual please contact:

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For advice on lighting please contact:

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For conservation area/listed building advice please contact:

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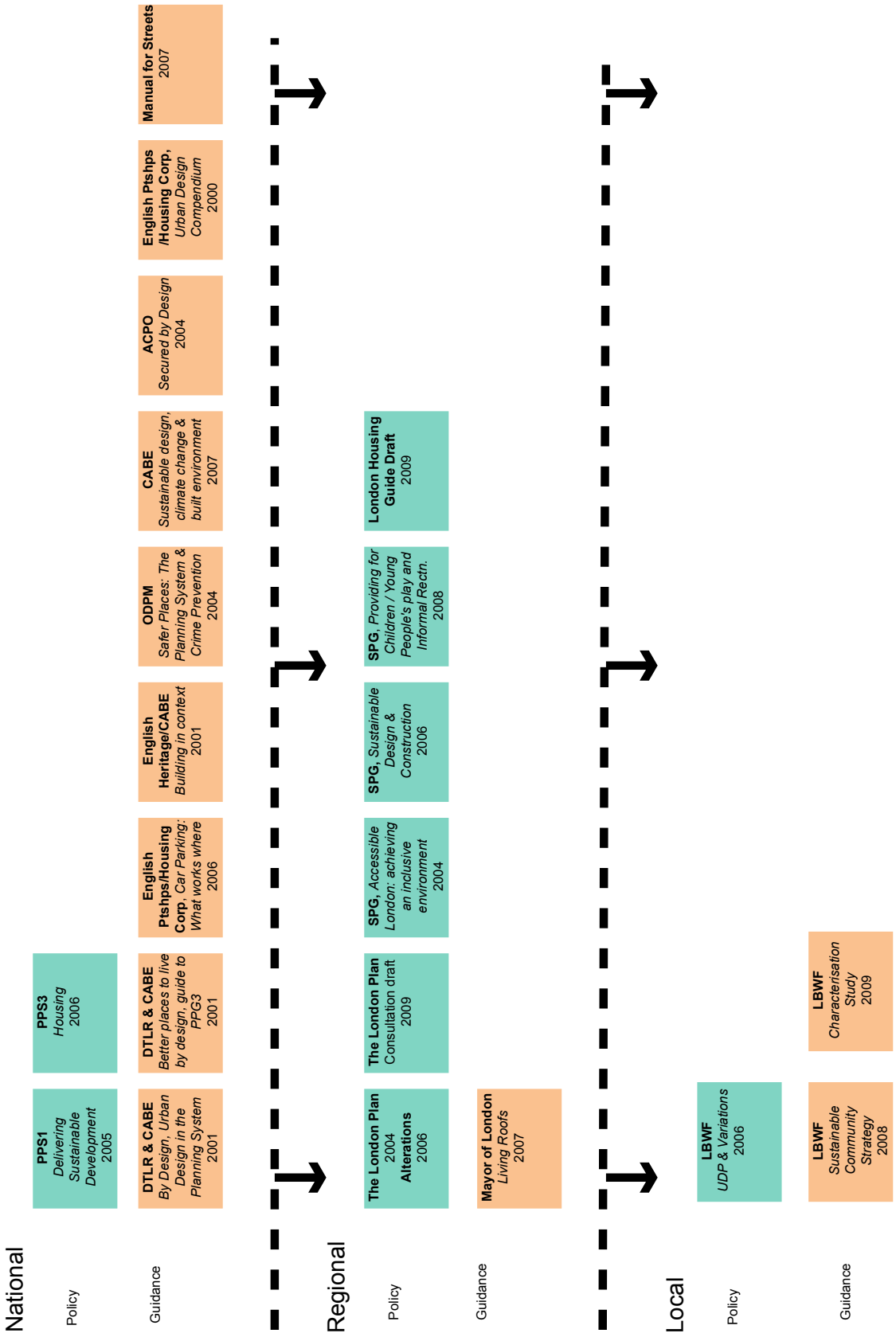
Appendices

Appendix 1 - Planning Policy Background



Appendix 2 - Site Assessment Checklist

The following list provides a general check of items to consider when appraising a site. Not all the items listed will be relevant to all sites, and conversely the list may not be exhaustive.

