



design guidance

ACHIEVING QUALITY IN RESIDENTIAL LAYOUTS

September 1997



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL



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Design Guidance

Achieving Quality in Residential Layouts has been prepared in the context of the emerging Bedford Borough Local Plan and is 'Supplementary Planning Guidance'. It has been revised to take account of the results of public consultation and was adopted by the Planning & Transportation Committee on 18th September 1997 for the purposes of development control.

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The production of this Guide has been coordinated by the Borough's Chief Architect in conjunction with members of the Planning Policy Team. Particular acknowledgement is given to Margaret Gawn for her invaluable contribution on graphics. The assistance of colleagues in other sections of the Borough Council is also acknowledged.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

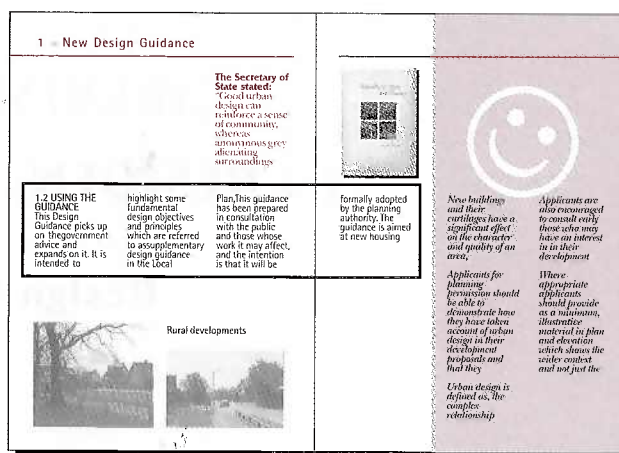


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1 – New Design Guidance



1.1 NEED FOR NEW DESIGN GUIDANCE

The Secretary of State for the Environment is seeking to encourage development which respects local distinctiveness and takes full account of urban design principles. The recently published PPG1 (revised) emphasises that applicants for planning permission should be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of urban design in their development proposals and that they have had regard to relevant development plan policies and supplementary design guidance. Bedford Borough Council wishes to emphasise its commitment to new housing developments of good and enduring quality, which will be good places to live in, will sit well in their context, and will be valued by residents and surrounding communities. This guidance is produced as Supplementary Planning Guidance in support of policies included in the emerging Local Plan. It also forms part of an initiative created by the establishment of the “Bedfordshire Local Authorities Design Forum” which seeks to improve the quality of design in all new development in Bedfordshire.

GOVERNMENT ADVICE:

PPG1 (revised) makes it clear that design considerations are a legitimate concern of the Planning Authority. Good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and should be encouraged everywhere. Good design can improve the quality of the existing environment and can help secure public acceptance of necessary

new development. New buildings and their curtilages are matters of proper public interest. The appearance of proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are therefore material planning considerations. Such considerations relate to the design of buildings and to urban design. The publication of 'Quality in Town Centres' in 1994

indicated that the Government placed a high premium on design quality and in the case of housing placed a high premium on more choice for the consumer. A clear understanding is needed about what constitutes a sense of place and community. The Government document 'Quality in Town and Country' indicates that the principles of the urban village can

New urban development
which respects local distinctiveness



New urban development
which sits well in its context



be applied to edge of town development. It recognises the fact that many towns and villages have areas which have character and are clearly distinctive, often with their own focal points or open spaces which help to create village 'feel', whether urban or rural. The Government intimates that there is no universal blueprint for applying this concept, but the

principle of dealing with large scale development on the basis of a series of villages or neighbourhoods, is a good one. Its advantage is that it builds on the experience of communities to ensure that urban structures are sufficiently small and coherent to give residents a pride and sense of place.

1 – New Design Guidance

The Secretary of State stated:

“Good urban design can reinforce a sense of community, whereas anonymous grey alienating surroundings can isolate the individual. A depressing environment destroys local pride, attracts crime, deters investment and leaves people feeling powerless.”

1.2 USING THE GUIDANCE

This Design Guidance picks up on the government advice and expands on it. It is intended to highlight some fundamental design objectives and principles which are referred to as supplementary design guidance in the Local Plan. This guidance

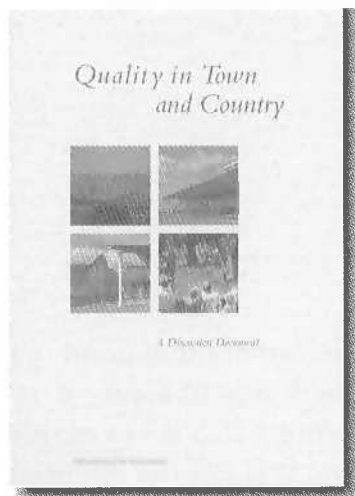
has been prepared in consultation with the public and those whose work it may affect, and has been formally adopted by the planning authority. The guidance is aimed at new housing development generally, whether in the rural or urban area. It deals with various

criteria to promote housing design with local distinctiveness and enduring quality. It is the Council's intention to produce further and more specific guidance on historic areas, small infill developments and residential extensions.



New rural village developments reflecting local distinctiveness



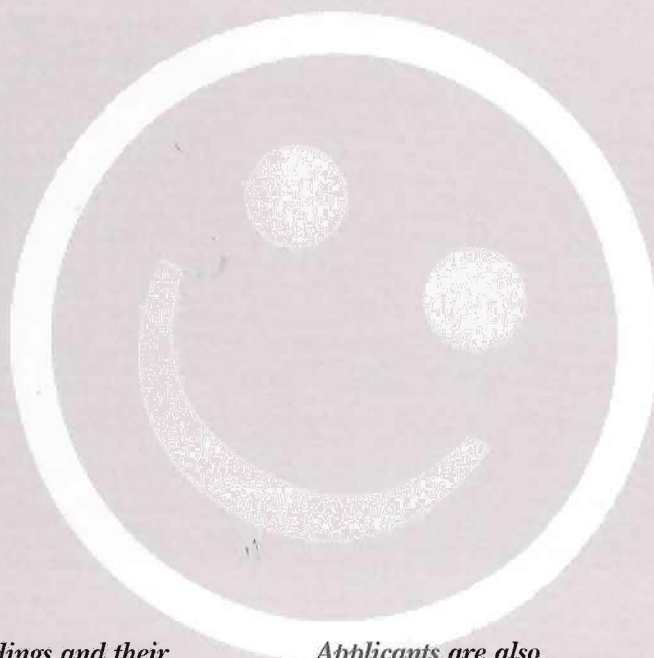


The Government has reinforced the need for greater attention to be paid to urban design in the recently published PPG1 (revised). It emphasises the following:

New buildings and their curtilages have a significant effect on the character and quality of an area. They define public spaces, streets, vistas. They affect the local sense of place.

Applicants for planning permission should be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of urban design in their development proposals and that they have had regard to relevant development plan policies and supplementary design guidance.

Urban design is defined as the complex relationship between all of the elements of the built and unbuilt space.



Applicants are also encouraged to consult early those who may have an interest in their development proposals. This accords well with the Council's policy of giving pre-application advice.

Where appropriate applicants should provide as a minimum, illustrative material in plan and elevation which shows the wider context and not just the development site and its immediately adjacent buildings; together with a short written statement setting out the design principles adopted.

2 – What Has Gone Before

2.1 LEARNING FROM THE PAST

What is essential is that we learn from and understand the qualities inherent in good environments created previously, and use these basic principles to design to meet modern needs, so that we improve the situation in the future. We must also try to ensure a better harmony between new settlements and their surroundings. It is not the intention to be over romantic about the past, many homes were squalid and badly built. Nor is it intended to recreate copies of older settlements. Poorly executed pastiche not only devalues itself but the original.

2.2 TRADITIONAL HOUSING

Most traditional housing was an integral part of settlements where people lived, worked and traded and had a mix of operations and uses. Neighbourhoods were often a dense and vibrant mix of uses and activities. The relationship between built form and spaces is one of the key elements which gives them such strong visual character and appeal.

The character of our towns and villages also stems from the availability of local building and structural materials together with the craft and customs of our forefathers in reacting to local conditions. Homes for the majority of people were simple and honest, most were in terraced form, providing shelter and

Physical connection and
unifying materials / design



A strong
sense of place



security. These settlements had a sense of order and overall integrity, much of this due to the physical connection of the separate elements of the built form. The restrained use of materials also helped unify the environment. The relationship between built form and spaces is one of the key elements which

gives them such character. Most settlements retained a sense of order despite a somewhat haphazard building process. Many of these settlements had a hierarchy of external spaces which were generally contained by the built form. This created a varying visual pattern of small and large spaces, hardness and

softness, enclosure and openness, surprise and certainty, all created by the built form, and the spaces between and around it, creating a rich and attractive environment. In the better examples streetscenes tend to be punctuated by changes of scale and proportion in the built form at strategic points, adding to the interest and local identity. Over the years trees have rooted these settlements into their surroundings. These well established trees add to the appeal and character of an area, and soften the built environment. Many of these settlements are regarded as areas of character and attractive living environments because they have a distinctive sense of place and incorporate good urban design although these qualities may not always have been intentional.



2- What Has Gone Before

2.3 MODERN HOUSING ESTATES

The large housing estate has evolved through the latter part of this century, and there has been a tendency to cramp inappropriate developments in to small or infill sites. Rising car ownership and town planning zoning policies have been major influences in the production of uniform housing development. This has all led to a loss of the local distinctiveness and mixed use which can be found in the best of the older traditional settlements. A return to both of these qualities is urged in further chapters of this document.

Modern technology has taken away the various constraints on construction such as ground conditions, locally available materials and building practices, and climate. A design approach has evolved over the years which has developed a culture of individuality and choice. The individual detached dwelling as an element has become the main focus of design. Nowadays the

individual dwelling tends to be well planned internally, is a well built and comfortable unit and can be obtained with a wide variety of materials and finishes. Today new housing can be built almost anywhere, with any materials, in any form, but that does not mean that it should. New building technology has revolutionised building practice, but has done little for

maintaining local or regional diversity of design. Ever increasing reliance on the car has resulted in layouts in which ease of vehicular access and road geometry have become the dominant framework around which layouts evolve. Accommodating the car in the most convenient way for each individual, ie. in the front/side garden of each property, has led

Bedworth?
Beddington?
Bradford?
Bedford?



