

Section 3

Place Making and Design Principles

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3.1 Introduction



Wymondham College. South Norfolk Design Award Winner: New Building and Landscape Categories, 2008.

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3.1.1 Background

The place-making and design quality of application proposals is assessed using the [Greater Norwich Development Partnership Joint Core Strategy Policy 2: Promoting Good Design](#). This requires:

- major developments to be masterplanned;
- new housing proposals to be evaluated against the [Building for Life \(BfL\) Standard](#); and
- non-residential proposals to demonstrate that they achieve similar high standards.

The topics in this section will be used by elected Council Members and planning officers to assess proposals for new development in South Norfolk. They will also provide a helpful checklist for anyone preparing a planning application, to guide proposals and also the contents of the Design & Access Statement.

How Building for Life works

BfL evolved from its original status as an awards scheme for completed projects, into a tool for assessing how proposals comply with planning policy at outline or detailed planning application stage, taking the form of a series of criteria for evaluating the scheme.

The topics here are drawn from the original BfL criteria dating from 2000, with some clarification as to what issues, or aspects of an issue, will be considered under each heading.

The design guidance explains what is required under each topic. However, there is no 'right solution' to any design challenge and there will always be other design approaches that may satisfy the criteria. Where a development proposal takes a different approach then the Design & Access Statement should explain how it meets the requirements.

It is important to provide evidence to demonstrate that a requirement will be met. This may be clear from the application drawings or it may need to be explained in the Design & Access Statement.

This approach recognises that every scheme will have different challenges, different design priorities and specific design qualities that respond to its particular circumstances. Applicants should explain their approach to achieving each of the criteria.

For an outline application, a criterion is met when demonstrated either by the application drawings or when there is a commitment to achieving it in the Design & Access Statement, which can be conditioned.

Relevant print and web-based Building for Life publications

[Delivering great places to live: 20 questions you need to answer, CABE, 2000](#)

[Evaluating Housing Proposals Step by Step, CABE, no date](#)

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3.1.1 Background

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Examples of good local design

3.2 Uses and activities



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Wymondham Library. South Norfolk Design Award Winner: New Building Category, 2009

3.2.1 Community facilities

Key principles

A range of community facilities should be available within easy reach of places that people live and work, so that they can be accessed without needing to use the car.

Why is it important?

Successful places are about more than providing suitable housing and places of work for local people. They also need a range of social, community and sports facilities to allow local people to interact with one another and to support daily life.

Local community facilities help to:

- establish a sense of local identity and community;
- encourage walking and cycling;
- support residents well-being in terms of education, healthcare, shops, local services, employment, and recreation;
- create places where all members of the local community can meet one another.

Are new facilities required?

Local community facilities include a wide range of uses and activities, including schools, nurseries, shops, pubs and cafes, healthcare, community centres, parks and play areas.

In some cases there may be advantages in providing a single, multi-purpose community facility that can be used by different groups and agencies at different times of the day or week.

It is important to identify whether new facilities are required or whether the proposed residents could access existing facilities and support their continued viability.

For large-scale masterplans, local community consultation is essential to ensure that development will reflect local needs. However, proposals for community facilities must be realistic in terms of project viability, management and ownership.

There is a balance to be struck between creating a new sense of place and community in a new development and supporting an existing place, which might also help promote the social integration of existing and new residents.

Where should new facilities be placed?

The position of new facilities in a new development may influence their use. At the heart of a new development, they may promote a sense of identity but they may also be seen as being for new residents only, whereas if they are sited towards the edge of a development they may be used by both new and existing residents.

Where large scale urban extensions are proposed, it may be appropriate to create a new centre with facilities for the entire settlement, or alternatively to expand an existing centre that is accessible and in need of revitalisation.

Are local facilities accessible?

Wherever possible new development should be within convenient walking or cycling distance of existing local facilities. Where new facilities are required they should be within walking distance of as many residents as possible (both new and existing residents), consistent with creating an appropriate site layout (assessed under 3.3.2 Integrate with surroundings).

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3.3.2 Integrate with surroundings

3.2.1 Community facilities

If local facilities are not within walking or cycling distance then accessibility to public transport (assessed under 3.3.1 Public transport) becomes more important to allow people to reach facilities in town centres or other settlements.

Relating community facilities to other uses

On many sites, community facilities are developed separately, by a different developer and to a different timescale.

It is important to make sure that these facilities are well-integrated into the overall scheme and the local context. This should include the site layout and also the character and design of the built form, landscape and public realm, to create an overall sense of place.

Community facilities often provide an opportunity for a more contemporary and innovative architectural character than the design of housing itself.

Relevant evidence

The Design & Access Statement should identify and locate existing community facilities and set out local needs that can be identified.

For large-scale masterplans a Statement of Community Involvement will be required to provide evidence for community aspirations and needs. The Design & Access Statement will need to show that the masterplan proposals are based on partnership working with the relevant authorities and agencies for health, education, leisure etc.

How is it evaluated?

- Are local community facilities, such as schools, local shops, post office, community buildings, open spaces, health facilities identified and located relative to the site?
- Are existing facilities within walking or cycling distance of the site?
- Where they are not, is there a need for local facilities in the area?
- Does the scheme provide any community facilities?



Harleston: New housing set around public open space



Roundwell Medical Centre, Costessey

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3.3.1 Public transport

3.2.2 Mix of uses

Key principles

Places should incorporate a mix of uses and a variety of different types and sizes of accommodation, in particular housing mix, carefully laid out and designed to be compatible with one another, in terms of both activity, and also form of development. New development should contribute towards meeting local needs and aspirations.

Why is it important?

Places with a mix of uses and different types of floorspace can accommodate people at all stages of their lives and careers, forming the basis for a balanced community that renews itself over time. A mix of uses helps to make sure that places are well-used and occupied at all times. It reduces the need for people to travel by car. Places with a mix of uses are vibrant, convenient and feel safe to use.

Housing mix makes an important contribution to the local mix of uses. Neighbourhoods that contain a variety of housing types mean that people can stay within the area and trade up / down as their household grows or as they get older.

Housing mix

Large, neighbourhood scale developments should provide a full range of housing types and sizes to offer choice and meet the needs and demands of a variety of potential residents (for tenure mix see 3.2.3 Mixed and affordable tenures).

Where implementation will take place over a considerable time, there should be some flexibility in the housing mix to allow for development to respond to possible future changes in circumstances.

It is not desirable to segregate different groups into different parts of a development. However, the distribution of housing types should be carefully designed so that people at different stages of life, whose lifestyles may be quite different, do not intrude upon one another. For instance play areas should be sited near family homes, and not close to housing for elderly people. However, elderly persons' housing may benefit from being sited near some other focus of activity.

In some cases, there will be a lack of balance in the housing mix in the wider context, in which case the development may redress the balance although not to the extent of providing a development of only one type or size.

Different sizes and types of housing should have appropriate amenity space to suit the likely lifestyle of occupants.

Within a larger scale development it will be desirable to group different housing types and sizes to create local variations in character, for instance lanes with smaller dwellings or a broad avenue with larger dwellings.

Smaller scale developments should contribute to meeting local housing need and housing types should be designed in a built form that relates well to local character.

Non-residential uses

Where non-residential uses are being provided it is also desirable to provide a mix of different types of accommodation, so that space is provided for both large and small-scale activities.

People benefit from access to shops and other services close to work as well as close to home.

Planning policies set out suitable locations for certain non-residential uses. Where possible and appropriate, new developments should enrich the mix of uses in a local area. This must be balanced with the desirability of reinforcing local character, which may depend in part upon a distinctive mix for that particular area.

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3.2.3 Mixed and affordable tenure

3.2.2 Mix of uses

Where a mix of different uses is proposed, particularly where this includes residential and non-residential uses, then it is important to design the scheme with care to make sure there is no potential for any conflicts between them.

Mixed-use development

Mixed-use development can be arranged in different ways, either:

- with different uses close to one another on a site, for instance a community or health centre or small supermarket together with housing; or
- with different uses on different levels of a building, for instance shops with flats above in a town centre.

Generally it is most likely to be appropriate in town centres or neighbourhood scale developments.

Where different uses are close to one another on a site, then the layout must be designed so that it is possible to walk or cycle between them, although vehicular routes will need to minimise any possible traffic impact on new or existing housing, for instance late evening traffic from a community centre should be routed away from adjoining housing where possible.

The adjoining uses should relate well to one another. For instance, in a new neighbourhood, a local nursery may provide convenient childcare for local residents, reducing the need to travel by car.

The different uses must be carefully planned to meet the needs of their occupants and to create a high quality environment for all users.

This includes making sure that the different uses are compatible with each other, in terms of matters such as hours of activity.

Where a block of development is proposed to include new housing and other uses, for instance in a new local centre, then careful design is required to provide residents with privacy and security.

Mixed use within a building is most appropriate in town centres. People living or working on upper floors helps to support the vitality of the centre and to make it a safe, attractive place that appeals to visitors. Upper floor uses also encourage owners to maintain properties in good condition, which is particularly important in historic environments.



Historic mixed use environment in Harleston

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3.4.1 Existing features

3.2.2 Mix of uses

In centres, the scale of development should be at least two storeys with uses on the upper floor (not only storage) wherever possible.

The entrance to upper floor uses must be safe, convenient, attractive and easy to find, preferably from a street frontage of the building.

Where there is residential use on an upper floor, private amenity space should be provided in the form of a terrace or balcony, wherever possible without infringing the privacy of other residents.

For all mixed use schemes, the uses must have no adverse environmental impact upon each other. This includes noise or vibration from services or between different uses; visual and other impacts from refuse storage, service or plant areas or security lighting.

Relevant evidence

An application should show the mix of accommodation and ideally provide a table detailing the mix of uses with floorspace and accommodation types for each use.

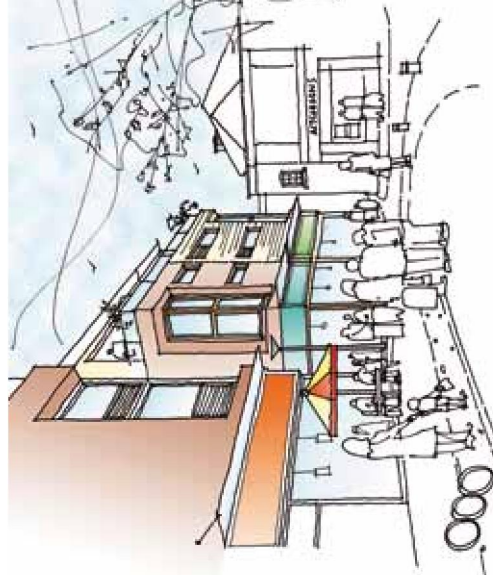
For new housing, this should include the housing mix by size/ no of bedrooms. It may also make reference to the local authority's Housing Market Assessment, or provide an analysis of demographic data or Housing Market Assessment.

For other uses, reference should be made to any research or evidence to support the need or demand for the proposed uses or types.

For large-scale proposals a Statement of Community Involvement will provide evidence of local community needs and aspirations.

How is it evaluated?

- Have needs and demands for different uses been identified and justified?
- Does the accommodation mix help to meet this need and demand and to create a balanced community?
- Does the mix of uses offer choice in terms of housing and work places?
- Are different uses related together well, so that they are compatible with one another?
- Are different accommodation types within each use arranged together satisfactorily?



Example of town centre mixed use scheme

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3.4.1 Existing features

3.2.3 Mixed and affordable tenure

Key principles

Neighbourhoods with a range of housing tenure can accommodate a variety of socio-economic groups in housing that is suitable and affordable.

Why is it important?

A poor mix of housing tenure (especially if replicated over a number of developments) can result in an imbalanced social mix across an area, with the potential for a concentration of social exclusion and deprivation in the long term.

Guidance

Successful developments will base the tenure mix on evidence of housing need and ensure that affordable housing is well designed and integrated with other types of housing.

In large, neighbourhood-scale developments a range of tenures should be provided, although the precise mix and type will depend on the applicant being able to demonstrate that each is deliverable and affordable for those in housing need.

These should be provided at each phase of development, although a degree of flexibility should be permitted so that built form is appropriate to the proposed character to be created.

It is important to ensure that the tenure mix is well integrated into the layout and not concentrated into a single location or into locations with the worst environmental quality. Providing affordable dwellings in small groups is the approach that is generally preferred for management purposes. Where there may be communal areas, for instance within the blocks of development (say for garden space or parking), then the management needs to be resolved if there is to be a mix of private and affordable housing within a single block.

For smaller scale developments, the tenure mix should contribute towards meeting needs by supporting the existing pattern of tenures or introducing new tenures as appropriate.

Tenure should not be differentiated by lower design quality. It may be permissible for elevations of affordable housing to be simpler in design, provided this is appropriate to their position in the layout and the character to be created, and that such elevations are well proportioned and carefully detailed, with the materials not being of obviously lower quality.

Relevant evidence

This should include a schedule of the housing mix by type, together with a site plan to show their proposed distribution across the site.

It may also refer to the local authority's Housing Market Assessment, or provide a specific analysis of demographic data or Housing Market Assessment.

For large-scale proposals a Statement of Community Involvement will provide evidence of community needs and aspirations.

An outline of the proposals for management of communal areas may also be required as part of the Design & Access Statement.

How is it evaluated?

- Has tenure need and demand been identified and justified?
- Does the tenure mix help to meet this need and demand and to create a balanced community?
- Does the tenure mix provide choice?
- Does the design approach distribute different tenures across the site in a way that is balanced?
- Is the quality of design and materials equally well considered for all tenures?

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3.2.2 Mix of uses

3.3 Accessibility

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Roundwell Medical Centre

3.3.1 Public Transport

Key principles

Where possible, new development should be located near to public transport, to offer people a choice of how to travel, not only by car.

Depending upon the scale of development proposals and their potential transport impact, developers will be expected to contribute towards improvements to public transport services and facilities, either directly through s.106 contributions or through CIL.

Other incentives to reduce the environmental impacts of cars and car use may also be incorporated into new development and may be regarded as contributing towards this objective.

Why is it important?

Access to public transport will help to reduce reliance on the private car and so reduce the environmental impact of new development. Reducing the number of car journeys also has the potential to enhance the experience of pedestrians and cyclists, both in new developments and in existing places.

There are also health and well-being advantages and added scope to create walkable neighbourhoods and smarter travel choices.

New development that can be reached by public transport is also accessible to a wider group of people than development that is reliant on car use.

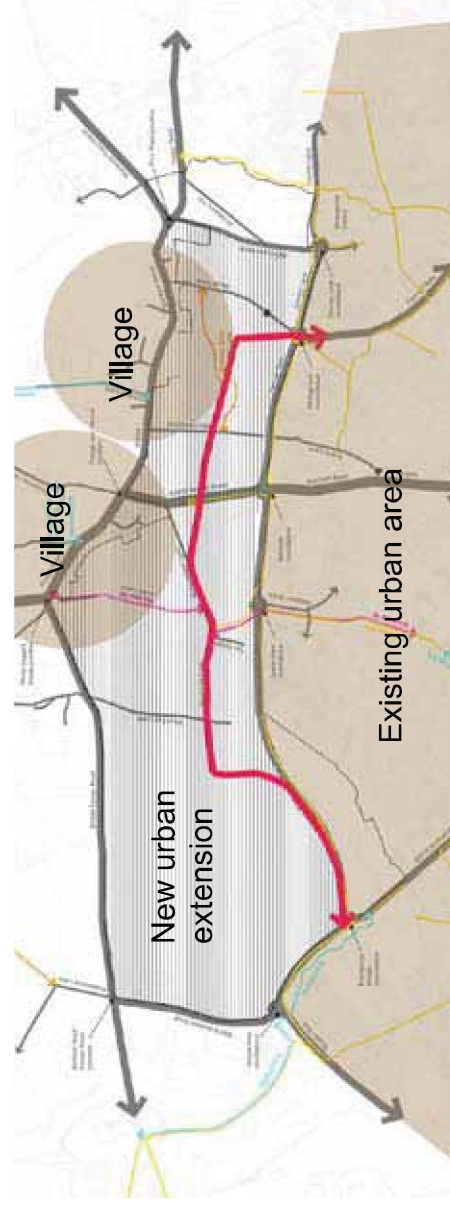
Guidance

Wherever possible, depending upon the scale of development proposals, access to public transport should be designed into the layout. In many cases, this will involve extending or altering an existing bus route and its stops.

Proposals for bus services must meet operational requirements, and will need to be agreed with the County Highways Authority and the bus operator, who should be consulted at an early stage of the design process.

Bus proposals should:

- serve as many of the occupiers of the new development as possible;
- provide a direct and convenient route, so that people choose it as an alternative to the car;
- follow a clear route along a principal street through the development;
- locate stops where activity is concentrated, near shops, street junctions, or other pedestrian routes.



A new bus route (red) provided as part of an urban extension improves the public transport provision for two outlying villages

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3.3.1 Public Transport

Access to public transport is easier to achieve in urban areas than in rural areas. The table recognises the difficulty of providing good accessibility to public transport in rural areas, and provides a 'rule of thumb' for distances/ walk time.

