PLACES TO LIVE

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDE

Adopted January 2014

City and County of Swansea
Dinas a Sir Abertawe

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New residential development with open space as a focal point which helps to create a sense of place. (Portishead, Bristol)

"The quality and attractiveness of our neighbourhoods …….can have a direct impact on our health and social well being, community safety and the economy"

(Swansea Environment Strategy, 2006—2014)

Introduction

1

1.1 This guide aims to inspire, encourage and support the creation of more sustainable communities, through the application of urban design principles to new residential development. Achieving quality living environments is a national and local objective:

> *"The design of our towns, villages, cities and the urban and rural landscape is important in articulating our nation and our culture. Design is important to our quality of life, and the quality of Wales' varied landscapes and townscapes—helping to sustain a positive image for Wales"*
>
> *(Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design, 2009, paragraph 2.1)*

1.2 This guide sets out the Council's expectations for all those involved in the process of planning, building and maintaining new residential and mixed use areas. This includes architects, designers, landowners, developers, house builders, housing associations, and the many public and private agencies whose actions and operations influence the way places look and work.

> *"The Council is committed to achieving high standards of design and layout in all new developments, …. while at the same time promoting sensitive and sustainable design that …. contributes to the vitality and vibrancy of the area."*
>
> *(Swansea UDP, 2008, paragraph 1.3.1)*

> *"….. everyone involved in the design process should focus from the outset on meeting a series of objectives of good design… "*
>
> *(TAN12: Design, 2009, paragraph 2.7)*

1.3 This guide can be applied in rural, suburban and urban areas and is relevant to all new residential developments, but the main focus is schemes of ten or more dwellings[1]. It provides clear guidance and certainty, and will be used to assess planning applications for new residential development throughout the County.

> *"Design is taken to mean the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. To create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings."*
>
> *(Planning Policy Wales (Edition 6) paragraph 4.11.1)*

1.4 This is not a manual of standards to be applied without thought, nor is it a substitute for using skilled designers. Its purpose is to re-focus attention on building 'places to live'.

1.5 This document was adopted on 23rd January 2014 by the Development Management & Control Committee as Supplementary Planning Guidance linked to policies EV1, EV2, EV3, EV4 & HC2 of the City and County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan .

1.6 For advice on any aspect of this document please contact the Design and Conservation Team on 01792 637341.

[1] Please see the Infill and Backland Design Guide (which is also subject to consultation) for less than 10 dwellings

Planning and Design Considerations

Housing Audits

2.1 Surveys of residential development built between 2003 and 2006 by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) highlighted significant design failings. In 2007, The Design Commission for Wales (DCfW) warned that the general standard of house building in Wales is mediocre (Design Review in Wales 2005-07, p23). Although a number of years have now passed the general view is that the standard of new housing in Wales has still not significantly improved.

2.2 The surveys of residential development by CABE identified three specific issues in the urban design of poor schemes:

- **Place making**
- **Layout**
- **Public realm**

2.3 The Future Homes Commission (FHC) report—Building the Homes and Communities Britain Needs (2012), also highlights several deficiencies in the design of new homes. They cautioned that research repeatedly demonstrated that the typical home being built in the UK was uninspiring with too little thought given to design.

2.4 CABE and the DCfW both emphasise the need for local authorities to clearly communicate what they expect from developers, hence the preparation of this design guidance. The Future Homes Commission also highlights the pivotal role that local authorities have in providing well designed, sustainable communities.

2.5 The CABE and Future Homes Commission findings also indicate that residents living in high-quality schemes value the benefits that good design can bring both in terms of quality of their living environment and sustaining or in some cases increasing the value of their investment.

"the general standard of house building in Wales remains at best mediocre"

(Design Review in Wales 2005-07, p23).

"Opposition to housing developments is rooted in perceived poor quality, which is sometimes well founded. . . Everyone has a role to play in improving the perception of new homes."

(Building the Homes and Communities Britain Needs, The Future Home Commission, 2012, p47).

Place making

Many recent housing developments fail to create a sense of place, they do not take advantage of their surroundings or fit the local context, nor do they create a sense of identity or distinct character.

2

"We believe that a sense of place is important for communities and neighbourhoods in Wales. Good places are about the people who live in them and use them. Good streets, squares and open spaces are memorable and lively. Their design should help foster communities, and be safe and accessible for everyone. Good places should help to promote a healthy lifestyle, providing access to amenities, green spaces and nature. Above all for our overall quality of life, they should be delightful, enjoyable places that we cherish"

(No Place Like Home, Design Commission for Wales, 2010)

"We need to design better neighbourhoods"

(Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive Design Commission for Wales, Blog 2012)

Layout

Schemes frequently have a poorly designed layout, leading to a poor quality streetscape, a lack of distinction between public and private realms, and a development that is difficult to move around especially on foot.

Public realm

Dominant roads and poorly integrated car parking result from highway design dictating layout, rather than designing a place to live. Public open space is often poorly designed or maintained.

Planning and Design Considerations

National Design Guidance

2.6 There are a number of documents which set out national guidance relevant to residential developments. This guidance document brings these sources together in an easy to use format which relates to the local Swansea context.

Planning Policy Wales (2014)

2.7 National planning policy promotes sustainable development in terms of the location of development, re-use of previously developed land and by setting minimum sustainable building standards.

2.8 The objective of minimising the need to travel and increase accessibility by travel modes other then private cars is stressed. Higher density development is encouraged near locations or corridors which are well served by public transport.

2.9 There is a strong emphasis on the importance of good design and the creation of places to live that are safe and attractive. This is highlighted as being the responsibility of all those involved in the development process, at all scales.

2.10 In terms of residential development, the emphasis is on sustainable residential environments, which include:

- mixed tenure communities;
- development that is easily accessible by public transport, cycling and walking;
- mixed use development so communities have good access to employment and services;
- attractive landscapes around dwellings, with usable open spaces and regard for biodiversity and flood risk;
- greater emphasis on quality, good design and the creation of places to live that are safe and attractive;
- the most efficient use of land;
- well designed living environments, where appropriate at increased densities;
- construction of housing with low environmental impact which meet nationally set standards;
- 'barrier free' housing developments, for example built to lifetime homes standards;
- direct connections to existing communities;
- interest and varied design rather than areas of monotonous character.

2.11 All residential development should seek to promote a hierarchy of sustainable transport (walking, cycling, public transport and then cars). Public transport is a highly important means to meeting several objectives of sustainability. Developers and the Local Planning Authority should therefore seek early dialogue with public transport providers and operators in the case of large scale residential developments and urban extensions. Where appropriate, contributions towards public transport improvements may be requested on smaller schemes.

2.12 Planning Policy Wales also sets mandatory Sustainable Building Standards:

- applications for all new dwellings to meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 and obtain 1 credit under issue *Ene1 - Dwelling Emission Rate.*[1]
- applications for non-residential development (including multi-residential and care homes) which will either have a floorspace of 1,000 m^2 or more, or will be carried out on a site having an area of one hectare or more, to meet the BREEAM 'Very Good' standard and achieve the mandatory credits for 'Excellent' under issue Ene1 - Reduction of CO2 Emissions[1]

TAN 5: Nature Conservation & Planning (2009)

2.13 This document contains specific guidance about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation.

2.14 TAN 5 identifies key principles for nature conservation within the planning system. These include partnership working to achieve objectives, integrating biodiversity into all planning decisions to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits as well as ensuring appropriate species and habitat protection and mitigating the effects of climate change.

TAN 12: Design (2009)

2.15 This document contains specific guidance regarding housing design and layout. It spells out the principles of good design based on an understanding of what makes existing places attractive, successful and sustainable places in which to live.

"Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to grasp opportunities to enhance the character, quality and function of an area, should not be accepted, as these have detrimental effects on the existing communities"

(TAN 12, 2009, paragraph 2.6)

2.16 TAN 12 identifies that the overriding principles in the design of residential environments should be to establish a sense of place and community. More specifically (paragraph 5.11.2) housing design should aim to:

- create places with the needs of people in mind, which are distinctive and respect local character;
- promote layouts and design features which encourage community safety and accessibility;
- focus on the quality of the places and living environments for pedestrians rather than the movement and parking of vehicles;
- avoid inflexible planning standards and encourage layouts which manage vehicle speeds through the geometry of the roads and building;

[1] Current sustainability standards which may be superseded by new editions of Planning Policy Wales.

- promote environmental sustainability features such as energy efficiency in new housing and make clear specific commitments to carbon reductions and/ or sustainable building standards;
- secure the most efficient use of land including appropriate densities; and,
- consider and balance potential conflicts between these criteria.

TAN15: Development and Flood Risk (2004)

2.17 This document covers flood risk from all sources including surface water and identifies the acceptability requirement and the relevant development advice for development. It stresses that in all flood risk zones, any development will require an appropriate drainage strategy to demonstrate that the development itself will not create, increase or exacerbate surface water flood risk. Section 8 and Appendix 4 of TAN15 deal specifically with surface water run-off from new development and require that "Sustainable Drainage Systems" (SuDS) be considered at a very early stage preferably in the form of blue/green Infrastructure which can blend seamlessly into the development within public open space.

TAN18: Transport (2007)

2.18 This requires transport and movement to be considered at the strategic and detailed level. In strategic terms this includes:

- focusing housing development at locations with good access by walking and cycling to schools and public transport stops, employment opportunities, shopping and leisure;
- ensuring that significant new housing schemes contain ancillary uses including local shops, and services and, where appropriate, local employment;
- policies and standards on density, and parking to achieve higher residential densities in places with good public transport accessibility and capacity;
- designing residential layouts that incorporate traffic management proposals such as home zones, calming measures and 20 mph zones and where appropriate, layouts that allow public transport to pass through easily; and
- layouts and densities, which maximise the opportunity for residents to walk and cycle to local facilities and public transport stops.

2.19 Transport infrastructure should contribute to a sense of place and community and the five principle functions of streets should generally be considered in the following order of importance:

1. place;
2. movement;

3. access;
4. parking; and
5. utilities (including drainage and street lighting).

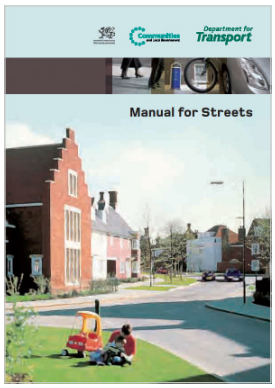
2.20 The TAN stresses that streets should not be:

- primarily designed to meet the needs of motor traffic;
- bland and unattractive;
- unsafe and unwelcoming to pedestrians and cyclists;
- difficult to serve by public transport; and
- poorly designed and constructed.

2.21 The TAN emphasizes that streets should form part of a well connected network and encourages new developments to help deliver walkable neighbourhoods where walking is promoted as the main means of travel for shorter trips.

2.22 The TAN links to the detailed guidance which is contained in the Manual for Streets.

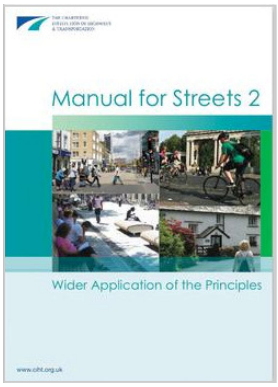
Manual for Streets (2007)



2.23 This document was produced to counter the dominance of vehicles and highways in streets. The main aim of this document which covers England and Wales is to facilitate the creation of streets that promote greater social interaction and enjoyment while still performing successfully as conduits for movement. As a companion guide to The Welsh Government Technical Advice Note on Transport (TAN 18), it indicates that streets should:

- help to build and strengthen the communities they serve;
- be designed first and foremost for pedestrians
- meet the needs of all users, by embodying the principles of inclusive design;
- form part of a well-connected network (such as existing desire lines);
- be attractive and have their own distinctive identity (this will involve be open minded to non-standard approaches);
- be cost-effective to construct and maintain;
- be safe.

Manual for Streets 2 (2010)



2.24 'Manual for Streets 2: Wider Application of the Principles' forms a companion guide to 'Manual for Streets'. With regard to residential streets it provides further detailed guidance and demonstrated how the principles can be applied to rural areas.

TAN22: Planning for Sustainable Buildings (2010)

2.25 This document is effectively a 'handbook' to help implement the Sustainable Building Standards set in Planning Policy Wales.

2.26 The emphasis is on reducing energy demand for new buildings through utilising the Code for Sustainable Homes for new dwellings and the BREEAM method for other building types.

Planning and Design Considerations

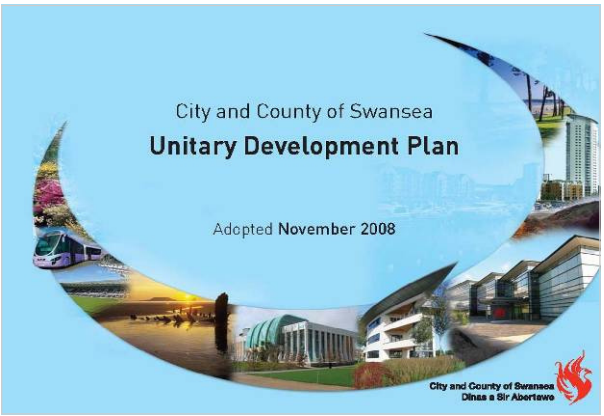
Local Policy Framework

City and County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

2.27 The UDP contains key policies with regard to residential development:

- **EV1** sets out general design criteria for new development;
- **EV2** relates to siting and location of development with the preference given to previously developed land;
- **EV3** deals with accessibility to and linkages within new development;
- **EV4** requires a connected, high quality and human scale public realm;
- **EV16** sets out specific design and development criteria for small villages
- **EV17** sets out specific design and development criteria for large villages
- **HC2** sets out requirements for development within the urban area.
- **HC24** includes requirements for open space provision

2.28 Please see the UDP for the full details of these policies.

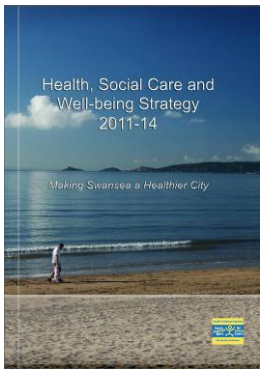


Supplementary Planning Guidance

2.29 There is a range of adopted guidance that supplements the Unitary Development Plan which is relevant to new residential developments:

- Planning Obligations (2009)
- Tall Buildings Strategy (2008)
- Gower Design Guide (2011)
- Car Parking Standards (2012)
- Planning for Community Safety (2012)

Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy 2011—2014: Making Swansea a Healthier City



2.30 Swansea was designated by the World Health Organisation as a member of the European Healthy City network in September 2010. The Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy sets out a number of themes that are relevant to new residential developments.

Core theme 1

*"**Caring and supportive environments**. A healthy city should be above all a city for all its citizens, inclusive, supportive, sensitive and responsive to their diverse needs and expectations."*

- **Better outcomes for all children.**
- **Age-friendly cities**.

Core theme 2

*"**Healthy living**. A healthy city provides conditions and opportunities that support healthy lifestyles."*

- **Active living**.
- **Healthy settings.**
- **Well-being and happiness**.

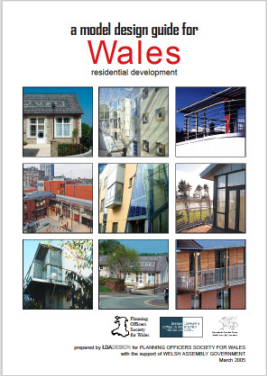
Core theme 3

*"**Healthy urban environment and design**. A healthy city offers a physical and built environment that supports health, recreation and wellbeing, safety, social interaction, easy mobility, a sense of pride and cultural identity and that is accessible to the needs of all its citizens."*

- **Healthy urban planning**. Integrating health considerations.
- **Housing and regeneration**. Increasing access to better housing for all, and to green and open spaces for recreation and physical activity.
- **Healthy transport**. Facilitating the ability for everyone to reach their required destination without having to use a car.
- **Safety and security**. Ensuring that neighbourhoods allow social interaction and increases a sense of safety and security.
- **Exposure to noise and pollution.** Promoting and adopting practices that protect all people from toxic and health-damaging exposure, air pollution and noise.
- **Healthy urban design**. Creating socially supportive environments that encourage walking and cycling. Enhance the distinctive cultural assets and promote good designs that address safety, accessibility, comfort and active living.
- **Creativity and liveability**. Encourage creativity and improve social cohesion.

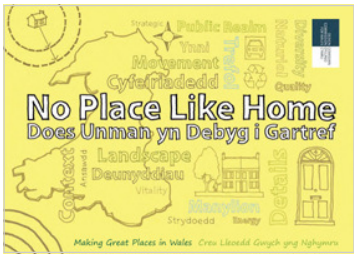
Other documents

Model Design Guide for residential development (2005)



2.31 The Planning Officers Society for Wales (POSW) has prepared generic residential design guidance building on the guidance set out in TAN 12. This document builds on the POSW guidance and tailors the guidance to the local context, updates the guidance to reflect the current national and local policy framework and makes the guidance easier to use.

No Place Like Home (2010)



2.32 This accessible guide by the Design Commission for Wales sets out themes which are fundamental to making good places. It includes a summary of the essential principles to consider:

- Character and context
- Movement
- Public realm
- Built form
- Materials and details

It is set out as a series of prompts and questions with an emphasis on jargon free language.

Design process

Pre-application discussion – improve speed and quality

3.1 Pre-application advice from the Council can assist in improving the quality of development and help to speed up the determination of the subsequent planning applications. It is therefore strongly encouraged particularly for larger or sensitive developments. Further national guidance on this can be found in the Welsh Government Practice Guide—*Realising the potential of pre-application discussions*.

3.2 In order to make the best use of Council resources and enable the authority to provide meaningful preliminary advice, a sufficient amount of information should be submitted prior to the undertaking of discussions. The level of information provided should be proportionate to the scale of the application. Some of the following information is desirable:

- Key site investigation information such as levels and tree surveys etc
- Initial Design and Access Statement findings
- Site location plan
- Initial site layout
- Initial dwelling details such as elevations and streetscene views.
- Initial drainage strategy/flood impact information

3.3 The response will **be based on the level of relevant information provided by the design/development team at the pre-application stage** and as the design is developed and detailed plans are prepared then more specific advice can then be given. For larger or more complex developments developers may also wish to consult with statutory consultees early in the process in order to identify any areas of concern from the outset. This could help to improve the speed of the determination of these applications.

The Need for Vision

3.4 Successful recent developments are underpinned by a guiding vision.

> *"The aim is to create a high quality place to live retaining key landscape features and incorporating a mix of housing that is fully integrated with the existing neighbourhood. Structure shall be provided by focal spaces linked by pedestrian streets. Local distinctiveness will be achieved in a contemporary manner through use of materials."* - ***Example of a Vision***

The Triangle, Swindon is an example of a new housing development that has a guiding vision based on sustainability and community.