A lack of local distinctiveness



to a rather uniform and stereotyped approach to layout design. In general terms developments have not accommodated the car in a coherent way. The quality of external spaces in much modern housing generally lacks the diversity and quality of townscape or urban design which is inherent in many older settlements. This is due not only to highway domination, but to the lack of variety in scale of both buildings and the building plots they sit on, and to the lack of diversity in land use, and in many cases to a lack of space for large scale tree planting. The expression of individuality on almost every

dwelling seems to outweigh any consideration of the coherence and sense of place which would be gained by developments with more restrained use of local materials and details. This has resulted in a general loss of local distinctiveness. Housing need not be like this. New technology should enable developers to design for the future, not just for individual needs and convenience, but with respect for the locality and some of the more desirable influences from the past. The need for local identity and the creation of a sense of place is just as important today as it has been in the past. With just a little more design consideration and effort it

is possible to create communities in which each dwelling is designed to respect and relate to its setting, its neighbours and its locality. Each dwelling should be not just a home for an individual or family, but should form an integral part of a clearly identifiable place to which the residents can relate to naturally. The relationships between the built form and external spaces must be carefully designed to promote residents' sense of belonging beyond their personal domain, to create a wider sense of place, which they see as their own community. Successful places have both local distinctiveness and a sense of community.

3 – Know the Site and Its Setting

3.1 CONSIDER THE EXISTING COMMUNITY

New developments should respect the needs of others who will be affected by the development.

It is essential that new development adjacent to existing settlements integrates well with these and provides adequate and suitable links between them. New developments should reflect local or regional distinctiveness. The

impact of travel needs consideration and efforts should be made to reduce the need to travel and reliance on the private car. A variety of residential needs may affect existing communities and should be considered, including

transport implications, support for local convenience shopping, the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and people with limited mobility and/or resources.

3.2 EXISTING GRAIN OF DEVELOPMENT

This is one of the most important criteria to influence design. The design challenge is to work with the existing grain of development and not against it, to take the best qualities of what exists and interpret these into the new development in a contemporary way. The design of new developments should take some significant points of reference from the setting and location, and incorporate these into the new designs, preferably in some innovative way. The scale of new development should respect the scale of any nearby, existing settlements, and should relate to them in a sympathetic way.

This guidance is intended to encourage genuinely innovative forms of development, as well as more conventional and traditional schemes. Either approach should respect and blend into their surroundings. It is **not intended** to recreate replicas of older settlements, the folly of such an approach is expressed well in the quotation by William Morris *"Pastiche is a poor and lifeless forgery"*. 'Theme park architecture' or cosmetic applications of 'styles' from bygone eras will be positively discouraged. The cosmetic

application of materials or details will also be discouraged. Having previously carried out a thorough site and context analysis, the information gained needs to be assessed and local distinctiveness identified. The fundamental design principles which will shape the new development and relate it to its setting can then be established in order to reinforce and enhance the character of existing settlements. Settlement patterns will vary from rural, semi-rural to urban and may be building or landscape dominated, or a mix of both.

Linear



Static



Informal



Formal

NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD

*Reinforce and enhance
the character of existing
settlements.*

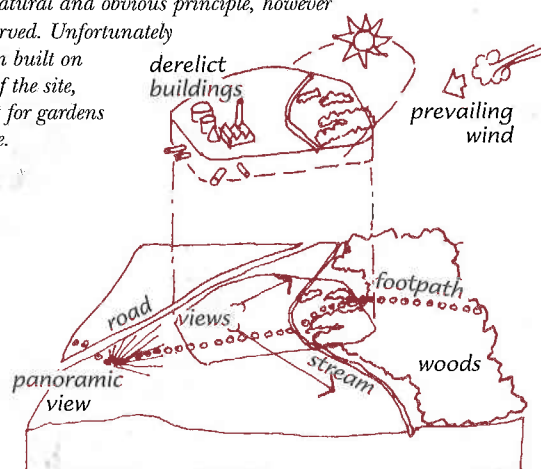
*Respect local
distinctiveness.*

*Respect the scale of any
existing settlements.*



3 – Know the Site and Its Setting

Site repair - In his book "A Pattern Language" Christopher Alexander promotes the idea of site repair. He believes that buildings must always be built on those parts of the land which are in the worst condition, not the best. Leave those areas which are the most precious, beautiful, comfortable and healthy as they are now, and build new structures in those parts of the site which are least pleasant now. Once stated, this seems such a natural and obvious principle, however it is rarely observed. Unfortunately houses are often built on the best areas of the site, leaving the rest for gardens and open space.



3.3 CAREFUL SITE ANALYSIS

Each scheme must be based on a thorough understanding of its development setting, whether urban, edge of town or rural. The starting point for any development process is to be aware of where the site is, what it is, and how it relates to its setting, to ensure that the development respects its setting.


Any development should harmonise with and reinforce its surroundings in a sensitive way. The first step must be a detailed study of the physical context, so that subsequent designs can exploit the natural benefits of the site in the most suitable way. A full understanding of the site and its surroundings is essential before proper design principles can be established. Many new developments will be an extension or intensification of an existing

settlement and it is essential that such developments reinforce and enhance the character of such settlements. Essentially the grain of development and character of long established local settlements and their buildings, open spaces or landscape forms should provide a source of inspiration for the design of new development. Many villages and suburban areas are ordinary, unassuming and without architectural merit, however the

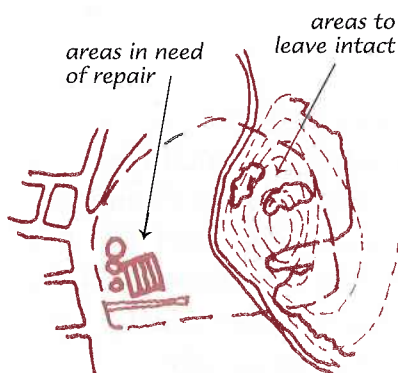
integration of new development into such quiet unobtrusive areas should still be handled carefully and strong contrasts avoided. In some locations where there are no local settlements then the influence should be regional. Local distinctiveness may simply stem from creative layout and conception of 'places' with high townscape value in areas where there is no existing built environment, however some reference to existing local context or

3.4 DEVELOPABLE SITE AREA

Because of criteria identified through the site analysis, some parts of a site may need to be reserved or protected from built development. The density calculations referred to in Chapter 6.4 should only be applied to net developable areas.



Gross site area	+
Tree belt	-
Existing trees	-
Existing hedge	-
Green wedges	-
Extend park	-
Access corridor	-
Flood park	-
Junction impr.	-
Net dev area	=



character is preferable, even if not from immediately adjacent settlements. Where a well designed scheme evolves in this situation it may well set the framework for character and distinctiveness for any subsequent development in the area.

The concept of net developable area needs to be established at the outset of a project. Close regard must be given to establish areas which are to be excluded from any density calculations.

PREPARE A SITE ANALYSIS

How the site relates to the overall settlement pattern.

How it relates to the local neighbourhood.

Physical characteristics.

Topography.

Existing buildings on or near the site.

Edge conditions.

Physical features, roads, railways, rivers, pylons etc.

How the site is viewed from surrounding areas.

Important vistas from the site.

Conservation of landscape, vegetation and wildlife features/corridors.

Pedestrian, cycle and vehicular movement into, around and across the site.

Microclimate, sun track, prevailing wind.

History of site, former uses.

Wider community, existing amenities and facilities.

Any sources of noise.

Consider effect on farming.

Consider future compensatory works and maintenance needs of flood plain watercourse.

EXCLUDE FROM NET DEVELOPABLE AREA

Protected areas and features such as trees.

Areas defined as open space and areas required for significant planting.

Community facilities.

Local Areas for Play (LAPS), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS) & Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPS).

Distributor roads and major access roads.

4 – A New Approach

4.1 OTHER VIEWS

National Planning Policy Guidance strongly advocates that local or regional distinctiveness should be taken into account in the design of new housing, that the concept of the Urban Village should be pursued where possible and reliance on the private car should be reduced. The Countryside Commission recommend in CP 501 & 502 that it is good practice to take account of local character in new development. 'This Common Inheritance', a Government White Paper, advocates that environmental considerations should be taken into account comprehensively and consistently.

'Urban Villages' published in 1993 states "It is a sad paradox of our age that we know and instantly recognise the kinds of towns and urban neighbourhoods we like to be in, but so seldom find in 1990s Britain. For most of us, our living, working and in many cases leisure environments are in towns or parts of towns developed or redeveloped in the last 50 years.

In all too many cases they lack most of the qualities we think of as ideal. What are those ideal qualities? Easier to recognise than describe, and easier to describe than prescribe with any precision. Neighbourliness (but not too much of it); some trees and greenery; a harmonious but diverse architecture, with occasional buildings that

Local character
in new development



Countryside Commission
publications



stimulate as well as delight; a clear legible layout relating to topography – disciplined, but not too much so. These are not places engineered for a single use, age or social group. They give a cross-section of people – families and single people of different ages – the chance to live there if they choose to. The very variety of residential, commercial and

community uses and activities taking place round the clock gives them vitality; it also brings a sense of security and conviviality. They also have the quality of sustainability. The people there have a commitment to caring for their community; neighbourliness leads to a degree of self policing; the usefulness and value of buildings survives changes of

function and fashion; they are flexible enough to adapt to new uses rather than stand empty and blight their surroundings."

Such Urban Village ideals should be the aim of all large scale developments, but clearly such broad aims cannot be achieved on small or infill developments.



