DESIGN IN BUILDINGS AND PLACES

ASSESSING PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH DORSET

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   With increasing demands for building development throughout many areas of the country, there has been a growing focus on the value of the surviving historic natural and built environment. This perhaps arises from the perception that changes during the last hundred years or so have eroded the special character of many places, markedly more so in recent decades. Generally it is now considered that new development should be resisted unless it enhances, or at least does not cause harm to, the special character of built places and the valued natural landscape.

1.2   North Dorset has extensive areas of fine natural landscape, dispersed throughout which are several towns and many villages valued for their special character and distinctiveness. However, the District is an example of an area where significant new development over the last few decades has been built. This is in line with the economic growth which is so necessary if the area is to prosper and the local communities survive. Inevitably, the District will have to continue to absorb new development and some re-development of existing sites, and the District Council, largely through the statutory planning system, has a key role in managing and controlling the pace and nature of this change. The District Council is by no means the only agent involved in this process. The responsibility is shared by many, including Government departments, the Regional and County authorities, building design and procurement professionals, developers, site owners, advisory bodies, and individuals.

1.3   North Dorset District Council recognises that it must continue working diligently to assist in the process of achieving acceptable new building development and redevelopment within its area. Those seeking to undertake development, together with their agents, have the major responsibility in ensuring that their proposals are appropriate to their contexts. Designing building developments to take account appropriately of all the relevant factors is a task requiring particular skills and knowledge, and applicants are urged to ensure that they appoint suitably qualified and experienced professionals to undertake this work. The professional bodies representing those engaged in building design and procurement can offer advice on suitable appointments. A list of some of these bodies is given at Appendix 1.

1.4   The following content is intended to provide guidance to applicants and their agents on the process of preparing design proposals for planning submissions. It is not intended to be design guidance in terms of defining in detail what is acceptable or unacceptable, but to give an indication of what design data will help inform the planning authority during its decision making process. Because the word 'design' features largely in this publication, it is thought appropriate to give some explanation of its application in building procurement.

2.0   BUILDING DESIGN AND URBAN DESIGN

2.1   Building development proposals need to conform to national and local policies issued under current planning legislation. Many factors have to be taken into consideration, and prominent amongst these are 'design' criteria. 'Design' (or 'architectural design') commonly is thought to be concerned solely with the appearance of buildings, but in fact it is much more broad-ranging, embracing fitness for purpose and quality in relation to durability, value-for-money and efficiency in the use of materials and the performance of buildings. Care in design should be applied across the whole spectrum of development types, from small extensions to dwellings and such like to multi-million pound commercial building schemes. Whatever the type or size of scheme, it is very likely to have a visual and functional relationship with other buildings adjoining and nearby, and an impact upon a natural or man-made landscape setting. Hence, 'design' cannot take place in a vacuum, but needs to respond to the various relevant contextual factors. For example, the designer of a house extension needs to fully understand the physical, architectural and historical qualities of the house to be extended, and ensure that the extension does not detract from the existing positive or special qualities of the house or its neighbouring buildings and their setting. Also, the site context needs to be understood in terms of the impact of the proposed extension on natural and man-made features within the site or nearby, or on the amenities of neighbouring properties. Most, if not all, of these design considerations are likely to apply at any scale of proposed development.

Urban Design

2.2   In recent years, the term 'urban design' has come into common use. 'By Design' is a key document in promoting the use of the term. This document has been published by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. Much of the following content is based on the 'By Design' document. Essentially, 'urban design' applies design considerations to a broader context, focusing upon places rather than individual buildings and the term is equally applicable in rural areas as well

as towns and cities. Urban design may be defined as 'the art of making places for people'. It is concerned with the way in which places work – how they can be used and enjoyed by people, the ease with which people can use them and find their way around them comfortably, enjoyably, efficiently and safely. This includes consideration of the various modes of transport, whether pedestrian, bicycle, car, public transport or other means. 'Urban design' is not meant to apply only to cities and large towns. It applies in any situation where buildings are grouped together to contain or sit within a space where the public can be present or which may be regarded as a public amenity, for example as part of an attractive view. Hence, it embraces all towns, villages and other settlements. Seeking to achieve visual attractiveness is of course amongst the objectives and applying urban design principles will help establish whether a proposed building or group of buildings should, at one extreme, seek to blend seamlessly into their context, at the other extreme, seek to provide a contrast with existing nearby buildings, perhaps to form a landmark, or possibly aim to be somewhere between these extremes. Unfortunately, many buildings erected in recent decades which are seen as contrasting with their valued neighbouring buildings do so for the wrong reasons, perhaps through being too large or comprising components which are visually overbearing (commonly referred to as being 'out of scale'), poorly proportioned or articulated, or of inappropriate materials.