In the SA1 Prince of Wales dock regeneration area new versions of the traditional town house are emerging.

3

The Vision and Concept Plan

3.5 The vision should be supplemented by a concept plan which indicates the potential key features of the development. It might address how new development responds and connects to the wider area such as connected spaces, main movement routes, density of development, mixed uses, landscape design and broad character /architectural principles.

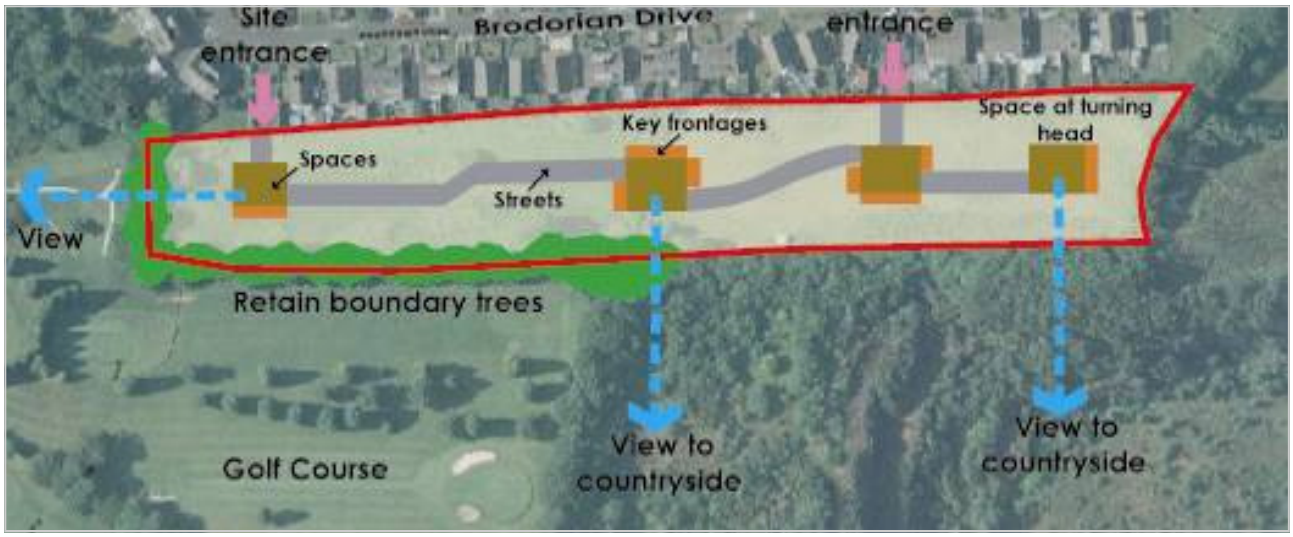
3.6 The vision and a concept plan can sum up what kind of place is being created. This allows the developer and Council to discuss how proposals can be evolved from the context, guidance and policy. It provides more certainty for all involved in the place-making process.

3.7 In creating the vision for a place, consultation with the local community and stakeholders at the pre-planning stage can help to ensure that proposals better reflect community aspirations and involve local people earlier and more meaningfully in the design process.

Community involvement

3.8 It is recommended that developers and designers should seek the views and opinions of the local community to inform the preparation of their proposals. Details of this process and the results should form part of the Design and Access Statement.

3.9 This is in addition to the statutory public consultation process the council will undertake when a planning application is received.



Example of a simple concept graphic indicating the main features of a potential development.

Design process

Design and Access Statements

3.10 All planning applications for residential development must be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement (DAS). This should explain and justify proposals such as:

- demonstrating the steps taken to appraise the context of the development
- explaining how the design of the development takes the context, the Development Plan and this document into account.

3.11 The DAS must be fit for purpose and 'readily identifiable' as meeting the statutory requirements, therefore it must include the headings in the legislation which are set out in the back of this document. Whilst the amount of information provided should reflect the scale of the proposal and sensitivity of the context, all DAS documents will need to concisely and clearly communicate the design approach and should include illustrations, plans, photos, sketches as appropriate.

3.12 The appendix section of this document sets out local guidance on Design and Access Statements and further information can also be found in the Design Commission for Wales publication 'Design and Access Statements in Wales' which is available from: http://dcfw.org/design-and-access-statements-in-wales

At the time of writing (December 2013), a review of the DAS requirements is underway. For the latest requirements please refer to: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/?lang=en

Demonstrating Sustainability

3.13 Often the 'sustainability' sections in Design and Access Statements do not address all the relevant issues and the variable content makes it difficult to compare the potential sustainability of differing sites. Therefore it is recommended that a BREEAM Communities assessment is carried out for all large scale developments of over 100 homes.

3.14 BREEAM Communities (2012) is an internationally recognised standard that allows local authorities and developers to measure and certify the sustainability of developments at the neighbourhood scale.

BREEAM Communities addresses:

- Site selection
- Site layout
- Details

3.15 These three levels of focus are assessed against five categories:

- Social and economic well being
- Resources and energy
- Land use and ecology
- Transport and movement
- Innovation

3

BREEAM Communities seeks to raise sustainability standards at the neighbourhood scale. This Swale at Upton, Northampton is part of a larger scale network of open swales which deals with the surface water from the surrounding residential development as part of an integrated SuDS solution.

Previous residential developments in Swansea have sought to challenge standard designs (Llangwm, Plen Plas).

Strategic Themes

4.1 Drawing on the national and local policy context, this design guide is underpinned by the following four themes:

Putting *people* first

4.2 Housing developments are where we spend most of our time. This has a considerable impact on quality of life and sense of community. Therefore achieving good design in 'everyday' places is imperative to providing robust and safe communities.

Sense of *place*

4.3 Every development should draw on the opportunities presented by the local context to create a sense of place. This includes well designed buildings, spaces and streets which are not dominated by vehicles. Well designed spaces and streets also allow for biodiversity enhancements which have several benefits for residents and can improve developer returns through integration of greenery and a strong sense of place.

Creating *sustainable* places

4.4 New residential developments are an opportunity to help people live in a more sustainable manner. This includes establishing mixed communities, creating places which are not dependant on private car use and where walking is the preferred means of getting around for short trips. It also means providing safe and overlooked open spaces and streets to encourage a healthy life style and making best use of land. This is in addition to the sustainability of the buildings themselves.

Improving *quality*

4.5 A national policy framework has been in place to address the above issues since 2003 and whilst there are a number of good quality and exemplar schemes in the City and County of Swansea, they are unfortunately not the norm. This design guidance is an opportunity to raise the bar on residential developments of all sizes in all locations.

4

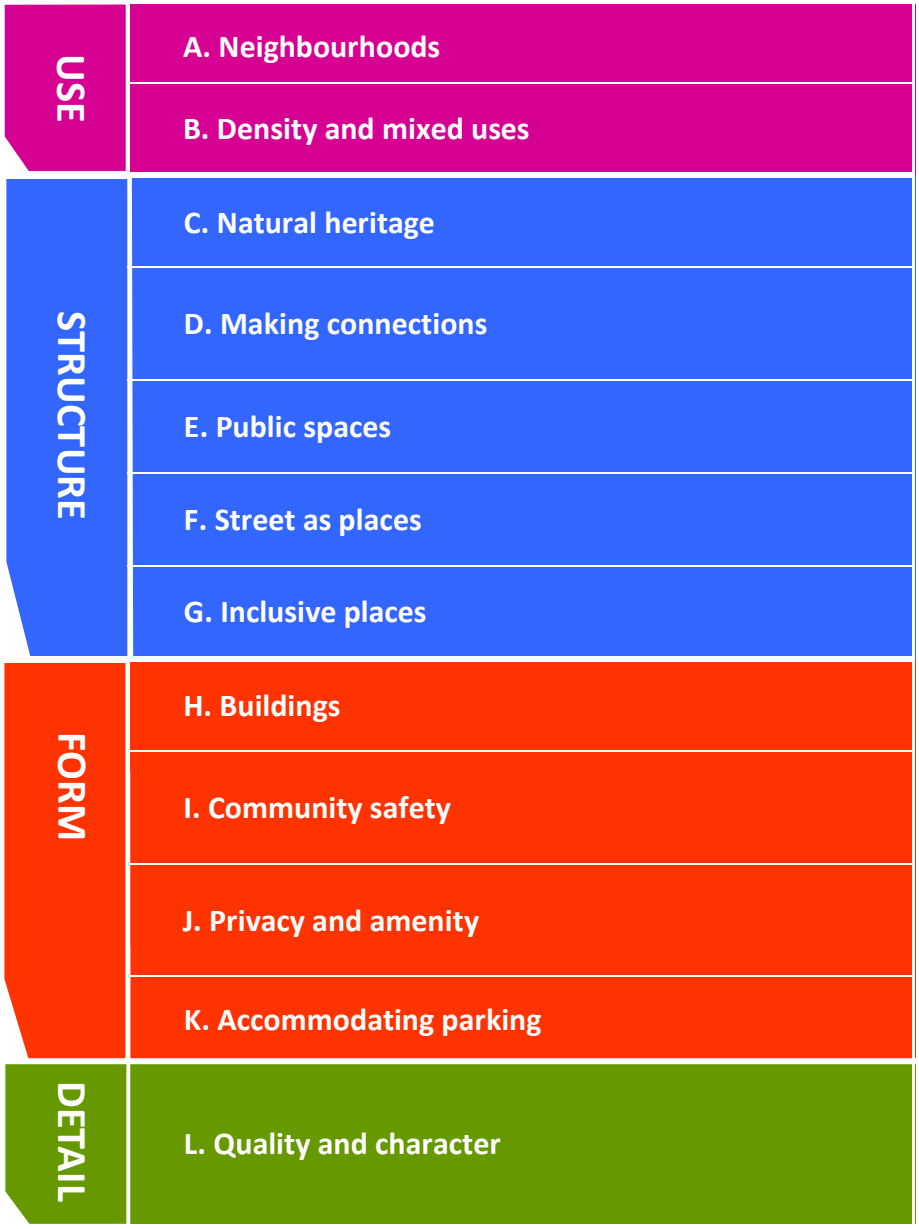
Example of a high quality housing development where public realm, SuDS and buildings are carefully integrated. The result is an attractive area to live in with a strong sense of place. (Upton, Northamptonshire)

"The design of our towns, villages, cities and the urban and rural landscape is important in articulating our nation and our culture. Design is important to our quality of life, and the quality of Wales' varied landscapes and townscapes—helping to sustain a positive image for Wales"

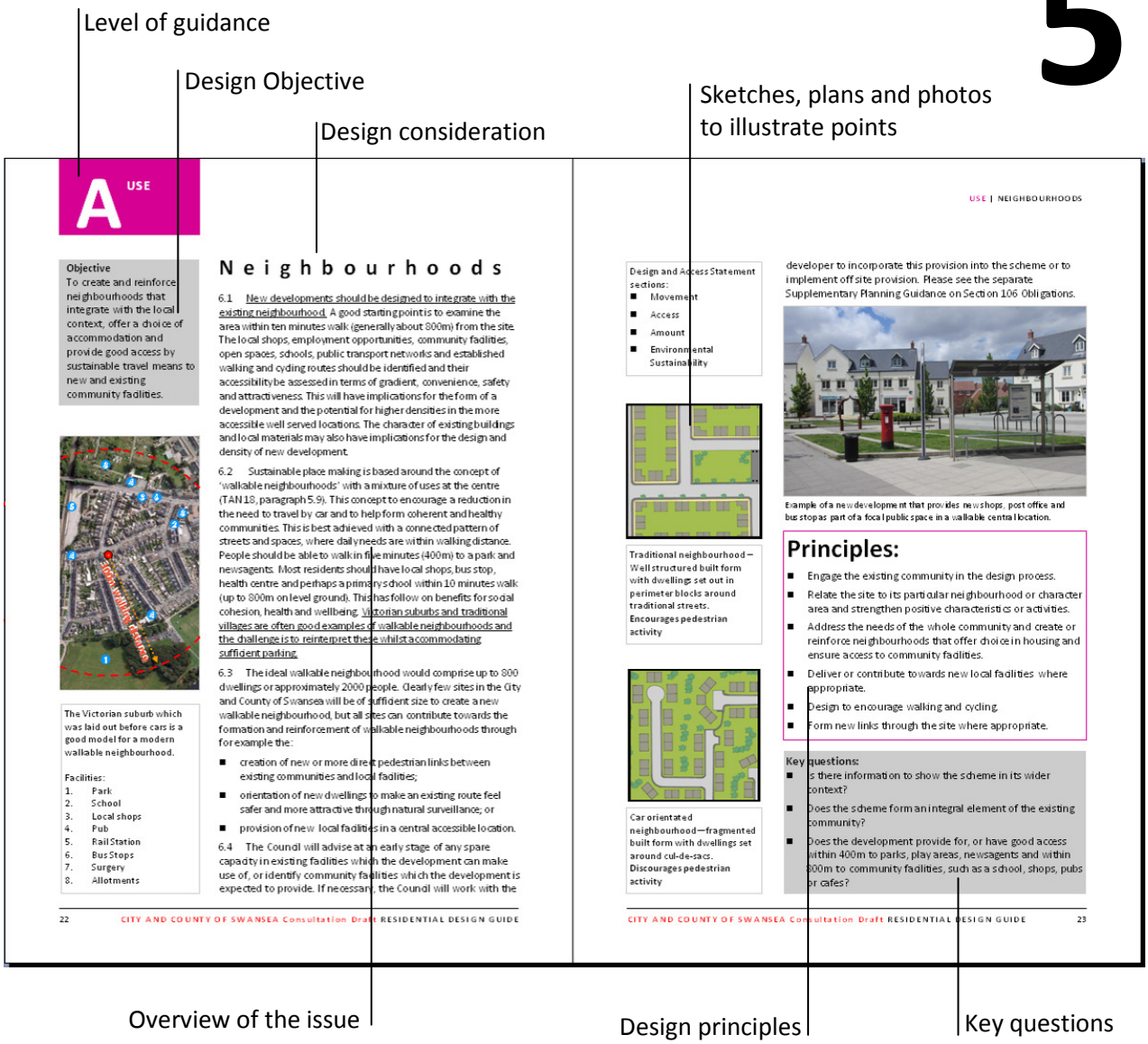
(TAN 12: Design, 2009, paragraph 2.1)

Using this Design Guidance

5.1 This guide sets out design considerations which work from strategic issues down to detailed issues. This reflects the sequence by which successful places are designed. Each design consideration sets out a brief overview of the issue, followed by guidance on how the consideration can be addressed to achieve high quality, sustainable, safe and inclusive places to live. They are not a set of rules but rather a set of principles which can be addressed in many different ways. These design considerations should not be read in isolation as many overlap and should be considered in conjunction with one another. They are as follows:-



5.2 At the end of each design consideration there are key questions to consider in preparing a scheme. These will be used by the council when assessing proposals. There is also an indication of the relevant Design and Access Statement (DAS) headings to help you explain your scheme.



Sustainable Building Standards

5.3 Sustainability is a fundamental principle which runs through all the design considerations in this guide and in addition, the Welsh Government has set the following minimum sustainable building standards:

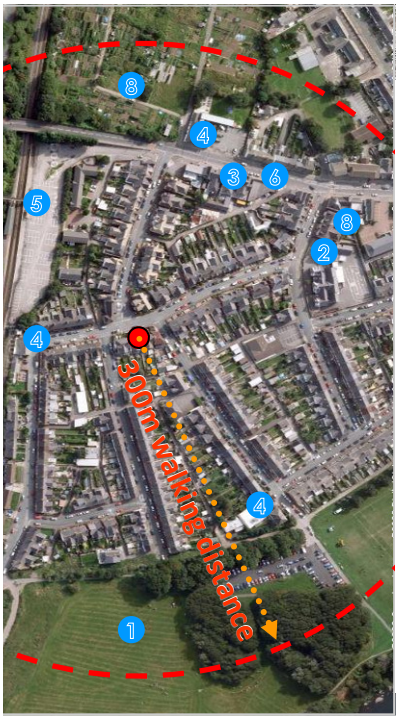
- Applications for 1 or more dwelling to meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 and obtain 1 credit under issue *Ene1 - Dwelling Emission Rate (CfSH, Nov 2010)*.

For mixed use developments and multi residential developments, the minimum standards are:

- Applications with a site area of 1ha or a floorspace of 1000m^2 to meet BREEAM 'Very Good' and obtain 'Excellent' under Ene1

For the current Sustainable Building Standards, please see Planning Policy Wales, Chapter 4, 'Planning for Sustainability' which can be downloaded from: www.wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy

Objective
To create and reinforce neighbourhoods that integrate with the local context, offer a choice of accommodation and provide good access by sustainable travel means to new and existing community facilities.



The Victorian suburb which was laid out before cars is a good model for a modern walkable neighbourhood.

Facilities:
1. Park
2. School
3. Local shops
4. Pub
5. Rail Station
6. Bus Stops
7. Surgery
8. Allotments

Neighbourhoods

6.1 New developments should be designed to integrate with the existing neighbourhood. A good starting point is to examine the area within ten minutes walk (generally about 800m) from the site. The local shops, employment opportunities, community facilities, open spaces, schools, public transport networks and established walking and cycling routes should be identified and their accessibility be assessed in terms of gradient, convenience, safety and attractiveness. This will have implications for the form of a development and the potential for higher densities in the more accessible well served locations. The character of existing buildings and local materials may also have implications for the design and density of new development.

6.2 Sustainable place making is based around the concept of 'walkable neighbourhoods' with a mixture of uses at the centre (TAN 18, paragraph 5.9). This concept to encourage a reduction in the need to travel by car and to help form coherent and healthy communities. This is best achieved with a connected pattern of streets and spaces, where daily needs are within walking distance. People should be able to walk in five minutes (400m) to a park and newsagents. Most residents should have local shops, bus stop, health centre and perhaps a primary school within 10 minutes walk (up to 800m on level ground). This has follow on benefits for social cohesion, health and wellbeing. Victorian suburbs and traditional villages are often good examples of walkable neighbourhoods and the challenge is to reinterpret these whilst accommodating sufficient parking.

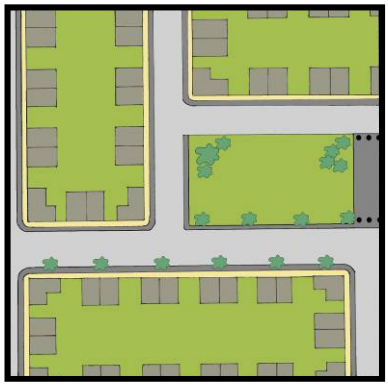
6.3 The ideal walkable neighbourhood would comprise up to 800 dwellings or approximately 2000 people. Clearly few sites in the City and County of Swansea will be of sufficient size to create a new walkable neighbourhood, but all sites can contribute towards the formation and reinforcement of walkable neighbourhoods through for example the:

- creation of new or more direct pedestrian links between existing communities and local facilities;
- orientation of new dwellings to make an existing route feel safer and more attractive through natural surveillance; or
- provision of new local facilities in a central accessible location.