Distance/ walk time	Public transport
400m, or 5 minutes	Bus or Bus Rapid Transit stop in an urban area or urban extension
800m or 10 minutes	Bus stop in a rural area Railway station Bus Rapid Transit stop in a rural area

Bus services for new development should not be provided at the expense of services for existing local communities. There may need to be a balance between retaining and re-routing existing bus routes, so that both existing and new residents benefit from improvements to bus services.

For smaller scale developments, site layouts and connections into the surrounding areas should be designed to create direct, convenient and attractive walking routes to any public transport stops in the locality (assessed under Section 3.3.2 Integrate with surroundings).

Where there is a bus route alongside the site, then there may be an opportunity to provide a new bus stop or to improve facilities, for instance with a bus shelter.

Where improvements to public transport are proposed, early discussions should be held with the County Highway Authority.

Other incentives to reduce the use of private cars that may be considered as contributing towards this objective include car clubs, car pools, electric cars and/ or charging points, and the provision of good broadband connections. Community transport initiatives can also help reduce the use of private cars.

Relevant evidence

The Design & Access Statement should include a schedule of public transport routes, distance from scheme and frequency of services. Where a new or altered bus services is proposed, its accessibility to proposed occupiers and existing communities should also be demonstrated.

For larger-scale developments a [Transport Statement](#) or [Transport Assessment](#) will be required.

Guidance on what is acceptable is provided in Norfolk County Council's [Safe, Sustainable Development: Aims and Guidance notes for Local Highway Authority requirements in Development Management](#).

How is it evaluated?

- Are local public transport services and stops identified?
- Is public transport accessible from the site?
- Is there a need or demand for new or improved public transport routes or services?
- Does the scheme provide new or improved public transport facilities or services and/ or contribute towards

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3.3.2 Integrate with surroundings

3.3.2 Integrate with surroundings

Key principles

New streets and footpaths should connect into existing networks of streets and footpaths to ensure that new housing is well linked into the surrounding area.

New housing should address surrounding development in a positive manner that is appropriate to the location.

Why is it important?

A new development that is well connected into the wider network of routes serving existing development will help to create a place without barriers to movement, that is accessible to all.

Creating convenient pedestrian and cycling links into existing routes and places will also help to reduce reliance on the private car.

New development that is designed to become a seamless part of the wider place rather than as somewhere separate and different will help to promote a shared community identity.

Integrating with surrounding route network

New development should link into the surrounding network of roads, streets and footpaths, and should make

connections between existing streets and footpaths to create convenient and direct routes for people to use.

Wherever possible, connections between the site and its surroundings should allow people a choice of route into and through the site.

In the past some developments were designed as 'estates', which were often physically isolated from their surroundings. Other developments included too many connections, so that no routes felt safe to use. Both extremes led to environments that contributed to social problems.

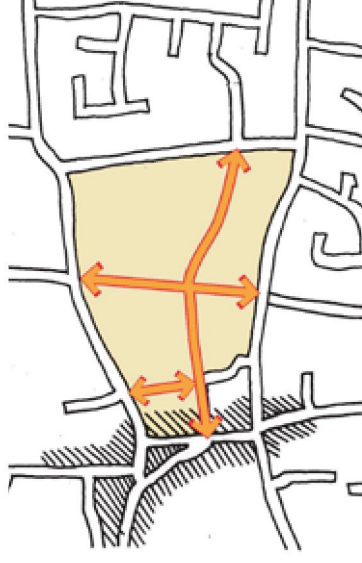
Identifying appropriate connections requires designers to balance several factors, such as:

- creating direct, convenient routes to encourage walking and cycling;
- discouraging 'rat running' by vehicles;
- complying with highway design junction spacing criteria;
- creating developable parcels and plots of land (assessed under Section 3.6.2 Development blocks); and
- making sure that routes will be safe and attractive to use (assessed under Section 3.6.3 Legibility).

Across some sites there may be 'desire lines' that connect existing housing into local community facilities, which should be retained where possible.

Integrating with surrounding development

New and existing development must integrate well together, to create a positive relationship. Proposals should be designed to maintain reasonable levels of sunlight, daylight, privacy and security to adjoining properties, with any potential impacts on neighbours being mitigated by careful design.



Connecting a development site into the existing road network



Harleston: redevelopment of a site in an urban context which integrates with existing pedestrian networks

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- 3.6.2 Development blocks
- 3.6.3 Legibility

3.3.2 Integrate with surroundings

The **Development Management DPD**

will provide an evidence base and policies for the relationships between neighbouring properties.

Where there is a street or footpath along a site boundary then new housing should face outwards to create a frontage.

Where a site is bounded by rear gardens, then new housing should back onto the boundary so that private gardens areas adjoin one another.

There may be some situations where this is not possible to achieve, in which case new housing must be designed with care to maintain reasonable levels of security and privacy for existing occupiers.

Where an open space is proposed next to a site boundary that adjoins existing rear gardens, it must be designed so that:

- the open space is well supervised by built development; and
- the rear of existing properties is secure.

Integrating with countryside

Where new development is proposed at the edge of a settlement then the boundaries should soften the edge, by:

- their position, so that they sit into the landscape, for instance by following contours;

- their alignment, so that they are informal and made up of smaller scale elements; and
- planting, so that the edge is 'green' and provides a soft transition between the edge of the development and the countryside.
- views into and out of the site that form visual links into the countryside.

Relevant evidence

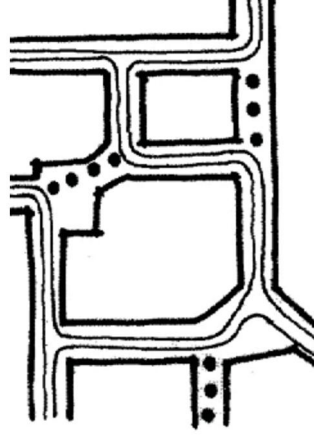
Development proposals should show the site together with its immediate context, to locate the position of surrounding routes and neighbouring development.

The Design & Access Statement should demonstrate how the new development will link into the local route network for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. It should also identify important desire lines across the site.

How is it evaluated?

- Is the local route network identified, including footpaths and cycle routes as well as streets?
- Are desire lines across the site identified?
- Do access points and routes within the site connect into the surrounding network in a way that will create direct and convenient links between the two?

- Does the development relate appropriately to the surrounding pattern of development in terms of public-private relationships, privacy and security?



Make sure that routes for pedestrian and cyclists are direct and follow desire lines



Pedestrian routes linking different parts of the development together, providing direct and convenient routes for people

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- 3.6.2 Development blocks
- 3.7.1 Supervision of streets

3.4 Site Assets



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3.4.1 Existing features

Key principles

New development should retain existing site features of value and should be designed to take advantage of the characteristics of the site and local surroundings.

Why is it important?

We value places that have developed in a way that makes them individual and memorable.

Every development site has a unique history of previous development or landscape that forms part of the identity of the area for the local community.

Incorporating existing features and characteristics of a site into proposals helps new development to create places that are distinctive and unlike anywhere else.

Retaining and incorporating existing features into development proposals can help to soften the impact of change by creating a sense of continuity that acknowledges local identity. For new occupiers, existing features create a sense of place and maturity that otherwise will take time to develop.

Development proposals must be based on a sound understanding of the site and its surroundings.

Site features

Where possible, designers should retain and integrate existing site features and characteristics into proposals for new development. These may include:

- Site features such as mature trees; hedgerows; boundary walls; buildings or structures; or watercourses. These may become focal points in a layout, or may form a setting for new buildings.
- Landform, topography, site orientation and views into and out of the site, where a carefully considered relationship will help development to:
 - sit well into the wider pattern of settlement and landscape,
 - exploit passive or solar energy generation (assessed under Section 3.4.2 Site-wide environmental features), or
 - provide vistas or create a new landmark for the local area.
- Environmental assets that may not be highly visible, such as archaeology, where the aim may be for development not to disturb its value.

Site features may be important for a variety of reasons, either through their inherent quality or through the contribution they make to their surroundings and to the wider place.



Poringland: Mature trees have been retained, giving the new development distinctiveness and character



Trowse: A good example of buildings relating to the existing site topography

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3.4.2 Site-wide environmental features

3.4.1 Existing features

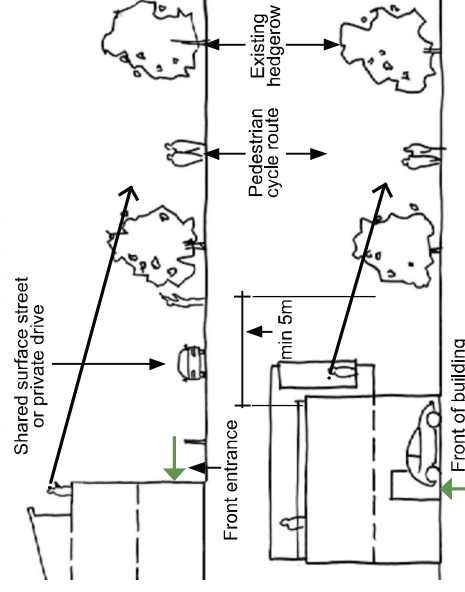
Mature trees and hedgerows play a significant role in the landscape and in many of the settlements in South Norfolk. For instance, mature trees may:

- have arboricultural value in themselves;
- have value as part of a group of trees or a woodland;
- contribute to local character, for instance providing a ‘green’ backdrop to buildings; or
- contribute to quality of life, for instance by visually screening a site from its neighbours.

In many places, hedgerows mark historic boundaries or follow historic routes across the rural landscape, providing bio-diverse habitats that support a wide range of species. In others, hedged front boundaries to properties contribute towards local character.

Similarly, the value of existing buildings may lie in their inherent quality in terms of architectural or historic interest, or, in their contribution to the quality of the townscape of the local area. Where a site is in a Conservation Area or contains Listed Buildings then the Conservation Officer should be consulted for advice at an early stage.

In many rural locations, there is an important balance between views restricted by development, and open views out across the countryside. In other locations, there may be important view corridors through a site towards landmarks that contribute significantly to local character.



Examples of how to integrate existing hedgerows



View of Abbey in Wymondham: It is important to retain view corridors to existing monuments or out to the landscape



The Pennoyer Centre, Pulham St Mary: Example of retention and positive extension of an existing building

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3.4.1 Existing features

Local surroundings

Development should also relate well to the character of the local area and to its positive characteristics and typical local patterns, which may include:

- the movement network, and the arrangement of streets and junctions;
- the layout of development blocks and plots;
- the arrangement and form of buildings, including the building line and gaps between buildings;
- open spaces;
- the architectural design of buildings;
- the hard and soft landscape design of plots, boundaries, streets and spaces; and
- the details, decorative elements, materials and planting.



Trowse: New development which takes advantage of site topography to inform site layout

Relevant evidence

A topographical survey drawing should show site levels, the position and canopies of trees, existing building and structures. The position of buildings and trees in neighbouring plots should also be shown.

It may also be necessary to provide an arboricultural assessment of existing trees, or a Phase 1 habitat survey to identify features of ecological interest. The Design & Access Statement should identify and appraise the value of the site's features and characteristics.



Colour/material palettes may be derived from the analysis of the local context

How is it evaluated?

- Are the existing features and characteristics of the site clearly and accurately identified?
- Has the value of existing features and other characteristics of the site been assessed?
- Does the appraisal of the site context identify the features and characteristics of the surroundings that contribute towards local character and the quality of the environment?
- Do the proposals retain and integrate positive site features into the development?
- Do the proposals incorporate or respond to local characteristics in a positive way?



Example of analysis drawing showing listed and existing buildings, trees, views and routes

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3.4.2 Site-wide environmental features

Key principles

The location and layout of new development proposals should be designed to support the transition to a low carbon economy in a changing climate. (Section 3.9.3 Building performance assesses the environmental sustainability of individual buildings and Section 3.3.1 Public transport assesses public transport accessibility).

Why is it important?

A priority for the design of new development is to reduce its impact upon the environment (mitigation), and also to reduce the environment's impact upon the development (adaptation to future climate change). The following shifts in weather are predicted for the UK:

- hotter drier summers;
- wetter warmer winters; and
- more intense weather events (rain storms; high winds; extended dry periods or cold – snow and ice).

Water availability and water quality are already key issues for South Norfolk and new development must not exacerbate the situation.

Current requirements can be met on a building-by-building basis. However, this will become increasingly difficult to

achieve and more strategic site-wide or communal approaches will become necessary. A site-wide approach is necessary for flood and surface water management.

Design guidance

Proposals must comply with [Joint Core Strategy](#) policy requirements for energy and water.

Site-wide environmental solutions must contribute to the character of the development as well as solving technical problems.

Site appraisal

The site appraisal should identify opportunities for the location or layout of development to be influenced by a site-wide environmental strategy. Relevant issues may include:

- watercourses;
- exposure to cold easterly winds;
- flood risk and drainage;
- soils and ground conditions;
- exposure to sun, such as slopes facing south, or within 30 degrees of it;
- biodiversity;
- open space and green infrastructure policy requirements;
- construction waste requirements.

Energy

Energy strategies should follow the principles of the energy hierarchy.

The site layout should allow for the optimum arrangement in terms of local microclimate, passive solar gain and natural ventilation, relative to the character of the local area, considering:

- the compactness of building forms, such as terraced rather than detached buildings;
- the orientation of streets, buildings and roofs; and
- how elevations provide appropriate levels of privacy for different locations, such as street frontages or gardens.

The potential for local energy generation, such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP), biomass fuel, wind generation, etc should also be investigated.



Street scenes can be designed so that roofs are at the most suitable angle for efficient solar panels: Proposals for affordable housing scheme, Spooner Row, Wymondham by Ingleton Wood Architects for Saffron Housing Trust

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- 3.9.3 Building performance
- 3.3.1 Public transport

3.4.2 Site-wide environmental features

Drainage

Surface water drainage strategies should follow the principles of the SuDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) hierarchy, aiming to reduce surface water run-off to main drainage systems whilst protecting groundwater quality. SuDs is a sequence of systems designed to be more sustainable than simply channelling of watercourses. The Building Regulations have a hierarchy of surface water technologies and infiltration systems that should be used as a priority unless there are reasons why they cannot be used. Applicants will need to discuss their proposals with the Environment Agency and Norfolk County Council, as well as complying with the Building Regulations.

The locations and extent of suitable drainage features are significantly influenced by topography and soil condition. This in turn could impact on the layout and appearance of a development.

SuDS can contribute to biodiversity enhancement on site and to wider ecological networks to meet both the Environment Agency's **national** policies and Norfolk County Council's **local** policies. Wherever possible:

- parking areas should be surfaced with permeable paving; and

- flood management and drainage solutions should be designed as landscape features.

Ecology

Development should retain native landscapes and maintain or enhance local biodiversity to ensure ecology is an integral part of the development proposals, both on site and the wider ecological network.

Green infrastructure

Green infrastructure is multi-functional landscape that provides a variety of open and green spaces, sustainable drainage and bio-diverse habitats. Wherever possible, development proposals should adopt this approach. For instance, informal open spaces may include wetland areas for surface water drainage, which support biodiversity and also create visual interest.

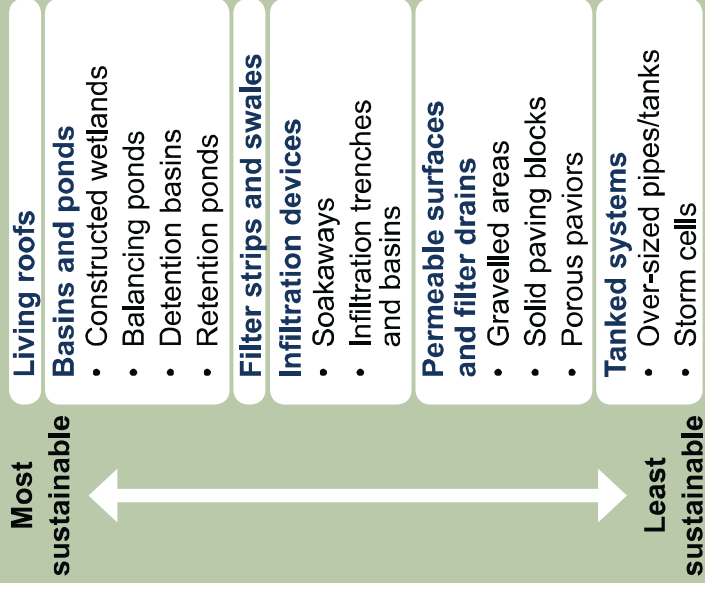
Possible evidence

Design & Access Statements should include a site appraisal identifying opportunities and constraints for site-wide environmental features and should justify their inclusion or otherwise in terms of energy, drainage, bio-diversity and green infrastructure.

Large sites and sites of possible sensitivity should submit a preliminary ecological site appraisal.

See www.naturalengland.org.uk

SuDS technique



How is it evaluated?