2.3   Other terms connected with architectural and urban design which have come into common use recently are 'sustainability' and 'inclusive design'. For example, 'Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development' (PPS1 published in 2005 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), states :- *Planning policies should promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted.* This is about designing buildings which do not limit access, which can adapt to varying needs so that they do not become prematurely obsolete, and which fit comfortably within, or preferably, enhance, their contexts. In essence, 'sustainability' is about ensuring that the building designs are energy efficient and not damaging to the environment, both in construction and use, together with being adaptable in use so that they do not become prematurely obsolete.

2.4   The same document, under a heading 'Design', goes on to state, amongst other things, that:-
  * *Good design ensures attractive usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning.*

- *Planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.*
- *High quality and inclusive design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process. High quality and inclusive design should create well-mixed and integrated developments which avoid segregation and have well-planned public spaces that bring people together and provide opportunities for physical activity and recreation. It means ensuring a space will function well and add to the overall character and quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. This requires carefully planned, high quality buildings and spaces that support the efficient use of resources. Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are clearly factors in achieving these objectives, securing high quality and inclusive design goes far beyond aesthetic considerations. Good design should:-*
  - *address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;*
  - *be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environments;*
  - *be an integral part of the processes for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities;*
  - *create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society; and*
  - *consider the direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment.*

2.5 The local planning authority has a key role in this process. Largely this is through its preparation of the Local Development Framework including its Core Strategy, other Local Development Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. However, as stated earlier, the responsibility for promoting and achieving good design in the locality includes many others, and especially those who provide a professional design service in developing building solutions on behalf of clients. Applicants, of course, as clients, have the responsibility to select suitable agents to act upon their behalf, and to ensure that a clear and acceptable brief is agreed. It should be clearly evident that all the relevant general design considerations have been taken into account at the planning application stage. There may be some detailed design points which remain to be agreed at a later stage, but the planning authority needs to be confident that a planning application, subject to the principle of such proposed development being acceptable, will be achievable on site as shown on the submitted

drawings. This means that the drawings must be clear and accurate, and correctly relate their content to the context.

3.0   DESIGN STATEMENTS

3.1   In many instances it will be helpful if applicants or their agents discuss their proposals with an officer of the planning department before submitting a formal application. The content that follows in this document is intended to serve as a guide to help ensure that such discussions and negotiations dealing with design quality lead to clear, unambiguous outcomes. In turn, this should assist the process of dealing with the ensuing application, enabling it to be processed more quickly and with a greater chance of it receiving approval.

3.2   In order to show that due consideration to built environment and design issues has been given in a development proposal, in many cases applications will need to be accompanied by a design statement. Often this can be brief, perhaps no more than a list of bullet points on one side of A4 paper. The points are simply some of those that the designer will have needed to consider in developing the proposed solution in a proper and thorough manner. The statement will assist anyone who has a legitimate interest in the planning application, whether the Council itself, consultees, or members of the public, to assess the likely effect of the scheme within its neighbourhood. Design statements will be necessary for proposals on sites of environmental importance, such as:-
- any site over 0.1 hectares in area;
- sites within or adjoining conservation areas;
- proposals affecting listed buildings or their setting; or
- any site, including small ones, where the proposals are likely to have a significant effect upon the amenity of residents, the appearance or character of an area, or would be visually prominent from key views within the public domain.

3.3   For small-scale proposals a design statement may not be required, but the minimum information submitted with any application should comprise:-
- plans and elevations of existing buildings on the site, together with photographs of the site and its surroundings;
- an accurate site survey sufficient to show features, whether natural or man-made, which may be affected by the proposals. Site levels also should be included;
- plans and elevations of the proposals in relation to adjoining properties; and

- a planting and landscape scheme which includes proposals for the protection of existing features to be retained such as trees, hedges, walls and structures.