Innovative creation
of strong identity

4 – A New Approach

4.2 A REALISTIC APPROACH

In 1990 the Royal Institute of British Architects and the House-Builders Federation seminar took place and the following extracts from the seminar discussion paper 'Good Design in Housing' are still relevant aims. These are considered to be fundamental objectives of this design guidance to achieve developments which

have a sense of place. The seminar produced some basic objectives and guidelines which set out a hierarchy of design priorities as highlighted opposite. It is essential that layout design input takes full account of and relates strictly to this priority order. All further chapters reflect these priorities.

RIBA/HBF Design Aims:

"We need to reproduce the charm of existing settlements in a new way. We must create a variety of spaces and not allow the car and road to dominate."

"We want new designs with vigour, clarity and authenticity, twentieth century designs which also respect local building tradition, materials and details."

The shape of development





NEW DESIGN PRIORITIES

1st PRIORITY

The shape of development and the spaces within it.



2nd PRIORITY

The choice of materials and details.



3rd PRIORITY

The individual dwelling.

4 – A New Approach

4.3 SUSTAINABILITY



4.4 NEW DESIGN CODE

Strong identity and sense of place



The Council is engaged in Local Agenda 21 activities. It is framing policies which promote and incorporate the principles of sustainable development for implementation. The Council wishes to see sustainable principles adopted in all new development.

Contemporary housing schemes can successfully meet the modern living requirements of individuals and families, whilst at the same time incorporating additional urban design qualities related to the whole development and its setting. Schemes will be encouraged which reinforce local distinctiveness and the following design code.

ENCOURAGE

Development which incorporates energy efficient design principles both in layout and detailed design.

Layouts designed to minimise the need for car journeys.

Layouts which relate well to public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes, and which maximise such provision.

House designs which achieve energy conservation in terms of materials and construction method.

DESIGN CODE

Developments should have a strong identity and sense of place.

Developments should integrate well with the landscape and surroundings.

Good access to work, amenities and surroundings should be provided.

Schemes should provide easy orientation and direction for residents and visitors.

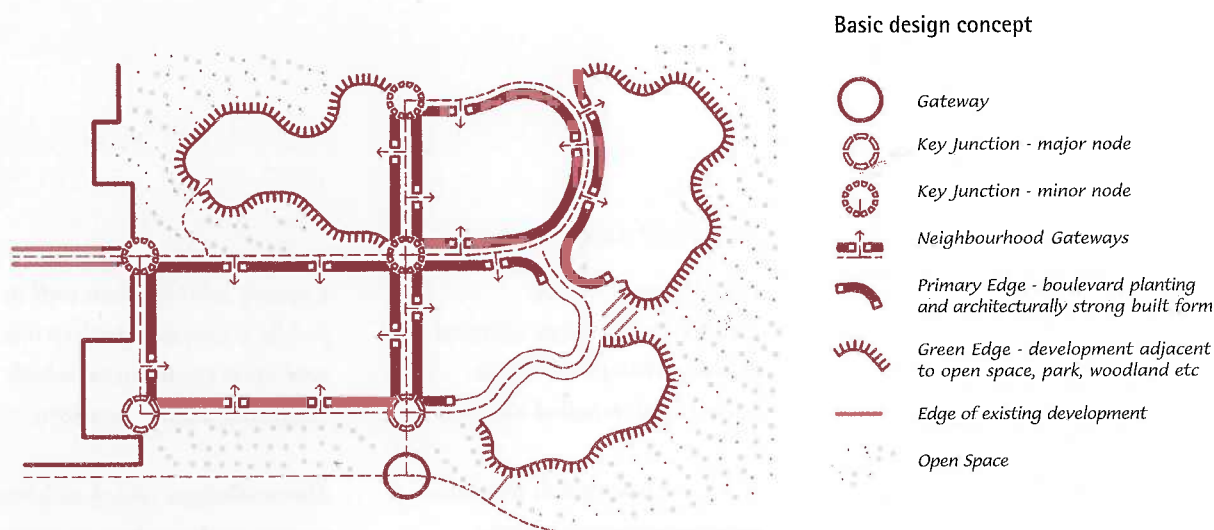
A secure and safe living environment should be created.

Developments should add to the quality of life for both new and existing communities.

Developments should be based on sustainable principles.

Schemes should have a full mix of dwelling sizes.

Large scale development areas should be based on the 'Urban Village' concept.



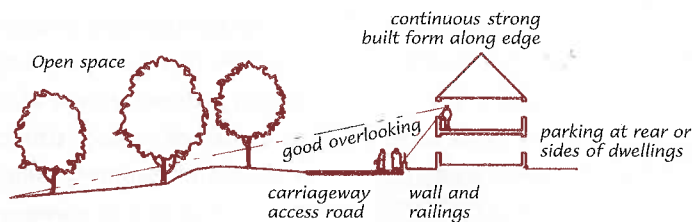
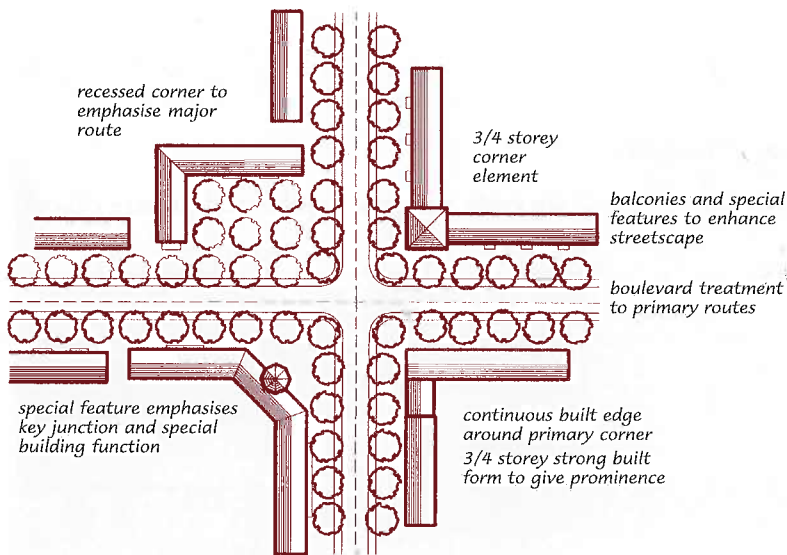
5.1 DESIGN and LANDSCAPE CONCEPT

A strong design philosophy does not necessarily mean the production of an over elaborate scheme. It must achieve a sense of place either in terms of relating subtly to existing developments, or by setting new standards of character and local distinctiveness which would create a basis for any further development. Good design is always based on a set of clear and relevant principles. It is beneficial to have these set down at the outset of the design of a housing project together with an overall design concept drawing which illustrates the design approach to both built form and landscape. This should include how 'places' will be created, probably by enclosure, which areas will be landscape dominated and which will be building dominated, formal or informal, how different buildings and spaces will compare and contrast, where feature buildings will be located and how the landscape structure influences and integrates with the scheme. The application of these principles is considered essential in the formulation of a successful planning application.

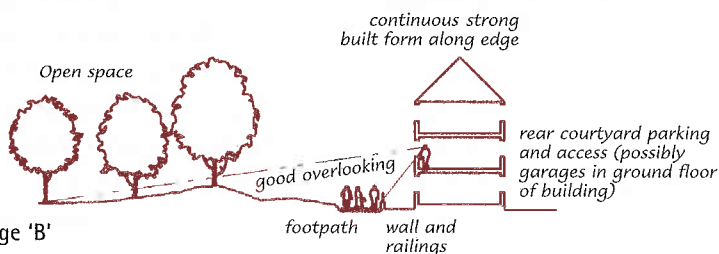
All good design stems from having a very clear vision of the desired form of the finished design at an early stage, and also of holding fast to the basic principles on which this concept is based throughout the design development process. The setting out of these principles in both written and drawn form is not

just a useful design tool, but can act as a benchmark to measure the success of both the evolving and final designs. It is the Council's policy to give pre-application advice and the early submission of a concept drawing will be encouraged, as this can only be mutually beneficial.

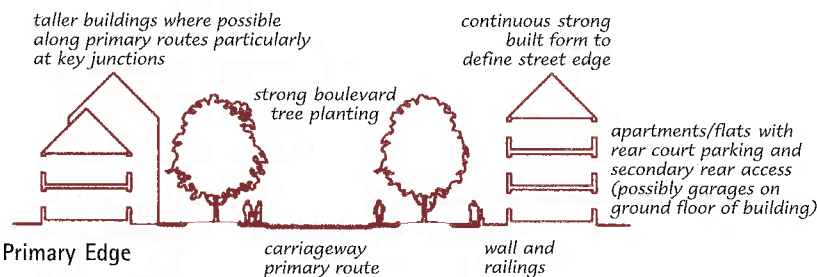
Architectural treatment at key junctions



Green Edge 'A'



Green Edge 'B'



Primary Edge

PREPARE A CONCEPT DRAWING TO ESTABLISH A STRUCTURE FOR ACCESS, BUILT FORM, SPACES AND LANDSCAPE

Relationship of built form and open spaces to existing or future settlements, features and countryside.

Identify important views in and out of the site.

Spatial organisation, and basic structure of landscape.

How best can existing trees and landscape features be incorporated.

Which spaces are landscape dominated and which are building dominated.

Circulation patterns and links inside and outside the site, pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and include wildlife corridors.

Proposed landmark or feature buildings.

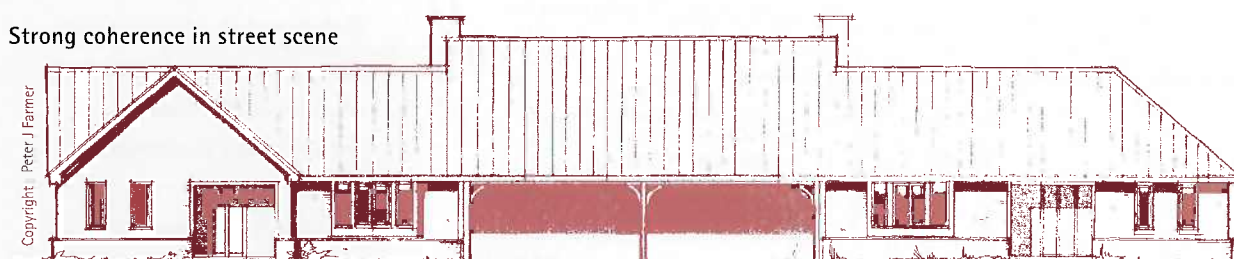
Indications of variety in car parking strategy.