- Have environmental opportunities associated with the site, mix of uses and/ or form of development been identified?
- Is the site layout or form of development influenced by passive energy considerations, such as microclimate, passive solar?
- Is the scheme influenced by the energy strategy?
- Do the proposals create or enhance green infrastructure?

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3.5 Character

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Trowse

3.5.1 Distinctive character

Key principles

New development should be designed to have a positive character that is appropriate for the place where it is located, the type of development to be provided and also the likely lifestyle of occupiers.

Why is it important?

Successful neighbourhoods have a sense of place that helps residents to feel a sense of identity.

Giving new development a character and quality helps community pride and 'ownership', which increases the likelihood that local people will look after and maintain it well.

For larger scale developments, a variety of distinctive character makes it possible for people to recognise different parts and to know where they are. However, there is a need to balance the variety of different parts with a coherence of character for the place as a whole, particularly when large-scale developments are built out in phases.

Design guidance

The character of a development comes from a combination of different design decisions relating to the layout, the design of buildings and the landscape, and includes existing features as well as new purpose designed ones. This topic relates to the development as a whole, or neighbourhoods within it, rather than the design of individual buildings.

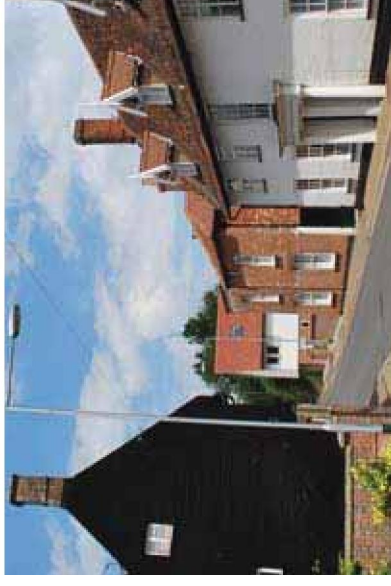
What creates local character?

Character is created by the qualities of:

- buildings,
- the public realm of streets, public and open spaces; and
- the landscape.

It is defined by the combination of a number of elements of a scheme, which may include:

- the network of movement, creating streets and junctions;
- the layout of development blocks and plots;
- the arrangement and form of buildings, including the building line and gaps between buildings;
- open spaces;
- the architectural design of buildings;
- the hard and soft landscape design of plots, boundaries, streets and spaces; and



Contemporary infill scheme that reinforces local characteristics



Above: existing street. Below: new development relates well in terms of character

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3.5.1 Distinctive character

- the details, decorative elements, materials and planting. In most places or developments, some of these elements will play a more important role in determining the character than others. For instance, local character may be created largely by:

- the soft landscape of trees and hedges of appropriate species and character, with buildings playing a secondary role;
- the architecture and characteristic materials of the buildings; or
- the scale, massing and rhythm of buildings and their relationship to the street.

Character is created when the different elements of a development are designed with a purpose, so the designer needs to have a clear idea of what the development is trying to achieve.

For instance if street trees are planted, the effect may be informal and arcadian, or formal and urban.

There are a variety of design approaches to creating character, which include:

- the coherent design of areas of housing, or ‘character areas’; and
- the design of special areas, or ‘character generators’ within the development.

Public and open spaces, together with the development around them, can often be designed to act as character generators. High streets, or main streets, can also be designed as character generators with a sequence of different spaces and events along their length.

What kind of character is appropriate?

The Joint Core Strategy in its policies for places, identifies certain aspects of local character that should be incorporated into new development proposals in South Norfolk. Section 2 of this document defines the special character of South Norfolk and identifies key local characteristics that should inform proposals for new development.

Development proposals should pick up on certain characteristics found on the site or in the local area. The appraisal of the context should identify what these might be (assessed in Section 3.4.1 Existing features). These may include aspects of the appearance of existing buildings, for instance their use of materials, but equally they may include the typical patterns of buildings and spaces, for instance the orientation of roofs in relation to the street.

Where local character is not positive or where it is not clear, then there is more scope for development to establish a new character.

It is important that development proposals incorporate local characteristics that are appropriate to the building type and its form. For instance, the characteristics of a cottage are generally unlikely to provide a useful character precedent for a large retail unit.

All buildings should contribute to the character of a place, including those for retail, social and community facilities and workplaces.

Where a development is proposed on the edge of a settlement it may be appropriate to vary the character to make a transition between an urban and more rural character.

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- 2 The special character of South Norfolk
- 3.4.1 Existing features

3.5.1 Distinctive character

Larger-scale developments

For larger, neighbourhood scale development, it will often be appropriate to create a new and distinctive character. However, this will still need to relate positively to the character of the settlement it belongs to.

The masterplanning process required by the [Joint Core Strategy](#) should resolve how a distinctive character is to be created.

For sites of this scale, designers will need to balance the degree of consistency and variety to create areas of different character and to reinforce the street hierarchy (assessed in Section 3.6.1 Street network).

Smaller-scale developments

For smaller-scale developments, particularly on infill sites, the aim should be to reinforce or improve existing local character. In terms of architectural design (assessed under 3.8.2 Architectural quality), this does not mean copying the appearance of existing buildings, but may include such things as:

- three dimensional form and articulation of buildings and roofs;
- composition and proportions of elevations; and
- use of materials.



Possible evidence

The Design & Access Statement should identify the aspects of local character to which the scheme responds. It should set out how character is proposed to be created, for instance in terms of character areas or character generators, together with the reasoning for the selected approach.

How is it evaluated?

- Does the scheme have a clear design concept?
- Is the local character identified?
- Do the proposals reinforce or enhance local character?
- Does the scheme create a strong sense of place?
- Does the scheme include an appropriate balance between consistency and variety?

Top-left - Cringleford: New development using local materials to create a distinctive, contemporary character

Left - Larger developments should be differentiated into different character areas to avoid a homogenous approach and aid distinctiveness and legibility

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- 3.6.1 Street network
- 3.8.2 Architectural quality

3.5.2 Scheme-specific design

Key principles

The design of new development should be specific to its situation, in terms of the client's brief, the site and local context, based on an understanding of the local area.

Why is it important?

We value places that are locally distinctive, with their own unique sense of place.

A design approach that is specific to its location will contribute to a locally distinctive sense of place and sense of identity, as well as creating a high quality environment.

It has the potential to create somewhere that becomes highly valued over time and part of our heritage in future.

Design guidance

This question refers to the layout of new development and also to the proposed building types.

A site-specific scheme is one that is purpose designed to suit the particular site and surroundings and to make the most of the opportunities for improving the character and quality of the local area.

Wherever, possible this should mean bespoke design concept, layout, building

types and landscape.

In some situations it may appropriate to use 'standard' or traditional building types, rather than ones that have been purpose-designed specifically for a particular site. In such cases, the building types should be appropriate to:

- the character of the proposals;
- the character of the local context;
- their position in the layout;
- the design of street elevations, and
- the three-dimensional composition of the scheme.

Where standard building types are proposed, then they must be tailored as necessary to suit the specific circumstances of a particular development and its site.

Typically, tailored building types are likely to be needed to achieve the following:

- to turn the corner at street junctions;
- to mark special points in the layout such as entrances, 'gateways' or to create landmarks (see Section 3.6.3 Legibility); or
- to create link elements to achieve continuous street frontages.

Building types should be designed to be appropriate to the local context. Section 2.2 outlines the typical characteristics of vernacular architecture in South Norfolk.

For instance, in a village, the typical house type may be wide-fronted and shallow plan. New houses will need to follow a similar plan form or to have carefully designed roof forms if they are to relate well to the character of the existing townscape.

Where a building type is unlike any found in the local context, then a contemporary approach will be appropriate, provided it is sensitive to its context of existing and new development.

Possible evidence

Where more than one building is proposed, street elevation drawings should be provided.

The Design & Access Statement should demonstrate how the scheme is site-specific in terms of both layout and buildings.

How is it evaluated?

- Is the scheme purpose designed for the specific site in terms of layout, building types and landscape?
- If it uses 'standard' building types, then are these appropriate to the situation and the desired character?
- Have standard building types been tailored to suit the specific requirements of the site and layout?

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- 2.2 Vernacular architecture of South Norfolk
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3.6 Development Form



Hethel Engineering Centre, South Norfolk Design Award Commendation, New Building Category, 2006

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3.6.1 Street network

Key principles

Developments should be designed around connected networks of streets in a clear street hierarchy, to accommodate vehicular movement and car parking, whilst ensuring that this does not dominate the layout of buildings and spaces.

Why is it important?

New developments that are designed around car movement, primarily based on technical highway design criteria, do not create a sense of place. The role of streets in new developments should be more than just being movement channels for vehicles, and they should be designed to be social spaces, as much for walking and cycling as for driving.

A connected network of streets and public spaces provides people with a choice of how to move around a development and makes all parts of it easily accessible to residents. A clear hierarchy of streets helps people to find their way around a place.

Design guidance

This question refers to the design of the street network as a whole.

Layouts should be designed as buildings and spaces in accordance with [Manual For Streets](#) (MfS1 and MfS2) principles, rather than around technical highway requirements.

The approach should be to design streets rather than roads, balance the needs of people and cars, to accommodate:

- movement by all modes of transport, to include cars, buses, and vehicles for refuse, services and delivery, and emergency access, cycling and walking for access;
- social activity, that is people walking for recreation, meeting others, using wheelchairs, pushing buggies, or informal play; and
- to contribute to environmental sustainability, for instance sustainable drainage or reducing heat absorption.

MfS principles apply to streets in residential areas with relatively light traffic, while MfS2 extended similar principles of design to a wider range of streets including all 30mph limits and some 40mph speed limit zones. So all new streets in residential areas should prioritise place.



The degree of spaciousness and formality of the street, together with the building line, creates different character

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3.6.1 Street network

In larger, neighbourhood scale developments, the projected traffic generation may mean that principal streets cannot function as through routes. Where this is the case, then such routes should still be designed as principal streets, with links for walking cycling and buses but movement restrictions for private cars, designed within the street space where necessary.

Connected network of streets

There should be a choice of access points into the development with clear views, easy orientation and direct routes.

The street network must:

- link well into the surrounding route network (assessed under Section 3.3.2 Integrate with surroundings);
- create a connected network of routes within the site wherever possible;
- provide a choice of access points and movement; and
- define development blocks that are capable of development.

Existing site features, such as mature trees may mean that it is not possible to create a well-connected network of streets in parts of a development. Where possible, pedestrian and cycle connections should be provided even where vehicular routes are not possible.

In larger-scale developments, the projected traffic generation may mean that principal streets cannot function as through routes. Where this is the case, then such routes should still be designed as principal streets, with links for walking cycling and buses but movement restrictions for private cars, designed within the street space where necessary.

The aim should be to integrate the site into the wider movement pattern and urban fabric without creating rat-running problems.

Creating a street hierarchy

A clear street hierarchy should be designed, to include all modes of movement, preferably using the same route network, so that it is easy to understand. Each street within the hierarchy should be an identifiable type, which may include some or all of the following:

- principal streets, for example a high street or boulevard;
- secondary streets, for example an avenue;
- local streets; and
- courtyards, mews and drives.

A spatial hierarchy of streets and spaces is important as it helps visitors and residents to navigate. The hierarchy should be based upon a range of issues, including the distribution of land uses, the density of development and the nature of movement through the space.

Traffic speed is a key influence on the position of a street in the hierarchy.

The appropriate design speed for a street should be identified and agreed at an early stage and the street design should aim to manage the speeds of motorists accordingly. For residential streets the design speed will generally be a maximum of 20mph. The street hierarchy should be influenced by:

- the relative numbers of pedestrians and vehicles;
- speed of vehicles;
- width of carriageway; and
- the use of the buildings adjoining the road.

Once a hierarchy is established, it should be reinforced by the design of both buildings and landscape (assessed under Section 3.6.3 Legibility).

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- 3.3.2 Integrate with surroundings
- 3.6.3 Legibility

3.6.1 Street network

Accommodating vehicles so they don't dominate layouts

The layout of a development should be arranged to create attractive spaces and not to follow the shape of a vehicular turning head.

Where vehicular routes run through spaces, then the space must be designed so that it is possible to use it in other ways as well as for driving through and parking.

In particular, where it is not possible to create a connected street, a cul-de-sac must be designed as a space with a positive character that accommodates a variety of activity.

Possible evidence

Scheme layout drawings.

The Design & Access Statement should show that there is a connected network with a clear hierarchy of streets and it should explain how it is appropriate to the scheme.

How is it evaluated?

- Do the proposals treat highways as streets rather than roads, for the use of all types of movement, and for social activity too?
- Is a connected network of streets and other routes proposed?
- Does the scheme establish a clear hierarchy of streets?



Aerial image of Wymondham: A clear hierarchy of streets

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3.6.2 Development blocks

Key principles

New development should be based on well-defined development blocks, with buildings placed so that there is a clear distinction between public and private space. This can most easily be achieved with the public side (or fronts) of buildings relating to streets, and the private side (or rear) relating to private external areas.

Why is it important?

Where buildings define streets, they help to create a sense of place and character for a development.

Successful places are based on a clear distinction between public and private spaces, which helps to make a place feel secure, both for the occupier of a building, and the person in the street.

The relationships between public and private space are particularly important in proposals for housing development.

Development blocks

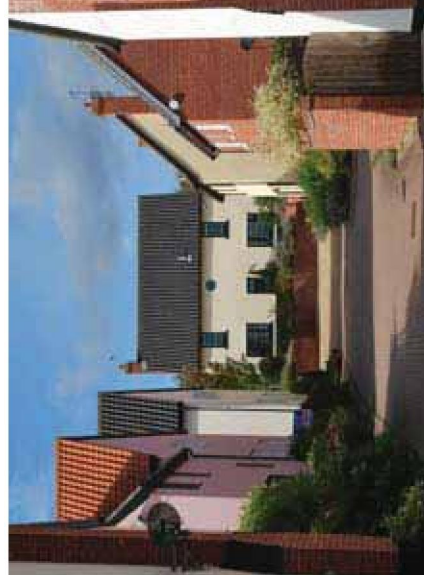
The street network must define development blocks or plots of a size and shape that is capable of being developed in accordance with the guidance set out below.

The blocks or plots may also reflect a characteristic pattern in the surrounding area, although generally the aim should be to create relatively small blocks so that there is a good choice of routes.

Block sizes will also depend upon how parking is to be accommodated.

Where development blocks are relatively large, then culs-de-sac may be introduced at the most local level of vehicular access, provided they are designed as positive spaces, for instance mews streets or courtyards, rather than simply around highway criteria (assessed under Section 3.6.1 Street network).

Public and open spaces should be positioned in locations where they are likely to be well used, for instance where routes meet. In some cases, it may be appropriate for them to be situated at the edge of a new development rather than at its heart.



Example of mews development



Example of mews development



Example of how buildings have been successfully designed to turn a corner

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3.6.1 Street network

3.6.2 Development blocks

Well defined and continuous frontages

In most cases, spaces should be well-defined by buildings to create a frontage to the street or space.

The continuity of a frontage is how built up it is. Continuous frontages mean that development will enclose and supervise streets (assessed under 3.7.1 Supervision of streets), making them feel comfortable and safe for people to walk around. The design of frontages also helps to create a sense of place and the degree of continuity will influence its character (assessed under Section 3.5.1 Distinctive character).

Generally, street frontages in urban locations should be continuous.

However, in some existing places, local character is determined by landscape elements rather than by buildings. In these locations, it is permissible for new development to be based on streets that are defined by trees and hedge planting, or brick walls rather than by the buildings themselves.

For an infill development, the continuity of the street frontage should be influenced by the typical characteristics found in the surrounding area, where this has a positive character.

Building lines

Streets with a positive character tend to have a building line, that is, a typical distance between the front of buildings and the street.

Where there is an established building line then it is important that new development should follow it wherever possible.

In centres the building line will generally be urban, that is, at the back edge of the pavement, in some cases with important buildings set back to create a small forecourt space. The building line for new development in centres should also be urban.

Public and private space

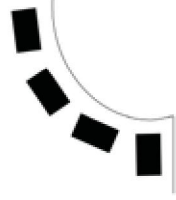
Development layouts should define clearly what is public realm and what is private realm.

This can most easily be achieved by creating a continuous building frontage that addresses the street, with private space within the block.

Where this is not possible or appropriate, then any boundary treatments between private space and the public realm must be high quality, robust, and contribute to the character of the development. Close-boarded fences are unlikely to meet these criteria.

Buildings of a similar height can be arranged to create streets with different character, depending upon such factors as:

- the position of the street in the street hierarchy, which may influence its width;
- the position and continuity of the building line;
- the relationship of the building height to the width of the space;
- the treatment of the space between the building line and the street, the front garden; and
- the design of the street space itself, the public realm.



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- 3.5.1 Distinctive character
- 3.7.1 Supervision of streets

3.6.2 Development blocks

Generally fronts of buildings should relate to other fronts across streets or other public realm, while the backs should relate to other backs to make a more private zone within the heart of a development block.

Other approaches may be appropriate in certain circumstances provided that issues of privacy and security are carefully resolved.