3.4 An accurate survey and thorough site analysis, of course, are essential before any planning application is prepared and submitted. Such a survey and analysis will need to give consideration to the following:-
- the specific qualities of the site – topography, geology, landscape, nature conservation, archaeology and views to and from the site;
- the relationship of the site to existing surrounding development in terms of –massing, height, proportion, scale, plot size, building alignment, layout, uses, overlooking and privacy; and
- linkages to other sites and the existing town or village with streets, footpaths, cycleways, together with views and open areas.
- The extended requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- BS Code 8300, 2001 provides guidance on achieving better accessibility and it is likely that Part M of the Building Regulations will be revised to have regard to BS Code 8300. Access is a material planning consideration and is a key ingredient of 'inclusive design', the importance of which has been stressed in PPS1. Hence, the District Council would expect to see that BS Code 8300 has been taken into account where relevant in planning applications. Improving accessibility at the outset could avoid the need for costly and disruptive alterations in the future.

4.0 THE FORM OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE OBJECTIVES OF URBAN DESIGN

4.1 The form of buildings, structures and spaces is the physical expression of urban design. The form has a strong influence upon the patterns of uses, activity and movement in a place and the experience of those who visit, live or work there. The main features of the built environment which define its form are:-
- the landscape within which it is set, including not only hills and fields but also public open spaces, both green and hard-surfaced, such as parks, squares, amenity areas, church yards, tree-lined streets and gardens;
- the overall layout of the place – in terms of its roads, footpaths and building 'blocks', for example the spaced out and set back arrangement of buildings in Milton Abbas in contrast to the tight, linear, street frontage development in the town centre of Blandford Forum, as shown at Figures 1 and 2; (Illustrations showing plan forms)
- its scale – in terms of building height and massing, often expressed in terms of 'human scale'; and
- its appearance, as expressed in details and use of materials, for example Georgian vertical sliding sash windows, or the relationship of stone dressings to a primarily brick-faced wall, as exemplified at Figure 3. (illustration of town centre buildings in Blandford Forum)

Some relevant aspects to consider when undertaking an analysis of building development form are listed at Appendix 2.

4.2   Successful streets, spaces, villages and towns within the District tend to have a number of characteristics in common, these historically having made the places attractive to residents and visitors. Amongst these are:-

- a place with its own identity – expressed in terms of character and local distinctiveness;
- a place with attractive and successful outdoor spaces – the quality of the public realm;
- a place where public and private spaces and ownership are clearly defined – frequently providing a sense of enclosure;
- a place that is easy to reach and move around – this should mean people before traffic;
- a place that has a clear image – this may be provided by landmarks, prominent corner buildings or a predominant architectural style;
- a place with variety and choice – often reflected in a mix of building types, uses and possibly architectural styles; and
- a place that can change easily – often the best historic urban areas are those where buildings and streets have been adapted successfully to meet the requirements of new uses and changes in the demands of society.

4.3   Maintaining, enhancing and introducing these characteristics are the objectives of good urban design and should reinforce the attractiveness of an area. This usually should apply to even the smallest of projects where they relate to other buildings. When these objectives are translated into development, they impact upon people's lives, sometimes in a pronounced manner.

4.4   These objectives for the form and layout of buildings should be mutually reinforcing and must be taken into consideration when proposing new development in the District. In some situations, however, not all the objectives are achievable and design priorities have to be established. Successfully resolving such conflicts should be within the skill range of a good designer. Determining priorities and finding solutions often will depend upon the nature of the site and its location.

4.5   It should be stressed here that urban design objectives cannot be set out in an all-embracing check-list where it is simply a matter of 'ticking the boxes'. For example, what may be appropriate in one of the District's towns or villages may be wholly inappropriate in others. Figures 4 and 5 show contrasting examples at Milton Abbas and Tarrant Keyneston. *Photographs annotated to show the spaced out arrangement at Milton Abbas and the street frontage arrangement at Tarrant Keynston.* An

acceptable design solution will be informed by a clear understanding of the key characteristics of the place in which it is to be located. These can be a combination of many factors, such as external building materials, forms of buildings and their relationships with the roads and streets, the layout of roads and streets, relationship with the natural landscape etc.