Treatment of exposed edges of development.

5.2 CREATING PLACES THROUGH ENCLOSURE

Dwellings should be grouped to create and enclose strongly defined public and private places.

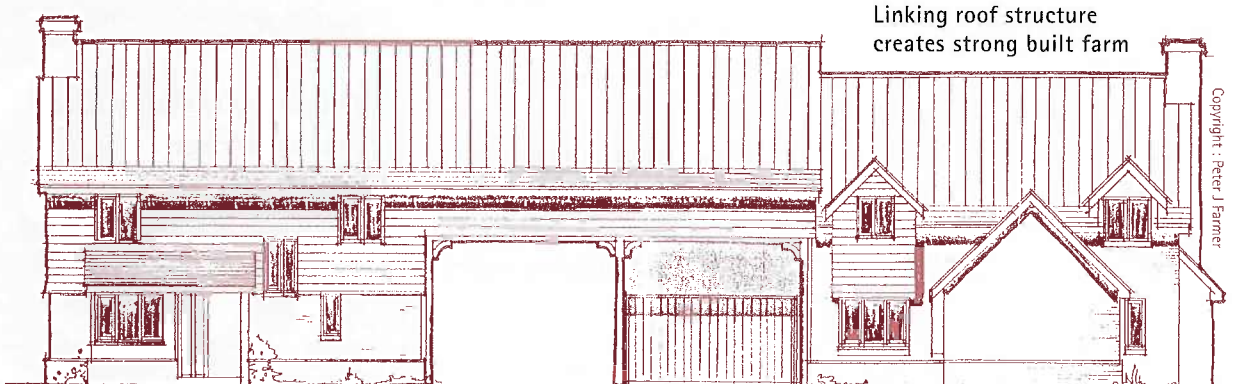
Strong coherence in street scene



One of the main characteristics of successful settlements is the combination of well defined public and private spaces. The home can be private and personal, as is a fully enclosed garden. The street, the square and park are where people rub shoulders in public, converse and join in outside activities. The need for enclosure is a basic human instinct. At a personal level people prefer to sit down in places with some form of demarcation. Indoors this might be at a table in a corner, by a pillar, or in an alcove. Outside this might be under some trees, by a

rock, or beside a pond. Externally, people react best to places with strong boundaries, where the shape of the space is easily seen. Such spaces are clearly identified and make us feel sheltered and safe. People need privacy, shelter, security and a sense of belonging not just within their own home, but within the greater whole of their local group of dwellings and other places within their estate. It is highly desirable to create well defined and contained places which establish a sense of identity and community, rather than just an assortment of individual homes. Places can be

created by enclosure of spaces. Enclosure can be achieved by carefully considered use of buildings, linking roof structures or structural planting. Walls can also be used to give a degree of enclosure, however this is in strict relation to the height. The use of low walls will have no material effect. Where low walls are used in conjunction with high railings, this will give definition to public realm/garden boundaries but will not significantly add to the enclosure of the street, but would add interest. There are many opportunities within housing developments to connect buildings



Linking roof structure creates strong built form

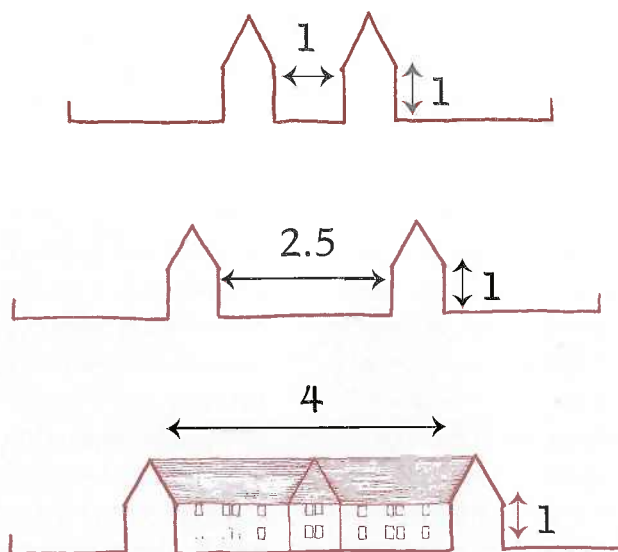


to contain spaces and add to the overall character. Applicants will be encouraged to demonstrate the quality of streetscenes or relationships to existing developments by the production of street elevations. This will be essential in important or sensitive locations within a scheme.

Enclosing private spaces by linking buildings



Enclosure ratios



ENCLOSURE RATIOS

There is a general consensus amongst urban designers that to contain streets (linear spaces) successfully, the ratio between height (eaves) to width should be between 1:1 and 1:2.5. The proportion for squares (or static spaces) should be 1:4.

Serious consideration does need to be given to containment of spaces by buildings or trees. Whilst it is not intended to apply such ratios in prescriptive detail, they provide a useful benchmark at both conceptual and detailed levels and regard should be given to them.

5.3 LANDSCAPE OR BUILDING DOMINATED SPACES?

One of the most important elements in determining a sense of place is the quality of the external spaces and how they are defined. The most attractive built environments have external spaces which generally are either defined or contained by buildings, or are more open and defined or dominated by large scale landscape elements such as trees. Terraced or linked building forms are more appropriate to building dominated spaces, whilst landscape dominated spaces can be less well defined.

The context will influence the type of spaces in some developments but others may be establishing development patterns and the character of spaces will need to be determined. To achieve any sense of place a conscious decision needs to be made on each external space as to whether it will be landscape or building dominated. It should be noted that it will not be acceptable in

the main to have more or less parallel rows of buildings which are too far apart to be building dominated, but do not have sufficient front garden space to allow large scale planting to dominate. Careful reference should be made to the enclosure ratios shown on page 25 which provide a useful but basic benchmark for the containment of spaces by buildings in schemes which are

not demonstrably landscape dominated. One of the simplest ways of achieving variety in a sequence of spaces is to create a mixture of landscape and building dominated spaces, where it is appropriate to do this. It should be noted that landscape dominated spaces can only be achieved at very low densities, which allow adequate space for large scale trees to mature without detrimental

5.4 SHAPING A SPATIAL HIERARCHY

Each development should be designed as a sequence of public and private spaces with a clear order of importance, easily understood by both residents and visitors alike. Careful consideration should be given to edges of development, and to creating variety in scale and massing within the scheme, in an appropriate way.

Our level of comfort in a place is strongly linked to our sense of direction, which is dependent on getting obvious clues about orientation from our surroundings, and being able to recognise the difference between one place and another. Developments which fail to address this need will not be acceptable. Layouts will be strongly

discouraged which comprise collections of individual units, with a wide variety of built forms and/or styles arranged in close juxtaposition at uniform spacings along service roads, or have ill considered left over spaces shaped in the main by highway geometry rather than the built form. A good environment can be readily understood as a series of

linked but easily understood places, with their own individual character and identity, and reflecting local or regional characteristics. In new developments the shaping and linking of a series of places needs careful consideration. These should vary in levels of importance within the whole scheme and each should have its own clear identity.

Landscape dominated street



effect on adjacent dwellings or gardens. Good building dominated spaces are more likely to be created successfully by using wide fronted house types near the front of plot, in mainly terraced or linked form and with car provision at the rear. It is very difficult to create enclosed spaces using mainly detached houses with garages at the front or side, as the space leaks away visually through the gaps.

Building dominated street



Well defined village green



Well considered development edge



Well defined urban edge
to development



5.5 FEATURE BUILDINGS

A series of visual ‘incidents’ or feature buildings marking the passage from one place to the next will add further character to both the individual places and the greater whole.



Feature buildings add character



Emphasis of important location within a scheme adds character and liveliness to the streetscene. Changes in building height and form to create feature blocks and landmarks at key locations will be encouraged. The linking of several separate units into a single large and distinctive building form, the use of a house type which ‘turns the corner’, the location of a well designed and proportioned garage block, or well positioned combinations of terraced and detached houses to form gateways or pinch points, can add to the definition of routes through the scheme. This approach will require the introduction of a few non standard house types which can provide particularly unique and desirable homes which perform specific townscape functions. The quality of the environment in new schemes should be enhanced by good townscape, with pinch points, vistas, feature buildings, glimpses and linked spaces. It must be understood that not every building can be a feature building and that

generally an overall sense of place, unity and coherence must take priority over attempts to give each dwelling its own individual style or attempted expression of architectural individuality.

Creating a sense of place is desirable and the use of standard house types with cosmetic changes in details or materials as feature buildings will not be encouraged, as these details are fairly meaningless in terms of giving definition to a place. Significant changes in scale and massing will be more successful generally. Directions to a visitor such as "turn left at the 14th detached house with the leaded porch roof, then right past the 20th detached house with the tile hung gable", will be of little benefit, and do not really describe a place. Much more meaningful and descriptive of place would be something like, "go through the 'new farm courtyard', turn left at the 'big manor house', then turn right along the narrow lane just past the town houses".

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR SHAPE OF DEVELOPMENT

CONSIDER

The shape and containment of each external space.

Will the space be building or landscape dominated.

Refer to enclosure ratios to get the right balance between the height of enclosure and its width.

Good townscape, with pinch points, vistas, feature buildings, glimpses and linked spaces.

Cohesive street elevations.

Avoid unplanned gaps by carefully positioning dwellings.

Creating meaningful variety in the width of buildings and use of semi-detached and terraced forms.