Generally, successful housing is designed with some form of transition between the street itself and the windows and doors of the dwelling. This helps to make sure that residents have sufficient privacy within their home.

The transition can take the form of:

- a change in level so that the house is set above the street, although accessibility requirements would also need to be addressed;
- a privacy strip - an open area marked out from the footway, often but not always paved; or
- a front garden, generally enclosed by walls, railings, fences or hedges, where it may be possible also to store bins, bikes etc.

Where there is no front boundary treatment then windows and doors need to be designed to provide residents with appropriate levels of privacy for their rooms.

Vertically proportioned windows afford residents more privacy than horizontal ones of the same size.

Sometimes rear courtyards in residential blocks are semi-public in that they contain housing or access to housing, sometimes in the form of flats over garages (FOGs) as well as parking and private spaces. These courtyards should be designed as if they were public spaces in terms of the criteria set out in this guide.



Possible evidence

Layout drawings showing public and private space.

The Design & Access Statement should explain the approach adopted in the development proposals in terms of development blocks, street frontages, building lines and public/ private space.

How is it evaluated?

- Does the layout create well defined development blocks?
- Does it create well defined and continuous street frontages?
- Is there a clear, established building line?
- Are there clear distinctions between public and private space?
- Do proposals for new housing provide a transition between the street and the dwelling frontage?

Example of well integrated car parking fronting onto a public space, above: example of a FOG

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3.6.3 Legibility

Key principles

The layout and form of buildings in new developments should reinforce the clarity of the clear street hierarchy, so that the movement patterns, the distribution of land uses, activities and spaces, and the scale and massing of buildings all support one another to create a memorable and recognisable place.

Why is it important?

A place with a clear street hierarchy will help people to navigate and to recognise whereabouts in the development they are. The scale and massing of the built form can reinforce this hierarchy, so making the development more legible and memorable, and helping to develop a sense of identity.



Trowse: building positioned to create a focal point at the end of the street

Reinforcing the street hierarchy

The buildings and landscape associated with each street should be designed to reinforce its position in the street hierarchy. This may include such things as:

- the width of the space;
- how close buildings are set to the footway (the building line, assessed under Section 3.6.2 Development blocks);
- how built up, or continuous, the street frontage is (also assessed under Section 3.6.2 Development blocks);
- the formality of the building layout in relation to the street frontage;
- the height of buildings; and
- the formality of the street design, including street furniture and planting.

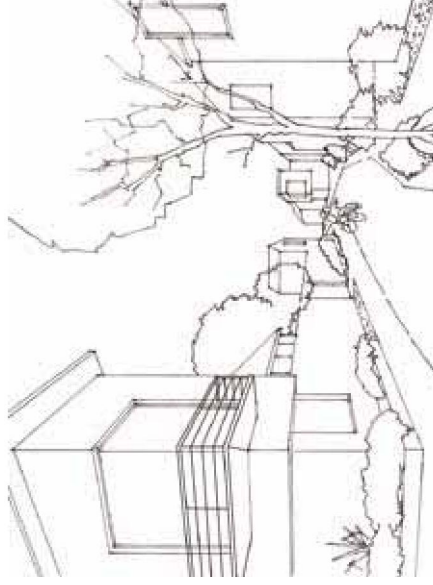
Formal and informal layout

Formal streets (which are straight, and axial or symmetrical) tend to be associated with principal routes or important locations within developments.

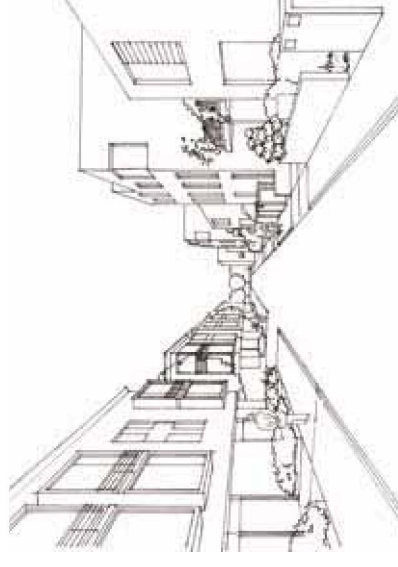
Informal streets are more likely to be associated with the edges of a settlement or development.

However, some settlements are characterised by formal or informal layouts for all their streets. Settlements in South Norfolk (see Section 2.0 Special

Character of South Norfolk) are not generally formal in layout so, if such an approach were to be adopted, it should be designed with particular care.



Informal lane, with varied building line and varied development form



Formal street, with consistent building line and generally consistent set back

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- 2 The special character of South Norfolk
- 3.6.2 Development blocks

3.6.3 Legibility

Variations in character

Distinctive character also contributes to helping people find their way around (assessed in Section 3.5.1 Distinctive character). The elements identified above also contribute towards creating distinctive character generators within a new development.

Variations in character between different character areas or between different street types in the hierarchy also contribute towards legibility.

Building heights

The heights of buildings should generally relate to those found in the surrounding context and should reflect their position in relation to the street hierarchy and the importance of a place in the layout.

Building heights should also be designed to respond to:

- key views and vistas;
- landmark and gateway locations and focal points; and to
- the size of spaces, to create a sense of enclosure.

Key views and vistas

Views into and out of a scheme or between different parts of a scheme can also help people orientate themselves. At the focus of key views, buildings should be designed to act as landmarks or marker buildings.

For a development that is principally new housing, formal vistas should be set up with care and only where there is confidence that the buildings proposed to terminate them will be of sufficient quality to match up to the view. A group of buildings, for instance town houses, is more likely to be capable of being designed to fulfil such a role than an individual dwelling.

Where there is a view from the site towards a local landmark such as a church tower, it may be appropriate to incorporate it into the layout of development.

Landmarks, gateways and focal points

At key points in the proposals, well related to the street hierarchy, special elements should be included to aid navigation, for instance:

- landmark buildings, of particular quality (assessed under Section 3.8.2 Architectural quality), which may

- also be taller than the surrounding buildings but not necessarily so;
- gateways, where the street space narrows down or the massing of buildings appears to make it do so, to mark a threshold between one area and another; and
- focal points or meeting places, such as a public square or local park, where taller buildings may denote their importance as well as enclosing larger spaces.



A pavilion marks an important junction and provides a focal point for views in Saxlingham Nethergate.

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- 3.5.1 Distinctive character
- 3.8.2 Architectural quality

3.6.3 Legibility

Enclosure of space

The scale and massing of the built form should be designed to complement the street hierarchy and to create memorable landmark elements at appropriate points in the layout.

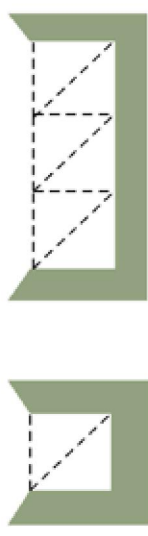
Building heights should enclose streets, public spaces and open spaces. Where new housing will not be tall enough to achieve this, then landscape elements should be introduced to provide a good sense of enclosure.

Different types of streets and public spaces require different degrees of enclosure to be successful as places.

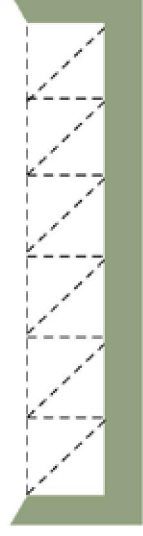
Possible evidence

Layout drawing showing building heights. Sections through streets and spaces to show relationship of building heights to width of space.

The Design & Access Statement should identify and explain the reasoning behind the identification of existing and proposed key views, landmark and gateway locations and focal points.

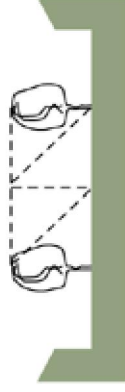


Ratio 1:1



Ratio 1:3

Maximum squares ratio 1:6



Spatial definition by tree canopy

Street sections illustrate different degrees of enclosure



Examples of different degrees of enclosure in Wymondham for a street and public space

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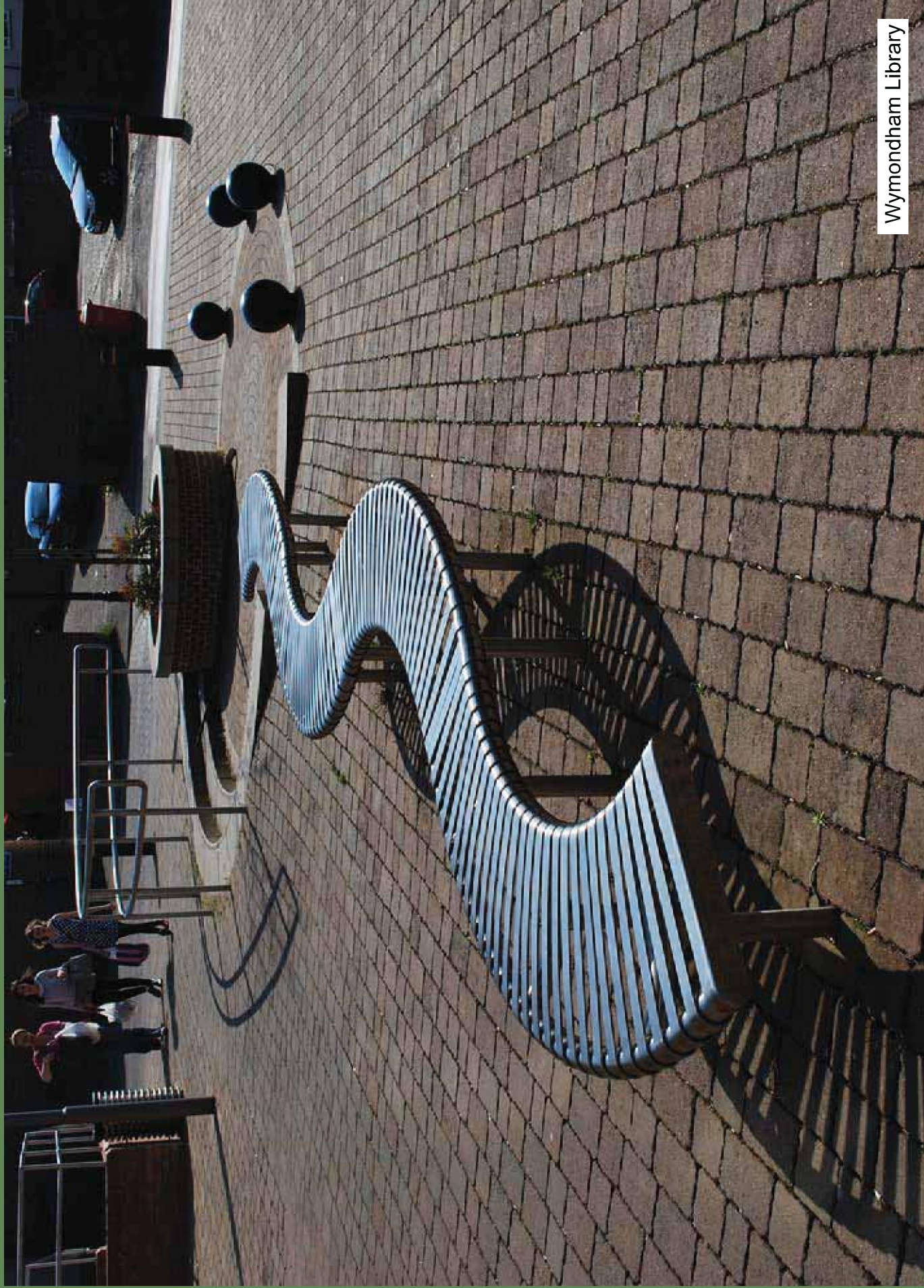
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3.8.2 Architectural quality

How is it evaluated?

- Does the proposed building layout reinforce the street hierarchy?
- Do building heights contribute to creating different street types?
- Does the layout respond well to key views and vistas both existing and proposed?
- Do the proposals create and emphasise landmarks, gateways and focal points to aid wayfinding;
- Are streets and public spaces well enclosed?

3.7 Public Realm



Wymondham Library

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3.7.1 Supervision of streets

Key principles

New development should have windows and doors onto public spaces and pedestrian routes.

The potential for overlooking from living accommodation and also from ground floor windows is particularly important. Entrances help to supervise the public realm.

Why is it important?

Public realm that is overlooked and so potentially supervised by windows and doors feels safe to use. Housing is particularly effective at providing supervision, as it is potentially occupied at any time of day or night, 7 days a week. Supervision is related to the potential for the space to be overlooked rather than whether people are actually overlooking it at any given time.

Entrances generate the potential for activity at ground floor level so also contribute towards supervision of the space.

Design guidance

Overlooking is provided by the windows of buildings that face the street or public space.

Active frontages are ones with entrances to housing and/ or public uses or activities, including community facilities, shops, healthcare, schools. Where community facilities are well used then they can provide particularly effective supervision of the public spaces they overlook.

Buildings should be located and arranged so that the public realm is well supervised.

Creating active and supervised streets and public spaces may have an impact on privacy expectations set out in Section 3.6.2 Development Blocks.

Where there is parking at ground floor or undercroft level, then there is less overlooking of the street. Larger openings, bay windows or balconies at upper floor levels can help to compensate for the reduced surveillance at ground floor level.

Centres are characterised by active frontages, and blank frontages onto public realm must be avoided. Shopfront display windows help to make streets in centres feel safe for pedestrians, both during the daytime and during the evenings. Any security measures, such as shutters should be perforated rather than solid and should preferably be internal rather than external.



Poringland: Well defined and overlooked pedestrian route

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3.6.2 Development Blocks

3.7.1 Supervision of streets

Wherever possible in centres, development proposals for new shops should include an upper floor use that will generate activity, whether this is residential or business based, so that people occupy the space and contribute to the activity and supervision of the frontage. Entrances to upper floor uses must be designed with care. If they are positioned on the street, then they must not interrupt the shopping frontage. If they are positioned within the block, where the service functions are likely to be, then the building and space must be designed to provide a good quality of living environment that feels safe to use.

Design guidance for new housing

In new housing, buildings should overlook all parts of the public realm, to provide surveillance and create a safe and secure environment. Wherever possible there should be active frontages onto the public realm, particularly at key points in the layout.

Windows, particularly from living accommodation and less so from bedrooms, and entrances, should overlook street frontages. Supervision is particularly important from the ground floor level of development.

Blank gable walls should be avoided. Where side elevations face onto the public realm, then windows to living accommodation should be introduced into the elevation. Bathroom windows and/or windows on staircases will not provide sufficient overlooking to supervise public spaces.

Where a development, for instance a block of flats, has access from a rear car park, then it must also have an entrance into the building from the street frontage.

Blocks of flats should be designed so that each dwelling at ground floor level has its own independent entrance from the street. Entrances to upper floor units should be based around staircase access rather than corridor or deck access to maximise the number of entrances onto the street frontage.

Safety of pedestrian routes

Overlooking helps to make public spaces and pedestrian routes feel safe. However the design of these spaces also contributes to their safety. For instance, they should be designed with:

- clear lines of sight;
- generous widths, particularly where any changes of direction are necessary;
- no hidden corners, out of view for people using the space;

- landscape that allows views into and through planting; and
- appropriate street lighting where necessary. Refer to [Safe, Sustainable Development: Aims and Guidance Notes](#), Norfolk County Council, 2011.

Possible evidence

Layout drawing to show position of entrances and supervised frontages.

Ground floor plans to show position of windows and doors.

Street scenes.

The Design & Access Statement should explain how streets will be well supervised.

How is it evaluated?

- Do the proposals overlook the street or public space?
- Are active frontages created to public spaces, with entrances onto streets and non-residential uses around public spaces wherever possible?
- Are safe routes created for pedestrians through surveillance and the design of the spaces themselves?
- Does the scheme conform to Secure by Design criteria or Safer Places guidance?

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3.7.2 Car parking

Key principles

Convenient, attractive and safe parking should be designed into development proposals so that it contributes to the quality of environment and sense of place.

Why is it important?

Balancing the needs of the car with other pressures on a development is often a difficult challenge in designing a site layout.

Well-integrated car parking is recognised as being important to the success of the places we use, where to live, town centres and business areas. However, it must also needs to be carefully designed so that it does not dominate the environment and undermine any sense of place.

Design guidance

Parking standards, based on an assessment of local need, will be adopted as part of the Development Management DPD. Until the adoption of the Development Management DPD, refer to Norfolk County Council car parking standards. Development proposals will also need to be accompanied by sustainable travel plans to demonstrate how the need for parking is being minimised.

Suitable parking areas should also be provided for cycles, motorcycles and disabled badge holders.

The location, layout and design of all parking areas must accommodate vehicles and pedestrian satisfactorily. The design and location of car parking should encourage its full and proper use to reflect the need to safeguard bus routes and minimise footway parking which can lead to danger and inconvenience to more vulnerable road users.

Car parking areas must be designed to be suitable for vehicles and also for pedestrians to use, as they are the places where people leave their cars and continue on foot.

Parking spaces and areas should be positioned and designed to:

- be safe and convenient for users;
- create a high quality setting for built development; and
- minimise any potential impact on the safety of the public realm.