4.6 The District Council recognises that most architects and many other building designers are aware of the need for well thought out design solutions, and as a matter of course normally would follow the processes outlined in this guidance. However, this document may be beneficial to them when they need to explain to their clients what is likely to be expected from their proposals in the broader public interest beyond the basic accommodation brief. Also, the document indicates to clients what reasonably they may expect from their appointed design agents, subject, of course, to their terms of appointment. More broadly, it aims to give the general public an indication of the processes necessarily involved in achieving acceptable building designs.

4.7 The following checklist sets out the main urban design points that need to be considered to ensure that a proposed new development responds suitably to the special characteristics of the District, the immediate locality and the site itself. The questions that follow relate to the separate urban design objectives, why they are important, and possible design options (between which there may be a level of overlapping).

5.0 URBAN DESIGN CHECKLIST

5.1 Clearly there is potential conflict between some of the urban design objectives. For example, the height of a building might need to respond to some or all of the following issues:-
- a general pattern of buildings of no more than a set number of storeys in height
- the means of achieving high density development
- the perceived value in creating a landmark
- the desirability of enhancing views
- the need for a sense of enclosure
- the desirability of enhancing safety by natural surveillance, and
- the avoidance of unreasonable overlooking or overshadowing.

5.2 Good design results from due consideration being given to all the options and the creative resolution of potential conflicts. This depends upon a reasoned judgment of the importance of each factor in the particular circumstances. It relies upon the designer being capable of rising imaginatively to the demands of what sometimes may be a difficult brief.

5.3   When preparing planning and development briefs for sites within the District, the Council will base the brief upon the guidelines within this document.

5.4   It should be remembered that this checklist provides guidance to assist the Council, applicants and designers as well as members of the public and amenity groups in appraising proposals for development in a consistent manner, with the aim of achieving well-designed buildings and spaces that enhance and reinforce the local distinctiveness of the District. The list is not a set of rules that must be rigidly followed at all times, nor is it exhaustive. Evolving practice and local circumstances may well lead to adaptation and adoption of new ways of achieving better design solutions.

A   *CHARACTER*

A1   *Does the proposed development take into account the existing character of the area and enhance it or develop it as a place with its own identity?*

The positive features of a place and its people contribute to its special character and sense of identity. They include landscape, building traditions and materials, patterns of social life, and other factors that make one place different from another. The best places are memorable, with a character which people can appreciate easily.

Many of the places which we now think of as being pleasantly distinctive, such as Tarrant Monkton or the historic town centre of Sturminster Newton, grew incrementally in response to local circumstances. (See Figures 6 and 7) *Include illustrations of Tarrant Monkton and Sturminster Newton.* Where such distinctiveness is ignored in the design of new development, the new buildings are unlikely to sit comfortably within their context. By contrast, development that responds sensitively to the site or its setting is likely to create a place that acquires lasting value and is pleasing to the eye.

Designing for local distinctiveness can involve the creative reconciliation of local practices with the latest technologies, building types and needs. Where there are no significant local traditions, the challenge to create a distinctive place will be all the greater. There is no reason why character and innovation should not go together. New and old buildings can co-exist comfortably without disguising one as the other, provided that the design of the new is a response to urban design objectives such as those set out in the following text.

A2   *When laying out new development, the site's land form and character should be taken into consideration.*

- The shape of the landscape should be the basis for a development's form expressed in its layout and massing. Natural features should give shape to a development and integrate it into the wider area, contributing to a sense of place.
- A site's natural features should be conserved to provide a stronger relationship between new development and its environment. Natural features include streams, ponds, trees and wildlife habitats.
- The local ecology should help to determine the character and identity of both a development and the place of which it is a part.

A3   *New development should be integrated into, rather than imposed upon, its landscape setting to reduce its impact on nature and reinforce local distinctiveness.*

- The layout, massing and landscape design of development should be integrated suitably into the wider landscape through using structural planting, shelter belts, green wedges and green corridors along natural features, roads and rivers.
- The planting of species that are common locally will help new development reinforce the distinct natural qualities of a place.
- The linking of the built form and landscape between new and existing development at their boundaries can be a key factor in achieving successful integration.

A4   *New development should respond to the existing layout of buildings, streets and spaces, and ensure that adjacent buildings relate to one another, streets are connected and spaces complement one another.*

- The existing layout of an area reflects its history, functions and connections with adjoining areas. These can contribute to the interest and richness of new development and to its potential to accommodate future change.
- Existing buildings and structures should be retained and integrated into new development where they contribute to the character and appearance of the built fabric as well as retaining buildings of local distinctiveness, historic or townscape merit.
- Development should not cause a barrier to established patterns of movement.