Design strong, well defined building groups to create positive public spaces.

Maintain a disciplined building line, using set backs or projections to emphasise strategic positions or local highlights.

Use of appropriate non-standard house types.

Minimising some front gardens to a depth of about 2 metres, this can often give the right balance between privacy, surveillance and containment of the public domain.

Using gates, railings or fences on front gardens to give strong boundary treatment.

Low maintenance costs for communal open spaces.

AVOID

Domination of car parking provision.

Large windswept public spaces.

Uniformity of spaces in the public realm.

Regular minimal gaps between buildings.

Detached dwellings on small, out of scale plots.



Trees and landscape 'rooting' dwellings into their environment

5.6 AN INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE

Buildings and landscape should form part of the same integrated design, with landscaping having a clear function within the scheme. The careful integration of existing landscape within and near new schemes can enhance character and 'root' schemes into their surroundings in a natural way.

The quality of external works, both hard and soft has a major effect on the success of a scheme. Schemes are often let down because external works were an afterthought or simply because of a lack of landscaping. The impact of landscaping can be particularly critical in residential schemes which are made up of a series of individual detached houses. The capability of good landscaping to

5.7 LINKS

Every opportunity must be taken to link public places within and beyond the site, to create straightforward routes for residents and visitors. However there is an equal need to create places which are naturally policed, secure for public gatherings and safe for play.

Link separate elements together for integration and containment

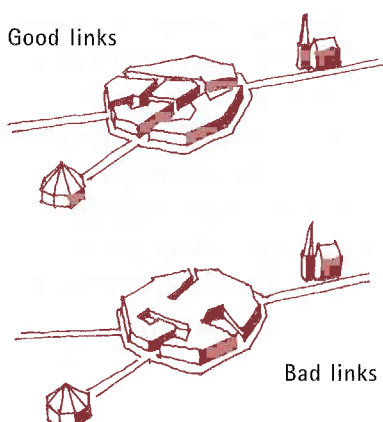


Traditional towns and neighbourhoods are permeable. Their streets, squares and courtyards are connected to each other to form a network allowing easy passage and route finding. This creates an integrated and seamless settlement.

Road safety and pedestrian priority are essential. Whilst some degree of external traffic movement within a site is essential, so is the prevention of rat runs or short cuts through a residential environment. Whilst segregated cycle/footpath only links are to be encouraged it is essential to ensure that these are 'policed' by natural surveillance.

bind individual elements together should be a key consideration in developing designs. Where structure planting is an essential part of a scheme, sufficient space is needed to allow for future growth of large scale tree planting which will eventually visually break up the rooflines. Some of this space might be at the rear as well as the front of dwellings.

Good links



Bad links

This requires a high level of natural overlooking and the creation of animated streets and public places. Great care is needed to minimise potentially easy escape routes for criminals.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN SHOULD HAVE A CLEAR FUNCTION WITHIN THE OVERALL SCHEME

Both hard and soft materials need sensitive consideration and have a positive design role to play.

Bring landscape 'up' to the dwellings by use of climbing plants, level changes etc.

Bring dwellings 'down' into landscape by elements such as porch supports, garden walls, or low sections of roof.

Integrate or 'root' dwellings into their environment.

Provide clear definition between different space types using walls, railings, fences, hedges, changes in surface materials.

Consider natural landscape.

Tie separate elements together, groundscape, garden walls, pergolas and other structures can provide a physical link and achieve containment.

Integrate existing mature trees within and near scheme.

Use trees to create or strengthen containment, form gateways, mark events in the hierarchy.

Define and create safe areas for outdoor play and informal assemblies.

Consider use of native landscape species.

Consider development edge treatment.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Integration is achieved by making strong links such as streets leading into the existing network.

Connect public places in a simple way to create clear well defined routes.

Consider links and access to the countryside.

Create new landmarks within the site to demarcate through routes.

Position routes to take advantage of views beyond the site, focusing on local landmarks.

Use pedestrian/cycle only links but ensure there are good levels of surveillance from surrounding properties.

Careful positioning of features or events along routes.

Creation of new wildlife features and corridors.

5.8 SECURED BY DESIGN

Careful thought at design stage can directly and significantly reduce the opportunities for anti-social behaviour, crime and fear of crime.

Good layout design is essential to create a sense of place, which helps to create collective ownership and appreciation of local environment, develop community spirit and encourage residents to extend their level of concern beyond their own property. Generally large housing

areas should be designed to create a variety of small identifiable places, or house groupings where strangers can be identified. It is desirable to avoid through routes within new housing areas, however in some locations links to existing communities, or where other strong

desire lines are created, a degree of permeability is necessary, as is the case in traditional town centres. Where through routes are unavoidable they should be kept to a minimum. There are 3 essential elements to consider when designing to prevent crime:



Good surveillance from bay windows

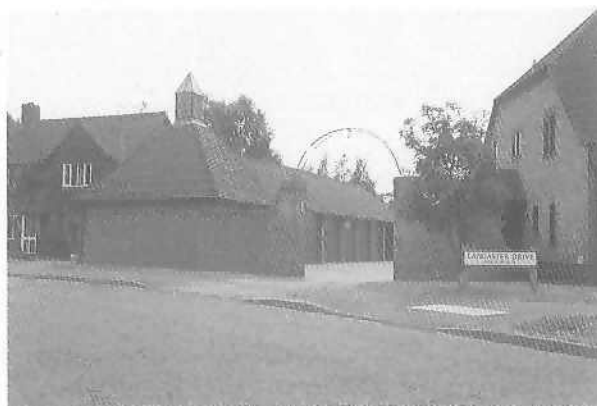
COMMUNITY CONCERN

The design objective is to create a sense of place. This might be achieved by grouping dwellings around small courts or culs de sac, or to streets, squares or crescents etc, where people can relate easily to their neighbours and are concerned about them. If the dwellings contain and create a clearly identifiable place, which residents can relate to naturally and which gives them a sense of belonging, this will help to promote residents' sense of concern beyond their personal domain to what they perceive as their own community.

Natural surveillance of through routes



Symbolic barriers and overlooking



THE CREATION OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE

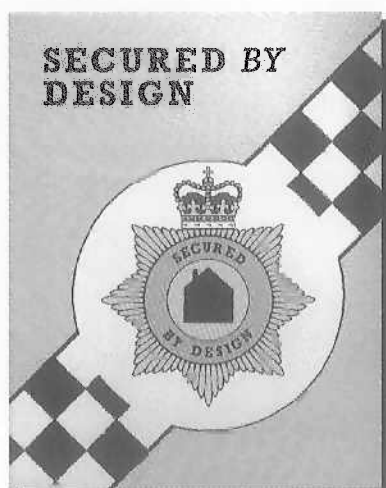
Defensible space can be described as the defined area which residents can control to some extent. Access by the general public should be limited to as few routes as possible and should not be next to private areas. Various types of space are defined as private, semi-private, semi-public and public. These are important definitions and all but the last can be accepted readily by residents as defensible spaces if they are well designed, have clear boundary definition, and are easily recognised as having communal if not private 'ownership'. A good example of this would be communal rear

access footpaths to gardens of mid-terrace properties, with access only from an 'internal' ground floor passage, as frequently found in Victorian terraced properties. Similar principles could be applied to small communal car parking/garage areas, where the entrance is well defined by a 'gateway' and clearly demarcates a semi-public space to give the impression to casual passers by, that it is 'private space'. Such definition would strongly discourage casual entry. Situations where public space adjoins private space should be avoided.

NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

Clear views from homes are essential so that observation is made easy and direct access is also needed to enable a high level of control. A mixture of different house types and sizes will be encouraged to gain maximum surveillance benefit from occupation throughout the day. Where permeability is essential, where public through routes pass through 'a place', or where there are some areas of public car parking, a high degree of direct supervision from adjacent house windows, and also direct access from the dwellings is needed to increase the risk of detection and to minimise the risks of crime. A buffer of semi-private space or a strong boundary to private areas will be important.

There are four types of external space, each of which has an important role to play in the residential environment.



PUBLIC SPACE

is available for all to enjoy and is made up of roadways, footpaths, grass verges and walkways, as well as traditional public squares and parks. Public space supports activities such as car parking, walking and play areas.

SEMI-PUBLIC SPACE

is normally used by a restricted number of people and is space that is not within the ownership of a private individual but has a degree of privacy or exclusiveness which would inhibit its use by non residents. For example, a short enclosed cul-de-sac.

The sequence of space types is confused with private space adjoining public space

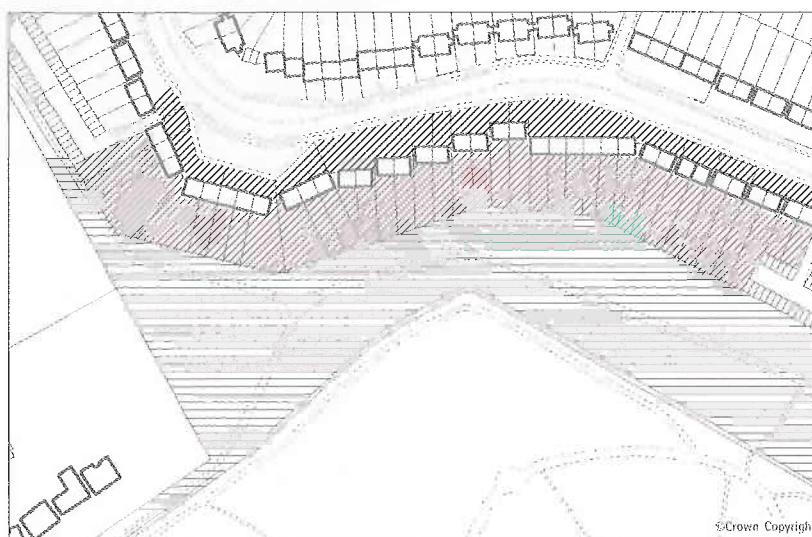
Public space



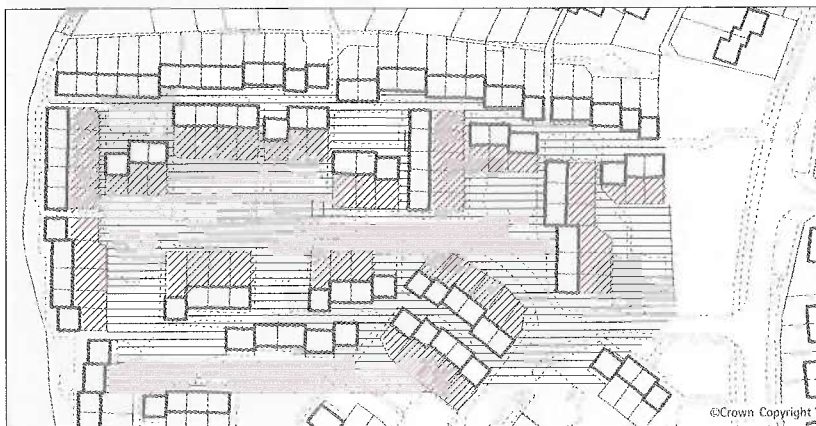
Private space



Semi-private space



In this case dwellings have turned their back on the street/public areas, creating a conflict between public and private space. This leads to a poor quality environment