Achieving a balance between these factors is particularly important in residential development, where residents expect to be able to park close to their property and where the supervision of parking areas contributes to their security.

Car parks should be designed as positive spaces that may either be urban in character or softened by planting trees and other vegetation, depending upon their location.

Car parks open to the public should be regarded as part of the public realm. They should be designed to have a strong townscape or landscape structure that creates a character for the space, so that it is not only defined by the number of cars. Where a car park is intended to be an urban space, there should be some vertical design elements, such as trees or canopies, at intervals to break up the visual impact of large numbers of cars.

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3.7.2 Car parking

Public car parks must have a high quality of hard and soft landscape. Wherever possible sustainable drainage should be incorporated into parking areas.

Car parks should also be easily accessible, supervised and well lit so that they feel safe to use.

Design guidance for housing

In new housing, well-designed and well-positioned parking will be well-used, so that parked cars are well integrated into a scheme as a whole, rather than potentially dominating the street scene and causing obstructions to traffic.

Car parking may be accommodated in a variety of ways such as:

- within the curtilage;
- in-structure, for instance town houses with integral garages, or flats with undercroft parking;
- on-street; or
- in courtyards, either at the rear or front of dwellings.

For larger scale developments, a mix of parking arrangements, including on-plot, communal areas and on-street, is likely to be needed to accommodate patterns of car use without dominating the environment.

Refer to [Car Parking: What Works Where, English Partnerships, 2006](#) and [Safe, Sustainable Development: Aims and Guidance Notes, Norfolk County Council, 2011](#).

The design of parking provision must balance a number of issues to make sure that spaces are used, including being:

- close to dwellings;
- accessed from front doors where possible;
- overlooked by dwellings, and
- supporting the character of the place.

Where fewer spaces per dwelling are allocated spaces, then less parking is

required to meet the prevailing patterns of car ownership and use. So where some of the parking is non-allocated, for instance on-street then fewer spaces will be needed in total to accommodate residents cars. This is because some households will have more cars and some fewer. Providing non-allocated spaces means that spaces will be used more efficiently overall.

Soft landscape should be integrated into parking areas. Wherever possible permeable paving should be used to minimise surface water run-off.

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Poringland: Well integrated parking can add interest to the public realm and the street scene. A variety of different car parking solutions break up the impact of car parking and discreetly integrates it into the scheme

3.7.2 Car parking

Parking within the curtilage

Parking within the curtilage should be set behind the building line so that cars do not dominate views along the street or from the houses themselves. Tandem parking is preferred to side-by-side spaces as it has less impact upon the continuity of the street frontage.

In-structure parking

In-structure car parking can provide convenient spaces that are well integrated into the layout.

Integral garages should not project forward of the front elevation of the dwelling. Wherever possible the houses should be wide enough to also provide a habitable room at ground level on the street frontage, or else the first floor will need to be designed to help overlook the street.

Undercroft parking can provide either allocated or non-allocated spaces. Undercrofts must be designed so that there is a relationship between the lowest residential units and the street to provide surveillance.

On street parking

On-street parking is non-allocated parking. It is convenient for visitor and short-term use, can animate the street and can help to calm traffic speeds. The layout and street space should be designed to accommodate it from the outset without letting it dominate.

Courtyards

Communal car parking areas should provide a maximum of 10 spaces to avoid the visual dominance of large areas of parking and/or problems of a 'lack of ownership' and care of such spaces.

Parking in rear courtyards must be designed with care to make sure that it is easy for residents to access their parking space.

Where there are any homes in rear courtyards then the space must be designed to be part of the public realm, not only as a place for parking cars, so that it is an attractive residential environment. In the case of FoGs (flats over garages) the front door must be accessible without having to walk through parked cars.

Possible evidence

Layout drawing with parking spaces shown and numbered.

For residential proposals, the numbering of parking spaces should relate to the numbering of residential units.

A schedule of the overall numbers of parking spaces in relation to residential units/ floorspace of other uses.

The Design & Access Statement should include a parking management strategy, or make reference to one where it is set out in a Transport Statement or Sustainable Travel Plan where appropriate.

How is it evaluated?

- Does the scheme provide safe convenient and attractive places for people to park their cars?
- Is car parking well-integrated into the overall layout and design so that it does not dominate?
- Do the proposals include a variety of parking options, such as spaces on-street and also in courtyards?
- Is a strategy proposed for managing car parking?

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3.7.3 Street design

Key principles

Streets are the most common form of public space and, as such, need to be designed to ensure they work well: for all users, including pedestrians and cyclists as well as drivers; and for all abilities, including people with pushchairs, wheelchairs or visual impairment.

Why is it important?

Well-designed streets, designed in line with **Manual for Streets** (MfS1 and MfS2) principles encourage people to cycle and walk as well as supporting a range of social activities. This makes for a more pleasant public realm and helps to encourage people out of their cars.

Design guidance

This topic focuses on the design of the street space itself, rather than on the buildings around it.

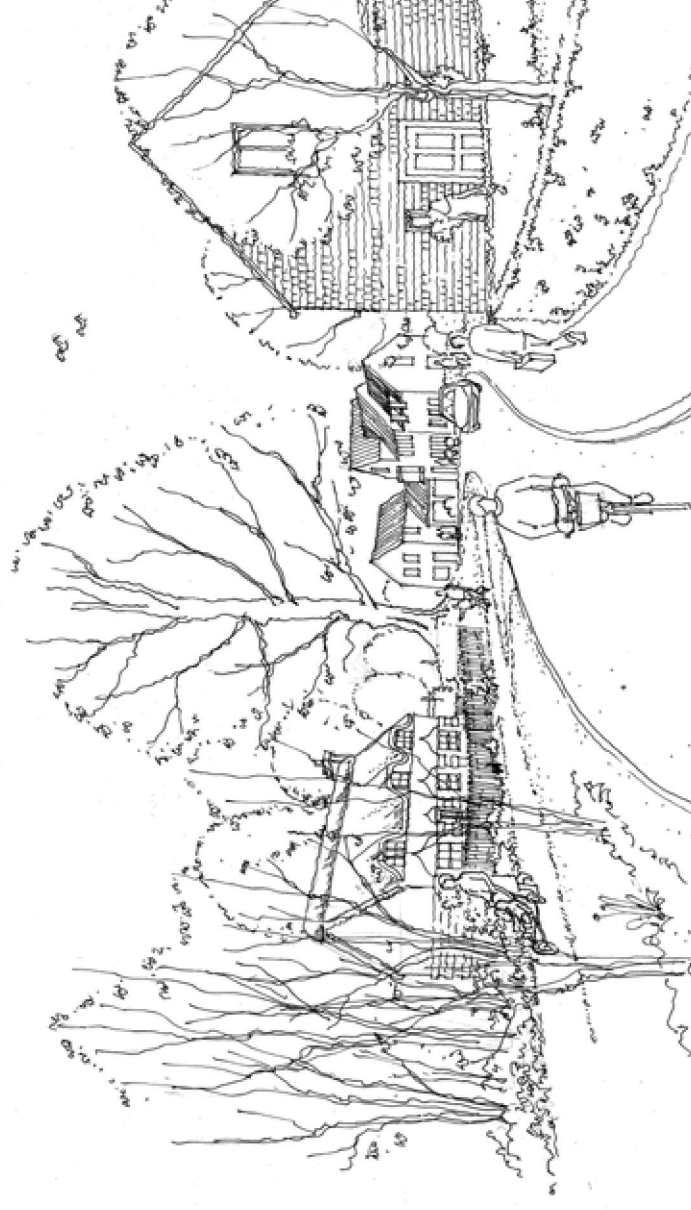
The movement network and built development both contribute towards creating successful streets, but so does the design of the street space itself.

The aim in street design should be for all users to share the same route network unless there is a particular reason why a pedestrian, cycle or vehicular route should be separate.

Designers should consider the needs of pedestrians first when designing streets, to create places that are:

- safe (built development assessed under Section 3.7.1 Supervision of streets);
- convenient routes including routes to schools (assessed under Section 3.3.2 Integrate with surroundings);
- accessible to all;
- sustainable;
- appropriate to local character; and
- attractive places in their own right.

Residential streets should be designed as low speed environments with a design speed of 20mph maximum, where cycle and /or pedestrian routes need not necessarily be segregated. For busier roads with faster traffic, cycle routes and pavements will need to be clearly defined. Where traffic speeds are 12 mph or less, then shared surfaces may be appropriate. In such spaces, the design must be inclusive, and in particular it should respond to the needs of partially sighted people.



A well designed road can accommodate pedestrian, cars and cyclists in an integrated and non-confrontational way

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- 3.3.2 Integrate with surroundings
- 3.7.1 Supervision of streets

3.7.3 Street design

Junctions and crossing points should be designed with particular care. These are places where people and cars will mix, where both safety and accessibility may be an issue.

Where design speeds allow, crossing points should be designed as raised tables, with a continuation of footway paving.

Smooth paved surfaces should be provided for pedestrian routes and desire lines. Textured surfaces, such as setts, may be used as a contrast to indicate areas that may be less suitable for pedestrian use although they should not be used to create deterrent paving.

Streets and roads in different places have a variety of different character. In the more built up areas, streets will generally have one or more footways and street lighting. In suburban areas, on-street trees or grass verges may be important to local character. In rural settlements, however, the streets may be characterised by informal soft verges with no footways and no street lighting.

Designers should balance safety and accessibility with local character to find the most appropriate solution for each situation. For instances in some rural area, it may be possible to provide a pedestrian route behind a retained boundary hedge, rather than a footway adjoining the carriageway.

The aim of street design in residential areas should be to create visually simple spaces that form a backdrop to the development as a whole. A clear design ethos must be adopted for the street furniture, materials and colour palettes so that it is coordinated and used in a coherent manner across a scheme. It should be appropriate to the character of the place, avoiding any mixing of contemporary and pastiche elements, although this does not necessarily mean a 'heritage' approach in all established urban areas.

Generally, street furniture should be minimised to avoid clutter. Where it is appropriate, then it must be selected and placed with care, in positions where it will serve a useful purpose. Where possible, street furniture and planting should be designed into a strip within the street, so that there are clear zones in the street space, one for movement, without obstruction, and one for vertical elements.



Well designed street in Trowse



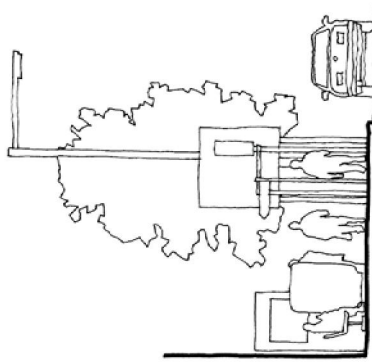
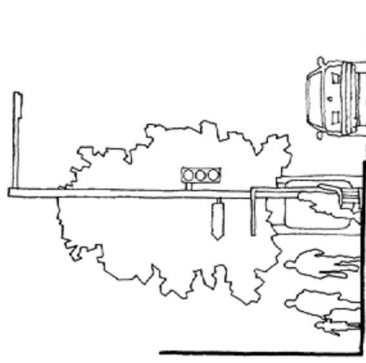
Homezone in Hethersett

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3.7.3 Street design

Paving should be simple in design, robustly detailed and with dropped kerbs and tactile paving designed with care. Generally different materials will be most appropriate where they denote special locations, such as a focal point or a centre. In these locations the quality of landscape materials and street furniture must be high. It is preferable to use high quality materials in limited areas rather than lower quality materials over a wider areas.

Street trees can contribute significantly to the character of a street and to its attractiveness. They can be introduced to relate a new development to the character of the local area, in which case they should relate to local patterns of landscape in terms of scale, species and formality or informality of planting.



Street furniture clutter can be avoided



Harleston: New streets can reinforce the strong sense of enclosure found within the town, using a variety of building types which link with the existing vehicular network

Possible evidence

The detail of landscape may be reserved at outline planning application stage, or conditioned at detailed planning stage. However, the application drawings or Design & Access Statement should provide sufficient landscape information to allow an assessment of the design intent and quality of street spaces.

Indicative or application landscape plan and/ or street sections to show materials, street furniture, drainage and details.

The Design & Access Statement should define the design speeds for different streets or make reference to them where they are set out in a Transport Statement.

How is it evaluated?

- Do the proposals demonstrate that street spaces are designed for pedestrians first and other users after?
- Are residential streets designed for a maximum of 20mph traffic speeds?
- Will streets and public spaces be inclusive and accessible to all?
- Is street design appropriate to local character?
- Are street design proposals simple, well-considered and uncluttered?

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3.8 Design Quality



Wymondham. South Norfolk Design Award Winner: New Building Category, 2011

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3.8.1 Public spaces

Key principles

Where development proposals include an element of public space, whether this is open space primarily with soft landscape, or urban space with hard landscape, then it is important that these spaces have an appropriate function and that they are well designed to fulfil a role in the development and the wider place.

Most residential development will contribute towards the provision or quality of open space. It may also include other public spaces.

Why is it important?

Successful public spaces are designed with a particular role and use in mind, rather than as space that happens to be left over once the buildings have been laid out.

Well-designed spaces help to create a sense of identity and community focus. They accommodate a range of activities, both physical and social, that promote the health and well-being of residents and other local people.

Public spaces could also help provide solutions to surface drainage issues (see Section 3.4.2 Site-wide environmental features) and generally enhance ecology and biodiversity.

Design guidance

Public spaces should be well supervised by buildings that address the space, generally by fronting onto it. Surveillance of the space from surrounding streets and different parts of the open space also helps to supervise the space and to encourage people to use it.

All public spaces should be designed with a purpose and with intended user group(s) in mind. Where possible, spaces should be designed to be multi-functional and for all sections of the community to use, where these can be accommodated without creating potential conflicts.

Activities may include formal sports and play areas, but should also include informal activities such as walking, standing and seating. More activity will make a public space feel safer and will reduce potential crime or vandalism.

Public spaces should be designed in the context of the pattern and nature of public spaces in the surrounding area. It may be appropriate to introduce a space similar to other characteristic features, for instance a village green, or alternatively a public space that can serve a different function, not already provided for in the local area.

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3.4.2 Site-wide environmental features



Public space, Hingham

3.8.1 Public spaces

Public spaces should fit within a clear hierarchy of space, from private, through semi-private to semi-public to public (assessed in Section 3.6.2 Development blocks).

Public spaces should be designed to capitalise on the site's assets, such as mature trees, where appropriate. They should also create a microclimate to encourage use, providing shelter from cold winds or catching the sun at particular times of day.

They also provide an opportunity to introduce large species of trees that may not be suitable for residential streets.

Most residential development will contribute towards the provision or quality of open space. It may also include other public spaces.

The design of open spaces should balance a sense of enclosure and openness. Buildings, structures and trees will enclose the space, making people feel comfortable in using it. However the design should also retain a sense of openness and outlook, particularly where there are views to local landmarks or across the wider area.

The planting of open spaces should:

- offer year-round visual interest;
- help to promote biodiversity;
- be suitable in size for the space over the long term; and
- be capable of being maintained, given the likely management arrangements.

Wherever possible open space should contribute towards creating green infrastructure, that is a multi-functional landscape that also plays a role in the biodiversity and surface-water drainage strategies for the site.

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Public space, Kimberley



Public square, Poringland

3.6.2 Development blocks

3.8.1 Public spaces

Where wetland features are retained or created to function as part of a neighbourhood sustainable drainage scheme, then they must also be designed to be attractive features of the open space. Wherever possible, safety should be designed in by means of the profile of the wetland area and the planting of its margins, rather than by fencing or other barriers. Access requirements should be sensitively designed to minimise hard surfacing around the perimeter of the wetland.

All public spaces should be designed with care, to include robust, fit for purpose materials, details and finishes, and good lighting.



Wymondham College: Use of well detailed, robust materials to create a high quality environment and a distinctive public space which relates to the architectural character of the buildings

The arrangements for future management and maintenance of public spaces, such as adoption by the local authority or management by a community trust, must be identified at an early stage of the design process, as these will have an influence on their design and detail.

Where communal semi-public spaces are proposed then they should be designed to a similar standard to public spaces, with a similar level of attention given to management and maintenance, together with any security arrangements that are proposed (for instance where there is a communal garden within a development block but this is proposed to be secured by gates).

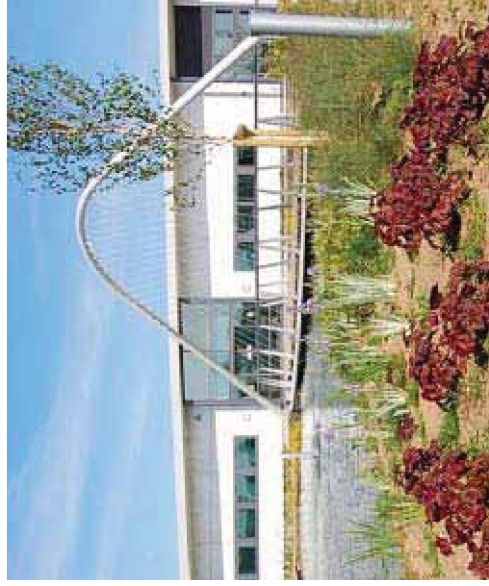


Image illustrating a natural character that supports biodiversity

Possible evidence

Layout to show public and open spaces together and in the context of the wider area.