Context appraisal

- **History**. Consider history to help understand why the site/area has developed as it has. This may provide inspiration for the design of the site.
- **Linkages**. Locate surrounding road networks and see how the site relates to those. Consider how the site links to public transport and cycle networks. The character of these routes should also be established taking account of street proportions, blocks patterns and consider their quality. Identify any barriers or strong boundaries which might limit integration between the site and its surroundings.
- **Landmarks or other legibility cues**. Identify important buildings and/or landmarks which may provide a visual clue for routes and reinforce important views from the site. Also identify any other existing nearby activities, patterns of use or areas of visual character which could be used to make the development more legible with its surroundings.
- **Uses and activity**. Establish what the surrounding land uses are. Also consider whether the area is busy throughout the day or night. This will relate to the site's proximity to local services and transport interchanges, to the intensity or density of surrounding area and the surrounding building uses. It would also be useful to ascertain what the behavioural characteristics of these areas are.
- **Open space**. Understand how the site relates to open space, parks or wildlife corridors. This will enable designers to compliment and enhance existing habitats
- **Public consultation**. This should ascertain what local people value about the place and how it can be improved. It will help you understand who the users of the development will be. Public consultation can understand the perceived problems of an area and what is the local image of the place is.

Analysis of site and immediate surroundings

- **Designations or protection orders**. Check whether the site is in a conservation area or if any of the buildings on or near to the site are listed. Also whether there are any protection orders on trees, vegetation or habitats. Also check whether the site is in an Archaeological Priority Zone. Details on designations for a particular site can be found in the Council's Unitary Development Plan.
- **Legal restrictions**. These could include wayleaves, easement strips, or rights of way that cannot be built on.
- **Services**. Ascertain the location of any services as they may affect the layout or cost of development.
- **Townscape**. Things to consider will include the local building forms, scale, massing and height; the local vernacular, materials, detailing, fenestration, texture, and colour; the

roofscape character and how proposals will affect the skyline. It is also important to consider building rhythms and whether they are strong; any gaps in rows of buildings and whether this is a strong characteristic of the street.

- **Intensity of character**. Consider the quality and intensity of the character. Where the character is not cohesive or is undesirable a more modern or creative response could be provided.
- **Views**. Consider views into and out of the site and also the skyline.
- **Natural features**. Look at the sites topography and understand how this will impact on development. Consider other natural features of the site such as rivers, open space, existing trees (including their spread), other vegetation, and microclimate (which areas of the site are the most sunny, are any areas of it particularly windy).
- **Access**. Understand where the existing access points are to the site.
- **Interesting features**. Identify whether there are any features on site that are not formally protected, yet which could be retained on site to give character and identity.

Appendix 3 - Building for Life Criteria

The following text has been taken from the Building for Life website www.buildingforlife.org/criteria

Environment and community

01. Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs or cafes?

Creating successful residential areas is about much more than just providing opportunities for homes that respond to people's needs. It is about providing a framework within which communities can grow.

Appropriate community facilities and services, such as open spaces, crèches, day-care and health services, local pubs and other places for residents, are important in this framework. Large developments or schemes in urban areas should include facilities that help meet the needs of the area. Services benefit from being close together so planning should allow for this in areas with greatest access.

Consulting the local community can help make sure that plans reflect community needs as well as encouraging local people to get involved in making decisions about their neighbourhood. For smaller developments, features that might help unite the community could include play areas, a gym and health facilities. If facilities are not provided within the development, the layout should make sure people have easy access to nearby facilities.

02. Is there an accommodation mix that reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community?

Neighbourhoods are more successful when they avoid large concentrations of housing of the same type. A good mix of housing types and sizes is important in creating a basis for a balanced community. Even comparatively small developments can have a wide mix of types of property. Also, a mix of housing types and uses can create more attractive residential environments with greater diversity in building forms and scales.

A mix of accommodation provides opportunities for communities where people can move home without leaving a neighbourhood. A well-designed neighbourhood will provide accommodation that meets the needs of single person households, small and large families as well as offering live-work possibilities.

However, the mix needs to be designed and managed carefully. Layouts should aim to reduce possible tensions between families, older people and students for example by considering the different activities of these groups and maintaining privacy between them.