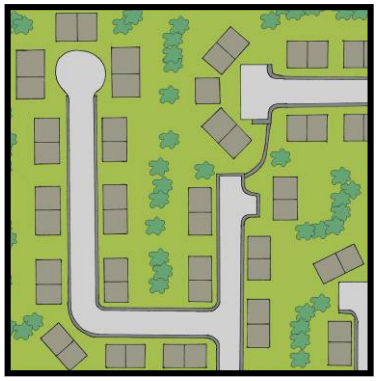
6.4 The Council will advise at an early stage of any spare capacity in existing facilities which the development can make use of, or identify community facilities which the development is expected to provide. If necessary, the Council will work with the

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Movement
- Access
- Amount
- Environmental Sustainability



Traditional neighbourhood – Well structured built form with dwellings set out in perimeter blocks around traditional streets. **Encourages pedestrian activity**



Car orientated neighbourhood—fragmented built form with dwellings set around cul-de-sacs. **Discourages pedestrian activity**

developer to incorporate this provision into the scheme or to implement off site provision. Please see the separate Supplementary Planning Guidance on Section 106 Obligations.

Example of a new development that provides new shops, post office and bus stop as part of a focal public space in a walkable central location.

Principles:

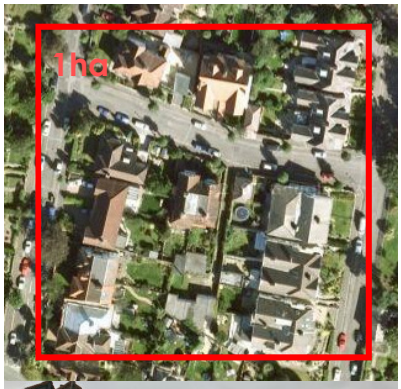
- Engage the existing community in the design process.
- Relate the site to its particular neighbourhood or character area and strengthen positive characteristics or activities.
- Address the needs of the whole community and create or reinforce neighbourhoods that offer choice in housing and ensure access to community facilities.
- Deliver or contribute towards new local facilities where appropriate.
- Design to encourage walking and cycling.
- Form new links through the site where appropriate.

Key questions:

- Is there information to show the scheme in its wider context?
- Does the scheme form an integral element of the existing community?
- Does the development provide for, or have good access within 400m to parks, play areas, newsagents and within 800m to community facilities, such as a school, shops, pubs or cafes?

Objective

To create vitality, with appropriate development densities supporting a range of services, mixed uses and public transport.



Eden Avenue, Uplands. Typically 20 dwellings per hectare. Detached and semi detached houses with front and rear gardens*

Queens Road area, Mumbles. Typically 35 dwellings per hectare. Terraced housing with long rear gardens*

Density and mixed uses

7.1 In line with national policy guidance, the aim of development should be to make the most efficient use of land and increase densities in locations which are accessible to a wide range of people (such as close to public transport routes, urban centres and community facilities).

7.2 When considering housing density within the City and County of Swansea it is important to differentiate between two different approaches which are dependent on site location:

- Developments which form part of or are considered an extension of existing places and neighbourhoods. This form of development will involve setting site densities to a level appropriate to make best use of accessible locations whilst respecting the local context.
- Larger strategic sites (such as those to be allocated via the LDP process) which create new mixed-use communities through a masterplanning process. This approach will comprise new higher density development capable of supporting a population size appropriate to sustain new local shops and facilities as well as public transport provision.

7.3 The predominant UK measure of density is dwellings per hectare (DPH) and using this measure the overall target density for development in the City and County of Swansea is between 30-40 dwellings per hectare (gross density measure)[1]. However it is important to avoid a 'one size fits all' approach and good design depends on a variety of densities and building types to create and sustain a local community character capable of satisfying everyone. This target density is therefore an overall figure for the whole of the Swansea area which takes into account a range of different densities between higher density city centre living and the lower densities of the Gower and other rural locations.

7.4 However a dwellings per hectare measurement has limitations in that it does not indicate the potential number of people living in a place, because there is no distinction between large and small units (e.g. between 4-bed houses and 1-bed flats) . Therefore a habitable rooms per hectare (HRPH) measurement and/or a bed spaces per hectare (BPH)

[1]Gross density calculations include streets and open spaces in addition to dwellings

Bryngwyn Village, Gorseinon. Typically 40 dwellings her hectare. Mixture of houses with gardens and flats, including open spaces*

Swansea Point. Typically 60 dwellings per hectare. Mixture of town houses (without gardens) and flats all served by communal open spaces*

measurement give a better impression of the potential size of a community in a residential development and these measures should be considered alongside the standard dwellings per hectare one in order to provide a more robust understanding of appropriate densities and housing variety for sites.

7.5 The basic requirement should be for a range of housing provision enabling real choice to meet individual needs and preferences over a reasonably lengthy period of time. It is particularly important that the housing stock is not tailored to fit too closely to the household profile of any one moment in time. Provision of a range of densities will allow for a variety of different responses to different locations whilst striking a balance between the efficient use of land and creating a pleasant place to live.

7.6 Sites at accessible locations should be expected to accommodate a higher density provided that the character is maintained and sufficient off-street parking can be provided. Larger sites may be able to accommodate a range of densities to make use of accessible locations within these and to create individual character areas.

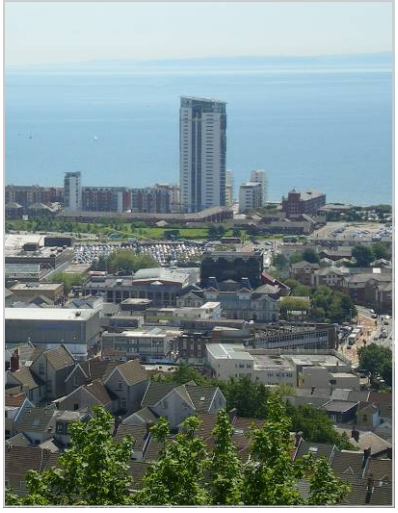
7.7 Ensuring high densities relates to sustainability, and in particular to reductions in travel distances so that more journeys can be made on foot and bicycle and public transport systems are more intensively used. Terraced housing and flats can also make more economical use of energy than the detached houses which might be found in areas of low residential density.

7.8 Building at high densities creates a more intense and varied urban environment which, it is argued, is visually and socially exciting. Proposals for city centre living should therefore seek to increase densities wherever possible and this can often be accommodated satisfactorily through use of better, more imaginative building designs and innovative urban layouts. When designing for higher density living standards of public neighbourhood space, local amenity, internal housing space, potential noise disturbance, and general environment and design should all be considered.

7.9 Where higher densities (over 40 dwellings per hectare) are proposed, this must not be at the expense of the character of an area or living conditions.

*These examples provide reference to the existing range of densities within the city and county of Swansea area and do not necessarily reflect design solutions for new schemes.

Density and mixed uses



Meridian Tower—creates an landmark building in the Maritime Quarter which maximises density in the city centre.

Swansea Urban Village—a contemporary mixed use development which raises design standards and drives mixed use regeneration in Swansea High Street.

The Swansea SA1 area comprises a mixed use regeneration project around the Prince of Wales dock. In includes a mixture of high density apartments and town houses

7.10 The adopted Tall Buildings Strategy (2008) sets out a definition of tall buildings as a *'building that is more than twice the height of adjacent buildings'*. The adopted strategy also identifies zones within Swansea City Centre where tall buildings are 'welcomed' and other areas where they may be 'considered', outside of these areas the general presumption is against tall buildings for visual and infrastructure reasons. The strategy also sets out guidelines for the design of tall buildings which should be considered in addition to this residential design guide.'

7.11`All sites should contribute to balanced communities both within the site and in conjunction with the wider area. This means that a mixture of dwelling types, tenures and sizes will be expected. In accordance with the Planning Obligations SPG, affordable homes should be seamlessly integrated into developments and not concentrated in one part of the site.

7.12 Larger sites also have the potential to deliver mixed use schemes. Windfall sites proposed for residential development (not identified in the Development Plan) of over 3 hectares or 120 dwellings may be expected to include a mixture of appropriate non—residential uses such as offices or community facilities in order to create a vibrant distinctive place which potentially reduces the need to travel.

7.13 Where non—residential uses are proposed, they should be in the most accessible location and positively integrate with adjacent properties/ buildings. New non—residential uses such as local shops, community facilities and schools should form focal points within developments.

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Amount
- Character
- Scale
- Environmental Sustainability

Many modern housing developments can average 40 homes per hectare but the challenge is often how to integrate parked cars. The top example places cars between buildings behind the building line, whilst the bottom example uses rear lane parking arrangements.

Principles

- Development in Swansea suburbs and the key towns should normally achieve a density of between 30-40 dwellings per hectare subject to all other criteria being met. Outside of these locations, the density should respond to the context with higher densities in Swansea city centre and lower densities in rural areas.
- Higher densities are encouraged in accessible locations, close to local centres, at important corners and around key open spaces.
- Where higher densities are proposed they should not result in a cramped living environment.
- Provide a mix of house types, form, densities, tenure and where appropriate mix of uses to suit the specific site characteristics, responding to accessibility to existing facilities, transport and local character. Development character may therefore vary within the site.
- Where affordable housing is provided it should be integrated into the overall development, and should not be obviously segregated through location, layout or design.
- Where mixed uses are provided, the floor space and servicing requirements should be positively integrated for example by making use of upper floors for flats, or by treating car parking areas and 'public squares' with trees, planting and high quality surfaces.

Key questions:

- Is the density of development appropriate for the accessibilities, facilities, character of the area and amenity of existing and potential occupants?
- Is there a mix of accommodation and tenure that reflects the local needs?
- Is a mix of uses provided?

Objective

To retain existing landscape features, habitats and important species and maximise opportunities for habitat enhancement, creation and management.

Retaining established trees and vegetation can add a sense of maturity to new residential development.

Meaningful public realm planting in combination with front garden areas can create a green character to residential developments.

Planting can be incorporated to create structure to roads and cul-de-sacs

Natural Heritage

8.1 The landscape is one of the most important resources of Swansea and this needs to be protected and enhanced. However this does not mean that there should be no change, but that development proposals will require high quality design solutions that complement or contribute to landscape character.

8.2 The starting point on every site should be to work within the existing environmental constraints and opportunities. Existing ecology and natural habitats should be taken into account. The design of open spaces should incorporate existing features of value as well as provide opportunities for habitat creation. Green spaces should be linked together by green corridors to create a quality sense of place as well as supporting a diverse and stable ecosystem.

8.3 The planning process is a critical in delivering the protection and enhancement of nature conservation which is set out in European and national legislation. Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5—Planning and Nature Conservation encourages a five point approach to decision making:

- Adequate information (including surveys where necessary)
- Avoidance of harm
- Mitigation to minimise unavoidable harm
- Compensation to offset residual harm
- New Benefits

Where possible new developments should retain green corridors and good access to the natural environment.

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Layout
- Landscaping
- Environmental Sustainability

8.4 A well considered and quality landscape design is fundamental to the creation of distinctive and attractive places to live. It is intended that no one should live more than 5 minutes walk (400m) from their nearest natural open space and that suitable access for all should be provided. However there may be instances where natural spaces are best managed without public access.

Retained trees should be used as focal points in layouts.

SuDS features can add visual interest and character to schemes in addition to reducing the impact of surface water run-off

Principles

- Identify intrinsic landscape characteristics of the site and its setting including topography, vegetation, watercourses etc.
- Carry out an ecological assessment of the site at an early stage to identify important species and habitats.
- Carry out an arboricultural survey of all trees on and overhanging site to establish condition and canopy spread.
- Retain existing landscape features of value which could add character to a development, be of value to wildlife and integrate development into surrounding areas. Ensure that these are protected throughout the site clearance and construction process.
- Design in new features to promote biodiversity, for example by planting native trees or developing the ecological value of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS).
- Prepare a landscape framework at the outset of any scheme to create green corridors and integrate buildings and spaces within the wider context.
- Consider the value of the existing or new features in providing natural wind mitigation in exposed locations.
- Ensure access for all to the natural environment without diminishing the value of the ecological resource.

Key Questions:

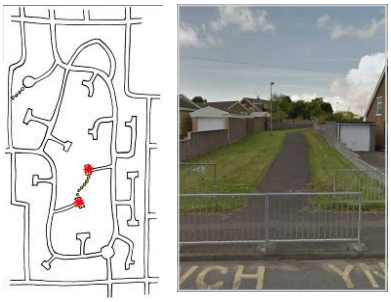
- Are existing landscape, ecological or topographical features of the site incorporated as positive aspects of the development?
- Does the development improve local biodiversity through the provision of areas of natural open space, wildlife corridors and watercourses?
- Is there good public access to the natural environment?
- Are management measures in place to maintain areas and watercourses in perpetuity?

Objective

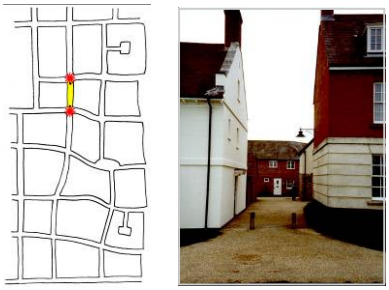
To create connected layouts that provide choice, and easy access to facilities public transport, neighbours and nearby communities.

Cul-de-sac layouts can result in long pedestrian connections which discourage walking

Connected layouts provide short, legible and direct paths which encourage use



Layouts with poor connections can result in pedestrian only routes which are not overlooked and appear unsafe



Pedestrian only routes should be short and designed as an integral part of the route network

Making Connections

9.1 A key consideration for achieving sustainable development is connecting communities and neighbourhoods. The layout of development is also a fundamental element of creating successful living environments.

> *"The layout and detailed design of development can be critically important in providing genuine alternatives to car travel and achieving quality in the environment as a whole"*
>
> *(TAN18, paragraph 5.4)*

9.2 Connected street layouts are now the expected approach as indicated by national guidance (see paragraph 2.23 of this guide). The benefits of connected street layouts are mutually reinforcing:

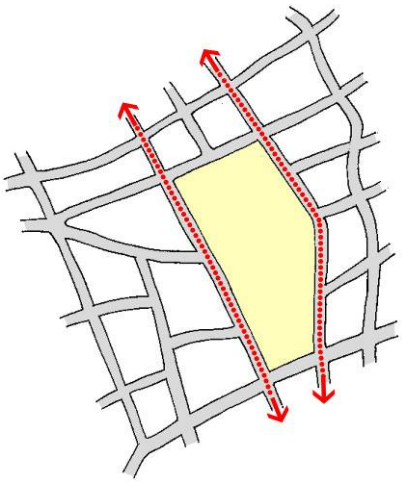
- The choice of routes make it easy and interesting to get from one place to another.
- Direct routes help minimise walking/ cycling distances and aid navigation.
- They form a robust framework for the creation of linked places with a distinct character.
- The frequent junctions and changes of direction can naturally help reduce vehicle speeds.
- The presence of walking and cycling routes along streets ensures that they are subject to natural surveillance and encourage the chance meetings which define communities.
- They help make better use of land through removal of the need for vehicle turning areas.
- They encouragement of walking and cycling has benefits for health and community cohesion.

Creating connected networks

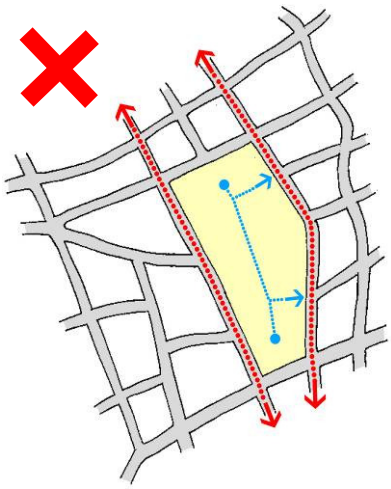
9.3 The connected network which underpins the walkable neighbourhood concept should be created by:

- Optimising the number of access points and routes into, out of and through a site for pedestrians and cyclists to ensure that these balance the requirements of good access and community safety.
- Formalising existing desire lines and providing direct routes through a site.

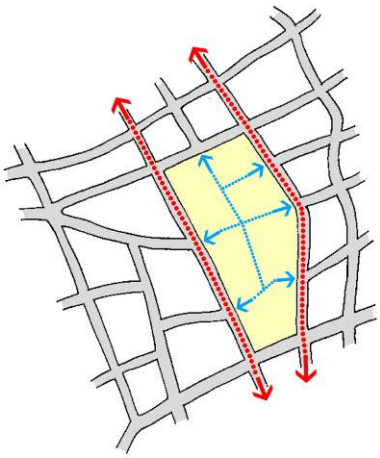
- Aligning key routes with views to features/ marker buildings on or off site.
- Running routes alongside retained landscape features such as watercourses, hedges, tree groups, etc.
- Making allowance for future links to adjacent development areas.
- Achieving accessible routes and gradients which are integral to a well designed public realm.



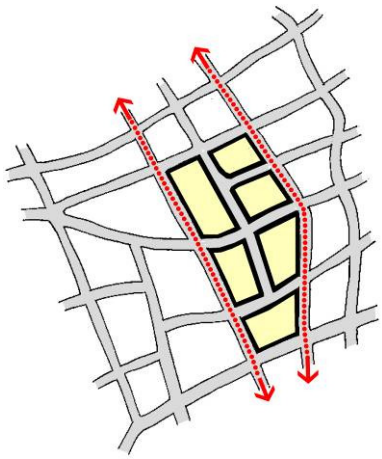
Consider how best the site can be connected with nearby main routes and transport facilities



A typical cul-de-sac response creates an inward looking development which fails to integrate into the existing built form



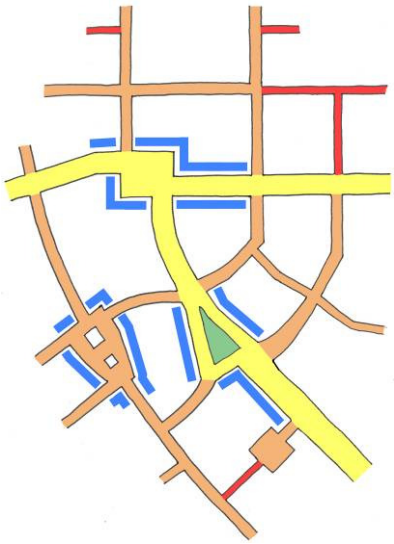
A more permeable and pedestrian friendly approach which integrates the site into the existing pattern of streets



This street pattern then forms the basis for perimeter blocks which ensure that the proposed buildings front onto the public realm and positively contribute to this

Making Connections

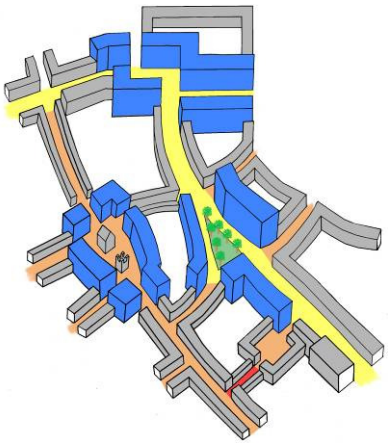
- Meeting the needs of all users by providing new controlled crossings where there are likely to be sufficient or increased pedestrian flows to justify these. These can be secured through Section 106 Agreement.
- Creating routes that are interesting to pedestrians—long straight routes with little variation can become monotonous, whereas slight changes in direction can add interest and legibility. However over use of variation can lead to confusion and loss of legibility.
- Providing routes which are safe and designed so as to minimise hiding spaces and concealed areas which may compromise pedestrian safety.
- Sub-dividing the main routes to create a hierarchy of streets with key movement routes identified between public destinations and an appropriate number of secondary routes coming off these to create a choice of pathways and form development blocks.