Layout to identify the role, function and character of each proposed public space and contribution to green infrastructure.

Layout and sections to demonstrate how buildings and landscape will enclose and supervise public spaces.

Hard and soft landscape plans, to show surfaces, street furniture and other elements, and planting.

Plan to identify proposed management regimes, whether adoption or other arrangements.

Views into or of the public spaces.

How is it evaluated?

- Do proposals demonstrate that public spaces have a purpose, with uses and activities identified?
- Are public spaces well located where they are likely to be used?
- Are they well defined and overlooked by buildings?
- Do they have well-considered soft and hard landscape?
- Is there a strategy for future management and maintenance of the public realm?

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3.8.2 Architectural quality

Key principles

Good architecture should be: fit for purpose; durable and well-built; and pleasing to the mind and the eye.

Good architecture is not a question of style - it can be of any era, or architectural character, and it does not depend upon copying the appearance of what is immediately around it.

Why is it important?

Sustainable homes are ones that are attractive to live in now and will be into the future, when lifestyles and other circumstances may have changed. To achieve this they need to function well, to be built to last, to be attractive initially and to remain so over time.

Design guidance

This question is about the design of the buildings themselves rather than their role in the layout as a whole.

It is about how a building looks but importantly it is about how it works and how it lasts over time too.

Fit for purpose

The accommodation provided should be suitable for use by the intended occupants and should function well.

This will include:

- internal arrangement: size of rooms (assessed in Section 3.9.3 Building performance), layout, orientation and aspect;
- external space: gardens, terraces, courtyards and roof gardens, their size, orientation and aspect; and
- service elements: refuse bins, recycling, cycle storage and meter boxes.



Harleston Police Station



Trowse Hopkins Homes

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3.9.3 Building performance

3.8.2 Architectural quality

Internal arrangement for new housing

Homes need to provide space in sociable rooms, for family and friends, and private spaces, for quiet relaxation or study. Research has shown that school performance is affected by the ability of a child to do homework in a quiet space. Play, work and study are as much part of daily life as cooking, eating and sleeping. Storage and circulation areas are needed to support these activities.

The layout of internal spaces in all new properties should be flexible to accommodate a range of residents and uses over a lifetime.

Family houses should generally provide two social spaces, for example a living room and a kitchen/dining room.

It is important that the position of doors, windows and any built-in furniture is designed so that the space within homes is usable and practical, for instance so that furniture can be accommodated.

Lighting and outlook contribute to the well being of residents. New housing should be designed to:

- provide a reasonable outlook for each dwelling;
- be dual aspect where possible, and avoid north facing, single aspect flats.

External space for new housing

The size of garden should relate to the house type and to the proposed number of occupants. It should also provide a degree of privacy at the rear, more private, side of the house.

Private garden space should be usable, that is:

- it should receive sunlight at some point in the day;
- capable of accommodating activities such as sitting, play, clothes drying and outside storage space; and
- where possible, accessible for cycle storage.

All dwellings should have access to some form of outdoor space, preferably a private or communal garden. However, upper floor flat dwellers rarely have access to gardens. Where a public open space is close to a development, it may provide a suitable alternative. Otherwise, it is important to provide private balconies or upper level terraces.

Balconies/ roof terraces should:

- provide some degree of privacy;
- benefit from sunlight where possible; and
- maintain a degree of privacy for existing residents.



Cringleford

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3.8.2 Architectural quality

Service and infrastructure elements

Service elements, in particular: refuse stores and recycling facilities; bicycle storage; and meter boxes must be considered early in the design process and integrated into the overall scheme.

Refuse stores and recycling facilities should be designed to screen bins from public view, whilst providing occupiers with easy access to them. Refuse and recycling arrangements are increasingly subject to change with variation in the numbers and sizes of bins.

It is essential to allow sufficient space for refuse storage, as otherwise bins will become dominant elements in the public realm or private spaces, such as garages. Insufficient space for refuse storage has potential knock-on effects on other areas of a development, such as cars being parked informally on-street rather than in spaces provided in car ports or garages, or informal bin stores coming into being on planted verges.

Refer also to South Norfolk's 'Planning Guidance notes for the provision of waste/recycling collections in new developments'.

Meter boxes must be accessible from the street frontage but should be positioned to be unobtrusive.

Bicycle storage facilities should be secure and conveniently located for the use of occupiers.

Similarly the infrastructure elements that a scheme requires must be identified early, so that they can be integrated unobtrusively into the development proposals, and do not affect the quality of the street scene. This may include such items as: sewage treatment plant; electricity transformers; telephone supplies and street signage.

Durable and well built

Buildings must be constructed in durable materials that will last well and look good over time.

Particular attention must be paid to areas that may get heavier wear, for instance corners of buildings on street frontages, porches and entrances, or boundary treatments onto the public realm.

The relationship and junctions between different materials will need to be detailed with care so that they weather well over time.

Generally it is preferable to adopt a design approach that is simple rather than complex in form and elevation, with attention paid to the quality of materials and details rather than to resolving complexity that has been introduced.

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3.8.2 Architectural quality

Pleasing to the mind and eye: A coherent design approach

Good architecture is well ordered. There are many different ways of ordering the design of a building and different architectural traditions are based on different approaches. Any of these can result in well-designed buildings that are appealing to look at.

New housing must be designed with care and with a coherent design approach, which influences the whole building, from its form, to the elevations and the detailing (whatever the architectural style may be).

Some modern developments emulate traditional buildings but lack their three dimensional qualities. For example: windows may be flush with external walls and porches; balconies and bay windows may appear to be 'stuck on' to a simple box rather than integrated into the design; or random changes in materials and brick colour may be used to 'add interest' to the appearance of the building.

All too often the result is buildings that are a poor pastiche of historic styles.

If a traditional approach is to be followed then it should correctly use traditional proportions and details and a similar quality of materials to the source for inspiration.

Generally buildings should be designed to reflect some of the attractive qualities of the local historic form of housing, for instance in terms of the scale and proportion of elements.

Where a contemporary approach is adopted, then the proportions of the form and elevations and quality of detailing will be of particular importance.

The following provides some general guidance relevant to typical design approaches to new housing. Where a different architectural approach is proposed then it should be explained in the Design & Access Statement.



Easton College Jubilee 3 Building



Dickleburgh Mulberry Barn, is orientated to create high quality outdoor and indoor spaces for its residents

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3.8.2 Architectural quality

Building orientation

Many traditional buildings are wide in frontage with shallow plan forms, whereas new buildings tend to be deep in plan. New housing is often also narrow in frontage.

The position and orientation of the building on its plot should respond well to the local context and to the design approach.

Form of buildings

The form of a building is its three dimensional shape.

Buildings should be designed as a three-dimensional whole, so that elements such as bay windows are integrated from the start.

Where building forms relate to the local traditional forms, then new buildings are likely to sit well in the landscape and street scene.

The arrangement of different forms in a group of buildings, the relationships between them and how they are joined or separated is also important.

Roofs may be prominent in local and more distant views. Where new buildings are deeper in plan than traditional buildings, roofs at a traditional pitch may be visually intrusive. The roof forms, in particular the spans and pitches must be designed with care, taking into consideration their potential visual impact on their context.

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From left to right: Colney Big C Centre, Cringleford and Long Stratton Police Station. Examples of contemporary designs using simple but bold forms to create distinctive buildings

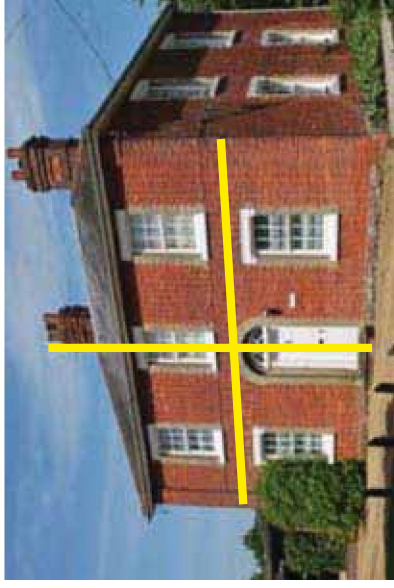
3.8.2 Architectural quality

Articulation and modelling

Articulation and modelling help to order a building and provide a framework for composing elevations. They also provide shade and light and add visual interest.

Buildings are articulated when their form shows their different parts. This may relate to different parts of the elevation, for instance when a gable at roof level is set slightly forward of a main elevation in plan. It may reflect the relative importance of different parts or functions, such as when a garage or outbuilding is set behind the main elevation. It may reflect the construction of the building, as when an upper storey is jettied in a timber framed building.

The elevation may also be modelled to add depth to the facade. This might include windows and doors being set back from the external surface of the building, or some element of three dimensional detailing.



Well proportioned building with formal symmetry



Building of three townhouses sets out to create symmetry without following through in the design of the facade



Left: Easton College Jubilee 3 Building. Top-left and top-right: Hethel Engineering Centre. Examples of buildings which use features such as roof overhangs and structural elements which not only create shading but also introduce three-dimensional modelling to the building façade

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3.8.2 Architectural quality

Composition of elevations

Elevations must be composed with care. The main elements are window and door openings, which should respond to:

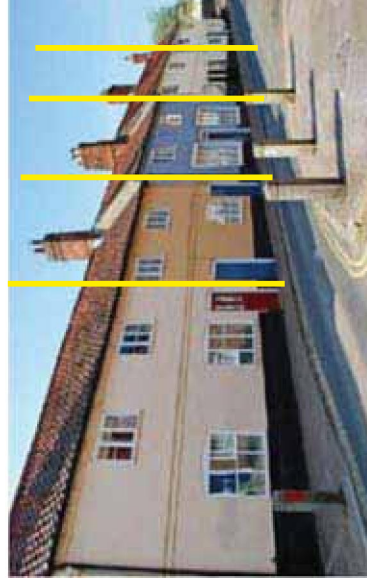
- the accommodation and the type of activity proposed;
- the composition of the street elevation; and
- local character.

Entrances in particular are important elements of an elevation and should be easily identifiable. This may be achieved by some form of emphasis, such as a porch. Such features must be of high quality as they will be experienced from close up.

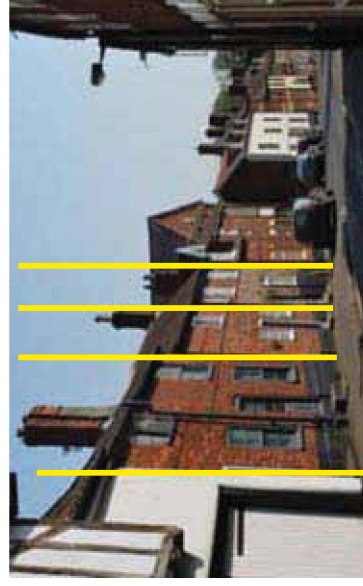
Elevations can be thought of as having a top, a middle and a bottom, all of which need to be designed with care and well integrated into the overall composition.

The shape of elevations and the composition of openings create a pattern, or rhythm, along a street frontage. This may be vertical, horizontal or neutral. New development should generally respond to the rhythms that are already found in a street frontage.

In some places, symmetrical compositions may be appropriate for buildings or groups of buildings, for instance where a building is of particular importance relative to others in the layout. It is particularly important that symmetrical compositions are well proportioned, in high quality materials and well detailed as attention will focus on them.

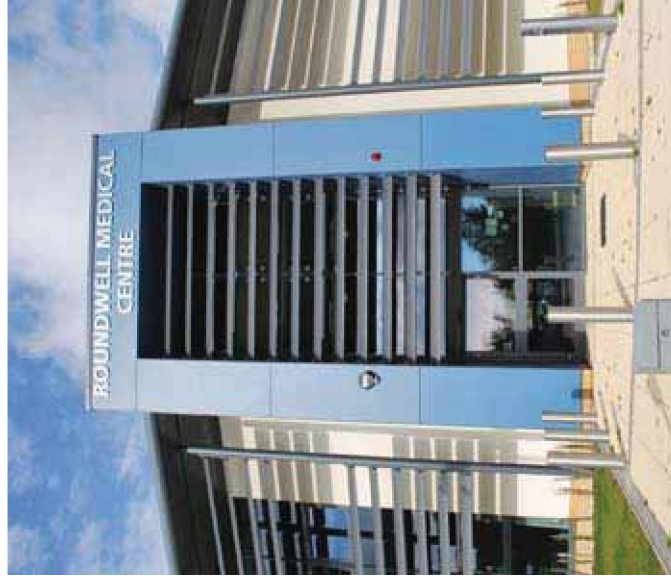


Wide fronted houses



Combination of wide fronted and narrow fronted houses

However, in many locations symmetry is not appropriate or necessary. For instance, terraces are generally made up of a repeated house type. The side or rear elevations of buildings do not need to match the symmetry of a facade.



Costessey Roundwell Medical Centre: Example of how architectural design can be used to draw attention to the entrance of a building

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3.8.2 Architectural quality

Examples of traditional and contemporary designs for different building types, showing well balanced proportions and relationships between solid and void to the elevations



Bressingham



Costessey



Trowse



Hethel Engineering Centre



Tibenham



Dickleburgh: Example showing how solar shading has been successfully incorporated into the architectural design of the façade

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3.8.2 Architectural quality

Materials and detailing

Materials and detailing have a significant influence on people's perceptions of the quality of a place.

Generally, quality can more easily be achieved through:

- simple forms, with limited decoration, but well proportioned elevations and high quality materials and detailing, rather than
- complex forms, with decorative features, but lesser quality materials or less careful design and detailing.

Changes in material should relate to the form and articulation of the building, for instance to a set back or projection, or should have some other clearly identifiable role in the design.

Where materials and details are used to reflect traditional building forms or vernacular architecture, then they should be a genuine reflection of those traditions rather than 'stick-on' features.

For instance, chimneys should relate to fireplaces, and weatherboarding should be timber.

In larger, neighbourhood scale developments, there will be a need to balance the degree of variety and consistency in the design of buildings, to create areas with their own distinct character. Changes in the use of materials can play a role in varying character, although this should not be the only means of creating variety.

Possible evidence

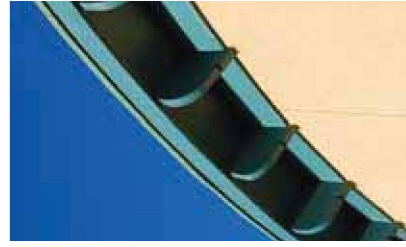
Floor plans and elevations to show furniture, locations of storage and items to be stored, such as refuse bins/ cycles. Layout drawing to show extent of routes for refuse vehicles and walk distances for bin men to stores.

Sections and street elevations.

3D visualisations and perspective or axonometric drawings of the proposed development in relation to the surrounding context.

The Design & Access Statement should include an explanation of the design approach, demonstrating how it is appropriate to the proposal, to its immediate context and to the character of the local area.

Contemporary interpretation of traditional materials



Colney Big C Centre



Dickleburgh



Wymondham Library



Wymondham



Wymondham

How is it evaluated?

- Does the scheme include buildings with accommodation that is fit for purpose in terms of the layout of internal and external spaces?
- Are service elements accommodated in a convenient yet inconspicuous way?
- Does the proposal use materials and details that will wear and weather well?
- Is there a coherent, well ordered design approach that underpins the design, from site layout, through building form and plan, to elevations and details?

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Easton College Jubilee Building. South Norfolk Design Award: Special Award for Sustainability, 2010

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3.9.1 Adaptability

Key principles

Well-designed buildings should be adaptable to meet changing circumstances over time.

Why is it important?

The lifespan of a building is longer than we can predict and successful buildings will be capable of being adapted to meet changing needs in the future.

For housing, these may be the evolving lifestyles of existing occupants as they grow older, or it may be potential new lifestyles that may emerge as technology advances or climate change occurs. For other types of building, this may include the ability to combine or to subdivide the space to allow it to be occupied in a different manner.

Design guidance for new housing

Houses that are designed to allow flexible use will not necessarily need to be adapted or converted over time, but can be used in different ways to meet different needs.

This may include for example:

- a room that can be used as a workspace, study, playroom or spare bedroom; or

- living spaces that can easily be adapted to be open plan or separate rooms.

The structural design of new housing can make dwellings more adaptable.

For instance where the structural walls are the external or party walls then the internal layout of rooms can be adapted more easily than otherwise.

Residents may wish to extend their living accommodation without having to move house. Houses should be designed to allow the potential for future loft conversions and with gardens sufficiently large so that conservatories can be added at a later date.

Over their lifetimes, the needs of residents will change and many people will wish to stay living in the same home as they grow older. Compliance with [Lifetime Homes](#) standard for adaptability in use will provide housing that enables this to happen.