A5   *To reinforce a sense of place, new development should respond in its detailed layout and design to local building forms and patterns of development.*

- Local building forms and details contribute to the distinctive qualities of a place. These should be interpreted in new development without unduly restricting the scope of the designer.
- In historic and established areas, plot size usually is an important determinant of visual character, and the existing rhythm of these plots should influence the design of new development.
- Generally, infill development should relate to existing surrounding development in terms of scale, density, massing, space between buildings, building form and design detail.
- Even the largest developments should relate to human scale.
- Proposals should relate in scale and massing to their valued surroundings.

B   *CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE*

B1   *Does the proposed development provide a place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguishable?*

Development either contributes to making the urban fabric coherent or undermines it. Urban design is often a matter of adopting good manners, recognizing that every building is part of a greater whole. Too many places have been adversely affected by development which, even if its design has merits when seen in isolation, ignores its local urban structure and creates bits of leftover space that contribute nothing to the urban or village scene.

Successful urban spaces, including streets, are defined and enclosed by buildings, structures and landscape. The relationship between buildings on a street, and between buildings and the street, is a key factor here. Buildings which follow a continuous building line around a street block and contain the private space within back yards and courtyards are often more successful than individual buildings that stand in the middle of a site. Buildings with 'live' facades, such as shopfronts, doors directly onto the street, or residential upper floors, enable people to keep an eye on public space and help engender a feeling of greater security and safety.

B2   *Buildings usually should relate to a common building line that reinforces and defines the street.*

- New development should respect the historic or traditional building line which helps it integrate new development into the street scene and maintain the continuous urban fabric. Development that follows the boundary of a street often can help to define the difference between public and private spaces. This is exemplified by Saint James Street at Shaftesbury, as shown at Figure 8. *(St James St illustration)*

- However, there are places, such as villages like Hilton and Iwerne Minster, where strong building lines occur only in short stretches or not at all, as shown in Figures 9 and 10. *(Illustrations of village-scape at Hilton and Iwerne Minster).* Such places often are more clearly identified by soft landscaping and open gaps rather than the buildings.
- To avoid situations where rigid continuity of the building line would become too oppressive visually, projections and setbacks, bays and porches may be considered as a means of reducing the visual mass of the building. Clues as to the appropriate means of dealing with the situation should be available within the local historic street scene.
- Where buildings step back from the common building line, they can create usable, attractive spaces for pedestrians. This needs to be very carefully considered, however, to avoid the risk of unwelcoming spaces where people may feel insecure or vulnerable.

B3 ***The primary access to a building should be from the street or key public space.***

- Building entrances should be clearly identifiable and define where people move between public and private space.

B4 ***The fronts and backs of buildings often are used in different ways, and their design should reflect this.***

- The fronts of buildings, their doors, windows and public activities should face onto the street or other key public space.
- Private spaces normally should be away from public view.
- Buildings which present their backs to roads or public spaces are usually visually unsatisfactory, because often they present high fences, walls and garden sheds etc. to the street.

B5 ***Defining and enclosing private space at the back of buildings should provide better privacy and security.***

- Inner courtyards that are private or communally shared are best enclosed by the backs of buildings.
- The rear gardens of houses are more secure if they back on to other gardens rather than side roads, service lanes or footpaths.

B6 ***Development should help to define streets and public spaces.***

- Streets, squares, parks and other public spaces should be defined by appropriately scaled buildings and trees. The height of buildings should relate to the width and importance of the space (including streets) which they enclose. The massing and the height of a building should

also have regard to the degree to which it will overlook and overshadow other buildings.

- Long stretches of buildings without 'activity', windows or public access at street level should be avoided because usually they are visually uninteresting and reduce vitality.
- A building at a corner of a street should respond to the junction and close the corner visually.

B7   *The junction between the fronts of buildings and the street should be defined clearly.*

- Indicating the extent of private ownership of space around a building, for example with walls, railings or paving, defines the boundary between public and private space.

C   *QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM*

C1   *Does the proposed development provide a place with attractive and successful outdoor areas?*

The success of the public realm depends on the arrangement of its paving, planting, lighting, orientation, shelter, signage, street furniture and the way it is overlooked, as well as the routes which pass through it and the uses in and next to it.