03. Is there a tenure mix that reflects the needs of the local community?

We can create neighbourhoods that cater for various socio-economic groups by having a mix of housing tenure. This includes providing social and privately rented accommodation, shared ownership properties and houses for outright sale.

A poor mix of housing tenure, if continued across a number of developments, can lead to a social imbalance and result in unsustainable communities. A large development should have the full range of tenures. For smaller developments, the tenure provision should support the existing mix of the area or introduce new tenures if necessary.

The percentage of affordable housing should be based on an assessment of the area in question. Successful development fully integrates the tenure mix, avoiding differentiation between individual dwellings and parts of the scheme based on their tenure.

04. Does the development have easy access to public transport?

Proximity to good public transport and facilities (see criterion 1) is essential in reducing the number of car journeys and making a place more accessible to a variety of groups. An effective way of achieving this is to link new housing into existing transport infrastructure, such as a railway station, tram route or bus service.

This will vary from place to place. Environmentally friendly travel plans, car pooling, car clubs and other management-led solutions should be considered as part of an overall car strategy. For smaller developments, public transport connections within a 400-metre radius or five-minute walk would be sufficient.

05. Does the development have any features that reduce its environmental impact?

With growing concern about climate change, building for sustainability is a necessity. Choices about where to build should be influenced by the resources and sustainability of a site. New solutions need to be explored that promote sustainable development, and should be considered from the start when doing risk assessments for land.

There is a wide variety of ways that housebuilders can reduce a scheme's effect on the environment. This question relates to the overall development where site-wide environmental approaches have been adopted (environmental design for individual houses is covered in criterion 20).

The code for sustainable homes lists the following measures:

- using alternative and renewable energy schemes
- promoting recycling
- using sustainable drainage systems
- reducing construction waste

- prioritising brownfield development
- increasing biodiversity.

Character

06. Is the design specific to the scheme?

The design of individual homes and entire neighbourhoods should be specific to the client's brief and the context, based on an understanding of the way the local area looks and works. This is part of a strong design process.

Good design is about offering solutions that allow us to build and live more efficiently. It is not about style. A good design should make best use of the land, provide value and create successful places with character, variety and identity.

The overall look and feel of a new development should be considered in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.

07. Does the scheme exploit existing buildings, landscape or topography?

Few development sites come as empty blocks of land. Many have existing buildings and some are rich with archaeology or important natural environments. In some cases, buildings are listed or within conservation areas. In others, preservation orders apply to some trees.

New housing should respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture. Historic environments and local landmarks can help give a neighbourhood a strong sense of identity, attracting residents and investors.

A design that reflects and improves the site and its surroundings will help create a sense of character. It does not have to copy the style of surrounding architecture to belong to an area, but may benefit by responding to the scale and materials of surrounding buildings, the aspect of the site and particular views.

08. Does the scheme feel like a place with distinctive character?

Successful places tend to be those that have their own distinct identity. How a neighbourhood looks affects how residents feel about where they live. Character and quality help increase community pride. The ability of a scheme to create a sense of place greatly depends on the quality of the buildings and the spaces around them. This not only needs architecture of a high standard but a strong landscape strategy. It is about character, identity and variety.

A design with character needs to be supported by strong ideas. These ideas may be about reflecting contemporary society and culture or about responding to local patterns of

development and landscape.

09. Do the buildings and layout make it easy to find your way around?

A housing development should have a clear identity and be easy to understand for residents and visitors. A neighbourhood that is easy to get around tends to feel safer and more secure. It will have a clear network of streets, courtyards and alleyways that are interesting, welcoming and people-friendly. This network should link to existing routes and developments.

Navigation can be improved by creating landmarks and focal points, views, clear routes, gateways to particular areas, lighting, works of art and signs.

Layouts such as cul-de-sacs with winding roads and the same types of houses can make it more difficult to get around; they also encourage car use rather than walking or cycling. Corner buildings should be treated with particular care as they are often a useful way of giving directions and helping people to find places. Looking at a sectional drawing through a neighbourhood will help identify the change of scale and heights at key points in the layout, such as junctions or public spaces.

10. Are streets defined by a well-structured building layout?

Streets, homes, gardens, places for leisure and parking must be carefully arranged. A successful layout should be characterised by a framework of interconnected routes which define 'blocks' of housing, open spaces and other uses. Streets, squares, courts, mews, circuses and avenues are tried and tested layouts which can successfully achieve this.