For larger, neighbourhood scale developments, adaptability may also include buildings with accommodation at ground floor level that can be converted to non residential use in future. This will require a taller ground floor storey height than for residential development, with 3.6m being a guideline minimum floor-to-floor height to allow future conversion.

Possible evidence

The Design & Access Statement should include information to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability, with indicative floor plans to show different arrangements, or the potential for future extension/ conversion.

Compliance with [Lifetime Homes](#) criteria should be demonstrated where this is relevant.

How is it evaluated?

- Does the scheme comply with the Lifetime Homes standard?
- For new housing, does the design approach make it easy to add to, convert and extend homes if necessary?
- Does it allow rooms to be put to a variety of uses?

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3.9.2 Innovation in construction

Key principle

The use of cutting-edge practices and/ or innovation in development or construction technologies and processes, rather than following custom and practice, should be encouraged provided that it is able to demonstrate a real benefit to the proposals.

Why is it important?

Adopting best practice, or innovating, can help to make sure that design solutions are the most appropriate for a given situation, with potential benefits that may include improved quality and reduced defects in construction, improved health and safety on site during construction and improved the environmental performance of a home.

As environmental requirements increase, there will be more need to adopt innovations in construction technologies and practices.



Design guidance

A planning application would not normally include information that relates directly to this question.

However if best practice or innovative methods of construction are proposed, then it is likely that these will be known at the time of a planning application and that they will have some influence upon the design of the proposals.

Advances in construction will move on over time. As a guideline, methods or processes that count as advanced or innovative will include those not generally in use in that sector of the development industry over the previous 5 years.

Innovation may include such things as:

- the use of unconventional materials, such as straw bale construction, lime rather than cement-based materials;
- the use of materials that are traditional in vernacular construction in contemporary ways;
- unconventional sourcing of materials from the local area (for instance locally coppiced timber but not bricks from a local brickworks); or
- off-grid solutions for energy, water and or drainage;

Innovative processes may include such things as partnering, the use of life-cycle costing analysis for dwellings, the release of plots to self- or cooperative-builders.

The benefits that may be identified include:

- cost savings that allow investment in another element of the scheme; or
- improvements in quality of finish; or
- lower lifecycle costs; or
- reduced environmental impact (assessed in Section 3.9.3 Building performance).

Possible evidence

The Design & Access Statement should include an outline of the approach, demonstrating its potential benefit to the scheme.

How is it evaluated?

- Does the scheme propose to adopt modern or innovative methods of development or construction technology or practice that bring wider benefits to the development as a whole?

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3.9.3 Building performance

3.9.3 Building performance

Key principles

Buildings that perform better than the minimum statutory environmental standards are more sustainable in the long term, in terms of issues such as: daylighting; sound insulation; generous internal space standards and energy efficiency.

Why is it important?

Today, the most important of these factors are environmental performance and, for housing, internal space standards.

Sustainable housing needs to be suitable for use and attractive to current occupiers and also to potential future occupants. Buildings that perform better than the minimum environmental standards provide a better quality of life for occupiers in a wide variety of ways. For example:

- people are more concerned about intrusions into their privacy through poor sound insulation than through overlooking in housing; and
- exposure to good levels of natural light affects our perceptions of well-being.

Environmental performance

[Code for Sustainable Homes \(CSH\)](#) provides the standard measure of the environmental performance of new homes.

The [Joint Core Strategy](#) requires development of at least 10 dwellings or 1,000sqm of other floorspace to provide 10% of energy requirements through decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy.

In terms of water requirements, new housing is required to comply with Policy 3 of the Joint Core Strategy and reach [Code for Sustainable Homes level 4](#) or any successor of this standard.

Meeting the energy policy requirements will mean that the performance of new housing will be above the statutory minimum requirements and will satisfy this criterion.

Internal spaces in new housing

The size of internal spaces in all new properties should be able to accommodate a range of residents over time.

Living spaces should be able to cater for activities involving all members of the household, with or without guests. Generally there should be enough space for a table and chairs that allows all

residents of a fully occupied property to enjoy a meal together.

Living rooms should be wide enough to provide space for furniture and for circulation if needed.

Bedrooms should provide wardrobe space for the number of occupants.

Storage and circulation areas are needed to support these activities. In houses, storage is often accommodated in garages, causing pressure on parking provision within new developments.

The layout of internal accommodation is assessed under [Section 3.8.2 Architectural quality](#).

This guide is not intended to specify the size that homes should be, either in terms of overall area or actual sizes per room, but to recognise that generous internal spaces contribute to design quality for occupants (in line with [Building for Life](#)).

Currently, new homes in South Norfolk are not required to meet specific internal space standards, other than:

- grant-supported affordable housing for rent, which must meet standards set by the [Homes and Communities Agency \(HCA\)](#); and
- any standards that individual Housing Associations apply to their new development.

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3.8.2 Architectural quality

3.9.3 Building performance

HCA space standards for affordable housing

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) internal space standards for affordable housing may be used as a rule of thumb to assess whether the internal space in proposed dwellings (of whatever tenure) is generous or not.

Refer to: *Housing Corporation 'Design and quality standards' April 2007*.

Building for Life recognises that grant-supported affordable rented housing is required to meet standards that are more onerous than the statutory minima set for private housing for sale.

This criterion will be satisfied by grant-supported or s.106 procured housing which complies with HCA standards.

For private sale housing this question will be satisfied by new housing that meets or exceeds the HCA standards through an approach which also satisfies the assessment in Section 3.2.3 Mixed and affordable tenure, or that in any other way exceeds the minimum requirements set out in current Building Regulations and/ or the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Other matters

Other matters such as good natural light or sound insulation may also play an important role in certain developments.

Possible evidence

The Design & Access Statement must demonstrate how the Joint Core Strategy policy requirements have been met or should refer to technical documents where this is demonstrated.

How is it evaluated?

- Does the scheme comply with the Core Strategy policy requirements relating to energy and water?
- For housing, do proposals provide internal space standards that are more generous than common practice?
- Does proposed new housing meet the same standards as required for affordable rented housing that is supported by HCA grant funding?
- Does the scheme perform better in other ways, such as in terms of Code for Sustainable Homes or BREEAM accreditation?



Examples of new small scale, domestic infill building (top: Hales) and large scale educational building (bottom: Easton College), both of which incorporate green roof technologies in their approach towards sustainable design

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- 3.2.3 Mixed and affordable tenure
- 3.8.2 Architectural quality
- 3.9.2 Innovation in construction

3.10 Worked Example



Harleston Police Station, South Norfolk Design Award Commendation, New Buildings Category 2006

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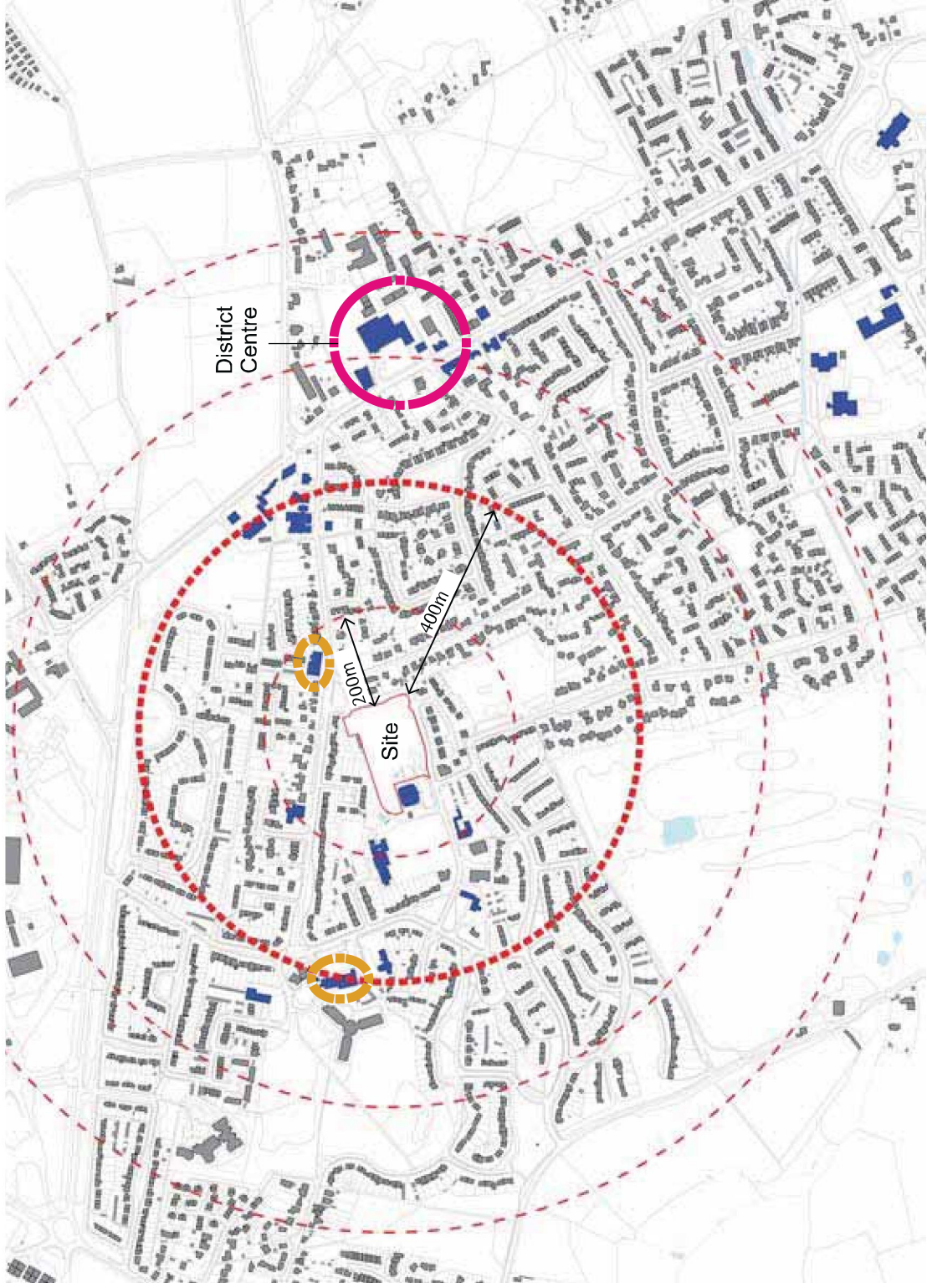
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3.10.1 Appraising the site and its setting

Wider Context

Key

-  Local centre
-  District centre
-  Schools, community facilities and commercial uses

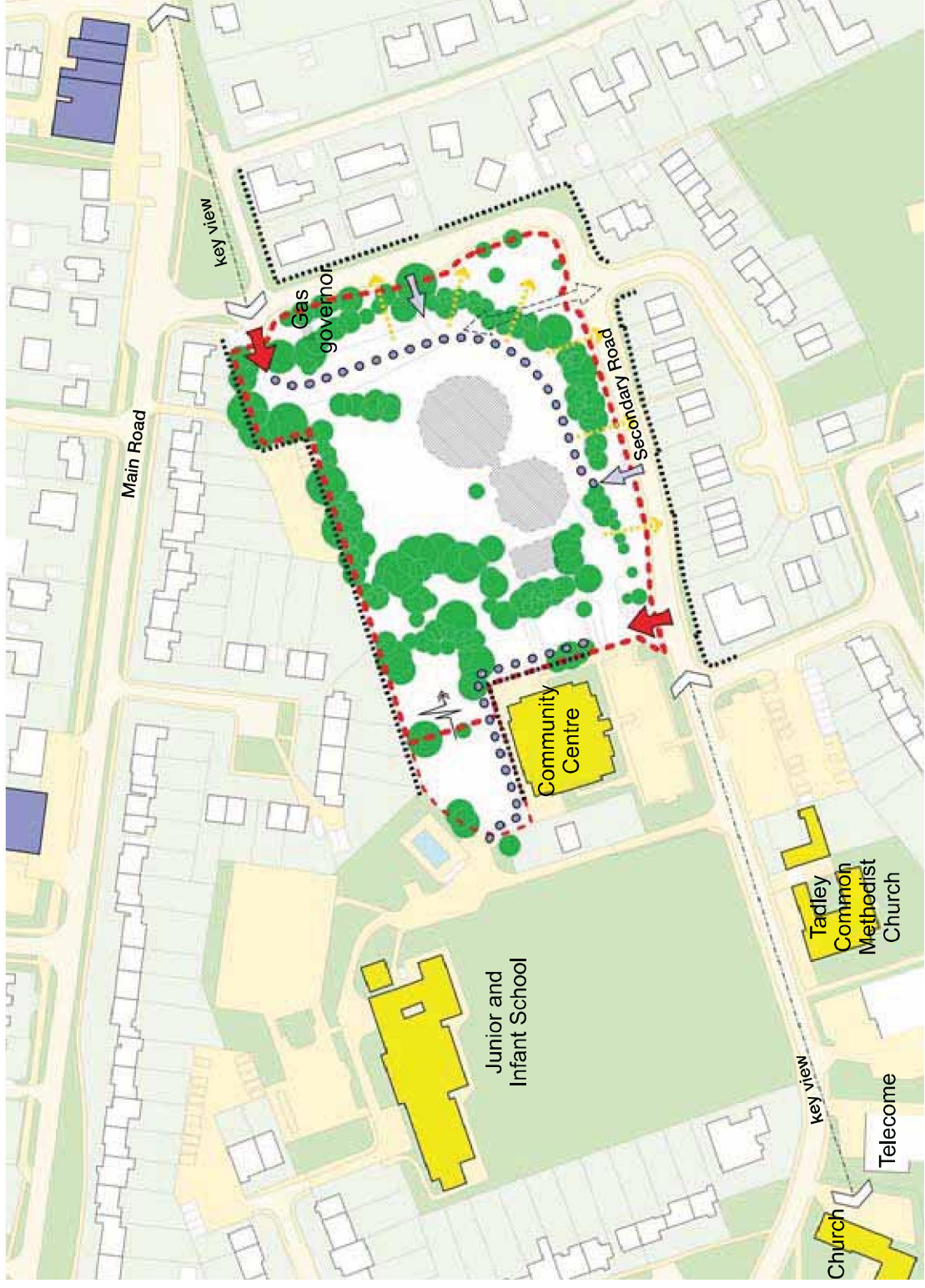


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3.10.1 Appraising the site and its setting

Site Analysis

- Key**
- Community facilities, i.e. schools,
 - Retail and office uses
 - Location of trees
 - Existing vehicular access
 - Existing pedestrian access
 - Former school buildings to be demolished
 - Backs and poor edges
 - Opportunity to improve character and overlooking of Secondary road
 - Site area
 - Potential site for community centre extension



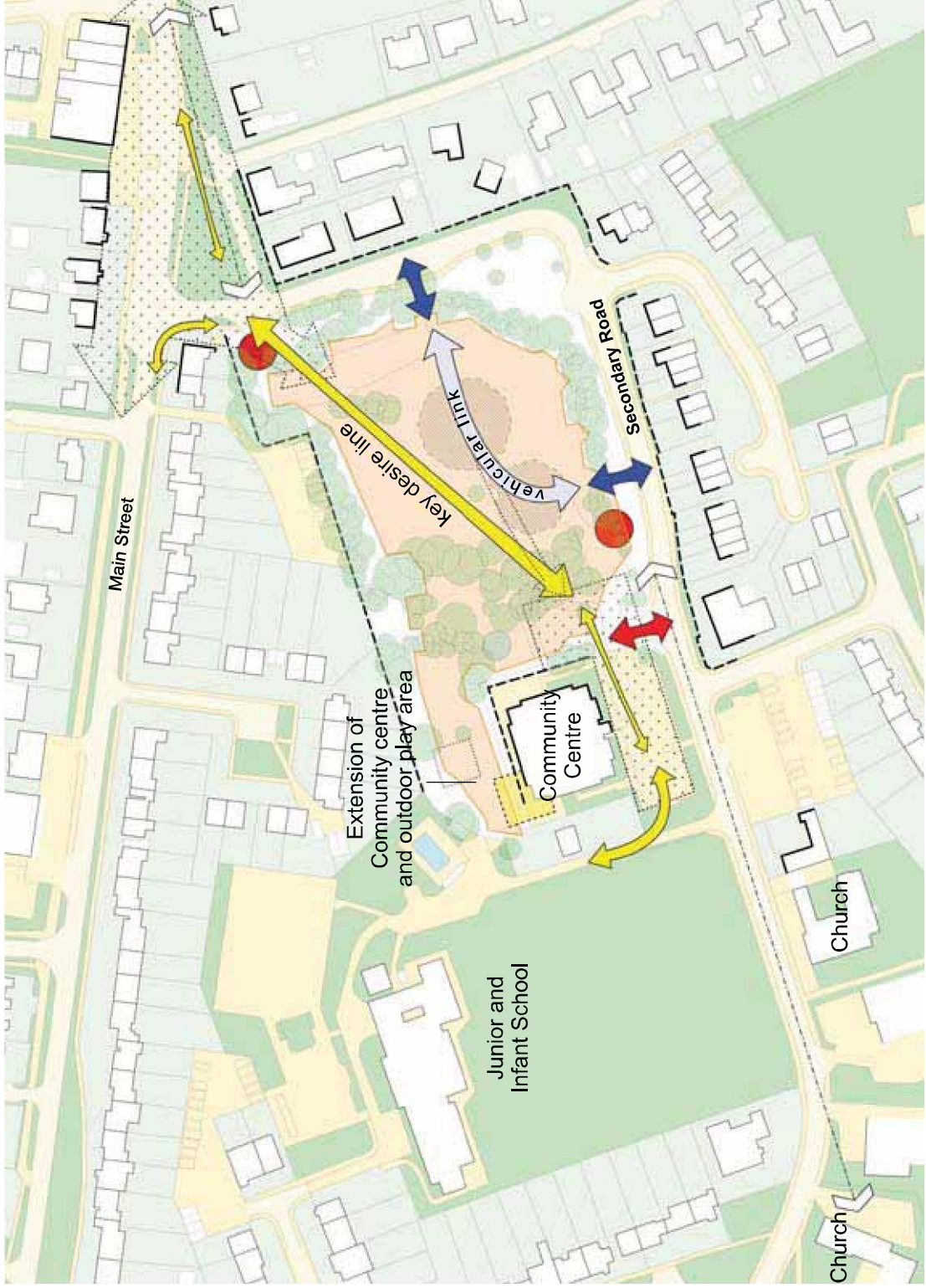
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3.10.2 Develop the design concept