A road hierarchy of varied streets with key frontages (blue) set around public spaces

9.4 Once the network of routes have been set out and the importance of each route established, then the spaces along the route can be designed (see 'public spaces'), the streets can be designed (see 'streets as places'), and a variety of development forms can be accommodated.

9.5 The connections and interaction of a new development should be explained in your Design and Access Statement (DAS). This will require the high consultant to contribute to the DAS.



Part of the above layout showing the hierarchy of routes and public spaces emphasised by key frontage buildings of greater height

Where cul-de-sacs are unavoidable, they should be designed as informal public spaces with clear, direct and well overlooked pedestrian connections.

Public Rights of Way

9.6 When considering the connectivity of sites, developers should be mindful to assess whether development proposals affect wider community connections such as established Public Rights of Way (PROW). These routes are important to providing environmental and local recreational benefits to communities. In many rural localities these routes can also help to draw tourists to the local area which helps to support the local economy.

9.7 The importance of such routes is recognised in Planning Policy Wales (PPW—edition 5) which states that measures should be sought to protect and enhance the PROW network.. Further support for enhancement of the network can be found in TAN 16 & 18.

9.8 Where development is located in the vicinity of a Public Right of Way, developers should seek the advice of the council's Rights of Way Officer in order to ascertain whether there is a need to divert routes to accommodate new development proposals.

9.9 Where Public Rights of Way are to be incorporated into new residential schemes these routes should be legible and safe. Therefore Public Rights of Way routes should preferably be designed into schemes in a manner which avoids areas for hiding spots or concealment. Where routes are long or where the exit point is not visible routes should be overlooked by dwellings.

Examples of cul-de-sacs designed as places

Where cul-de-sacs are unavoidable, they should be designed as informal public spaces with clear, direct and well overlooked pedestrian connections.

Making Connections

Further guidance on Cul-de-sacs

9.10 The adopted Community Safety SPG acknowledges that permeability is an important consideration in residential developments. However in some circumstances, the nature of a site and its surroundings may mean that there are no possibilities to connect to the wider movement network and a cul-de-sac approach is more appropriate.

9.11 Research[1] into patterns of burglary in residential areas suggests that burglary rates were lower in more connected streets. The research found that in general the hot spots of crime are those locations with low pedestrian traffic and low visibility of homes. Hidden or partly visible homes, on long, curvy cul-de-sacs, tend to have the highest crime rates. Conversely, the safest locations are generally on well-connected streets with plenty of foot traffic and many highly visible dwellings.

9.12 Whilst cul-de-sacs can provide an appropriate response to site constraints in specific locations, the indiscriminate use of this approach will be resisted. This is because they encourage private vehicle use as public transportation services are unable to accommodate their select residents and this, in turn, produces urban congestion in other parts of the community as well as a host of environmental problems associated with increased vehicle use. Furthermore they are not well connected to other streets and they are often far from the local centres as well as other areas of economic activity and community participation. They can also create a number of inefficiencies with respect to the provision of public services such as refuse collection.

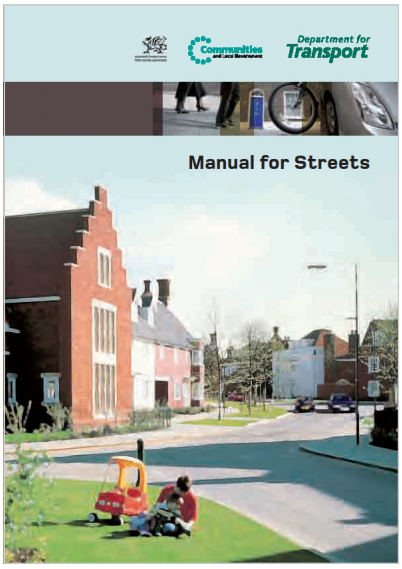
9.13 Therefore the starting point should be firstly to achieve a connected network with the use of cul-de-sacs limited to physically constrained areas of sites. However where cul-de-sacs are the only option these should be short and straight to provide high visibility to all dwellings. Cul-de-sacs should also supplement the connected network through the provision of well designed and overlooked pedestrian and cycle only links with provision to deter motor cycles if necessary. Any turning areas should be sensitively designed as focal public areas rather then standardised engineering solutions.

9.14 Footpaths between cul-de-sacs should be designed as routes with limited escape routes and clear pedestrian sightlines along their entire length in order to limit hiding places along these. Furthermore such paths will need to be well lit and overlooked from a number of dwellings along the route.

[1] By Space Syntax (Bill Hiller and Simon Shu), 2003 (See rear of document for weblink)

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Movement
- Access
- Layout



Principles

- Maximise the choice for people to make journeys to, from and within the development, not just for car users.
- Development schemes should aim to improve the existing movement network where possible, for example by the provision of new routes through the site to community facilities (such as schools, parks, shops, etc) and employment opportunities on foot, cycle and/or public transport.
- Connect new developments into the existing streets and footpaths that provide further linkages to other neighbourhoods, town centres, bus routes etc.
- Provide layouts based on linked streets and spaces to maximise connections, provide choice and spread out traffic.
- Streets and connections should lead to somewhere, be simple and clear, safe, accessible and attractive, provide choice for residents and visitors whilst discouraging through traffic.
- Consider the requirements of public transport early in the design process. Bus stops should be well located, overlooked and provided with appropriate facilities.
- Consider the historical network of streets and spaces in an area. Positive existing qualities can be used as a basis to develop the new street network.
- Generally avoid cul-de-sacs, except as a limited part of a connected layout (see box opposite).
- Where turning areas are required, they should be incorporated within distinct focal spaces and not simply follow rigid geometric standards.

Key questions:

- Does the scheme integrate well with existing streets, paths and surrounding development patterns?
- Does the scheme encourage walking and cycling?
- Is the development easy to move through with good access to local services and facilities, including public transport?
- Where turning heads are proposed, have these been designed as public spaces?

Objective

To provide a varied network of attractive, usable and safe public spaces as part of a hierarchy of places.

Public Spaces

10.1 Public spaces are fundamental to successful places to live, they contribute to quality of life, encourage healthy life styles, help create a sense of place and aid orientation. No matter how well designed the buildings, a lack of public spaces or a poor quality public realm can ruin a scheme. Public spaces should be designed as part of the 'green infrastructure' of a site in order to be multi-functional. They should be welcoming, comfortable, and situated at accessible locations at the heart of a neighbourhood. They should cater for all elements of the community from play areas to resting points for older people. There might be a variety of spaces on some sites, ranging from a more formal hard paved 'square' or landscaped green space, to less formal play/ amenity areas or allotments.

10.2 Connected street networks offer opportunities for focal spaces at important junctions. The importance of these spaces could be reinforced through the form and density of development, surface treatment and planting. The areas around these accessible locations are logical places for non-residential uses, such as shops, schools, parks and public facilities.

10.3 The starting point on all sites should be the provision of open space and play provision on site in accordance with the nationally recognised Fields in Trust (formerly known as the National Playing Fields Association) or equivalent standards. Green spaces and play areas should be focal areas in the overall structure and recognisable places in their own right. Dwellings and other buildings must face onto public spaces to provide surveillance and create a quality backdrop.

10.4 On larger sites (over 100 homes) it is important that the open space is implemented in a phased basis as the new homes are completed. Therefore planning mechanisms such as Section 106 agreements will be required to set robust triggers for the master planning process to ensure that the open spaces are created as the community develops and not left to the end.

10.5 A hierarchy of play space should be integrated into the network of spaces to provide the opportunity for play for all ages and abilities in convenient, safe, accessible and attractive locations which are well overlooked and where they do not attract anti-social behaviour. Play spaces should be designed to restrict non-authorised access to motorised vehicles and cycles.

10.6 Where significant public spaces exist immediately adjacent to a site, it may be possible to off set part of the informal amenity

Examples of public spaces

In some instances, a communal approach to amenity space may be appropriate in place of private gardens.

Example of a play space as a focal point of a new housing development

Example of unfenced play area within larger park space

space requirement to the existing area provided that the area is enhanced and the access is direct, safe and convenient.

10.7 Open spaces must not be leftover areas in the corner of the site, or hidden behind back fences. The integration of designated open spaces such as those for play must therefore be considered at the outset of the design process. All public spaces not offered for adoption should be subject to a maintenance regime to be secured through planning condition or established via Section 106 Agreement.

10.8 Consideration should be given to the type of open spaces required for the development as well as the wider community whether these be informal nature spaces, ball game areas, areas for wheeled activities (e.g. BMX, skateboard) or equipped play spaces. The locations of such spaces must also be carefully considered to ensure that spaces are not sited in inappropriate locations such as beneath overhead power lines or in unsafe or otherwise unsuitable areas which are likely to result in restrictions to their further development. In addition to this careful thought must be given to the access arrangements for these spaces to ensure that they are readily and easily accessible on foot. As a general rule, all households should be within a 5 minute walk of an open space.

10.9 Where equipped play spaces are proposed, the use of fencing should be appropriate to the context of the proposals and wider area. In some cases fencing may not be required (if the play area is included within a larger fenced park for example). Fenced boundaries around play spaces tend to make them feel segregated from their surroundings and there is a growing view that presence of fencing can discourage some children from using the play space. Fencing can also imply that this is where children are meant to be—and that they only belong here, rather than elsewhere in the public domain. There may be other more satisfactory ways of creating boundaries that add to the play value of the space and make it feel more pleasant to use. Planting a hedge; creating a change in level; siting the whole space in a shallow hollow in the ground; surrounding it with a low wall where people can also sit; the possibilities are numerous. Therefore developers should seek the advice of the council's play officers to ascertain the need for play space fencing.

10.10 Potential problems should be resolved through design, rather than simply resorting to standardised separation distances and buffer planting. The design of public spaces

Public Spaces

Examples of informal and natural play provision

Further guidance: Open Space requirements as the starting point for on-site provision:

Local Area for Play (LAP) - located within a walking time of 1 minute (100m) from home, this provides play opportunities for toddlers and young children.

- **0.3 ha per 1000 population**
- **3 m² per person/ 9 m² per house**

Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) - typically contains 5 types of play equipment for children of early school age and is located within a walking time of 5 minutes (400m) from home.

- **0.5 ha per 1000 population**
- **5 m² per person/ 15 m² per house**

Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) - site that is equipped mainly for older children, but with opportunities for play for younger children too. Located within a walking time of 12—15 minutes (1000m) from home.

- **1.6 ha per 1000 population**
- **16 m² per person/ 48 m² per house**

In recent years there has been a move away from standardised, fenced in play provision. Instead the preferred approach is for more natural play environments which form an integral element of larger open spaces.

Source: Planning Obligations SPG 2010

"If we don't allow children to experience managed risk I have grave concerns about the future for workplace health and safety. If the next generation enter the workplace having been protected from all risk they will not be so much risk averse as risk naïve"[1]

Judith Hackitt, Chair of the Health and Safety Executive

should recognise the potential desire lines for pedestrians and cyclists. The requirements for sustainable drainage arising from the Code for Sustainable Homes must be positively integrated alongside useable public areas.

10.11 Approaches to play areas should not be solely restricted to the use of standardised play equipment and risk minimisation. An appropriate level of risk is considered to provide a range of benefits to children's physical and psychological development. Therefore suitable non—prescriptive play elements or features such as logs, boulders, hard landscaping, planting or changes of levels should be also be considered for inclusion in play areas or other informal open spaces.[1] Guidance for inclusion of such elements should be sought from the council's play officers.

[1]Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide (Please see rear of document for details)

New community garden and local food production (The Vetch, Swansea)

Areas for local food production can be small scale incidental spaces (The Triangle, Swindon)

Example of SuDs integrated as a focal point in the public realm (Upton, Northampton)

SuDs can also be an incidental part of open space such as this dry ditch (The Triangle, Swindon)

10.12 The use of green spaces is more than just grass. As part of a green infrastructure approach, there is potential to integrate opportunities for local food production in the form of allotment provision, community gardens and urban orchards. Local food production can help to create more healthy cities in line with national and local aspirations and can help bring communities together. This can also provide choice for residents to supplement compact small gardens. Further guidance can be found in the Council document 'Urban Growing: Edible Land in Swansea' (2013). Developers should therefore consider the incorporation of growing spaces in their proposals and should adopt partnership approaches to managing these community spaces such as friends or local residents groups.

10.13 The Code for Sustainable Homes requires a sustainable drainage system (SuDs) approach on many sites. Furthermore SuDs can also be required by the Natural Resource Wales under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010). In the past developments have altered natural drainage by replacing free draining ground with impermeable surfaces, gulleys, pipes, sewers and channels. Traditional drainage systems collect surface water as quickly as possible and dispose of it through pipes and sewers. This increases total volume and flow of runoff from sites making areas more susceptible to flooding locally.

10.14 SuDS schemes can reduce issues of flooding through designs which slow water down (attenuate) before it enters sewers or watercourses. The overall purpose is to reduce surface water before discharging into either a watercourse or sewer at pre-development rates. SuDs should be considered at a very early stage and can take a variety of above ground forms such as rain-water recycling, green roofs, swales, filter drains and ponds/depressions etc.. Integrating green spaces into new development proposals can therefore help to reduce the risk of flooding in urban areas. SuDs should be seamlessly integrated into open spaces and in many cases can also provide Blue/Green Infrastructure such as focal areas and ecological habitats.

Vertical planting and green roofs

Whilst these are not public spaces, they do add greenery to the public realm and can provide for other benefits such as SuDs, local food production and ecological habitats. Vertical planting is usually fixed to buildings and takes the place of a traditional architectural elevation, whereas green roofs replace the traditional roof covering. In both cases it is very important that appropriate management and irrigation is in place for perpetuity.

Green roofs can provide a number of benefits in urbanised areas in-cluding improving biodiversity, reducing rainfall run-off as well as improving the water quality of this

Vertical Walls can add visual interest to public spaces as well as providing opportunities for biodiversity

Green spaces should provide for informal play

SuDS features can help to create a sense of place

Public Spaces

Principles

- Identify locations and features that are valued by the existing community and integrate these into new and improved public spaces.
- Ensure that public spaces are designed using the multi functional 'green infrastructure' approach and explain this in the Design and Access Statement.
- Locate public spaces in accessible, highly visible locations where they can be co-located with community buildings and are well overlooked from the fronts of buildings.
- Connect open space networks with landscape elements providing green corridor links to other sites and the wider landscape.
- Ensure that public space is accessible to all and caters for all elements of the community from children to older people.
- Ensure that the design of spaces and relationship to surrounding buildings takes account of microclimatic factors, such as shading and wind tunnelling effects.
- Integrate community gardens and areas for community food production into new green spaces
- Consider whether open spaces can accommodate surface water runoff by means of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) or soakaways to meet the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes and wider drainage requirements.
- Ensure that open spaces are positively related to the surrounding buildings and well overlooked.
- Create focal points from existing or new landscape features or public art.
- Soften boundaries adjacent to open land with planting belts.
- Emphasise key junctions with 'focal' spaces.
- Ensure that open spaces are provided on or adjacent to high density development sites in order to provide amenity space for all residents.
- Punctuate a site layout with smaller open spaces to create visual interest and localised focal points.

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Access
- Layout
- Environmental Sustainability

Public art can add interest to key public spaces

Play spaces should be close to and well overlooked from dwellings to provide safe outdoor areas to meet children's needs.

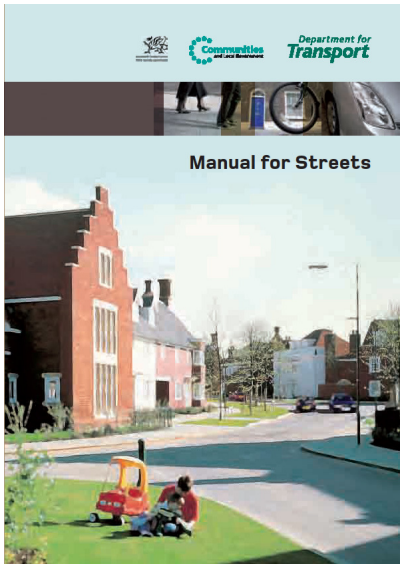
- Ensure open spaces, retained vegetation and footpaths are overlooked by fronts of dwellings to maximise natural surveillance.
- Ensure that open space provision is within 5 minutes walking distance of the majority of homes (which generally equates to 400m)
- All developments with family housing should make provision for (or have good access to) children's play opportunities. This is likely to be in the form of informal play spaces/opportunities on site or by a developer contribution to existing formal play grounds located off-site within a short walking distance. Pre-application consultation will clarify the extent of local provision and need at the outset.
- Ensure that all elements of publicly accessible space are designed coherently to provide consistency and high quality. Coordination of street furniture including lighting, seating, bins, signage, railings, bollards, etc. will be essential to the success of a scheme.
- Use public art where appropriate to enhance public spaces
- Ensure a clear definition between areas of public and private space.
- Ensure that public spaces are created as homes are built, not left to the very end.
- Ensure that a long term maintenance scheme is put in place for non-adopted public spaces.

Key Questions:

- Is public space integral to the development and does it have a purpose?
- Have the public spaces been designed as multi functional green infrastructure?
- Is the open space well designed, robust and enhanced through the incorporation of seating, play equipment or public art?
- Are open spaces accessible, overlooked and do they feel safe?
- Is there suitable children's play provision on site, or is there good access to an existing play area nearby?
- Are adequate transitions provided between public and private spaces through the use of hard and soft landscaping?
- Are suitable management arrangements in place?