Streets work well if there is a clear definition of the public and private realm. This can be achieved by arranging buildings to follow a continuous line and by creating active edges with doors and windows opening onto the street, which also increases surveillance.

Design should start with the arrangement of buildings. Footpaths and roads can then be included in that arrangement, and within the wider neighbourhood structure. Generally, buildings should be positioned along and around public spaces, with small blocks that offer architectural variety and frequent entrances along the street.

Streets, parking and pedestrianisation

11. Does the building layout take priority over the streets and car parking, so that the highways do not dominate?

The building layout should be the priority in any new housing development. Buildings of the appropriate size, proportion, shape and layout will help create well-defined streets and spaces, which are attractive and user-friendly, improving residents' quality of life.

In many recent housing layouts, more thought has been given to streets and car parking than to the arrangement of the buildings and the quality of the spaces created between them.

The rigid application of highway engineering standards for roads, junction separation distances and turning circles can create an environment which is unpleasant and difficult to use, especially for pedestrians. Streets and parking facilities should be designed to improve the usability and feel of an area but not to dominate it.

12. Is the car parking well integrated and situated so it supports the street scene?

Car parking is one of the most difficult challenges in housing design. Discussions between planning authorities and developers should be influenced by a realistic assessment of likely patterns of car use as well as alternative options for parking. In many cases, a mix of parking will achieve the best results.

At roughly 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare, limiting parking squares and courtyards to 10 spaces will help avoid visual dominance. On-street parking can bring activity to the street and have a traffic-calming effect. Car parking should be designed into the scheme, making sure that the fronts of properties are not dominated by cars, and that there is a good relationship between houses and the street.

In denser developments, experience suggests that where commercial viability and conditions allow, on-street parking combined with well-managed below-building parking provides the most satisfactory solution. Where possible, below-building parking should be efficiently designed to free up more space for attractive streets and more shared public areas. Any development should avoid large areas of unsupervised garage court parking.

13. Are the streets pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly?

Streets are the most used form of public space and they need to be designed to work well for us all. Pedestrians and cyclists need routes that are safe, direct, accessible and free from barriers. Places with low speed limits are safer and can be achieved through the careful treatment of surfaces, junctions and crossings. In a low-speed environment, pedestrian, vehicular and cycle routes need not necessarily be segregated.

Homezones use materials, textures, patterns, furniture and good planting to divert and slow traffic.

For busier streets with fast traffic, cycle routes and pavements should be clearly defined.

A good streetscape will offer direct connections and crossings that are convenient and easy to use. It should be well lit, feel safe and make it easy for users to find and follow a route.

14. Does the scheme integrate with existing streets, paths and surrounding development?

New housing does not exist on its own. Streets and footpaths should be connected to existing routes and neighbourhoods, creating a district that is accessible and easy to get around. A well-designed development should be easy to get to and move through, making the most of existing or proposed facilities in the area. This needs streets, footpaths and public spaces which link into well-used routes.

A seamless network of routes and public spaces will help create a community that includes all residents.

Safe access points into and through the development increase opportunities for walking and help reduce our reliance on cars.

Designing well-connected layouts depends on the local context (including local security issues) and how the development relates to existing areas. Plans of the surrounding area are useful because they show the continuity between new and existing development.

15. Are public spaces and pedestrian routes overlooked and do they feel safe?

Design has a crucial role to play in creating places that not only feel safe, but are safe. Developments should be planned in a way that makes sure buildings overlook all public spaces, roads and footpaths to increase surveillance.

Windows and doors opening onto all streets and footpaths can provide greater security for users. Bay and corner windows will provide views in different directions, as well as bringing more light into homes.

Blank gable walls facing onto public spaces should be avoided. Street lighting needs to be carefully considered to cover all vulnerable areas. Light levels need to be fairly even throughout developments.

Design and construction

16. Is public space well designed and does it have suitable management arrangements in place?

The space around buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. Any development should be able to provide some public open space, whether it is for children's play and adventure, or for reflection and learning. If this is well designed it will result in a pleasurable place that will be popular and well used. This brings with it economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits.

Good public space is usually planned for a particular use. Too often, public space is the area left once buildings have been planned. This can lead to undefined areas with no specific use.