SEMI-PRIVATE SPACE

acts as an 'interface' between public and private space. It contributes visually to the public areas of the street while at the same time allowing a degree of policing to be carried out from within the property. It is usually space that is privately owned and takes the form of front gardens but is not useable as private space because it is overlooked.

PRIVATE SPACE

should be for the benefit of the occupiers of a property only and will normally be that enclosed in rear gardens. Private space supports more personal activities such as eating outside, gardening and sunbathing and should not be easily overlooked.

A typical perimeter block layout with the hierarchy of spaces clearly defined and private space in the middle of the block



CONSIDER

Relationships of the various types of space and how to make them distinctive.

Real or symbolic barriers to demarcate different types of spaces.

Creation of places that residents can identify with and feel a sense of belonging.

Use of walls, fences and railings to demarcate front garden boundaries.

AVOID

Unnecessary through routes.

External spaces which create a public/private interface.

Creation of natural hiding places.

Public spaces which are not directly overlooked.

Public spaces with no direct access.



A safe and attractive environment

The right balance needs to be struck between accommodating the car, and promoting a safe and attractive environment for people. Housing area design must not be visually dominated by the car. Planning policy now stresses the need to encourage people to use their cars less and rely more on walking and other modes of transport.

The visual impact of the car has been catastrophic on many recent housing schemes. The spaces between dwellings have become large areas dominated by black tarmac and parked vehicles. These areas have been set out purely to

meet vehicular needs and the rigid, space consuming geometry of highway engineering. Front gardens have become little more than individual car parks. The streetscene has become so car dominated and unfriendly to

6.1 ROAD HIERARCHY

Highway considerations are a major influence on scale, townscape and residential amenity of development. The layout and nature of roads should be strongly influenced by the need to promote a sense of place and to integrate sensitively with the existing environment. Residential streets should be designed to reduce vehicle speeds rather than ease traffic flow, and to accommodate a range of modes of transport.

The geometry, scale and detail of modern highway engineering are important elements within residential environments, which can very easily destroy a sense of place unless the road design is considered carefully in terms of both basic principles and also at detailed level. Both levels need sensitive handling. Developments should not be shaped by the line of roads with dwellings echoing

Semi-public courtyard parking
at the rear but through
symbolic 'private' entrance



pedestrian use that it is no longer valued by residents as part of their public realm. It has now been recognised that highway design standards which ease the passage of the car, also serve to increase traffic speeds and

accident potential. Many households regard their car as an important possession so it is impossible to ignore the needs of the car owner. The objective must therefore be to accommodate the car but in a realistic way without

letting it dominate housing area design. Housing areas must be designed to meet the needs of people, including children first and foremost, whether or not they own a car.

these monotonously. Roads and provision for cars should be as varied as possible and the external spaces within a development should be shaped by other criteria. Both DB32 and Bedfordshire Design Guide for Roads and Footpaths allow possibilities to reduce the scale and impact of roads by giving sets of standards appropriate to varying levels and types of development.

Developers are encouraged to use roads of lower orders where this is appropriate to the setting. Large scale developments might be broken down into smaller sites to minimise the use of distributor roads. Sites approached from small streets or lanes should reflect this in the scale of development. The scale of external spaces adjacent to roads should reflect the type of road.

The lower the order of road, the more closely dwellings can integrate with it. Higher order roads require more space between them and the dwellings both environmentally and in terms of safety. Such larger scale spaces can accommodate larger scale planting to soften the impact of major roads on the housing environment.

6.2 CAR PARKING STRATEGY

A balance needs to be struck between the individuals needs for convenience and safety of car parking location and the wider need for environmental amenity and creating a sense of place. Diversity in the way car parking is provided needs careful consideration.

The standard approach to car provision has been to park the car in the front garden, and whilst this is clearly convenient for the car user, it has had a disastrous effect on the visual quality of the environment created. This approach pushes back the building line and undermines containment

6.3 CAR PARKING ALTERNATIVES

The use of gates and lighting should be a strong consideration wherever the car is parked.

WITHIN CURTILAGE

Developments with a blanket approach of open front curtilage parking will be strongly discouraged. Careful consideration should be given to various appropriate ways of screening cars parked in the front curtilage from the public domain, by planting, walls, fences, railings or raised banks. The impact of fumes and headlights should be considered, and parking directly outside a principal window will be discouraged. Parking at the rear of

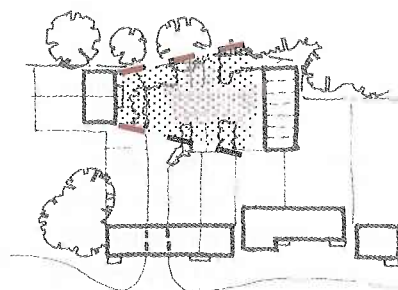
property can be both secure and reasonably convenient provided careful design consideration is given. This form can also afford the opportunity of continuous building frontage, with passageway through and a building dominated street scene. Where parking is located between dwellings the provision of garages or car ports is a preferred option to open space parking, unless the scheme is very low density and landscape dominated.

GROUPED OR COMMUNAL PARKING

This form of parking needs to be clearly visible from adjacent dwellings and should be well lit at night. Such parking generally needs to be broken down into small areas to prevent ownership and security problems. Careful design can allow the provision of such parking at the rear of properties, where access is limited through a single, well overlooked entrance. The need for direct overlooking of such parking areas from adjacent homes must also be



Use of gates



Semi public with 'private' entrance and natural overlooking

of the streetscene. It also tends to destroy integration of the individual dwelling and the public realm. A uniform layout approach with car provision mainly in this form will be discouraged unless positive measures are taken to mitigate its effect. A variety of alternatives should be considered.

Well overlooked controlled entry to semi-public communal parking



carefully considered. Areas serving only 2 or 3 dwellings and accessed via carriage arches are a good example of this. The alternative is a parking court in the public realm. The need for small areas of parking is even more acute here, as is good lighting and overlooking from the adjacent dwellings. Such areas should not be closer than 3 metres from the nearest window of a habitable room unless the parking is on curtilage.

ON STREET PARKING

This can be quite acceptable for residents, particularly in urban areas, but should be an early design consideration. Reference should be made to the Council's design guidance document, 'Traffic Calming -Streets for People. '

Attractive, well landscaped parking courtyard overlooked by adjacent dwellings



6.4 CAR PARKING DENSITY













Car parking demand is a significant element leading to overdevelopment of sites. The space needed to manoeuvre and park a car is fixed. Where car provision per dwelling is high, any rise in housing density will disproportionately increase the land take for cars.

Studies over the years have shown that a land take of about 10% for car accommodation results in the creation of well balanced and satisfactory environments, leaving a reasonably acceptable level of amenity space over the remainder of the site. Car parking densities of 70 car spaces or under per

hectare will achieve this where there is a balanced mix of houses. Maximum car density of a site is worked out by multiplying net developable area by the car density figure of 70. Whilst 70 car spaces per hectare will be used as a benchmark for layouts, exceptions to this will be possible in

appropriate locations. The car parking standards indicated in the chart below should be taken to be the maximum level of car parking required. Each proposal will be examined on its merits and a reduced requirement will be considered wherever developments are fully integrated

CAR PARKING STANDARDS CHART
based on 70 car parking spaces per hectare

SIZE OF DWELLING	CAR PARKING PROVISION BASED ON ADOPTED STANDARDS	NORMAL MAXIMUM DENSITY PER HECTARE
4 bedroom or more double garage	 4.00 car spaces	17.50 dwellings 
4 bedroom single garage	 3.25 car spaces	21.54 dwellings 
3 bedroom	 2.25 car spaces	31.11 dwellings 
2 bedroom	 1.75 car spaces	40.00 dwellings 
1 bedroom	 1.50 car spaces	46.66 dwellings 
Inner Urban Area	 1.00 car space	70.00 dwellings 

Well overlooked mews court



with good public transport and cycle networks, are in brownfield central locations or involve mixed uses and where appropriate traffic and parking management measures are included. In particular relaxations will be considered where proposals for multiple occupation meet a

particular housing need. An example of this would be student accommodation. In such locations density might also be increased. Other exceptions to car density would be where high quality design can demonstrably overcome the problems of car domination within schemes.

EXAMPLE (HOUSING MIX)

Net developable site area = 0.70 ha.
Maximum Car Density = 70 cars per ha.
Maximum no. of cars allowed = 70×0.70

Maximum number of car spaces = 49

Housing mix wanted =

- 2 no. 4 bed houses (double garage)
- 4 no. 4 bed houses (single garage)
- 7 no. 3 bedroom houses
- 5 no. 2 bedroom houses
- 3 no. 1 bedroom houses.