Objective

To create people-friendly streets that allow for necessary vehicular access without giving preference to motor vehicles



See Manual for Streets which sets out detailed guidance on designing streets as places for people:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets

Streets should not be primarily designed to meet the needs of motor traffic (TAN18: Transport)

Streets as Places

11.1 In the past, highway requirements have had a significant impact upon the layout, appearance and functioning of residential developments. This is acknowledged by 'Manual for Streets':

"For too long the focus has been on the movement function of residential streets. The result has often been places that are dominated by motor vehicles to the extent that they fail to make a positive contribution to the quality of life." (Manual for Streets, p7)

Example of past development based on highway standards alone that has no sense of place and which discourages walking and cycling.

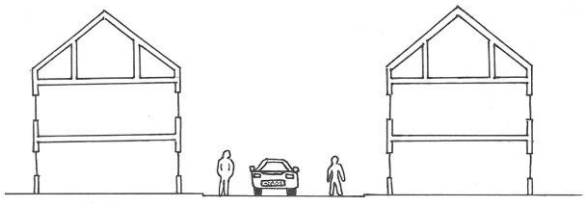
11.2 All schemes should be designed in accordance with the suite of Manual for Streets documents which emphasises that **streets are places primarily for people**. Schemes based on the now defunct 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' will not be accepted. Social life is concentrated on streets – they are places for meeting, playing and relaxing, not just the sole preserve of vehicles. **Therefore streets should be designed as places first.** Vehicle movements should then be accommodated via a stepped hierarchy of speeds with integrated measures to ensure that vehicles do not exceed 20mph outside homes.

11.3 To achieve pedestrian orientated legible streets, the emphasis should be on the desired street character rather than highway function. Therefore streets should be classified as follows (see images left):

1. **Avenues/ High Streets** providing the main movement framework and public transport provision. These should be made legible by a greater front to front width incorporating trees and taller buildings to provide differentiation from general streets.
2. **Streets** providing the wider movement network (can also include trees and parking where appropriate).
3. **Mews/Lanes** providing access only environments.

Aerial photograph of a recent residential development showing avenues, streets, lanes, courtyards and focal spaces

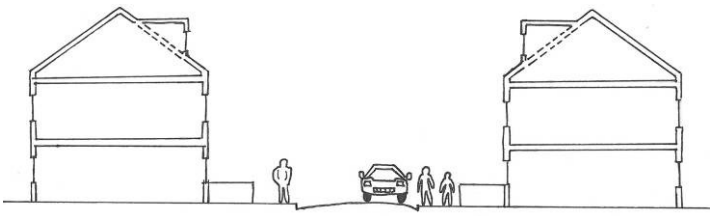
Mews/Lane:



Typical Characteristics:

Smaller units with no frontage boundary, informal layout with minimal or no kerb upstand to allow walking in carriageway. Low traffic volume and speeds.

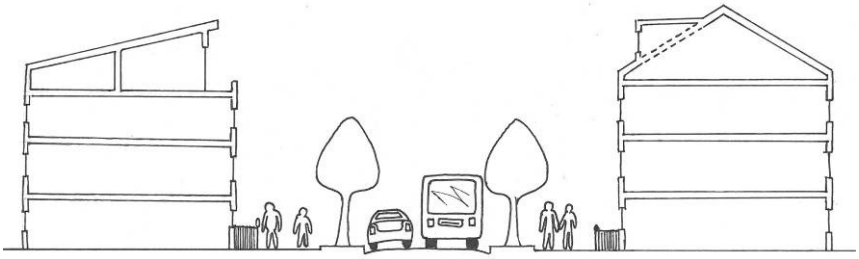
Residential Street:



Typical Characteristics:

2 storey houses fronted by front gardens, standard footway and highway dimensions, residential access up to 20 mph.

Avenue/High Street (mixed use):



Typical Characteristics:

Taller buildings with minimal or no frontage boundary, tree planting at intervals with on-street parking bays between, wider footways to accommodate more pedestrians, high traffic volume up to 30mph.

Here street trees and lighting columns have been placed in a soft buffer strip on the edge of the carriageway to create a softer, greener streetscene which does not obstruct the footway.

Narrow footways can restrict the free flow of passing people resulting in a poor pedestrian experience. Narrow footways in conjunction with lighting columns and signs abutting the road edge can lead to further issues of obstruction and may force certain groups such as buggy or wheelchair users out onto the road.

Here the lighting columns abut boundary walls which obtains the maximum footway width and reduces street clutter.

Streets as Places

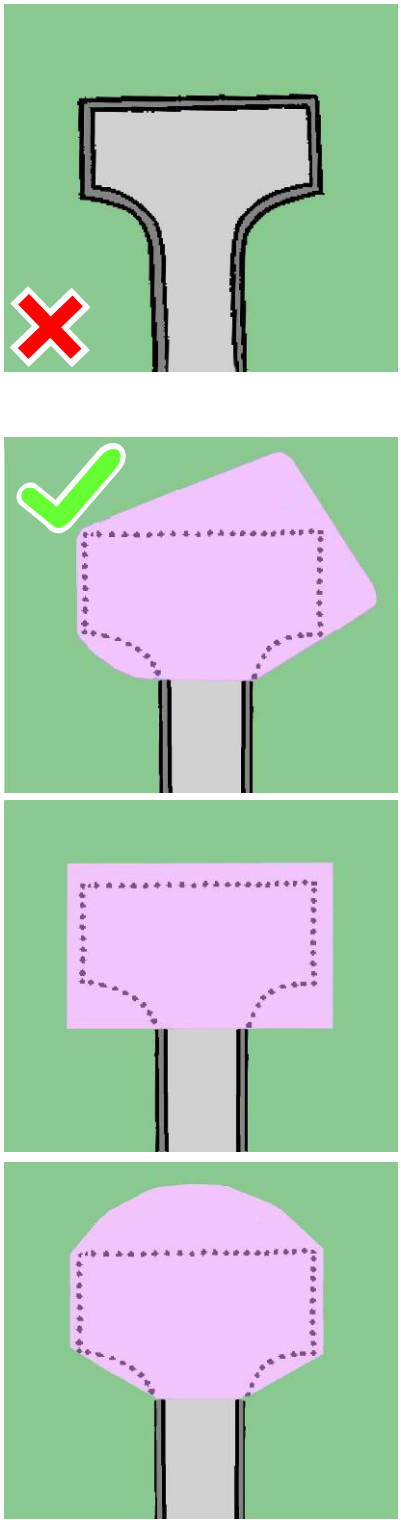
11.4 Once a connected hierarchy of streets has been established and the main spaces identified, then the desired character of each street should be determined. Any necessary highway requirements should then be incorporated. **Overly engineered schemes or layouts led by highway requirements will not be considered acceptable.**

11.5 Junctions are key locations in the street network. They should be designed as spaces and not dominated by visibility splays.

11.6 In order to reduce the visual dominance of highways (particularly within focal spaces and turning areas), **engineering requirements should be designed into spaces but 'hidden' within shared space areas to create spaces that reinforce the character of the development.** This can be achieved using shared surfaces with defined safe areas for vulnerable pedestrians. Tree planting can also be used to soften the appearance of streets, add visual interest and seasonality, provide shade and protection, reduce surface water run off, and provide habitats for birds and other wildlife. In all instances every item of street furniture provided must have a purpose in order to minimise visual 'clutter'. Street design should also be contextual, for example in some rural locations such as Gower and Mawr it will not be appropriate to use standard concrete kerbs, whilst in other locations it may not be appropriate to design standard parallel kerb alignments. In all areas the choice and location of street furniture should:

- Contribute to the place and/or route functions of the street.
- Relate and make a positive contribution to the streetscape and fabric of the neighbourhood at large.
- Be necessary, functional and suitable to the place.
- Contribute towards a de-cluttered environment.
- Improve the legibility of the area; assisting users to read and navigate the space.
- Support walking and cycling.
- Support and coordinate with other sustainable transport measures e.g. cycle hire and car club bays.
- Be easily maintained.
- Be accessible and easy to use.
- Enhance the accessibility of the area.
- Be durable and provide a long lasting contribution.

Designing Turning Heads for residential development

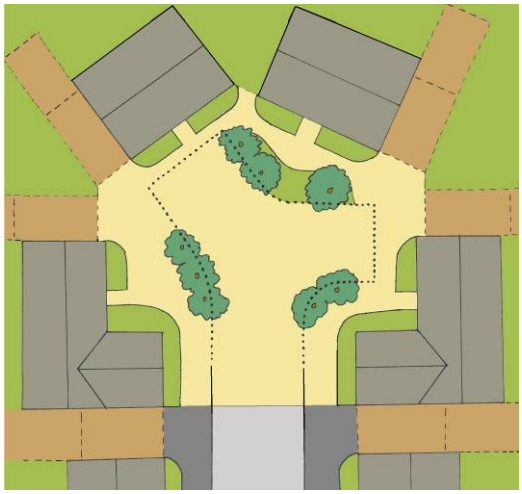


Turning heads can be incorporated into a variety of different shaped spaces to create more people friendly environments.

Turning Heads

11.7 In some circumstances it may not be possible to provide a fully connected street layout resulting in the need for a turning head. However these should not be designed as overly engineered road spaces but should instead be embraced as opportunities to provide pedestrian friendly places.

Above: Example of a turning head designed as a place—turning space area is defined by buildings and planting rather than relying on overly engineered carriageway and kerbs etc. This approach allows the turning head to be hidden within the overall treatment of the space to create a more people orientated development.



Left: Turning heads can also be shaped into different forms if required to accommodate housing within irregular or constrained areas.

Note: innovative and non standard design must still be safe and accessible to all vehicles. Therefore in these instances additional information such as an 'Autotrack' assessment which tests the turning and movement of service vehicles may be required.

Streets as Places

Shared Spaces

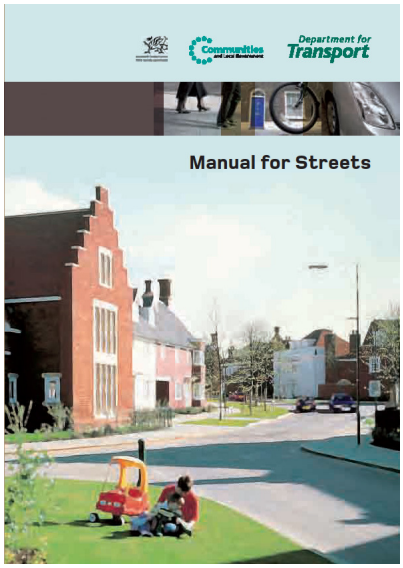
11.8 In many new developments there will likely be opportunities to adopt a HomeZones or shared space approach where the street is designed to integrate socialising, safe movement areas for vulnerable pedestrians, tree planting, appropriate play, slower movement of vehicles and also car parking. Schemes can be based on HomeZone principles without seeking formal designation. All shared space areas should include a clear transition from the standard highway in order to highlight the different nature of the space. These should take the form of 'gateways' which include features such as raised tables, carriageway narrowings, planting, paving or signage to mark the entrance to the space.

11.9 Shared spaces are streets and areas of public realm in which all users have equal status. Shared streets have been popular and successful for around 40 years in many Northern European countries and involve the introduction of features which influence driver behaviour to reduce vehicle speeds to levels more appropriate to residential environments. Whether they are informal or formally adopted as Home Zones, the principles governing the physical design of such streets and spaces are the same:

- Motorists should feel that they have left the normal highway and have entered an area where they are a 'guest' and can expect to find people who are using the whole of the street.
- A shared street is much more than a "typical" 20mph zone. Within a 20mph zone vehicles still retain their priority over pedestrians and there is usually a typical road and footway. In comparison a shared street may be a flush surface using block paving that demarks a safe area for vulnerable pedestrians .
- Shared streets take many forms including streets, squares, cul-de-sacs etc.
- Buildings, planting, trees and surfacing should define shared street spaces, rather than conventional kerb edges and carriageways.
- Features should create self-enforcing low vehicle speeds.
- Good shared streets are designed to encourage a high level of social interaction between residents and particular attention should be given to the needs of children and disabled people.

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Movement
- Access
- Character



See Manual for Streets which sets out detailed guidance on designing streets as places for people:

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Principles

- At the outset develop a hierarchal network of spaces (avenues, streets, lanes and courtyards) and consider how movement relates to them.
- Design streets as accessible spaces for people and not in response to the rigid geometry of road design.
- Create safe, accessible, enjoyable places with priority for pedestrians and where vehicles are carefully managed.
- Encourage social interaction through the provision of places to meet, sit and play
- Integrate new tree planting wherever possible provided that this does not limit natural surveillance or existing CCTV coverage.
- Discourage high levels of through traffic (except by public transport) in residential areas by careful design of connected layout.
- Slow traffic on residential network (maximum design speed is 20mph) through the arrangement of buildings and spaces (including where appropriate a shared streets/Home Zones approach), positioning of trees and planting, bollards and other street furniture.
- Shared streets and Home Zones should include clear definition of the safe pedestrian area.
- Street furniture should be agreed with the Council and clutter should be minimised.

Key Questions

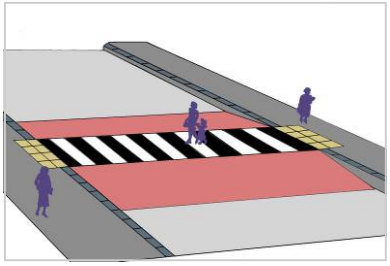
- Does the building layout take priority over the streets and car parking, so that the highways do not dominate?
- Are streets and spaces defined by a well structured building layout and animated with a mix of front entrances and uses?
- Does the design of the development limit vehicles speeds so that streets are pedestrian and cycle friendly?
- Are streets defined by a coherent hierarchy?
- Is the street hierarchy designed contextually to give appropriate regard to the different needs of pedestrians, cycle users and vehicle drivers?
- Does the development comply with the principles of inclusive design?

Objective
To create inclusive residential environments and homes which maximise mobility and foster a sense of independence for all people.

Inclusive Places

12.1 Inclusive environments should be easy for everyone to use. They should maximise everyone's ability to move freely, efficiently and safely around the environment, and encourage feelings of confidence when doing so. In order to create fully inclusive environments both houses and streets should be designed to address the needs of all. This does not mean designers should attempt to meet every single need but aim to break down any unnecessary barriers and exclusion through design.

Streets and Public Spaces (Public Realm)



Raising carriageways to provide level pedestrian crossings provides a better pedestrian experience for all users.

12.2 Inclusively designed streets and public spaces will accommodate the differing needs and expectations of all those who use them. They will enable people to feel comfortable and safe when moving around by giving them control over the pace at which they move, how they gather information, and how they interact with other users of the space.

12.3 Inclusive design recognises the diversity of people and should not impose barriers. Legible design which makes it easier for people to work out where they are and where they are going is especially helpful. Not only does it minimise the length of journeys by avoiding wrong turns but for some it may also make journeys possible to accomplish in the first place.

Street furniture should not be placed in locations which impede pedestrian movement or would cause a hazardous obstruction.

12.4 There are certain key components that are critical to the provision of inclusive, accessible streets and public spaces. These are:

- Priority for Pedestrians
- Appropriate Traffic Speed
- Logical Layout and Reference Points
- Clearly Defined, Obstacle Free, Pedestrian Routes
- Pedestrian Crossings
- Visual and Tactile Contrast
- Good Quality Lighting
- Maintenance and Management Procedures

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Movement
- Access
- Layout
- Community Safety
- Design Evolution

12.5 The kerbed separation of footway and carriageway can offer protection to pedestrians in finding their way around, but kerbs can also present barriers for some (e.g. blind or partially sighted people, wheelchair users, people who use walking frames or those with small children in prams or pushchairs). At junctions and other key locations, such as school or community building entrances, there are benefits in considering bringing the carriageway up flush with the footway to allow people to cross on one level. Walking and crossing surfaces also need to be smooth and free from trip hazards. Irregular surfaces, such as cobbles, are a barrier to some pedestrians and are unlikely to be appropriate for large expanses of surfacing in residential areas.

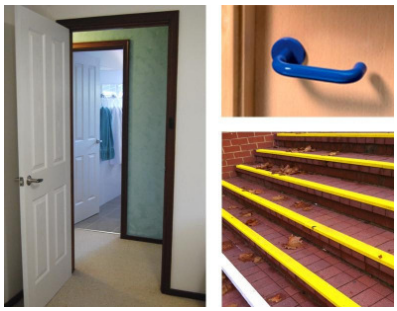
Wide pavements can accommodate a number of people side by side and help to better facilitate sign language conversations.

12.6 If carefully incorporated into the design, street furniture may also be used to enhance delineation between preferred uses within the public realm, to provide protection and to influence the flow of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Street furniture is typically sited on footways and can be a hazard and obstruction for blind or partially-sighted people, wheelchair users and people who use walking frames. Obstructions on the footway should be minimised to provide a clearly defined and convenient pedestrian route.

12.7 Footway widths can also be varied between different streets to take account of pedestrian volumes and composition. Streets where people walk in groups or near schools or shops, for example, need wider footways. In areas of high pedestrian flow, the quality of the walking experience can deteriorate unless sufficient width is provided. Furthermore when walking together in conversation; Sign language users will tend to maintain a wider distance for clear visual communication. The proper design of circulation and gathering spaces enable signers to move through space uninterrupted.

Provision of frequent seating in appropriate locations can provide rest stops and help to foster street activity.

12.8 Seating is necessary to provide rest points for pedestrians, particularly those with mobility or visual impairments and older people, and extra seating should be considered where people congregate, such as squares, local shops and schools. Seating on key pedestrian routes should be considered every 100m to provide rest points and to encourage street activity and the concept of a 'lifetime neighbourhood'.



Colour contrast can be used to highlight hazards, handles and switches or to signify changes in surroundings such as moving between rooms.

Curved corners give deaf residents a greater visual field to see around them. Curved corners are also generally more aesthetically pleasing.

Open plan rooms provide greater visual connection between different areas to facilitate sign language conversations. Transparent or translucent walls can also increase visual connectedness whilst providing structure to rooms.

Inclusive Places

In and around the home

12.9 To enable more people to remain in their homes if they become disabled, new build housing should ideally be built for adaptation for wheelchair users. It is appropriate that wheelchair adaptable housing is provided in larger schemes, close to public transport and community facilities.

12.10 The requirement for providing accessible homes is set out in Part M of the Building Regulations 2012. However newly constructed homes in Wales are also subject to assessment under the Code for Sustainable Homes method. An option as a part of this is to provide homes which meet the 'Lifetime Homes' standard (http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/revised-design-criteria.html). This is a 16 point criteria which goes beyond the requirements of Part M and allows for the easier adaptation of dwellings for wheelchair use. Achieving the Lifetime Homes criteria can be significant in meeting the required points to pass the mandatory requirement for the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Homes for blind and partially sighted people

12.11 As a basic rule designers should ensure that there is adequate space to enable simple and direct circulation routes within all rooms. Simple, logical design of all external and internal layouts will assist orientation.

12.12 The design should aim to achieve consistency of form and placing of key items so that switches and sockets are at the same height and locations in rooms, door and window handles are consistently located and hot and cold taps are on the same sides etc.