The public realm is made up of parts of the District that are available for use by everyone. This includes streets, parks, squares and public buildings, whether publicly or privately owned. It provides the setting not only for everyday life, but also for more formal civic occasions. It is impoverished by buildings and spaces designed to keep people out or discourage its use. Anyone who is designing a building, or any other structure, is helping to shape the public realm – for better or worse.

In addition, attractive public spaces probably will be better used, enjoyed and maintained by the people who use them.

C2   *New development should provide open and green spaces that are linked, respect natural features and are easily accessible.*

- Public spaces should be designated to create a variety of type of space – square or park; character of space – formal or recreational; and scale. They should be merely the parts of a site that have not been built on.
- Public spaces should be seen as part of a network of pedestrian routes, providing for the needs of all users, including disabled people, children and elderly people.

- Streets and street junctions should be designed as public spaces rather than just traffic routes.
- Street trees and street lighting should reinforce the character and importance of a route.
- Green spaces should make use of natural assets such as water, slopes, trees and planting. This helps to create attractive spaces and encourage biodiversity.

C3   *Well-designed public space should relate to the buildings around it.*

- Public space should be designed with a purpose in mind. Space left over after development, without a function, is a wasted resource and will detract from a place's sense of identity. It is likely to be abused and vandalized, diminishing safety and security.

C4   *Streets and spaces should be overlooked to allow natural surveillance.*

- Buildings of all types should front onto streets, squares or parks and contribute to overlooking and a perception of safety.
- Separate footpaths or cycle tracks should be made as direct as possible and be well overlooked.
- Play areas, communal spaces and car parks should be overlooked.
- Lighting should help surveillance and increase perceptions of safety.

C5   *The design of public spaces should take account of the micro-climate.*

- The layout and massing of development should take account of local climate conditions, including daylight and sunlight, wind and temperature.
- The micro-climate will both influence and be influenced by the form of development, including the orientation of buildings and the degree of enclosure.
- Deciduous trees and climbers can filter heat and pollution in summer and allow low winter sunlight.

C6   *Works of art and well designed street furniture should be integrated into the design of public spaces and enhance the sense of place.*

- The design of streetscape should be co-ordinated to help avoid clutter and confusion. This should include the elements of the street scene, e.g. signage, lighting, railings, litter bins, paving, seating, bus shelters, bollards, kiosks, cycle racks as well as such features as sculpture and fountains.

- Streetscape design should take account of the need for maintenance, resistance to vandalism and access to underground services.
- Wherever possible new development should include the provision of public art. The work of artists should be integrated into the design process at the earliest possible stage if it is to be accommodated effectively.

D   *EASE OF MOVEMENT*

D1   *Does the proposed development provide a place that is easy to get to and move through?*

The convenience, safety and comfort with which people go to and pass through buildings, places and spaces play a large part in determining how successful a place will be. Streets are more than just traffic channels for vehicles, and should offer a safe and attractive environment for all. Well designed streets encourage people to use them, and help make being outside a safe and pleasant experience.

Successful places are unlikely to include large blocks of inward-looking development which exclude public access.

D2   *New development should contribute to a well designed urban network of connected spaces and routes for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.*

- New routes should connect to existing routes and movement patterns. The degree of connection in a new development is often the key to its success. Established footpaths, short-cuts and minor roads can become the basis of enduring linkages.
- Access to public transport should be considered as an integral part of the street layout.
- On-street parking should be utilized where the character of the area, space and safety permit.

D3   *Transport routes should reflect urban design qualities and not just traffic considerations.*

- A development's access and circulation should contribute to a fine-grain network of direct and connected routes within and beyond the site rather than creating big blocks.
- The way development is laid out should, where appropriate, encourage low traffic speeds.

- Developments should be designed with regard to their effect on traffic speeds.
- Traffic speeds should be managed by the arrangement of buildings and spaces. Physical traffic calming measures should be secondary but considered as an integral part of the design.
- Changes in materials or 'gateways' at the entrance to low-speed areas should alert motorists to the need to reduce speed.
- The provision of sight lines for junctions should not be detrimental to the character of the street. Smaller corner radii should be used to encourage more careful vehicle movement.