From the car parking standards chart work out the total car provision which this mix will give:

- 2 x 4.00 car spaces = 8.00
- 4 x 3.25 car spaces = 13.00
- 7 x 2.25 car spaces = 15.75
- 6 x 1.75 car spaces = 10.50
- 3 x 1.50 car spaces = 4.50
- Total no. of car spaces = 51.75**
- Max. no. of car spaces = 49.00**
- Excess = 2.75**

Reduction of 2.75 car spaces is necessary. Taking out 1 no. 4 bed (single garage) house will reduce car provision by 3.25 car spaces and dwellings by 1.

Revised total of car spaces = 48.50.

Such a reduced mix would fall within the maximum limit, and into the acceptable car limit of under 70 car spaces per hectare.



PRINCIPLES TO ACCOMMODATE CARS

Use the lowest possible category of road.

Minimise through routes.

Balance between convenience and environmental needs.

Avoid car domination of the general environment.

Secure and overlooked parking areas.

Include variety in location of parking and garages.

Major roads/housing interface needs careful design.

Car parking density should generally be no more than 70 car spaces per hectare.

Refer to Chapter 3.4 with regard to net developable area.

7.1 TRADITIONS IN BEDFORD BOROUGH

It is essential that new development takes account of local character. There is no specific Bedford style but there is a rich mix of styles within the area, dependent on the location. This creates a strong need for developers to identify and respect local character.

Modern interpretation
of traditional details



The diversity of styles ranges from the stone built villages to the north, through predominantly brick areas including the predominantly urban forms in Bedford itself, to timber framed houses in Elstow in the south. It is not possible to deal with all of these in this guidance. However, when considering a specific site careful identification of local

characteristics will be needed to ensure that the new development makes some form of design reference to the existing traditions. This is essential to reinforce and enhance local distinctiveness.

The criteria on pages 44 and 45 give an indication of some established local traditions, it is not intended that all of these will

Strong tradition of vertically proportioned windows



Coherent and interesting roofscape



be applied to every scheme as hard and fast rules provided that the guidance on shaping development and controlling the car has been followed. However, in sensitive locations those criteria which are relevant to the particular locality will be applied more rigidly to ensure that proposed designs are in context and reflect local distinctiveness.

Great care is needed, particularly in developments of detached dwellings, to avoid the temptation to make each house different, differences are better expressed in careful treatment of occasional feature buildings, and between different character areas. Groups of dwellings need an overall unifying theme.

Traditional low window/wall ratio



AVOID

Boxed eaves and soffit boards.

Boxed verges with heavy barge board and soffit boarding.

Exposed soil pipes on the building facade.

Light coloured pipes and rainwater goods.

Decorative brick
and flush eaves board



Well detailed chimney as feature

TAKE REFERENCE FROM ESTABLISHED LOCAL TRADITIONS

WINDOWS AND DOORS

Good quality detailing around doors and window openings enhance the appearance of a building. A segmental arch is a low cost way of introducing a traditional feature. Brick soldier arches, brick or tiled sills, mouldings above openings can all add to a well finished appearance. There are many others.

Setting window and door frames well back from the face of the wall provides shadowing and three dimensional relief.

Traditionally the area of doors and windows in a facade did not normally exceed one third of the total wall area, whilst gable end walls had a lower ratio.

Simplicity is the key to selection of doors and windows. Avoid fussiness. Traditional openings tend to have vertical proportions. They also tend to have substantial areas of wall separating them and windows were usually subdivided so that each pane of glass was the same size, giving some rhythm to the elevation and a pleasing overall 'hole in the wall' effect. Many traditional buildings were based on a simple grid with 'window over window'. Irregular window arrangements require high levels of design skill to achieve a good balance.

EAVES

An attractive feature of many traditional cottages is their steep pitched roofs, protruding overhangs and deep shadow lines. Where an oversailing roof is used there should be a substantial overhang of at least 300mm and the roof construction should be exposed on the underside.

The alternative is to use a flush eaves detail where the fascia board is 'lost' behind the gutter. In such cases the use of decorative brick detail to express the top of the wall should be considered, such as dentil courses, recessed or projecting banding.

CHIMNEYS

Consider the use of chimneys, if not throughout a scheme then at least in selective prominent positions. Carefully consider their height and proportion. Generally follow the traditional pattern of chimneys breaking the ridge line.

A similar effect can be achieved by breaking the roofline with ventilation cowls, possibly by gathering several ventilation or flue terminals together to make a vertical roof feature.

GABLES

Where oversailing roofs are used there should be a significant overhang with an exposed roof construction. Decorative mouldings at the bottom edge of barge boards can look attractive but care should be taken to use these only where there is a strong local tradition.

If plain verges are used there should be a clean sharp junction, using either cement pargetting or proprietary profiled cappings.

Gables with parapets should only be used very selectively.

DORMER WINDOWS

Traditional dormers rarely exceed 1.2 metres in width and have near square windows, and wedge or steep pitch gabled roofs. It is better to have two small dormers than one large one, however the number and style of dormers should be in keeping with the surroundings.

ROOFSCAPE

A particular richness of character found in many traditional settlements is the overall variety of roof styles, dormers and chimneys. However, the use of terraced houses, limited roof and wall materials and similarity of window proportions, gives an overall coherence to developments.

PORCHES

These can enhance or ruin appearance. Simple gabled or lean-to roofs on simple brackets, or tying the porch roof into a nearby structure such as a garage roof can be very attractive. Fully enclosed porches need sensitive handling so that they are not out of scale with other parts of the facade.

WALLS AND BOUNDARIES

The skilful use of walls can be most effective in unifying a scheme by linking various separate elements into a whole. Hedges can also soften and integrate buildings with the overall landscape.

METER CUPBOARDS

Provide internal meter cupboards where possible, or place external meter boxes away from prominent positions. If meter boxes have to be placed in prominent positions then integrate them with an element of the building to reduce their visual impact.

EXPOSED SERVICES

Rain water goods should be discreet and should normally be in dark colours.

Flue terminals should not be positioned on prominent facades. Terminals which break the roof line should be confined to non-prominent positions or discreet ridge terminals.

LANDSCAPE

The surface treatment of the groundscape plays an important part in determining the scale and unifying a scheme and/or identifying changes of use. Consider carefully the use of flags, setts, bricks, blocks, surface dressed tarmac, planting, grass etc.

8.1 APPROACH TO HOUSE DESIGN

Individual dwellings must provide for family and individual needs but should be seen as an integral part of a greater whole. Understand the essence of local building traditions by developing an appreciation of their underlying characteristics. Draw inspiration from local characteristics, with the emphasis on contemporary reinterpretation rather than mere reproduction.

The scale and pace of house building has increased dramatically in recent times. Modern construction methods have increased the range of materials and finishes available. There has been a strong move towards meeting individual needs and giving consumer choice. The result is that much modern development is a series of detached houses, uniformly aligned and set back a car length to face the geometry of modern roads. Nowadays 'architectural expression' reflects the range of individual choices available and results in a wide variety of windows, doors, porches, materials etc. selected from consumers' 'pattern books' applied to building forms of similar massing, proportion, scale and construction throughout the country. The 'grain' and appearance of new development is markedly different from more traditional settlements. These incorporated a wide variety of open spaces and built form, whilst some buildings were variable in scale and proportion, the use of materials

was limited to those available locally and the limitation of construction methods and the use of local details gave overall coherence and local or regional character. Much of the built form was terraced and such physical linking strengthened the building mass, defined external spaces well, and added to the overall unity of the environment. Traditional settlements have a variety of building mass, scale, proportion and external spaces, but the whole is normally unified by local materials and details. Modern housing schemes tend to have no real variety in scale, proportion, building mass or shape of external spaces, but infinite variety in materials, details and elevational treatment. Local or regional character is rarely reflected in developments and this is to the detriment of 'a sense of place'. The reasons for this are understandable and reflect changes in society, technology and pace of building. However, it would only take a little more design effort to reintroduce

some of the more significant elements which contribute to local distinctiveness and use these in new developments without necessarily compromising modern day requirements. Variety of building mass can be achieved to a degree by a wide housing mix and the introduction of some 'joined up' buildings to give a larger built form in places as a feature building or landmark to mark the passage from one place to another, or as a local focal point. The use of linking walls, roofs or other devices can tie in otherwise separate buildings to good visual effect. The use of terraces to give continuity of built form and good definition of external spaces can also add to the variety of built form. Changes of scale and proportion are easier to attain in the mixed use 'urban village' situation but the larger feature buildings mentioned previously offer some scope for this as does the inclusion of a significantly varied housing mix, which may include some larger scale buildings, which might



comprise integrated small dwellings. The achievement of visual coherence can be achieved quite simply by using a limited palette of appropriate materials, colours and details. Such an approach need not restrict customisation of homes, where individual treatment of gardens, their floorscape and entrance areas leave adequate scope for individual expression, but are contained within an overall architectural framework where the local identity derives more from the 'place' than the individual dwelling.

Individual dwellings designed as part of a greater whole



Reflecting traditional form –
wide front, shallow depth, steep pitch roof



Existing chimneys and gables

New development echoing chimneys and gables above



Pronounced individuality in a dwelling is much more meaningful where it is expressed as a feature building in a specific location which can contribute to the overall townscape. This need not just be the creation of unique or unusual building forms, but can be done in a more subtle way such as creating the 'Manor House' on a distinctive plot and built to a grander scale than the neighbouring homes, although the accommodation inside may simply comprise a group of flats. It should be noted that in sensitive areas it may be necessary for the individual house or building mass to echo the local traditional shape and massing to ensure that local identity is maintained.

Buildings turning the corner



Generally houses with integral garages will not be encouraged, as garage doors become over significant elements in the elevation and are out of scale with it. There is also a strong likelihood that such garages will become used as part of the living accommodation and the car will be displaced into an unplanned area. Schemes at the upper end of the market which may comprise very large houses need particularly sensitive care to ensure their compatibility with their surroundings and usually a simple design approach will be encouraged, which unifies the scheme, either through a coherent architectural treatment or by strong landscape domination.