12.13 Providing bigger, bolder and brighter contrasts between adjacent surfaces, potential hazards and their background, and controls on appliances and their background is a general principle to be applied. Contrasts can be enhanced by creating differences in brightness or differences in colour/hue, or both. However, care should be taken to avoid a garish appearance.

12.14 Similarly, large areas of highly polished reflective surfaces and finishes should be avoided whenever possible as they may become a source of glare. Finishes should generally be comfortable to the touch for people 'feeling' their way.

12.15 The use of different front door/gate colours, different brick shades for different blocks of housing, colour themes for

Key questions

- Does the scheme create any barriers to inclusive design?
- Does the design provide legible routes clear from obstructions?
- Are footways of sufficient width?
- Are crossings at key junctions and locations flush with the footway?
- Is sufficient seating provided to provide rest stops?
- Are adequate colour contrasts provided to provide legibility and highlight potential hazards etc?
- Are new homes sufficiently adaptable for future wheelchair use?
- Is lighting sufficient and controllable to reduce eye strain?
- Does the design of dwelling maximise clear sightlines between different areas?
- Do dwellings meet the Lifetime Homes Standard?

different storeys in communal corridors can also assist in wayfinding or determining location.

Homes for d/Deaf and hard of hearing people

12.16 Designs should allow clear sightlines to maximise opportunities to communicate visually with family members as well as to extend sensory awareness.

12.17 Poor lighting conditions are major contributors to the causes of eye fatigue that can lead to a loss of concentration and even physical exhaustion. Dimmer switch lighting and architectural elements used to control daylight can be configured to provide a soft, diffused light which reduces eye strain.

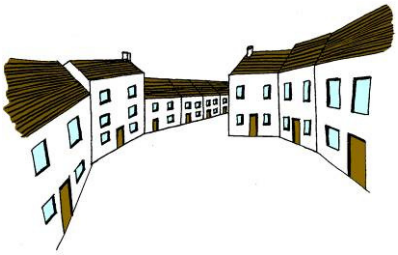
12.18 The following aspects of the design can be applied to improve visual connections and daily living:

- An open floor plan and wide hallways that will facilitate sign language conversations – kitchens which visually accessible to adjacent rooms are particularly important;
- Use of partial walls;
- Wooden floors – so banging can be felt from other rooms;
- Use of building materials such as clouded glass instead of brick, concrete, or drywall, to create privacy and still feel open;
- Use curved corners instead of right-angled walls or sharp turns;
- Select colours on floors as not to confuse a d/Deaf person's wide vision range;
- The incorporation of visual communication features – These building will include a video door buzzer as well as visual fire and carbon monoxide alarms.

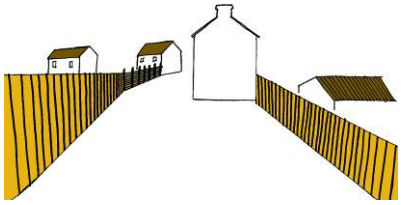
Principles:

- Incorporate inclusive design from the outset—it is not an ‘optional extra’ or add on.
- Equal and convenient access should be provided for everyone.
- Design places to foster a culture of inclusion.
- Design in flexibility, so different people can use a development differently.

Objective
To create buildings that are of human scale, which respond to the context and which form a high quality townscape.



Dwellings respond positively to the public realm with multiple windows and doors providing access and activity.



Poor response to design with limited doors and windows overlooking public realm and long lengths of blank frontage as a result of fencing .

Buildings

13.1 The manner in which buildings are positioned and joined should define and give character to the avenues, streets, lanes and spaces, plus respond to the valued elements of local character. This should emphasise the human scale, define public and private areas, create interest, aid navigation and minimise the visual impact of parked cars. Taken together the buildings form a 'townscape' and this approach is relevant in all urban, rural and sub-urban locations.

Townscape

13.2 Whilst the planning process focuses on two dimensional plans, it is important to consider the real life experience of moving through a place and the oblique views experienced, whether as a resident or as a visitor. The starting point should be windows and doors facing the street (known as active frontages) to make a place feel lived in and safe.

13.3 Successful residential environments are generally made up of a sequence of spaces connected by streets and lanes. It is important that the streets are interesting and easy to navigate. If the buildings and streets are very similar with little building variation then the place lacks distinctiveness and the journeys through it become less enjoyable, appear longer and may be disorientating. This has the effect of discouraging people from walking which has numerous negative effects on residential areas. Therefore consideration should be given to the changing viewing experiences as you move through a place in order to create memorable townscape and places which make the public realm more inclusive and accessible.

13.4 The main townscape features which should be applied to residential areas to create variety and interest are:

- **Views along the street**
- **Contrast in the streetscene**
- **Corners**

A focal house that is taller (with rooms in the roof) to close the view, whilst the house to the right of it leads the eye round the corner.

Applicable to all types of residential development (Detached, Semi-detached, terraced)

Inappropriate responses to vistas:

Blank side elevation of dwellings

Long length of boundary treatment. In particular close boarded fencing is not considered appropriate to any publicly visible boundaries.

Front or side driveways

In this example, the view is closed, but the buildings indicate that the route continues

Views along the street

13.5 The view along a street is usually framed by the buildings to either side and this is known as a 'vista'. In many situations this vista remains unbroken until the street ends at a junction or where it meets the site boundary or other obstruction. If this happens the view beyond is closed off and becomes a 'closed vista'.

13.6 Views down typical residential streets must be carefully considered to ensure that the character and appearance of the development is maintained.

13.7 Views down streets should not terminate at the blank side elevations of dwellings, boundary treatments or at driveways between the fronts (and/or sides) of adjacent dwellings (see left). Dwelling frontages, detailed side elevations and appropriate planting or locally significant buildings or structures which close the view will be welcomed.

13.8 In certain locations it may be appropriate to leave the view open. This could include the opening up of views to a wider landscape of interest or a significant landscape feature such as a mature tree.

13.9 Another element of the view along a street is the deflected view (see bottom left). This is most common in curving streets where the buildings follow the curvature, leading the eye towards yet unseen views, thereby creating interest and intrigue. Curving streets often follow features such boundaries and natural contours. Given that this creates an informal feel to the layout, it is considered more appropriate to suburban locations. It will also be important to consider how

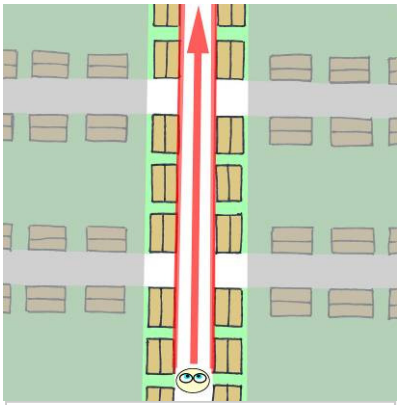
Appropriate responses to vistas (see text above)

More applicable to closely spaced types of residential development (Semi-detached, terraced) or where the road width is limited

Buildings

Contrast in the streetscene

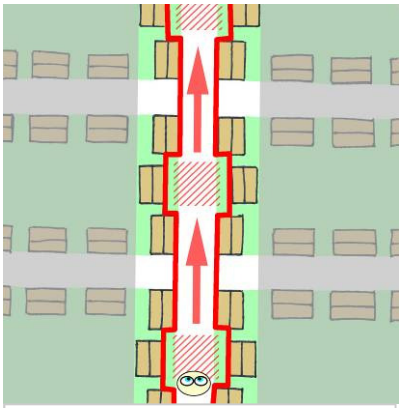
13.10 Long residential streets comprising of flat facades and limited detailing create bland environments which encourage higher vehicle speeds and discourage pedestrian activity in the street. This is because the eye of the driver is quickly drawn forward along the flat, straight surfaces of the building facades without any form of visual break.



Long straight building line with flat building facades creates a visual tunnelling effect which increases movement speeds.

13.11 In many instances it will be desirable to introduce some contrast and variation into the streetscene. There are many ways of doing this and it may reflect the wider established context. Examples of contrast in the streetscene include individual or reoccurring building details such as a projecting gable or bay, a building of different function, height, design or materials to stand out from those around it. Contrast can also be created through providing varying pavement widths on opposing sides of the street, the inclusion of small scale space which widens out from the street or a slight change in direction of the street. When considering these approaches a sun path model can help in determining the appropriate locations of such features. Contrast may also include providing trees to green the street and contrast with the buildings around them. In some instances the contrast in the streetscene may be used as a visual pinch point to help slow vehicles.

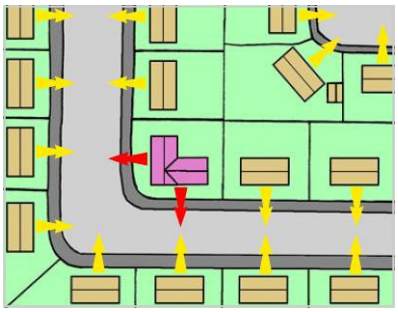
13.12 The principle of building variation should not be used to justify inappropriate and non-contextual designs.

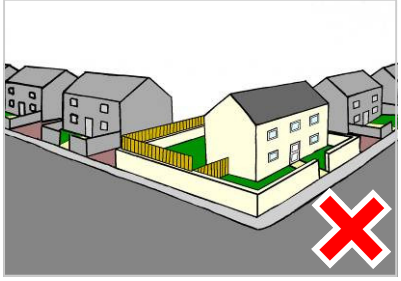


Staggered building line helps to break up tunnelling effect by creating small spaces which provide visual pauses.

Local examples of building detailing in Swansea— gables & bay windows

Applicable to all types of residential development (Detached, Semi-detached, terraced)





Corners

12.13 Corner plots differ from typical mid street plots in that they provide two public frontages onto the street.

12.14 Unfortunately the indiscriminate use of standard house types and a 'one size fits all' approach to residential design has resulted in a high number of housing developments which adopt the same approach to corner plots as they do to single frontage plots rather than maximising the opportunities presented by the corner location. This results in dwellings which front onto one street only and present blank side elevations and/or private boundary treatments onto the other. This results in a poor image of the street and reduces opportunities for natural surveillance.

12.15 Dwellings located on corner plots should be designed 'turn the corner' with a well designed frontage that includes windows to habitable room onto public areas to create interest and allow surveillance. Generally the orientation of corner dwellings should respect the overall road hierarchy with the principal elevation fronting onto the more primary street.

12.16 In some instances it may also be appropriate to increase the height of the dwelling to emphasise the corner. Appropriate increases in height should be undertaken through taking cues from the context of the surrounding streets.

Corner houses can adopt a variety of architectural styles, but they always have side windows and often step up in height

Buildings

Example of contrast in the streetscene achieved through a change in scale and materials.

Variations of building orientation, elevational detailing and materials can add townscape interest if undertaken as part of an overall integrated approach to streetscene design.

A building set back to create a front garden area can also be given character through the use of front boundaries.

Principles:

- Where the scale, massing, height and building line of existing buildings are strong local features, this should be reflected, especially on the edges of sites to link into the existing context
- Ensure that the massing and height of buildings pay regard to overshadowing and overlooking of adjacent properties and garden areas.
- Utilise an appropriate range of building forms such as terraces, semi-detached and detached to create interest as part of an overall composition. Marginal increases in height along a street, narrowings, set backs and appropriate townscape techniques can also be used deliberately to add interest and variety.
- Ensure buildings, streets and places are of a human scale to encourage walking and cycling and reinforce 20mph maximum design speeds.
- Use the layout, building form and sense of enclosure to create streets and spaces with a sense of place/ local identity that are easy to find your way around. These should reflect the status of the street or space in the overall movement network. Thus important routes such as avenues should be wider with taller buildings, whilst access only lanes may be narrow with low buildings.
- There is no need for building frontages across a street or public area to be 21m apart. This is an outdated standard which does not make best use of land, and can compromise the sense of place created by enclosing and defining strong edges to streets. The minimum front to front separation distance across the public realm and streets should be 10m. Where this minimum distance is applied to streets these should form part of the lowest of branch of the hierarchical highway movement network (e.g. mews streets).

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Character
- Scale
- Appearance
- Environmental Sustainability

Two very different examples of strong corners with a change in scale and more than one public elevation. Note that rear elevations will also be visible at corners.

- Ensure that the roofscape pays regard to overall composition, especially where highly visible (such as in skyline locations or where there are views down onto a site).
- Maximise active frontages with doors that are easy to find and habitable room windows facing the street and public areas. Avoid long stretches of blank walls.
- It is vital to enclose space at corners and create definition, as these are very important locations within the movement network. Corner buildings have at least two public elevations, and could be minor landmarks emphasised by scale and/or detailed design.
- Orientate routes to focus on landmark buildings and important views. Where appropriate, deflected views can be used to create interest by creating a sense of anticipation of yet unseen views.
- Existing landmarks should be reinforced or new ones created to generate visual interest.
- New landmarks do not have to be taller; a change of design or material; or a different land use (especially public uses) also make buildings stand out and help give character to an area.

Key Questions:

- Does the scale of buildings respond positively to the area?
- Does the massing of buildings reinforce the street hierarchy?
- Does the scheme have a human scale and well defined streets and spaces?
- Does the layout and townscape make the scheme memorable and easy to navigate?

Objective

To create safe and secure places with effective natural surveillance.

Front gardens and boundaries provide a buffer between the home and the street

All areas of public realm, such as this dock-side walkway should be well overlooked by development and suitable buffer areas should be provided.

Blank Side elevations onto the public realm do not provide opportunities for natural surveillance

Community Safety

14.1 Inherent to sustainable place making is the creation of living environments which feel and are safe. This is underpinned by a connected street network which can generate good levels of passing surveillance and continuous frontages whereby dwellings overlook the public realm and rear gardens are secure.

14.2 New development should not have an adverse effect on crime and disorder in adjoining existing developments. A minimum level of security and safety should be considered for all developments and it is recommended that all schemes apply for Secured by Design accreditation.

14.3 The appropriate level of permeability in a new development will be informed by a variety of factors such as the relationship to facilities which generate or attract pedestrian movement (for example schools and shops); the site characteristics (including topography); the overall design concept and the local crime context. The use of cul-de-sacs should be fully justified and must be short with good levels of natural surveillance. Gated communities will generally be resisted and will only be considered where it can be proven that they are needed for safety and security reasons.

14.4 Areas to the front of properties are semi private by being visually and physically accessible to passing public. They should form a 'buffer' to public areas such as streets and open spaces.

14.5 It is important to provide a clear distinction between private and public areas. Blocks of residential development should generally enclose back-to-back private gardens. Communal areas around residential developments should restrict access to residents only through the use of lockable doors or gates with intercom facilities. All private areas should be fully enclosed and access should be controlled through the use of lockable gates.

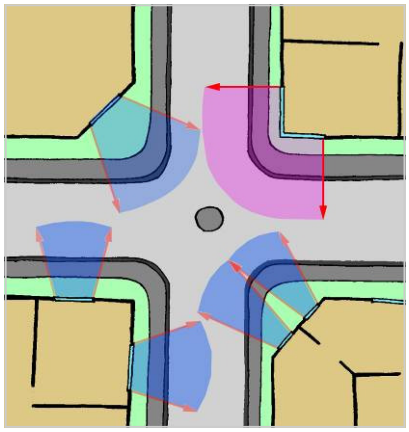
14.6 Windowless elevations or long lengths of blank walls adjacent to streets, publicly accessible space or parking courts should be avoided as these provide opportunities for crime (see paragraphs 12.14 to 12.16 for further details).

14.7 Fences, trees and other features should not obscure entrances, provide hiding places or easy access to upper floor windows or over boundaries.

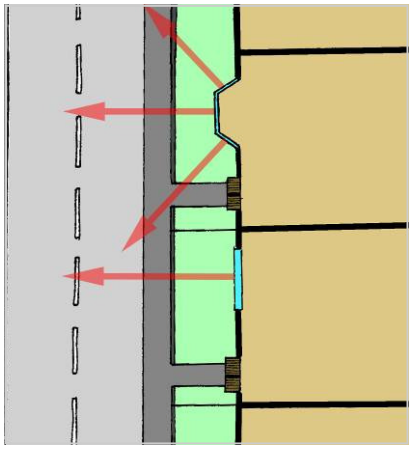
14.8 Further information can be found in the Supplementary Planning Guidance document - **'Planning for Community Safety' (December 2012)** developed jointly by the City and County of Swansea Council and South Wales Police.

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Community Safety



Corner Windows offer better views of the public realm and greater opportunities for passing natural surveillance



Bay Windows offer more viewing angles of the public realm and greater opportunities for passing natural surveillance

Principles:

- Design buildings to face onto streets to make the place feel safer. There should be eyes on the street including at corners and gable ends.
- Provide a critical mass of frontages facing onto public spaces to maximise natural surveillance.
- Make the primary means of access for all dwellings from the streets, including flats. Entrances should be visible, accessible and frequent along the street to provide life, interest and activity.
- Avoid unnecessary rear access and ensure where it is provided it is secure.
- Provide a mix of uses, dwelling sizes and types to encourage activity throughout the day and evening thereby lengthening the period of natural surveillance.
- Design for community safety (see Community Safety SPG and www.securedbydesign.com).
- Avoid places of concealment throughout the development. Particular care needs to be taken at building entrances and along pedestrian routes.
- Avoid long lengths of garages, blank walls and bin stores as these deaden the street.
- Avoid footpaths which are not open, well lit and overlooked.
- Ensure that planting is compatible with community safety and does not reduce opportunities for a good level of surveillance to all public areas.

Key questions

- Do public spaces and pedestrian/cycle routes follow the street network, benefit from adequate natural surveillance and will they feel safe?
- Do buildings feature defensible space around them and do they turn the corner?
- Is back to back protection provided through the use of perimeter blocks or similar techniques?

Objective

To provide well designed private and semi-private open space for all dwellings, appropriate to the design character of the area.

Privacy and amenity

15.1 Whilst the starting point for the design and layout of residential developments should be the urban design principles outlined earlier in this guide, consideration must also be given to meeting privacy and amenity standards. No matter how well designed a streetscene, if the gardens are too small or if residents feel they lack privacy then the quality of life will be diminished.

15.2 It is important to separate public from private space within residential neighbourhoods. Front garden areas form a privacy buffer between the street and ground floor windows. Furthermore they provide space for planting to 'soften' the public realm whilst also allowing residents to express their individuality. Depending on rear access arrangements these areas may also have to accommodate cycle and refuse/ recycling storage. The size of front gardens will vary according to the existing/ desired character of an area, building lines and the density of the proposed development. Front boundary treatments such as walls or railings are an important element of integrating schemes into the existing streetscene.