D4 *Where appropriate, the layout and density of development should be used to help increase accessibility to public transport.*

- Higher densities help to support public transport.

E *LEGIBILITY*

E1 *Does the development provide a place with recognizable landmarks and features to help people find their way around?*

Landmarks, gateways and focal points help people find their way. Vistas create visual links between places. Planting can emphasize pedestrian routes. Visible routes and destinations, and a visible choice of routes, will contribute to making a place feel safe and unthreatening. Places where form, layout and signage make them easy to understand are likely both to function well and to be pleasant to live in or visit.

On the other hand, some places draw their charm from their lack of clear routes. The process of design needs to take account of the fact that people do not all interpret and enjoy a place in the same way. Men and women, children and adults, residents and visitors, and old and young people will experience it differently and be encouraged to feel at ease by different aspects.

E2 *Development should be sited so as to enhance existing views and vistas, and create new ones and help people to find their way around.*

- Existing valued views and landmarks should be retained and enhanced. The ability to see important routes and landmarks is integral to finding one's way around and also it reinforces the sense of place.
- Where possible, views should focus on important routes, memorable buildings and landscape features.

- A sense of place often depends on the design of the public realm and its contribution to an area's character and identity. Purpose designed street furniture is one example of this.

E3   ***The design, location and function of buildings should reinforce the identity and character of routes and spaces.***

- Design should ensure that a building's function is readily apparent and that its main entrance is easily identifiable.
- Existing building lines should be followed where appropriate.
- Buildings should be laid out in identifiable groups and often should create enclosed spaces.

E4   ***Well designed corner buildings should enhance legibility, create visual interest and contribute to a distinctive local identity.***

- Corner buildings can provide identity and points of orientation. Making them higher or bolder (in part or in whole) than the surrounding buildings can emphasize their importance.

E5   ***The legibility of an area should be strengthened through the detailing and quality of materials in new development.***

- Good design often depends on close attention being paid to the detailing, for example windows and the use of natural stone.
- Richness of detail is particularly important at ground level, where people see it close at hand, e.g. shopfronts.
- The choice of materials should add interest and aid legibility. In this context, natural materials have their own intrinsic and distinctive qualities.
- Attention should be paid to the quality of signage, including that for shops and other commercial premises, because it is important and can enhance identity and legibility.
- Works of art and lighting schemes should be used to help define identity and legibility.

F   ***ADAPTABILITY***

F1   ***Will the development be adaptable and provide a place that can change easily to meet changing social or economic circumstances?***

The most successful places have prospered in changing circumstances. The basic structure of the physical fabric of such places may have changed little over time, but they have been successfully adapted to meet the changes in the way people live, work and travel.

Places need to be adaptable at every scale. A household makes different demands on a house as children are born and grow up. Towns as a whole have to adapt as industries rise and decline, demand for housing varies, the nature of workplaces changes, and buildings and infrastructure age. On a national scale this is exemplified by Covent Garden in London, and locally by some former farmsteads located in village centres.

F2   *Simple, robust building forms, not tightly designed to a very particular use, allow for the greatest variety of possible future uses to be accommodated.*

- Floor-to-ceiling heights and building depths should be considered in the light of the need for flexibility to allow later conversion of a building to other uses.
- Adaptable ground floors in shopping streets and commercial areas allow different uses to be accommodated over time.
- Well designed housing is adaptable to the changing needs of its occupants e.g. lifetime homes.

F3   *Places and public buildings should be capable of being used for a range of activities.*

- Well designed public spaces should allow for different uses, such as festivals or markets.
- Where appropriate, good design should facilitate mixed use buildings and development e.g. by providing alternative acces arrangements at different times.

F4   *For developments to endure, they should have flexible layouts and design.*

- The layout of the infrastructure servicing development should take account of foreseeable changes in demand.
- Building to last should mean thinking about future uses, expansion and changing needs for access. For example, the position of the building on the site can affect scope for expansion.

G   *DIVERSITY*

G1   *Will the proposed development offer variety and choice by mixing uses and building types?*

The mix of uses (whether within a building, a street or an area) can help to determine how well used a place is, and what economic and social activities it will support.

A mix of uses may well be appropriate at a variety of scales: within a village or town; within a neighbourhood or street; or even in a particular building. In a town centre, for example, housing can provide customers for shops, make use of empty space above them and generate activity when they are closed.