17. Do the buildings exhibit architectural quality?

Architectural quality is about being fit for purpose, durable, well built and pleasing to the mind and the eye. Good architecture works well for its intended use. Housing design should be well thought through and cater for the residents' needs. From the design of the exteriors and interiors to the surrounding landscaping, planners, developers and design teams should ensure that a significant proportion of home-buyers have their spirits lifted by what is on offer.

Good architecture is less to do with a particular style and more to do with the successful co-ordination of proportions, materials, colour and detail. Windows need to be arranged to look good but also to work for views and light inside the home.

Details need to be considered as an important part of the building and not as an add-on. Particular care should be given to corners, roof lines and how the building meets the ground. These have a significant effect on the overall impression of a building.

18. Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion or extension?

A well-designed home will need to take account of changing demands and lifestyles of the future by providing flexible internal layouts and allowing for cost-effective alterations. Housing should be able to respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

The main consideration is adaptability. For houses, the design could accommodate a downstairs toilet, wider doorways, level entrances and allow for a lift or stair lift to be fitted in the future. The potential to extend back or upwards, or to open up between rooms to allow open-plan living, is valuable, as is garden space and the space to allow a conservatory to be added.

For houses and apartments, if outside walls carry structural loads this allows for partitions to be added or removed inside to suit the owner's needs. And if rooms are big enough to allow them to be used in a variety of ways, for example, as a work space, study, bedroom or playroom, this adds flexibility.

19. Has the scheme made use of advances in construction or technology that enhance its performance, quality and attractiveness?

Advanced building technology can contribute to the environmental performance of a home, reduce defects in construction, improve health and safety on site, and increase overall efficiency. It has been shown that using modern methods of construction, up to four times as many homes can be built with the same on-site labour, and on-site construction time can be halved. Modern methods of construction include a variety of build approaches and products, covering off-site manufacturing and innovations in process and the way people work.

Examples of systems that are considered as advanced forms of construction include prefabricated elements such as 'thin joint blocks' (glued brick panels), fast track foundations or advanced methods of cladding. They may involve more substantial forms of construction such as tunnel form (concrete formed units) or precast concrete panels, timber or steel panellised wall units and floor cassettes or volumetric construction (also known as modular construction) of kitchen or bathroom pods or even entire apartments fully fitted prior to installation on site.

20. Do buildings or spaces outperform statutory minima, such as building regulations?

Features such as generous space, good natural light, energy efficiency and good sound insulation can greatly improve the popularity of a home and the quality of life for the people who live in it. Well-designed homes will excel in some, if not all, of these areas. This should not be achieved at the expense of the overall design quality of the scheme.

Good space standards contribute to the long-term flexibility and future proofing (able to accommodate changing lifestyle demands) of a home.

For various aspects of building performance, including energy efficiency, the higher levels of achievement listed in the code for sustainable homes is the relevant reference point.

Good sound insulation between homes is important, especially for schemes where there are lots of houses close together. The biggest effect on privacy is sound coming through dividing walls.

Appendix 4 - How to write Design & Access Statements

What is a design and access statement?

A design & access statement is a concise description of how a design for a particular site has been developed and explains what a developer/applicant is trying to achieve. The amount of information required will depend on the size and/or location of your development, and you may find it useful to include images or plans to help explain your design rationale for the proposed scheme.

Why is it important?

A design and access statement allows the Council's planning officers to see that design and access issues have been properly considered as part of your application for development. The statement is also placed on a public register to help the public or other interested parties understand your design.

When do I need to do one?

Generally when you submit a planning application or if you apply for listed building consent. You do **not** need to do one if:-

- The application is for a house extension that is not within a conservation area
- You are only applying to change the use of a building
- You are only applying for engineering operations (i.e. for road access, bridge building, etc)
- You are applying for an advertising hoarding
- The application is with regard to a Tree Preservation Order
- You are applying to store hazardous substances.

What should be included?

A statement should be concise, to the point, and in simple language. It must explain your design and access aims and set out principles which will guide further detailed design. A model statement is available on the Counci's website at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/design-access-statements-guidance27mar07.pdf.