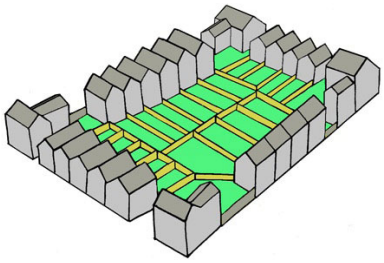
Example of how even small front gardens can add interest and allow for personalisation

15.3 Back gardens are private spaces, but where they abut public spaces, they are less secure and also less private. The need to enclose private rear gardens with boundary walls detracts from the appearance, life and security of public areas, therefore the best way to define, separate and secure public from private spaces is to use the buildings themselves. Rear gardens should be secure, whilst building fronts should face each other across the public realm.

Front boundaries should also contribute to the character of the public realm

15.4 Private gardens should take into account orientation and overhanging trees. North facing gardens should be longer to provide an unshaded area of garden.

15.5 In higher density urban locations with good access to open spaces, there may be scope to consider family housing with reduced garden provision and instead make use of high quality communal areas. This approach has been applied in the Swansea Point and SA1 regeneration areas.



Example of a 'perimeter block' layout where the rear gardens abut one another

15.6 Balconies should be provided wherever possible for flats above ground floor level. These provide useful amenity space and add visual interest to the elevation. Where possible they should be useable with enough space for two people to sit at a small table. Where balconies cannot be provided then full height glazing (or Juliet balconies) should be provided to maximise natural lighting and outlook from the main living space.

1 bed flat (2p)	46m2
2 bed flat (3p)	59m2
2 bed house (3p)	74m2[2]
3 bed house (4p)	88m2
4 bed house (6p)	110m2

Notional internal floor areas Note that 'p' in the table above indicates the number of occupants.

No of flats	Green Bags (glass/ tins/ card-board)	Pink Bags (plastic)	Black Bag (landfill)
5	1 bin of 770 l	1 bin of 770 l	1 bin of 770
10	1 bin of 1100 l	1 bin of 1100 l	1 bin of 1100 l
15	2 bins of 1100 l	2 bins of 1100 l	2 bins of 1100 l
20	3 bins of 1100 l	3 bins of 1100 l	3 bins of 1100 l

Waste and Recycling storage The basic requirement for external waste and recycling storage is 2 green bags, 1 pink bag and 1 landfill bag in Swansea per house. However in flats the minimum communal provision must be made as indicated above.

Footnotes:

[1] ***Building The Homes And Communities Britain Needs**, The Future Homes Commission (Oct 2012)*

[2] Note that the Acceptable Cost Guidance/On-Costs for use with SHG Funded Housing in Wales (2012) indicates 83m2 for a 4 person 2 bedroom house. The figure of 74m2 represents a 3 person 2 bedroom house and is taken from 'A New Approach to Housing Standards' Levitt Bernstein (2010)

Space inside the home

15.7 Studies have revealed that only one in four people would consider buying a home built in the last 10 years, due mostly to inadequate room sizes[1]. Therefore a quality public realm and building design should be combined with quality internal living environments to create homes that are good to look at *and* live in. This means that homes should have a convenient layout for everyday living with adequate storage and space to move about. Therefore reference should be made to the floor space table (top left) which is largely based on the Welsh Housing Quality Standards. There are considered to be tried and tested space standards which are a valid reference for all developments and not just for affordable homes.

Waste and recycling

15.8 With a move to fortnightly refuse collections and recyclables, there is a greater need for external storage areas. This should be addressed at the planning stage especially in the case of terraced houses where rear access may not be possible as well as apartment developments with communal storage bins. Reference should be made to the current requirements in the City and County of Swansea (see left). All refuse storage areas visible from the public realm should well integrated into the streetscene.

Example of housing development successfully incorporating waste and cycle storage into the front amenity area of homes

Privacy and amenity

Protection of residential amenity

15.9 Residential amenity should be considered in terms of overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing. These factors have a strong bearing on the quality of life of residents which is a central premise of sustainable development.

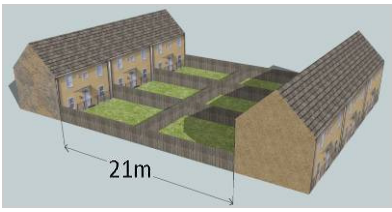
15.10 Adherence to separation distances will not on its own lead to good place making. It must be balanced against making best use of land and achieving good design solutions. The established rules of thumb for back-to-back privacy distances will be taken as a starting point for assessing relationships and will take into account factors such as site character, density and local character. In higher density schemes and innovative schemes it may be possible to achieve appropriate privacy through design and screening rather than physical separation. However this must be demonstrated.

The importance of gardens

15.11 In a survey undertaken by RIBA, 47% of respondents ranked outside space (gardens and balconies) as the most important aspect of a home[1]. However many new residential developments often have poor or awkward outdoor amenity provision. Garden sizes should therefore be appropriate to the dwelling size. Given the need for privacy levels between homes, garden sizes are often determined by separation distances (see below). As an absolute minimum, garden sizes should be the same size as the footprint of the house which they serve (provided that these also meet the below standards).

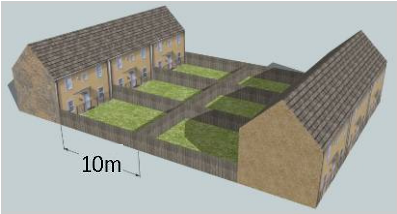
15.12 In addition to providing adequate space, it is important to ensure that outdoor amenity provision is useable (i.e. provide adequate space for, sitting, outdoor dining, garden items (sheds etc) plus sufficient space for potential rear extensions or future conservatories.

'Back to back' relationships:



15.13 A 21m back-to-back separation distance should be provided between windows to habitable rooms for 2 storey dwellings in order to provide adequate privacy within the home.

15.14 The relationship of dwellings across the public realm such as streets will be determined on a case by case basis with regard to the character of the locality.



'Back to garden' relationships:

15.15 Elevations with windows to habitable rooms at first floor level should be set back by 10m from the common boundary. This is to avoid overlooking of adjacent garden/ amenity space.

Back to side' relationships:

15.16 To avoid an overbearing impact on habitable rooms and gardens, a 15m minimum distance should be achieved between existing windowed elevations and opposing proposed (windowless walls. Where this relationship exists between two proposed dwellings then the separation can be reduced to 12m.

15.17 Where a design-led solution is utilised to avoid issues of overlooking, considerations of overbearing and overshadowing are still relevant. Therefore regard should be given to the BRE standards which relate to rights to light. For more information please the Building Research Establishment (BRE) document—'Site and Layout Planning for Daylighting and Sunlight'.

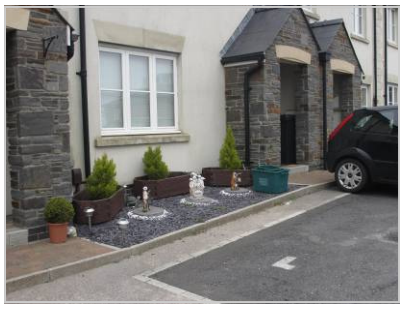
Where there is a level difference and distances are increased, the lower home should have the longer garden to compensate for any slopes or retaining structures.

Relationships at different levels:

15.18 Where homes are set at different slab levels, or where homes over two storeys in height are proposed this can result in additional overlooking and a more overbearing impact on the lower home/garden space. Furthermore the potential need for earthworks or retaining structures can limit the useable garden areas of the lower home. and is a consideration when assessing the relationship to new and existing homes.

15.19 Therefore as a starting point, the basic separation distances set out in sections 15.13, 15.15 and 15.16 should be increased by 2m for every 1m difference in level. Where the distances are increased, this should include a longer garden for the lower home to compensate for any slopes or retaining structures. If the increased distances cannot be met then planting or a design solution may be required. In many instances, the best way to assess the relationship is by means of a drawn section.

Privacy and amenity



Principles:

- Distinguish between private and public space through appropriate enclosures to front gardens which respect the character of the area.
- Where buildings are sited closer to public or communal areas, a buffer strip (often referred to as defensible space) should generally be provided to separate habitable rooms and the public realm and to allow occupants to personalise the front of their properties.
- Design the size and form of front gardens and front boundaries in response to the character of the area. Provide appropriate planting (including trees) to make a positive contribution to the public realm.
- Provide adequate external amenity spaces in all new developments. The design concept for a scheme should determine the quality, form and level of private space provision.
- Gardens should generally have a minimum useable area of 40m² for houses and 30m² for bungalows, including a nominally level paved area no smaller than 3m x 3m, easily reached from the back door. Where sites have access to safe accessible communal areas, then the extent of garden provision could be reduced.
- Communal space for flats needs to be safe and accessible only to residents to provide for relaxation and clothes drying. It may be appropriate to reduce the level of on site amenity space for flats where there is accessible public space within 400m (5 minute walk).
- Provision for refuse and recycling storage and meter cupboards should be positively integrated and visually unobtrusive.
- Avoid backs of buildings and rear gardens facing onto streets and public spaces. ‘Backs’ should be private and face each other to form secure private gardens and courtyards.

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Layout
- Landscaping
- Community Safety

- Where rear or side boundaries abut the public realm, they must be high quality and robust to form a feature. Therefore close boarded fencing on its own will not be acceptable in locations abutting the public realm.
- Provide access to private gardens without compromising security; access to rear areas should be gated and vehicle entrances small and obviously private.
- Ensure private gardens get sunshine wherever possible. North facing gardens may require greater length.
- Allow for retention of existing trees and adequate provision of new larger growing trees, which will provide structure and setting to new development.
- For communal spaces and gardens ensure that there is a management scheme.
- Ensure that existing habitable rooms are not directly overlooked from proposed dwellings.
- Ensure that garden and amenity areas have a suitable level of privacy and openness.
- Design homes to have a convenient layout for everyday living with adequate space for storage.
- Ensure that rooms have a reasonable sense of outlook. It is not acceptable to obscure glaze a habitable room in order to avoid overlooking issues.

Key questions:

- How does the proposal relate to the floorspace Development Quality Requirements?
- Is the amount and treatment of amenity space appropriate to the type of development and the location?
- Are private areas secure to provide privacy and stop uncontrolled entry?
- Are service areas sensitively located and well screened?
- Are buildings orientated to provide public fronts and private backs?
- Does the scheme provide an acceptable standard of residential amenity and avoid problems such as overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing impacts?

Objective

to provide appropriate parking at discreet but safe locations within the development.

Example of side drive parking spaces which are behind the building line.

An integrated approach to front boundaries can also be used to reduce the visual impact of parking areas

Example of frontage parking spaces designed to minimise the impact on the streetscene with a single space per plot, intervening walls and space for planting mature trees.

Accommodating Parking

16.1 Where and how cars are parked can have a significant impact on the quality of the residential environment. It is vital to balance the desire of residents to park as close as possible to front doors with the need to avoid parked vehicles dominating the public realm and causing highway safety issues.

16.2 Up to date guidance on the merits of the various forms of parking provision is set out in 'Manual for Streets' and 'Car Parking: What works where'. These both advocate a mixture of parking solutions which are well integrated and reinforce the character of the place. Furthermore the level of car parking required should be determined with reference to the adopted 'Car parking Standards' SPG. This identifies potential reduction in parking standards based on location and accessibility (see web link at end of document). It also specifies the minimum car park space dimensions of 4.8m by 2.6m.

16.3 The type of parking provision should respond to the context and the type of development. The merits of the various forms of parking are discussed below:

Parking on plot

16.4 On plot parking (also known as within curtilage parking) is well related to the dwellings served. However forecourt parking requires buildings to be set back from the street which weakens the sense of enclosure and reduces natural surveillance of the public realm. Furthermore the streetscene becomes dominated by parked cars and hard surfacing and pedestrian access to front doors can be blocked. Therefore on plot parking should generally be located behind the building line. A typical solution is the 'side drive' between semi-detached units. In this instance the side parking spaces which have walls to either side should be at least 3.2m wide to allow car doors to be opened (a width of 3.8m is required if the parking space is for use by a wheelchair user). If necessary, continuity of frontage can be maintained by linking over at first floor level, or through the use of gates between dwellings on the building line. Where forecourt parking is proposed, this should be one side of the street only in order to maintain an adequate sense of enclosure. In this instance the forecourt parking spaces should not take up more than half of the plot width and should be combined with planting and/or front boundaries to soften the visual impact of the parked cars.

Example of acceptable integral garages where the main living space faces the street at first floor and above.

Integral garages

16.5 Dwellings with integral garages can detract from the character and quality of the streetscene. Therefore where integral garages are proposed, they should be part of a:

- mews type development which supplements the main street network;
- two storey house which is wide enough to accommodate a front door and habitable room with window onto the street at ground floor level; or
- three storey town house where the main living space is at first floor level facing the street.

Example of parking court which is well overlooked and has high quality boundaries.

Courtyard parking

16.6 Rear parking courtyards allow cars to be located away from the public realm and dwellings to be sited close to the street. However if they are inconvenient and poorly overlooked then they will not be used and may attract crime and antisocial behaviour.

16.7 It is essential that parking courts are designed as places; well overlooked, kept to a manageable size (accommodating no more than 10 parking spaces) and provide a safe accessible route must be provided between each dwelling unit and its parking space.

A variation on the parking court—a parking lane that is well overlooked with well defined boundaries.

16.8 The entrances to parking courtyards should have strong gateway treatments to discourage casual intrusion and minimise vehicular speeds. In some instances, parking courtyards may need to be gated to form a secure area. Adjacent buildings should be located and designed to directly supervise the access point. The courtyards should be separated from gardens by robust and attractive screen walls which should provide privacy and security for the private garden areas, without blocking supervision from upper floor windows. There may also be opportunities to incorporate communal space and/ or informal play provision.

Accommodating Parking

Hard paved focal spaces can often accommodate an element of communal or visitor car parking.

Parking 'squares'

16.9 Off street parking within the public realm is well related to dwellings served and well overlooked but must be designed in a quality manner as a public space.

16.10 It is essential to break up the groups of parking spaces with planting that does not hinder natural surveillance. The use suitable surfacing materials such as small unit paviours where appropriate will also be welcomed. This will allow each approach to be tailored to its specific location. Communal areas such as seats, play equipment etc can be combined into some spaces.

This parking area has been screened by a wall, softened by planting and enlivened by a series of legible and welcoming pedestrian entrances.

Parking structures

16.11 Undercroft, basement or decked parking is an efficient way of accommodating parked cars within high density residential areas. In mixed use schemes, such parking could be shared between business users and residents.

16.12 It is important that parking structures are secure and do not make street elevations 'dead' and lifeless. Often parking structures can be located behind single aspect offices or flats to provide a more appropriate frontage. Where wrapping parking area is not possible, the upstand of the basement parking area should be minimised or screened using planting. It is also essential that entrances, and pedestrian gates into such parking areas, be designed to be legible with adequate access controls to maintain security.

Visitor parking should be provided on street.

On-street parking

16.13 Manual for Streets indicates that parking should be designed into streets. This has the benefits of creating activity and being well overlooked, as well as contributing to informal traffic calming. On street parking can meet the visitor element of parking provision, plus possibly an element of shared residential provision to supplement off street provision. Parking on street should be designed to add to the character of the streetscene. The scope for incidental on street car parking can also provide for fluctuations in car ownership during the changing lives of members of a household.

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Movement
- Access
- Layout

Cycle parking in the public realm can have a simple, traditional appearance (above) or can utilise a variety of forms to create stands with a public art quality (below).

Where space permits it may be worth considering provision of a canopy or covering to protect bikes in wet weather (below).

Cycle parking

16.14 Cycle parking should be safe, secure and convenient to encourage this sustainable mode of travel. Formal public spaces are ideal locations for visitor cycle parking because they are accessible, overlooked and well lit.

16.15 Garages should be of sufficient size to accommodate cycle parking plus a family car. Where there are no garages, cycle storage could be provided in rear gardens where there is a safe and secure means of access. Alternatively, cycle provision could be built into the design of front elevations along with refuse and recycling storage – provided this does not detract from the attractiveness of the building or the street. In flatted development secure cycle storage should be provided.

Principles

- Provide car parking to suit the nature and location of the development. It may be appropriate to reduce car parking provision taking into account accessibility to facilities, availability of public transport and the potential impact on surrounding area.
- Provide convenient, covered and secure cycle parking which should generally be related to individual homes, or in the cases of flats should be related to the entrances.
- Ensure car parking is usable, safe and secure for both people and vehicles.
- Ensure parked cars do not dominate any space especially where the development density is high. Use a variety of parking solutions and changes in levels, low walls and soft landscaping to break up, limit and soften the visual impact.
- Avoid large groups of cars that can be seen from a distance.
- Use permeable surfaces to reduce surface water runoff where ground conditions are suitable.

Key Questions

- Is car parking well integrated so it complements and forms an integral element of the street scene?
- Is the car parking well overlooked and related to the dwellings served?
- Is the cycle parking safe, secure and convenient?

Objective

To create high quality building design with a distinctive sense of place

Examples of a variety of architectural styles that all relate well to the street and have a distinct sense of place

Quality and Character

17.1 This guidance does not seek to arbitrarily impose a particular architectural style. A well structured place can accommodate a variety of different architectural styles from traditional to contemporary. However all schemes must display a sense of place which make them quality places to live.

17.2 Generally, the starting point should be to take cues from the architectural traditions of the locality, know as the design context. The aim is to understand valued local character and use this to inform the design of a new place.

> *In many cases an appraisal of the local context will highlight distinctive patterns of development or landscape where the intention will be to sustain character. Appraisal is equally important in areas where patterns of development have failed to respond to context in the past. In these areas appraisal should point towards solutions which reverse the trend. (TAN12: Design para 4.5)*

17.3 This does not mean that new development should be a copy of what is around the site, but instead that new developments should reflect the positive elements of local character, possibly in a contemporary manner. These elements of character should be identified in an appraisal of the site context and could include:

- Building form
- Proportion and scale of buildings
- Shape of roofs
- Materials and colours
- Window proportions and arrangement
- Detailing
- Boundary treatments
- Degree of consistency or variation

17.4 These can be identified by a photographic survey of the area around the site. Where the site lies in a conservation area, there may be a published description that identifies the special architectural interest. For schemes in Gower, the adopted Gower Design Guide identifies the main elements of 'Gower Vernacular', whilst in Conservation Areas, the character appraisal should be the starting point.

17.5 There may be situations where there is no existing positive character which can be reflected in the site. This is not an excuse for mediocre design. Instead this provides an opportunity to improve the character and quality of the area, possibly by establishing a new contemporary character through reinterpreting forms and materials.

These examples are all considered to be quality places to live with a distinctive character. They all respond to their context, creating positive additions to the locality.

Quality and Character

17.6 It is important to take an integrated approach to the detailed design of streetscenes and the public realm. Buildings must not be treated in isolation and street materials and landscaping must not be treated as an afterthought..

17.7 White plastic meter cupboards can detract from the appearance of dwelling elevations (see images below) and as such should be situated as to best minimise their harmful visual impact on facades.