Mixed-use development can make the most of opportunities for higher densities and intense activity at locations with good access to public transport.

G2   *Where appropriate, and in accordance with adopted planning policy, development should provide a mix of uses that help to attract people to live, work and play in the same area.*

- The mix can be at the scale of the building (e.g. one use above another) or the street (one use next to another).
- Interesting and successful places often have a mix of uses which involves different people using the same parts of the building or place at different times of the day, as well as different uses happening in different parts of a building or space at the same time.

G3   *The right mix is important if the development is to be successful in terms of good design and use.*

- A successful mix of uses results where the uses are compatible one with another and interact with each other positively.
- A successful mix of uses is achieved where the uses help to create a balanced community with a range of services, without increasing reliance upon the car.

G4   *Diversity of layout, building form and tenure should contribute to making successful living and working environments.*

- Good design should include buildings of different sizes and types, and allow for different uses over time.
- To promote social inclusion in well designed places, social housing should not be distinguishable from private housing by its design, nor allocated totally to the least attractive sites.
- Developing large sites by subdividing into smaller development plots, each with direct access to public roads and spaces, can help the design process and create diversity.
- Narrow plot frontages in commercial areas can allow small-scale shopping and associated activities to flourish and adapt to changing needs.

APPENDIX ONE

PROFESSIONAL BODIES IN ENGLAND WHOSE MEMBERS ARE INVOLVED IN BUILDING DESIGN AND PROCUREMENT

Royal Institute of British Architects
66 Portland Place, London, W18 1AD
tel 020 7580 5533   www.architecture.com

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
12 Great George Street, Parliament Square, London, SW1P 3AD
tel 020 7222 9430   www.rics.org.uk

Royal Town Planning Institute
41 Botolph Lane, London, EC3R 8DL
tel 020 7929 9490   www.rtpi.org.uk

Urban Design Group
70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ
tel 020 7250 0872   www.udg.org.uk

Institute of Historic Building Conservation
Jubilee House, High Street, Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6HA
tel 01747 873133   www.ihbc.org.uk

Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists
397 City Road, London, EC1V 1NH
tel 020 7278 2206   www.biat.org.uk

Landscape Institute
33 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 8QG
Tel 020 7299 4500   www.landscapeinstitute.org.uk

Arts Council
Senate Court, Southernhay Gardens, Exeter, EX1 1UG
Tel 0845 3006200   www.artscouncil.org.uk

APPENDIX TWO

SOME ASPECTS OF BUILDING DEVELOPMENT FORM

Landscape
The character and appearance of land, including its shape, form, *ecology, natural features, colours and elements, and the way these components combine.*

Layout: Urban Structure
The framework of roads, footpaths, parks and squares and how they connect locally and more widely, and the way they relate to one another.
This includes all open space, including its planting, boundary treatments and private gardens where they make a contribution to the landscape. The layout provides the basic plan on which all other aspects of the form and uses of a development depend.

Layout: Urban Grain
The pattern of the arrangement of street blocks, plots and their buildings in a settlement.
The degree to which an area's pattern of blocks and plot divisions is respectively small and frequent (fine grain), or large and infrequent (coarse grain).

Density and Mix
The amount of development and the range of uses on a given piece of land. Density influences the intensity of development, and in combination with the mix of uses can affect a place's vitality and viability.
The density of a development can be expressed in a number of ways. For example, this could be in terms of plot ratio (particularly for commercial developments), or number of habitable rooms (for residential developments).

Scale: Height
Scale is the size of the building in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, usually in relation to the size of a person. Height may determine the impact of development on views, vistas and skylines.
Height can be expressed in terms of the number of floors; height of parapet or ridge; overall height; any of these in combination; a ratio of building height to street or space width; height relative to particular landmarks or background buildings; or strategic view.

Scale: Massing

The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces.
Massing is the three-dimensional expression of the amount of development on a given piece of land.

Appearance: Details
The craftsmanship, building techniques, decoration, styles and lighting of a building or structure.
This includes all building elements such as openings and bays; entrances and colonnades; balconies, chimneys and roofscape; and the rhythm of the façade.

Appearance: Materials
The texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials, and how they are used.
The richness of a building lies in its use of materials which contribute to the attractiveness of its appearance and the character of the area.