Development Concept



- Key**
-  Strategic desire line for pedestrian movement
 -  Opportunity for vehicular access
 -  Existing trees to be retained where possible
 -  Area where tree removal could be considered subject to detailed design
 -  Existing vehicular access and right of way into community centre car park
 -  Opportunity for a better defined space
 -  Former school buildings to be demolished
 -  Opportunity for landmark / focal point
 -  Opportunity for vehicular link through site

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3.10.2 Develop the design concept

Development Options

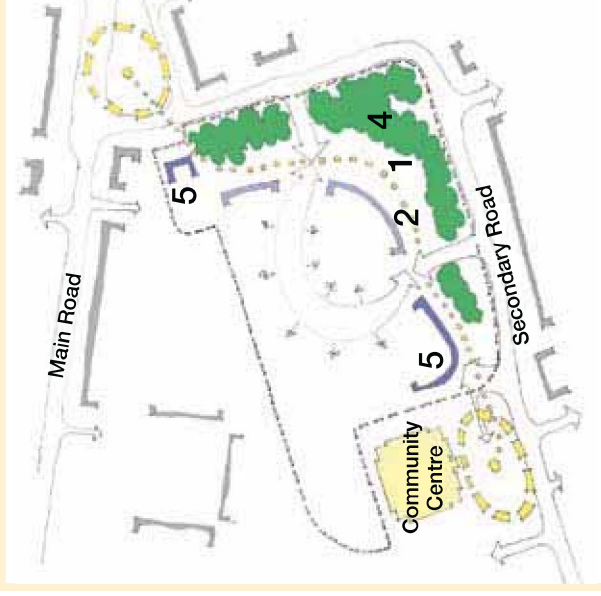
Concept

- 1 Provide a new open space for the site
- 2 Provide a save route through the site to the school
- 3 Create a frontage onto Secondary Road
- 4 Retain Trees as much as possible
- 5 Focal buildings at the north west corner and the south west corner

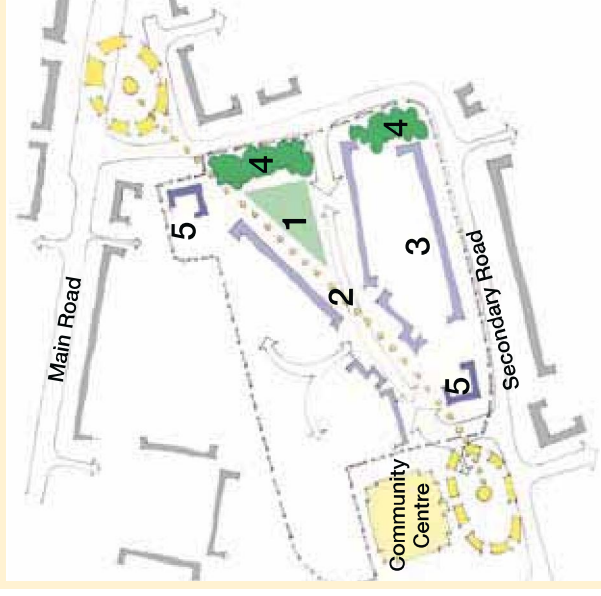
Key

-  Important Space
-  Existing Frontages
-  Proposed Frontages
-  Focal Building
-  Retained Green
-  Pedestrian Route

Option A



Option B



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3.10.2 Proposal

Illustrative Layout identifying location of affordable units

Housing mix:

- Affordable: 40%
 - 3 x 2 bed flats
 - 7 x 2 bed houses
 - 8 x 3 bed houses

Private:

- 6 x 1 bed flats
- 2 x 2 bed houses
- 9 x 3 bed houses
- 10 x 4 bed houses

Total: 45 units



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3.10.2 Proposal

Layout identifying the unit mix



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3.10.2 Proposal

Tree strategy

Key

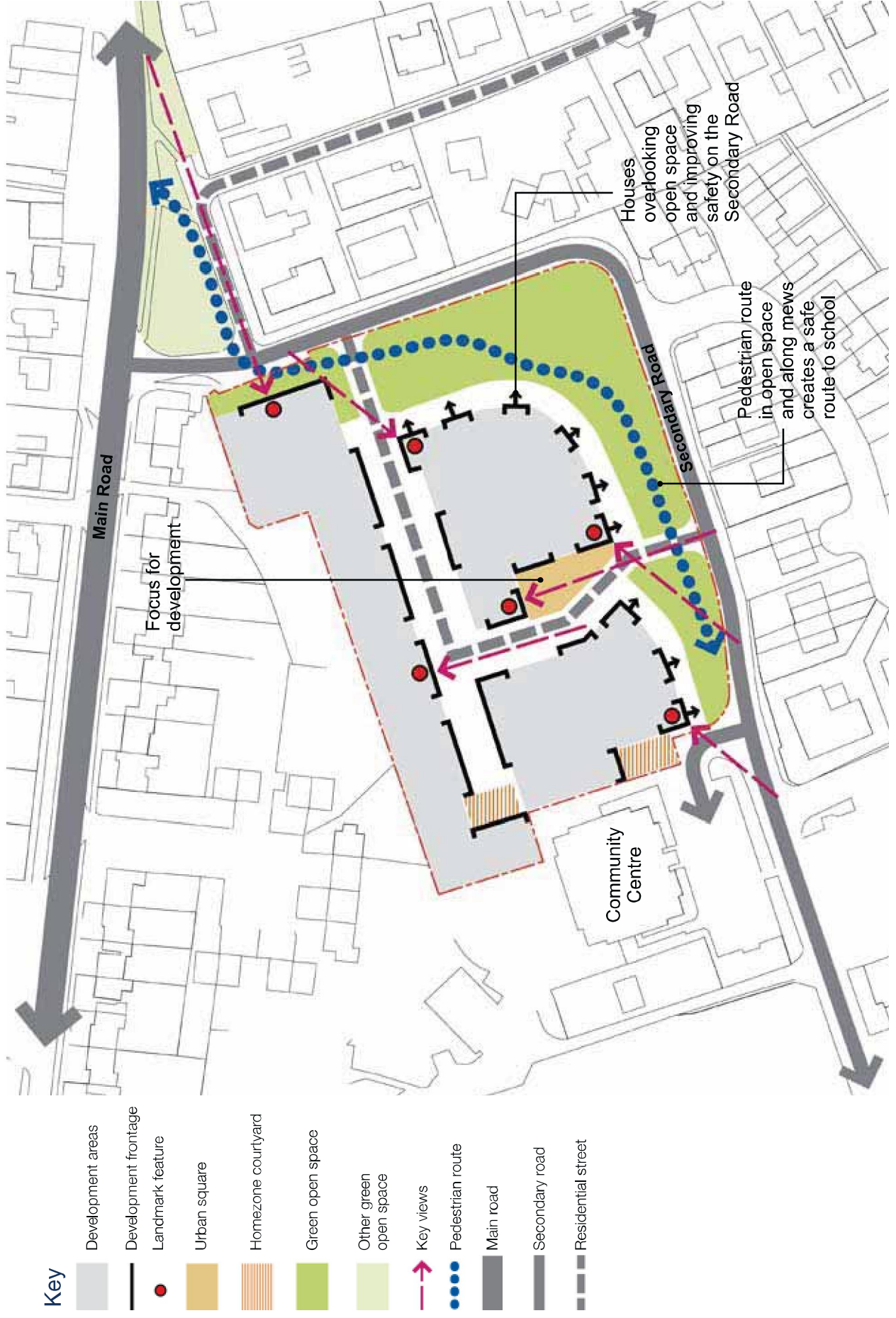
- Category C - removed
- Category B - removed
- Category A - retained
- New trees
- Trees retained
- Area where tree removal could be considered subject to detail design
- Area where tree removal could be considered subject to detail design



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3.10.2 Proposal

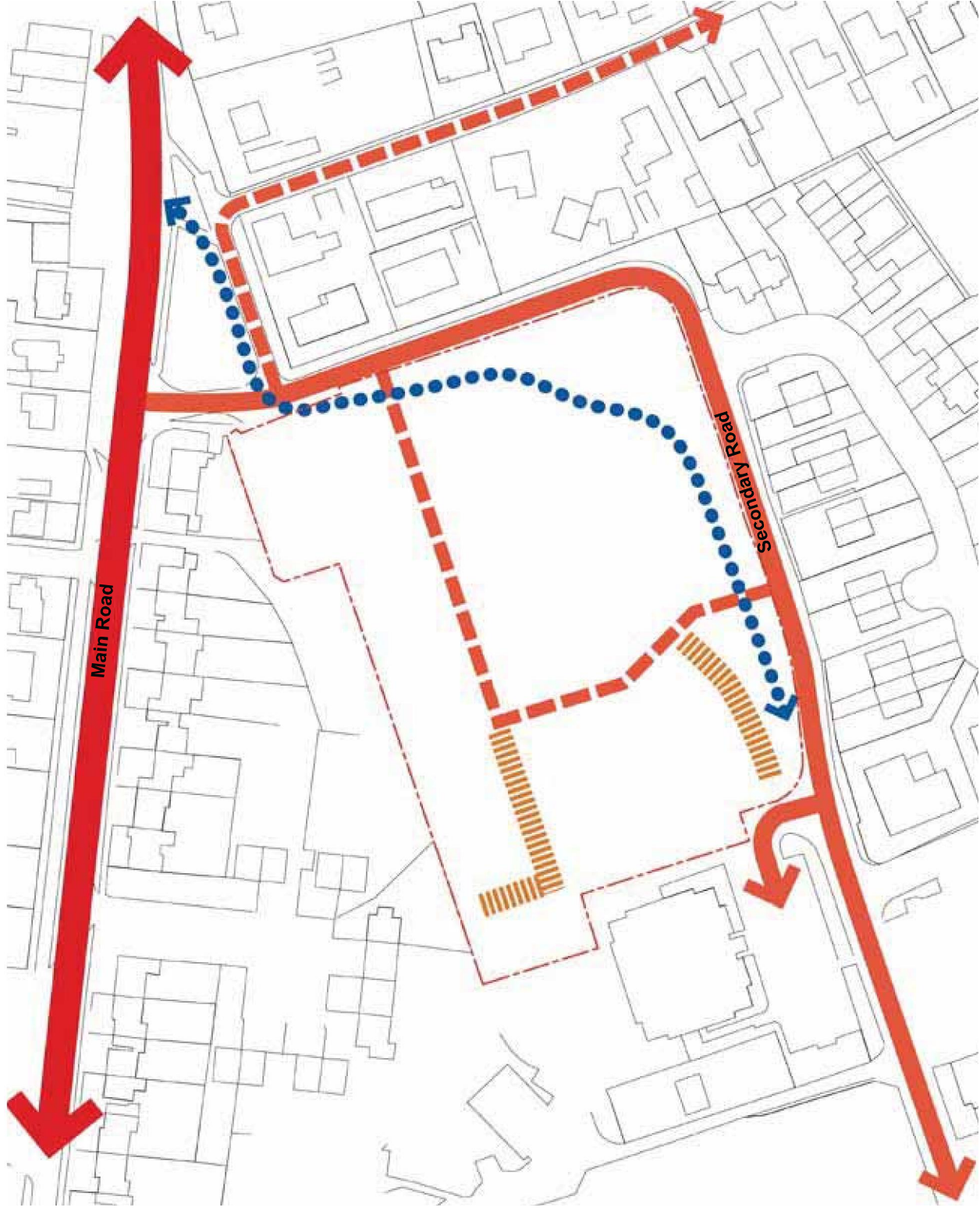
Development framework



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3.10.2 Proposal

Movement strategy



- Key**
- Main road
 - Secondary road
 - Residential street
 - Homezone / mews
 - Safe pedestrian route

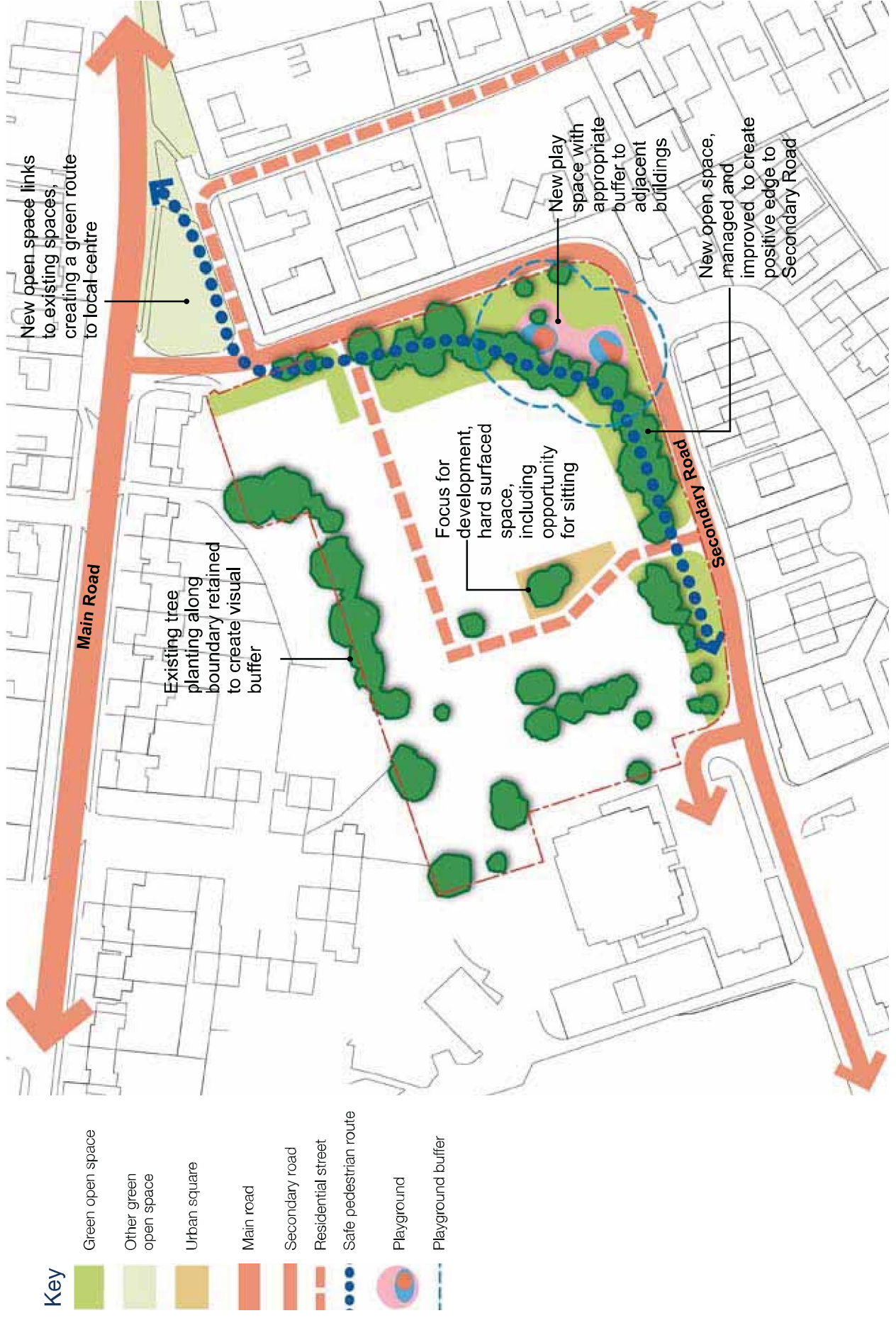
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3.10.2 Proposal

Open space strategy



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3.10.2 Proposal

3D illustration and sketch elevations



Sketch illustrating the enclosure and character of the residential street

3D sketch illustrating the development character and layout

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