White meter boxes located on front or other prominent elevations can impact negatively on otherwise well designed elevations or streetscenes.

Key questions

- Does the character respond positively to the existing context, or is the design specific to the scheme?
- Do buildings exhibit architectural quality and improve the character and appearance of the area?
- Is the appearance and setting of any nearby historic buildings or features respected?
- Does the development feature a mix of building styles or retain any existing buildings of interest?
- Is the public realm central to the scheme?
- Does the scheme feel like a quality place to live with a distinct sense of place?

Contemporary streetscene. This award winning scheme of family homes in Essex reinterprets the local materials and forms in a modern manner.

Design and Access Statement sections:

- Scale
- Appearance
- Environmental Sustainability

Integrated development — dwelling frontages incorporating parking, bin storage areas hidden behind gabion walls and hanging bike racks incorporated into porch areas.

Integrated solar panel tiles can take a variety of forms to match different roof styles and provide a neater and less obtrusive appearance than traditional protruding solar panel sheets.

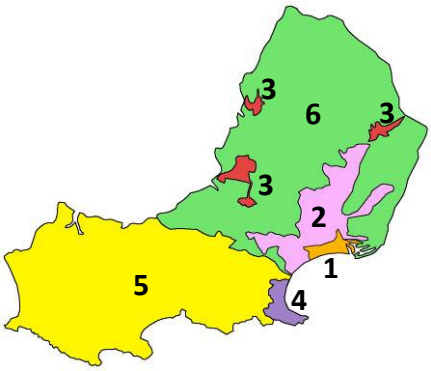
Principles

- Identify local character through site appraisals, urban design analysis and review of published sources. Address issues such as landscape, building form, layout, height, massing, details, views and important frontages.
- Establish design opportunities that reflect and enhance positive aspects of local character. Explore further beyond the immediate neighbourhood if necessary to identify local distinctiveness.
- Where the local character does not portray positive characteristics, take the opportunity to add character and quality to the neighbourhood – perhaps by adopting a contemporary approach.
- Provide well articulated elevations - the emphasis should be on well designed streetscenes rather than individual buildings.
- Ensure that the detailed design allows access for all, whilst maintaining the overall character of the scheme.
- Encourage expression and variety in architectural style allowing people to personalise and adapt their buildings where appropriate to the context and community demand.
- Treat ancillary elements such as boundaries, garaging, cycle parking and recycling/ refuse storage as an integral part of the overall design.
- Select materials carefully to reflect the best aspects of local character whilst addressing robustness, fitness for purpose and weathering. Also consider the environmental impact of materials (see www.thegreenguide.org.uk).
- Carefully detail all aspects of the external elevations in particular openings, any changes in materials, soffits, weatherboards, chimneys.
- Ensure that features responding to the Sustainable Building Standards such as photo voltaic panels, solar thermal panels, recycling storage etc are positively integrated into the overall design.

Swansea character
This section identifies some of the key characteristics of distinct areas of Swansea. This is intended to give an overview and is not a substitute for carrying out the detailed appraisal of the area around your site which should be included in the Design and Access Statement.

1. Swansea City Centre and waterfront

2. Swansea suburbs



Key:

1. City Centre
2. Suburbs
3. Northern Towns
4. Mumbles Area
5. Gower
6. Rural (Mawr)

3. Northern settlements (Gorseinon, Gowerton, Loughor)

4. Mumbles & Surrounding Settlements

5. Gower

Schemes in Gower should also make reference to the adopted Gower Design Guide (2011)

6. Rural (Mawr)

Design and Access Statement

The DAS is an opportunity for you to explain and justify your proposals. It must be fit for purpose and 'readily identifiable' as meeting the statutory requirements, therefore you should include each of the headings set out below (and over) in your DAS. The bullet points give some examples of the information to include in each section. The amount of information provided should reflect the scale of the proposal and sensitivity of the context.

In major schemes for 10 or more homes, the developer should indicate the intended approach to managing the public realm such as open spaces and streets.

All DASs will need to concisely and clearly communicate the design approach, therefore you should include illustrations, plans, photos, sketches as appropriate.

You must demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the site and context of the development. This should include:

Site analysis

- Access points
- Boundaries
- Site features
- Topography
- Constraints and opportunities

Economic, Social and Physical Context analysis

- Character appraisal
- Local facilities e.g. shops, schools, public transport
- Identify any nearby Listed Buildings as these may impact upon development proposals. A list of all the Listed Buildings in Swansea can be found at: www.swansea.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=756

Policy context

- Identify relevant Unitary Development Plan policies including any special area designations (e.g. Conservation Areas) as these will affect development proposals. These can be identified on the UDP maps available on the council website. An index of information for all 31 Conservation Areas can be found at: www.swansea.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=756
- Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance

Involvement

- Community/neighbour engagement
- Pre-application advice

Response to objectives of good design:

The DAS must explain how each of the following aspects of the scheme:

- Access
- Character (with regard to each of the below):
  - amount of development
  - layout
  - scale
  - appearance
  - landscaping
- Community Safety
- Environmental Sustainability
- Movement

address the objectives of good design as set out in section 4 of TAN 12 (Design):

- Ensuring ease of access for all
- Sustaining or enhancing local character
- Promoting legible development

- Promoting a successful relationship between public & private space
- Promoting quality, choice and variety
- Promoting innovative design
- Ensuring attractive, safe public spaces
- Security through natural surveillance
- Achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Designing for change
- Promoting sustainable means of travel

Design evolution

The DAS must demonstrate how the design of the scheme takes into account the context and each of the objectives of good design by means of:

- Vision statement covering type of building or place to be created and how it will relate to the context
- Details of scheme evolution from initial concept to final design
- Options considered but discarded
- Competing issues

Final scheme

In addition to the planning applications drawings, the DAS should include additional visual information as necessary to explain the final scheme, such as:

- Coloured elevations
- Contextual elevations showing surrounding development
- Perspective drawings (preferably at eye level)

Further advice on Design and Access Statements can be found in the 'Design and Access Statements in Wales' information document found at the Design Commission for Wales website:

http://dcfw.org/design-and-access-statements-in-wales

Key References

Acceptable Cost Guidance/On-Costs for use with SHG Funded Housing in Wales (2012)

A New Approach to Housing Standards' Levitt Bernstein (2010)

Better Places to Live: By Design, CABE/DTLR, 2001

Building for Life (2nd edition), CABE and House Builders Federation, 2008

By Design, CABE/DETR, 2000

Car Park Standards SPG, CCS, 2011

Car Parking: What works where, English Partnerships, 2006

Code for Sustainable Homes, DCLG, 2009

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Creating Successful Masterplans: A Guide for Clients, CABE, 2004

Creating Sustainable Places, WDA, 2005

Design Review in Wales 2003-2005, DCfW, 2006

Design Review in Wales 2005-2007, DCfW, 2008

Design Reviewed: Masterplans, CABE, 2004

Development Quality Requirements, Welsh Government (2005)

Evaluating Housing Proposals Step by Step, Building for Life 2008

Green Guide to Housing Specification, BRE, 2000

Gower Design Guide SPG, CCS, 2011

Manual for Streets, WAG/ DCLG, DfT, 2007

Masterplan preparation guidelines, DEIN, 2007

Model Design Guide for Residential Development, POSW, DCfW, WAG, 2005

People, Places, Future: Wales Spatial Plan, WAG, 2004

Planning Policy Wales, WAG, 2002

Planning Obligations SPG, CCS 2010

Safer Places, ODPM, 2004

Shaping Neighbourhoods, Barton, Grant and Guise, 2003

Shaping the Way We Work, Live and Play, WLGA, 2007

Site and Layout Planning, BRE, 2011

Start with the Park, CABE, 2005

Sustainable Developers Guide, City and County of Swansea, 2008

Sustainable Drainage Systems, RSPB and WWT, 2013

TAN12: Design, WAG, 2009

TAN16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space, 2009

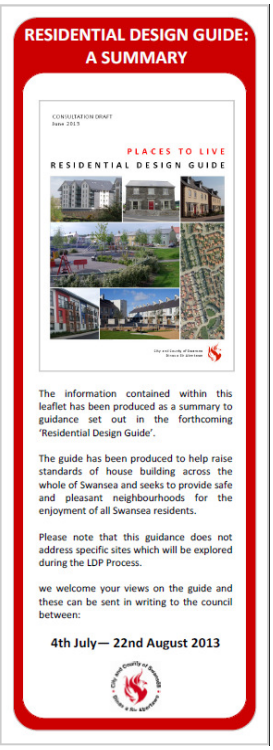
HomeZones photos on page 46 kindly supplied by Mike Biddulph, Cardiff University

Consultation Statement

The draft Residential Design Guide was presented to Development Management and Control Committee on the 6th June 2013. Members resolved to endorse the draft document to be issued for public and stakeholder consultation.

The consultation period ran from the 4th July 2013 until the 6th September 2013 and the following consultation methods were utilised:

- Notification emails highlighting the consultation on the draft document were sent to Councillors, Community Councils, consultees registered to the Local Development Plan (LDP) consultation database, developers, specific and local consultation bodies and relevant academics.
- A dedicated webpage was also established to explain the consultation and allow the electronic document to be downloaded in pdf format.
- Copies of all relevant documents and supporting information were made available at the Civic Centre and all Libraries within the County.


RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDE: A SUMMARY

CONSULTATION DRAFT
June 2013

PLACES TO LIVE
RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDE

The information contained within this leaflet has been produced as a summary to guidance set out in the forthcoming 'Residential Design Guide'.

The guide has been produced to help raise standards of house building across the whole of Swansea and seeks to provide safe and pleasant neighbourhoods for the enjoyment of all Swansea residents.

Please note that this guidance does not address specific sites which will be explored during the LDP Process.

we welcome your views on the guide and these can be sent in writing to the council between:

4th July— 22nd August 2013

- Bilingual posters were sent to all libraries for display.
- A summary leaflet was also made available which distilled the guidance down to two sides of A4 paper.
- A Press Release was issued and featured within the South Wales Evening Post on the 8th July 2013.
- The consultation was featured in the 'Have your Say' section of the Council home page on the web site.
- A dedicated web page on the consultation was created. This allowed electronic copies of the consultation document to be downloaded and allowed respondents to comment online. There were also details of how to request a paper copy for comment.
- Social media in the form of Twitter was also used to inform a wider audience of the consultation which resulted in 20 tweets in total being sent out to the 13,600 Council Twitter followers. Response tweets were also received from external agencies totalling over 800+ additional followers).
- A presentation to Designers, Developers, Agents, and Housing Associations was made to publicise the draft guide and gain feedback.
- A presentation to the Disability Liaison Group to publicise the draft guide and gain feedback.

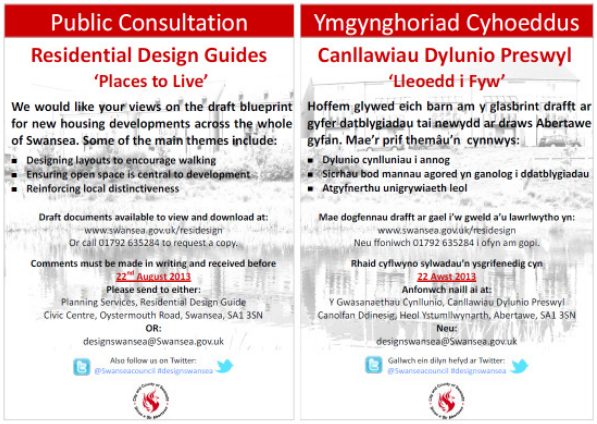
During the consultation period there were 993 unique page views on the dedicated web page. The maximum number of views of the web page on a single day was of 102 views on 9th July 2013 which coincided with one of the Tweets.

The use of social media certainly increased traffic to the dedicated web page with a clear increase in web page hits in the period immediately after sending each of the tweets. The tweets were designed to be different every time highlighting the different sections of the draft design guide in an intriguing manner. For example some of the tweets were as follows:

- *What did the Victorians do for us?* This highlighted the section of the draft document that dealt with neighbourhoods and designing for walking which many Victorian suburbs are will known.
- *Public space or wasted space?* This section of the draft document that highlighted the importance of accessible, safe and well designed public space.

Consultation Statement

In total, comments from 20 individual respondents were received. These respondents covered a wide range of organisations and interests including house builders, planning agents, housing associations, access representatives, external consultees, academics and members of the public. The respondents made over 200 separate comments on the draft Residential Design Guide. The full list of respondents and the breakdown of the representations received along with the Authority's response is available upon request.



Public Consultation

Residential Design Guides

'Places to Live'

We would like your views on the draft blueprint for new housing developments across the whole of Swansea. Some of the main themes include:

- Designing layouts to encourage walking
- Ensuring open space is central to development
- Reinforcing local distinctiveness

Draft documents available to view and download at:
www.swansea.gov.uk/residesign
Or call 01792 635284 to request a copy.

Comments must be made in writing and received before
22nd August 2013
Please send to either:
Planning Services, Residential Design Guide
Civic Centre, Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3SN
OR:
designswansea@Swansea.gov.uk

Also follow us on Twitter:
@Swanseacouncil #designswansea

Ymgynghoriad Cyhoeddus

Canllawiau Dylunio Preswyl

'Lleoedd i Fyw'

Hoffem glywed eich barn am y glasbrint drafft ar gyfer datblygiadau tai newydd ar draws Abertawe gyfan. Mae'r prif themâu'n cynnwys:

- Dylunio cynlluniau i annog
- Sicrhau bod mannau agored yn ganolog i ddatblygiadau
- Atgyfnerthu unigrywiaeth leol

Mae dogfennau drafft ar gael i'w gweld a'u lawrlwytho yn:
www.swansea.gov.uk/residesign
Neu ffoniwch 01792 635284 i ofyn am gopi.

Rhaid cyflwyno sylwadau'n ysgrifenedig cyn
22 Awst 2013
Anfonwch naill ai at:
Y Gwasanaethau Cynllunio, Canllawiau Dylunio Preswyl
Canolfan Ddinesig, Heol Ystumllwynarth, Abertawe, SA1 3SN
Neu:
designswansea@Swansea.gov.uk

Gallwch ein dilyn hefyd ar Twitter:
@Swanseacouncil #designswansea

Summary of Representations Received

Most comments were supportive and suggested improvements to the content of the Residential Design Guide and the main comments and responses are summarised below.

It was requested that the nationally recognised BREEAM Communities assessment should be required for all new large scale housing developments in order to demonstrate sustainability at the strategic scale. In response it is considered that a nationally recognised measure of sustainability at the neighbourhood scale would be beneficial because the sustainability information currently provided by applicants is varied and cannot be compared between developments. However it is not possible to bring this requirement into force in a supplementary planning guidance document. Instead the requirement will be imbedded into the Design Topic paper that forms part of the emerging Local Development Plan with regard to larger sites of 100 or more homes as part of a required mixed use and master planning process. In the meantime there is scope to encourage the submission of a BREEAM Communities assessment in the final draft of the Residential Design Guide.

There was a request for a separate access section from the Disability Liaison Group. Whilst the concept of access for all is embedded throughout the draft document as part of the sustainable placemaking approach it is considered that a distinct section addressing more specific points would be beneficial. Therefore four new pages are proposed to address access for all and the content of these pages has been the subject of further consultation with the DLG members.

There were comments that the typical density range of 30-40 homes per hectare is not high enough to be truly sustainable. Best practice advice indicates that the 30-40 homes per hectare is an appropriate range overall across the city and county area, but the guide does not preclude densities above 40. Rather it stresses that what may be considered 'higher density' approaches are usually justified by proximity to facilities and public transport routes whilst ensuring that these do not result in cramped and over intensive development. However it is considered that the guide does need to differentiate between developments that form part of existing neighbourhoods where the emphasis will be on integrating with the context and the larger more strategic sites where there is potential for higher densities supported by new facilities and transport infrastructure as part of the mixed use master planning process.

There were negative comments about tall buildings. The design guide encourages a contextual approach which makes the best use of land relative to the existing character, public transport and facilities as part of a sustainable place making approach. In many instances away from Swansea City Centre, town centres and

Consultation Statement

district centres the typical scale will be two or three storeys and new development will be expected to respect this, so tall building will not be appropriate. However the Council does have an adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance document on tall buildings which addresses the location and design of tall buildings and a reference to this has been added to the document.

There was a request for a clearer statement of the 'Green Infrastructure' concept which is a way of expressing the interconnected nature of spaces, for outdoor relaxation, play, flood alleviation, wildlife and local food production. This concept is imbedded into the residential design guide, but the actual term 'green infrastructure' is not used so this has been addressed in the final document.

There were various comments with regard to Community safety. There is a separate section on this within the design guide and also a separate stand alone SPG document on community safety that was adopted in 2012. Where appropriate minor changes with regard to community safety have been made to further embed this concept throughout the document.

There were various comments with regard to the concept of streets as public realm areas namely in terms of access for all and maintenance. These issues have been addressed to indicate, for example, that a safe area for vulnerable pedestrians should be provided within shared surface areas and that adoption and maintenance should be addressed upfront as part of the planning process.

There were a number of comments about recommended internal floor areas for new homes, namely that it is not appropriate to address this issue in the Residential Design Guide. This is disagreed as a sustainable place to live must be holistic with quality internal living environments as well as the external public realm. It has been accepted for a number of years that modern private housing is considered too small and lacking adequate storage space by the occupants and this is backed by several studies which have shown that UK housing has on average the smallest floor areas in Western Europe. The design guide proposes that reference should be made to the tried and tested internal floor areas used by the Welsh Government with regard to affordable housing. Specific attention was drawn in the comments to the figure of 83m2 for a 2 bedroom house where as developers are currently building 2 bedroom homes in the range of 55-65m2. It turns out the 83m2 related to a 4 person 2 bedroom house, where as most private 2 bedroom homes are for 3 people, so this figure is excessive. To address this a robust methodology has been identified in a publication called 'A New Approach to Housing Standards' Levitt Bernstein (2010) which indicates a that the area of a 3 person 2 bedroom house should be 74m2. This is considered to be a more appropriate reference than the 55-65m2 as indicated by the respondent.

There was significant comment on the separation distances which relates to the spacing between houses. The main comments were with regard to the proposed requirement to increase the back to back separation between houses on sloping sites (it should be noted that the tried and tested 21m basic separation rule was not challenged). The guide was proposing that for every 1m difference in level that the separation should be increased by 2m above the basic 21m. This was felt to be too prescriptive and it is agreed that often design solutions and or planting may be able to address the issues.

There were various comments about the character section, both in terms of strengthen the messages about contemporary designs and also about focussing on the details. This has resulted in additional images and information being included.

The full detailed list of comments made, the consideration of these comments and the resulting changes are available on request.

City and County of Swansea

Economic Regeneration and Planning

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