The statement should be divided into the following headings:-

1. **Context**
   This describes how your development will fit into the area. It should include an assessment of the site and surrounding area, evaluating aspects such as history, landmarks, uses and activity, open space, designations or protection orders, legal restrictions, townscape (i.e. local building forms, scale and massing), views, natural or other interesting features, etc. You should then explain how these findings have guided your design decisions.
   You should also explain how the proposed development will affect people in the locality,

and, if appropriate, what contribution it might make to the local economy. It is also important to identify who you have or will be consulting, and how any outcomes have or will guide your decisions. You should also identify any design policies or documents that are relevant in guiding your design decision.

For listed building consent you need to explain how the design and access will preserve or enhance the building's historic and special features and the building's setting.

2. Use

This identifies what your development will be used for (i.e. housing or retail) and your argument as to why this is a good use for the location. This is not required for listed building consent.

3. Amount

You should explain how much will be built on site (i.e. the number of houses) and why you think this is an appropriate amount for the site. This is not required for listed building consent.

4. Layout

Here you should explain why the layout shown in the application has been chosen. For example, why buildings have been placed where they are; why they face the way they do; how the design might help in reducing crime; why entrances are where they are; and how these relate to levels, public and private space, existing buildings, and features.

5. Access & Inclusion

This part of the statement should cover two points. The first is the general movement to and through the site and its buildings. The second is how people will be able to use the site (for example, where the roads, walkways, doors and so on will go, and then how accessible they will be in terms of levels, colours, lighting, markings, sizes, surface finishes, handrails and so on).

6. Scale

Here you state how big the buildings will be (height, width, and length) and explain why you think this is appropriate for the site and wider location. You should also explain how the development relates to the human scale, for example the size and location of windows or the width of doors.

7. Landscaping

Here you explain what the purpose of any landscaped areas are (i.e. to create a natural habitat, provide a garden, etc) and how they work with the buildings. You should also provide detail and give reasons for choosing particular paving, planting, seating, etc, or if you have not designed these yet set out your principles for designing them. This is not required for listed building consent.

8. Appearance

Here you explain what the buildings and spaces will look like (i.e. the style, the colour, the materials, etc) and why.

9. Climate change

This is where you show how your development will impact on, and take account of climate change. This will include:-

- How you will keep energy use to a minimum during construction (such as buying materials that are manufactured locally) and how you keep it to a minimum when the development is up and running (for example by installing energy efficient boilers)
- Reducing emissions (for example by creating a development that reduces the need for car travel)
- Including renewable energy systems (making power on site), such as solar panels, wind power, etc.

This is not required for listed building consent.

10. Maintenance & Management

Here you should show you have considered any long-term maintenance and management issues in respect to the building(s), landscaping and access.

Where can I go for further information?

Department for Communities and Local Government - *Circular 01/2006 Guidance to Changes to the Development Control System*
Tel: 0870 1226 236
www.communities.gov.uk/pub/715/Circular0106DCLGGuidanceonChangestotheDevelopmentControlSystem_id1500715.pdf

Department for Communities and Local Government - *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development*
Tel: as above
www.communities.gov.uk/pub/806/PlanningPolicyStatement1DeliveringSustainableDevelopment_id1143806.pdf

CABE- *Design & Access Statements - How to Write, Read and Use them 2006*
Tel: 010 7070 6700
www.cabe.org.uk/AssetLibrary/8073.pdf

Appendix 5 - Internal Space standards

Minimum floor areas

These floor areas are consistent with Waltham Forest's Dwelling Conversions Interim Planning Policy Adopted November 2009.

General Size Standards (square metres)

Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minimum Internal Dwelling Area (square metres)	37	44	57	67	81	92	105
Cooking, eating and living (Kitchen/ Dining / Living) areas (excluding any utility area or space taken up on plan by staircases or hallways/ corridors connecting these areas.)	22	22	24	27	30	33	36

Bedroom Size Standards (square metres)

Size of bedroom by type (minimum sizes)	
Single bedroom	7
Double twin bedroom	12

Room Dimensions (metres)

Minimum Room Dimensions (at the narrowest/shortest point)	
Living Area	3.2m
Double/Twin Bedroom	2.6m
Bedroom Length	3m
Habitable Rooms	To be no longer than twice their width, or no wider than twice their depth (i.e. the ratio 2:1 not to be exceeded)

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