CONSIDER LOCAL TRADITIONS

How buildings sit on the ground.

How they are silhouetted.

How they relate to each other.

The shape of roofs.

Proportions and scale.

Materials and construction methods.

Fenestration.

Surface texture.

The degree of consistency and variation.

NEW DESIGNS

Use a mix of house sizes.

Consider appropriate dwelling shape, height, width, depth.

Create containment and hierarchy.

Overall simplicity and dignity.

Create building features to emphasise important places.

Building linkages.

Buildings to 'turn the corner'.

Buildings that relate to each other.

Continuous street frontages where appropriate.

Use of chimneys and creative roofscape.

AVOID

Standard national house types which are unsympathetic to local character.

Too many houses trying to make individual architectural statements.

Uniform alignment.

Pattern book detailing and a cosmetic approach.

Dwellings with integral garages.

8.2 INDIVIDUAL GARDENS

The size of the garden generally should be in proportion to the size of the building to provide a proper setting. Detached dwellings should normally have adequate breathing space around their plot boundaries. In landscape dominated schemes there is a need for more breathing space than in building dominated schemes. A mix of house sizes should result in a range of garden sizes. Smaller gardens should be located to benefit from the scale of more mature landscaping in larger gardens. It is important that full consideration is given to achieving good levels of privacy within the home, both in main living areas and in garden areas. Garages should be large enough to accommodate some storage provision.

Large dwellings should not be squeezed in but . . .



sit more comfortably on large plots or . . .



be an architectural entity or . . .

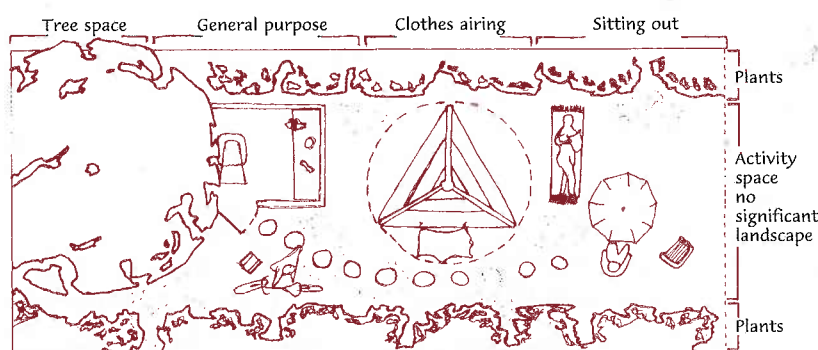


a feature building.



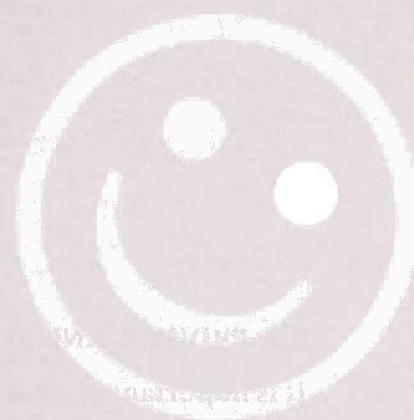
In most large developments it is desirable to have a variety of front garden sizes to allow environmental variety and the creation of different types of environment within a scheme. The now standard 6-7 metre depth open front garden does nothing for the street scene or the creation of a sense of place and its open nature makes it undesirable for garden use by the resident. Such a design layout approach leads to rows of dwellings which are too far apart for the street scene to be building dominated and does not have enough space to allow the large scale planting necessary to achieve landscape domination. Schemes based on such standard front gardens will be discouraged and schemes with a variety of front garden sizes and appropriate front boundary treatments will be encouraged.

Allow for various garden uses



Rear gardens are usually more private and much more suitable for garden activities. Private gardens need to accommodate areas for sitting out, general purpose, clothes airing, planting and gardening activities, and occasionally large scale trees. The Council's previous design guidance referred to minimum garden depths of 7 metres for bungalows and 9 metres for two storey houses, and at least 2 metres between dwellings. Whilst there is no wish to lay down minimum standards in this guidance because it encourages designing down to a minimum standard, it is very unlikely that gardens of shallower depth could accommodate all the above activities in a satisfactory way. Where tree planting is provided in gardens as part of an overall landscape structure then adequate space is needed to prevent overshadowing of both house and

garden and to allow for full growth potential. Private gardens should receive adequate levels of sunlight and daylight, and small north facing gardens avoided. There can be considerable benefits in curtailing front gardens to create a minimal defensible space protected by railings or walls as protective boundaries. This allows provision of larger and more useful rear gardens. Such an approach gives the opportunity to contain the streetscene with a building dominated form. As a general rule to equalise overall garden sizes, dwellings close to the highway should have longer rear gardens than similar sized dwellings which are set further back. Generally front gardens with car parking should be screened from the street by appropriate use of hedges, walls, railings, fences and gates, to give more privacy to residents and to add interest to the street scene.



DESIGN OF GARDENS

Most large developments should have a variety of garden sizes.

In large schemes some gardens should be big enough to accommodate mature forest trees to visually break up rooflines.

Small gardens should benefit from large scale landscape in larger gardens.

Consider use of minimal but protected front gardens.

Allow for variety of uses in private gardens.

Allow for planting space between parked cars and main windows.

Space between dwellings and between dwellings and plot boundaries should be in proportion to the size of the dwelling.

8.3 PRIVACY AND OVERLOOKING

It is important that full consideration is given to achieving good levels of privacy within the home, both in main living areas and in garden areas.

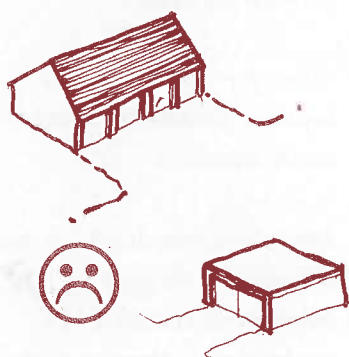
Traditionally privacy is at its highest within the home and in the rear garden. Direct overlooking can be avoided by distance, screening or careful design and positioning of windows to avoid direct overlooking. Good levels of privacy are required within the home and in private garden areas.

Where there is direct overlooking between new main windows, distances from the rear of properties from habitable room to habitable room should be 26 metres. Where there is direct overlooking between new and existing windows, then the privacy previously enjoyed by the existing

property should be given high regard. In a building dominated area where small scale secondary windows overlook, this will not be considered a problem as small windows close to public view can offer more privacy than large windows which are well set back from the street.

8.4 GARAGES

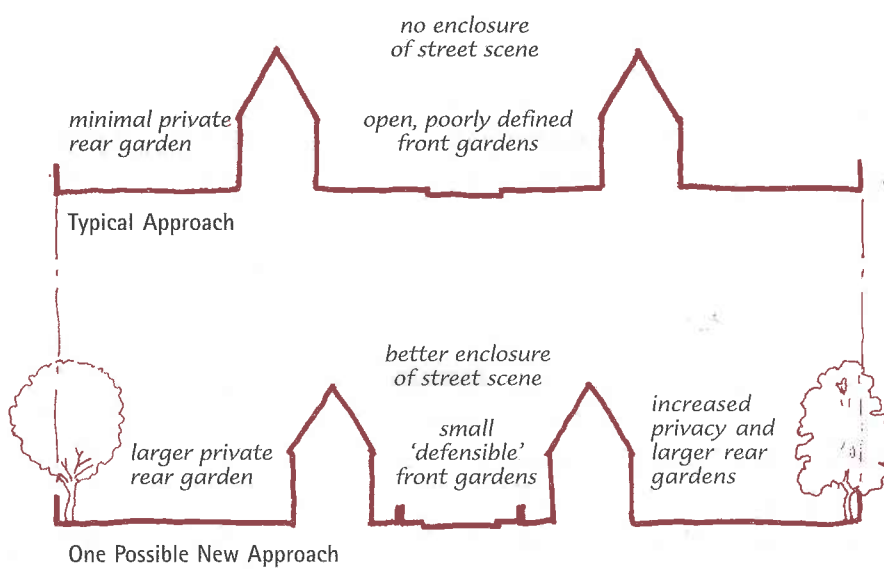
These should be large enough to accommodate some storage provision.



Various garage arrangements



Garages are often used as storage space for bikes, freezers, workbenches etc. Provision needs to be made for this or car displacement will occur into unplanned and unsuitable locations. Minimum internal garage dimensions for single garages should be 6.0 x 3.0 metres or 5.0 x 3.6 metres and for double garages 6.0 x 5.0 metres.



Small gardens with no space for landscape



9 – Appendices

9.1 EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

Cross reference should be made to various relevant policies in the emerging Bedford Borough Local Plan - Deposit Draft. The following policies relate specifically to the built environment and housing development but other policies may also be relevant.

- Policy BE35 Achieving Quality in Residential Layouts
- Policy BE36 Space about Buildings
- Policy BE37 Overdevelopment
- Policy BE38 On and Off Site Landscaping
- Policy BE39 Landscaping Schemes
- Policy BE40 Trees
- Policy BE43 New Public Spaces
- Policy BE45 Community Safety
- Policy BE48 Accessible Environments

9.2 OTHER DESIGN GUIDES

Other relevant design guides produced by the Borough Council which should be consulted are

- Car Parking Standards
- Traffic Calming – Streets for People
- Accessible Housing (Consultation Draft)
- Landscape Design Guide

10 – Acknowledgements

The Borough Council wish to acknowledge the kind help and assistance given by the following, who have made significant contributions towards the preparation of the guide:

The Guinness Trust Group

Local Planning and Highways Authorities in Suffolk

David Bradley, Design Liaison Officer, St Edmondsbury Borough Council

The Bedfordshire Local Authorities Design Forum

The Borough Council would also like to thank all those who have given constructive criticism and comments during the consultation exercise.